

CATHOLICS, PROTESTANTS, & CONFESSION

(1John 1:9; James 5:16)

Catholics and Protestants could teach each other a lot about confession

- **What Protestants could teach Catholics**

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1John 1:9)

- Human nature makes confessing *to God* necessary

- Confession restores our *relationship* with God

- **What Catholics could teach Protestants**

Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

- Human nature makes confessing *to others* necessary

- Confessing restores our *fellowship* with God

QUOTES OF NOTE

Confession begins in sorrow, but it ends in joy. (Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*)

Without the cross the Discipline of confession would be only psychologically therapeutic. But it is so much more. It involves an objective change in our relationship with God and a subjective change in us. It is a means of healing and transforming the inner spirit. (Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*)

The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everybody must conceal his sin from himself and from the fellowship. We dare not be sinners. Many Christians are unthinkably horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among the righteous. So we remain alone with our sin, living in lies and hypocrisy. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*)

The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him, and the more deeply he becomes involved in it, the more disastrous is his isolation. Sin wants to remain unknown. It shuns the light. In the darkness of the unexpressed it poisons the whole being of a person. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*)

Expressed, acknowledged sin has lost all its power. It has been revealed and judged as sin. It can no longer tear the fellowship asunder. Now the fellowship bears the sin of the brother. He is no longer alone with his evil for he has cast off his sin in confession and handed it over to God. It has been taken away from him. Now he stands in the fellowship of sinners who live by the grace of God in the Cross of Jesus Christ. Now he can be a sinner and still enjoy the grace of God. He can confess his sins and in this very act find fellowship for the first time. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*)

A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person. As long as I am by myself in the confession of my sins everything remains in the dark, but in the presence of a brother the sin has to be brought into the light. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*)

If there is ever to be true healing and helping, a true sheltering and clothing for any of us, it is with our nakedness and helplessness that it has to start. (Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth*)