

'GO AND SIN NO MORE' In the Sacrament of Penance it is Christ who forgives. Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? No one, Lord. Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again (John 8: 10-11). They placed her in the midst, says the Gospel (cf John 8:1-11). They have humiliated her and shamed her in the extreme, without the slightest concern for her. They remind Our Lord that the Law imposed the severe penalty of death by stoning for this sin. What do you say, they ask him, disguising their ulterior motives so that they might have some charge to bring against him. But Jesus surprises them all. He does not say anything; He bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. The woman is terrified by them all. The Scribes and Pharisees go on asking questions. Then, Jesus stood up and said to them, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her. 'And once more He bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. They all went away, one by one, Beginning with the eldest. Not one of them had a clear conscience and they were trying to set a trap for Our Lord. All of them went away. And Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus looked up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' Jesus' words are full of gentleness and clemency, a manifestation of God's infinite mercy and forgiveness. She answered straight away, No one, Lord. And Jesus said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.' We can imagine the enormous joy of that woman, her desire to begin again, her deep love for Christ. Such a deep change has taken place in that woman's soul, stained by sin and suffused with her public shame, that we can only partly see the alteration in her with the light of faith. The words of the prophet Isaiah are fulfilled: Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I am doing a new thing... I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert ... to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise (Is 43:16-21). Every day, in every corner of the world, Jesus, through his ministers, the priests, continues to say I absolve you from your sins ... 'Go' says our Lord, 'and do not sin again.' It is Christ himself who forgives. The sacramental formula, I absolve you ... and the imposition of the hand and the sign of the Cross made over the penitent show that at this moment the contrite and converted sinner comes into contact with the power and mercy of God. It is the moment at which, in response to the penitent, the Trinity becomes present in order to blot out sin and restore innocence. And the saving power of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus is also imparted to the penitent... God is always the one who is principally offended by sin — 'tibi soli peccavi!' - and God alone can forgive (John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Reconciliatio et Poenitentia*, 2 December 1984, 31, III ). The words pronounced by the priest are not just a prayer of supplication to ask God to forgive our sins, or a mere certification that God has deigned to grant us his pardon, but at that moment every sin is forgiven and blotted out by the mysterious intervention of the Saviour (ibid). Few words have ever produced more joy in the world than the words of absolution, I absolve you from your sins ... St Augustine affirms that the wonder they work is greater than the very creation of the world (cf St Augustine, *Commentary on St John's Gospel*, 72). How glad are we to receive these words when we go to the sacrament of forgiveness? How grateful are we? How often have we thanked God for having this sacrament close at hand? In our prayer to-day we can show Our Lord our gratitude for this great gift. With permission from Scepter UK. Short excerpt from *IN CONVERSATION WITH GOD* by Francis Fernandez. Available at SinagTala or Totus Bookstore 723-4326 or at [www.totusbookstore.com](http://www.totusbookstore.com) ([info@totusbookstore.com](mailto:info@totusbookstore.com)) To subscribe or unsubscribe, please email [info@defensoresfidei.com](mailto:info@defensoresfidei.com). The DEFENSORES FIDEI FOUNDATION actively spreads Ecclesial Information, Catechetical Instructions and Apologetics in pursuit of making good

## **'GO AND SIN NO MORE' ☐ ☐ In the Sacra - MabuhayRadio**

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