



WHY DO WE SIN?



GOSPEL



ANSWERS

JESUS SAID TO SIMON PETER, "SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THESE?" HE SAID TO HIM, "YES, LORD, YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU." HE SAID TO HIM, "FEED MY LAMBS."

— JOHN 21: 15-23

SAINTS & INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

ST ZITA

St Zita lived a life close to God and nourished by the sacraments. This kept her life of grace strong within her soul and she was able to lead a Christian life and avoid occasions of sin. She busied herself with good deeds and caring for those in need. These things and her life of prayer kept her united to God throughout her life.



ST JOHN VIANNEY

St John Vianney is the patron saint of parish priests because of his amazing dedication to bringing the sacraments to his parishioners, especially confession. He would spend hours in the confessional each day and would speak openly about the evil of sin in the world.



TALK
ABOUT IT!

TEAM DISCUSSION

After reading over the YOUCAT numbers on the following pages, how do you think the Youth Catechism answers the question of the week? Were there any words or ideas that you did not fully understand that you would like to understand better?

ANSWER IN YOUR OWN WORDS:



YOUCAT NUMBERS FOR THIS WEEK



#67 WHAT IS SIN? At the core of sin is a rejection of God and the refusal to accept his love. This is manifested in a disregard for his commandments. Sin is more than incorrect behavior; it is not just a psychological weakness. In the deepest sense every rejection or destruction of something good is the rejection of good in itself, the rejection of God. In its most profound and terrible dimension, sin is separation from God and, thus, separation from the source of life. That is why death is another consequence of sin. Only through Jesus do we understand the abysmal dimension of sin: Jesus suffered God's rejection in his own flesh. He took upon himself the deadly power of sin so that it would not strike us. The term that we use for this is redemption.

#315 WHAT IS A SIN IN THE FIRST PLACE? A sin is a word, deed, or intention by which man deliberately and voluntarily offends against the true order of things, as God's loving providence has arranged them. To sin means more than to violate some rules about which men have agreed. Sin turns freely and deliberately against God's love and ignores him. Sin is ultimately "love of oneself even to contempt of God" (St. Augustine), and in the extreme case the sinful creature says, "I want to be like God" (see Gen 3:5). Just as sin burdens me with guilt, wounds me, and by its consequences ruins me, so too it poisons and damages the world in which I live. It becomes possible to recognize sin and its seriousness by drawing near to God.

#316 HOW CAN WE DISTINGUISH SERIOUS SINS (MORTAL SINS) FROM LESS SERIOUS (VENIAL) SINS? Serious sin destroys the divine power of love in a person's heart, without which there can be no eternal beatitude. Hence it is also called mortal sin. Serious sin breaks with God, whereas venial sin only strains the relationship with him. A serious sin cuts a person off from God. One requirement for such a sin is that it be opposed to an important value, for instance, directed against life or God (for example, murder, blasphemy, adultery, and so on) and that it be committed with full knowledge and full consent. Venial sins are opposed to secondary values (honor, truth, property, and so on) or are committed without full knowledge of their seriousness or without full consent of the will. Such sins disrupt the relationship with God but do not sever it.

#68 ORIGINAL SIN? WHAT DOES THE FALL OF ADAM AND EVE HAVE TO DO WITH US? Sin in the strict sense implies guilt for which one is personally responsible. Therefore the term "Original Sin" refers, not to a personal sin, but rather to the disastrous, fallen state of mankind into which the individual is born, even before he himself sins by a free decision.

#69 ARE WE COMPELLED TO SIN BY ORIGINAL SIN? No. Man, though, is deeply wounded by original sin and is inclined to sin. Nevertheless, with God's help he is capable of doing good. In no single case are we obliged to sin. In fact, however, we sin again and again, because we are weak, ignorant, and easily misled. A sin committed under compulsion, moreover, would be no sin, because sin always involves a free decision.



#150 CAN THE CHURCH REALLY FORGIVE SINS?

Yes. Jesus not only forgave sins himself, he also conferred on the Church the mission and the power to free men from their sins. Through the ministry of the priest, the penitent receives God's forgiveness, and his guilt is wiped away as completely as if it had never existed. A priest can do this only because Jesus allows him to participate in his own divine power to forgive sins.

#151 WHAT POSSIBILITIES ARE THERE FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS IN THE CHURCH?

Fundamentally the forgiveness of sins occurs in the sacrament of Baptism. After that the sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance, confession) is necessary for the forgiveness of serious sins. For less serious sins, confession is recommended. But reading Sacred Scripture, prayer, fasting, and the performance of good works also have the effect of forgiving sins.

#320 IS THERE SUCH A THING AS STRUCTURES OF SIN? Structures of sin exist only in a manner of speaking. A sin is always connected with an individual person, who knowingly and willingly agrees to something evil. Nevertheless, there are societal situations and institutions that are so contradictory to God's commandments that we speak about "structures of sin"—yet these, too, are the consequence of personal sins.

#389 WHY IS IT A SIN TO TAKE DRUGS? Using drugs is a sin because it is an act of self-destruction and thus an offense against the life that God has given us out of love. Every form of a person's dependence on legal substances (alcohol, medication, tobacco) and even more so on illegal drugs is an exchange of freedom for slavery; it damages the health and life of the person concerned and also does great harm to the people around him. Every time a person loses or forgets himself by becoming intoxicated, which can also include excessive eating and drinking, indulgence in sexual activity, or speeding with an automobile, he loses some of his human dignity and freedom and therefore sins against God. This should be distinguished from the reasonable, conscious, and moderate use of enjoyable things.

#264 WHAT THREATENS MARRIAGES? What really threatens marriages is sin; what renews them is forgiveness; what makes them strong is prayer and trust in God's presence. Conflict between men and women, which sometimes reaches the point of mutual hatred in marriages, of all places, is not a sign that the sexes are incompatible; nor is there such a thing as a genetic disposition to infidelity or some special psychological disability for lifelong commitments. Many marriages, however, are endangered by a lack of communication and consideration. Then there are economic and societal problems. The decisive role is played by the reality of sin: envy, love of power, a tendency to quarrel, lust, infidelity, and other destructive forces. That is why forgiveness and reconciliation, in confession as well, is an essential part of every marriage.

#317 HOW CAN A PERSON BE DELIVERED FROM A SERIOUS SIN AND REUNITED WITH GOD? In order to heal the break with God that is caused by a serious sin, a Catholic Christian must be reconciled with God through confession.

#318 WHAT ARE VICES? Vices are negative habits that deaden and dull the conscience, incline a person to evil, and habitually prepare him for sin. Human vices are found in connection with the capital sins of pride, avarice, envy, anger, lust, gluttony, and sloth (or acedia, spiritual boredom).

#319 ARE WE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SINS OF OTHER PEOPLE? No, we are not responsible for other people's sins, unless we are guilty of misleading or seducing another person to sin or of cooperating in it or of encouraging someone else to sin or of neglecting to offer a timely warning or our help.