

Sins of Omission



R. J. M. I.

By

The Precious Blood of Jesus Christ,
The Grace of the God of the Holy Catholic Church,
The Mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
Our Lady of Good Counsel and Crusher of Heretics,
The Protection of Saint Joseph, Patriarch of the Holy Family,
The Intercession of Saint Michael the Archangel,
and the cooperation of

Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

To Jesus through Mary

*Júdica me, Deus, et discérne causam meam de gente non sancta:
ab hómine iníquo, et dolóso érue me*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

“If any one sin and hear the voice of one swearing
and is a witness either because he himself hath seen or is privy to it:
if he do not utter it, he shall bear his iniquity.”
(Leviticus 5:1)

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Mary's Little Remnant

302 East Joffre St.

Truth or Consequences, New Mexico 87901-2878, USA

Website: www.JohnTheBaptist.us

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Introduction

On dogmas

The subject matter of dogmas is faith and morals. Hence anything that does not deal with faith or morals cannot be a dogma. Dogmas are eternal truths and thus they cannot be abolished, changed, modified, exempted from, or dispensed from. Natural magisterium dogmas are the natural law that is written in the hearts of all men. Ordinary magisterium dogmas are the unanimous consensus of the apostles and other Church Fathers on faith and morals. Solemn magisterium dogmas are infallible papal definitions on faith and morals. (See RJMI books *The Magisterium of the Catholic Church* and *Catholic Dogmas*.)

Apostate antipopes and anticardinals and their invalid acts

As of 2013, I have discovered conclusive evidence that all the so-called popes and cardinals from Innocent II (1130-1143) onward have been apostate antipopes and apostate anticardinals because they have all been idolaters and some have been formal heretics. Hence all their teachings, laws, judgments, and other acts are null and void. Therefore, all of the ecumenical councils, canon laws, and other acts from Apostate Antipope Innocent II onward are null and void. Also all of the theologians and canon lawyers from 1250 onward have been apostates. (See RJMI article and audio “No Popes or Cardinals since 1130.”)

In this book I quote from nominal Catholic idolaters or heretics to show that even they at least verbally held this dogma, even though many of them denied it by their actions. Many of them were guilty of the same sins of omission they rightly condemned.

The Dogma

Sins of omission cause equal guilt

1. It is a basic dogma that a man commits a sin of omission for not sufficiently condemning sins or not denouncing or punishing sinners when he is obliged to.
2. It is a basic dogma that a man is obliged to condemn sins, denounce sinners, or punish sinners (if he has the power to do so) when his silence or inaction can easily be taken as consenting to the sin or sinner.
3. It is a basic dogma that men who commit sins of omission share equally in the guilt of the sin or sinner they do not sufficiently condemn, denounce, or punish.

Evidence of the Dogma

It is a basic dogma of the natural, the ordinary, and the solemn magisterium that men who commit sins of omission share equally in the guilt of the sin or sinner they do not sufficiently condemn, denounce, or punish.

1. It is a natural magisterium dogma because it is written in the hearts of all men. Hence it was a dogma from the time of Adam. And because it is written in the hearts of all men, it is a basic dogma, more precisely a natural basic dogma as opposed to a supernatural basic dogma which is not written in the hearts of men and thus must be learned from an outside source. One of the conditions to be Catholic is knowing and believing all the basic dogmas. (See RJMI book *Basic Dogmas*.)
2. It was an Old Testament dogma from the time of Adam because it was held by the unanimous consensus of the Old Testament Church Fathers and was also infallibly defined by the ultimate religious rulers, such as Moses. Adam was the first Old Testament Church Father and Church ruler.
3. It was an ordinary magisterium dogma from Pentecost Day because it was held by the unanimous consensus of the apostles, the first New Testament Church Fathers. Hence it was also held by the unanimous consensus of the other Church Fathers.¹
4. It was made a solemn magisterium dogma in 683 when Pope St. Leo II confirmed the Third Council of Constantinople, which in turn confirmed the Second Council of Constantinople of 553 which teaches the dogma. (See in this book [7th century^: Church Father Pope St. Leo II in 683 confirmed the Second Council of Constantinople of 553](#), p. 18.) In the

¹ There are two allowable opinions as to when the era of the Church Fathers ended, one says in the 7th century and the other in the 8th century. (See RJMI book *The Magisterium of the Catholic Church: Who was the last Church Father?*)

evidence in this book, I use the “^” symbol to denote an infallible papal decree and thus a solemn magisterium definition.

When reading the following evidence of the dogma that men who commit sins of omission share equally in the guilt of the sin or sinner they do not sufficiently condemn, denounce, or punish, know that the dogmas that were infallibly taught for the first one thousand years of the Catholic Church, from the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles, must be believed by Catholics at all times, in all places, and without any change of meaning:

“For ever, O Lord, thy word standeth firm in heaven. Thy truth unto all generations... Thou art near, O Lord: and all thy ways are truth. I have known from the beginning concerning thy testimonies: that thou hast founded them forever... The truth of the Lord remaineth forever. (Psalm 118:89-90, 151-152; 116:2) For I am the Lord and I change not. (Mala. 3:6) Jesus Christ, yesterday and today and the same for ever. Be not led away with various and strange doctrines. (Heb. 13:8-9)”

Hence beware of the strange doctrines of the heretics, especially from the 11th century onward, that doubt or deny dogmas and try to bind you to their heresies as if the magisterium of the Catholic Church did not exist until the 11th century. In essence, they created a new anti-Catholic magisterium that takes its authority from the modern theologians and apostate antipopes. They have no link with the infallible tradition of the Catholic Church. The Church Father St. Paul says, *“Therefore, brethren, stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle.”* (2 Thes. 2:14) Instead, they have a tradition of men, which St. Paul condemns: *“Beware lest any man cheat you by philosophy, and vain deceit; according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ.”* (Col. 2:8) The modern theologians and apostate antipopes contradict the infallible tradition of the Catholic Church and thus are non-Catholic idolaters or heretics. Beware, then, of any so-called Catholic theologian, so-called pope, or so-called saint who doubts or denies the dogmas regarding sins of omission or any other dogma. Run from them and their heresies as you would from a ravening wolf; that is, after you condemn their heresies and denounce them as non-Catholic heretics. And you must do your best to warn others.

Jesus Christ says, *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits [heresies and idolatries] you shall know them.”* (Mt. 7:15-16) And the Church Father St. Paul says, *“I know that, after my departure, ravening wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves shall arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”* (Acts 20:29-30) *“For there shall be a time, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables.”* (2 Tim. 4:3-4) (See in this book [Beware of the heretics who doubt or deny the dogma](#), p. 28.)

Before the Incarnation of Christ (BC)

“We are ready to die rather than to transgress the laws of God received from our fathers.”
(2 Machabees 7:2)

St. Moses

Moses decrees that those who do not sufficiently denounce a sinner bear the sinner’s iniquity and thus share equally in his guilt:

“Thou shalt not receive the voice of a lie: neither shalt thou join thy hand to bear false witness for a wicked person.” (Ex. 23:1)

“If any one sin, and hear the voice of one swearing, and is a witness either because he himself hath seen, or is privy to it: if he do not utter it, he shall bear his iniquity.” (Lev. 5:1)

Moses, speaking for God, teaches that silence means consent when one should speak but does not. In the following case a husband’s silence means he tacitly consents to his wife’s vow:

“If she vow and bind herself by oath, to afflict her soul by fasting, or abstinence from other things, it shall depend on the will of her husband, whether she shall do it, or not do it. But if the husband hearing it hold his peace, and defer the declaring his mind till another day: whatsoever she had vowed and promised, she shall fulfil: because immediately as he heard it, he held his peace. But if he gainsay it after that he knew it, he shall bear her iniquity.” (Num. 30:14-16)

The same applies to silence regarding sins of omission. When one who is obliged to condemn sin or denounce a sinner remains silent, he tacitly consents to the sin or sinner and thus shares equally in the guilt of the sin or sinner. (See in this book [When silence means consent](#), p. 25.)

Moses, speaking for God, decrees that those who do not sufficiently punish a sinner share equally in the sinner’s guilt and thus are to receive the same punishment as the sinner:

“And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: If any man of the children of Israel or of the strangers that dwell in Israel give of his seed to the idol Moloch, dying let him die: the people of the land shall stone him. And I will set my face against him: and I will cut him off from the midst of his people, because he hath given of his seed to Moloch, and hath defiled my sanctuary, and profaned my holy name. And if the people of the land neglecting, and as it were little regarding my commandment, let alone the man that hath given of his seed to Moloch, and will not kill him: I will set my face against that man, and his kindred, and will cut off both him and all that consented with him, to commit fornication with Moloch, out of the midst of their people.” (Lev. 20:1-5)

Catholic Commentary on Lev. 20:3: “I will thus execute vengeance upon him by the hands of the people; and, in case they neglect it or the crime be secret I will surely punish the guilty person and all who may have consented to his wickedness (Ver. 5).”

St. Josue

“But beware ye lest you touch ought of those things that are forbidden, and you be guilty of transgression, and all the camp of Israel be under sin, and be troubled.” (Jos. 6:18)

Catholic Commentary on Jos. 6:18: “Many are held guilty of sin and are justly punished for the fact of one or few, either because they consented, or concealed, or neglected to punish the offenders.”

The sacrilegious and immoral High Priest Heli

The sacrilegious and immoral High Priest Heli shared equally in the guilt of his sons that he did not sufficiently punish and thus incurred the same death sentence:

“In that day I will raise up against Heli all the things I have spoken concerning his house: I will begin, and I will make an end. For I have foretold unto him, that I will judge his house for ever, for iniquity, because he knew that his sons did wickedly, and did not chastise them. Therefore have I sworn to the house of Heli, that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated with victims nor offerings for ever.” (1Ki. 3:12-14)

St. Isaias

Regarding the obligation to profess the faith, God decrees, through the holy Prophet Isaias, that His chosen people are to condemn sin and denounce sinners:

“Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their wicked doings, and the house of Jacob their sins.” (Isa. 58:1)

St. Ezechiel

God warns the holy Prophet Ezechiel that if he does not denounce sinners he will share in their guilt and thus in their punishment:

“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel: and thou shalt hear the word out of my mouth, and shalt tell it them from me. If, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die: thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his wicked way, and live: the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand.” (Ez. 3:17-18)

Catholic Commentary on Ez. 3:17: “Require his blood: Let none perish through thy neglect. ‘He (the pastor) kills the man whom he delivers up to death by silence.’ Pope St. Gregory I, hom. xi. 9.”

Catholic Commentary on Ez. 3:20: “Iniquity: For want of thy instruction or if thou neglect to reclaim him and he perish. Thy sin is great whatever become of him. But if he be damned, though he must blame himself chiefly, yet the blood of his soul shall cry for vengeance more than Abel’s. If thou neglect to attempt reclaiming him, thou shalt perish with him. (St. Gregory I)”

Catholic Commentary on Ez. 3:21: “Warn: It is the duty of a pastor to warn the just as well as sinners.”

“And the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Son of man, prophesy thou against the prophets of Israel that prophesy: and thou shalt say to them that prophesy out of their own heart: Hear ye the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord God: Woe to the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit, and see nothing. Thy prophets, O Israel, were like foxes in the deserts. You have not gone up to face the enemy, nor have you set up a wall for the house of Israel, to stand in battle in the day of the Lord.” (Ez. 13:1-5)

Catholic Commentary on Ez. 13:5: “Enemy: You do not admonish sinners of their evil ways nor strive to avert God’s indignation in imitation of true prophets but rather undermine the wall like foxes.”

St. Micheas

“Hear, all ye people, and let the earth give ear and all that is therein and let the Lord God be a witness to you, the Lord from his holy temple.” (Mich. 1:2)

Catholic Commentary on Mich. 1:2: “Witness: If the prophet should not admonish the people both he and they should die in their sin.”

After the Incarnation of Christ (AD)

“As for you, let that which you have heard from the beginning abide in you...
Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints...
And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles.”
(1 John 2:24; Jude 1:3; Acts 2:42)

1st century: God (the Son, Jesus Christ)

Jesus Christ teaches that when a Catholic omits to feed the poor or clothe the naked when he should, he commits a mortal sin of omission and thus, by implication, is just as guilty as a man who unjustly starves or strips them:

“Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me not in: naked, and you covered me not: sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. Then they also shall answer him, saying: Lord, when did we see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee? Then he shall answer them, saying: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just, into life everlasting.”
(Mt. 25:41-46)

1st century: Church Father St. James

“To him therefore who knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.” (Ja. 4:17)

1st century: Church Father St. Paul

St. Paul teaches that not only those who commit sins are guilty of those sins but also those who consent to the sinners who commit them:

“Who, having known the justice of God, did not understand that they who do such things, are worthy of death; and not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them.” (Rom. 1:32)

A man consents to another’s sin in two ways: 1) by explicitly consenting to the sin; or 2) by implicitly consenting by sins of omission for not sufficiently condemning sin or not denouncing or punishing sinners, which is called tacit consent. (See in this book [When silence means consent](#), p. 25.)

4th century: Church Father St. Ambrose

St. Ambrose, *Letter 40*, to Emperor Theodosius, 4th century: “2. ...And there is nothing in a priest so full of peril as regards God, or so base in the opinion of men, as not freely to declare what he thinks. For it is written: ‘I spoke of Thy testimonies before kings and was not ashamed’; and in another place: ‘Son of man, I have set Thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, in order,’ it is said, ‘that if the righteous doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity because thou hast not given him warning,’ that is, hast not told him what to guard against, ‘the memory of his righteousness shall not be retained, and I will require his blood at thine hand. But if thou warn the righteous that he sin not and he doth not sin, the righteous shall surely live because thou hast warned him, and thou shalt deliver thy soul.’...If I saw that you sinned against me, I ought not to keep silence, for it is written: ‘If thy brother sin against thee, rebuke him at first, then chide him sharply before two or three witnesses. If he will not hear thee, tell the Church.’ Shall I, then, keep silence in the cause of God?”

5th century: Church Father St. Augustine

St. Augustine, *Against the Pelagians*, 412: “22. ...Eli certainly rebuked his sons, saying, ‘Nay, my sons, nay; it is not a good report which I hear of you.’ He chided them and yet was punished because he should not have chided but cast them off. What will he do who rejoices at vice or lacks the courage to correct it?”

St. Augustine, *Letter 141*, 412: “But, if no one consents to his evil deeds, the evil man carries his own case and plays his own part; he does not harm any other, unless he has this one as a partner in his guilt by consent to the evil deed.”

St. Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms*, Psalm 39, 5th century: “19. ‘Remove not Thou Thy mercies far from me, O Lord.’ He is turning his attention to the wounded members. Because I have not ‘concealed Thy mercy and Thy Truth from the great congregation,’ from the Unity of the Universal Church, look Thou on Thy afflicted members, look on those who are guilty of sins of omission, and on those who are guilty of sins of commission: and withhold not Thou Thy mercies.”

5th century: Church Fathers at the Council of Carthage, 419

Council of Carthage, 419: “Canon 9. Of those who on account of their deeds are justly cast forth from the congregation of the Church. Augustine the bishop, the legate of the Numidian province, said: Deign to enact that if any perchance have been rightly on account of their crimes cast forth from the Church and shall have been received into communion by some bishop or presbyter, such shall be considered as guilty of an equal crime with them who flee away from the judgment of their own bishop.” (Also contained in *The Canons of the 217 blessed Fathers who assembled at Carthage*, aka *The Code of Canons of the African Church*.)

5th century: Church Father Pope St. Leo the Great

Pope St. Leo the Great, 5th century: “He that sees another in error and endeavors not to correct it testifies himself to be in error.”

Pope St. Leo the Great, *Letter 4*, to several bishops, 443: “I) As the peaceful settlement of the churches causes us satisfaction, so are we saddened with no slight sorrow whenever we learn that anything has been taken for granted or done contrary to the ordinances of the canons and the discipline of the Church: and if we do not repress such things with the vigilance we ought, we cannot excuse ourselves to Him who intended us to be watchmen, for permitting the pure body of the Church, which we ought to keep clean from every stain, to be defiled by contact with wicked schemers, since the framework of the members loses its harmony by such dissimulation.”

Pope St. Leo the Great, *Letter 7*, to the Bishops throughout Italy, 444: “I) We call you to a share in our anxiety, that with the diligence of shepherds you may take more careful heed to your flocks entrusted to you that no craft of the devil’s be permitted: lest that plague, which by the revealing mercy of the Lord is driven off from our flocks through our care, should spread among your churches before you are forewarned, and are still ignorant of what is happening, and should find means of stealthily burrowing into your midst, and thus what we are checking in the City should take hidden root among you and grow up. Our search has discovered in the City a great many followers and teachers of the Manichean impiety, our watchfulness has proclaimed them, and our authority and censure has checked them: those whom we could reform we have corrected and driven to condemn Manichæus with his preachings and teachings by public confession in church, and by the subscription of their own hand, and thus we have lifted those who have acknowledged their fault from the pit of their iniquity by granting them room for repentance. A good many, however, who had so deeply involved themselves that no remedy could assist them, have been subjected to the laws in accordance with the constitutions of our Christian princes, and lest they should pollute the holy flock by their contagion, have been banished into perpetual exile by public judges. And all the profane and disgraceful things which are found as well in their writings as in their secret traditions, we have disclosed and clearly proved to the eyes of the Christian laity that the people might know what to shrink from or avoid: so that he that was called their bishop was himself tried by us, and betrayed the criminal views which he held in his mystic religion, as the record of our proceedings can show you. For this, too, we have sent you for instruction: and after reading them you will be in a position to understand all the discoveries we have made.

“II) And because we know that a good many of those who are involved here in too close an accusation for them to clear themselves have escaped, we have sent this letter to you, beloved, by our acolyth: that your holiness, dear brothers, may be informed of this, and see fit to act with diligence and caution, lest the men of the

Manichæan error be able to find opportunity of hurting your people and of teaching their impious doctrines. For we cannot otherwise rule those entrusted to us unless we pursue with the zeal of faith in the Lord those who are destroyers and destroyed: and with what severity we can bring to bear, cut them off from intercourse with sound minds, lest this pestilence spread much wider. Wherefore I exhort you, beloved, I beseech and warn you to use such watchful diligence as you ought and can employ in tracking them out, lest they find opportunity of concealment anywhere. For as he will have a due recompense of reward from God, who carries out what conduces to the health of the people committed to him; so before the Lord's judgment-seat no one will be able to excuse himself from a charge of carelessness who has not been willing to guard his people against the propagators of an impious misbelief. Dated 30 January, in the consulship of the illustrious Theodosius Augustus (18th time) and Albinus (444)."

Pope St. Leo the Great, *Letter 15*, to Turribius, Bishop of Asturia, 447: "XVII) ... We have, I think, satisfactorily shown what our opinion on the matters which you, brother, have referred to us, and how unbearable it is if such blasphemous errors find acceptance in the hearts even of some priests, or to put it more mildly, are not actively opposed by them. With what conscience can they maintain the honourable position which has been given them, who do not labour for the souls entrusted to them? Beasts rush in, and they do not close the fold. Robbers lay wait, and they set no watch. Diseases multiply, and they seek out no remedies. But when in addition they refuse assent to those who act more warily, and shrink from anathematizing by their written confession blasphemies which the whole world has already condemned, what do they wish men to understand except that they are not of the number of the brethren, but on the enemy's side?"

Pope St. Leo the Great, *Letter 18*, to Januarius, Bishop of Aquileia, 447: "... But do not doubt, beloved, that, if what we decree for the observance of the canons and the integrity of the Faith be neglected (which we do not anticipate), we shall be strongly moved because the faults of the lower orders are to be referred to none more than to slothful and careless governors who often foster much disease by refusing to apply the needful remedy."

5th century: Church Father Pope St. Felix III

Pope St. Felix III, 5th century: "Not to oppose error, is to approve it, and indeed to neglect to confound evil men, when we can do it, is no less a sin than to encourage them."

6th century: Emperor Justinian (The Justinian Code)

Emperor Justinian, as recorded in the *Justinian Code (Corpus Juris Civilis)*, 6th century: "No judge or any other person whosoever shall dare to violate this law. The penalties which We have mentioned above, that is to say, death and confiscation, We establish not only against the ravishers themselves, but also against those who accompanied them in the attack and rape. We also subject to capital punishment any others who may be convicted of having guilty knowledge of, and of acting as accomplices in this crime, whether they concealed the culprits, or gave them any assistance, no matter whether they are male or female, or what may be their condition, rank, or dignity, in order that all may undergo this penalty whether the consecrated virgin or other women above mentioned did or did not consent to the perpetration of such an atrocious deed... – Given at Constantinople, on the fifteenth

of December, during the Consulate of Our Lord Justinian, Consul for the second time.” (v. 12, b. 1, title 3, sec. 41)

6th century: Church Father Pope St. Gregory the Great

Pope St. Gregory the Great, Book 9, *Epistle 110*, To Theoderic and Theodebert, Kings of the Franks, 6th century: “Since he who neglects to amend what he is able to correct, undoubtedly has the guilt of the doer.”²

Pope St. Gregory the Great, Book 9, *Epistle 11*, to Brunichild, Queen of the Franks, 6th century: “If therefore you know of any that are violent, if of any that are adulterers, if of any that are thieves, or bent on other wicked deeds, make haste to appease God by their correction, that He may not bring upon you the scourge due to unfaithful races, which, so far as we see, is already lifted up for the punishment of many nations.”

Pope St. Gregory the Great, Book 10, *Epistle 42*, to Eusebius, Archbishop of Thessalonica, 6th century: “If however, as we do not expect, they should be found to be wounded by the dart of this error, the cure of ecclesiastical exhortation must be applied to them, so that they may either remain among the Lord’s sheep if healed, or be cut off from the unity of the ecclesiastical body; to the end that from a slight loss there may be a great gain, and that the removal of a part may make the whole body free. For it is the care also of a provident shepherd not to delay casting out from consort with his sound sheep a sickly one that admits not of cure, lest it should contaminate others with the taint of its sickness, knowing that he cannot preserve the soundness of the rest but by the ejection of this one. Accordingly I once more warn you in brotherly charity to investigate this matter with the utmost vigilance, and to observe what we have written with the utmost care, lest by consort with others you should make the right faith which you hold, doubtful. For he who does not correct things that should be cut off commits them.”

Pope St. Gregory the Great, Book 11, *Epistle 13*, to Serenus, Bishop of Masillia (Marseilles), 6th century: “Furthermore, it has come to our ears that thy Love gladly receives bad men into its society; so much so as to have as a familiar friend a certain presbyter who, after having fallen, is said to live still in the pollution of his iniquity. This indeed we do not entirely believe, since he that receives such a one does not correct wickedness, but rather appears to give license to others to perpetrate the like things. But, lest haply by any subornation or dissimulation he should prevail on thee to receive him and keep him still in favour, it becomes thee not only to drive him further from thee, but also in all ways to cut away his excesses with priestly zeal. But as to others who are reported to be bad, study to restrain them from their badness by fatherly exhortation, and to recall them to the way of rectitude. But, if (which God forbid) you seem not to profit them at all by salutary admonition, these also thou wilt take care to cast off far from thee, lest, from their being received, their evil doings should seem not at all to displease thee, and lest not only they themselves should remain un-amended, but others also should be corrupted in consequence of thy reception of them. And consider how execrable it is before men, and how perilous before the eyes of God, if vices should seem to be nurtured through him whose duty it is to punish crimes. Attend therefore to these things diligently, most beloved brother; and study so to act as both wholesomely to correct the bad and to avoid breeding offence in the minds of thy children by associating with evil men.”

² “J. Joseph Ryan’s *Saint Peter Damiani and His Canonical Sources*, 58f, no. 104, cites John the Deacon, *Sancti Gregorii magni vita* 3.2 (PL 75.128C) and Gregory I, *Reg.* 9:215 (MG Epist. 2.202 [JE 1744]).

Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Epistle 48*, to Bishop Columbus, 6th century: “If, then, thou art aware of these things being done, keep not silence, but oppose them urgently; since, if perchance thou shouldst neglect them, or conceal them when known of, the chain of sin will bind not those alone who do such things, but no light guilt before God will touch thee also in the matter. If, then, anything of the kind is committed, it ought to be restrained by canonical punishment, lest so great a wickedness, with sin in others, acquire strength from connivance.”

Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Rule*, 6th century: “Some things, however, ought to be vehemently reprov'd, that, when a fault is not recognized by him who has committed it, he may be made sensible of its gravity from the mouth of the reprover; and that, when any one smooths over to himself the evil that he has perpetrated, he may be led by the asperity of his censurer to entertain grave fears of its effects against himself. For indeed it is the duty of a ruler to shew by the voice of preaching the glory of the supernal country, to disclose what great temptations of the old enemy are lurking in this life's journey, and to correct with great asperity of zeal such evils among those who are under his sway as ought not to be gently borne with; lest, in being too little incensed against faults, of all faults he be himself held guilty.” (b. 2, c. 10)

Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Rule*, 6th century: “If persons by no means ignorant of the medicinal art were to see a sore that required lancing, and yet refused to lance it, certainly by their mere inactivity they would be guilty of a brother's death. Let them see, then, in how great guilt they are involved who, knowing the sores of souls, neglect to cure them by the lancing of words. Whence also it is well said through the prophet, *Cursed is he who keepeth back his sword from blood*. (Jer. 48:10) For to keep back the sword from blood is to hold back the word of preaching from the slaying of the carnal life. Of which sword it is said again, *And my sword shall devour flesh*. (Deut. 32:42)” (b. 3, c. 25)

Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Rule*, 6th century: “...For, as incautious speaking leads into error, so indiscreet silence leaves in error those who might have been instructed. For often improvident rulers, fearing to lose human favour, shrink timidly from speaking freely the things that are right; and, according to the voice of the Truth (Job 10:12), serve unto the custody of the flock by no means with the zeal of shepherds, but in the way of hirelings; since they fly when the wolf cometh if they hide themselves under silence. For hence it is that the Lord through the prophet upbraids them, saying, *Dumb dogs, that cannot bark* (Isa. 56:10). Hence again He complains, saying, *Ye have not gone up against the enemy, neither opposed a wall for the house of Israel, to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord* (Ez. 13:5). Now to go up against the enemy is to go with free voice against the powers of this world for defence of the flock; and to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord is out of love of justice to resist evil men when they contend against us. For a shepherd to have feared to say what is right, what else is it but to have turned his back in keeping silence? But surely, if he puts himself in front for the flock, he opposes a wall against the enemy for the house of Israel. Hence again to the sinful people it is said, *Thy prophets have seen false and foolish things for thee: neither did they discover thine iniquity, to provoke thee to repentance* (Lam. 2:14)... Such discourse convinces of seeing false things, because, while fearing to reprove faults, they vainly flatter evil doers by promising security: neither do they at all discover the iniquity of sinners, since they refrain their voice from chiding. For the language of reproof is the key of discovery, because by chiding it discloses the fault of which even he who has committed it is often himself unaware. Hence Paul says, *That he may be able by sound doctrine even to convince the gainsayers* (Titus 1:9). Hence through Malachias it is said, *The priest's lips keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth* (Malac. 2:7). Hence through Isaiah the Lord admonishes, saying, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet* (Isa. 58:1). For it is true

that whosoever enters on the priesthood undertakes the office of a herald, so as to walk, himself crying aloud, before the coming of the judge who follows terribly. Wherefore, if the priest knows not how to preach, what voice of a loud cry shall the mute herald utter? For hence it is that the Holy Spirit sat upon the first pastors under the appearance of tongues (Acts 2:3); because whomsoever He has filled, He himself at once makes eloquent. Hence it is enjoined on Moses that when the priest goes into the tabernacle he shall be encompassed with bells (Exod. 28:33); that is, he shall have about him the sounds of preaching, lest he provoke by his silence the judgment of Him Who beholds him from above. For it is written, That his sound may be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord and when he cometh out, that he die not (Exod. 28:35). For the priest, when he goeth in or cometh out, dies if a sound is not heard from him, because he provokes the wrath of the hidden judge, if he goes without the sound of preaching. Aptly also are the bells described as inserted in his vestments. For what else ought we to take the vestments of the priest to be but righteous works; as the prophet attests when he says, Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness (Ps. 131:9). The bells, therefore, are inherent in his vestments to signify that the very works of the priest should also proclaim the way of life together with the sound of his tongue.” (b. 2, c. 4)

7th century[^]: Church Father Pope St. Leo II in 683 confirmed the Second Council of Constantinople of 553

The first so-called pope who invalidly confirmed the Second Council of Constantinople was Apostate Antipope Vigilius. I say “invalidly” because he did not hold the papal office since he was a notorious heretic for defending the heretical Three Chapters, which contained the Arian heresy. He even proclaimed that the Three Chapters were orthodox. Hence he may have even held this heresy himself. He eventually admitted his guilt and confessed his sin, but this could not make him the pope. The Second Council of Constantinople, then, was first given papal approval in the Third Council of Constantinople’s Exposition of Faith:

Third Council of Constantinople, Exposition of Faith, 681: “Wherefore this holy and universal synod of ours, driving afar the error of impiety which endured for some time even till the present, following without deviation in a straight path after the holy and accepted fathers, has piously accorded in all things with the five holy and universal synods: *that is to say, with...the fifth holy synod [Constantinople II], the latest of them...*”

Pope St. Agatho, who called the Third Council of Constantinople, died in 681 before confirming it. However the next pope, St. Leo II, confirmed the council in 683. Hence the decrees that deal with faith or morals are solemn definitions and thus are infallible. Therefore, from the information I have, the basic dogma that men who commit sins of omission share equally in the guilt of the sin or sinner they do not sufficiently condemn, denounce, or punish was first infallibly defined in 683 by Pope St. Leo II when he confirmed the Third Council of Constantinople of 681, which in turn confirmed the Second Council of Constantinople of 553 which taught the dogma:

Second Council of Constantinople, 553, confirmed by Pope St. Leo II in 683:

“Sentence against the ‘Three Chapters’: ...It is clear to all believers that when a problem about the faith comes up it is not only the heretical person who is condemned but also the person who is in a position to correct the heresy of others and fails to do so. To those of us to whom the task has been given of governing the

Church of the Lord, there comes a fear of the condemnation which threatens those who neglect to do the Lord's work. We hurry to take care of the good seed of faith protecting it from the weeds of heresy which have been planted by the enemy."

"Anathemas against the 'Three Chapters': If anyone offers a defence for this more heretical Theodore, and his heretical books in which he throws up the aforesaid blasphemies and many other additional blasphemies against our great God and saviour Jesus Christ, and if anyone fails to anathematize him and his heretical books as well as all those who offer acceptance or defence to him, or who allege that his interpretation is correct, or who write on his behalf or on that of his heretical teachings, or who are or have been of the same way of thinking and persist until death in this error: let him be anathema."

"Canon 11: If anyone does not anathematize Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, Apollinarius Nestorius, Eutyches and Origen together with their impious writings and also all other heretics...let him be anathema."

11th century: Peter Damian

Peter Damian, *Letter 61*, to Pope Nicholas II, 1059: "(2) Recently, as I conversed with several bishops by authority of your majesty, I sought to bar the door of their loins and tried, as it were, to apply safeguards of chastity to their priestly genitals. But...this is a sect for which no one has a good thing to say... (3) ...They had no fear of being punished by a synodal decree for practicing this vice of impurity. Indeed, in our day the genuine custom of the Roman Church seems to be observed in this way, that regarding other practices of ecclesiastical discipline, a proper investigation is held; but a prudent silence is maintained concerning clerical sexuality for fear of insults from laymen. But this is something that badly needs correction, so that precisely what all the people are complaining about should not be hushed up in council by the leaders of the Church. For, indeed, if this evil were secret, silence could perhaps somehow be condoned. But what a criminal situation! Shamelessly, this epidemic has been so audaciously revealed that everyone knows the houses of prostitution, the names of the mistresses, the fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law, brothers, and other close relatives; and lest anything be lacking in these assertions, they give evidence of messengers running to and fro, of sending of presents, of the jokes they laughed at, and of their private conversations. And lastly, to remove all doubt, you have the obvious pregnancies and the squalling babies. Therefore, because of the ignominy involved, I do not see how something that is everywhere publicly discussed can be suppressed by the synod, so that not only the offenders be properly branded with infamy, but also that those whose duty is to punish them be found guilty.

"(4) This kind of shame was not evident in the face of the priest Phinehas who, in the presence of all the people, took up a spear against the Israelite and the Midianite woman with whom he was having intercourse, and transfixing them both through the genitals. Contrary to God's command, however, we are not impartial. For we indeed punish acts of impurity performed by priests in the lower ranks, but with bishops, we pay our reverence with silent toleration, which is totally absurd. But notice that Phinehas, roused by the zeal of the Holy Spirit,...did not attack those who were unknown or of lower estate, but chose to kill outstanding and famous people to cause terror among the rest...

"(5) And so, while Phinehas was quick to punish especially those who were the leaders, to avenge the general acts of fornication of the whole people; and, as divine judgment, in like manner ordered the leaders of the people to be hanged on gallows... What are we to understand in all of this, if not the fact that the crime of adultery committed by eminent people must be harshly punished! And he who is

aroused to punish such men doubtless wins peace from the heavenly judge, and grace not only for himself, but also for the people. Hence the voice of God spoke: 'Phinehas has turned my wrath away from the Israelites, for he displayed among them the same jealous anger that moved me, and therefore in my anger I did not exterminate them.' (Num. 25:11)...

“(9) Obviously, just as they who corrected sins were worthy of receiving a blessing, so too those who dealt lightly with sinners were likely to be cursed, as the prophet said, ‘A curse on him who withholds his sword from bloodshed.’³ One surely withholds his sword from bloodshed if he refrains from inflicting condign punishment on the wicked. ‘He who fails to correct, when it is possible for him to do so, makes himself guilty of the other’s fault.’⁴ And so a man of God, who was thought to have been Phinehas, said to Eli whom I mentioned above, ‘This is the word of the Lord: Why do you show disrespect for my sacrifices and for my temple-offerings that I have ordained, and honor your sons more than me?’ (1 Ki. 2:27, 29) Therefore, if Eli perished with his sons, together with such a vast number of others, only because he did not correct his two sons as harshly as they deserved, what sort of sentence, do we think, will be given those who preside at the bench of justice in an ecclesiastical court and remain silent when confronted with the recognized crimes of evil men? While fearing publicly to disgrace men, they cause the commands of God’s Law to be in disarray and dishonor the heavenly judge. And while they keep profligate men from losing the honors of their office, they harshly bring the very author of ecclesiastical dignity into disrepute. Thus was the word of God spoken to the same Eli who despised God in honoring his sons: ‘I will honor those who honor me, and those who despise me shall meet with contempt.’ And then the following words were added: ‘The time is coming when I will lop off every limb of your own and of your father’s family.’ (1 Ki. 2:30-31) With these words, he said, as it were, Since by granting you the dignity of the pastoral office I strengthened your arm against my enemies, although you refused to use force in punishing them, I will now cut off your arm, that is, I will take away from you the power of the priestly office, so that as you were lacking an arm in fighting for me, you will now be without a hand to defend yourself.

“(10) Now let us say that Hophni and Phinehas are bishops and that Eli holds the office of metropolitan. Is there anything worse that one can do than to exonerate lustful bishops when one is in a position to reform them? This is especially so since the Lord said to Eli, ‘I foretold to him that my judgment on his house will stand forever because of his evil deed, since he knew that his sons were wicked, and he did not rebuke them. Therefore I have sworn to the family of Eli that the wickedness of his house will never be expiated by sacrifices and offerings.’ (1 Ki. 3:13-14) Therefore, if every crime is washed away by sacrifices and offerings, and only mistaken compassion for bishops is undeserving of forgiveness, let him who neglects to pass judgment on their evil deeds be aware that he is making himself liable to harsh punishment at the hands of a severe judge.”⁵

Peter Damian, *Letter 69*, to Boniface, Cardinal Bishop of Albano, c. 1059: “(8) With this evidence from Scripture it becomes clear that whoever indulges in flattery deserves especially to be called a sinner, indeed a great sinner. And when the psalmist says that ‘the sinner is praised because of his own desires’ and he is

³ Footnote: “Jer 48.10. Cf. Robinson, *Authority* 25 on the use of this Jeremiah text to justify violent action against evildoers.”

⁴ Footnote: “Ryan, *Sources* 58f. no. 104, cites John the Deacon, *Sancti Gregorii magni vita* 3.2 (PL 75.128C) and Gregory I, *Reg. 9.215* (MG Epist. 2.202 [JE (Jaffe) 1744]).” RJMI: From Ryan *Sources* 58f, no. 104: “Opusc. XVII (N. 43-1059) *De caelibatu sacerdotum ad Nicolaum II Romanum pontificem* (PL 145, 379, 379-388). *cap. 2*. ‘Facti siquidem culpam habet, qui quod potest, negligit emendare. (383C).’...” I found this quote in (PL 145, 379). This teaching of Pope St. Gregory the Great is in his Book 9, *Epistle 110*, To Theoderic and Theodebert, Kings of the Franks. See in this book [6th century: Church Father Pope St. Gregory the Great](#), p. 14.

⁵ *Peter Damian Letters*, translated by Owen J. Blum, O.F.M. The Fathers of the Church Mediaeval Continuation. Publisher: The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1989.

blessed who does evil, both he who praises and he who willingly accepts praise are forced to bear their guilt in common.”

Peter Damian, *Letter 68*, to Duke Godfrey of Tuscany, 1059-1063: “(3) Therefore, most eminent sir, put the scales in equipoise, keep the tongue of the balance level, and always maintain the scales of legal sanctions swaying evenly before your eyes. But perhaps you will here object in the words of Solomon: ‘Do not be excessively just.’ (Ecltes. 7:17) And, on the other hand, I will answer you: Do not be over compassionate. For just as by unrestrained justice the irresolute are broken, so under too much compassion the spirit of license will boldly run to unbridled insolence. Was indiscreet kindness in evidence in the words, ‘If you take the stick to your son, you will preserve him from the jaws of death?’ (Prv. 23:14) Or again, ‘A father who spares the rod hates his son.’ (Prv. 13:24) And elsewhere, ‘A man who loves his son will whip him often.’ (Eclcus. 30:1) ...So, if a father should use correction and the rod on an only son, how much more should this be true of a prince with his people, so that a great number of them may not perish in their attempt to act with unbridled liberty. Hence the Scriptures have it, ‘A king untutored is the people’s ruin, but wise rulers make a city fit to live in.’ (Eclcus. 10:3)

“(4) Therefore, that the people who are your subjects be kept from harm through the maintenance of a just regime, it is required that when you preside at the bench you dispense justice, and that you appoint men through whom you rule the provinces, that they strictly carry out the prescripts of the law. And so, as the wise man said, ‘A wise judge will judge his people, and the government of a sensible ruler will be sound.’ And he quickly added, ‘Like ruler, like ministers; and like leader of a city, like its inhabitants.’ (Eclcus. 10:1-2) Clearly, what is more holy, more pleasing to God, or more preeminent in Christian living than to enforce justice and to oppose with the force of legitimate authority those who are about to act unlawfully, in which case it applies equally to criminals and to their victims? For the former, it serves to prevent them from incurring the punishment for violence; for the latter, to avoid the danger of future calamity; for the former, that they be content with what they have and do not seize another man’s property; for the latter who are guaranteed public protection, that they do not lose what is theirs; for the former, that in doing harm to their neighbor they do not provoke the sword of divine anger; and for the latter, that always grateful that they are free from a climate of crime, they may rejoice in giving praise to God.

“(5) Indeed, what sweeter sacrifice can one offer to God than to release orphans from the hands of violent men, to protect widows, to put the down and out on their feet again, and to restore the lost title to those who were robbed and cheated of their property? Therefore it was written, ‘In giving a verdict be a kind father to orphans and like a husband to their mother; then the Most High will call you his son, and his love for you will be greater than a mother’s.’ (Eclcus. 4:10-11) For what is greater, and in human affairs more preeminent, than that for which a mortal man becomes a child of God? God repays him from the depths of his love, not like a father but, what is still more significant, like a mother, so that he who stands and fights for orphans and widows against the crimes of the wicked may himself rest quietly like a nursing child at the comforting breast of God’s goodness.

“(6) All⁶ speak with one voice and concur in expressing the same opinion, both the Fathers in the Old Testament and the holy doctors of the Church, in the matter of using the severity of the Law to punish the excesses of wicked men. For in the

⁶ Footnote 12: “For a discussion of Damian’s dependence here on Burchard, *Decretorum libri* 6.43 (PL 140.775f.), and for the identification of the biblical and patristic texts there cited, see Ryan, *Sources*, 92f. no. 179; Reindel, *Briefe* 2 (1988) 291 n. 6.” RJMI: From Ryan, *Sources*, no. 179, 92f. “BURCHARD VI, 43: (*tit.*) De vindicta non prohibenda. This chapter contains the two scriptural texts and the patristic excerpts in this passage. The original form of the chapter is in the *Collectio Hibernensis* XXVII, c. 8 (ed. EL Wasserschleben, *Die irische Kanonensammlung*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1885, p. 87). Wasserschleben (‘*sehr wahrscheinlich*’, *op. cit.*, p. XXIX); E. Diederich, *Das Dekret des Bischofs Burchard v. Worms* (Jauer, 1908), p. 34; and P. Fournier, ‘*Etudes critiques sur le decret de Burchard*,’ *Nouv. rev. de droii franc. et etranger*, XXXIV (1910), 80, all share the opinion that Burchard’s source was the *Coll. Hibern.*; and Diederich cites the changes in the text to illustrate the role of Burchard as reviser (*Bearbeiter*) as well as collector...”

Law it is written, 'You shall not allow criminals to live.' (Exod. 22:18) And the Apostle says among other things, 'Submit yourselves, whether it be to the sovereign as supreme, or to the governors as his deputies for the punishment of criminals and the commendation of those who do right.' (1 Pet. 2:13-14) And St. Augustine says, 'How out of touch with reality is it to spare one person and put everyone else in danger? For all are contaminated by the one sinner.' And Jerome says, 'He who strikes down the wicked because they are wicked, and has good reason to kill in cutting down evil men, is the agent of God.' And elsewhere he says, 'To punish murderers and idolaters is not shedding blood.' And St. Ambrose says, 'To kill an enemy is a victory, a guilty man justice, an innocent man murder.' (7) These holy men would certainly not have said such things about penalizing criminals unless they had been convinced that capital punishment would also to some degree be good for their souls..."

Peter Damian, *Letter 174*, to Bishop V., not datable: "(13) ...Thrust into the very source of sinning, so that it will never be able to conceive or give birth to poisonous offspring that might contaminate the Israelite camp. Let the sword of the Spirit, I say, destroy the very birthplace of sinning, that it may extinguish the wanton pleasures of our indulgent flesh.

"(14) While this mode of action is necessary for all according to each one's capacity, it is especially important for those who are in positions of authority and are charged with directing the lives of the brethren. For them it is truly imperative that the fire of episcopal zeal be enkindled in combating the vices of their subjects, that with Phinehas they may possess the dignity of the eternal priesthood. But if they suffer from slothful negligence by disregarding those who have sinned, stripped of their priesthood, like Eli they will be thrown to the ground and break their necks. (1 Ki. 4:18) Consequently, when the people of Israel joined in the worship of the Baal of Peor in the wilderness, and shamefully succumbed to the harlots of Moab, the Lord was furious with the Israelites, and said to Moses: 'Take all the leaders of the people and hang them on gibbets in the full light of day, that my anger may be turned away from Israel.' (Num. 35:4) Why is it, that when the people fell into the depths of lust, vengeance was meted out to their leaders? The subjects transgress, and the rulers are hung on gibbets? Surely, there is a difference here between the one who sins and the other who is flogged. The reason is that the guilt of the subjects redounds to the dishonor of their leaders, and the fault committed by the sheep is ascribed to the negligence of the shepherd. And note how dreadful is the lot of those in authority, that they are punished not only for their own offenses, but also for those of their subjects. And Moses accuses them, because the law of God indicts them for negligence and sloth He hanged them in the full light of day, because they were brought forth to be tried and to be accused by the light. 'All those who commit evil deeds,' as the Lord says, 'hate the light and avoid it, for fear their practices should be shown up. But those who act truthfully come to the light.' (Jn. 3:20) He, indeed, comes to the light, who reveals his secret sins by way of a sincere confession.

"(15) Therefore, the pastors of churches should make sure that they beget children in Israel. But they should not rear just any kind of offspring, but sons who will mature to fight bravely the battles of the Lord. Moreover, anyone who uses his established office of preaching to incite others to join in the fight, but does not himself take up arms, is like the man who sounds the trumpet for battle, but does not personally dare to engage the enemy. Such a man does not beget male offspring, since he is an inactive father. Such a one, surely, was prefigured by Zelophehad, (Num. 36:33) who had no sons, but at his death left five daughters. Now Zelophehad has the meaning of 'shade on his face.'⁷ For anyone who preaches about brave deeds, and fails to live like a man, takes shelter, as it were, under the

⁷ Footnote 48: "Cf. Jerome, *Norn. hebr.* 20.33."

trees of edifying words and hides in the shade on his face, lest he appear dishonorable, since he does not take to the field of battle because of his sloth and cowardice...”

13th century: Apostate Antipope Innocent IV

Apostate Antipope Innocent IV, Invalid and Heretical *Fourth Lateran Council*, 1215: “We decree that those who give credence to the teachings of heretics, as well as those who receive, defend, or patronize them, are excommunicated.”

Apostate Antipope Innocent IV, Invalid *First Council of Lyons*, 1245: “To be unwilling to disquiet evildoers is none other than to encourage them, and since he who fails to oppose a manifest crime is not without a touch of secret complicity...”

19th century: A Catechism of Christian Doctrine (aka Penny Catechism)

Penny Catechism, 1859: “329. **Question:** In how many ways may we either cause or share in the guilt of another’s sin? **Answer:** We may either cause or share the guilt of another’s sin in nine ways: 1. By counsel; 2. By command; 3. By consent; 4. By provocation; 5. By praise or flattery; 6. By concealment; 7. By being a partner in the sin; 8. By silence; 9. By defending the ill done.”

19th century: Apostate Antipope Leo XIII

Apostate Antipope Leo XIII, *Inimica Vis*, 1892: “An error which is not resisted is approved; a truth which is not defended is suppressed... He who does not oppose an evident crime is open to the suspicion of secret complicity.”

20th century: Invalid and Heretical 1917 Code of Canon Law

Invalid and Heretical *1917 Code of Canon Law*: “Canon 1325, § 1, Obligation to Profess the Faith - The faithful are bound to profess their faith openly whenever under the circumstances silence, evasion, or their manner of acting would otherwise implicitly amount to a denial of the faith, or would involve contempt of religion, an offense to God, or scandal to their neighbor.”

20th century: The heretics Woywod and Smith

The heretics Woywod and Smith, *A Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, 1957, Commentary on Canon 1130: “...If the other party consented to the adultery, it is no ground for separation. If the other party knew of the evil intention of his consort and did not protest when protest was possible and obligatory, it amounts to tacit consent.” (b. 3, t. 7, c. 10, art. 2, p. 816)

Comments on the Dogma

The Catholic obligation to profess the faith is related to sins of omission

Sins of omission are directly related to the Catholic obligation to profess the faith. This obligation consists of teaching the Catholic faith to those who are ignorant of it; of condemning and refuting all sins, which includes condemning all false gods, false religions, and other falsehoods; of denouncing sinners, which includes denouncing non-Catholics as being outside the Catholic Church and on the road to hell; of calling sinners to repentance or conversion and thus calling bad Catholics to repent and non-Catholics to convert to Catholicism; and of denouncing those who are suspect of sin.

However, a Catholic is not obliged to profess the faith to everyone. Jesus said, “*Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine.*” (Mt. 7:6) But when the situation demands it, a Catholic is obliged to profess the faith or he sins by omission. The Catholic’s first obligation to profess the faith is to other Catholics. Catholics are united in the strongest bond, the bond of faith, which is the strongest bond of unity—stronger than flesh, blood, and family. Catholics are “*born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*” (Jn. 1:13) That is why St. Paul teaches that Catholics are to “*Judge them that are within*” (1 Cor. 5:12); that is, to judge firstly other Catholics. The Catholic’s second obligation to profess the faith is to catechumens, then to non-Catholic family members and friends, and then to all other non-Catholics.

When a so-called Catholic does not profess the faith when obliged to, he commits a sin of omission. And if he sinned by omission for not sufficiently condemning sins or not denouncing or punishing sinners, then he shares equally in the guilt of the sins or sinners. Speaking for God, Moses says, “*If any one sin, and hear the voice of one swearing, and is a witness either because he himself hath seen, or is privy to it: if he do not utter it, he shall bear his iniquity.*” (Lev. 5:1) For example,

- A man who does not sufficiently condemn adultery is an adulterer. A man who does not sufficiently denounce an adulterer is an adulterer. A man who does not sufficiently punish an adulterer when he has the power to do so is an adulterer. He cannot claim he is inculpably ignorant that adultery is a sin because the law upon his heart, the law which all men have, condemns adultery.
- A baptized man who does not sufficiently condemn heresy is a heretic. A baptized man who does not sufficiently denounce a heretic is a heretic. A baptized man who does not sufficiently punish a heretic when he has the power to do so is a heretic. If the baptized man knows that the heresy is heresy, then he is a formal heretic by sins of omission. If he does not know that the heresy is heresy, then he is still a heretic but by sins of commission and not by sins of omission because he holds the heresy himself. If he is culpably ignorant of the dogma, then he is a formal heretic; if he is inculpably ignorant of the dogma, then he is a

material heretic. But even a material heretic must be treated as a formal heretic until he proves his innocence due to inculpable ignorance.⁸

When silence means consent

Moses, speaking for God, teaches that silence means consent when one should speak but does not. In the following case a husband's silence means he tacitly consents to his wife's vow:

“If she vow and bind herself by oath, to afflict her soul by fasting, or abstinence from other things, it shall depend on the will of her husband, whether she shall do it, or not do it. But if the husband hearing it hold his peace, and defer the declaring his mind till another day: whatsoever she had vowed and promised, she shall fulfil: because immediately as he heard it, he held his peace. But if he gainsay it after that he knew it, he shall bear her iniquity.” (Num. 30:14-16)

Hence there is “*a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*” (Ectes. 3:7) Sometimes keeping silent means consenting to something good or neutral and thus is not sinful. Sometimes keeping silent means not provoking non-obstinate sinners whom you already denounced, and this is a prudent and charitable silence. Sometimes keeping silent means not denouncing a sinner you are not obliged to denounce, such as by not casting your pearls to swine, and this is a prudent silence. However, keeping silent is sinful when it consents or appears to consent to sins or sinners. It does not matter if the offender actually consents to the sins or sinners he remains silent about but only that he *appears* to consent. Appearing to consent while not actually consenting is called tacit consent as opposed to explicit consent. In both cases the offender's silence convicts him of a sin of omission, and thus he shares equally in the guilt of the sin or sinner he does not sufficiently condemn, denounce, or punish:

Pope St. Felix III, 5th century: “Not to oppose error, is to approve it, and indeed to neglect to confound evil men, when we can do it, is no less a sin than to encourage them.”

Apostate Antipope Leo XIII, *Inimica Vis*, 1892: “An error which is not resisted is approved; a truth which is not defended is suppressed... He who does not oppose an evident crime is open to the suspicion of secret complicity.”

Invalid and Heretical *1917 Code of Canon Law*: “Canon 1325, § 1, Obligation to Profess the Faith - The faithful are bound to profess their faith openly whenever under the circumstances silence, evasion, or their manner of acting would otherwise implicitly amount to a denial of the faith, or would involve contempt of religion, an offense to God, or scandal to their neighbor.”

The heretics Woywod and Smith, *A Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, 1957, Commentary on Canon 1130: “...If the other party consented to the adultery, it is no ground for separation. If the other party knew of the evil intention

⁸ If he inculpably denies a basic dogma and adheres to the Catholic Church, then he is a catechumen but not Catholic because to be Catholic one must know and believe all the basic dogmas. If he inculpably denies a deeper dogma and adheres to the Catholic Church, then he is Catholic. But both the catechumen material heretic and the Catholic material heretic must be treated as formal heretics until they prove they were only material heretics due to inculpable ignorance. (See RJMI article “St. Augustine on Formal Heretics and the Salvation Dogma.”)

of his consort and did not protest when protest was possible and obligatory, it amounts to tacit consent.”⁹

A man, then, consents to sin or a sinner in two ways: 1) explicitly; or 2) implicitly by sins of omission for not sufficiently condemning sin or not denouncing or punishing the sinner, which is called tacit consent. Hence St. Paul’s following teaching applies to all who consent to sin, both those who explicitly consent and those who tacitly consent:

“Who, having known the justice of God, did not understand that they who do such things, are worthy of death; and not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them.” (Rom. 1:32)

St. Paul, then, teaches that not only those who commit a sin are guilty but also those who explicitly or tacitly consent to the sin or the sinner are equally guilty. The holy and wise Israelite Jesus, son of Sirach, teaches that there is a shame that is good and a shame that bringeth sin. A shame that brings sin is a shame of professing the truth when one should because one is afraid of persecution or offending others:

“Son, observe the time and fly from evil. For thy soul be not ashamed to say the truth. For there is a shame that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace. Accept no person against thy own person nor against thy soul a lie.” (Eclcus. 4:23-26)

Catholic Commentary on Eclcus. 4:25: “Sin: To abhor sin is glorious; but to yield to it through shamefacedness or not to reprove it is vicious.”

What is sufficient punishment

Sufficient punishment takes into account the disposition of the offender. Is he penitent? If so, how penitent is he? Or is he obstinate? If he is penitent, his punishment can be mitigated according to his degree of penitence provided the mitigation does not harm the common good. If he is obstinate, then he must be punished by the full measure of the law because he is not worthy of mercy. (See in this book [Peter Damian's Letter 68](#), p. 21.)

Pope St. Leo the Great, *Letter 31*, to Pulcheria Augusta, 449: “(III) ... For the moderation of the Apostolic See uses its leniency in such a way as to deal severely with the contumacious while desiring to offer pardon to those who accept correction.”

An offender who is fully penitent will punish himself in spirit and body; and thus even though the punishment prescribed by law is either dispensed from or mitigated, he nevertheless does not escape punishment. Sin demands punishment in one way or another. “*The blueness of a wound shall wipe away evils: and stripes in the more inward parts of the belly.*” (Prv. 20:30) Jesus, son of Sirach, says, Do not “*bind sin to sin: for even in one thou shalt not be unpunished.*” (Eclcus. 7:8) Jesus Christ, Son of God and son of Mary, said, “*And that servant who knew the will of his lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.*” (Lk. 12:47-

⁹ *A Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, by Rev. Stanislaus Woywod, O.F.M., LL.B. Revised by Rev. Callistus Smith, O.F.M., J.C.L. *Nihil Obstat*: Fr. Felician Berkery, O.F.M. *Imprimi Potest*: Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M., Minister Provincialis. *Nihil Obstat*: John Goodwine, J.C.D., *Censor Librorum*. Imprimatur: + Francis Cardinal Spellman, D.D., Archbishop of New York, Nov. 14, 1957. Published: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., New York, 1957; B. Herder, London. B. 3, t. 7, c. 10, art. 2, p. 816.

48) The holy Eleazar would not even *pretend* to sin in order to escape torture because he knew that if he even pretended God would punish him most severely on earth and then after death in eternal hell: “*For though, for the present time, I should be delivered from the punishments of men, yet should I not escape the hand of the Almighty neither alive nor dead.*” (2 Mac. 6:26) Hence sinners are punished either on earth when alive or in hell or purgatory when dead.

For example, Jesus Christ forgave Mary Magdalen for her mortal sins of adultery and granted her a dispensation from the punishment prescribed by law, which was the death penalty by stoning, because she was fully penitent. Jesus told her, “*Go, and now sin no more.*” (Jn. 8:11) Knowing her heart, even as good confessors can know the heart of penitents, Jesus knew she would punish herself in soul and body for her sins. Yet, He may have even given her a penance which is not recorded in the Bible. The history of Mary Magdalen’s life after her conversion proves that she punished herself for her sins until the day of her death. Hence even though the punishment prescribed by law was dispensed from in her case, she did not go unpunished. Indeed, she was sufficiently punished when taking into account that she was fully penitent and the common good did not demand the full measure of the law.

However, if the common good demands that all prostitutes be killed without mercy because they are rampant in society, then even those who are fully penitent must be killed in order for the punishment to be sufficient. Yet the Catholic penitent has nothing to complain about. If she is truly penitent and thus in a state of grace, she will be saved. And her willing acceptance of the death penalty as a punishment for her sin would expiate a great amount of punishment that was due to her sin so that she would spend less time in purgatory.

An example of the common good demanding the full measure of punishment, even against offenders who are fully penitent, is as follows. If prostitution is rampant in society and thus most of the citizens (young and old) are falling into sins of fornication by either sins of commission or sins of omission, then the full punishment, which in this case is the death penalty, must be enforced against all prostitutes, those who aid and abet prostitutes, and those who solicit prostitutes. Even those who are fully penitent must be given the death penalty because of the obstinacy of the general public regarding this sin. The full punishment prescribed by law would deter the general public from committing this sin and thus aid in saving souls. It would sway them from an indifference or acceptance of the sin to a fear of committing it and a detestation of it. And it would bring peace and justice to the righteous who are greatly oppressed by this sin and the sinners. Therefore, even when the full measure of the law, the full punishment, is exacted, mercy is found toward those who repent, toward those who are deterred from ever falling into the sin, toward the righteous who were greatly oppressed, and toward society by bringing it peace in this matter.

And even in mercy justice is found because without a sufficient punishment to put the people in fear, the force and effect of mercy would be null and void. Mercy is always in regard to the just law or just punishment that is dispensed from or mitigated. The person who is given mercy must know from what he is being spared, such as the death penalty, so he can be thankful for the mercy and also know that he deserved death. Hence in true justice true mercy is found, and in true mercy true justice is found.

Many times it happens that a law or punishment is sufficient under one condition but not under another and thus the law or punishment must be adjusted to fit the new circumstance. For example, the normal punishment for stealing a car should be the cutting off of some non-essential fingers and three years in jail doing hard time for first-time offenders and the cutting off of the hand and ten years hard time for second-time offenders and the death penalty for third-time offenders. Yet if stealing cars is rampant and thus the current law is not deterring this rampant crime, then the law, the punishment, must become more severe, such as the death penalty for first- or second-time offenders.

Some sins by their very nature deserve death as the only sufficient punishment, such as sins of adultery and homosexuality. But even in these cases mercy can be given and the death penalty dispensed from depending on how penitent the sinner is and how many times he is convicted.

Hence as the Word of God teaches, there is a time for mercy and a time for justice. *“All things have their season, and in their times all things pass under heaven... A time to kill, and a time to heal. A time to destroy, and a time to build.”* (Ectes. 3:1, 3) For mercy and wrath are with God:

“For mercy and wrath are with him. He is mighty to forgive, and to pour out indignation: According as his mercy is, so his correction judgeth a man according to his works. The sinner shall not escape in his rapines, and the patience of him that sheweth mercy shall not be put off. All mercy shall make a place for every man according to the merit of his works, and according to the wisdom of his sojournment.” (Eclcus. 16:12-15)

Beware of the heretics who doubt or deny the dogma

Beware of the heretics, especially from the 11th century onward, who doubt or deny dogmas regarding sins of omission:

- Some of these heretics doubt or deny the very obligation to condemn sin or denounce sinners and thus are formal heretics for holding the heresy of non-judgmentalism.¹⁰
- Some of these heretics doubt or deny the very obligation to punish sinners and thus are formal heretics for holding the heresy of non-punishmentalism.
- Some of these heretics teach that sins of omission do not cause equal guilt but cause either lesser guilt or only suspicion of guilt.
- Some of these heretics teach that a man cannot share equally in the guilt of a sin or sinner for sins of omission as long as he believes in his heart that the sin is a sin and the sinner is a sinner. They hold the same heresy in regards to heresy. They hold the heresy that a man who believes a dogma in his heart cannot be a heretic for denying the dogma publicly, such as to avoid persecution or to save his life. This heresy denies the dogma that public profession of heresy makes one a heretic regardless if

¹⁰ To see how they defend their heresy by taking out of context Jesus Christ’s words “Judge not lest you be judged,” see RJMI book *On Judging*.

he does not believe the heresy in his heart. St. Paul teaches that a man is first justified by truly believing in his heart but is not saved unless he makes confession with his mouth when he is obliged to: “*For, with the heart, we believe unto justice; but, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.*” (Rom. 10:10) Hence the so-called Catholic who does not confess the faith he has in his heart when he is obliged to cannot be saved and thus cannot be justified and hence falls out of a state of justice and into mortal sin, and in this case the mortal sin of heresy. For example, the lapsed Christians denied the Catholic faith to avoid persecution, torture, or death even though they believed in the faith in their hearts. But they nevertheless fell outside the Catholic Church as idolaters or heretics and thus had to abjure and do penance in order to re-enter the Catholic Church. They were known as lapsed Christians or *lapsi*. They are the worst kind of idolaters or heretics because they show contempt for the whole deposit of faith and add hypocrisy and lying to their sins. They love the world and the flesh more than God because instead of confessing God they denied Him in favor of the world, the flesh, or the devil.

For an example of a notorious heretic who committed sins of omission and was also guilty of the heresy that men are saved by following their own conscience, see RJMI book *Against the Heretic Thomas More*.