

## *A Priest's Secret Sin*

We are an imperfect people; sin – which is defined as missing the mark God has set for us – is part of our human nature.

Understanding our predilection to sin, coupled with the free will that our Creator gave us, God presented us with the 10 Commandments so that we may have happy, fulfilled, abundant lives.

As believers, we understand that when we sin – even those deep-seated, troubling, life-distracting sins – we can receive forgiveness for them when we acknowledge, confess and repent of them and be restored to a right relationship with our Lord.

An insightful story about this truth was told by the Rev. Bruce Larson, who served as senior pastor at Seattle's University Presbyterian Church in the 1980s, and as co-pastor with the Rev. Robert Schuller at the Crystal Cathedral in Southern California in the 1990s. Here it is:

*A Catholic priest living in the Philippines was a much-loved man of God who once carried a secret burden of long-past sin buried deep in his heart. He had committed that sin once, many years before, during his time in seminary. No one else knew of this sin. He had repented of it, and he had suffered years of remorse for it, but he still had no peace, no inner joy, no sense of God's forgiveness.*

*There was a woman in this priest's parish who deeply loved God and who claimed to have visions in which she spoke with Christ, and He with her. The priest, however, was skeptical of her claims. So to test her visions, he said to her, "You say you actually speak directly with Christ in your visions. Let me ask you a favor. The next time you have one of those visions, I want you to ask Him what sin your priest committed while he was in seminary."*

*The woman agreed and went home. When she returned to the church a few days later, the priest said, "Well, did Christ visit you in your dreams?"*

*She replied, "Yes, He did."*

*"And did you ask Him what sin I committed in seminary?"*

*"Yes, I asked Him."*

*"Well, what did He say?" The priest was anxious to hear the answer.*

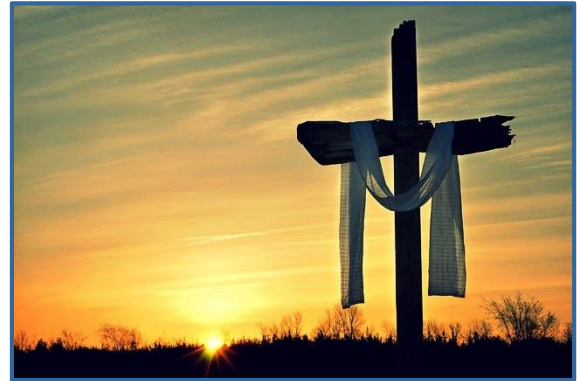
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*“He said, ‘I don’t remember.’”*

Maybe today you have some deep-seated, troubling, life-distracting sin that haunts you.

God wants you to know about the forgiveness He freely offers you. When your sins are forgiven, they are forgotten.

The past – with its sins, hurts, brokenness and self-recrimination – is gone, dead, crucified, remembered no more.



What God forgives, He forgets. And that is good news, indeed!

*I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sin no more (Isaiah 43:25 NIV).*

– Beecher Hunter