



# The Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther

## The Fifth Chief Part

### **The Office of the Keys and Confession**

*What sins should we confess?*

Before God we should acknowledge ourselves guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not know about, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But before the pastor or confessor we should acknowledge those sins only which we know and feel in our hearts.

*Which are these?*

Here **consider your own situation** according to the Ten Commandments, **whether you** are a father, mother, son, daughter, employer, employee; **whether you** have been disobedient, dishonest, lazy; **whether you** have injured anyone by word or deed; **whether you** have stolen, neglected, wasted anything, or done any harm.

When I urge you to go to confession, I am simply urging you to be a Christian. If I

bring you to this point, I have also brought you to confession. Those who really want to be good Christians, **free from their sins, and happy in their conscience**, already have the true hunger and thirst. They snatch at the bread just like a hunted deer, burning with heat and thirst, as Ps. 42:2 says, "As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my heart for You, O God." That is, as a deer trembles with eagerness for a fresh spring, so I yearn and tremble for God's Word, absolution, the sacrament. – **Martin Luther, Large Catechism, A Brief Exhortation to Confession, 32-33.**



### **FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE**

#### **ISAIAH 53:4-7**

"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and **the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all**. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so **He opened not His mouth.**"

#### **A VERSE TO REMEMBER**

"He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'"

**John 20:22-23**

***Ecce Homo ("Behold, the Man!")***  
Guido Reni, oil on canvas - 1640