



What Makes Us Catholic?

Mortal vs. Venial Sins

Do you find it hard to avoid sin? That's certainly not uncommon. Pope Francis often preaches, "we are all sinners" (including himself). It's true and all sin is serious because it negatively affects our relationship with God and with those around us. But don't lose all hope yet. There are different types of sins, and more importantly, Catholics are blessed to have the Sacrament of Reconciliation to reunite us with God in an intimate friendship.

Mortal sin is the most severe as it separates us from God and leads to "spiritual" death of the soul. Someone with an unconfessed mortal sin should not receive the Eucharist. In addition, if we die without repenting a mortal sin, we lose the opportunity to spend eternity with Him in heaven. For a sin to be mortal: 1) it must be a serious matter, 2) the person must know it is serious, and then 3) freely commit it. If any one of these conditions is missing, the sin is not mortal.

Venial sins are when we disobey God in a small way. They don't break our friendship with God, but they do injure it. However, we must be careful, because deliberate and unrepented venial sin may lead us little by little to commit mortal sin.

Regardless of the sin we commit, God always loves us, which is why we have the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If we confess that we are truly sorry for our sin and promise to sin no more we can be reconciled with God and the Church. It's the ultimate reward for Catholics as it allows those committing mortal sin to receive Holy Communion. In addition, confessing venial sins helps form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, and lets us be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Holy Spirit.

Want to read more about this topic?

Sources:

- Checklist of mortal and venial sins: <http://www.followthissite.com/list-of-sins.php>
- CCC 1846-1876, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a8.htm
- http://www.catholicity.com/catechism/mortal_and_venial.html

Do you have questions on this topic, or other topics you would like to learn more about? Please complete the back side of this sheet and leave it in the box on the "What Makes Us Catholic?" stand.

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