

**I was the smart kid in class that you hated all through school. I was the kid who demolished the curve and made your grade a C instead of a B. I was the kid who loved to ask you how you did on the test, not because I cared but just so I could tell you that I got an A. I was the kid who groaned when you asked that thing the teacher said there was no such thing as...you know...there's no such thing as a dumb question. I disagreed whole-heartedly. I thought that many questions were dumb and was not in the least concerned about your feelings when I told you so by groaning loudly, rolling my eyes and looking at you with utter disdain. Yep. I'm not proud of it, but I was that kid. I like to imagine that I have grown up and left that person behind, but in all honesty, he still comes out to play from time to time. For that I am sorry to anyone to whom he has shown his face.**

**If anyone had called me on my behavior back then I would have apologized that I offended you, but then, I would have explained why you should not have been offended or upset. I would not have been so crass as to suggest that maybe you misunderstood and actually were mistaken in your offense or just too dense to understand it all. I would not have suggested it but I certainly would have thought it and probably implied it in my tone. There may or may not be dumb questions but there are most certainly dumb confessions, I know because I have made them.**

**A dumb confession is a quasi-confession. It sounds as though you are confessing your sin but really all you are doing is deflecting and trying to**

**demonstrate how your sin was not really your sin at all but someone else's sin or at least someone else's fault. A quasi confession is designed to make you look better than you are and it is dishonest. The Lord came to Adam and said, "Where are you?" Now think about that for a moment. Do you think God lost track of Adam? He knew fully well where both Adam and Eve were, so why did he ask the question? He was giving them the opportunity to confess and unburden their souls. They chose the dumb confession.**

**"I hid because I was naked." Right. God had never seen them naked before. He only created them from dirt and a bone and breathed life into them with his own breath but Heavens to Betsy, NAKED? They were created to be naked! Clothes are a product of sin. If there were not harsh climates, burning sun rays, thorns that tear the flesh and hearts that lust, there would be no need for clothing. Putting clothing on a human being was Adam and Eve's idea, not God's.**

**"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the fruit I commanded you not to eat?" God went all in and just named the sin that needed confessing. Once again, a perfect invitation to confess is issued and yet it is not taken. Let the deflections and justifications begin.**

**"It wasn't me!" says Adam. "It was that woman YOU gave me! See! It's really your fault God! You gave me that sinful woman and I would have never disobeyed you except she tempted me!"**

**"Uh-uh! It wasn't me," says Eve. "It was that serpent YOU created. It really is your fault God! That serpent tricked me into disobeying you!" Both Adam and Eve were so consumed with proving that it wasn't their fault and even**

**blaming God himself, that neither stopped to confess and receive God's forgiveness. That is why he was there. That is why he had approached them in the garden. He wanted to allow them to confess and receive forgiveness. That's the way we unburden our souls and make our lives so much better, not through dumb, quasi-confessions where we try to justify or deflect but with honest, real confessions where we own up to what we did or failed to do and simply say, "I'm sorry Lord."**

**Enter Jesus on the scene. He has had a busy day of healing and casting out demons. Now there are so many people in the house wanting his attention that he can't even eat. In the midst of all that Mary and his brothers have come to try and physically haul him away because they think he is crazy. Frankly, he is embarrassing the family by calling himself God. In the face of this blatant blasphemy from the religious leaders and his own family Jesus says,**

**"Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." What does that mean? What is it to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit? Is it not to say that we do not believe that the Holy Spirit is who he says he is and can do what he says he can do? To blaspheme against the Holy Spirit is to reject his work in favor of our own. Why do we try to justify our own sin? Why do we try to deflect our sin onto others? Why do we stubbornly refuse to forgive ourselves? God came searching in the Garden to forgive Adam and Eve. Jesus came searching for us in this broken world to forgive us not to condemn us. We have no need of those quasi-confessions that we like to make. Just a simple, "I'm sorry" will do fine.**

**And likewise, if my "I'm sorry" is not good enough for you, too bad. God accepts it and that's all I really need. Just "I'm sorry" and move on. To demand more is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit and suggest that he cannot do his job.**

**The hardest part of this confession business is admitting that we need forgiveness. Oh, I hear people all the time admitting that they are poor miserable sinners. But in reality, most people think way too highly of themselves. We good church people put on a good front but God is not concerned with our image that we project. He is far more concerned with our motives for projecting that image. To confess your sin is to admit that your motives are not always pure and your objectives are not always righteous. To confess is to admit that you need help. You can't do it...you can't do it at all. You can't even begin to live the kind of life God wants you to live and not only do you offer quasi-confessions, you don't even know all the sin you have committed today, because you are held accountable for every sin of thought, word and deed, awake or asleep. Even if you wanted to, you couldn't confess all your sin and you certainly could not be sorry enough for all your sin and that is why the Holy Spirit intercedes for you.**

**Paul tells us that even when you don't know how to ask or what to ask for, he does and he asks at just the right time and for exactly what you need. And guess what? You receive everything for which he asks, including full forgiveness for every sin you ever committed. Quasi-confessions are a waste of time. Full and complete forgiveness is ours, won by Jesus on the cross and given to us freely in his Word and Sacraments.**