

**Question:** On November 5, 1923, it appears Luisa received absolution from Jesus without a Priest. If this is possible, can the same be said for us, that is, can we too be forgiven of our sins without the absolution of a priest?

**Answer:** The November 5, 1923 passage you refer comes from volume 16 and states as follows:

[Luisa relates]: *“I was feeling oppressed on account of my sweet Jesus’ absence, and because the Confessor denied me absolution due to me being bad and me refusing to be [completely] open [with him in Confession]. So, after having received Holy Communion, I abandoned myself in the arms of my most sweet Jesus, saying to Him: ‘Help me, my love; do not abandon me. You know the [interior] state in which I find myself on account of your absence...’ As the High Priest You are, grant me absolution by telling me that You forgive the sins of my soul; let me hear your sweetest voice that gives me life and grants me forgiveness...”*

[To Luisa Jesus reveals]: *‘...My Will encloses all the Sacraments and their effects. So, completely abandon yourself in My Will; by availing yourself of it in its entirety, you will receive the effects of absolution,<sup>1</sup> or whatever else you may be denied. Wherefore, I encourage you to waste no time, for in wasting time you impede My Real Life which I am forming in you.’”*

This passage addresses three important questions that ultimately provide the answer to your question: 1) Why did Luisa confess her sins to Jesus? 2) What “bad” thing did Luisa do to cause the confessor to deny her absolution? 3) What does Jesus mean when he exhorts her not to “waste time”? 4) Why did Luisa not open herself up to the confessor?

### **1) Why did Luisa confess her sins to Jesus?**

The answer is intimated in Luisa’s autobiography, “Notebook of Childhood Memories”, where she states, *“...it cost me so much to be deprived of Jesus voice when I was forced by my family to go with them to the farm house, where for many months I was without Mass and Communion. How many times I burst into tears...”* In this passage one discovers that for months on end Luisa could not confess or receive Communion from a priest. In these extraordinary circumstances Jesus assisted her, without giving her the impression she was not to go to a priest to receive these Sacraments (see below). Because Jesus, on only a handful of occasions granted the extraordinary grace of sacramental absolution to Luisa, this by no means signifies that all the faithful may presume to receive this extraordinary grace. It is a fact that Luisa and other mystics were granted by Jesus certain singular graces conceded to no one else.

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<sup>1</sup> In her volumes, Jesus reassured Luisa that she never committed one grave sin in her life. He also exhorted her to confess whatever venial sins she had committed.

## 2) What “bad” thing did Luisa do to cause the confessor deny her absolution?

and

## 3) What does Jesus mean when He exhorts her not to “waste time”?

23 years earlier Luisa intimates the nature of “bad” thing she here refers to when she writes on September 12, 1900:

*“This morning upon arriving, He [Jesus] poured out [in me] his bitterness, and I was left in a state of so much suffering that I began to implore the Lord to grant me strength and some relief, as I could no longer bear it. Then a light came to my mind that I was committing a sin in doing this... It seems that I am becoming even more bad, and I am so bad that even before Jesus I do not abstain from my defects and committing sins.”*

In volume 9, November 16, 1909, Luisa also addresses a possible “disorder” in her soul, of her having been “bad”, and in response Jesus exhorts her not to “waste time”. She relates:

*“After spending [several] bitter days on account of Jesus’ absence, and having received [Holy] Communion, I was complaining to Blessed Jesus as follows: ‘It really seems that You wish to leave me completely. At least tell me: Do You wish for me to leave this state? After all, who knows what kind of disorder there might exist in me [and] that [may have caused] You to distance yourself [from me]. Tell me; I promise You from the [bottom of my] heart that I will be better.’*

*And Jesus: ‘My daughter, do not be alarmed. When I make you lose consciousness, remain peaceful, and when I do not, remain yet more peaceful without wasting time. Accept whatever happens to you as coming from My hands. Can I not suspend your state for a few days? As for the disorder [you speak of], [if it existed] I would have told you [so]. Do you know what places the soul in disorder? Only sin – even the slightest. Oh, how it deforms the soul; it discolors and debilitates it! But the soul’s interior state [of bitterness] and its [experiencing My absence] do not harm the soul. So, be careful not to offend Me, however slightly, and have no fear of disorder existing in your soul.’*

*And I: ‘But, Lord, there must be something bad in me. For previously in your visits to me You would always come and go; You allowed me to share in your Cross, nails and thorns. Whereas now that my nature has become used to these [penances], to the point of considering them so natural that suffering is easier for me than not suffering, You choose to no longer visit me. How is it possible that there is nothing grave in me?’ Whence Jesus benignly replied: ‘You see My daughter, I had to dispose your soul in such a way that you would arrive at this point of finding joy in suffering, whereby you might [faithfully] carry out My work. And so I had to test you, astonish you and make you endure much suffering; I did so in order for your nature to rise*

*again to new life. This work I have completed, as the participation in My sorrows permanently remains in you...’”*

Further vexations that perplexed Luisa and caused her worry are evident from her undated entry of volume 1, where she relates:

*“He [Satan] tempted me not to receive [Holy] Communion, persuading me that after I had committed so many sins it would be presumptuous of me to receive Jesus, and that if I dared to that he the devil, and not Jesus Christ, would come and inflict me with so many torments that I would die. However, [my] obedience [to the Confessor] would [eventually] win out. It is true that sometimes I suffered mortal pains that were so intense that I could hardly recover from them after [Holy] Communion, but since the Confessor absolutely insisted that I receive Jesus, I could not do otherwise. So, [as a result of these deceptive persuasions of the devil] I remember that quite a few times I did not receive Jesus.”*

In light of the preceding, it is evident that Luisa’s worries of her having been “bad”, of there existing some “disorder” in her soul, and of her having “sinned” appear to be an admixture of her fear that derived from Satan’s threats, from her scrupulosity and from her unfounded worries that kept her from opening up completely to her confessor. Indeed, Satan threatened Luisa in order to keep her from receiving the Sacraments of Communion and Penance (absolution).

While Jesus reassures Luisa that she never committed any grave sin, and that from the age of 23 he established in her his “continual”<sup>2</sup> indwelling, after this age he nevertheless continued to exhort her to banish such thoughts of fear, scrupulosity and to avoid “wasting time” with such thoughts that brought her spiritual harm.<sup>3</sup>

In volume 9, November 2, 1909, Jesus reveals to Luisa: *“My daughter, do not look at the past, because the past is already in Me and can be a distraction to you; it can make you overlook that little part of your journey that remains for you to cover. In fact, your turning to the past makes you slow down your pace in your present journey, whereby you lose time and fail to*

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<sup>2</sup> At 23 Luisa experienced Jesus’ “continual” indwelling (spiritual marriage on earth), and at 24 his “continuous” indwelling (spiritual marriage in heaven). Noteworthy is the distinction between ‘continual’ and ‘continuous’ – the former indicating Luisa’s stability in the virtues of the divine mode (Christian virtues) and interruptions of unspecified duration of her divine acts in the eternal mode (e.g., while asleep); the latter indicating her stability in the virtues of the eternal mode (divine virtues) with no interruptions of her divine acts in that same eternal mode.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus reveals to Luisa the harm that come from such worries and disturbances that she experienced and that caused her to “waste time”. In volume 6, September 2, 1905, Jesus reveals to Luisa: *“...disturbance impedes the course of grace and renders it unable to do good.”* Again, in volume 8, March 13, 1908 he informs her: *“The frosts of passions and the snows of disturbances block the fruits of grace in the soul.”* And Jesus gives evidence of the harm such disturbances had caused her soul.

*advance. On the other hand, by looking only at the present, you acquire more courage, you remain more closely united to Me, you advance more speedily along your path and there are no dangers of you being misled.”*

In Volume 20, Sept. 26, 1926 Luisa relates: “[Jesus,] your absence during these days has rendered me even uglier. I feel like I’m good for nothing; even the rounds in Your Will, I do with difficulty. Oh, how bad I feel! Your absence is to me like a consuming fire that, consuming everything in me, robs me of the life of doing good.”

Admittedly, one of the greatest struggles Luisa encountered, especially in her earlier years, was with the virtue of obedience to those Confessors whom Christ had chosen and placed in her path to lead her.<sup>4</sup> Such struggles were more often than not the fruit of her love to give herself over to more penances than what Jesus and her Confessors permitted.

It is noteworthy that St. Padre Pio occasionally refused the Sacrament of Confession to certain individuals who were either not properly disposed or who chose (as in the case of Luisa) to not be completely transparent with him re. their interior state or venial faults. Indeed, the deliberate withholding of either one’s grave or venial sins renders the Sacrament of Confession invalid.<sup>5</sup>

#### **4) Why did Luisa not open herself up to the Confessor?**

In the following undated entry from volume one, Luisa provides an insight into why she failed to open herself up to her confessor. Luisa relates:

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<sup>4</sup> Volume 1, undated entry [Luisa relates]: “Sometimes the Lord asked me to request the obedience not to eat, but the Confessor has never granted me this obedience. He would say to me: ‘It matters little if, after you have eaten, the food comes back up – you may offer it up as another mortification.’ And I would relate this to Jesus, and He would tell me: ‘I [still] want you to ask the [Confessor the] question [by requesting obedience] and with holy indifference; **I want you to do whatever he [the Confessor] asks you to do in obedience.**’ And so I continued to do [as Jesus asked].”

<sup>5</sup> The Catholic Catechism, article 1456 affirms: “Confession to a priest is an essential part of the Sacrament of Penance: ‘All mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent self-examination are conscious must be recounted by them in Confession...’ When Christ’s faithful strive to confess all the sins that they can remember [mortal and venial], they undoubtedly place all of them before the divine mercy for pardon. But those who fail to do so and knowingly withhold some, place nothing before the divine goodness for remission through the mediation of the priest, “for if the sick person is too ashamed to show his wound to the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not know”.

In this article of the Catholic Catechism relates that the *deliberate* withholding of grave or venial sins renders the confession invalid. So should one, out of fear, shame or scrupulosity, refuse to open oneself up to the confessor, he has the authority to exhort the penitent to transparency and, should they refuse, delay their absolution. St. Padre Pio, who enjoyed the gift of introspection, occasionally refused certain individuals absolution for such reasons.

*“...When the soul is obedient [in approaching the Sacrament of Confession] the Lord never permits that the Priest to be mistaken [in his counsel]...<sup>6</sup> It seemed to me that sometimes Jesus Christ and the Confessor would fuse together, and so I managed to manifest my soul [to the Confessor]. The past Confessor would not ask me questions – he would not try to know what was happening to me in my state of ecstasy, and so I did not know how to open up to him and talk about these things. His counsel was simply that I be resigned, conformed to the Will of God and bear the Cross the Lord had given me...” (L. Piccarreta, Volume 1, undated entry).*

As to the nature of Luisa’s concealed faults that Luisa failed to reveal to the confessor, they appear to be intimated two months earlier when she writes of having done her rounds in the Divine Will “badly”. Luisa relates:

*“I was petrified with sorrow on account of my sweet Jesus’ absence... I tried as much as I could to continue my interior acts, as when I once united the light [of my acts] with [those of] Jesus in His Most Holy Will. But, oh, how differently I would [now] do them - I would do them badly, not [impacting everyone so as to] find everyone in order to offer my God [love] on behalf of all...” (Ibid., volume, 16, September 6, 1923).*

15 days later Jesus revealed to Luisa the reason for his absence:

[Jesus reveals]: *“My daughter, My Will wanted... to see whether you would continue your flights in My Will without Me” (Ibid., volume 16, September 21, 1923).*

In the following passage, Luisa reveals that Jesus administered to her the Sacrament of Penance for her venial sins. Luisa relates:

*“I remember to my own embarrassment that, when I would be with Our Lord, I would often ask for [the grace of] sorrow for my sins and for the grace to be forgiven of all the evil I had done; and at times I reached the point of saying that I would only be content when I would hear Him say from His own lips: "I forgive all your sins." And blessed Jesus, who can deny nothing when it is for our good, one morning appeared and said to me: “This time I Myself wish to carry out the office of Confessor. Confess all of your sins to Me, and while you do so, I will make you understand, one by one, the sorrows you have inflicted upon My Heart in offending Me so that, by understanding what sin is to the greatest extent possible for a human being, you may resolve to die rather than to offend Me [again]. As for you, be mindful of your own unworthiness and recite the Confiteor.”*

*In calling to mind my own unworthiness, I could envision all of my misery and wicked deeds and, in Jesus’ presence, I trembled like a leaf... I then said the Confiteor, overwhelmed*

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<sup>6</sup> In volume 12, December 25, 1918 Jesus reassures Luisa that He himself guides her confessors: *“Why do you fear? I will take care of everything; and when one [Confessor] directs you I give him My grace [to guide you]; when another directs you, I likewise give My grace to him also.”*

*and humiliated, as I saw myself completely covered with my own sins. In one glance I saw that my greatest sin which had caused Our Lord so much sorrow was pride...*

*Whence Jesus added: 'And do you promise to sin no more, and to banish from your heart all shadow of evil that might offend your Creator?' And I: 'Ah, yes, with all my heart I promise You this. I prefer to die a thousand times rather than sin again. Never again, never again [shall I sin].' And Jesus: 'And I forgive you, and I extend to your soul the merits of My Passion as I cleanse it in My Blood.' And as He was saying this, He raised his sacred right hand and pronounced the words of the absolution – exactly like the words that the Priest says when he administers Absolution. And as Jesus did this, a river of Blood poured down from his hand and completely inundated my soul.*

*After this, He said to me: 'Come, My daughter, come to offer penance for your sins by reverencing My wounds.' Trembling from head to toe, I stood up and kissed His most sacred wounds. He then said to me: 'My daughter, be more vigilant and attentive, for today I give you the grace of never again falling into voluntary venial sin.' He then exhorted me in other ways, which I do not clearly recall, and He disappeared" (Ibid., Volume 1, undated entry; cf. also November 26, 1899; January 5, 1900).*

## **Conclusion**

If Jesus granted Luisa absolution on few occasions, he did not intend and she did not perceive this charitable gesture as a pretext to avoid confessing her sins sacramentally to an ordained Priest. On the contrary, she often requested absolution from the hands of God's ordained Priest whom he had chosen, placed in her path and asked her to obey (cf. Ibid., November 17, 1889; volume 15, February 22, 1923; volume 18, January 30, 1926; etc.). Indeed, Jesus reassured Luisa that he would not usurp the authority had given to his Priests:

[Luisa relates]: *"While I was longing for Jesus' return, the Confessor came and at that precise moment. After having awaited Jesus so long, he moved in my interior and, hugging my heart tightly, revealed himself, whence I said to him: 'My Jesus, could You not have come before? Now I must obey [the Confessor]. If it pleases You, may You come to me whenever I receive You in the Most Blessed Sacrament and in this way we will be alone again – [just the two of us], and will be free to be together.'* And Jesus, in a dignified and unmoved appearance said to me: ***'My daughter, do you want Me to destroy the order of My wisdom by taking away the authority I gave to My Church?'*** And while saying this, He allowed me to share in his sorrows.

*One day, reprimanding me, Jesus told me: '... When a soul has humbled itself, being convinced of having done wrong, and **has cleansed itself in the Sacrament of Confession**, and is ready to die rather than offend Me...' "* (Ibid., volume 1, undated entry).

In fine, Jesus exhorts Luisa to place herself “blindly” in the hands of the confessor.

[Jesus reveals]: *“I want you to place yourself blindly in the hands of the Confessor, without examining what is being said to you... Your eyes will be [guided by] the voice of the Confessor which, like light, will clear the darkness from you...”* (Ibid., volume 1, undated entry).

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