

I. What is the Office of the Keys?

The Office of the Keys is the special power Christ gave to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners and to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent.

Where is this written?

The holy evangelist John writes in chapter 20: “[Jesus] breathed on [His disciples] 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).

2. How does a Christian congregation use the Keys?

A Christian congregation, with its pastor, uses the keys according to Christ’s command, either by forgiving those who repent of their sins and are willing to change, or by excluding those who are obviously impenitent from the Christian congregation. These actions are as valid and certain in heaven also as if Christ our dear Lord were dealing with us Himself.

Matthew 16:19 ¹⁹ "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

8th Graders

Matthew 18:18,20 ¹⁸ "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven . . . ²⁰ "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

1 John 1:8 ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.