

The Seal of the Confessional

<http://catholiceducation.org/articles/religion/re0628.html>

A beautiful story (perhaps embellished with time) which captures the reality of this topic is the life of **St. John Nepomucene (1340-93)**, the vicar general to the Archbishop of Prague.

King Wenceslaus IV, described as a vicious, young man who easily succumbed to rage and caprice, was highly suspicious of his wife, the Queen. St. John happened to be the Queen's confessor. Although the king himself was unfaithful, he became increasingly jealous and suspicious of his wife, who was irreproachable in her conduct. Wencelaus, as king, demanded that St. John break the sacramental seal.

Although Wencelaus tortured St. John to force him to reveal the Queen's confessions, he would not. In the end, St. John was thrown into the River Moldau and drowned on March 20, 1393.

Similar stories abound, especially in the past century during the awful persecution of the Church under Communism and Naziism, where priests were tortured, imprisoned, and executed because they would not break the sacramental seal.