

The Sacrament of Penance



Prayer Before Self-Examination

O Holy Spirit, Source of all light, Spirit of wisdom, of understanding and of knowledge, come to my assistance and enable me to make a good confession. Enlighten me, and help me now to know my sins as one day I shall be forced to recognize them before thy judgment seat. Bring to my mind the evil which I have done and the good which I have neglected. Permit me not to be blinded by self-love. Grant me, moreover, heartfelt sorrow for my transgressions, knowing how deeply they have wounded the loving Heart of my Heavenly Father; and help me to make a good confession that all stain of guilt may be washed away in the Precious Blood of my Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Self-Examination

Pride

Putting self in the place of God; Refusal to recognize our dependence on God, and our relationship to the rest of his creation

- **Irreverence**
 - ☐ Deliberate neglect of Sunday worship
 - ☐ Half-hearted worship
 - ☐ Disregard of Holy Days
 - ☐ Failure to thank God adequately
 - ☐ Careless disrespect to God & holy things
 - ☐ Use of holy things for personal advantage
 - ☐ Attempting to bribe God with works or promises
- **Sentimentality**
 - ☐ Satisfaction with pious feelings or beautiful ceremony, without striving to obey God's will
- **Presumption**
 - ☐ Dependence on self rather than God
 - ☐ Neglect of the means of Grace: Sacraments & Prayer
 - ☐ Neglecting ordinary duties on grounds that we are superior
 - ☐ Self-satisfaction with spiritual achievements
 - ☐ Refusal to avoid occasions of temptation
 - ☐ Preference for our own ideas, customs, & techniques
 - ☐ Foolish optimism
- **Distrust**
 - ☐ Refusal to recognize God's wisdom, providence, & love
 - ☐ Worry, anxiety, & misgivings
 - ☐ Scrupulosity & perfectionism
 - ☐ Attempts to discern or control the future through superstition.
 - ☐ Hypersensitivity
 - ☐ Expectation that others will dislike, reject, or mistreat us
 - ☐ Quickness to interpret attitudes of others & take offense
 - ☐ Unfounded suspicion
 - ☐ Timidity in accepting responsibility
 - ☐ Cowardice in facing difficulty or suffering
 - ☐ Surrender to depression, gloom, pessimism, discouragement, self-pity, or fear of death, instead of fighting to be brave, cheerful, & hopeful
- **Disobedience**
 - ☐ Rejection of God's known will in favor of our own interests
 - ☐ Disobedience of legitimate laws & authority of the Church, state, husband, parents, teachers, etc; Slow or reluctant obedience
 - ☐ Failure when in authority to fulfill responsibilities or to consider best interests of those under us

- ☐ Refusal to learn God's nature or will through Scripture, the Church, prayer, meditation, or reading.
- ☐ Absorption in our own affairs rather than things of God
- ☐ Violation of confidentiality
- ☐ Breaking legitimate promises or contracts
- ☐ Irresponsibility
- ☐ Deceitfulness or duplicity
- ☐ Unnecessary disappointment of another
- ☐ Causing shame or anxiety in those who love us
- **Impenitence**
 - ☐ Refusal to search out & face up to sins
 - ☐ Refusal to confess & admit sins to God
 - ☐ Disregard of sins, or pretense that we are better than we are
 - ☐ Self-justification; discounting sins as insignificant, natural, or inevitable
 - ☐ Self-righteous comparison with others
 - ☐ Refusal to accept just punishment or make due reparation
 - ☐ Deceit or lying to escape consequences of sins
 - ☐ Allowing others to suffer blame for our faults
 - ☐ Attempts at self-reform to avoid surrender to God
 - ☐ Wounded pride because sins make us less respectable than we like, or because we fear punishment or injury to reputation, rather than sorrow for sins in the eyes of God
 - ☐ Refusal to admit wrong or apologize
 - ☐ Refusal to accept forgiveness from God or others
 - ☐ Doubt that God can forgive our sins
 - ☐ Failure to use means of assurance of forgiveness
 - ☐ Unwillingness to forgive ourselves
- **Vanity**
 - ☐ Crediting ourselves rather than God for talents, abilities, insights, accomplishments, or good works
 - ☐ Refusal to admit indebtedness or to express gratitude
 - ☐ Hypocrisy
 - ☐ Pretense to virtues we do not possess
 - ☐ False humility
 - ☐ Judgments on others for faults we excuse in ourselves
 - ☐ Boasting ability, wisdom, experience, or influence we do not have
 - ☐ Drawing attention to ourselves by ostentatious behavior
 - ☐ Undue investment in looks, dress, or surroundings to impress others
 - ☐ Drawing attention through deliberate untidiness or poor hygiene
 - ☐ Seeking, desiring, or relishing flattery or compliments
- **Arrogance**
 - ☐ Insisting that others conform to our wishes, recognize our leadership, or accept our estimate of our own worth
 - ☐ Being overbearing, argumentative, opinionated, or obstinate

- Snobbery
 - ☐ Pride over race, family, position/personality, education, Skill, achievements, or possessions

Anger

Rebellion against God or others to eliminate obstacles to our self-seeking; retaliating against threats to our security; avenging insult & injury to our person

- Resentment
 - ☐ Refusal to discern, accept, or fulfill God's vocation
 - ☐ Dissatisfaction with God-given talents, abilities, or opportunities
 - ☐ Unwillingness to face up to difficulties or sacrifices
 - ☐ Unjustified rebellion or complaint at circumstances of our lives
 - ☐ Escape from, or attempt to force our will upon, reality
 - ☐ Blaming God, parents, society, or others for our maladjustment
 - ☐ Hatred of God
 - ☐ Antisocial behavior
 - ☐ Cynicism
 - ☐ Annoyance when things don't go our way
 - ☐ Profanity
 - ☐ Grumbling
- Combativeness
 - ☐ Attacking others in anger
 - ☐ Murder in deed or desire
 - ☐ Nursing grudges
 - ☐ Injury to another by striking, cursing, or insulting
 - ☐ Damage to another's reputation or property
 - ☐ Bickering, contradiction, nagging, rudeness, or snubbing
- Retaliation
 - ☐ Plotting or committing vengeance for real or imagined wrongs
 - ☐ Harsh or excessive punishment
 - ☐ Hostility, sullenness, or rash judgment
 - ☐ Refusal to forgive
 - ☐ Refusal to accept reconciliation
 - ☐ Unwillingness to love, do good to, or pray for enemies
 - ☐ Boycotting or ostracizing others for selfish reasons
 - ☐ Spoiling others' pleasure by uncooperativeness or disdain because we have not gotten our way, or feel superior or out of sorts

Envy

Dissatisfaction with our place in God's order of creation, manifested in begrudging his gifts and vocation to others

- Jealousy
 - ☐ Offense at the talents, success, or good fortune of others
 - ☐ Selfish or unnecessary rivalry or competition

- ☐ Pleasure at others' difficulty or distress
- ☐ Belittling others
- Malice
 - ☐ Ill will
 - ☐ False accusation
 - ☐ Slander
 - ☐ Back-biting
 - ☐ Reading false motives into others' behavior
 - ☐ Initiation, collection, or spreading of gossip
 - ☐ Arousing, fostering, or organizing antagonism against others
 - ☐ Unnecessary criticism, even when true
 - ☐ Deliberate annoying of others; teasing or bullying
- Contempt
 - ☐ Scorn of another's virtue, ability, shortcomings, or failings
 - ☐ Prejudice against those we consider inferior, or who seem to threaten our security or position
 - ☐ Ridicule of persons, institutions, or ideals

Covetousness

Refusal to respect the integrity of others, expressed in the inordinate accumulation of material things, the use of other people for our own advantage, or in the quest for status, power, or security at their expense

- Inordinate Ambition
 - ☐ Pursuit of status, power, influence, reputation, or possessions, at the expense of the moral law, other obligations, or the rights of others
 - ☐ Ruthless or unfair competition
 - ☐ Putting self or family first
 - ☐ Conformity to standards we know to be wrong or inadequate to get ahead
 - ☐ Deception or conspiracy for self-advancement
- Domination
 - ☐ Seeking to use or possess others
 - ☐ Overprotection of children
 - ☐ Refusal to correct or punish for fear of losing affection
 - ☐ Insistence that children conform to our ideal contrary to their own vocation
 - ☐ Imposing our will on others by force, slyness, whining, or refusal to cooperate
 - ☐ Over-readiness to advise or command
 - ☐ Abuse of authority
 - ☐ Patronizing
 - ☐ Keeping others in poverty
 - ☐ Placing others under debt of gratitude
 - ☐ Resentment when others' affection or compliance cannot be bought

- ☐ Winning support or affection through favoritism, partiality, flattery, fawning, or bribery
- ☐ Refusal to uphold truth, fulfill duties, perform good acts, or defend the persecuted, for fear of criticism or ridicule, or to gain favor or approval
- ☐ Leading, tempting, or encouraging another to sin
- Avarice
 - ☐ Inordinate pursuit of wealth and material things
 - ☐ Theft
 - ☐ Dishonesty
 - ☐ Misrepresentation
 - ☐ Sharing in stolen goods
 - ☐ Cheating in business, taxes, school, or games
 - ☐ Making worldly success our goal in life
 - ☐ Making worldly success our standard for judging others
- Prodigality
 - ☐ Waste of natural resources or personal possessions
 - ☐ Living beyond income
 - ☐ Extravagant living to impress others or maintain status
 - ☐ Failure to pay debts
 - ☐ Gambling more than we can afford to lose, or to win unearned profits
 - ☐ Unnecessary borrowing
 - ☐ Carelessness with others' money
 - ☐ Spending on self what is needed for the welfare of others
- Miserliness
 - ☐ Undue protection of wealth or security
 - ☐ Selfish insistence on vested interests or claimed rights
 - ☐ Refusal to support or help those to whom we are indebted
 - ☐ Freeloading
 - ☐ Stinginess
 - ☐ Failure to give due proportion of income to Church and charity
 - ☐ Failure to give time and energy to good works
 - ☐ Failure to pay pledges promised to Church and charity when able

Gluttony

*Overindulgence of natural appetites for food & drink.
Inordinate quest for pleasure or comfort*

- Intemperance
 - ☐ Overindulgence in food, drink, tobacco, or other physical pleasures
 - ☐ Fastidiousness, fussiness, or excessively high standards
 - ☐ Superficial dabbling in art or knowledge
 - ☐ Condemnation of material things or pleasures as inherently evil, to prohibit their use rather than their abuse.
- Lack of Discipline
 - ☐ Negligence in keeping days of fasting or abstinence

- ☐ Failure to use necessary means of self-discipline
- ☐ Neglect to bodily health: insufficient rest, recreation, exercise or nourishment
- ☐ Failure to use or cooperate with available medical care when ill
- ☐ Use of sickness as means of escape from responsibilities

Lust

*Misuse of sex for personal gratification. Debasing sex
from the holy purpose for which God has given it to us*

- Unchastity
 - ☐ Violation of the Church's marriage laws
 - ☐ Lack of consideration for one's partner in the marital relationship
 - ☐ Refusal to fulfill the purpose of Holy Matrimony in the bringing forth and adequate care of children
 - ☐ Artificial contraception; Direct sterilization, temporary or permanent
 - ☐ Refusal to take our full share of responsibilities in raising children
 - ☐ Unfaithfulness to one's spouse
 - ☐ Sexual indulgence outside matrimony, in thought or act, alone or with others
- Immodesty
 - ☐ Stimulation of sexual desire in others by word, dress, or actions
 - ☐ Stimulation of sexual desire in self by pornography
- Prudery
 - ☐ Fear of sex or condemnation of it as evil in itself
 - ☐ Refusal to seek adequate sexual instruction, or attempting to prevent others from obtaining it
 - ☐ Stimulation of excessive curiosity by undue secrecy
 - ☐ Repression of sex
- Cruelty
 - ☐ Deliberate infliction of mental or physical pain
 - ☐ Tormenting of animals

Sloth

*Refusal to respond to opportunities
for growth, service, or sacrifice*

- Laziness
 - ☐ Sluggishness to perform spiritual, mental, or physical duties
 - ☐ Neglect of family, business, or social obligations or courtesies
 - ☐ Procrastination of disliked tasks
 - ☐ Busyness or triviality to avoid more important commitments
 - ☐ Devotion of excessive time to rest, recreation, amusement, television, light reading, etc.
 - ☐ Waste of employers' time
 - ☐ Shoddy or inadequate work

- **Indifference**

- ☐ Unconcern over injustice to others, especially by currently accepted social standards
- ☐ Lack of sympathy for the suffering of the world
- ☐ Failure to become adequately informed on both sides of contemporary issues, or on Christian principles involved
- ☐ Neglect of duties to state or community
- ☐ Failure to adequately provide for or treat justly those we employ
- ☐ Ignoring or refusing to minister to needy, lonely, or unpopular persons in our parish or neighborhood
- ☐ Insufficient attention to the spiritual & other needs of our family
- ☐ Failure to fulfill our obligation of Christian witness
- ☐ Failure to fully engage in the effort to make the Church's unity and holiness a manifest reality on earth.

The Sacrament of Penance

Upon entering the Confessional, kneel and say the following, making the sign of the Cross:

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost.**

**Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.
It has been _____ since my last confession.**

Recount your sins here, concluding:

**For these sins and for those I cannot now remember
I am truly sorry.**

The priest will offer you counsel, and assign your penance. Then say:

The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offend thee, and I detest all my sins, because I fear the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they have offended thee, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid the near occasion of sin.

The priest absolves you.

If he concludes with a blessing or a dismissal, respond by saying:

Thanks be to God.