

Prayers for the Sacrament of Penance

Penance is the Sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ in His love and mercy wherein we meet the loving Jesus who offers sinners forgiveness for offenses committed against God and neighbor. At the same time, the Sacrament permits sinners to reconcile with the Church, which also is wounded by our sins.

The fruits of this Sacrament are:

- ♦ Reconciliation with God: the penitent recovers sanctifying grace.
- ♦ Reconciliation with the Church.
- ♦ Remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins. Remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin.
- ♦ Peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation.
- ♦ An increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.

Preparation

Supplication

O God the Holy Spirit, enlighten my conscience and grant me the grace to know my sins, to understand the gravity of them, and to have a sincere conversion of heart. Grant me also the grace to call upon you and to show contrition for my sins.

O Mary, refuge of sinners, intercede on my behalf that I may see the wickedness of my ways and show contrition for my sins.

My beloved guardian angel, pray for me that this confession I will make will be my last and that I will no longer sin against our great and holy God.

Examination of Conscience

[Adapted from Socias, James. *Handbook of Prayers* (Woodridge: Midwest Theological Forum., 2012)]

Examine your conscience. Recall your sins.

Calmly ask yourself what you have done with full knowledge and full consent against God's Commandments.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

- ♦ Did I perform my duties toward God reluctantly or grudgingly?
- ♦ Did I neglect my prayer life? Did I recite my usual prayers?
- ♦ Did I receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin or without the necessary preparation?
- ♦ Did I violate the one-hour Eucharistic fast?
- ♦ Did I fail to mention some grave sin in my previous confessions?

- ♦ Did I seriously believe in something superstitious or engage in a superstitious practice (palm-reading or fortune telling for instance)?
- ♦ Did I seriously doubt a matter of Faith?
- ♦ Did I put my faith in danger — without a good reason — by accessing the Internet; reading a book, pamphlet, or magazine; or viewing movies and television programs that contains material contrary to the Catholic Faith or morals?
- ♦ Did I endanger my faith by joining or attending meetings of organizations opposed to the Catholic Faith? Did I take part in one of its activities?
- ♦ Have I committed the sin of sacrilege (profanation of a sacred person, place, or thing)?

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

- ♦ Did I fail to try my best to fulfill the promises and resolutions I made to God?
- ♦ Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I make use of God's name mockingly, jokingly, angrily, or in any other irreverent manner?
- ♦ Did I make use of the Blessed Virgin Mary's name or another saint's name mockingly, jokingly, angrily, or in any other irreverent manner?
- ♦ Have I been a sponsor in Baptism or participate actively in other ceremonies outside the Catholic Church?
- ♦ Did I tell a lie under oath?
- ♦ Did I break (private or public) vows?

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

- ♦ Did I miss Mass on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation?
- ♦ Did I fail to dress appropriately for Mass?
- ♦ Have I, without sufficient reason, arrived at Mass so late that I failed to fulfill the Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation?
- ♦ Did I allow myself to be distracted during Mass, by not paying attention, looking around out of curiosity, etc.?
- ♦ Did I cause another to be distracted?
- ♦ Have I performed any work or business activity that would inhibit the worship due to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, or the appropriate relaxation of mind and body, on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation?
- ♦ Did I fail to generously help the Church in her necessities to the extent that I am able?
- ♦ Did I fail to fast or abstain on a day prescribed by the Church?

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

(FOR PARENTS)

- ♦ Have I neglected to teach my children their prayers, send them to church, or give them a Christian education?
- ♦ Have I given them bad example?
- ♦ Have I neglected to watch over my children, to monitor their companions, the books they read, the movies and TV shows they watch, or their use of the Internet?
- ♦ Have I failed to see to it that my children have received the Sacraments of Baptism and

Confirmation; that they made First Confession and First Communion?

(FOR CHILDREN)

- ♦ Was I disobedient toward my parents or others in authority?
- ♦ Did I neglect to help my parents when my help was needed?
- ♦ Did I treat my parents with little affection or respect?
- ♦ Did I react proudly when I was corrected by my parents?
- ♦ Did I have a disordered desire for independence?
- ♦ Did I do my chores?

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

- ♦ Did I easily get angry or lose my temper?
- ♦ Was I envious or jealous of others?
- ♦ Did I injure or take the life of anyone? Was I ever reckless in driving?
- ♦ Was I an occasion of sin for others by way of conversation; the telling of jokes religiously, racially, or sexually offensive; my way of dressing; inviting somebody to attend certain shows; recommending inappropriate or immoral Web sites on the Internet; lending harmful books or magazines; helping someone to steal, etc.? Did I give scandal to others? Did I try to repair the damage done by the scandal I gave?
- ♦ Did I lead others to sin? What sin or sins were involved?
- ♦ Did I fail to maintain a healthy lifestyle to the detriment or the neglect of my physical health?
- ♦ Did I attempt to take my life?
- ♦ Have I mutilated myself or another?
- ♦ Did I get drunk or use prohibited drugs?
- ♦ Did I eat or drink more than a sufficient amount, allowing myself to get carried away by gluttony?
- ♦ Did I participate in any form of physical violence?
- ♦ Did I consent to or actively take part in direct sterilization (tubal ligation, vasectomy, etc.)? Do I realize that this will have a permanent effect on my married life and that I will have to answer to God for its consequences?
- ♦ Did I consent to, advise, or actively take part in an abortion? Was I aware that the Church punishes with automatic excommunication (*latae sententiae*) those who procure and achieve abortion? Do I realize that this is a very grave crime?
- ♦ Did I cause harm to anyone with my words or actions?
- ♦ Did I desire revenge or harbor enmity, hatred, or ill-feelings when someone offended me?
- ♦ Did I ask pardon whenever I offended anyone?
- ♦ Did I insult or offensively tease others?
- ♦ Did I quarrel with one of my brothers or sisters?

THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS

- ♦ Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts?
- ♦ Did I consent to evil desires against the virtue of purity, even though I may not have carried them out? Were there any circumstances that aggravated the sin: affinity (relationship by marriage), consanguinity (blood relationship), either the married state

or the consecration to God of a person involved?

- ♦ Did I engage in impure conversations? Did I start them?
- ♦ Did I look for fun in forms of entertainment that placed me in proximate occasions of sin, such as certain dances, movies, shows, books, or on the Internet with immoral contents? Did I frequent houses of ill-repute or keep bad company?
- ♦ Did I realize that I might already have been committing a sin by placing myself in a proximate occasion of sin, such as sharing a room with a person I find sexually attractive, or being alone with such a person in circumstances that could lead to sin?
- ♦ Did I fail to take care of those details of modesty and decency that are the safeguards of purity?
- ♦ Did I fail, before going to a show or reading a book, to find out its moral implications, so as not to put myself in immediate danger of sinning and in order to avoid distorting my conscience?
- ♦ Did I willfully look at an indecent picture or cast an immodest look upon myself or another? Did I willfully desire to commit such a sin?
- ♦ Did I lead others to sins of impurity or immodesty? What sins?
- ♦ Did I commit an impure act? By myself, through masturbation (which is objectively a grave sin)? With someone else? How many times? With someone of the same or opposite sex? Was there any circumstance of relationship (such as affinity) that could have given the sin special gravity?
- ♦ Do I have friendships that are habitual occasions of sexual sins? Am I prepared to end them?
- ♦ In courtship, is true love my fundamental reason for wanting to be with the other person? Do I live the constant and cheerful sacrifice of not putting the person I love in danger of sinning? Do I degrade human love by confusing it with selfishness or mere pleasure?

(FOR MARRIED PEOPLE)

- ♦ Did I, without serious reason, deprive my spouse of the marital right? Did I claim my own rights in a way which showed no concern for my spouse's state of mind or health? Did I betray conjugal fidelity in desire or in deed?
- ♦ Did I take "the pill" or use any other artificial birth control device before or after new life had already been conceived?
- ♦ Did I suggest to another person the use of birth-control pills or another artificial method of preventing pregnancy (like condoms)?
- ♦ Did I have a hand in contributing to the contraceptive mentality by my advice, jokes, or attitudes?

THE SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

- ♦ Did I steal? What object did I steal? How much money, or how much was the object worth? Did I give it back, or at least have the intention of doing so? Did I knowingly accept stolen goods or services (cable television, Internet access) without payment?
- ♦ Have I done or caused damage to another person's property? To what extent?
- ♦ Did I harm anyone by deception, fraud, or coercion in business contracts or transactions?
- ♦ Did I unnecessarily spend beyond my means? Do I spend too much money because of

vanity or caprice?

- ◆ Do I give alms according to my capacity?
- ◆ Was I envious of my neighbor's goods?
- ◆ Did I neglect to pay my debts?
- ◆ Did I knowingly accept stolen goods?
- ◆ Did I desire to steal?
- ◆ Did I give in to laziness or love of comfort rather than diligently work or study?
- ◆ Was I greedy? Do I have an excessively materialistic view of life?

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

- ◆ Did I tell lies? Did I repair any damage that may have resulted as a consequence of this?
- ◆ Have I unjustly or rashly accused others?
- ◆ Did I sin by detraction, that is, by telling the faults of another person without necessity?
- ◆ Did I sin by calumny, that is, by telling derogatory lies about another person?
- ◆ Did I engage in gossip, backbiting, or taletelling?
- ◆ Did I reveal a secret without due cause?

Prayer of Repentance

Almighty and Eternal God, you are the Divine Master, and, I am but a lowly slave who has sinned against you. In my wickedness, I thought harm against you, the Font of all-goodness. By my sins I nailed you to the Cross, O Lord. Woe to me for I am the cause of your holy wounds and bloodshed! By my sins I have damned my soul and become a slave to Satan, inheriting the eternal fires of Hell. I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of Hell; but most of all because they offend you, O God. With the prodigal I cry, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you." Forgive me. "Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your holy Spirit from me." I promise to sin no more. On account of your Most Beloved Son, O Eternal Father, have mercy on me, a sinner.

O my Jesus, the Lamb of God who take away the sin of the world, by the merits of your holy wounds, forgive my sins and bless me. With Mary Magdalene I kiss your feet. Accept this prodigal child, O Lord! Wash my soul with the Holy Blood which flows from your wounds.

Mary Most Sorrowful, grant that I may reach my Lord again through your mediation. All you heavenly angels and saints, pray for me.

Here, the penitent may recite
and meditate over the Penitential Psalms.
The Penitential Psalms are 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143.

Confession

Renouncing sin and intending to live a virtuous life, the penitent kneels before a priest, the representative of Christ to whom the power to bind and to loosen have been granted, and prays the Mawdyoneetho in humility and reverence.

Mawdyoneetho

Before God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and before the Blessed Ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and before all the saints and holy angels, and before the noble priesthood by which you loose and bind, O priest of God, I confess my sins. I am sinner! I am a grave sinner!

On account of my sins, I mourn. I wholeheartedly renounce my sins and seek refuge in the grace and mercy of Christ Jesus the Lord. I entreat you: Father, grant me absolution of my sins and bless me.

*Here the penitent lists his sins, according to number and kind.
The penitent ought not hide any sin out of fear but should confess all his/her sins openly to the priest.*

And afterwards, the penitent concludes, saying:

For these and all the sins of my past life, especially those I have named here and those I have forgotten, and the sins of my past, especially (...), I ask pardon of God, penance, and absolution from you.

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven, and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend thee, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

Thanksgiving after Confession

O Most Compassionate Lord God, my thanksgiving for all that you have done for me is insufficient. Until now I had been enslaved by my sins to the evil one. However, now I am your servant. On account of my sins, I deserved the eternal fires of hell but now by this Sacrament I am made worthy for the eternal joy of the kingdom of heaven.