

Penance: Contrition

- 6. The disciple of Christ who, after sinning, is moved by the Holy Spirit and comes to the Sacrament of Penance, should above all, turn to God with all his (her) heart. This inner conversion of heart, which involves contrition for sin and the resolution to lead a new life, is expressed by confession made to the Church, by due satisfaction (an act of penance), and also by amendment of life. God truly grants forgiveness of sins through the Church, which works by the ministry of Priests.

- **A) Contrition**

Among the actions of a penitent the most important is contrition which is “heartfelt sorrow and detestation for the sin committed, with the resolve not to sin again.” And indeed, “we can only approach the Kingdom of Christ by ‘metanoia,’ that is, by an intimate change of the whole person, so that one begins to consider, to judge, and to order one’s life, having been overcome by the holiness and love of God, which in these last days have been revealed in his son and imparted to us abundantly. Therefore, the genuineness of repentance depends on this contrition of the heart. For conversion should affect the person from within, in order to enlighten him (her) more deeply day by day and to conform him (her) more and more to Christ.

- **B) Confession**

The Sacrament of Penance involves the confession of sins, which proceeds from true knowledge of self before God and from contrition for sins, this inward examination of the heart and outward accusation, however, should be made in the light of God’s mercy. Confession requires in the penitent the willingness to open his (her) heart to the minister of God; and in the minister, a spiritual judgment by which, acting in the person of Christ, he pronounces sentence for the forgiveness or retention of sins by virtue of the power of the keys.

- Do I have the habit of real contrition when I celebrate the sacrament of Penance?
- Have I withheld a sin and refused to say it out loud?
- Do I believe that with Jesus I can change or do I feel like it is always going to be this way?
- How can I plan to integrate these ideas into my life?

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- **The Prayer of the Penitent**

- O my God,

I am sorry and repent with all my heart

For all the wrong I have done

And for the good I have failed to do,

Because by sinning I have offended you,

Who are all good and worthy to be loved above all things.

I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace,

To do penance,

To sin no more,

And to avoid the occasions of sin.

Through the merits of the Passion of our Savior Jesus Christ,

Lord, have mercy.

- Lord Jesus, Son of God,

have mercy on me, a sinner.

- O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you,

And I detest all my sins because of your just punishments,

But most of all because they offend you, my God,

Who are all good and deserving of all my love.

I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace,

To sin no more

And to avoid the near occasions of sin.

- Amen

- How can I better avoid the occasions of sin? Which occasions should I avoid? Who knows and could help me?

- Do I firmly resolve to sin no more? What does grace look like when it helps me stay out of sin?

- Do I have a hearty sorrow for my sins?