



# Adoration and Penance

“The human heart is heavy and hardened. God must give man a new heart” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1432). God always gives us the strength to recalibrate our lives and begin again. We participate in this process when we have the resolve to accept God’s grace of conversion. What better place to seek a change of heart than before Christ in the Blessed Sacrament? When we ask for God’s forgiveness, we begin the process of a penitent—that is, one who admits his or her sins, who is truly sorry for having sinned, and who wishes to be restored to right relationship with God and the Church.

## *The Confiteor*

*The Confiteor (Latin for “I confess”) is one of the prayers that can be said as part of the Penitential Act at Mass. When mentioning our faults, we strike our breasts three times. St. Augustine of Hippo said: “No sooner have you heard the word ‘Confiteor,’ than you strike your breast. What does this mean except that you wish to bring to light what is concealed in the breast, and by this act to cleanse your hidden sins?” (Sermo de verbis Domini, 13).*

I confess to almighty God and to you,  
my brothers and sisters, that I have  
greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in  
my words, in what I have done, and in  
what I have failed to do; through my  
fault, through my fault, through my  
most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed  
Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and  
Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

### *Personal Conversation with Jesus*

- Name occasions of sinful thoughts and words that have plagued you.
- When was a recent time you failed to do what was needed?
- Speak a prayer of sorrow to the Lord.

## *St. Faustina's Prayer for Sinners*

*This prayer is typically prayed at the opening of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, a devotion linked to appearances of Christ to St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun who lived in the early twentieth century and recorded in her diary (Diary, 72). The overall purpose of praying the chaplet is threefold: to obtain mercy, to trust in Christ's mercy, and to show mercy to others. (See appendix, page 150, for directions on praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.)*

O Jesus, eternal Truth, our Life, I call upon You and I beg Your mercy for poor sinners. O sweetest Heart of my Lord, full of pity and unfathomable mercy, I plead with You for poor sinners. O Most Sacred Heart, Fount of Mercy from which gush forth rays of inconceivable graces upon the entire human race, I beg of You light for poor sinners. O Jesus, be mindful of Your own bitter Passion and do not permit the loss of souls redeemed at so dear a price of Your most precious Blood. O Jesus, when I consider the great price of Your Blood, I rejoice at its immensity, for one drop alone would have been enough for

the salvation of all sinners. Although sin is an abyss of wickedness and ingratitude, the price paid for us can never be equaled. Therefore, let every soul trust in the Passion of the Lord, and place its hope in His mercy. God will not deny His mercy to anyone. Heaven and earth may change, but God's mercy will never be exhausted. Oh, what immense joy burns in my heart when I contemplate Your incomprehensible goodness, O Jesus! I desire to bring all sinners to Your feet that they may glorify Your mercy throughout endless ages.

### *Personal Conversation with Jesus*

- Jesus is “full of pity and unfathomable mercy.” How are these qualities comparable to each other?
- Contemplate what one drop of Jesus's blood has accomplished.
- Name a way you can show mercy to another in the next twenty-four hours.

## *My Nature Is Fire*

*St. Catherine of Siena (1347–1341) was an “advisor of the pope” personally in her life and has been ever since in her writings. Her ability to offer wise counsel and settle disputes that rocked the papacy led to her canonization in 1461. Pope St. Paul VI gave her the title of Doctor of the Church in 1970. This prayer, tucked within her many writings, calls us to recognize the gift of our God-given nature that is absent of sin.*

In your nature, eternal Godhead,  
I shall come to know my nature.  
And what is my nature, boundless love?  
It is fire,  
because you are nothing but a fire of  
love.  
And you have given humankind  
a share in this nature,  
for by the fire of love you created us.  
And so with all other people  
and every created thing;  
you made them out of love.  
O ungrateful people!  
What nature has your God given you?  
His very own nature!  
Are you not ashamed to cut yourself off  
from such a noble thing

through the guilt of deadly sin?  
O eternal Trinity, my sweet love!  
You, light, give us light.  
You, wisdom, give us wisdom.  
You, supreme strength, strengthen us.  
Today, eternal God,  
let our cloud be dissipated  
so that we may perfectly know and fol-  
low your Truth in truth,  
with a free and simple heart.  
God, come to our assistance!  
Lord, make haste to help us!  
Amen.

### *Personal Conversation with Jesus*

- Imagine the holy nature God intends for you. What is it like?
- Share with Jesus something you are grateful for.
- Tell Jesus how you will be on fire for him.

## *Act of Contrition*

*Contrition is heartfelt sorrow for sins committed, along with the intention of sinning no more. Perfect contrition arises from your love for God and your desire to be in relationship with him. It is also called “contrition of charity,” and it obtains forgiveness from mortal sins as long as it is accompanied by recourse to the Sacrament of Penance as soon as possible. Imperfect contrition, or “attrition,” is sorrow for sin because you fear punishment or perceive the ugliness of your sin. It is also valid in the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance.*

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishment, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

### *Personal Conversation with Jesus*

- Is your heartfelt sorrow for your sins perfect or imperfect?
- In what particular ways do your sins offend God, others, and yourself?
- Tell Jesus of your resolution not to sin again. Ask for his grace to help with this promise.

## Joel 2:12-13

*The Book of Joel was one of the last prophetic books of the Old Testament, completed in roughly 400 BC. Joel's message was a call to repentance and fasting, after which he promised God would bless the people. The prophet refers to a "day of the Lord" when God would battle all the evil forces of the world.*

Yet even now—oracle of the LORD—  
return to me with your whole heart,  
with fasting, weeping, and mourning.  
Rend your hearts, not your garments,  
and return to the LORD, your God,  
For he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,  
and relenting in punishment.

### *Personal Conversation with Jesus*

- “Return to me,” says the Lord. How have you been absent from God?
- Which sins do you weep over? Bring those to Jesus.
- God’s love for you has been steadfast. Name a way this has been true for you despite your remaining absent from him.



## Psalm 32:1-6a

*This is one of seven Penitential Psalms. The psalmist writes from his own experience of being stubborn to the Lord's call to repent and of being subject to sin's power. The consequence of sinful behavior without repentance is understood as frustration and the waning of one's vitality.*

Blessed is the one whose fault is removed,  
whose sin is forgiven.

Blessed is the one to whom the LORD imputes  
no guilt,  
in whose spirit is no deceit.

Because I kept silent, my bones wasted away;  
I groaned all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength withered as in dry summer heat.

*Selah*

Then I declared my sin to you;  
my guilt I did not hide.

I said, "I confess my transgression to the LORD,"  
and you took away the guilt of my sin.

*Selah*

Therefore every loyal person should pray to you  
in time of distress.

### *Personal Conversation with Jesus*

- What is a sin you have been silent about for quite a bit of time? Tell Jesus about the sin.
- How has your physical well-being been impacted by sin?
- Share your joy about being forgiven.