

IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH: THE MASS



Penitential Act

This is article 3 of 21 of the Mass series

We cannot come closer to God than when we come to Mass. Let's face it, when we come before the Lord, we realize in the past week that we have not always focused on Him. Simply put, we have sinned. This is why we acknowledge our sins at the beginning of the Mass and pray the Penitential Act.

There are three forms of the Penitential Act:

1. The Confiteor, or the "I confess" prayer, in which we admit to God and to each other that we have sinned.
2. Priest: "Have mercy on us, O Lord," People: "For we have sinned against you."
Priest: "Show us, O Lord, your mercy," People: "And grant us your salvation." This option is often used at our Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland.
3. After an invocation, the priest or deacon says, "Lord, have mercy" or "Christ have mercy" and the people respond by repeating.

The purpose of acknowledging our sins through the Penitential Act is to examine ourselves (see 1 Corinthians 11:28) and prepare ourselves to receive God in the Holy Eucharist.

During the Penitential Act, we should reflect on these questions:

1. Has it been awhile since we have been to Confession?
2. Do we know we have mortal sins to confess? /Do we have a mortal sin(s) to confess?

If we answer yes, then we need to make a good Confession first before receiving God in the Holy Eucharist. Why? Because the Penitential Act is not a substitute for the Sacrament of Confession.

We all pray this prayer *together* because we *all* sin! We are *all* on a spiritual journey that entails conversion, mercy, and becoming the saints God has called us to be.