

PRAYERS IN THE PEW™ MONTHLY

FAITH IN ACTION CALENDAR / HIGHLIGHTS

THU MAR 7	Saints Perpetua and Felicity, Martyrs
SUN MAR 17	St. Patrick, Bishop and Patron of Ireland
SUN MAR 31	Easter Sunday

Faith Formation Companion to Prayers in the Pew™

→ MONTHLY SYNOPSIS ←

March 2024 – Lent takes up all of March this year and leads us into Holy Week at the very end of the month. It is a time of preparation and deep listening to the voice of the Lord. Lent is also a penitential season in which we aim to overcome our sinful tendencies and strengthen our spiritual lives. The Act of Contrition helps us truly understand our need for Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

The devil has great power to tempt us to sin, however, his power is not infinite (CCC, 395). God has provided a way to break sin's power over us: namely, by repentance. Repentance is the *antidote* to sin.

To help us spiritually, the Church gives us a prayer we can easily memorize as our way to express repentance. Hopefully, we learned some form of the Act of Contrition in our catechism as children or from our parents.

As you pray this Offering, keep in mind that you are united with the entire Church at prayer, from the most pious nuns and monks in their monasteries to the simplest believers on all five continents:

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins, because I dread of the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; 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 confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

There are slightly different versions of this prayer, but essentially, any good act of contrition contains these seven elements:

1. We express sorrow to God because our sin offends Him specifically.

2. We are "heartily" sorry, meaning that our repentance is from the heart, not just a superficial sentiment.
3. We hate ("detest") sin because it is the devil's work, not God's. Note that this is not a hatred of ourselves but of our sinful acts.
4. We also humbly acknowledge the truth that mortal sin leads us to hell if we do not repent.
5. We understand that the love of God is the reason we repent – we regret offending Him "who is all good" and deserves a better response from us.
6. We make a firm act of the will ("firmly resolve") to get our moral lives back on track and never to sin again. And finally,
7. We declare that we cannot overcome sin on our own without the "help of His grace."

This is the perfect prayer for our spiritual lives, and we should pray it every day. Why is it perfect? Because it gives us *humility* in the place of the sin of pride which separates both angels and men from God.

— THE SCHOOL OF SAINTS —



"Urge all souls to trust in the unfathomable abyss of My mercy, because I want to save them all. On the cross, the fountain of My mercy was opened wide by the lance for all souls - no one have I excluded!"

~ *Words of Jesus, the Divine Mercy, to St. Faustina*

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

This month, Lent challenges us to place the highest possible priority on developing a Eucharist-centered spirituality. This may take the form of visiting the Lord directly in a parish's adoration chapel, or attending a daily Mass of possible, or just making a visit to a Catholic church to pray. A Eucharist-centered spirituality is the actual spirituality of Our Lady and of the Church itself.

CALENDAR OF FAITH | March

MAR 3 Sun	St. Katherine Drexel, Virgin and Founder of Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament
MAR 4 Mon	St. Casimir, Confessor
MAR 7 Thu	Saints Perpetua and Felicity, Martyrs
MAR 8 Fri	Saint John of God, Religious
MAR 9 Sat	St. Frances of Rome, Religious
MAR 17 Sun	St. Patrick, Bishop and Patron of Ireland
MAR 18 Mon	St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
MAR 19 Tue	Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary
MAR 23 Sat	St. Turibius de Mongrovejo, Bishop
MAR 24 Sun	Palm Sunday, Beginning of Holy Week

FAITH FUNDAMENTALS



Two Types of Sin

There are many ways to sin but only two types of sin. "All wrongdoing is sin," says the Apostle John, "but there is sin that is not deadly" (1 John 5:17). John's teaching is the biblical basis for the Church's understanding of the two types of sin: mortal and venial.

How do we know for sure whether a sin is mortal or venial? The Church gives us three criteria for evaluating sin.

Mortal Sin—We can know an act is mortally sinful if it consists of:

1. Grave matter – namely, a serious violation of God's commandments.
2. Full knowledge – that is, an understanding of the wrongness of the act.
3. Deliberate consent – meaning a personal decision to commit the sin.

Venial Sin—When an act is a venial sin, it lacks one or more of these criteria, or it is much less serious in any of these three areas.

CATECHISM CONNECTION



1452 When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called "perfect" (contrition of charity). Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible.



BIBLE BASICS



Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed.

Mark 1:14-15 After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel!"

Praying with the National Eucharistic Revival

Dulce, Jesus

Sweet Jesus, Body and Blood most Holy,
be the delight and pleasure of my soul,
my strength and salvation in all temptations,
my joy and peace in every trial,
my light and guide in every word and deed,
and my final protector in death. Amen.

~ *St. Thomas Aquinas*

[Prayers concerning the Eucharist can be found on the Official Prayers in the Pew Eucharistic Revival Edition Prayer Card.]

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