



**ORTHODOX
PRAYERS
OF OLD ENGLAND**

A Western Rite
Prayer-Book
for Orthodox Christians



Third Edition

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REPENTANCE



WHAT IS IT?

Repentance is a change of heart, with contrition for one's sins and a firm resolve to make amends and keep oneself from sin. Repentance is more than being sorry; it includes:

- (1) hope in God's forgiveness,
- (2) remorse (being sorry),
- (3) confessing sins aloud,
- (4) doing the penance—if any—and
- (5) giving up the sin.

A GOOD CONFESSION

A good confession is:

- (1) true (no sins omitted);
- (2) well-prepared;
- (3) contrite (with remorse and without excuses); and
- (4) resolute (with a firm resolve not to repeat the sins).

PREPARING

Ponder on your life and take note of how you have sinned against the Lord, others, and yourself. Ponder also what good you could have done, but did not (we will be judged for that, too). It may help to write your sins down, to make for a quick and thorough confession.

How to Confess Rightly

HOW DO I TELL MY SINS?

Soberly, simply, clearly, briefly. Take full responsibility for choices you have made. Explain any particular harm caused by the sin, and be ready to state how often you fell into the sin. Explain if a sin was really much worse because of the motive (for example, done out of hatred vs. done out of habit). Thoughts and feelings may be confessed generally, but ones that come back again and again to trouble you explain in more detail.

HOW NOT TO CONFESS

Do not implicate anyone else, and do not excuse your sins. It is quite acceptable to say, "Father, I'm not sure what my sins are; can you help me?" It is not a good idea to shrug and say, "Well, Father, I try to be good." We all try to be good; when we do not succeed, we say how in confession.

FREQUENCY OF CONFESSION

If you take Holy Communion monthly, confess monthly. If weekly, confess weekly. Always confess in the Lenten seasons of the year, and each year, be especially sure to confess on a Shrove Day (the Sat., Sun., Mon., or Tues. before Ash Wednesday).

GUIDE TO CONFESSION



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS — Exod. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21

I

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

Do I believe in God? In His Church? His Gospel? Have I been ashamed to confess the truth or make the sign of the Cross? Which do I care more for, the salvation of my soul, or academics, arts, sciences, sports, “fun,” intellectual pursuits, ambitions, or financial “security”? Have I made contact with fortune-telling, tarot cards, or anything “new age” or occult? Do I love my neighbour for God’s sake, forgiving and bearing with him? Have I been arrogant? Unpleasant? Cruel? Manipulative? Stubborn to have my way? Have I been humble? Teachable? Have I dominated conversations without really listening? When scolded, have I owned up to my faults, or did I make a fuss? Do I feel worthy before God? Do I pray, at least mornings, evenings, and at meals? During prayer did my mind wander? Did I rush through the words without actually praying them, at home or in church? Do I read the Scriptures? Have I read or viewed spiritually harmful things? Have I asked God’s help with everything? Thanked Him for everything? Accepted His Providence? Or have I murmured against God? Have I forgotten to hope in Him, grown despondent? Is there a sin I am not willing to give up? Have I attributed my abilities, achievements, and advantages to myself, or God? Been vain about my looks, speech, status, etc.?

II

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Have I cursed using God’s holy name? Spoken God’s name other than with reverence? Do I say, “Oh my God,” “Oh, Jesus,” etc.? Have I mentioned anything to do with faith carelessly or irreverently? Have I behaved irreverently in church or with clergy or monastics? Laughed or chattered in church? Have I made a show of my piety? Have I used Orthodox teachings or traditions to intimidate others? To justify myself? Did I do my penance from my last confession? Am I repentant for my sins, with resolve not to repeat them? Have I concealed anything, because of false shame?

III

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

On Sundays and great Feasts, do I attend Liturgy (Mass)? Vespers or Vigil? Do I usually arrive on time? Do I leave early? Do I participate in services prayerfully, stand and cross myself attentively, or simply daydream? Did I pay close heed to the Scripture readings? Have I influenced others away from services or prayer? If truly unable to attend services, have I prayed extra on these days and kept them quiet and sacred? Did I attend services at non-Orthodox churches? Pray along with non-Orthodox people? Break the church fasts? Have I dressed immodestly going to church, e.g., worn short pants or skirts, not worn a dress and scarf (for women), worn a T-shirt bearing a secular message, or worn anything to gain attention, etc.?

IV*Honour thy father and mother.*

Do I show sincere respect to my parents, to clergy, to teachers and supervisors? If a child or a minor, have I obeyed my parents in all except sin? Do I pray for my parents and superiors? Forgive them? Offend them by rudeness or contradiction?

V*Thou shalt not kill.*

Have I killed another? Wanted to? Hastened his death? Engaged in, encouraged, or failed to discourage an abortion? Have I thought about suicide? Despaired? Have I been angry at another? Hit him? Pushed him? Slapped him? Yelled at him? Given him the cold shoulder? Nourished resentments? Been quarrelsome? Have I discouraged or offended another? Been a bad example? Tempted anyone? Been cruel to any person or to an animal? Have I harmed myself? Have I been angry in general? Lost patience? Been irritable? Overbearing? Inconsiderate? Small-minded? Have I forgiven offenses? Asked forgiveness for mine? Am I at peace with others? Have I helped the needy as I should? Have I neglected anyone in my care? Have I attended the sick or elderly as duty required?

VI*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

Have I committed adultery, or anything sexual outside marriage, such as fornication, masturbation, unnatural acts? Have I filled my mind and senses with fantasies, pornography, etc.? Have I flirted? Have I broken marriage or monastic vows in thought, word, or deed? Have I sinned by impure glances? Relished impure jokes, stories, or shows? Tempted others by immodest dress or suggestive language?

VII*Thou shalt not steal.*

Have I stolen? Taken or used others' things without asking? Failed to restore things loaned to me? Taken things from my employer, for my own use? Have I given of myself, or have I been stingy, selfish? Have I supported the church and its work financially? Did I do my duties, or have I been lazy? Do I waste my time or talents? Do I have a weakness for alcohol, marijuana, drugs, television? Have I wasted money? Spent it selfishly? Been picky about my food? Betrayed anyone's trust? Have I found something valuable and kept it without trying to find the owner?

VIII*Thou shalt not bear false witness.*

Have I slandered others? Deceived others? Gossiped, delighted in gossip, or encouraged others to gossip? Maliciously so? Have I told lies? Have I tended to focus more on the faults of others than on their good points? Engaged in idle talk, chatter, overbearing speech, or grumbling whispers?

IX*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.*

Have I been envious of others' relationships? Been unhappy to see others esteemed more than me? Been sad things were going well for others? Delighted in their misfortunes? Have I been grateful to God for the good people in my life? Have I craved admiration from others? Been unpleasantly competitive?

X*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.*

Have I wanted to be rich? To own more than I need? To give orders? Did I have greedy or envious dreams, thoughts, feelings? Have I overeaten, becoming inactive and unhealthy? Have I grumbled at my lot in life? Have I blamed God when He has permitted hardships for my spiritual growth? Been gloomy that others prospered but I barely make it through life? Been envious of others' virtues? Delighted at their hardships or sins? Have I grumbled at my lot in life? Am I truly thankful to God for all that I do have? Have I been tempted, thinking that I need a lot of money so as to do more good deeds?

**Thou Shalt...***CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY*

Have I given clothing to those needing it? Drink to the thirsty? Food to the hungry? Visits, letters, or phone calls to prisoners and sick folks? Shelter to the homeless? Burial to the dead?

SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

Have I given good advice to those needing it? Shared good knowledge with those unaware? Given a discreet and humble corrective word to those going astray? Comforted those in sorrow? Forgiven my enemies? Been patient to those who corrected me, and grateful for their assistance? Have I prayed for those in need of prayers, both the living and the dead?

UNCERTAIN?

Finally, is there something that might or might not be a sin? — If so, ask the Priest. Is there something that lies heavy on my heart?



PRAYERS FOR GOOD CONFESSION



When you arrive in church, make the usual reverences (p. 12) and then stand before the icon of Christ to say the following prayers.

May the intercession of the Holy Theotókos Mary, of Archangel Michael, of Saint John the Baptist, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint George, Saint Christopher, Saint Martin, Saint Nicholas, Saint Katherine, Saint Barbara, and of Saint Margaret be with and assist me. And pray for me, all Saints and elect of God, that I may be counted worthy to inherit with you the kingdom of God.

- God the Father bless me, He that created the world out of nothing.
- God the Son preserve me, He that repaired the lost human race with His own Blood.
- The Holy Spirit enlighten me, and may the compassionate pouring-out of Him save me always.
- May the All-Holy Trinity deliver me from all evil, preserve and strengthen me in good, and bring me to eternal life. Amen.

FIRST PRAYER

O God, my God, almighty One, before Thee I fall down in humble adoration. Thou art King of kings and Lord of lords; Thou art judge of all the ages; Thou art the redeemer of our souls. Thou art the deliverer of those with faith; Thou art the hope of those that toil; Thou art the comfort of those that sorrow; Thou art the path to those that stray; Thou art the teacher of the nations; Thou art the creator of all created things. Thou art the lover of all good; Thou art the ruler of all the virtues; Thou art the joy of Thy Saints; Thou art everlasting life; Thou art joy in the truth; Thou art exultation in the eternal homeland; Thou art Light of Light; Thou art the wellspring of holiness; Thou art the glory of God the Father on high. Thou art the Saviour of the world; Thou art the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Thou sittest at the right hand of God the Father; Thou reignest upon Thy throne for ever.

I ask Thee for remission of all sins, O my God Jesus Christ, Who desirest that none perish, but all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Thou, O God, hast said with Thy pure and holy mouth: In whatsoever day the sinner turneth again, 'living, he shall live, and shall not die.' (Ezec. 18:21) I turn again to Thee, and with all my heart I will cry to Thee, my God, and to Thee I now wish to confess all my sins. My debts are multiplied upon me, for my sins have no number. I confess to Thee,

O Lord my God, for I have sinned against heaven and against the earth and before Thee and before Thine Angels.

I have sinned by neglecting Thy commandments and my work. I have sinned by vainglory, boasts, and elation of heart. I have sinned by envy and ill will. I have sinned by speaking ill of others and by greed. I have sinned by pride and by malice. I have sinned by fornication and by gluttony. I have sinned by false witness and by hating others. I have sinned by dishonesty and stealing. I have sinned by blasphemy and by carnal hopes. I have sinned by drunkenness and by idle chatter. I have sinned by contentions and by quarrels. I have sinned by swearing and by irritability. I have sinned by earthly and vanishing joy. I have sinned by the delighting of my mind. I have sinned by depression and by murmuring. I have sinned with mine eyes and with mine ears. I have sinned with my nose and with my mouth. I have sinned with my hands and with my feet. I have sinned with my tongue and throat. I have sinned with my neck and chest. I have sinned in my heart and in thoughts. I have sinned with my bones and flesh. I have sinned with my marrow and loins. I have sinned with my soul and with my whole body.

If Thine avenging justice were now upon me, seeing that my sins have been so very greatly multiplied in myself, how could I bear Thy judgment? But I have Thee as my High Priest. I confess my sins to Thee, my God, for Thou art the sinless One. I beseech Thee, Lord God, by Thy Passion and by the sign and wood of Thy salvation-bearing Cross, and by the shedding of Thy holy Blood, that Thou wouldst grant me remission of all my sins. I ask Thee, O Lord my God, Jesus Christ, that Thou wouldst not deal with me according to my deserts but according to Thy great mercy. Judge me, Lord, according to the judgment of Thy forgiveness and Thy mercy. I implore Thee, mine almighty God, that Thou wouldst plant Thy love and fear in me. For Thy name's sake, raise up in me repentance and weeping for my sins. Help me and grant me the remembrance of Thy commandments. O God, blot out mine iniquity from Thy sight, and turn not Thy countenance away from my prayer. Cast me not away from Thy presence. (cf. Ps. 50) Forsake me not; O my God, depart not from me, (Ps. 37:23) but strengthen me in Thy will. Teach me what I should do, what I should speak, and what I should be silent about. O Lord my God, defend me from all mine enemies, visible and invisible. O Lord my God, defend me from the darts of the Devil and against the angel of hell suggesting many evils to me and teaching me how to do them. Forsake me not, O Lord my God, forsake me not, Thy lonely and miserable servant, but help me, O Lord my God, and perfect Thy teaching in me. Teach me to do Thy will, (Ps. 142:10) for Thou art my Teacher and my God, Who reignest unto ages of ages. Amen.

SECOND PRAYER

Before Thine eyes, O Lord, I whose conscience is guilty stand witness. I do not dare to ask for what I am unworthy to receive. For Thou, Lord, knowest all that happeneth with us. We blush for shame to confess what we were fearless to allow ourselves to do. We serve Thee only with words, and lie in our heart; and what we say we want, we prove by our actions that we refuse. Spare us who confess to Thee, Lord; forgive our sins; have mercy on those who beseech Thee; and because mine understanding regarding Thy Most Holy Mysteries is weak, grant, O Lord, that Thou Who dost not accept from us the words of a stony heart mayest impart forgiveness to us of Thyself, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIRD PRAYER

For my sins, O Lord, I ask forgiveness from Thee, for very many are my sins, and numberless my transgressions. I have transgressed with predictability, daily, by day and by night. I walk against the commandment of God which I ought to keep, for full am I of drunkenness, vainglory, dishonesty, perjury, theft, fornication, defilement, lust, pride, accidia, and envy, for I am sinful and unfaithful, wicked of heart, and hateful. I beat against every commandment which I ought to keep from day to day. But, O Father in heaven, I ask for Thy pity and Thy mercy, that Thou never allow me to depart from the light of this life before Thou grant me, a sinner, such repentance that it will free me from hell and bring me into Thy holy mercy. Amen.



ORDER OF CONFESSION

Priest:

EXHORTATION TO PENITENTS

My dearly beloved (child), if (thou wishest) to arrive at the vision of God, it is wholly necessary that (thou) be clean of thought and pure of conscience, for in the Gospel Christ saith, 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.'¹ So if (thou desirest) a clean heart and sound conscience, confess each of (thy) sins, because, as the Apostle saith, 'With the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.'² Declare every single one of (thy) sins, therefore, that God may conceal them on the day of judgment from many thousands. But if thou hide or conceal them now, then on the day of judgment they shall be revealed in the sight of everyone, making thee ashamed.³ Arise, my (son), from the pit of misery and the mire of sin⁴ by confessing. Let the path of reproaches restore (thee) to (thy) first state. Arise, then, so that washed by tears of compunction (thou mayst) be worthy to eat the Bread of Life,⁵ that is, the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of all the faithful, grant (thee) this. Amen.

When it is your turn, stand with lowered eyes next to the Priest, before the holy Altar or the icon of Christ. Begin by making the sign of the Cross over your breast, saying:

¹ Mt. 5:8 ² Rom. 10:10 ³ 1 Cor. 11:31 ⁴ Ps. 39:3 ⁵ Jn. 6:35 ⁶ Jn. 6:53

O Bless, Father. *The Priest blesses you, saying:*

The Lord be in thy heart and on thy lips, that thou mayest confess all thy sins. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

You say: **I confess to God, to Blessed Mary, to all the Saints, and to thee, my spiritual father, that since the time of my last confession (tell how long ago) I have sinned exceedingly against the Lord my God...**

Here speak your sins.

Then you say: **Whereof being repentant, I cry: O God, have mercy.**

For these sins and all others, known and unknown, that I ever did since I was born¹ to this day, I ask mercy of God; and, most merciful Lord God, I acknowledge myself guilty unto Thee, and throw myself utterly upon Thy grace and compassion and mercy.

And I pray thee, my spiritual father, to be between my sin and me, that God, in His mercy, may forgive me for this lowly confession, that I may be delivered from my spiritual foe, and obtain the endless joy to which God hath redeemed me.

Therefore, I beseech Holy Mary, all the Saints of God, and thee, to pray for me. *Priest:*

May almighty God have mercy on thee, forgive thee all thy sins, deliver thee from all evil, preserve and strengthen thee in good, and bring thee to eternal life. *℟ Amen.*

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant thee pardon and remission of all thy sins, space for true repentance and amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of the Holy Spirit. *℟ Amen.*

May the virtue of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the prayers of Holy Mother Church, the good which thou hast done and which, by God's grace, thou shalt do, be to thee for the remission of thy sins.

PENANCE

The Priest tells you what your penance, if any, is:

And for a penance thou shalt ...

ABSOLUTION

Kneel on both knees; the Priest places his prayer-stole over your head & says:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said to His disciples, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven' (Mt. 18:18), Whose will it was for us, though unworthy, to be among their number, Himself absolve thee, N., by our ministry, from all thy sins whatsoever thou hast committed in thought, word, and deed, and neglect, and as thou art absolved from the bonds of thy sins, may He be pleased to bring thee into the kingdom of heaven, O Who with the Father and Holy Spirit liveth & reigneth, God through all the ages of ages. Amen.

¹ Born in the saving stream of Baptism, that is