

Prayer of Perfect Contrition when the Sacrament of Reconciliation is Temporarily not Accessible

One of the questions that has come up quite a bit during this time is “what do we do when we commit a grave sin, and we are not able to get to a priest for confession?” This is a very good question, especially in light of the fact that we priests are unable to hear Confessions for the time being outside of the circumstance of Anointing and Last Rites. It has long been our tradition that in such a situation, the faithful can receive absolution and full remission of their sins under the following circumstances:

1. A “Prayer of Perfect Contrition” is made to God in which all sins are called to mind and forgiveness is sought for them.
2. A pledge to go to Confession as soon as it is possible is made to God. When this Confession is finally made, all the sins that were called to mind in the Prayer of Perfect Contrition are confessed to the priest.

In uncertain times it is always good to be reminded of our Church’s teaching that access to God’s mercy is ALWAYS possible, even when the normal means of receiving forgiveness for sins, especially grave sins, is unavailable. Should the person who makes this perfect Act of Contrition not make it to confession before death, they can be assured that God has recognized their sincere desire to submit to the Sacrament and forgiven their sins. After all, God certainly doesn’t hold the impossibility of getting to Confession against us! Below is a Prayer of Perfect Contrition. The penitent calls to mind his or her sins, and then prays this prayer, followed by a Pledge of Future Reconciliation. When this is finished, a traditional Act of Contrition is said to conclude the prayer.

Prayer of Perfect Contrition

*My God, please grant me perfect sorrow for my sins. Jesus, Savior of the world,
in the midst of your passion on the cross, you suffered for me and gave your life to purify me from my sins.
Separate me from any sinful desires. Amen.*

Pledge of Future Reconciliation

*Lord, whenever the opportunity may be available to me, I resolve to make a sacramental confession.
But, come now and bring your healing grace. Amen.*

Act of Contrition

*O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishment,
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 occasion of sin. Amen.*