



Invest time each week to
expand your vocabulary and
deepen your faith.

07 July 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Penitential Act \pə-nə-ˈten(t)-shəl ˈakt\

A short rite recognizing our failures that is part of the opening rite of the Mass. Sometimes the **Penitential Act** includes the Confiteor ("I confess to almighty God") or the Kyrie ("Lord have mercy"). Another suitable prayer may also be used.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-Penitential-Act>

CONTEXT

The **Penitential Act** opens with an introduction from the priest. He invites the whole community—himself included—to acknowledge their sins.

—Paul Turner, *At the Supper of the Lamb*

This honest look inside ourselves during the **Penitential Act** helps us to be aware of our sin and our need for God to help us overcome sin.

—*EucharisticRevival.org*

WHY IT MATTERS

As early as the time of Saint Paul, those participating in the Lord's Supper were asked to examine their consciences before receiving the Eucharist. Within a few decades, a formal confession of sin and appeal for God's mercy was added to the liturgy. While the forms vary, from beating our breasts to being sprinkled with holy water, the idea is the same: We desire to come to the Eucharist reconciled to God. The **Penitential Act** is a recognition that God is merciful, and we need mercy.

From the U.S. Bishops Committee on Divine Worship: Our communal "action" of acknowledging our sinful state [in the **Penitential Act**] is the first step toward thankfulness for God's mercy, which is always greater than our sinfulness. The pattern of the liturgy is a pattern for life: acknowledge one's sinfulness, but then move on to acceptance of and gratitude for God's merciful love.

RELATED WORDS

Didache | Kyrie | Confiteor | Penance | Confession

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Sin is such a negative word. Can't we just talk about human failure?

I wish I had a dollar each time someone objected to the word *sin*. We're uncomfortable at the implication of blame. We prefer a noncommittal approach—"Mistakes were made"—than the frank admission: "I was wrong."

Religious language is unblinkingly honest. There's no spin with sin. Let's say we're sinners because it's true, and because telling the truth is a healthy choice.

From personal culpability, we move into some wonderful territory. Owning our sinfulness provides access to forgiveness. Denial of culpability never moves us toward healing. Wounds that aren't cleansed, treated, and aired become infected and lead to more serious conditions. So unaddressed pride leads to egotism. Sexual irresponsibility prompts a habit of exploitation. Self-righteous anger paves the way to violence.

Admitting fault is the antidote to self-justification. I'm a sinner! And also, thanks be to God, forgiven.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <https://tinyurl.com/QCA-penitential-act>

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (JULY 7)

Share in the prophets

Prophets can be annoying, always harping about change, so it shouldn't be surprising that Jesus' message of "Repent! Change your heart!" was not popular. In our own day, we are bombarded by messages of all kinds by those who claim to have unique insights into what constitutes a successful life. It is good to have a healthy skepticism unafraid to challenge cultural assumptions.

READINGS: Ezekiel 2:2-5; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Mark 6:1-6 (101 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/070724.cfm>). "The spirit entered into me and set me on my feet."

FAITH IN ACTION

Pray about the messages you hear from all quarters. In the quiet presence of the Holy Spirit ask for help to discern the true prophets of our time. They may not be the ones you'd expect.