

Salvation IS NEAR

AN ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE



OPENING HYMN

(All stand.)

GREETING

Priest or deacon: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Brothers and sisters, Advent is a penitential season to prepare us to celebrate the mystery of the Lord's Incarnation. For our salvation through Christ is nearer to us now than when we first believed. As we look forward to the celebration of the birth of our Savior, let us also recall and prepare for the Second Coming of the Lord.

Let us pray.

All-loving and almighty God, we ask for pardon for our offenses, so that, as we await the appearing of our Redeemer, we may be found worthy to receive forgiveness of our sins. Give your merciful ear to our fervent prayers. We call upon your grace to purify us and make us better prepared for our Lord's coming, as we celebrate this sacrament of your merciful love and reconciliation, through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

(continued on back)

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Parish communities may elect to offer an extended time of silence for this examination before confessions or employ lectors to offer a prayerful reading of the different parts of this examination for the benefit of the penitents gathered.

PART 1: In the silence of our hearts, let us ask ourselves the following questions.

Do I come to the Sacrament of Penance with a sincere desire for purification, conversion, renewal of life and deeper friendship with God? Or do I consider going to Confession a burden to be seldom undertaken?

Did I forget, or deliberately fail to mention, any grave sins in previous confessions?

And have I performed the penances given to me?

Have I made reparation for injuries committed? Have I put into practice the purpose of amendment of life, according to the Gospel?

PART 2: Let us examine our lives when it comes to our love of God. **The Lord says: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart”** (Mt 22:37).

Do I truly love God above all things by faithfully keeping of his commandments, as a child loves a parent? Or are world matters more important to me?

Do I believe that God the Father has spoken to us through his Son, Jesus? Do I follow the teachings of the Catholic Church? Have I made efforts to be instructed in the faith? Do I listen to the Word of God and actively take part in catechesis? Do I avoid things that maybe be harmful to my spiritual life? Do I profess my faith boldly and without fear? Do I avoid being known as a Christian in my private and public life?

Do I pray daily or not? Is my prayer a rote observance or is it a true conversation with God, engaging my mind and heart? Do I turn to God in my difficulties, my joys, my sorrows, and even in my temptations?

Do I show a love for God’s name and reverence for it? Or have I offended God by swearing, or taking his name in vain, or being profane or blasphemous? Am I irreverent to the Blessed Virgin Mary or to the Saints?

Do I keep Sundays—the Lord’s Day—holy and the feasts of the Church by attentive and active participation in the Mass? Have I obeyed the precepts of the Church including making an annual confession and receiving Communion at Easter?

Do I serve any other gods—things that I care more about, or that I trust more—than God? Have I made a god of money, superstitions, spirit-worship or occult practices?

PART 3A: Let us examine our lives when it comes to love of neighbor. **The Lord says: “This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.”** (Jn 15:12).

Is my love of neighbor genuine? Or do I misuse others for my own ends or gains? Do I treat other people as I wish to be treated? Have my words or actions ever given grave scandal to others?

Within the family, do I work toward the good and joy of others? Do I practice patience and genuine love? As children, have you have been obedient to your parents, showing them honor and offering them help? As parents, have you raised your children up in the faith by good example and parental discipline. As spouses, have you have been faithful to one another in your hearts and in your daily life together?

Do I care for those who are poorer than myself, sharing my worldly goods? As far as I can, do I defend persons who may be oppressed? Do I comfort those in sorrow and help persons in need? Or have I despised or ignored people who might be the poor, the frail, the elderly, the stranger, or people of another race?