

II. HOLY REPENTANCE

19

PREFACE AND INSTRUCTION CONCERNING HOW IT BEHOOVES A CONFESSOR TO BEHAVE AND TO INSTRUCT WITHOUT CONTRADICTION THEM THAT COME TO HIM

It is the duty of him that is the recipient of human thoughts to be a model of all good things, and to be abstinent, humble, and virtuous, himself praying every hour unto God, that He may give him the word of understanding to correct them that make haste unto him. First of all it is his duty himself to fast Wednesday and Friday throughout the year, as the divine canons direct, since from these he has to direct himself and others what to do. But if he himself be ignorant, a profligate, and a lover of pleasure, how can he teach virtue unto others? And who would be so unwise as to hearken unto him concerning that which he (*that is, the penitent*) has to say, seeing him a disorderly person and a drunkard, and teaching others not to be intemperate, or to follow any virtue whatever, while he himself is unable to do this? For eyes are more believing than ears, says the divine Scripture. Therefore, take heed unto thyself, O Confessor, for if one sheep be lost through thy negligence, it shall be required at thy hands. "For cursed," says the Scripture, "is he that does the work of the Lord negligently." (Jer. 48:10) And the great Basil says, Give heed, that thou fear not a man in his fall, that thou give not the Son of God into unworthy hands, that thou be not ashamed of Him because of them that are glorious on the earth, and that thou commune not even him that wears a diadem. For the divine canons do not permit the unworthy to be communed, since they are regarded as pagans. If they will not repent, woe unto them, and to them that commune them. Give heed, he says; thou seest that I will not permit such things. Keeping these and similar precepts, and before all things, preserving the Church dogmas immovably, thou shalt save thyself and them that hearken unto thee. If any without proper authorization from the local Bishop dare to be the recipient of thoughts and to confess, such shall rightly receive punishment as a transgressor of the divine canons; for he not only ruins himself, but as many as are confessed by him, they are not confessed, and as many as are bound or loosed, they are not corrected, according to the Sixth Canon of the Council of Carthage, and according to the Forty-third of the same Council.

THE ORDER OF CONFESSION

Preparatory Notes

Confession must be performed at any time: the shepherd of souls must be prepared to confess any repenting Christian at any time—even when it may be inconvenient for him.

If anyone comes to Confession who is unknown, the Confessor must first inquire as to who he/she is, whether he/she is married or unmarried, how long has it been since his/her last confession, and who confessed him/her previously.

Perhaps he/she has left his/her previous Confessor? Has he/she fulfilled any penance laid by the previous Confessor? Has he/she been confessed according to the rules of the Holy Orthodox Church? Is he/she under excommunication, or any other penance by a Bishop? And if the one coming to him is bound by a Bishop, then the Confessor is not permitted to confess him/her, and he/she must be sent to the Bishop who bound him/her.

In preparation for Confession, a Gospel Book, or an Icon of the Savior, and a Cross are placed on an analogion. Then the beginning prayers (*Trisagion*, Psalm 50 and the two following prayers) are said. Usually the reading of the prayers for Confession will be in the church at one time for all those wishing to confess; they are read before Confession at the end of a Divine Service, e.g., at the end of Matins or Vespers, or at Divine Liturgy. Also, the following *Exhortation* may be said (or one similar) for all penitents together, before each one comes forward for their individual confessions.

EXHORTATION TO THE PENITENT BEFORE CONFESSION

My beloved Child in the Holy Spirit, *N.*, it is good that you have come to Holy Repentance, for there, as by a spiritual font, you will wash the sins of your soul, and, as with heavenly medicine, it shall be healed of deathbearing wounds. Only strive that your heart might be broken on account of all your sins, and that you may confess them truthfully to the Lord your God Who is with us invisibly, before me, the wretched one, who have received from him the power of absolution, hiding nothing and in nowise lying. But call to remembrance everything that you have done, and confess them. For the hiding of sins is soul-destroying deception, and lying is death-bearing; for the sake of both, all sins confessed will not be forgiven. And as the Mystery is not fulfilled because of this action of lying, new deadly sins are born. But do not conceal even one sin, not even because of shame, for I also am a man subject to passions, able to fall into similar sins, and I have experience of the weakness of man. And when despising the shame which you shall expose to the One *God*, through me, you will not be accused of these sins before the Angels of God and before all men at the dread Judgement. But if you hide *anything*, before me, from the One *God*, then you will be accused before the universal assembly, and you shall not be delivered from eternal punishment. Do not hide anything because of infirmity, for I will not be angry at you, neither will I make public your sins; but I will heal you with gentleness of soul. And when you confess, expose *everything*, and I will not censure you; uncover your sins, and I will not be as a stranger *to you*. Do not speak to me about those who participate with you in sins, for *to speak of* the weakness of *our* neighbors is evil. Confess only your sins, not idly, but with a pricked heart, and, with good intent, to preserve yourself henceforth from like transgressions; for without this it is not possible to have true repentance. In this way, then, having ordered your heart, give glory to the Lord. Confessing your transgressions before me, a sinner, and receiving absolution, you will be freed from the bonds of sins, you will be cleansed, and you will be healed spiritually by the grace of God.

The Confessor leads the one that comes to confess (but not two or more) with uncovered head before an icon of our Lord Jesus Christ. And he begins: Blessed is our God.... Then: Amen. O Heavenly King.... Holy God ... Glory ... O Most-holy Trinity ... Lord, have mercy (thrice). Glory ... Our Father ... For Thine is the Kingdom.... Lord, have mercy (12 times). Glory.... Come, let us worship ... (thrice). Then:

Psalm 50(51)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and

my sin is before me continually. Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight; that Thou mightest be justified in Thy words and victorious when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me.

For behold, Thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom hast Thou revealed unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; *my* humbled bones shall rejoice. Turn Thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and with Thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto Thee.

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Thy righteousness. O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would have given it; with whole burnt-offerings Thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a broken and humbled heart God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy good pleasure unto Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be built. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole burnt-offerings. Then shall they offer young bulls upon Thine altar.

And these Troparia, TONE 6:

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, for laying aside all excuse, we sinners offer to Thee, as to our Master, this supplication: Have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

O Lord, have mercy on us, for in Thee have we put our trust. Do not be angry with us, nor remember our iniquities, but look down on us even now, as Thou art compassionate, and deliver us from our enemies; for Thou art our God, and we are Thy people; we are all the work of Thy hands, and we call on Thy name.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Blessed Theotokos, open the doors of compassion to us whose hope is in thee, that we may not perish, but be delivered from adversity through thee. For thou are the salvation of the Christian people.

Then, Lord, have mercy (40 times).

The Priest says:

Let us pray to the Lord.

And this Prayer:

O God, our Savior, Who, by Thy prophet Nathan didst grant remission of his sins to the repentant David, and didst accept the penitent prayer of Manasseh: Do Thou Thyself, in Thy customary love for mankind, accept this, Thy servant, *N.*, who repents of the sins he (*she*) has committed, overlooking all that he (*she*) has done, forgiving his (*her*) unrighteousness, and passing by his (*her*) transgressions. For Thou, O Lord, hast said: "I desire not the death of a sinner, but that he turn from his way and live"; and that sins shall be forgiven even unto seventy times seven. For as Thy majesty is incomparable, so is Thy mercy immeasurable. For if Thou shouldest mark iniquities, who should stand? For Thou art the God of them that repent and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Let us pray to the Lord.

And another Prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, the Shepherd, and the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world, Who gavest remittance unto the two debtors, and didst grant remission of her sins unto the harlot: Do Thou Thyself, O Master, loose, remit and pardon the sins, transgressions and iniquities, whether voluntary or involuntary, whether known or unknown, whether by mistake or in disobedience, which Thy servants have wrought, and whatsoever they have done, as men bearing flesh and living in the world, being beguiled by the devil. And if by word, or by deed, or in knowledge, or in ignorance they have sinned, or have despised the word of a Priest, or are under a priestly anathema, or are fallen under their own anathema, or are bound under an oath, do Thou Thyself, as Thou art good and gentle, O Master, be pleased that these, Thy servants, be loosed by Thy word, forgiving them their own anathema and oath, according to the greatness of Thy mercy. Yea, O Master and Lord, O Lover of Mankind, hearken unto us who are entreating Thy grace for these Thy servants; and, as the greatly-merciful One, overlook all their transgressions, and deliver them from eternal torment. For Thou hast said, O Master: "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." For Thou only art sinless, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

After this, he says to him (her):

Behold, Child, Christ invisibly stands here to hear your confession. Be not ashamed, neither be afraid, and hide nothing from me. Rather, fear not to tell me all that you have done, so that you may receive forgiveness from our Lord Jesus Christ. Behold, His Icon is before us. And I am only the witness, that I may bear

witness before Him of all you tell me. If you hide anything from me, you shall have the greater sin. Take heed, therefore, that having come to the place of the Physician, you not depart unhealed.

And then he shall question him (her) diligently, question by question, and shall await his (her) answer to each question.

Customarily, the Confessor sits, while the penitent kneels before the analogion.

And first of all he shall question him (her) concerning his (her) faith, saying:

Tell me, Child: Do you believe that which has been transmitted and taught by the Catholic Apostolic Church which was planted and nourished in the east, and which has spread from the east into all the universe and which abides even to this day undivided and unchanged? And do you doubt any of its traditions?

And if he (she) believes in an Orthodox manner, without doubt, let him (her) read the Symbol of Faith:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; Who spoke by the prophets.

In one Holy Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

And when this is finished, the Priest shall question him (her):

The questions that follow in the ***Book of Needs***, coming down from Byzantine times, although retained in earlier editions, are not now asked. (They are, however, appended at the end of the *Order of Confession*.) Instead, the Confessor waits for the penitent to reveal his (*her*) offences, and, when necessary, asks suitable questions, according to the penitent's condition, sex, age, etc.

At the conclusion of the questioning, the Priest admonishes:

Concerning all these things you are bound henceforth to take care, since, according to the Christian Mystery, you are baptized with a second Baptism, and, God helping you, you must make a good beginning. And, above all, you must not take these things lightly, to return to the same things, lest you become a cause of scorn to men; for this is not becoming to Christians. But live honorably, righteously, and devoutly. And may God help you by His grace.

And when you, O Priest, have said all these things to him (her), and have carefully examined him (her), and he (she) moreover has revealed all things concerning himself (herself) without shame (that is, concealing nothing), say unto him (her): Bow your head. Then he (she) that has confessed bows his (her) head. And the Confessor shall say this Prayer:

Let us pray to the Lord.

O Lord God of the salvation of Thy servants, Who art merciful, compassionate and long-suffering, Who repentest concerning our evil deeds, Who desirest not the death of a sinner, but that he should turn from his way and live: Do Thou Thyself now be merciful unto Thy servant, *N.*, and grant unto him (*her*) an image of repentance, pardon and remission of sins, forgiving him (*her*) every transgression, whether voluntary or involuntary. Reconcile and unite him (*her*) to Thy Holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with Whom is due unto Thee power and majesty, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

After this Prayer, the Priest absolves the penitent, who kneels with head to the ground, saying:

The Completion of the Mystery of Holy Repentance

Slavonic Form

May our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, by the grace and compassion of His love for mankind, forgive you, child, *N.*, all your transgressions; and I, an unworthy Priest, through His power given unto me, forgive you and absolve you from all your sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Greek Form

May God Who pardoned David through Nathan the Prophet when he confessed his sins, Peter who wept bitterly for his denial, the Harlot weeping at His feet, the Publican and the Prodigal, forgive you all things, through me a sinner, both in this world and in the world to come, and set you uncondemned before His terrible Judgment Seat. Now, having no further care for the sins which you have confessed, depart in peace.

And finally, the Priest, while saying the Absolution, signs the penitent with his right hand with the Sign of the Cross.

Customarily, the Priest lays his Epitrachelion over the head of the penitent and makes the Sign of the Cross on the penitent's head over it.

Then:

It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God, more honorable than the Cherubim and, more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim. Without defilement thou gavest birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify thee.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

And the Dismissal.

After this, the Priest gives the Cross to the penitent to kiss.

And the Spiritual Father makes an exhortation to the Spiritual Child after the confession of his (her) sins:

EXHORTATION FROM THE SPIRITUAL FATHER TO THE SPIRITUAL CHILD AFTER THE CONFESSION OF SINS

My beloved Child in the Holy Spirit, *N.*, the unconquerable mercy of God, the Lover of Mankind, desiring not that one sinner should perish, but summoning all to repentance, for the sake of the inheritance of future good things, does not leave you to rot spiritually in sins, for it is better that you should obtain life eternal. And He is well pleased to turn unto you, the apple of His eye, His own deep compassion, and to touch you with the finger of the grace of the Holy Spirit, rousing you, that you might quickly arise from the sleep of sin, to stand up from the bed of transgressions, and to receive the most important healing of soul-destroying harm—Holy Repentance; and to make manifest your own sickness through confession of sins in the presence of me who am unworthy, and to receive, with joy, a penance for sins that works for good. For this you must always render great thanksgiving unto Him, for this is not done according to your sins which you have committed, nor has this been given you according to your transgressions, but according to the compassion that proceeds out of His own goodness has He been merciful to you. And He has done this to you that you might be counted worthy of the remission of your iniquities—all of them. Like the dust from the face of the earth by the wind, they have been carried away from your soul by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Like the leprosy of Na’aman by the waters of the Jordan, for the sake of your tears they have been cleansed. And as through the word of the Lord the Ten Lepers were made healthy in their bodies, thus has been done today, rendering your soul safe from harm through the word of absolution from our Lord. And, as the Paralytic, who for thirty-eight years lay by the Sheep Pool, having been healed by the word of the Lord, heard from the Lord, “See, thou art well. Sin no more” (John 5:14), likewise, the same has been given you, through grace: at the word of petition by me a sinner being freed of paralysis of the soul, you hear from my wretchedness: “See, thou art well. Sin no more.” “Sin not”, I say, that having been given the precious pearl by the grace of God through repentance you not be found destroyed, and that you not be deprived of the meet adornment of Heaven. “Sin not”, that the lamp of your soul not be extinguished, inflamed with the fire of the love of God, by whose radiance you may be able to walk easily the dark path of this life, and that it may be easy for you to enter into the land of unblinking light, and again, without this, to suffer on this path that always brings harm from the snares and delusion of enemies, and, having run to the doors of the chamber of the heavenly Bridegroom, finding it necessary to remain with the foolish virgins who had their lamps extinguished, to be left outside. I say in a few words, “Sin no more”, that you not be likened unto mindless beasts, according to one of the proverbs adopted by St. Peter: “It has

happened unto them according to the true proverb: ‘The dog turns to his own vomit again’, and, ‘the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire’ ” (2 Pet. 2:22); for those who are like these beasts shall not enter into the heavenly Kingdom. Henceforth, sin no more, that having come to repent of sins, you not continue to sin. Yet, a penance is laid upon you, which you must strive to fulfil with diligence and devotion, and beyond this, as far as it is possible for you to do, to do it well; for this is not according to the multitude of transgressions, but is applied taking into account usual human weakness, hoping on the merciful kindness of God Who is well-pleased to accept the efforts of them that are not able and to crown them. But abiding in continual repentance for sins, strive to increase good deeds, that, through repentance, you not only be delivered of eternal torment, but also that you may be counted worthy, by God, of unending life for your good work, from whom will always come assistance to you for all your good beginnings, for the performing of good deeds, and mercy and blessing all the days of your life, and that you may be counted worthy to receive in the future age the gift of eternal life.

Then a penance is given him (*her*) opposite its transgression.

Concerning Penance

(At this point in the **Book of Needs** there follow instructions concerning the imposition of a penance, which, according to the canons, consists of prohibition from Holy Communion for a lengthy time (one, two or many years) because of certain grave sins. These have not been translated.)

Other Directives Concerning Penance

A distinctive penance is assigned according to the gravity of the sins, the age of the penitent, the circumstances, and also the measure of his/her repentance.

Assigning a penance to the penitent consisting of the exercise of some sort of virtue, the Confessor must choose virtues opposite the sins that have been confessed. Thus: covetousness presupposes the distribution of alms; fornication—fasting; weakness in Faith and Hope—the imposition of prayers; etc. But, it must also be taken into account whether or not it is possible for the penitent to fulfill the penance assigned to him/her; that is, a penance must not be assigned that is impossible to fulfill. For example, the distribution of alms is not assigned to one who is poor; or, for one occupied with many burdensome obligations—overly-frequent attendance at church services and lengthy time in prayer; etc.

In that penance is not reparation to God for sins, it is possible and perfectly correct not to lay it on a penitent who, with a pure heart and with tears, repents for his/her own sins and promises henceforth with all his might to refrain from them.

Penances consisting of exclusion from communion of the Holy Mysteries (excommunication) for a long time, is imposed for more weighty sins. Such penances, according to the canons of the Holy Fathers, are applied for such sins as: apostasy, heresy, incest, adultery, murder, sodomy, bestiality, perjury, oath-breaking, witchcraft, and defilement of graves. (In times past, penances for such sins consisted of exclusion from Communion for a few or even many years, even extending to the end of one's life.) Only the Bishop has the power to lay such penances. In such cases, he *must* be consulted.

For less weighty sins, exclusion from communion of the Holy Mysteries is permitted to the Priest, but, a penance consisting of exclusion from the Holy Mysteries for a *long* time is not permitted.

A penance consisting of exclusion from church services, or a *publicly announced* exclusion from communion of the Holy Mysteries, is laid only by the Bishop.

If, due to the seriousness of the sin(s) confessed a penance has been laid upon the penitent consisting of abstinence from communion of the Holy Mysteries, then the Prayers, "Lord God of the salvation ..." and that of absolution are not read. When the term of the prohibition has ended, then, after Confession, before the reading of the aforementioned Prayers, it is necessary to read a special ***Prayer on the Absolution from Penance***, which follows the ***ORDER OF CONFESSION***. It is necessary, however, that it be read over the one being absolved *in private*, and *not* at Divine Liturgy.

Absolution is possible only from the Priest who laid the penance. It is not possible for another Priest to absolve him/her who has been penanced, excepting circumstances when the one under penance is dying. In such cases any Priest may absolve, providing him/her with the Holy Mysteries before death.

A Priest is not permitted to absolve one under penance if such was laid by the Bishop.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE CONFESSOR AS FOUND IN THE *BOOK OF NEEDS*

What follows are the printed questions asked in the *Book of Needs* from Byzantine times.

Tell me, Child: Have you been a heretic or a schismatic? Have you stood with them, frequenting their houses of worship, listening to their doctrines, or reading their books? Have you loved someone of the world more than your Creator? Have you borne false witness? Have you forsaken any vow promised to God? Have you scorned divine Scriptures?

Tell me, Child: Have you perverted your virginity by masturbation; do you *still* masturbate? Tell me: Have you sodomized anyone, or someone you? Have you committed fornication with a woman? With how many woman have you fallen, and who were these persons: divorced women, or those with a husband? For they that have fallen with divorced women are adulterers; likewise if a married woman falls with someone, she is called an adulteress.

And again he questions him (her) concerning incest:

Tell me, Child: Have you fallen with someone in your family, or with your godfather? This is called incest. Tell me: Have you fallen into bestiality; have you fallen with your wife beyond nature, or have you fallen, before marriage, with one already betrothed to you? Have you fallen with anything alien to the body?

But for the gravest sins one shall be put under a ban (from Communion):

Tell me, Child: Have you killed a man, either voluntary or involuntary?

Tell me, Child: Have you defrauded *anyone* for something, and swore an oath concerning this? Or, another defrauded *someone* and you accepted *that for which the fraud was perpetrated?*

And if he defrauded anyone for something, let it be returned; and when it has been returned, let him make haste to the Bishop to receive forgiveness, and perform his penance. But if he did not make an oath, let him fulfil, if possible, the penance for stealing (a lesser offense).

Apparently this question concerns a fraud when the one who has defrauded another has sworn an oath in the perpetration of the fraud, e.g., “I swear before God that what I say is true”.

Tell me, Child: Have you cursed, and how have you cursed—voluntarily, or involuntarily, or according to need? Have you coerced a weaker person? Have you wronged anyone? Or have you wronged anyone in purchasing *something*; or in some other way?

And if he has wronged, or is in the process of wronging someone, let him requite it.

For example, see the Gospel story of Zacchaeus.

Tell me, Child: Have you practiced witchcraft, or, practicing magic have you molded wax or tin (*e.g., as in Voodoo magic*)? Have you brought witches into your home, and did they perform witchcraft? Or, did you do this yourself, and when did you do this? Or, did you practice magic in order to harm someone? Did you tie up an animal that a magician (*or witch*) might use its blood? Or did you offer it, and he cast a spell for you? Have you bound (*i.e., cast a spell, or caused a spell to be cast against*) a man or a woman, or perhaps cast a spell to make someone sick? Do you wear amulets/charms made from herbs?

And if, therefore, it be discovered that he did any of these things, or that others did them to him, he shall be put under the ban for six years, as the canons prescribe. “But let an adept that does these things (i.e., one practiced in these things) be put under the ban as a murderer, that is to say, for twenty years”, as the great Basil says.

And again he shall say:

Tell me, Child: Have you reproached your parents, or a Priest, or a monk, or some other person? Are you at enmity with anyone? Do you have love for him? For if you are at enmity with someone, or are envious, your gifts and prayers are not acceptable before God; nothing that you do for God’s sake will be accepted *under such circumstances*. Tell me, Child: Have you practiced cannibalism, or eaten blood, or something strangled, or something ravished by wolves, or something struck by birds? Have you defiled yourself with anything from meat or cheese, as set forth in the sacred canons: either in Great Lent, or on Wednesday or Friday? Have you given anyone over to the devil, or have you censured or reproached the Faith, or the laws, or have you spoken some blasphemy, or cursed a man? Have you spoken lies, or sworn falsely? Or have you boasted or gotten drunk, for which you ruin soul and body?

And he shall call to remembrance the other deadly sins:

Pride, extortion, fornication, envy, gluttony, anger, laziness—all the Seven Sins resulting from being born of mothers (*cf. Psalm 50*)—with all reasonable examination considering their distinctive forms, and consequently making a strict searching out, no matter whether the one being questioned be highly spiritual, a coarse person, a monastic, a secular person, a young person, or an elder person.

PRAYER ON THE ABSOLUTION FROM PENANCE

O Deeply-compassionate Lord, Who art Good and the Lover of Mankind; Who, for Thy compassion's sake, didst send Thine Only-begotten Son into the world that He might tear asunder the handwriting of our sins, and loose the bonds of them that are bound in sin, and preach deliverance unto the captives: Do Thou Thyself, O Master, by Thy goodness free Thy servant, *N.*, from the bond that lies upon him (*her*), and grant unto him (*her*) that, at every time and place, he (*she*) may, without sin, draw near with boldness unto Thy majesty, and, with a pure conscience entreat the rich mercy that is from Thee. For Thou art a merciful God, and the Lover of Mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then the Prayers, "Lord God of the salvation ..." and that of Absolution are read.