

Article #3 = The Penitential Rite – “I confess to Almighty God...”

Imagine a priest telling you, “you must get up in front of everyone here in our church and tell them that you are a sinner! That you have greatly sinned! And that you need their prayers and their help!” Believe it or not, we all do this together every single Mass during the penitential rite. After the opening few words, we go right into asking God for forgiveness for our sins, and we say a prayer together called the CONFITEOR prayer (Latin for “I confess”). As we approach the infinite God, as we approach Jesus, God become man, during each and every Mass, it makes perfect sense to start by humbling ourselves, by examining our consciences, and by asking God to forgive us of our sins. *By the way, the Church teaches that we can be forgiven of smaller sins or venial sins during this part of the Mass (this is possible many times throughout our everyday life through acts of charity, love, faith, and repentance, but the Mass is a special outpouring of God’s grace in this way), even though we should still go to the Sacrament of Confession for bigger or mortal sins [and confessing our smaller sins is still a good thing to do in the Sacrament of Confession].* Either way, as we strike our chests 3 times with a closed fist during the 3-fold repetition of “through my fault!” (see Luke 23:48 or Luke 18:13) in humility and also reflect on specific **thoughts, words, and actions** that might be struggles for us, we strive to entrust ourselves into the mercy of Jesus Christ and prepare our hearts for the outpouring of grace to come. Let us take advantage of this beautiful part of each Mass, and ask Christ to reveal our faults more fully to our minds and hearts, so that you can hand them over to Jesus and He can forgive them and sanctify us more and more each and every day!