

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

FORMULA OF PRIVATE CONFESSION

Confessionis Privatae Formula

SABBATISMUS

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153)
Confessionis Privatae Formula · Formula of Private Confession

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CONFESSIONIS PRIVATAE FORMULA Seu oratio poenitentis ad Christum devotissima, quae B. Bernardo non male ascribitur.

1. In unione acerbissimi doloris tui, qui causam doloris mei assumpsisti, et emendationem pro peccatis meis suscepisti, Domine Jesu Christe, cum universitate dolentium, vere poenitentium, et te in veritate quaerentium, confiteor tibi omnia peccata mea, mala commissa, et bona omissa, vel non pure aut negligenter facta, sicut tu ea melius nosti in numero, pondere et mensura; et dies perditos vitae meae, in quibus te offendi, et laudem tuam minui, et a te summo bono cecidi, et proximum in casum traxi. Suscipe ergo, Domine, de mea misera vita residuum annorum meorum; pro his vero quos male vivendo perdidisti, quibus perditae vixi, cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, ne despicias. Dies mei declinaverunt et perierunt sine fructu. Impossibile est ut eos revocem; sed placeat tibi, ut recogitem illos in amaritudine animae meae. Domine, abyssus profundissima miseriae meae abyssum invocat altissimae misericordiae tuae. Ne contineas in ira miserationes tuas, et fontem inexhaustum misericordiae tuae circa me exsiccari ne permittas propter peccata mea, qui misereris omnium, et nihil odisti eorum quae fecisti, dissimulans peccata hominum propter poenitentiam. Tuum est, Domine, remittere peccata; miserere mei, dum tempus est gratiae et miserationis; et dum tempus est emendationis, da mereri gloriam benedictionis, ne in die consummationis me feriat verbum maledictionis.

2. Fac me, quaeso, Domine, assueta mala relinquere et quae tibi placent peragere; et studium, quod huc usque in peccatis exercui, te adjuvante, deinceps in tua voluntate da ut exerceam, ut ubi abundavit delictum tua gratia reabundet. Rogo te propter temetipsum, et per amorem piissimae matris tuae gloriosae Virginis Mariae, et per intercessionem omnium sanctorum tuorum atque electorum tuorum, ignosce omnibus peccatis, negligentis et ignorantis meis, et ne perdas me cum omnibus iniquitatibus meis, neque in finem iratus reserves mala mea. Recordare, Domine Jesu, quia tuum non est perdere quidquam eorum quae Pater tuus dedit tibi; quin tibi proprium est misereri semper et parcere, neminem perdere, sed salvare. Nam Pater tuus misit te in mundum, non ut iudices mundum, sed ut vitam habeamus per te; ut sis propitiatio nostra, et advocatus noster, non contra nos. Quod enim nos debuimus, tu solvisti; quod nos peccavimus, tu luisti; quod nos negleximus, tu supplesti.

FORMULA FOR PRIVATE CONFESSION Or a most devout prayer of a penitent to Christ, which is not incorrectly ascribed to Blessed Bernard.

1. In union with your most bitter sorrow, you who took up the cause of my sorrow and undertook the amendment for my sins, Lord Jesus Christ, together with the whole community of those who grieve, truly repent, and seek you in truth, I confess to you all my sins, the evils committed and the good omitted, or those things done impurely or negligently, just as you know them better in number, weight, and measure; and the lost days of my life, in which I offended you, diminished your praise, fell away from you, the highest good, and drew my neighbor into a fall. Receive therefore, Lord, the remainder of the years of my wretched life; but for those which I lost by living badly, in which I lived ruinously, a contrite and humbled heart, O God, do not despise. My days have declined and perished without fruit. It is impossible for me to recall them; but let it please you that I reflect upon them in the bitterness of my soul. Lord, the deepest abyss of my misery calls upon the highest abyss of your mercy. Do not withhold your compassions in anger, and do not permit the inexhaustible fountain of your mercy to be dried up around me because of my sins—you who have mercy on all and hate nothing of what you have made, overlooking the sins of men for the sake of repentance. It is yours, Lord, to remit sins; have mercy on me while it is the time of grace and compassion; and while it is the time of amendment, grant that I may merit the glory of blessing, lest on the day of consummation the word of malediction strike me.

2. Make me, I beseech you, Lord, to leave behind my accustomed evils and to perform what pleases you; and grant that the diligence which I have hitherto exercised in sins, with your help, I may henceforth exercise in your will, so that where transgression abounded, your grace may superabound. I ask you for your own sake, and through the love of your most holy mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, and through the intercession of all your saints and your elect, forgive all my sins, negligences, and ignorances, and do not destroy me with all my iniquities, nor in anger reserve my evils until the end. Remember, Lord Jesus, that it is not yours to lose anything of those which your Father gave to you; rather, it is proper to you always to have mercy and to spare, to destroy no one, but to save. For your Father sent you into the world, not that you might judge the world, but that we might have life through you; that you might be our propitiation and our advocate, not against us. For what we owed, you paid; what we sinned, you atoned; what we neglected, you supplied.

3. Proficiat ergo nunc, Domine, et in extremis meis, plenaria, imo superflua satisfactio, amarissima mors tua, et pretium inaestimabile fusi sanguinis tui, commemoratio satisfactionis tuae, venerabile mysterium corporis et sanguinis tui, quod tibi quotidie offertur in Ecclesia pro salute fidelium servorum tuorum: in quo es tu ipse sacerdos et sacrificium; ille qui offert pariter et cui offertur, et hoc ipsum quod offertur, ad promerendam in praesenti gratiam, quam non mereor; ad obtinendam in futurum requiem et gloriam, quam tua amarissima mors impetravit. Imperfectum meum, Domine Jesu, oculi tui viderunt; sed tu, pie, misericors et praestabilis super malitia, ne, quaeso, imputes mihi ad aeternum supplicium, qui omnia ad summum et perfectum bonum optime, et perfectissime, et sapientissime praeordinasti; et ne permittas me deleri de libro vitae; sed offer mihi portionem, quae me contingit, in subsidium tuae videlicet pretiosae passionis, pro qua voluisti hominem habere tibi cohaerem in terra viventium.

4. Te igitur, Domine, moveat et inclinet ad misericordiam humanae fragilitatis consideratio, qui nosti quae sit hominis substantia, et quod non vane constitueris hominem super terram; et conserva me opus tuae pietatis, ne incassum circa ipsum laboraveris, neve infructuosa sit in me immaculati cruoris tui effusio. Tu, qui es purificationem faciens peccatorum, praesta, ut emundatis per te peccatorum sordibus, illustrataque mentis facie cognoscam te, teque agnoscens in directione jugiter ad te tendam, ut felici tandem exitu ad te merear pervenire, Jesu Christe, Deus meus et Dominus meus, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivis, etc.

3. Let it profit me therefore now, Lord, and in my last moments, that plenary, nay superfluous satisfaction, your most bitter death, and the priceless value of your shed blood, the commemoration of your satisfaction, the venerable mystery of your body and blood, which is offered to you daily in the Church for the salvation of your faithful servants: in which you yourself are both priest and sacrifice; he who offers equally and to whom it is offered, and that very thing which is offered, to merit in the present the grace which I do not deserve; to obtain in the future the rest and glory which your most bitter death obtained. My imperfection, Lord Jesus, your eyes have seen; but you, who are pious, merciful, and prevailing over malice, do not, I beseech you, impute to me eternal punishment, you who have preordained all things for the highest and most perfect good, most excellently, most perfectly, and most wisely; and do not permit me to be blotted out from the book of life; but offer to me the portion which falls to me, namely in support of your precious passion, for which you willed to have man as your co-heir in the land of the living.

4. May the consideration of human frailty, therefore, move and incline you to mercy, Lord, you who know what is the substance of man, and that you have not established man upon the earth in vain; and preserve me, the work of your piety, lest you have labored in vain concerning it, and lest the shedding of your immaculate blood be fruitless in me. You, who are the one who effects the purification of sins, grant that once the filth of my sins has been cleansed by you and the face of my mind has been enlightened, I may know you; and knowing you, may I continually strive toward you in directness, so that at a happy end I may finally merit to reach you, Jesus Christ, my God and my Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live, etc.