

LEARNING FOCUS 3: The Penitential Act.

CONTENT

Part of the Introductory Rite at the beginning of Mass is the Penitential Act. It reminds people of the mystery of Christ's love. This helps to prepare people to hear God's Word in the part of the Mass which is the Liturgy of the Word. It also helps them to feel part of the community, as everyone is together needing mercy and forgiveness.

The priest begins the Penitential Act by saying:

"Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries."

There are then three different Penitential Acts that could be used. Read these together from the Mass leaflet.

- 1 I confess ...
- 2 Have mercy on us, O Lord ...
- 3 You were sent to heal the contrite of heart ...




In the *I confess* prayer everyone acknowledges they have done wrong in their thoughts, in their words, in the things they have done and the things they have neglected to do. Then they agree it was their own fault. Nobody made them do it. Finally, they ask all the angels and saints as well as everyone present to pray for them.

At the end of the Penitential Act, the priest reassures the people by saying:

"May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life."

Everyone responds, "Amen!"

SOME KEY QUESTIONS

-  Why is the Penitential Act at the beginning of Mass?
-  Which of the three Penitential Acts do you like best and why?
-  How is Christ's love shown in the Penitential Act?

Task:

Give some examples of how we say sorry in our daily lives. How can we change what we do in order to follow God's way?