

PRAYER 7.

A very humble Confession of Sins, and a Prayer to the Father for Forgiveness.

O FATHER Almighty, tender and merciful, I, a wretched and vile sinner, with as much lowliness as I can, and with full trust in the immensity of Your goodness, cast myself down at Your Feet, and confess with inward sorrow of heart all my great and grievous sins, where I have offended You, my gracious Father, even to this very hour; and that I have not feared to commit those accursed crimes which Your only and beloved Son so cruelly atoned for, and so bitterly expiated. I confess also to You, O most gracious Father, my manifold and great ingratitude, that even to this hour I have been ungrateful both to You, and to Your Son, for all the love, and mercy, and faithfulness which You have shown me; inasmuch as now, for so many years, in the midst of malice and sinfulness, You have in Your long-suffering spared me, and have gently borne with all the wrong and contempt I have brought upon You by my disobedience and evil will; indeed, even waited for my repentance with such infinite loving-kindness, in order that at some time or other You might get possession of my heart, and make Your dwelling-place in it, and pour out upon it Your love. And oh! how often, O Lord my God, have You knocked at the door of my heart by Your inspirations, and soothed me with Your good gifts, and drawn me on by Your consolations, and forced me on by the afflictions You have sent me; and yet You last allowed Yourself to be driven back, for always have I turned my back on You. But even this You have borne in mercy. Oh! how justly might You have cast me down into the depths of hell, yet You have graciously spared me. Certainly, it is wonderful, O sweet Father, that my heart did not break for exceeding great contrition, when I think of these things. Even hell itself does not have many punishments and is cruel enough for all my wickedness and sin. I am not worthy that I should be called Your creature, or that the earth should bear me up, or provide me with

nourishment. Marvelous it is, O Lord, that Your other creatures and all the elements have not taken vengeance together on the wrongs and contempt I have brought upon You by my many iniquity.

But now, O most faithful Father, have mercy upon me, I beseech You, and turn to me, a wretched and lonely sinner, the eyes of Your divine grace and tenderness. Open to me the depths of Your lovingkindness; take me back again into Your grace; pardon me for having so long delayed to turn to You. Throw open to me Your fatherly bosom, and pour upon me the nourishment and comfort of Your grace. I beseech You, O Lord God, work speedily in me, that for the sake of which so far You have spared me, and for which from everlasting You have foreordained me. And woe to me, unhappy sinner, because I have forsaken so loving, so tender a Father, Who has never shown me anything but love, and kindness, and grace, and faithfulness, and because I have refused You my heart, which You, O God, have decreed to be Your temple, Your dwelling-place, and Your delight, and have made it foul with many stains, for indeed it has been a vessel of iniquity, and the cave of unclean spirits. Openly I confess to You, O Lord, that of all whom the world holds, I am the most sinful. Nevertheless, in the immensity of Your goodness I place my trust; for if my sins are above number, so also is Your mercy.

O most loving Father, if You will, You can indeed make me clean. Heal my soul, for I confess to You that I have sinned. Remember, O kind Lord, that comforting word of Yours, which You spoke by one of Your prophets: “You have committed fornication with many lovers; yet turn again to Me, and I will take You back.” Truly, Father of Mercies, I trust much in this most sweet word, and with my whole heart I turn to You, as if You have spoken it to none but to me alone, and as if by that word You meant to call me alone. For I, even I, unclean and unfaithful soul that I am, am that prodigal and unprofitable son, who miserably have gone far away from You, the Father of lights, from Whom flow all good things, and as a wandering sheep, have strayed far from You, and squandered and lost all

those bountiful gifts which You have given me in such profusion. I have left You, the fountain of living water, and have dug for myself cisterns holding no water, by seeking outward consolation, for all temporal and perishable delight vanish away like smoke. I have left You, too, the Bread of Life, and I have fed myself with the husks of swine, by following my sensual appetites, and indulging my passions, like the beasts. I have left You, the Highest, and perfect, and Eternal Good, and I have let myself float down upon the stream of earthly pleasure that passes rapidly away. Where I have become naked, and poor, and wretched, and unclean, and, like the beast of the stall, I have become rotten in my own dung and filth. But I pray that You, O Father, remember not the contempt and the wrong You have received at my hands. For I have thought of my ways, and my evil life, and with my whole strength I have turned my feet towards Your testimonies and Your commandments. Yes! and in the bitterness of my soul I have counted all my years as evil and lost, and I have determined with myself to do Your will, and to persevere in Your faithful service. Lord! What will You have me to do? For I am ready not only to bear the easy yoke of Your commandments, but also for Your love to keep to hard paths, and to enter upon the straight and narrow way of the cross, and to take the cross upon my shoulders, and to follow Your only and beloved Son. And now, O Father of heaven, I offer myself wholly to You, with all love, and with all my powers, as a living sacrifice; and whatever You wish to do with me in time and eternity, I am ready to do or not to do, and to suffer whatever Your goodness shall desire to come upon me. Take complete vengeance upon me, O Lord, for all the wrong I have done You, for humbly I bow myself beneath the scourge of Your fatherly mercy. Bind, I beseech You, my hands and my feet, lest because of nothing I may rebel against You; for although the flesh indeed is weak, and without will, yet the spirit is altogether ready. I know, yes, truly, I know that so many adversities could not have come upon me, unless I had deserved greater and more for my iniquities. Therefore I ask for nothing but Your grace from the depths of my heart, and that mercy may temper justice. But what shall I render to You, O most gracious Father, for all that You have done for me? Teach me by what works, by what service, by what offerings I ought to appease and reconcile You. You have commanded us not to appear before You empty-handed. But what shall I

offer You, who have nothing of my own. All this is why I humbly knock at the door of Your rich Son, and beg an alms out of the infinite never-failing treasury of His most sacred Passion; and this I will offer You. Indeed, I offer You this same only Son of Yours, in union with that love with which You offered Him to me, and sent Him from Your fatherly Heart into this world, that He might take our human nature, and undergo a most bitter death; and with Him I offer You all His merits, that is to say, of His Incarnation, Passion and Death; but more especially that shameful affliction and torment which He suffered when He was taken prisoner. Moreover I offer You His willing obedience, His unutterable lowliness and patience, and above all that burning love of His, with which He went forth to meet His enemies, and cheerfully, as if they had been His friends, gave Himself into their hands. In like manner, all the cruel chains, and blows, and buffets, and trappings under foot, the contempt, the spittle, the mockery, the blasphemies, and whatever He suffered when He was taken, all this with overflowing heart and meek gratitude, I offer as a worthy sacrifice to Your supreme glory, for all my sins and negligences. Accept, I beseech You, O most gracious Father, the merits of Your only-begotten Son for all my iniquities. For whatever sin I have committed against Your justice, all this Your beloved and only Son has paid for, and blotted out, and expiated by His Passion, and for all my defects He has laden Himself with, and supplied for them. And what can be the sin so great, for which such suffering cannot implore pardon? What can be the stain so foul, that Christ's warm blood cannot wash away? What malice can there be in man so deep-rooted and entrenched which such burning love cannot melt away, and utterly burn out? In reality, His Passion is stronger than our sins, and the riches of His merits are measureless and infinite, so as to outweigh all sins and negligence. Therefore from these deep streams I draw whatever I see is wanting to me.

I offer You, then, His most innocent Death, and whatever He accomplished in His human nature, together with all the merits of all the saints, and all the acts of virtue, and all the praise which shall be shown forth in Your sight until the last judgment day, and throughout the endless ages of ages. All this with as full a heart as I can, I offer You, as if they were all my own. Lastly, I offer You this

oblation to Your eternal glory for my own sins, and for those of all the living and the dead, for whom I am bound to pour forth prayers, and as You, O God, wish to be entreated for them, and that You may be praised and blessed for all eternity, and that thanksgiving may be made to You by all Your creatures.