

The General Confession of St. Ignatius Brianchaninov

This general confession is used at Valaam Monastery, and at many places throughout the Russian Orthodox Church, as a preparation for confession. It is especially read following the introductory prayers of the Mystery of Repentance, as a general confession either for a group or for an individual, followed by each person's specific individual confession to the priest. When used corporately, the congregation responds "Forgive us, Merciful Lord!" or individually, "Forgive me, holy father."

This was published in 1991 by Optina Pustyn Monastery, and was also included in a prayerbook published by Valaam Monastery in 1993. It is part of a larger set of preparations for confession, which we hope to translate and publish in the near future.

I, the great sinner (name), confess to the Lord God and our Saviour Jesus Christ and to you, honorable father, all of my sins and all my evil deeds, which I have done during every day of my life, and of which I have thought to this very day.

I have sinned by breaking the promises of holy Baptism and the monastic tonsure, though I consented to each one, and I have not demanded of myself to fulfill them.

Response: Forgive us, Merciful Lord!

I have sinned against the Lord by little faith, and by distraction by thoughts from the enemy of us all against faith and the holy Church; by unthankfulness for the Lord's great and ceaseless goodness; and by calling on the Lord's Name vainly and without cause.

I have sinned by having neither love nor fear of the Lord; by not fulfilling His holy will and holy commandments; by inattentively making the sign of the Cross, not piously venerating the holy icons, by not wearing a cross, shame in making the sign of the Cross, and thereby by confessing the Lord.

I have sinned by not preserving love for my neighbors, not fed the hungry nor given drink to the thirsty; I have not clothed the naked nor visited the sick or imprisoned; I have not kept the Law of God or the Traditions of the holy fathers from my laziness and negligence.

I have sinned by not fulfilling the Church's rule of prayer or my personal rule, by going to Church without zeal or eagerness, but with laziness and negligence; I have left off morning, evening and other prayers; during church services I have sinned by idle talking, laughing, lack of attention to the singing and reading, distracted thoughts; I have left church during services; and I have sinned by not going to church from laziness and negligence.

I have sinned by going to the temple of God in a state of impurity, and by touching holy things.

I have sinned by disregarding the feasts of God, breaking the fasts, and not observing fast days, Wednesday and Friday; by gluttony in food and drink, overeating, secret eating, drunkenness, dissatisfaction with food, drink and clothing; by fulfilling my own will and thoughts, selfishness, self-directedness, and self-exaltation; by not respecting my parents, by not raising my children in the Orthodox Faith, by cursing my children and those close to me.

I have sinned by disbelief, holding superstitions, doubting, despair, despondency; blasphemy, impious lying, dancing, smoking, playing cards; by fortunetelling, sorcery,

magic; by gossiping; by remembering the living as dead, and by eating the blood of animals.

I have sinned by pride, self-opinion, high-mindedness, self-love, love of honor; by envy, self-exaltation, suspicion and irritability.

I have sinned by judging all people, living and dead, by evil words and anger, remembrance of evils, hatred, repaying evil for evil, blaming others; by wickedness, laziness, deceit, hypocrisy, gossip, bickering, stubbornness; by unwillingness to support or serve my neighbor; by taking delight in evil, by wishing evil on someone, entrapping in evil; by insulting and laughing at others, abuse, manpleasing.

I have sinned by vain talking, joking, listening to and remembering worldly songs, reading inappropriate books, looking at tempting pictures, taking delight in the remembrance of past sins; by being overcome by the temptation of the desire for others by the seduction of others; by willfulness, impudence, preoccupation with the spirit of the world and worldly habits, which are contrary to the Orthodox Faith.

I have sinned by spiritual and bodily feelings, impurity of soul and body, delighting in and entertaining unclean and passionate thoughts; by passionate and voluptuous arousals and desires for women, youths and men; by defilements during sleep from impure dreams; and by not preserving my marriage vows.

I have sinned by not patiently enduring illness and trials, by love of comfort in this life, by distraction of mind and a hardened heart, and by avoidance of every good work.

I have sinned by inattention to spiritual counsel, careless and laziness in reading the Word of God, and in carelessness towards the Jesus Prayer.

I have sinned by love of gain, love of money, unrighteousness, acquisitiveness, embezzlement, thievery, avarice, miserliness, preoccupation with various things and people.

I have sinned by judging and disobeying spiritual fathers, arguing with and being offended at them, and by not confessing before them all of my sins because of forgetfulness, carelessness and false shame.

I have sinned by being unmerciful, having contempt for and judging the lowly and meek; going to church without fear of God, praying with a cold heart, with lack of attention, lack of zeal and preparation; and by paying attention to heresy and sectarian teachings.

I have sinned by laziness, weakness for comfort, love of bodily rest, oversleeping; by voluptuous dreaming, passionate arousals, shameless movements of the body; by touch, fornication, adultery, dissolute life, masturbation; by extramarital affairs; and by uncrowned civil marriage.

I have greatly sinned in having an abortion or doing one, or persuading someone to that great sin of child-murder.

I have sinned by spending time in empty and vain occupations, in vain conversations, jokes, laughter and other shameless sins.

I have sinned by falling into despondency, low spirits, impatience, complaining, despair of salvation, by not having hope in the mercy of God; by unfeelingness, ignorance, insolence and lack of shame.

I have sinned by slander of my neighbors, anger, insults, irritation and ridicule; irreconcilability, enmity and hatred; contradiction; and prying into the sins of others and

eavesdropping on others' conversations.

I have sinned by coldness and lack of feeling in confession, by belittling my sins, accusation against my neighbors, and by not judging myself.

I have sinned against the lifegiving and holy Mysteries of Christ, have come to them without the necessary preparation, without reverence and the fear of God.

I have sinned in deed, word, thought and all my senses: touch, hearing, sight, taste and smell, willfully and unwillingly, with knowledge and in ignorance, rationally and irrationally, and it is impossible to count the multitude of my sins. But in all of them, those committed knowingly and in ignorance, I say and desire, in the future and with the help of God: I promise to amend myself.