

What does the Act of Contrition mean?

Here are few pointers to start understanding this prayer that is so full of meaning.

The Act of Contrition is a way to tell God that we are sorry for doing things wrong on purpose. We can pray it every night to tell God sorry for what we did wrong today. We also say it after confessing sins to the priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Some Acts of Contrition have different words, but they say "I'm sorry" to God.

My God, I am sorry for my sins

"Sins" are things we do wrong on purpose. Sins separate us from God kind of like an argument with a friend can make us feel far from our friend.

with all my heart.

We are really sorry and wish we hadn't done it.

In choosing to do wrong

We choose to sin; it is our fault, no one else's.

and failing to do good,

Some sins are good things we should have done and didn't.

I have sinned against you

When we sin, we hurt our friendship with God.

whom I should love above all things.

God wants us to love Him. Sin is loving something else more than God, choosing something God doesn't want.

I firmly intend,

"Intend" means to decide, to plan something.

with your help,

We need God's help to do what we are planning. He gives us this help in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

to do penance,

"Penance" is something we do to show God how sorry we are, to try to make it up to Him a little bit. Even though we can never undo what we did wrong, doing penance helps us be better.

to sin no more,

With God's help, we will not sin again.

and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

With God's help, we will avoid people or places or anything that pulls us toward sin.

Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

Jesus suffered and died to fix our friendship with God. "Mercy" is God making our sins go away so that we can be good friends with God again.

