

How to Forgive Yourself and Others: Steps to Reconciliation
by Fr. Eamon Tobin

Sample Prayers

Prayer of Rage

Jesus, I have absolutely no desire to forgive _____ for the hurt and injustice he did to me. I am so angry with him. I hate his guts. I would even be happy if harm came his way. I cannot imagine myself forgiving him. He is the scum of the earth. I detest and despise him. I never want to see him again.

Prayer for the Desire to Forgive

Jesus, you know the way I feel about _____. You know my lack of desire to forgive. You know that all I want to do is to get even with him. But, I also know that holding onto a hardened, unforgiving heart is bad for my body, mind, and spirit. It hurts me more than it hurts my offender. It also hurts my relationship with you.

Jesus, I admit my helplessness and powerlessness when it comes to even thinking about forgiving _____. But, I also know that all things are possible for those who cooperate with your grace. With St. Paul, I believe that I can do all things in you who strengthen me. Empower me, Jesus, to do this work of forgiveness. Place within my heart the desire to forgive _____. I find it so hard to even make that request because my heart has so much venom toward _____. But I make the request, however feebly, hoping that you will give me the grace to do what I am powerless to do for myself.

Prayer of Repentance

Jesus, forgive me for anything wrong I have said or done in this relationship. I have no problem telling others about how horrible _____ is but I have a big problem admitting my own wrongdoing. I ask your forgiveness for the way I have spoken in an unchristian way about _____.

Now take a moment to ponder other ways you may have sinned or done wrong before, during, or after the hurt or injustice occurred. After naming the specific wrongs you have done, ask for the Lord's forgiveness. Then you might add

Jesus, I accept your mercy and thank you for the countless times you have forgiven me. Grace me with the strength and power to forgive _____.

Prayer for the Offender

Lord, you created _____ good just like you created me good. You love _____ just as you love me with all my faults and weaknesses. You know I do not love _____ very much at this time, but you do love him or her. Share with me your love for _____. Also, God, I ask you to bless this scoundrel. Sometimes, I, too, am a scoundrel and in need of your blessing.