



Sons of Saint Joseph tm

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The Book of Psalms part 1: Psalm 51 – The Miserere Saturday, March 15, 2025

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, God, in accord with your merciful love;
in your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions.

Thoroughly wash away my guilt;
and from my sin cleanse me.

For I know my transgressions;
my sin is always before me.

Against you, you alone have I sinned;
I have done what is evil in your eyes

So that you are just in your word, and without reproach in your judgment.^e

Behold, I was born in guilt,
in sin my mother conceived me.^d

8Behold, you desire true sincerity;
and secretly you teach me wisdom.

9Cleanse me with hyssop,^{*} that I may be pure;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.^e

10You will let me hear gladness and joy;
the bones you have crushed will rejoice.

II

Turn away your face from my sins;
blot out all my iniquities.

A clean heart create for me, God;
renew within me a steadfast spirit.^f

Do not drive me from before your face,
nor take from me your holy spirit.^g
Restore to me the gladness of your salvation;
uphold me with a willing spirit.

I will teach the wicked your ways,
that sinners may return to you.

Rescue me from violent bloodshed, God, my saving God,
and my tongue will sing joyfully of your justice.
Lord, you will open my lips;
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.

For you do not desire sacrifice^{*} or I would give it;
a burnt offering you would not accept.

My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a contrite, humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn.

III

^{*}Treat Zion kindly according to your good will;
build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will desire the sacrifices of the just,
burnt offering and whole offerings; then they will offer up young bulls on your altar.

Questions

1. What are the main themes of this psalm? Not just regret, but what else is the psalmist asking for?
2. He begins by acknowledging that he is a sinner. Why is it so important for us to first admit we have sinned greatly? Why is it easy to admit some sins, but difficult to admit others?
3. Why is it good that he is more concerned with the sin itself rather than the physical consequences he suffers? How does that teach us about our attitude towards sin?
4. “Create a clean heart in me o God, put a new spirit within me.” what does that mean to the Catholic today? How does this relate to mortal sin and venial sin?