

The Science of Repentance

People often wonder, "Have I truly repented if I keep committing the same sin?" In order to answer that question fairly, we need to know that there is such a thing as the science of repentance and understand what it is. Rather than base repentance on personal feelings, repentance can be carried out with a more objective and deliberate approach.

Repentance is mainly a spiritual activity, but the science of repentance also includes a structured process of psychological and behavioral change. One of the common obstructions to this process is that people tend to justify their sins or behavior; here are some of the ways it can happen: (1) it wasn't really my fault or I didn't mean to do it, (2) it is in my nature and there is nothing I can do about it, or (3) I am too weak to fight or stop it. However, the science of repentance demonstrates that we can transition from someone who justifies their sins towards someone who can confront and challenge themselves in an honest way.

There are 5 elements in the science of repentance: (1) recognizing and identifying the sin or harmful behavior – this means taking the time to reflect on one's actions and motivations, even making a list of the most common sins or harmful behaviors in our lives, (2) the exercise of contrition – which includes remorse for the committed sin or behavior, hatred for the sin or behavior, and the resolution to turn away from the sin or behavior, (3) confessing or admitting the sin or behavior, (4) making reparation or restitution by actively making amends for the damage caused, and (5) seeking God's healing – spiritual, emotional and psychological healing can be a vital part of the process of repentance, especially if the sin or behavior was initially triggered or is being driven by past trauma.

This process of repentance is often called "metanoia"; i.e., a "U-turn" in thinking and behavior. It involves practical, daily, and hourly efforts to avoid the traps, to turn away from sin or harmful behaviors and to adopt a new, positive lifestyle. The regular and consistent practice of repentance creates a "virtuous cycle" – a cycle of behavior that changes passive faith into an active and transformed way of life.

The key takeaways from the science of repentance are: (1) Repentance is a process. It can be a one-time event in a person's life, but for the most part, it is a process with ups and downs, small victories and falls. (2) Repentance is not "guilt." Guilt focuses on the self and can become paralyzing, but repentance focuses on looking ahead, changing future behavior and personal transformation. (3) Repentance is a turning toward God and His goodness –one of its effects is that it alleviates guilt, but its goal is to cultivate lasting joy and peace. Other effects of the science of repentance are that (1) it increases self-awareness and accountability, (2) it strengthens personal character and relationships, and (3) it reduces inner conflict and conflict with others.

Measuring progress in the process of repentance is straightforward – God's grace has truly taken hold in our lives if the sin or behavior no longer repeats itself, but until that major victory has been won, the diminishing recurrence of the sin or behavior is a good sign that God's grace continues to work in us.



Psalms 51 is a wonderful prayer for someone who is in the process of repentance; it is a psalm of David after Nathan the prophet confronted him about his sin of causing the death of Uriah and taking Uriah's wife Bathsheba for himself. Psalm 51 is used primarily in the Liturgy of the Hours during Friday Morning Prayer:

Have mercy on me, O God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offense. O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. My offenses truly I know them, my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done. Indeed you love truth in the heart; then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom. O purify me, then I shall be clean; O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow. A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away

耶穌聖名華人天主堂
THE HOLY NAME of Jesus CHINESE CATHOLIC MISSION
5395 Light Circle NW, Norcross GA 30071 678-691-3261 hnojat.org
每周公告 Weekly Bulletin
2026年三月八日 March 8, 2026

from your presence, nor deprive me of your Spirit. O rescue me, God, my helper, and my tongue shall proclaim your praise. For in sacrifice you take no delight, burnt offering from me you would refuse. My sacrifice, a contrite spirit, a humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attention children and parents: We will have Sunday School class today!

Since we did not have the monthly Anointing of the Sick last Sunday, we will schedule it today after the 10:30 am Mass.

March 15 is potluck Sunday! This is a great activity for everyone to foster fellowship in our church community. Lunch begins after the 10:30am Mass. Please bring your favorite dish to share. If you are celebrating your birthday in the month of January, we have ordered a birthday cake for you.

Fr. Teng Lin will lead our Lenten Parish Mission on Saturday, March 14. The morning session will be from 10:00am to 12:00pm, break for lunch, and the afternoon session will be from 1:00-3:00pm. We invite everyone to join us in the evening for dinner with Fr. Teng, exact time and place TBA. On Sunday, March 15, Fr. Teng will offer a sharing after the 10:30am Mass. Fr. Teng Lin comes from the Liaoning Diocese of China. He is studying pastoral theology at St. John's University in New York, focusing on pastoral companionship, spiritual reflection, and life integration.

The Archbishop's Annual Appeal for 2026 has begun. Our goal is \$3,500. For your convenience, you can make your donations through our church. If you wish to donate through our church, please make sure your check is payable to HNOJ and write AAA in the memo. Please use the AAA envelopes provided. Thank you for your support.

Did you know that you can make donations to the church directly from your retirement account? Each time you make a distribution from your retirement account, it is counted as taxable income. However, if you make a donation (up to \$108,000), to qualified charities through QCD (Qualified Charitable Distributions), these donations, although not tax-deductible, are excluded from taxable income. Many older retired donors use this strategy to lower their taxable income, but it also satisfies Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) without increasing their adjusted gross income (AGI). Consult your financial advisor or contact your retirement account specialist.

The 10th year anniversary of the dedication of our church will be on November 19, 2027. We would like all church members to have their picture taken for the 10th year anniversary commemorative parish book. Please sign up with Tommy Puk.

Prayer List: Xie Yannong, Bian Meiyi, Chen Shupeng, Ni Yufang, Lydia Chen, David Wang, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing and Xu Taicheng.

Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	By Appointment	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)		
	Anointing of the Sick	Eucharistic Adoration
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Sundays 9:00 to 10:00 AM
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	First Fridays after 7:00 PM Mass	
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)		
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 7:00 PM (English)		