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978-0-521-02968-1 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 60 - Penance, (3a. 84-90)

Reginald Masterson O.P. and T. C. O'Brien O.P.

Excerpt

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## SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 3a. 84, 1

Consequenter considerandum est de sacramento Pœnitentiæ. Circa quod:

- primo, considerandum est de ipsa Pœnitentiâ;
- secundo, de effectu ipsius;
- tertio, de partibus ejus;
- quarto, de suscipientibus hoc sacramentum;
- quinto, de potestate ministrorum, quæ ad claves pertinent;
- sexto, de solemni ritu\* hujus sacramenti.

Circa primum duo considerata sunt,

- primo, de Pœnitentiâ secundum quod est sacramentum;
- secundo, de pœnitentiâ secundum quod est virtus.

## Quæstio 84. de sacramento Pœnitentiæ

Circa primum quærentur decem:

1. utrum pœnitentiâ sit sacramentum;
2. de propria materia ejus;
3. de forma ipsius;
4. utrum impositio manus requiratur ad hoc sacramentum;
5. utrum hoc sacramentum sit de necessitate salutis;
6. de ordine ejus ad alia sacramenta;
7. de institutione ejus;
8. de duratione ipsius;
9. de continuatione ejus;
10. utrum possit iterari.

*articulus 1. utrum Pœnitentiâ sit sacramentum*

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur:<sup>1</sup> 1. Videtur quod Pœnitentiâ non sit sacramentum, Gregorius enim dicit, et habetur in *Decretis* 1, *Sacramenta sunt baptismus, chrisma, corpus et sanguis Christi; quæ ob id sacramenta dicuntur, quia sub tegumento corporalium rerum divina virtus secretius operatur salutem.*<sup>2</sup>

\*Piana: *solemnitate*, the solemnization<sup>1</sup>3a. 65, 1. v *Sent.* 14, 1, 1; 22, 2, 1

<sup>2</sup>Gratian *Decretum* II, 1. 1. cn. 84; Gratian, twelfth-century professor at Bologna. His *Decretals* (*Concordia Discordantium Canonum*) formed the basic *corpus juris* in the Church for centuries. Isidore (not Gregory) *Etymol.* 6, 19. PL 82, 255. St Isidore of Seville (†636), Doctor of the Church, by his erudite compilations of theological matters provided much of the source material for medieval theologians.

\*St Thomas stopped writing after Question 90, article 3. The remaining titles, as well as the rest of the planned contents of the *Tertia Pars* (see Prologue) are treated

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## THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

We have now to consider the sacrament of Penance. And under the following headings:

- first, Penance itself (84–85);
- second, its effect (86–89);
- third, its parts (90);
- fourth, the recipients of this sacrament;<sup>a</sup>
- fifth, the power of the ministers belonging to the keys;
- sixth, the solemn rite of this sacrament.

Under the first heading there are two studies:

- first, the sacrament of Penance;
- then, the virtue of penitence.

## Question 84. the sacrament of Penance

Concerning the first of these there are ten points of inquiry:

1. is Penance a sacrament?
2. what is its proper matter?
3. what is its form?
4. is the imposition of hands required for this sacrament?
5. is this sacrament necessary for salvation?
6. what is the place of this sacrament in relation to the others?
7. how was it instituted?
8. how long does it last?
9. can it be continuous?
10. can it be repeated?

*article 1. is Penance a sacrament?*<sup>b</sup>

**THE FIRST POINT:**<sup>1</sup> I. It seems that Penance is not a sacrament. For Gregory says, and it is in the *Decretals*, *The sacraments are baptism, chrism, the body and blood of Christ; these are called sacraments because, under cover of material things, divine power secretly effects our salvation.*<sup>2</sup> But this does not

in the *Supplementum*, a fourteenth-century compilation taken from his commentary on the *Sentences*. See Vol. 1 of this series, Introduction, p. xix

<sup>b</sup>In this edition, the names of the sacraments are capitalized. Here when the sacrament of Penance is clearly spoken of, this usage is followed. When the term ‘*penitentia*’ refers both to the sacrament and the virtue, as it can in Latin, or even when the term is ambiguous, it is not capitalized. As referring to the virtue, it is translated sometimes by ‘penitence’ sometimes by ‘repentance’; the use of ‘penance’ in this sense is now obsolete in English.

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## SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 3a. 84, I

Sed hoc non contingit in Pœnitentia, quia non adhibentur aliquæ corporales res sub quibus divina virtus operetur salutem. Ergo Pœnitentia non est sacramentum.

2. Præterea, sacramenta Ecclesiæ a ministris Christi exhibentur, secundum illud *1. Cor.*, *Sic nos existimet homo ut ministros Christi, et dispensatores mysteriorum Dei.*<sup>3</sup> Sed Pœnitentia non exhibetur a ministris Christi, sed interius a Deo hominibus inspiratur, secundum illud *Jer.*, *Postquam convertisti me, egi pœnitentiam.*<sup>4</sup> Ergo videtur quod Pœnitentia non sit sacramentum.

3. Præterea, in sacramentis de quibus jam supra diximus<sup>5</sup> est aliquid quod est sacramentum tantum, aliquid quod est res et sacramentum, aliquid vero quod est res tantum, ut ex præmissis patet.<sup>6</sup> Sed hoc non invenitur in Pœnitentia. Ergo Pœnitentia non est sacramentum.

SED CONTRA est quod sicut Baptismus adhibetur ad purificandum a peccato, ita et Pœnitentia; unde et Petrus dixit Simoni Mago, *Act. 8*, *Pœnitentiam age ab hac nequitia tua.*<sup>7</sup> Sed Baptismus est sacramentum, ut supra habitum est.<sup>8</sup> Ergo pari ratione et Pœnitentia.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod, sicut Gregorius dicit, *sacramentum est in aliqua celebratione, cum res gesta ita fit ut aliquid significare intelligatur quod sancte accipiendum est.*<sup>9</sup> Manifestum est autem quod in Pœnitentia ita res gesta sit quod aliquid sanctum significatur tam ex parte peccatoris pœnitentis, quam ex parte sacerdotis absolventis. Nam peccator pœnitens per ea quæ agit\* et dicit, significat† cor suum a peccato recessisse; similiter etiam sacerdos per ea quæ agit et dicit circa Pœnitentem, significat opus Dei remittentis peccata. Unde manifestum est quod Pœnitentia quæ in Ecclesia agitur, est sacramentum.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod nomine corporalium rerum intelliguntur large etiam ipsi exteriores actus sensibiles qui ita se habent in hoc sacramento, sicut aqua in baptismo, vel chrisma in Confirmatione. Est autem attendendum quod in illis sacramentis in quibus confertur excellens gratia, quæ superabundat omnem facultatem humani actus, adhibetur aliqua corporalis materia exterius; sicut in Baptismo, ubi fit plena remissio pec-

\*Piana: *fecit*, the same sense†Piana: *ostendit*, shows<sup>3</sup>*1 Corinthians 4, 1*<sup>4</sup>*Jeremiah 3, 19*<sup>5</sup>3a. 66-83<sup>6</sup>3a. 66. 1<sup>7</sup>*Acts 8, 22*<sup>8</sup>3a. 66, 1<sup>9</sup>cf note 2, above

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happen in Penance, because there is no use of material objects under which divine power may effect our salvation. Therefore Penance is not a sacrament.

2. Moreover, the sacraments of the Church are dispensed by the ministers of Christ, according to the word of St Paul, *Let a man so account us as of the ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God.*<sup>3</sup> But Penance is not dispensed by the ministers of Christ, but interiorly inspired in men by God, as in *Jeremiah*, *For after thou didst convert me, I did penance.*<sup>4</sup> Therefore it seems that Penance is not a sacrament.

3. Moreover, as we have said before,<sup>5</sup> in the sacraments there is an element which is the sacrament alone (*sacramentum tantum*), and an element which is sacramental effect and sacrament (*res et sacramentum*), and a third which is sacramental effect alone (*res tantum*). This is clear from previous statements.<sup>6</sup> But this division is not found in penance. Therefore Penance is not a sacrament.

ON THE OTHER HAND, just as Baptism is used to purify from sin, so also is Penance. Hence Peter said to Simon Magus, *Do penance therefore for this thy wickedness.*<sup>7</sup> But Baptism is a sacrament, as was said above.<sup>8</sup> Therefore with equal reason so is Penance.

REPLY: As Gregory says, *A sacrament consists in a certain ceremony in which the action is so performed that we take it to signify the sanctity it bestows.*<sup>9</sup> Now it is manifest that in Penance the ceremony is so done that something holy is signified, both on the part of the penitent sinner as well as on the part of the priest who absolves. For what the penitent sinner does and says signifies that his heart has turned away from sin; likewise the priest, through what he does and says with regard to the penitent, signifies the work of God forgiving sin. Thus it is manifest that Penance which is performed in the Church is a sacrament.<sup>c</sup>

Hence: 1. By bodily things taken in a wide sense are understood also the exterior acts evident to the senses which are in this sacrament what water is in Baptism and chrism in Confirmation.<sup>d</sup> Now it is to be noted that in those sacraments which confer a grace so excellent that it surpasses entirely the power of human activity,<sup>e</sup> some bodily matter is employed externally, for example, in Baptism wherein full pardon for sin is granted

<sup>c</sup>The defining note of sacrament for St Thomas is that it is a 'sign'; the whole force of its elements is their expressing the realities that go to make men holy. By acting as such signs, by signifying, the sacraments of the New Law have their proper effects; cf 3a. 60 & 62.

<sup>d</sup>cf 3a. 60, 4 & 5.

<sup>e</sup>cf 3a. 65, 1 & 2.

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## SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 3a. 84, I

catorum et quantum ad culpam et quantum ad poenam, in Confirmatione, ubi datur plenitudo Spiritus Sancti, et in Extrema Unctione, ubi confertur perfecta sanitas\* spiritualis, quæ provenit ex virtute Christi, quasi ex quodam extrinseco principio. Unde si qui actus humani sunt in talibus sacramentis, non sunt de essentia materiæ† sacramentorum, sed dispositive se habent ad sacramenta.

In illis autem sacramentis quæ habent effectum correspondentem humanis actibus, ipsi actus humani sensibiles‡ sunt loco materiæ, ut accidit in Pœnitentia et Matrimonio, sicut etiam in medicinis corporalibus quædam sunt res exterius adhibitæ, sicut emplastra et electuaria, quædam vero sunt actus sanandorum, puta exercitationes quædam.

2. Ad secundam dicendum quod in sacramentis quæ habent corporalem materiam oportet quod illa materia adhibeatur a ministro Ecclesiæ, qui gerit personam Christi, in signum quod excellentia virtutis in sacramento operantis est a Christo. In sacramento autem Pœnitentiæ, sicut dictum est,<sup>10</sup> sunt actus humani pro materia, qui proveniunt ex inspiratione interna. Unde materia non adhibetur a ministro, sed a Deo interius operante; sed complementum sacramenti exhibet minister dum pœnitentem absolvit.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod etiam in Pœnitentia est aliquid quod est sacramentum tantum, scilicet actus exercitus§ tam per peccatorem pœnitentem, quam etiam per sacerdotem absolventem; res autem et sacramentum est pœnitentia interior peccatoris; res autem tantum et non sacramentum est remissio peccati; quorum primum totum simul sumptum est causa secundi; primum autem et secundum sunt quodammodo causa tertii.

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\*Piana: *sanctitas*, holiness

†Piana omits

‡Piana omits

§Piana: *actus exterius exercitus*, the act outwardly performed

<sup>10</sup>ad 1

<sup>10</sup>Realities of the physical world are described as being composed of 'matter' and 'form'. The first is the element of determinability, receptivity, changeableness; the other is determining, giving each thing its definiteness. Since sacraments are signs, they are in some way 'outward', observable, so that they can express the realities they stand for. They are made up of objects or actions and words (cf *Denz.* 1312). The first are designated the 'matter' of the sacraments, in that their definite signification is determined by the words used with them, the 'form'.

<sup>§</sup>The medievals found the distinction between *sacramentum tantum*, *res et sacramentum* and *res tantum* a fruitful way of expressing the sacraments' causality as signs. As sign the whole standing of a sacrament is to point to something else. Thus *sacramentum* and *res* mean sign and something not having further reference. The two extremes in the relationship, then, are *sacramentum tantum* and *res tantum*, that which is wholly meant to signify, and that which is final, with no further signification. The sacraments of the New Law are all *sacramenta tantum*; the grace they

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both as to fault and to punishment; in Confirmation wherein the plenitude of the Holy Spirit is given; and in Extreme Unction in which perfect spiritual health is conferred, the grace comes from Christ's power as from an outside source. Hence what human acts there are in these sacraments are not the essential matter but are dispositions to these sacraments.

But in those sacraments which have an effect corresponding to human acts, the human acts themselves which are evident to sense take the place of the matter, as happens in Penance and in Matrimony, even as in medicine sometimes things like plasters and medicines are applied externally, and at other times the patient himself performs health-giving exercises.

2. In the sacraments which have as matter a material object, this needs to be applied by a minister of the Church, who stands in Christ's place, to signify that the excellence of the power working in the sacrament is from him. However, in the sacrament of Penance, as has been said,<sup>10</sup> internally prompted human acts supply matter, which is not supplied by the minister, but by God working interiorly; yet the minister furnishes the complement of the sacrament by absolving the penitent.<sup>f</sup>

3. Even in Penance there is something which is the sacrament alone (*sacramentum tantum*), namely the action performed both by the penitent sinner and the priest absolving. Sacramental effect and sacrament (*res et sacramentum*) are the interior repentance of the sinner. The forgiveness of sin is sacramental effect alone, not sacrament (*res tantum et non sacramentum*). The first of these, taken integrally, is the cause of the second; the first and the second are in a way the cause of the third.<sup>g</sup>

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cause by signifying is the *res tantum* in each case. But all the sacraments have a dynamism, there is a kind of intermediate stage, along which the process of sacramental signification is carried. An effect is produced by the external sacrament; it is called therefore a *res*; but it in turn points to the ultimate effect of the sacrament and so is also called *sacramentum*; thus *res et sacramentum*: cf 3a. 66, 1. In the application here there is a subtle point. The acts of the penitent (cf 90, 2) which, joined to the absolution of the priest, compose the *sacramentum tantum*, are made under the influence of God's actual grace which is as it were a beginning of the infusion of habitual grace (cf 85, 5, 6; 86, 6). They proceed from inner repentance, which is either not yet complete or not yet bearing the mark of the sacrament. Once the sacramental action has been placed, this inner repentance is infused fully with grace and becomes the sign of the healing of sin as an effect of the sacrament. As such a sign it points to the final effect, the forgiveness of sin by the presence of grace in the soul. Thus inner repentance, either imperfect, called attrition (cf *Denz.* 1678; 1705) or as a virtue, is the source of the acts of the penitent, the outer repentance entering into the sacrament; inner repentance, as made complete or as deepened with the sacrament's special meaning, is the effect of the sacrament pointing like the sacrament itself to the ultimate effect, forgiveness: cf IV *Sent.* 22, 1, 2.

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## SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 3a. 84, 2

*articulus 2. utrum peccata sint propria materia hujus sacramenti*

AD SECUNDUM sic proceditur:<sup>1</sup> 1. Videtur quod peccata non sint propria materia hujus sacramenti. Materia enim in aliis sacramentis per aliqua verba\* sanctificatur, et sanctificata effectum sacramenti operatur. Peccata autem non possunt sanctificari, eo quod contrariantur effectui sacramenti, qui est gratia remittens peccata. Ergo peccata non sunt materia propria hujus sacramenti.

2. Præterea, Augustinus dicit in libro *De pœnitentia*, *Nullus potest inchoare novam vitam, nisi eum veteris vitæ pœniteat.*<sup>2</sup> Sed ad vetustatem vitæ pertinent non solum peccata, sed etiam pœnalitates præsentis vitæ. Non ergo peccata sunt propria materia Pœnitentiæ.

3. Præterea, peccatorum quoddam est originale, quoddam mortale, quoddam veniale. Sed Pœnitentiæ sacramentum non ordinatur contra originale peccatum, quod tollitur per Baptismum, neque† etiam contra veniale, quod tollitur per tunctionem pectoris et per aquam benedictam, et alia hujusmodi. Ergo peccata non sunt propria materia Pœnitentiæ.

SED CONTRA est quod Apostolus dicit II *Cor. 12*, *Non egerunt pœnitentiam super immunditia, et fornicatione, et impudicitia, quam gesserunt.*<sup>3</sup>

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod duplex est materia, scilicet proxima et remota, sicut statuæ proxima‡ materia est metallum, remota vero aqua. Dictum est autem<sup>4</sup> quod materia proxima hujus sacramenti sunt actus pœnitentis, cujus materia sunt peccata, de quibus dolet et quæ confitetur, et pro quibus satisfacit. Unde relinquitur quod remota materia pœnitentiæ sint peccata, non acceptanda§, sed detestanda et destruenda.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod ratio illa procedit de proxima materia sacramenti.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod vetus et mortalis vita est objectum pœnitentiæ, non ratione pœnæ, sed ratione culpæ annexæ.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod pœnitentia quodammodo est de quolibet

\*Piana: *verba prolata*, words spoken

†Piana adds here: *contra peccatum mortale quod tollitur per confessionem peccatoris nec*, against mortal sin which is taken away through the sinner's confession nor

‡Piana: *propria*, proper

§Leonine: *attentanda*, to be tried

<sup>1</sup>3a. 90, 1 ad 3

<sup>2</sup>*Sermones ad popul.*, serm. 351. PL 39, 1537 (authenticity doubtful)

<sup>3</sup>II *Corinthians 12*, 21

<sup>4</sup>art. 1 ad 1 & 2

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*article 2. are sins the proper matter of this sacrament?<sup>a</sup>*

THE SECOND POINT:<sup>1</sup> 1. It seems that sins are not the proper matter of this sacrament. For in the other sacraments the matter is hallowed through certain words and thus sanctified produces the effect of the sacrament. But sins cannot be sanctified, since they are contrary to the effect of the sacrament, which is grace unbinding us from sin. Therefore sins are not the proper matter of this sacrament.

2. Moreover, Augustine says, *No one can begin a new life unless he repents of his old life.*<sup>2</sup> Yet not only sins but the hardships of the present life are part of the old life. Therefore, sins are not the proper matter of Penance.

3. Furthermore, there are three kinds of sins: original, mortal, and venial. But the sacrament of Penance is not directed against original sin, which is taken away through Baptism; nor even against venial sin, which is taken away by beating the breast and through holy water and other things of this kind. Therefore, sins are not the proper matter of Penance.

ON THE OTHER HAND, the Apostle says, *They have not done penance for the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, that they have committed.*<sup>3</sup>

REPLY: Matter is twofold, namely proximate and remote; just as the proximate matter of a statue is its metal, and the remote is water.<sup>b</sup> Now it has been said<sup>4</sup> that the proximate matter of this sacrament are the acts of the penitent, made out of the sins for which he grieves, which he confesses and for which he makes satisfaction.<sup>c</sup> Thus it follows that sins are the remote matter of Penance, not for approval, but for destestation and destruction.

Hence: 1. The matter spoken of in the first objection is the proximate matter of the sacrament.

2. The old life subject to death is the object of Penance, not because of the punishment, but because of the guilt attached to it.

3. In some way Penance is concerned with every kind of sin but not

<sup>a</sup>cf article 1, note f; *Denz.* 1704.

<sup>b</sup>For the medievals, water was one of the four elements out of which metal was composed. The same point can be made by designating the ore as the remote matter and the refined metal as the proximate matter from which the statue will be formed.

<sup>c</sup>In English usage this is called the 'penance' in the make-up of the sacrament. One accepts and performs a penance imposed by the priest in order to atone or 'make satisfaction' for sins confessed: cf 90, 2 below.



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## SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 3a. 84, 3

peccatorum genere, non tamen eodem modo. Nam de peccato actuali mortali est Pœnitentia proprie et principaliter: proprie quidem, quia propria dicimur pœnitere de his quæ nostra voluntate commisimus; principaliter autem, quia ad deletionem peccati mortalis hoc sacramentum est institutum.\* De peccatis autem venialibus est quidem† pœnitentia proprie, in quantum sunt nostra voluntate facta; non tamen contra hæc principaliter est hoc sacramentum institutum. De peccato vero originali Pœnitentia nec principaliter est (quia contra ipsum non ordinatur hoc sacramentum, sed magis Baptismus), nec etiam proprie, quia peccatum originale non est nostra voluntate peractum, nisi forte in quantum voluntas Adæ reputatur nostra, secundum modum loquendi quo Apostolus dicit *Rom. 5, In quo omnes peccaverunt*.‡ In quantum tamen large accipitur pœnitentia pro quacumque detestatione rei præteritæ, potest dici pœnitentia de peccato originali, sicut loquitur Augustinus in libro *De pœnitentia*.<sup>6</sup>

*articulus 3. utrum hæc sit forma hujus sacramenti, 'Ego te absolvo'*

AD TERTIUM sic proceditur:<sup>1</sup> Videtur quod hæc non sit forma hujus sacramenti, 'Ego te absolvo'. Formæ enim sacramentorum ex institutione Christi et Ecclesiæ usu habentur. Sed Christus non legitur hanc formam instituisse, neque etiam in communi usu habetur; quinimmo in quibusdam absolutionibus quæ in Ecclesia publice fiunt, sicut in Prima et Completorio et in Cœna Domini absolvens non utitur oratione indicativa, ut dicat, 'Ego te absolvo', sed oratione deprecativa, cum dicit, *Misereatur vestri omnipotens Deus*; vel, *Absolutionem§ tribuat vobis omnipotens Deus*. Ergo hæc non est forma hujus sacramenti, 'Ego te absolvo'.

2. Præterea, Leo papa dicit, quod *Indulgentia nisi supplicationibus sacerdotum nequit obtineri*.<sup>2</sup> Loquitur autem de indulgentia Dei quæ præstatur pœnitentibus. Ergo forma hujus sacramenti debet esse per modum deprecationis.

3. Præterea, idem est absolvere a peccato, quod peccatum remittere. Sed *Solus Deus peccatum remittit, qui etiam solus interius hominem a peccato mundat*, ut Augustinus dicit *super Jo*.<sup>3</sup> Ergo videtur quod solus Deus a peccato absolvat. Non ergo debet sacerdos dicere, 'Ego te absolvo', sicut non dicit, 'Ego tibi peccata remitto'.

\*Piana: *principaliter institutum*, chiefly instituted

†Leonine: *quædam*, a certain

‡Many codices have *peccavimus*, we have sinned

§Piana: *Absolutionem et remissionem*, absolution and pardon

<sup>1</sup>*Romans 5, 12*

<sup>2</sup>cf note 2

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with each in the same way. For actual mortal sin is properly and principally the object of Penance: properly, indeed, because we are properly said to repent of those sins which we have committed by our own will; and principally, because this sacrament was instituted to take away mortal sin. Yet to some extent Penance is properly concerned with venial sins in so far as they are committed by our will; this sacrament, however, was not principally instituted for these.<sup>d</sup> Nor was Penance principally instituted for original sin (because Baptism, not this sacrament is directed against it), nor even properly because original sin was not committed by our will; unless perhaps, Adam's will be considered ours,<sup>e</sup> according to the Apostle's manner of speaking when he says, *In whom all have sinned*.<sup>5</sup> However, inasmuch as repentance in a wide sense is taken to mean any detestation of the past, it can be used in reference to original sin, in the way St Augustine uses it.<sup>6</sup>

*article 3. is the form of this sacrament: 'I absolve you'?*

THE THIRD POINT:<sup>1</sup> 1. It seems that 'I absolve you' is not the form of this sacrament. For the forms of the sacraments are received from Christ's institution and the Church's practice. We do not read that Christ instituted this form. Nor is it even in common use; indeed in certain absolutions which are given publicly in Church, as in Prime, Compline and on Holy Thursday, the one absolving does not use the indicative form, 'I absolve you', but a pleading form, *May Almighty God have mercy upon you*, or, *May Almighty God grant you absolution*. Therefore, 'I absolve you' is not the form of this sacrament.

2. Moreover, Pope Leo says that *The forgiveness of God cannot be obtained except by the supplications of the priests*.<sup>2</sup> Now he is speaking of the forgiveness of God which is granted to penitents. Therefore the form of this sacrament ought to be by way of supplication.

3. Besides, to absolve from sin is the same thing as to pardon sin. But, as Augustine says, *God alone pardons sin, who alone also interiorly cleanses from sin*.<sup>3</sup> Therefore it seems that only God may absolve from sin. Just as he does not say, 'I pardon your sins', neither therefore ought the priest to say, 'I absolve you'.

<sup>1</sup>*IV Sent.*, 22, 2, 2, iii. Opusc. 22, *De forma absolutionis*

<sup>2</sup>Epist. 108, *Ad Theodorum*, c. 2. PL 54, 1011

<sup>3</sup>cf Peter Lombard, *IV Sent.*, 18, c. 5. (Quaracchi II, 862)

<sup>d</sup>cf Appendix 3.

<sup>e</sup>This, however, is not the way St Thomas sees the guilt of original sin. cf Vol. 26 of this series, Appendix 7.