



# Boston Catholic Journal

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## Formula of Excommunication from the Roman Pontifical



“**[Name of the person]**, led by the Devil, having abandoned through apostasy the promise he had made at his Baptism, has not feared to ravage the Church of God, steal Church goods and violently oppress the poor of Christ. In our concern over this, we do not desire that he perish because of any pastoral neglect of our own. For before the dread Judgment seat, we will have to render an account to the Prince of Shepherds, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in accordance with the terrible warning the Lord Himself addresses to us with these words: If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand (Ez 3: 18). Therefore, we have canonically warned him once, twice, a third and yet a fourth time so that he might conquer his malice, inviting him to amend himself, make reparation and penance, and reprehending him with paternal affection. But he – o woe! – despising the salutary admonitions of the Church of God, which he has offended, and led by the spirit of pride, has not wanted to make any reparation

“The precepts of the Lord and of the Apostles speak clearly about what to do with such prevaricators. For the Lord says: Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offends thee, cut them off and cast them from thee (Mt 8:18). And the Apostle advises: If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or a server of idols, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner: with such a one, do not so much as to eat. (1 Cor 5:11) And John, the favorite disciple of Christ, forbids

that one should even greet one who is wicked: If any one come to you and bring not this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and greet him not (2 Jn 1:10).

“Therefore, carrying out the precepts of the Lord and of the Apostles, let us take from the body of the Church with the iron tongs of excommunication this putrid and incurable member who refuses to accept the remedy, so that the rest of the members of the body may not be poisoned by such a pestiferous disease. He has despised our admonitions and our repeated exhortations; having been warned three times, according to the precept of the Lord, he would not amend himself and do penance; he has not reflected upon his guilt, nor has he confessed it; neither has he presented any excuse through a third party, nor did he ask for pardon. But, with his heart hardened by the Devil, he continues to persevere in the same evil as before, according to the words of the Apostle: The impenitent heart stores up to itself wrath for the day of wrath (Rom 2:5).

“Wherefore by the judgment of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost, of the St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and of all the Saints, and by virtue of the power which has been given us of binding and loosing in Heaven and on earth that which was divinely entrusted to us, we deprive him [the person is named] with all his accomplices and all his abettors of the Communion of the Body and Blood of Our Lord; we separate him from the society of all Christians; we exclude him from the bosom of our Holy Mother the Church in Heaven and on earth; and we declare him excommunicated and anathematized, as well as judge him condemned to eternal fire with Satan and his angels and all the reprobates. So long as he will not burst the fetters of the Devil, amend himself and do penance and make reparation to the Church which he has offended, we deliver him to Satan for the perdition of his flesh, so that his soul may be saved on the day of judgment.

“To this, all the assistants answer: "Fiat, fiat, fiat" [so be it, so be it, so be it].

“The Bishop and the assisting priests then cast to the ground the lighted candles they have been carrying. Notice is sent in writing to all the priests in the neighboring parishes, as well as to the Bishops, of the name of the one who has been excommunicated and the cause of his excommunication in order that they may have no communication with him, thus removing them from any occasion of excommunication.”

(Roman Pontifical *apud Catholicismo*, December 1952)



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