Everyday Catholicism

Why Do We Strike Our Breast During the Confiteor?

During Mass, there's a familiar prayer and gesture many of us say and do without thinking much about it. As we pray the Confiteor, saying, "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault," we strike our breast. Why? While this is a small gesture we can easily do out of habit, it gives our body a chance to join the prayer on our lips.

We find this gesture in Scripture. Jesus tells of a tax collector who prayed in the Temple. Unlike the Pharisee who prayed confidently about his own religious observance, the tax collector stood at a distance and would not "even raise his eyes to heaven." Instead, he "beat his breast" and prayed, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). After Jesus died, Luke tells us that the crowds who witnessed what had happened returned home "beating their breasts" (Luke 23:48). Striking the breast could express sorrow and repentance in the biblical world.

The Catechism tells us that true penance begins in the conversion of our hearts. But authentic conversion of life doesn't stop there; it wants to speak. It naturally seeks to express itself in "visible signs, gestures and works of penance." This helps us see why we make this gesture at the Confiteor. Worship in the Catholic Church includes the whole person, not just the soul but the body as well. Our bodies can speak what is in our hearts.

The Roman Missal instructs us to strike our breast as we say, "through my fault, through my most grievous fault." It doesn't specify how many times we should strike our breast. Many Catholics strike their breast three times, accompanying the threefold repetition of "my fault." But the Church isn't saying each strike means something different. It's more important that we don't simply go through the motions. Make sure your body says what your lips are praying: I acknowledge that I have sinned and I need God's mercy.

At the Confiteor, I am confessing that I have sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do. Striking my breast helps me make this acknowledgment personal. But it shouldn't end there. We acknowledge our sins so that we can turn back to God. Christian repentance leads us to trust in God's mercy and the grace that changes and heals our hearts. The Penitential Act does not replace the Sacrament of Penance. Here, as the Church gathered for Mass, we humbly admit our sins to Almighty God and ask for our brothers and sisters to pray for us.

So next time you pray the Confiteor, let the gesture come from the heart. Let your hand join your heart in prayer: Lord, I have sinned. I need your mercy. Help me return to you. Then continue the Mass trusting in the mercy of God.

Catechism Connection: Luke 18:9–14; Luke 23:44–48; CCC 1146, 1430–1433.



ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

"When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him."
— Matthew 21:28-32

Mass Intentions

Sat.	26	Bill Mazzacane
Sun.	27	+Conrad Alli Solum
Mon.	28	Michael Shields
Tues.	29	+Ski Planansky
Wed.	30	St. Joseph's Parishioners
Thurs.	01	Paul Andre
Thurs.	01	(Spanish) Todos los fieles difuntos
Fri.	02	+Elinor, Lee, & Brian Cass
Sat.	03	+Elizabeth & James Penne
Sun.	04	+Linda Pearson

September 27, 2026

Most Rev. Ramón Bejarano
Bishop of Monterey

Rev. Martel Ramos
Pastor
Pastor@SaintJosephCayucos.org

Office Hours
Monday–Thursday
10:00 AM–4:30 PM
Friday — Closed

Parish Staff
Judy Ann Cross
Business Administrator
BusinessAdmin@SaintJosephCayucos.org

Mass Schedule
Monday–Friday — 9:00 AM
Thursday — 6:30 PM (Spanish)
Saturday Vigil — 5:00 PM
Sunday — 10:00 AM

Rosary
Weekdays — 8:30 AM

Confessions
Friday after the 9:00 AM Mass
First Saturday — 4:00 PM

Adoration & Benediction
Friday after the 9:00 AM Mass

Confessions

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered on Saturday, October 3, at 4:00 p.m., before the 5:00 p.m. Mass.

Food Pantry and Baby Diapers

Our parish food pantry gives out free food from 7:30 to 8:00 p.m. every Thursday night in our church hall and from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. every Friday under the parish rectory. There are no requirements to receive food from the pantry. A free home delivery service is also available for those in Cayucos, Morro Bay or Cambria. Please call 818-257-8116 to sign up.

Free diapers are also distributed after the 6:30 p.m. Spanish Mass on the first Thursday of each month while supplies last.

Bible Sharing

Please join us every Wednesday after the 9:00 a.m. Mass for Bible Sharing. We reflect on the readings for the following Sunday and listen to how God's Word speaks to our lives. Come and share with us, or simply listen. Everyone is welcome.

Supporting Our Parish

If you would like to make a special gift to Saint Joseph Parish, you may designate your donation to our Capital Campaign, which supports major parish projects such as the rectory, or to our Building and Maintenance Fund, which helps care for and maintain our church and parish facilities.

Thank you for your generosity and support of Saint Joseph. Online giving is available through the parish website at saintjosephcayucos.org, where you may choose from these and other giving categories.

Celebrate These Feast Days with Us

Please join us for Mass at 9:00 a.m. on:
October 2
Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels
October 7
Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary
All are welcome.

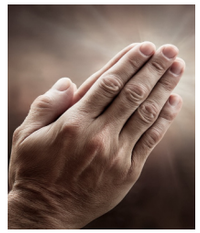
Reminder: Diocese of Monterey Community Survey

There is still time to participate in the Diocese of Monterey Community Survey. Your input will help the Diocese better understand the educational needs and priorities of children, youth, and families as it considers future opportunities for the former Notre Dame High School campus. Please complete the survey by September 30, 2026:

English: surveymonkey.com/r/dioceseofmontereycommunitysurvey

Spanish: surveymonkey.com/r/encuestaalacomunidaddeladiocesisdemonterey

English Spanish



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND INJURED

We are updating our parish prayer list. If you or a loved one is sick, injured, or in need of prayer, please contact the parish office so we may add the name to the list. To help us keep the list current, please also let us know when a name may be removed.

Steve Santi	Carlos Cortes	Eric Solum
Stan Piwaworski	Mary Moloney	Glen Bennett
Jim & Joanne Tobias	Mickey Bruno	Bonnie Bowman
Innette Starkenburg	Gary & Bonnie Nelson	Bill Mazzacane
Steve Buller	Butch Rambaud	Editha Andres
Michael Shields	Marina Taverner	William Baldwin
Camelia Cross	Keith Hart	Sandy Johnson