

We beseech You, O Lord, graciously attend to our prayers: and, having been loosed from the fetters of sins, guard us from every adversity.

What is the first thing an enemy does to you, once you are captured?

- He disarms you.
- He shackles you.
- He renders you powerless to do your own will.

Even when we have fallen into sin, we retain free will, but **our will is already weakened due to original and actual sin. We can become so mired in sin that we can't rule ourselves.**

The Sacrament of Penance is a great gift. It frees us from our self-inflicted chains.

We must strive to live without mortal sin.

But we fall. **In mortal sin we divest ourselves, as it were, of our spiritual armor. We make ourselves prisoners.**

We pray to God to protect us from the dire consequences of sin, including the attacks of the Enemy, which on our own without God's help we cannot resist.

Among the benefits of the Sacrament of Penance, along with being freed from the chains of sins, is a strengthening to resist sin in the future.

These prayers of the pre-Lenten Sundays are meant to help us ready the stores in our interior fortresses before the spiritual battle of Lent.

We must empty out what does not serve and be filled with that which does.

Prepare yourselves for *battle* and Lent's discipline.

GO TO CONFESSION! — *Fr. John Zuhlsdorf from his webpage <https://wdtprs.com/>*