The Sin of One Person

1. I come into God's presence and offer myself to Him.

2 Then, I compose myself in my real world. I consider how I live surrounded by violence and anger, in a deteriorating environment steeped in self-deception, untruth, and error, and under genuine threat of nuclear holocaust. I have to make my way through all this.

3. And now I ask of God what I yearn for: I ask God to let me feel shame at my thoughtless sins and my deliberate sins; I want to feel confounded by the truth that others suffer such dire things because of sins, and I have suffered so little, although I know I have sinned and do sin.

**Now, think about a person who died in alienation from God.**

1. I recall that Jesus said in one of His stories that a rich man, "Dives," had despised his wretched neighbor and ended up in a place divided by a great chasm from the bosom of Abraham, forever thirsty (Luke 16:19-31).

2. I think about this. Jesus himself said very clearly that some people were on the way to living forever apart from God. The Church has consistently taught that some deeds and some ways of life lead to self-destruction, to a life after life that can only be called totally wretched.
If a person has really loved only himself or herself, and wanted only that - he or she may get it, forever, and live deeply alone and without love except self-love.

3. I remember that some dictators in this century have murdered vast numbers of people, because of their lust for personal power over others. Where are they now? I remember that some rich people spend their entire lives amassing money, while doing nothing for the poor and suffering right under their noses. What happened to them when they died?  Other people spent their whole brief life relentlessly enjoying themselves in sensuality, really recklessly hurting and harming others, whom they simply use for their own pleasure. What happens to them when they die? Where are they now?

4. I imagine a young man in Vietnam, gradually growing callous as he fires into huts. He actually kills some people. He gets a taste for this deadly occupation. He figures he cannot tell who are the enemy and who are not, so it doesn't much matter. One day, he faces an old man and some children, and kills them quite wantonly and deliberately. Then he is killed. What kind of life did he lead? Where is he now?

5. Then I think about myself.

Have I pursued something, destroying myself as I did it?

Why haven't my stupidities caused the wretchedness that others' have caused?

Do I want to risk ending up all alone, forever alone, loving no one but myself?

6. Then I make my colloquy with Jesus on His cross, letting the three questions rise in me:

What have I done for Christ?
What am I doing for Christ?
What ought I do for Christ?

I talk this over with him I end with the Our Father.