

How Come?

"Dear Father: How come you jump all over a daily communicant if he misses once and send him a Lastare Medal if he is not of the Church for a week, and yet you never say a word to those bozos who make their Easter duty on Trinity Sunday?"

I.

Many a pipe has been spoiled by being drawn from the oven too soon.

II.

You will find the answer to your question if you meditate on the answers to questions 14, 15 and 16 of the Religious Survey, particularly question 16. Various forms of reason and ~~mild~~ emotion make people Catholic and keep them Catholics; eleven per cent of those who answered question 16 found a serious shock the most helpful religious experience in their lives; twenty-seven per cent of those answering the questionnaire had yet to find a "helpful religious experience."

III.

While very few students go through four years at Notre Dame without reacting to some degree to the religious atmosphere, a period of spiritual dullness, more or less prolonged, hits most students; and experience has shown that it is largely a waste of time to try to arouse spiritual languor by ordinary means. Plenty of minor calamities effect this: a mission helps some; a sermon now and then, particularly during Lent, arouses a dormant conscience; but some sort of humiliation, from within or from without, is essential to the awakening process. Something must show the individual that he is making a bally ass of himself.

IV.

It is the constant prayer of the Prefect of Religion that this calamity will overtake the soporific Catholic before he marries, as otherwise his purgatory will last till the end of his days. If his shell of selfishness, self-adulation, smugness, self-sufficiency, is not cracked before that time, his married life will be a torture. When a conceited snob chooses to honour a woman with his name and fortune, he is headed for catastrophe, because self-conceit is always blind. The humble wise man seeks a woman who will help a poor sinner save his soul.

V.

Whence comes this spiritual languor? From pride or sloth as a rule -- from infidelity to grace, laxity in preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion, neglect of spiritual reading, (which is essential to growth), unwillingness to make voluntary sacrifices, a passion for trashy reading, sensitiveness about seeking advice. We are all more or less self-conscious, but only a fool fails to seek advice when he finds a problem beyond his own spiritual horizon.

VI.

If you **have** a spiritual deadbeat among your friends and you want to do him a good turn, you will follow the following course:

1. Pray that God will send him a real humiliation;
2. Leave a copy of "The Dark Beyond" under his nose;
3. See that he makes a visit to the Blessed Sacrament every day using the little blue pamphlet containing the "Visits" of St. Alphonsus.