

What is a Practical Catholic?

There are different opinions -- in theory and in practice. Some people practice at it, but never get to be very good. "Practice makes perfect" -- sometimes. Other people are practically Catholics -- from their own point of view. The Church could never pick them out and claim them for her own by any external marks or signs.

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There were some very ardent Catholics running amuck in town last Saturday. They risked their lives in defense of the Church. But one shouldn't do that unless he is in the state of grace, and one who passes up his Easter duty year after year cannot be in the state of grace if he realizes his obligation.

From The Survey.

I.

"How can a Notre Dame student miss Mass every Sunday?"

Several questionnaires make this query. Some of the guilty parties try to answer it on their questionnaires. Very few hit the point. Spiritual blindness, caused by infidelity to grace, causes some of it. Laziness is of itself insufficient explanation. Poor home training is another cause.

A more important cause is a peculiar kind of cowardice. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." The number of Communions at the Sunday Masses gets on the nerves of those who are afraid of confession, and they finally try staying away from Mass rather than fighting their conscience during the time required for the distribution of Holy Communion to their companions. This reason does not appear on the questionnaires because we are always too cowardly to admit our cowardice.

The most frequent attempt at explanation of this state of mind is the accusation that frequent Communicants are insincere. Envy prompts us to belittle or destroy what we cannot equal.

II.

"How many times a day do you take God's Name in vain? There should be lots of answers to this question."

And yet we hear beautiful reports of respect for God's Name that give us confidence to continue the fight.

III.

"Are you ever afraid to go to confession? Why?"

IV.

"Do you regard Saturday night as a test of your character?"