

The Case of W.

W has been told by his friends that he talks too much and uses obscene language too much. He stays away from frequent Communion for fear of receiving in the state of sin.

Well may he fear! If there is any vice that is going to open the eyes at Judgment it is the sin of impure speech. The authors and circulators of obscene literature are hellish enough, but they usually know just what they are doing, and no matter how they may try to justify themselves in public, in private their consciences tell them what they are doing and they accept the consequences. With speech it seems to be different: thoughtless of consequences that may go on under their very noses, and of the countless effects that may follow, they empty the sewers of their minds before their fellow-men until their death-bed languor warns of approaching dissolution, and their last painful gasps are snatches of prayer. If they go to confession they tell their sin without thought of the reparation that Divine Justice demands for damage done, and go out again to corrupt more minds and send more souls to Hell.

A student came in a few years ago to ask advice for a stranger with whom he had struck up an acquaintance in a hotel lobby. The stranger, a young man hardly out of his teens, was suffering his fifth attack of a venereal disease. With the encouragement of this student the young man began a fight against impurity, but his will was weak, and there were slips. In every case he traced his fall to an evil conversation or an evil remark that might have meant nothing to others but meant disaster to him. Within three months he had suffered a sixth attack. He was back once since, looking like a ghost, after a long sojourn in a hospital.

How many young men who have fallen can trace their first fall to the wearing effect of impure stories? How many of their subsequent falls can be traced to the same source? W will find out on the Day of Judgment how many souls have gone to Hell because of his loose tongue; he will find out how many minds he has corrupted, how much disease has been spread as an indirect result of his unbridled speech; he will find out how many babies have been born dead or blind or rotten with disease, how many killed unborn, how many born without a name.

W says that he is a senior and that he doesn't like sacrifice. Notre Dame has failed in his case. Our Blessed Lord said: "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross daily and follow Me." W has heard these words at Notre Dame but they have meant nothing to him; Notre Dame is to blame for not demanding more sacrifice.

What can W do about it? For one thing, he can be more respectful to his fellow-men. He doesn't use such language in the presence of people he respects; when he uses it in your presence it is a sign he doesn't respect you; you can help him respect you. For another, he can make reparation for the harm he has done by praying daily for the victims of his tongue; he can manfully take and keep the Holy Name pledge to do all in his power to keep others from using obscene language; he can offer the mortification of silence through the month of May as an act of reparation to the Blessed Mother whom he has dishonored by his foulness while at her school.

To X Y Z.

Other students here have faced a worse condition than your letter reveals and have had great success in correcting it. The grace of God will bring everything to a happy end. You needn't feel a bit awkward about coming in to talk about it; plenty do.

Father Cavanaugh Will Preach.

Fr. Cavanaugh will open the May Devotions at 7:30 tomorrow evening.