

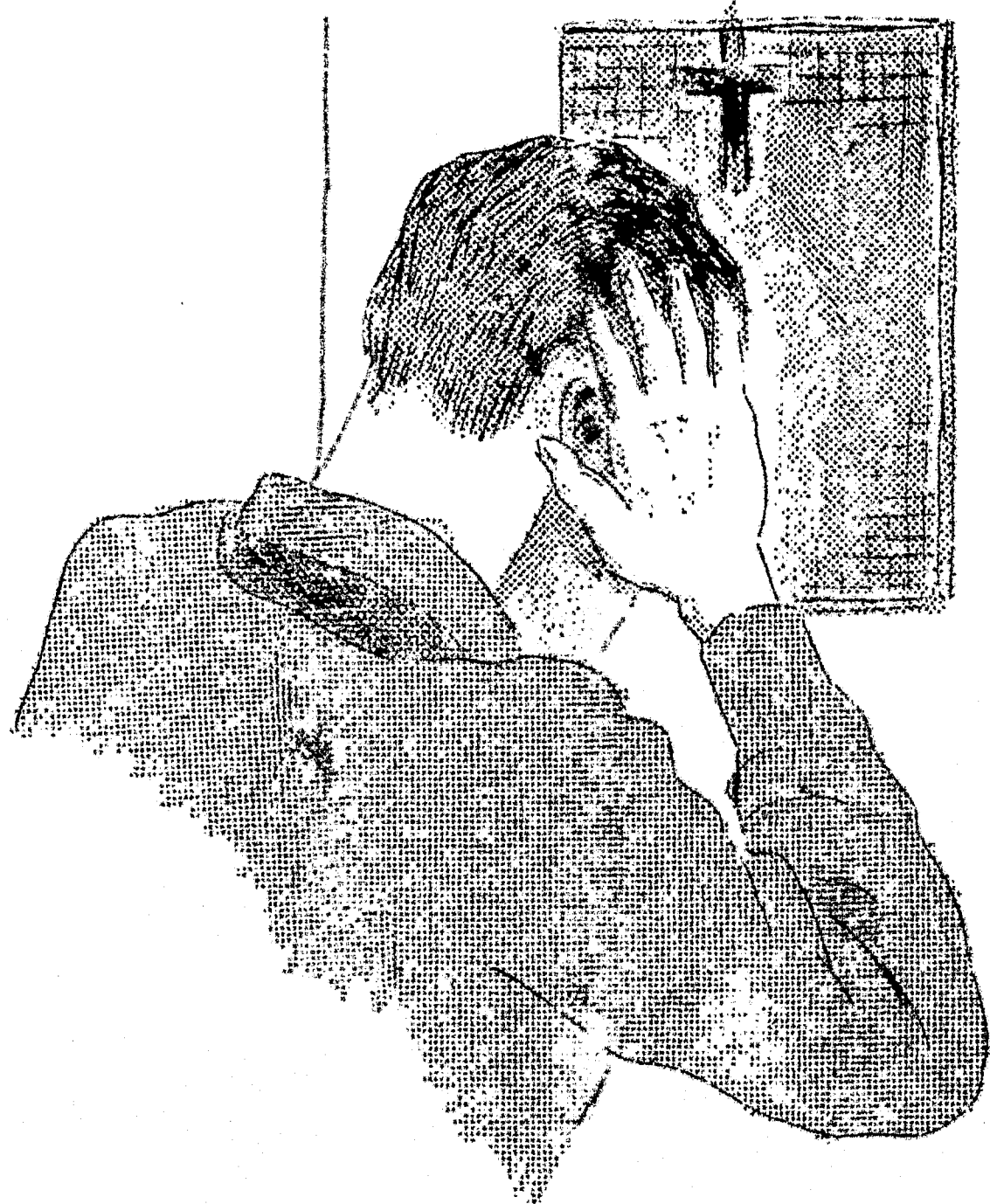
Prayers: deceased, 2nd
anniv. of father of Joseph
O'Connell (Br.).

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
April 6, 1937.

Prayers: ill, father-in-
law of Don Miller, '25;
Bill Ryan (Car.) appendect.

Confession Is Never Too Difficult.

In the face of a difficult confession the strong man often shivers in shame and fear. For weeks and months--and, sometimes, even for years--he suffers terrifying torments of conscience rather than uncover his soul.



"No confessor in the world could begin to understand why I have sunk so low." A moment, please. The priest who truly loves Christ understands evil about as well as any other man in the world. This story from the Autobiography of G.K. Chesterton illustrates the truth:

"I mentioned to the priest in conversation that I proposed to support in print a certain proposal, it matters not what, in connection with some rather sordid social questions of vice and crime. On this particular point he thought I was in error, or rather in ignorance; as indeed I was. And, merely as a necessary duty and to prevent me from falling into a mare's nest, he told me certain facts he knew...I have confessed on an earlier page that in my own youth I had imagined for myself any amount of iniquity; and it was a curious experience to find that this quiet and pleasant celibate had plumbed those abysses far deeper than I. I had not imagined that the world could hold such horrors..."

"When we returned to the house, we found it full of visitors, and fell into special conversation with two hearty and healthy young Cambridge undergraduates, who had been walking or cycling across the moors in the spirit of the stern and vigorous English holiday. They were no narrow athletes, however, but interested in various sports and in a breezy way in various arts; and they began to discuss music and landscape with my friend Father O'Connor...The talk soon deepened into a discussion on matters more philosophical and moral; and when the priest had left the room, the two young men broke out into generous expressions of admiration...Then there fell a curious reflective silence, at the end of which one of the undergraduates burst out, 'All the same, I don't believe his sort of life is the right one. It's all very well to like religious music and so on, when you're all shut up in a sort of cloister and don't know anything about the real evil in the world. But I don't believe that's the right ideal. I believe in a fellow coming out into the world and facing the evil that's in it, and knowing something about the dangers and all that. It's a very beautiful thing to be innocent and ignorant; but I think it's a much finer thing not to be afraid of knowledge.'

"To me, still almost shivering with the appallingly practical facts of which the priest had warned me, this comment came with such a colossal and crushing irony, that I nearly burst into a loud harsh laugh in the drawing-room. For I knew perfectly well that, as regards all the solid Satanism which the priest knew and warred against with all his life, these two Cambridge gentlemen (luckily for them) knew about as much of real evil as two babies in the same perambulator."

With all his knowledge of sin, the priest feels deeply for the sinner. "Father, I'm in an awful mess; please help me." At that appeal in the confessional any priest's heart is moved to compassion. Christ, who is sinned against, is ready for the most joyous reconciliation; why not the priest?

PRAYERS: (deceased) Mother of Louis W. Esposito, '31; aunt of Walter Gerard (Badin).