

Tomorrow is the Feast of
CHRIST THE KING. World's
trouble: everybody else
wants to be the king....

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
October 28, 1939

10:00 o'clock Mass Sun.
for Gilbert Behrens on
his fifth anniversary.
Requested by his mother.

".....And I'm Sorry For All The Sins
Of My Past Life, Especially..."

With these words you should end every confession. But so few people do. They either forget or someone else forgot to instruct them.

Misunderstanding this simple point often causes a loss of time which is precious when twenty or thirty are standing in line. The priest may have to stop and ask you to mention a sin from the past. (Explanation forthcoming in just a minute.)

Again, misunderstanding this simple point sometimes occasions the needless embarrassment of priest or penitent. For example, some pious old lady might be shocked and say: "Why, Father! I have no past life!"

Here's the why of it. No absolution can ever be given if sufficient matter is lacking. You approach the confessional. This day-- thank God very much-- you have no new sins to tell. You are making what is called a confession of devotion. Or you do mention something, but it's a peccadillo, an imperfection but no sin at all. (You took a picture off your girl's chiffonier. Or, unthinking, you swore once. There was not the thousandth part of reflection in it. It completely slipped. You didn't want it to pop out at all.) Then you keep mum awaiting the priest's "I absolve thee."

You'll have to wait a long time. There's nothing to take away. So, your confessor has to take time out. "Will you mention," he asks, "some one sin, in a general way, from your past life?" Then you hem and haw: "What do you mean, Father?" or "I don't understand." Or, your only answer is a prolonged silence. Or, perhaps, a remark almost equivalent to this: "What do you want to know for?"

What To Do? ---Why.

Say simply, after you finish telling the sins (if any) since your last good confession: "I'm sorry for these and all the sins of my past life, especially (drunkenness) (impurity) (lying) (making a sacrilegious Communion)."

Two advantages. (1) You've certainly given the priest "matter" enough to forgive. And (2) You've mentioned something you're really sorry for (that drunken fit long ago) (that unchaste thought you deliberately held in your mind) and that sorrow, augmenting the sorrow you've just expressed for your "new" sins makes you better disposed to receive absolution. You derive more grace from that confession.

No "Difficulty" At All.

But this sophomore, not drilled in theology, objects: "How does THAT help, adding a sin already forgiven? If it has already been forgiven, it can't be forgiven again."

Is that so? What mother, seeing her son in trouble, has not forgiven him time and time again-- endlessly-- for a single crime? What boy, having sorrowed his parents, has not frequently and sincerely gone to them with the words, "I'm sorry. I will never do it again?" As a matter of fact, it might easily be that the second and third time you ask forgiveness of God for your sin (your wild, non-sensical, assinine trip around town), you were more deeply sorry for it than the first time you mentioned it to the priest.

T.B. If you need help in making your confession, ask for it. If the priest loves his job, he'll gladly assist you. Rushing, mumbling, ducking the issue may make your confession a sacrilege. MAKING CAREFUL, TRULY CONTRITE CONFESSIONS IS MIGHTY IMPORTANT.

PRAYERS: (Deceased) friend of Howie Korth (How.); Fr. Philip McGuire (Balto.) uncle of Al McGuire (Bad.); Eliz. Shea (Chicopee, Mass.); father of friend of Gerald Klyn; (Ill) father of Ernie LeVigne '39; aunt of John Miller (O-C); father of John Ryan (Freshman) LOST: at Thurs. pep rally, silver wrist-watch; return 107 Cav; LOST: gold class ring.