

The President's Novena began University of Notre Dame Ill: Mrs. Irnena Long; aunt and
this morning. If you didn't Religious Bulletin friend of Louis Rieg (Sor).
begin it, starts tomorrow. April 21, 1952 10 special intentions.

Oh! Forget It!

Time and again the question is asked how to get rid of "bad thoughts." The stock answer is: begin thinking about good thoughts--squeeze out the bad images with the good ones. But it doesn't always work out according to plan, psychological or theological. Good thoughts strong enough and powerful enough to grip the mind can't be picked up like ripe apples out of a barrel.

Last December in the Reader's Digest there was a good article apropos to BAD THOUGHTS: "Forget It!--And How." Although the author, W.E. Sangster, is not talking about impure thoughts specifically, this particular kind of undesirable thoughts can be included without doing any injustice to the author.

He claims that if he were asked what causes more trouble in the world--the things forgotten which should have been remembered, or the things remembered which should have been forgotten--he's sure it would be the latter. What we need, therefore, is not so much a good memory as a good forgettery.

If you say, "I can't forget," Mr. Sangster will say, "You are wrong. You imply that the will has no power over the memory. But the will can be trained to do the work. 'I meet people,' he says, 'who seem to think that if someone has played them a dirty trick resentment is justified. Justified or not, resentment and the ache for revenge are poison. It is better to get rid of them. . . So learn to forget '"

Remember To Forget.

Mr. Sangster points out we may not always be able to forget readily painful, tragic, or deeply emotional experiences. The real danger in remembering the wrong things is that we keep resentment, self-pity, embarrassment, sinful desires alive in our souls.

So-o-o. . . remember to forget. Reverse the process of remembering. To remember, one must revive the image, usually by association, hold it in the mind for so long, revive it again--and regularly.

In remembering to forget, reverse the process. Don't revive the image. When it rises of itself, summoned by some associated idea, turn your thoughts immediately from it.

Have in the ante-chamber of your mind a few interesting ideas always on call (like carrying extra chocolate bars on a long hike)--things you find particularly absorbing and which have the power to grip your thought and attention--for example, your work, vacation plans, sports, hobbies.

Most of the things you want to forget want to be forgotten; you are not working against but with nature if you learn to forget. A recollection--sinful or merely unpleasant--firmly rejected in a disciplined way recurs less and less frequently.

Restitution Helps Forgetfulness.

No man, concludes Mr. Sangster, should hope to forget the wrong things he's done till he has done also whatever he can to straighten out his crooked lines. To do everything you can to make amends helps our misdeeds into oblivion. A guilty conscience keeps the memory terribly alert.

Let us add a theological addendum to this very practical psychology. The only place to ease an uneasy conscience is the confessional. Whenever we are tempted to indulge in impure thoughts, the best way to begin the psychological process of remembering to forget is the theological self-starter: a strong, silent prayer to God and Mary. Prayers: (deceased) mother of Prof. C. Birder; father of J.G. Porbeck, '40. Ill, Mrs. M. Pryor.