

1. To Admonish the Sinner.

You saw the Spiritual Works of Mercy yesterday, for the first time since you studied Catechism. They look good in print, but they mean nothing unless you work on them. It is hypocrisy, an ugly vice, to call yourself a Christian and not practice virtue.

Don't leave all the admonition of sinners to the Religious Bulletin. It's the business of the Bulletin? to be sure, and without sinners the poor sheet would be in a bad way for readers; it's the business of the priest; but it's not the exclusive business of either the Bulletin or the priest. It is the duty of every Catholic, and it must be exercised with prudence, patience and charity, and a big allowance of courage, by every man who loves his neighbor for the love of God. How go about it? Here are some pointers on a few common types:

1. The good-natured sinner. The poor fellow is a friend of everyone but himself, and is his own worst enemy. You can't help liking him, and you hate to see him go wrong. He sins just because he can't say No -- to the tempter, to the temptress, to his passions. Make use of his charitable inclinations: make him promise to spend as much on charity as he does on sin. Get him to make fulsome acts of adoration and reparation, particularly the First Friday Adoration and the daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Drag him along with you to daily Communion. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins." Charity will cover his sins if you can lead him away from their occasions.
2. The timid sinner. Overwrought and highly sensitive, he is tortured by sin, yet he hasn't the nerve to go to confession. Tell him what he knows already, that the Sacrament of Penance is a supernatural institution, in which the priest acts merely as God's representative, and in which he has the fullest protection through the sacramental seal. Encourage him to overcome self-consciousness once for all by going to a priest for plain advice outside of confession.
3. The stiff-necked sinner. PRIDE is the most hopeless obstacle to spiritual progress, and unless it is caught and tamed in school, the chances for conversion are small -- unless the subject marries a woman who will lead him a dog's life. Pray for him; humiliate him when occasion offers; say "bunk" whenever he springs the time-worn excuse that sin is natural. Fast and mortify yourself for his sake, remembering that Our Lord told the Apostles of the kind of devil that yields only to prayer and fasting.
4. The rough-neck sinner. Introduce him to a good girl who is wise and patient and gifted with enough sense of humor to take up his training where his mother left off. In time he will become a dutiful husband and militant Catholic.
5. The underslung sport. Save him for the lake.
6. The hard-boiled sinner. Take him to a priest and save his soul. His great fear -- his "complex" -- is that someone will discover what a beastly tender conscience he has. Let a priest show him plainly that this is nothing to be ashamed of. He will then begin a beautiful spiritual development.

These and many other types of sinner are represented in the Religious Survey which is due to appear next month. If your own particular charge is not represented here, apply for more particular directions.

William Sheehan asks prayers for his uncle, who is thought to be dying.