
Daily Self-Denial.

Mark well these words of Christ: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Look at the life that He beckons us to imitate. From Bethlehem to Calvary it was a long series of privations and humiliations, of fatigue and fastings and apostolic labors, finally crowned by His bitter passion and death on the cross. Consider the example of the Blessed Mother and every single saint, without exception, that the Church holds up for emulation, -- each an heroic life of self-denial.

Why this universal insistence on self-denial? Because, you reply, we must do penance and atone for past sin. That's true, but it's only half the story. Daily mortification is absolutely necessary, as well, to win out in the daily struggle against present and future temptations.

Perverted human nature craves sensual pleasures. The eyes are ever curious, shifting this way and that for something sensual to rest upon. Modern movies, sexy magazines and books feed this evil inclination. Suggestive songs, lascivious stories and conversations pour in filth through the ears. And the other senses play an equally large part in the conspiracy of sin.

Dangerous images and recollections run riot in the memory and imagination when these faculties are not restrained. Distaste for solid study and thinking, pride and vain curiosity after forbidden books beset the intellect. Passion, routine, caprice, fear and sloth corrupt the will.

Christ's injunction means that we must wage a well-planned daily battle against these evil tendencies.

Prompt rising to attend Mass and Holy Communion is mortification of the natural craving for softness and bodily ease. Abstention from dangerous movies and from suggestive newspapers and magazines and books, helps towards control of the eyes. Blanket refusal to take part in indecent conversations aids in disciplining the ears. Instantaneous repulsion of impure suggestions in the memory and imagination brings these two faculties habitually under control. Working conscientiously according to a daily study schedule cultivates directly the intellect and will.

The whole business of daily mortification is to put evil inclinations in order, to subject them to the will and the will to God.

Maybe you do not follow the Divine Physician's advice because you don't know which kind of mortification suits your particular difficulties. Then consult a priest. If you don't begin the habit of daily self-denial here at Notre Dame you will probably never begin it, and your moral and intellectual life will be a hit-and-miss affair, without direction, without stamina, without the joy that comes with success.

Bear this in mind: unless you develop the habit of daily mortification you will always be a weak sister in the presence of temptation. Christ's words are not submitted as a matter of choice. You can't break up habits of sin, you can't keep from falling back into habits temporarily conquered, you can't live free from sin, day in and day out, without daily mortification.

PRAYERS: Ill - Jas. McKeon (appendectomy); Prof. Mack's mother; John Ohnemus, '27; the grandmother of Haskell Askew, '30; two friends of students. Four special intentions.