

Mass, Friday of St.
Peter Nolasco, p. 730.
One collect.

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
January 30, 1936

We Are Challenged.

Here's the gist of a postcard that your representative sent through the morning mail:

"Dear Father--Taken from the Bulletin: 'A Notre Dame student who misses Mass will have a mighty hard time begging for any mercy on the day of judgment. Don't be mistaken about that!'

"Did this come over the United Press wires, or is it the result of a seance???"

"Please reply as soon as possible in the Bulletin as we are constant readers and wish to know the source of your information.

"Student Body,"

It beats all what the modern science of sleuthing tells about the author of that postcard: (a) He's a powerful, barrel-chested magician. Otherwise, how could he have ever got all "you guys" together in this cold weather even to write that postcard? (b) He's extremely modest. Note, that although he represents the student body in globo, he declines to sign his name and thereby, with a single gesture, waives all rights to publicity. (c) He is decidedly psychic because his mind turns to seances and to United Press reports as to sources of information. (d) A multitude of his sins are already covered, and he himself certainly doesn't miss Mass on Sundays and Holydays, because he is a constant reader of the Bulletin.

Respondeo.

At the Particular Judgment a man is privately judged according to his merits and demerits--not according to the tears he then sheds, not according to the promises he then makes, nor according to the belated impulses that come to him while he's shaking in his boots. And the General Judgment is nothing but a public revelation of all Particular Judgments, in order that God's providence and His majesty, and the glory of the elect, may be made manifest to mankind.

Missing Mass on Sundays and Holydays is usually a sin of the mind, rather than of the flesh. That sin betrays supine indifference to God's authority, or a spirit of disobedience and rebellion. Some of the angels of heaven rebelled, and they were given no second chance. Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil so that they might know as much as God. You have heard of the consequences of their action. Witness, too, Christ's resolute dealings with the hard-hearted Pharisees who, against plenty of evidence, refused to assent to the meaning of His works.

On the other hand, sins of the flesh--recall Magdalene's story, and that of the prodigal son, and of the woman taken in adultery--brought seemingly tireless mercy from the God-Man. It is possible for a person of good heart to sin through weakness; contrition may come very quickly and genuinely to such a one. But repeated sins of the mind--as when a person misses Mass, confesses it, and goes on missing again and again--spring from a perverted, hardened heart.

And, according to Holy Scripture, perverted, hardened hearts are particularly obnoxious even to a merciful God. True conversion rarely seems to come to them. And, without conversion, there is little chance for them to amass merits and to avoid demerits. And merits and demerits speak out on Judgment Day. Hence we might put it this way: The Notre Dame student who misses Mass will have a hard time begging for mercy because there will be little or no mercy for him to beg for.

Acknowledgments.

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PRAYERS: (deceased) father of Robert E. Gorman '32. Ill, father of Bill Gillespie (Sorin); mother of Joe Campbell (O.C.); Pete Kern (Howard); mother of N. Allard '31.