
Wild Thoughts.
(Reprinted by request.)

D'ya know what I did the other day? Believe it or not, Stooze, I called on one of the padres for advice. And did I get plenty!

I said to him, I'm having a lotta trouble with wild thoughts. Just can't seem to get them out of my head. I thought maybe you'd give me a remedy --- sort of a formula like x plus y, and presto! the thoughts'd disappear.

D'ya know the first question he asked me? He says, What do you generally read for entertainment during the week?

I told him, I didn't read much of anything. I usually look at the pictures, I said, and read the wise cracks in a few movie magazines, but outside of them and Cosmopolitan and Liberty and College Humor, I don't read anything but the daily papers.

Well sir, d'ya know what he did? He threw his arms clear into the air and said: In the name of God, why wouldn't you have bad thoughts, if that's the kind of stuff you are filling your mind with!

But right there I checked him. I said, Listen, Father, I go to Confession and Communion every two weeks, so you don't need to look at me as though I were an A.P.A. or an I.W.W! I thought that'd hold him plenty. But it didn't.

You're like a fellow, he says, who takes a bath every two weeks and puts on clean linen and then starts to root around in the coal bin. How can such a chap expect to keep clean? Did you ever at any time read a life of a saint for variety?

I said, Now, Father, y'know I'm no sissy, and those goody-goody boys are not down my alley at all!

Right there was where I made my tactical blunder, I guess. He fell on me like an elephant.

Sissies, he says. You big clothes horse! You sit around in overstuffed chairs, drinking beer and smoking cigarettes and reading moving picture magazines! You haven't got the gumption to get down to hard work and cut out all this soft stuff. And you call fellows who can take it, sissies! Someone ought to really go to work on you, McGutzky!

Then he told me about some longshoreman named Matt Telbot who had been drunk for twenty years. One day he got himself by the back of the neck and kicked himself across the dock and into a church to confession. And for the rest of his life he never drank a drop. He worked hard every day at the dock and when he died they found he had been wearing a hair shirt and spiked chains which cut into his flesh--wearing them for years as a penance for his sins! A sissy, was he? That fellow could take it!

Did you ever hear of Saint Agnes? he says. She was only thirteen years old but she defied the Roman Emperor. She had her breasts cut off and died a martyr rather than commit sin. A sissy, was she? If you ever get her nerve you'll have your name in all the office books and missals in the world, and you'll really be a big shot. That's how he finished. Strong finish, eh Stooze?

Y'know, sometime when I have nothing to read I'm gonna get hold of one of those books and look it over. There must be something in what the padre says after all.

PRAYERS: (deceased) Mr. Michael Grimes; friend of Bob Heywood Ill, cousin of Arch Gott (Walsh); father-in-law of F. McGuire (off-cam.); friend of Dan Finn (Walsh); mother of Gerald Schaefer (Alum.); Kay Meyer's mother; friend of Phil Bondi.