

(FOR THE CATHOLIC STUDENT AT NOTRE DAME)

Friday is First Friday.  
Don't delay confession.  
Go today.

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Every Mass attended helps  
the dead and dying. How  
charitable are you?

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The Salted Tongue.

You were just a babe, and doubtlessly a bawling one, when you first came in contact with salt. It happened around eighteen years ago or more. It was the day your parents brought you to the baptismal font to have you changed from a pagan to a Christian. The priest put a pinch of salt on your tongue. This is one of the very first ceremonies of the baptismal rite.

It's true that the Church has surrounded the essential ceremony, namely the pouring of the water and the saying of the words, "I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," with many "extras", like the salting of the tongue, and the anointing of the crown of the head, the breast and the shoulders between the shoulder blades. She has reason for dressing up the ceremony. It takes about six seconds for a priest to perform the essential rite. If all were over in that short space, one might leave the ceremony unimpressed and lacking in appreciation for the Sacrament. So Mother Church calls upon the symbolism and prayer to express to the eye and ear, and through them to the mind and heart, the wonderful effects of Baptism.

Salt Tells A Story.

There is symbolism in salt. It is a preservative from corruption. It gives tastiness to food that is otherwise insipid. It stands for wisdom. The ceremony tells all present this truth: the tongue of the new Christian should always speak with relish of Divine Wisdom, and should never be tainted by corruption, now that it is under the preservative.

Baptism and a gathering of young men for a "session" seem to be miles apart. Far from it. The tongue is used on these occasions. And it should be a Christian tongue. No corruption should flow from it. The impure story, all boasting about drunkenness, of escapades, of "conquests" is corruption. It is not Divine Wisdom. Baptism was not mere playacting. It was not simply a pep talk to the tongue. "Now be good." Baptism actually gave the grace of purity of speech. The impure story is a revocation of one's baptism. It's a return to paganism.

The Sexy Tongue.

Maybe you are guilty, maybe not. But listen. What happens when you gather with the boys in a student's room or in a tavern? God made sex. The tongue that tells the suggestive story, that makes fun of womanhood, that casts reflections on motherhood, is making light of God's creation, and His divine plan. That's bad business. Very bad. It's not the work of an intelligent man, this joking about God's handiwork. It's sinful, a slap at God's face. It's helping the devil with his work or tempting others. About such a tempter Christ said it were better that a stone be hung about his neck and dropped into the bottom of the sea. Strong words from the kind, loving Christ! He must hate the sexy tongue.

Give Him A Hand.

St. Paul has a warning for those who listen in on a sinner tell the story of his weekend of drunkenness and conquests, and then praise him for his victories: "And not only do they do these things (shameful lusts) but they applaud others doing them." (And here is the condemnation of applauders) "Wherefore, thou art inexcusable, O man, whoever thou art who judgest... For thou who judgest does the same thing thyself. But does thou think, O man who judgest those who do such things and dost the same thyself, that thou wilt escape the judgment of God?"..Thou dost treasure up wrath on the day of wrath..." Hell is paved with good intentions and with sexy tongues.