

Prayers requested for special intention of Rev. Bernard Dalton.

University of Notre Dame Ill: father of J. Gittlein, '50.
Religious Bulletin Uncle of Jodie Stavinoha
January 22, 1951 hurt in accident.

Lapsed Catholics.

During this Chair of Unity Octave we pray in general for Church Unity. The intentions of the Octave, mentioned in a previous Bulletin, specify eight different ways this unity will be achieved. When praying for conversions we do not have in mind primarily enhancing the universal and temporal power of the Catholic Church, as many Non-Catholics and some misinformed Catholics may think.

However, it is true that in Apologetics the very fact of the universality of the Church is one of many valid claims for her divinity; and a proof of her universality is the fact that she is spread all over the world, even in God's underground beneath, behind and beyond the Iron Curtain. But the Church is more mindful of Christ's reply to Pilate, "My Kingdom is not of this world." So her first concern is for the salvation of individual souls. This concern necessarily manifests itself in the sanctification of those souls whom she calls her very own. When one of these goes astray she leaves the ninety-nine just and seeks the one who is lost.

The Catholic Church receives thousands upon thousands of converts. But Catholics born and reared in the faith sometimes do wander or practically quit the Church. For this sorry reason the intention for the Octave for January 23--"The Return of Lapsed Catholics"--is one of importance for us all.

Lapsed Catholics Need Your Prayers.

How many of them do you know? among your relatives? among your friends? "Lapsed Catholics" are not those who have discovered an easier way to save their souls. No one leaves the Catholic Church in order to live a more virtuous life. Nor do they stay away from the Sacraments in order to find peace for their restless hearts. Whatever excuses are given for not becoming reconciled with the Church, for not returning to the Sacraments, there is at the bottom of the scrap heap of all excuses, mortal sin, whether it be of the mind, such as pride, or of the flesh, such as lust.

Excuses.

We have listened to many goofy excuses for not frequenting the Sacraments. One of the goofiest of all is the retort, "I don't want to be a hypocrite." Such a one knows he is weak, or a sinner, or victimized by bad habits. But he wants to wait, so he says, until he is sure he has overcome himself before making his way to confession and then to Communion. He's a good deal like the fellow who waits until he recovers from smallpox before getting vaccinated. In Holy Communion he sees a parade of virtue, not a humble supplication for virtue. In confession he waits to boast of a natural power in overcoming sin, not to plead as a penitent for the supernatural help that follows absolution.

Confession and Holy Communion are aids to virtue, not rewards for virtue. The Eucharist is not only the Food of the strong but the Medicine for the weak. The Sacraments were instituted for weak men as means for recovering and intensifying divine friendship, not for supermen capable of angelic feats.

You Know The Score.

You must know that there are students here who do not receive the Sacraments and whom you could classify as "Lapsed Catholics." The very graces of the Masses you hear may reach out and touch their hearts. You are your brother's keeper, in that you are bound to give them good example, to avoid leading them into sin, to pray for their return to the Sacraments. Tomorrow is the day to demonstrate your fraternal charity.

Thanks for alms: "My brother and I have been putting aside money to give to charitable causes. Enclosed is \$5.00 for the Bengal Missions." Pray for one special intention.