

Prayers: deceased grandfather University of Notre Dame
of Gene Myler; mother of F. Religious Bulletin
Ang; Dr. John Wilson, Cobh, Ire. April 4, 1951

Ill, mother of Prof. James
McCarthy. (Next Friday is
First Friday.)

Is The Cure A Lay-Off?

This is a practical question: "Why does one become religiously stale especially after Lent? Is the cure a lay-off?"

You have a body as well as a soul, and the flesh wars against the spirit, seeking to drag it down. The cure lies not in a lay-off to await an emotional upheaval, such as a retreat, a firebrand sermon, a close scrape with death, but in steady regularity in spiritual reading, prayer, self-discipline and the reception of the Sacraments.

For all practical purposes a lay-off means a rejection of needed graces. The more graces you reject the staler you become. If you are not becoming better you are getting worse, because no man stands still in his religious life.

Religion is not an affair of the emotions. It is based on truth, on the revealed truths Christ gave us. Truth cannot fluctuate. Truth cannot be more true one day, less true the next. Emotions, however, have their good days and bad. If you pray only when you feel like it, not because Christ wants you to pray daily "and not to faint," you will pray hard one day and let down the next. Christ is really present in the Blessed Sacrament, no matter how you feel, no matter what the weather is like, no matter whether you pass your classes with high honors or low, no matter whether you feel like getting up for daily Mass or lying in bed like a lazy galoot. He is there. . . Twenty-four hours of the day.

The more graces you reject the more dangerously you get yourself out of top-notch spiritual condition, the more likely you will become a push-over for the devil or a dead duck for mortal sin. The more lights of divine grace you turn out, the darker becomes your vision. Then some bleak day you will stumble into a rut, commit mortal sin.

As long as you remain in mortal sin, your will is habitually turned away from the God who created you for Himself alone. Instead of loving Him above all other things, you begin loving yourself more than God. In this state of wretched selfishness, you will show great weakness in being morally stable even in the natural order.

Stability in the practice of virtue is acquired on the condition that a man live habitually in the state of grace. His will must be kept straight in regard to his last end, which is God. He must love this God more than himself. This is impossible without the state of grace. Hence its vital importance.

Men addicted to habitual mortal sin, men who make no persevering efforts to avoid mortal sin, men who neglect graces meant to strengthen them in virtue, will always be unpredictable and morally unstable. The light of Reason glows brighter with Faith than without it. Just as man's lower appetites need Reason to function orderly, in like manner, man's reason needs live Faith to guide him safely toward his goal.

The Lover In Love With Himself.

The very nature of love demands that the lover seek union with his beloved. God, the Divine Lover, loved man and sought union with him. . . That was the incarnation. Man was made by God for union with Himself. All his powers and faculties are intended to unite him with God. The Sacraments not only make this possible but actually facilitate the union. If all these potentialities for union are not actualized because of mortal sin, frustration must necessarily set in. When he loses God, man has no one to love but himself. The frustrated lover must still continue to love, so he falls in love with himself. Like a true lover he seeks to do the will of his beloved, which is himself. The longer he remains in mortal sin, the more confirmed he becomes in self-will, in his egotism. Unfed by God he starves. Nothing but God appeases that hunger.