

Mission tonight: 6:45. . . University of Notre Dame . . . Mike Cuddihy (polio); for  
Pray for Art Eggers (two Religious Bulletin the father of Jim Termondt; for  
fractured vertebrae); for . . . September 17, 1951 Joe Curley's sister.

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Bugbears

Are you sure you have not some unhealthy notions in your head? There are a good many sickly ones running round loose; they need confessionalization and the care of a priest. Particularly, a man who is not well grounded in theological principles and schooled in the facts of faith and morals may absorb error as truth, and may thereby draw erroneous conclusions.

There are upperclassmen who have not received the Sacraments since returning to the campus; there are some who are not making the Mission. We can't believe for two minutes that indifference, laziness, and love for sinful pleasures can account for their neglect of grace. It is likewise beyond belief that cowardice--fear of confession--keeps many away; the average upperclassman is not a coward, at least not when the chips are down. We can seek the trouble of many unhealthy souls in false theological notions.

Many students delay coming back to the Sacraments because they feel it would be hypocritical to be inconsistent--they neglected God all summer, and they do hate hypocrisy! To be consistent these men should refuse the Last Sacraments on the ground that they neglected the Sacraments during the days of good health. Fortunately, they don't, or they say they won't. Common sense prevails in major crises. "Once a thief, always a thief" is an old saw that is trite and untrue. If Mary Magdalene, St. Paul and St. Augustine are hypocrites because their saintly lives were inconsistent with their former evil ways, then happy their inconsistency!

Others remain away because they "know" they have no sincere purpose of amendment. If they are planning to sin when another weekend blows around, then they do not have purpose of amendment. But no sinner should draw the conclusion that he is insincere without consulting a priest. There is room for unhealthy self-deception in such matters. There is overwhelming evidence in the annals of the saints to prove that sinners who have not given up hope do come back to God, if they are willing to pay the price. "What exchange shall a man give for his soul?" One good confession!

Any penitent who feels that he cannot conquer sin needs the advice of a priest. Let him go to a priest and say that he does not want to go to confession, but needs advice. There will be no danger of a sacrilegious confession.

Another unhealthy notion is that one cannot enjoy himself if he is a daily communicant. The implication is that mortal sin is essential to a good time. There is more truth in the contrary proposition: one cannot really enjoy himself unless he is in the state of grace; otherwise he does violence to the sole purpose of his creation.

Any honest Catholic of normal conscience and a fair degree of "horse sense" will tell you that he does not feel comfortable in mortal sin. One's sense of good humor has full play only when he is in the state of grace: the scope of his embarrassment is then limited; he takes nothing seriously except the salvation of his soul. A bit of observation will show the skeptic just who at Notre Dame has the best time. . . without regrets.

Scruples are not infrequently a cause of spiritual inertia. The feverish mind afflicted with them may decide to stay away from the Sacraments rather than face the ordeal of necessary spiritual surgery the next time he goes to confession. Such a man must remember that scruples do not cure themselves, but they can be cured. The longer the delay the more difficult the prognosis.

Finally, there are those who mistake emotional fervor for real devotion. It's almost pointless to harp on this, but the mistake is a common one. These men need to know, once and for all, that TRUE FERVOR CONSISTS IN THE AVOIDANCE OF SIN.