
About Confession

Not only does Our Lord forgive us our sins in the Sacrament -- He also bestows special actual graces to help us recover from the evil effects of our sins, and a new strength to fight our particular weaknesses. This is the reason for the Pope, and priests, and bishops, and nuns making it a practice to go to Confession at least once a week -- not that they are necessarily in the state of grievous sin, but to receive graces to overcome their particular faults, and to strive for perfection.

"But Sometimes I Don't Feel Sorry"

The sorrow necessary for a good confession is an act of the will by which, through the help of God's grace, we turn away from our sins, resolving to avoid them in the future, and turn toward God. Since sorrow is an act of the will, it need not be felt emotionally. Feelings have nothing to do with essential sorrow. The real test of the depth of sorrow is in the will and its decision to avoid sin in the future. The real meaning of "doing penance" is "change of heart" -- and that belongs to the will. On the other hand, some penitents are moved to tears by their sorrow. That's neither essential, nor a common experience.

"I Always Forget Some Sins"

You should make a little preparation, beginning with a prayer to the Holy Ghost to enlighten you. Then, take the little Notre Dame Prayerbook and run through the brief examination based upon the Commandments and the duties of your state in life. Then you should make an Act of Contrition. Now you are ready for Confession -- but hardly before you have done this. After confessing your sins, and making an Act of Contrition -- say your penance immediately. It is not of obligation to do so immediately; but it is the best method in the world to keep from forgetting it. We have a serious obligation to acquit a serious penance.

And This Is Very Important

After we leave the confessional and say our penance, we must carry away with us a firm purpose of amendment. If we don't have this, the whole procedure has been a farce. Why? Because it's an indication that we are not sorry for our sins.

Confession is not merely a "shower" -- nor is it a mere "garbage disposal" -- or just an "unloading station" for our sins. Yet, unless we have true sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment, that's what we make of confession -- nothing more. And that's not enough. God demands that much -- plus the resolve to sin no more.

A firm purpose of amendment is an act of the will -- it implies not only a willingness, but a firm determination on our part -- to avoid not only the sins themselves, but also the occasions that lead us into those sins. An occasion may be a person, a place, or a thing. Under certain circumstances in the past they have been occasions of sin because of our association with them. A firm purpose of amendment is the resolve to avoid these circumstances in the future. This resolve demands courage of us -- a courage born of self-denial. Thus a good confession doesn't terminate with our rattling off sins; and paying mere lip service regarding contrition and amendment. Not at all. It remains for us to be resolved firmly to take the means necessary to avoid those sins in the future.

PRAYERS - Deceased: uncle of Father Simonitsch, CSC; Ray Kasher, '28; aunt of Lawrence Dolan of Dillon; Mrs. Ella Cole; uncle of Bill McNally of Cavanaugh; friend of Norm Krauss of Sorin; Ed Streb, '34; friend of Tom Bennet of Walsh; mother of Rev. Charles Coughlin. Ill: grandfather of Jim Munro of Sorin.