

University of Notre Dame

Religious Bulletin

October 22, 1956

Before You Enter The Confessional

Blood Donors still needed. See the Prefect of Religion, 117 Dillon.

Confessions - morning and evening in every hall on the campus.

Even if your previous confession has been very recent, take time to prepare well. Always kneel down in the chapel and mentally run over the Commandments of God and of the Church -- dwelling carefully upon those against which you have sinned most often in the past. Next come the duties of your state in life. If you have mortal sins on your soul, determine as accurately as possible their number and kind.

Then take pains to rouse yourself to real sorrow. This is essentially an act of the will, whereby we make up our minds to break, once for all, with every mortal sin, and in particular with the ones we are about to confess. Feelings have nothing to do with essential sorrow. The real test is in the will and its decision to avoid the sins in the future. Make a good Act of Contrition before you enter the confessional, attending to the meaning of the words: heartily sorry, detest, and firmly resolved never to sin again. If you have only venial sins to confess, it is better not to spend a long time trying to arrive at the exact number. Rather, put your time on contrition. Choose two or three kinds of venial sins that seem to be most harmful. For these you can most easily arouse yourself to sorrow.

Inside The Confessional

Ask the blessing of the priest; then tell him the interval since your confession. If you have mortal sins to confess, mention them first -- clearly, frankly, humbly, according to their number and kind. Don't smuggle them in under vague generalities. Nor should you go into elaborate detail. The confessor wants only the species and number. Next, go to your venial sins, mentioning those you are most determined to eliminate. Then always mention some sin that you have confessed in your past life and that you are especially sorry for.

If you think you are not improving as you should from confession to confession, speak up. It may be that the priest can and will give you some very good advice on the problems confronting you. Certainly he will try; and he will better dispose you to make an Act of Contrition with a firm purpose of amendment. All sins have their causes, and all sinners must be wary of certain occasions. This is the moment when we make up our minds honestly to take the means that are actually needed to avoid the causes and the occasions of sin. This is the moment that calls for courage and sincerity on our part to amend our lives by avoiding the persons, places, and things that lead us into sin.

This firm purpose of amendment is the element that makes our confessions something more than a mere cleaning up process, or dumping ground, or garbage disposal. Anyone who regards confession as a mere "unloading station" for sin, is making a farce of the whole procedure. Why? Because that's only half the job. God demands the admission of our sins, plus the firm resolve not to sin again -- plus our willingness to adopt the means necessary to avoid the occasions for these sins.

After Confession

Say your penance immediately. You are now, once again, like the newly baptized, at peace with God. Ask for the grace to maintain this new friendship at all costs. And thank God for His great mercy in this Sacrament.

PRAYERS REQUESTED - Deceased: M. Driscoll; Joseph Ryan; grandmother of Jim Keegan of Lyons hall; grandmother of Bob Meyer of Cavanaugh. Ill: Dennis Pat Ryan, ex-'43; Mary Marsden and Peter Marsden; mother of John Mack of Sorin, friend of Paul Flattery of Walsh, father of Tom Gozdicki of Dillon. 3 special intentions.