



ON CONFESSION

(Part 2)

4. DIFFICULTIES FACED BY CONFESSORS

We hear of difficulties that some priests face. Priests avoid administering this sacrament because they do not want to work or are frightened of this ministry.

Difficulty (1) Some priests do not confess or confess very little because they find confession to be tiresome. Some priests do not adapt themselves to confessing and do not see it as their cup of tea.

(a) “Confession is tiresome.” There is no problem in feeling the fatigue of confession. Feeling fatigue is neither a sin nor a lack of virtue. The fault lies in giving it up altogether because it is tiresome. Let us confront the priest who claims that he suffers because of confessions! Okay! But how is it that the same priest can give himself to even more tiresome occupations which are honourable and lucrative? How is it that he never feels any discomfort in gambling or in reading secular books, or in dealing with secular affairs? Does he doubt that the Lord will not pay him well for everything that he suffers?

St. Francis de Sales was urged to slow his efforts out of fear that it would shorten his life. He replied: “It is not necessary that I live, but if I live, it is necessary that I work.” Dear friends, I do not know if some of us will merit the honour of dying a martyr or a victim of charity! Come on! Let us confess! It is not the feeling nice, nor the inclination, nor the liking that should move us to do it! How many are the things that we do not like and yet do them? The sick do not want the medicines, and yet they take them! Let us do likewise. Let us not give flimsy excuses!



(b) “It is not possible for me to adapt to it. It is not my cup of tea.” It is too late! You should have thought about it before entering priestly life! Whether we like it or not, we are priests, and by necessity we have to attend to our duties!

Difficulty (2) Some priests who have no care of souls claim that they are not obliged to listen to confessions. So, is there an obligation on a priest to hear confessions if he has no assignment that requires this ministry? I consider this question from two points. Is the priest obliged to train himself or acquire the knowledge necessary to administer this sacrament? Once he has acquired it, is he required to exercise it?

If the priest must acquire knowledge to carry out this ministry, how can he, in conscience, be peaceful without doing it? Is every priest obliged to hear confessions if he has sufficient ability? The priest is essentially obliged to minister in some way for the good of souls. Woe to him if he refuses or is idle or wastes time uselessly! He has to give an account of



it to God! Is there an obligation on the priests to make efforts at hearing confessions? This obligation arises from the need of the faithful. This need arises when they reasonably desire and ask to approach this sacrament, but do not find anyone to hear them. When there is such a need, there is an obligation to administer this sacrament.

In certain parts of the year when people desire to receive the sacrament, and there are not enough parish priests and their assistants for everyone, many would remain without confession. In this case, any priest who is capable is obliged to offer himself, and if he does not do so, he would be failing in charity. Those who can but do not confess will wish that they confessed when the time comes! At the point of death, what would you want to – having heard confessions or having stayed away from it? I have not read or heard of a priest who, at the moment of his death, was sorry for having listened to confessions! But I can tell you the anguish and remorse of not a few who died with this guilt!

Difficulty (3) Some priests are reluctant to administer this sacrament. They are occupied with something else entirely alien to their state, and they do not want to hear confessions. They confess very rarely, confess only a few people reluctantly and only when they are forced to do so! Why this reluctance and repugnance?

(To be continued).

