

ON CONFESSION

(Part 3)

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There are priests who are reluctant to administer this sacrament. They are occupied with something else which is completely 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?

All their reasonings can be grouped into two: (1) It is a waste of time. Penitents are always the same. They narrate the same

defects and sins. No effect is visible. So, it is better to turn to something else and leave others, who wish, to take the role of the confessor. (2) The office of the confessor is very dangerous, very delicate and subject to many faults and has great risks for one's soul especially if the person were to be subjected to certain temptations and miseries. So, it is better to stay away from it and take up to other ministries easier and safer! Let us analyse these reasons.

(a) Some priests say that it is a waste of time, because the penitent gains little or no benefit by confessing: one always confesses the same sins and same failings. Even if this were true, it does not mean that the priest wastes his time and that he will go without his reward. God will repay him according to his goodwill. My dear brothers, do not think that you are wasting your time in the confessional! Waste of time does not refer to those who, having confessed with all the signs of true repentance cease to live, die and are saved. It does not refer to those who are repentant and forgiven through confession and remain constant and steadfast without ever falling back. They are not a few. It does not refer to those who having fallen into serious sins, return repentant and rise again. I believe that this objection refers to those few people who always fall into the same sins and who, stubborn and hardened, never reach the point of being absolved. Do you think that it is a waste of time confessing these people? No, my brothers! Even if we had no other penitents except these, I would say, always stay in the confessional, stay there as long as you can, and be sure that you will have a



wonderful time. And how? Examine carefully the person, whom you say bears no fruit and relapses in the same sin. Examine him in his thoughts, words and deeds. It is impossible that you do not find at least one sin less from the previous confession! I am sure that in a day, in a week, in a month he would have avoided some fall! Is this a small thing? And this because of whom?



To whose credit? Is it not that of the confessor? Suppose the confessor confessed twenty or thirty of this type of people, it means twenty or thirty sins less in that month!

Let us take the case of the worst and the most wicked, those who are indisposed ... even these bear some fruit! You can be sure that kindness and love which the penitent found in the confessor, and the words of salvation and repentance that the confessor put into his ears and heart will not return empty! On the day of confession, he will be more reluctant to do evil! On the following days what the confessor has said comes to his mind several times without his wanting it expressly. This will some time lead him to repentance. And we have proof of all these in the sacrament itself. Take the case of one who left the confessional without wanting to return. But now he has returned! Ask him if he was more peaceful and content during that time and why he returned and how he intended to do it? You will hear him say of the great remorse and anxiety, not being able to get out of his head what he felt, not being able to live any longer, always feeling anguish and almost having thought of ending it all if he could – more or less this is what even the worst and most malicious will respond! So, is this a waste of time?

That confessor who allows himself to be carried away and grow lax in administering the sacrament for fear of wasting time, is gravely mistaken. Let us learn from the devil himself to catch souls: “The enemy is prowling round like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat.” He goes searching, he goes on trying, if he does not succeed today he comes back tomorrow, till he succeeds! Will we take it easy?

(To be continued).