

Secondly, if your sins have been pardoned as to the guilt, who knows how long a time you may have to expiate them in purgatory? Now, — mark it well! — this debt is remitted more or less, and even totally, by means of frequent and daily Communion. The Angel of the Schools teaches us that an indirect effect of Communion is to remit the punishment of past sins and to deliver us from all or a part of our purgatory by the actual awakening in our soul of holy charity, which, being a “consuming fire,” destroys not only the guilt, but even the punishment of sin.

Ah! let not your past mortal sins keep you from the Holy Table! May they, on the contrary, draw you to it! The more you have wounded the Heart of our good Jesus, the greater is the compensation that you owe Him, and the best and sweetest way of offering it to Him is by multiplying your fervent Communions.

But you still hesitate, and why? — “I fear not having confessed as I should have done and, consequently, of not having received forgiveness.” Are you *certain* of this? Since you have no certitude on this point, since you cannot *swear* to it, — you are so timid, so delicate of conscience, — hold on to this decision of St. Alphonsus, that your confessions have been well made, and so, you have only to be at peace and remain tranquil.

Put away, also, all thought of general confessions. “They are,” says the same Doctor “necessary *only* for him who is *certain* of having made sacrilegious confessions,” — and surely you have not done that.

General confessions may be useful or necessary to those souls who pass their life between confessions and mortal sins, mortal sins and confession. To you who navigate so painfully in a sea of doubts, anxiety, and apprehension, it would be hurtful and far from procuring you peace, it would bring you rather an increase of trouble and inquietude. Your confessor has, doubtless, told you this more than once.

“But,” you insist, “supposing a case in which, without having certainty, I have, nevertheless, made my confessions badly, either from want of contrition, or from not having accused myself of all my mortal sins, or from not having sufficiently explained them, what ought I to do?”