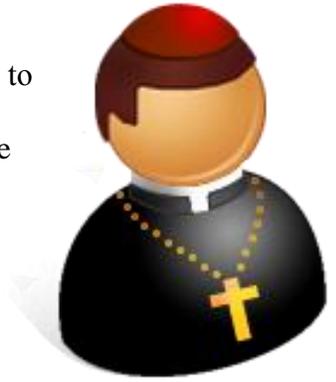


Confession in Catholic Church enters the app age (24, 11, 12)

© by Mike Keenan

Last March, the Standard ran an interesting story brilliantly entitled “More app to confess.” Having had some experience involving confession (no, not with the police) I cut out the article but like a poor surgeon, promptly buried it. (in a pile of books and paper, not six feet under)



Today, I did some house cleaning and found the article sitting underneath my calendar which was a poor place to stash anything because I rarely look at my calendar except when Miriam demands that we have a meeting.

When she demands a meeting, the agenda invariably involves me forgetting something like a special date. Being retired, there are no special dates for me anymore. Each day is like the one that preceded it, and to assign them arbitrary names such as Sunday, Monday, etc. is a waste of time. Numbers do not matter either. I could care less if this day is number 1 or number 14 or number 30. You can see that Miriam tends to call a lot of meetings.

As usual, I sense that we are starting to drift. Let’s get back to confession. The article in question describes a smart phone app that makes it easier to talk to God. I knew this would happen. Actually, I was just in the process of promoting a franchise called “Miracles ‘R Us” which would allow the smart phone user to ask for a specific miracle – for example, you might ask that you see your mother-in-law far less frequently or that your spouse would shut up and let you talk on occasion, particularly in social situations.

This particular app sells for \$1.99 on iTunes. Whoever invented it knows a thing or two about marketing. You do not want to make any talk with God too cheap. When I attended church and the collection box was passed around, I would never throw in a bunch of loose change. The word would quickly get out that I was frugal or perhaps a more critical term like cheap or miserly or stingy, tight-fisted, penny-pinching, parsimonious, etc. (I like parsimonious; don’t you? Most people think that it’s a good quality. “Don’t you just love Bill? He is so parsimonious!”)

And, of course, the other side of the issue is that you don’t want to price God out of the ballpark by asking for too much. Then, it would amount to the opposite intent of the rich man passing through the proverbial eye of the needle, which is a difficult task indeed and surely warms the hearts of all the poor people freezing outside without shelter. \$1.99 is just about perfect. Indeed, it’s slightly less than the price of a lottery ticket.

Anyway, this app is used by Catholics in London, Ontario, and it gives them a list of sins to check off before they enter the confessional booth, thereby speeding up the entire process. Hmm. I’m thinking that two might play this game. What if the priest had an app that dispensed the appropriate penance for each specific sin? It’s a win-win scenario. In fact, why bother with going to the confessional at all? Why not make it super easy and simply conduct the entire process electronically? These are difficult times, and we are getting busier and busier with less and less personal time. How can you expect people to tweet a thousand or so followers, email their many friends and relatives, text teenagers and still find time to go to confession? Of course, Protestants discovered all of this long ago, well before the electronic age that bombards us with iPads, iPhones and hybrid combinations of the two. They simply must feel genuinely sorry about their transgressions. And it’s all okay.



I will soon write to the Diocese of London to get the name of the app person. There must be a more resourceful manner with which to deal with Miriam’s countless meetings. If I could simply confess about missing dates in a more efficient manner, I think we

could shave valuable minutes off those tedious conferences. If there are other men out there burdened with my affliction, I will let you know how it goes.