

By  
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## The Delivery Boy

Back in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, it was common for small businesses like pharmacies to use messenger and delivery boys. In fact, some of you who've been fifty years old for thirty or forty years now may have even had a job like this. This installment begins with a story about a clever delivery boy.

The boy entered a shop and asked the shopkeeper if he might use the phone. The shopkeeper gave permission for the boy to use the phone, then he heard the conversation.

"Is that you, Mr. Jones? Oh, Mr. Jones, this is a boy speaking. Would you need a delivery boy, Mr. Jones? I'd like to work for you. Oh, you have a boy already? Well, Mr. Jones, does that boy do satisfactory work? He does? You're satisfied then? All right. Thank you. Good bye."

The boy hung up the phone and turned to the shopkeeper. "Well, thank you, sir. I'm Mr. Jones' delivery boy and I was just checking up on myself."

See, I told you he was clever, but God's opinion about you is what really matters. You'll know His opinion in a split second after your death. In the meantime you've got to check up on yourself as the delivery boy did by a good examination of conscience not only when you go to confession, but each night before you go to bed. Ask God's help to know your sins and confess them with sincere sorrow. Such a spiritual checkup and regular sincere confession will help you keep your soul in order and make it pleasing to God.

I've been writing *a lot* about Catholic morality and the need for frequent confession. My reasons for this are because the confession lines in the parish churches I've been in are so short, and because our society and culture seem to grow more evil every day. I don't write about morality and the need for frequent confession because I'm trying to seem holier than thou, or because I want to seem like some modern Elmer Gantry, Billy Graham or Archbishop Fulton Sheen. I do it because of what I see taking place all around me, and I have a genuine concern for your soul. I really do; I love your soul. Sometimes I begin to wonder, though, if I care more about the souls of those who read these than the readers do themselves.

The other day something occurred to me that I think was somewhat profound. Well, it was profound to my simple mind.

When I had a stroke, I couldn't even adjust my position in bed. Over time, I recovered enough that I began to learn to walk again. It was hard. Really hard. It took a lot of extra time too. Because I had so much that needed to be done, and because trying to walk required so much ex-

haustive effort, I told myself the lie that I just needed to stay in my wheelchair. As is always the case, when we lie to ourselves we pay a price for that lie.

When I realized that staying in my wheelchair was making me weaker and weaker, I began walking again as much as I could. Ever since the stroke, I've had to walk with the aid of a brace on my leg and a walker or cane. But starting to walk again was different than before. I'd spent so much time in my wheelchair because of my excuses and rejection of the hard work involved that I'd greatly hindered my recovery.

When I had the stroke, the physical therapy people told me I should have a complete recovery, but I'd cheated myself out of a full recovery because of my laziness and excuses. Now I spend most of my time in the wheelchair because I have to, not because I want to.

This really does relate to confession. Confession was really downplayed in the '70s and most Catholics were told they're okay, that they really don't offend God. They were told they were just being human, so confession was only necessary once a year to satisfy Church law. We got out of the habit of going to confession. For most of us, even when our consciences nagged at us to go to confession we told ourselves going to see Father was a lot of effort, and we had too much to do anyway. That's when we pulled the trigger on the spiritual suicide gun.

We've gotten into the bad habit of not going to confession. Mark Twain once famously said that you can't toss a bad habit out of the window, but that you have to coax it down the stairs one step at a time. So let's rid ourselves of the bad habit of not going to confession regularly and replace it with the good habit of going.

You're used to forming good habits, so this shouldn't be too difficult. You get into the habit of sticking to a diet. You get into the habit of working out or running. Heck, you even get in the habit of watching certain television shows every week. But all these things are of this world. They have no meaning, no lasting value, and they will do you no good when it's time to learn God's opinion of you.

All of us, at any given moment, will face God's judgement. We'll certainly get to see His mercy, but we must also face His justice. I don't know about you, but I'm afraid of His justice. After all, none of us knows with absolute certainty whether we're in a state of grace. Even if I find that I'm saved after I die, I still fear His justice awaiting me in purgatory.

Speaking of God's justice and mercy, something else just occurred to me. I never write *What We Believe... Why We Believe It* just for the sake of writing. I write it for the benefit of your soul. If you learn that you're saved after you die, God's mercy will allow you to recall the words among these that got your attention, and they'll be a source of eternal joy because you chose to make God and His Church the highest priority in your life. On the other hand, if you learn that you're damned to eternity in hell, despite the esteem you may hold yourself in, you'll be forced to recall the words that got your attention but rejected. They'll be a source of eternal torment, and you'll hate yourself because you failed to make God and His Church the highest priority in your life.

I'm just sayin'.