

**A LENTEN APP**

Confession by internet, without facing a priest? That was the buzz some weeks ago when a new app for confession came out. As you know, the word “app” comes from the word “application.” This new app is a program (or application) that one can buy for an iPhone or iPad. It is an aid, designed to assist those preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, - or Penance, as we sometimes call it.

While this new application does not replace an actual person-to-person confession, it does help with the examination of one’s conscience and with prayer formularies. It can also be used as a reminder of one’s sins. The Church, from top to bottom, has given its approval.

That should not surprise us. All of God’s creation is good, including that which He continues to create through human beings. How and for what purpose we use God’s creation is what makes the difference. That includes electronic discoveries and the internet.

I think that the Apostle Paul would have used the internet for e-mailing. He might even have twittered, letting all the Christian communities know of his travels and activities as they occurred. Of course, we would not have his letters if he had, which would have been regretful. (It is regretful that we are losing the printed word.)

Here we are in the First Week of the Holy Season of Lent. It is a season of doing penance, - that is true. But, as Adam Wood and Samantha Slezak reminded us a week ago during their Teen Talk segment on our TV program “Proclaim,” it is more than that. It is a time to draw closer to the Lord. That means changing our lives, particularly in the areas of transgressions that alienate us from him.

We religious types were instructed during our time of formation to make a daily examination of conscience. You know, like we do in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, - only, to do it every day before retiring for the night. This fosters growth in our spiritual life and progress on our journey of faith. There is no need to look for any particular Lenten exercise, as that will take care of itself through our daily examinations. Such practice also makes confession a lot easier.

The confession app incorporates that idea. While I am not promoting the sale of the new app, I would like to suggest the making of an examination of conscience as a practice for this Lenten Season. Let us not merely promise to do or not to do something during this time until Easter, after which we go back to our old way of life. Instead, let us get ourselves into the habit of an exercise that will take us beyond Easter into the real resurrection and eternity.

The exercise itself is very simple. Before going to bed and as a part of one’s evening prayer, a person looks back on the day and recalls what he or she would have done differently. “What did I do that I wish I had not or what did I not do that I wish I had?” Then I write it down under the current date and try to do better the next day. One of those pocket calendars will do very nicely for this purpose. Using a code of some sort does away with the concern that someone might read what we wrote.

One does not need a special confession app for this. Our daily preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and confession becomes the application! True, an iPhone or iPad can be of assistance. However, for those of us who are not up on the latest of the Lord’s creations, a simple pocket calendar will do.