

*Pick yourself up, be sorry, shake yourself, and go on again*

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*Pick yourself up, be sorry, shake yourself, and go on again* Evelyn Underhill

There is a wonderful efficiency in the Christian way of forgiveness and reconciliation. The scriptures want us to get on with things.



*Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger* (Ephesians 4:26)

*'If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.* (Matthew 18:15)

*Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.* (Colossians 3:13)

In Benedict's Rule the Divine Office is arranged so that the community twice a day is invited to forgive - "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."

Last August, Michelle Heyne, OA and I spent a good bit of time attending the Eucharist and saying the Office at All Saints Margaret Street. There can't be too many parishes in the Anglican Communion in which there are three masses most days along with Morning and Evening Prayer. The other practice Monday through Saturday is that for a half hour each day there is a priest available to hear confessions. Not only does the parish outdo Benedict by saying the Lord's Prayer five times/day but it offers God's healing, mercy and grace in sacramental efficiency.

Hear Martin Thornton on that:

*Perhaps the best of all reasons in favour of sacramental Confession is simply "why not?" Is it not just a little silly, and flagrantly inefficient, to cut the lawn with nail scissors when God has take the trouble to supply a very workmanlike power mower?*

My own inclination when serving as a parish priest was to offer the rite during Advent and Lent. People could also make appointments at other times (though of course they tended not to do that.) I find myself thinking that a better approach would be to offer it at least once a month. Enough to keep the opportunity in the minds of the congregation.

Underhill wrote:

*Refuse to pander to a morbid interest in your own misdeeds*

She wasn't suggesting avoidance or denial. She wanted us to get on with things.



Parishes are too often weighed down by a litany of old grudges and resentment. Our disobedience to the church's norms and the Gospel's call create a cancer within the Eucharistic community. Sometimes obvious but more commonly hidden deep within, unacknowledged but slowly eating away.

In my experience the chronic grumbling that feeds the spirit of grievance and animus will continue on until someone names the demon and offers the alternative of Christian practice.

*Every minute you are thinking of evil, you might have been thinking of good instead. Refuse to pander to a morbid interest in your own misdeeds. Pick yourself up, be sorry, shake yourself, and go on again.* Evelyn Underhill

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On the Feast of Blessed Evelyn Underhill, 2018