

## Bless me Father

We are in a confessional box in a Catholic church. There's the priest, and a penitent on either side of the screen.

**Penitent:** (Waits a few seconds then coughs)

**Priest:** 'Ah, good evening my son, and how may I help you? (Smiles beatifically)

**Penitent:** 'Good evening Father (then, as if reciting a text) Bless-me-father-for-I-have-sinned...

**Priest:** And how long is it since your last confession?

**Penitent:** ...and-it-is... (starts to count quietly on his fingers, mouthing and screwing up his face with concentration. Gets to three, stops, has a think, counts on to seven, stops has a think...)

**Priest:** (Looks at his watch, readjusts his sitting position, raises his eyes at audience)

**Penitent:** (Carries on counting to ten – stops- nods and smiles) 'Ten! There's Ten years ...since my last confession.'

**Priest:** (Mouths 'Ten!' at the audience) 'Ten years...ah, very well...um, ten years...well, my son, what have you come to repent?'

**Penitent:** (Sits up straighter, gets comfortable, and prepares himself for a long conversation) 'Well... I stole an apple.'

**Priest:** 'Aha, an apple. Sure, haven't we all stolen apples in our time?'

**Penitent:** Um...this one was a toffee apple, Father - from a toddler... at the orphan's Christmas Fair'

**Priest:** (Looks shocked, shakes his head) 'Ah. I see....Well, carry on my son.'

**Penitent:** 'And then I broke the tenth commandment'.

**Priest:** (Scratching his head –trying to remember) 'The tenth, you say-'

**Penitent:** (Seriously) 'Yes father, I coveted my neighbour's ass.'

**Priest:** (Leans with his ear to the screen. Pronounces it very deliberately) Ass, you say?'

**Penitent:** Yes father...next door... they own a smallholding.'

**Priest** (Smiling, obviously relieved) 'Ah, now I understand! And, pray, what else, my son?'

**Penitent:** (Says nothing, bites his own fingers)

**Priest:** 'My son?'

**Penitent:** 'Um...'

**Priest:** 'It's alright my son, you can say anything in the sight of the Lord. He'll understand.'

**Penitent:** 'Well, I've had...'

**Priest:** 'Go on my son.'

**Penitent:** 'I've had...thoughts'

*Priest:* 'Thoughts?'

*Penitent:* 'Yes father. Improper thoughts'

*Priest:* (**Lewdly**) 'And, can you ...elaborate? (**Quickly**) So that the Lord may understand better the, uh, exact nature of these improper thoughts?'

*Penitent:* (**Thinks, then asks piously**) 'Can the Lord not see into the very recesses of my heart, and divine my darkest intentions without my uttering even a single word? ...Father?'

*Priest:* 'Ah, yes. Good point.' (**Looks disappointed**). 'So.. anyway...improper thoughts... thoughts of a...(speaks very deliberately) sexual nature? Would I be right?'

*Penitent:* 'Yes father... you would.' (**Hangs his head. Addresses the audience**) 'Also involving my neighbour.'

*Priest:* (**Looks intrigued/ shocked. Starts to loosen collar.**) 'But son, you must remember (**Preachy – uses his hands and arms to emphasise – also addresses the audience**) that we are all but mortal. We ALL have these thoughts.'

*Penitent:* 'ALL, father? (**Looks shocked and puzzled**) 'What... Father Murphy, Father Thompson... even *you* father?'

*Priest:* (**Smiling beatifically again.**) 'Yes my son...even me!'

*Penitent:* (**Bristling**) 'Ooh, you dirty dog! ... NEXT!'

*Priest:* Thank you, my son. Same time next week?

*Penitent:* Bye-ee!

*Priest:* **Stands up and leaves the stage, head bowed.**