

March 21, 1962  
Tanunak

Dear Father Provincial: P.C.

You will recall that at my manifestation to you in Fairbanks, I mentioned my concern about the use of the Confessional by Father Poole. You asked that at my visit to St. Mary's I see whether or not this is still going on. I did not have to do any special kind of observing, Father, as it is an open problem there and was brought to my attention by Fathers Corrigan and Poole, as well as by several of the girls.

Father Poole asked me in for a chat and we discussed the problem. He seems to be of the same opinion as to his obligation to search into the consciences of his penitents, but he told me that he planned to mitigate the practice for fear of losing his faculties. But even while he was deciding on this course he continues to use the procedure that he has been using. He told me that he now no longer has the lights on in the Confessional.

One Eskimo lay agoutle told me of her fear of going to confession. When I asked her why she did not go to another Confessor she asked me what she would tell Father Poole

when he mentioned that she had not been going to Confession to him. I then asked her if Father Poole knew the individual going to Confession. She told me that he did and made it known to the penitent. She did not tell me how he made it known.

She also told me some of the questions he asked her in an interview when she came to St. Mary's. After which questions he advised her to make a general Confession of her whole life.

Some of the questions were the following;

Did you do impure things with yourself.

Have you been to bed with a man, single or married.

Have you ever wanted to or done impure things with animals such as birds or dogs.

Have you ever prevented pregnancy in any way.

After these questions, in his office, he had her go to the Confessional for a general Confession. Then he had her go over all the sins she could remember and also asked her if she had ever been in trouble with a religious.

Another young lady told me that she was scared to go to Confession to Father Poole because he called her by name in the Confessional and asked her questions like the above. She, however, formerly had the practice of going to Confession every day before she would go to Holy Communion.

I have hesitated writing, Father, because in my talk with Father Poole, he did say that he intended to change. But, as I said, it seemed that his attitude was prompted by the fear of losing his faculties. My reason for writing now is that if nothing is said or done, I fear that Father Poole will return to his former practice. And too, I am so sure that he has really changed much, because of the lengthy interviews in his office and the length of time he spends with penitents in confession.

I have talked openly with Father Poole and he knows that I disagree with his methods. If, therefore, it is necessary to use my name, feel perfectly free to do so. I only ask that the remarks of the girls I quoted not be used. I gave them my promise that they were not going to be questioned again and that anything they said would be in strict confidence.

I have prayed much over this, Father, and only hope that something can be done to remedy the situation without, at the same time, crushing the Christlike zeal that Father Poole has. I think that he has many good ideas, but that his means

are faulty and therefore dangerous to the penitent.

I ask a remembrance in your Masses and promise a continuance of prayers for you and for your work.

Sincerely in Christ,

James E. Jacobson, S.J.