

# Presbyterian Confession

# Ad Mocks

WTOP, a news radio station in Washington, D.C., is currently playing a commercial that ridicules the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The spot, paid for by a Presbyterian Church in the nation's capital, mimics a man confessing his sins to a priest. The priest repeats the man's sins back to him, and with each sin (e.g., having lustful thoughts while viewing lingerie ads and coveting a neighbor's lawn equipment) a cash register clicks, as if to tally up the sum of each sin. At the end, a voice tells listeners that with the Presbyterian Church, their spiritual journey doesn't have to be "a guilt trip." According to station managers, this ad has been aired for two runs a year since 2004.

It is interesting that those who made this spot felt that in order to spur interest in their church, they had to mock a Catholic sacrament. Rather than boasting of a strong faith formation or meaningful religious services, these folks must rely on trivializing attack ads to gin up their declining membership.

It is also troublesome that such an ad is running during Holy Week. This most sacred season is often the time when those with an animus toward the Church level their assaults. We're used to it. What we are not accustomed to, however, are these assaults coming from our fellow Christians. We hope that in the future, those responsible for this advertisement will choose to highlight Presbyterianism, rather than to belittle Catholicism.