Back three weeks ago it was Ash Wednesday. Ahead three weeks and you will be on your way home in a splash of Easter finery. Why bring that up? Because it's a safe bet that if you have neglected your immortal soul during Lent, you won't do much, if anything, during the rest of the year.

It's hard to miss the meaning of Lent -- because the whole Catholic world is on a 40-day retreat. Another thing: no pope, no bishop, no priest invented Lent -- no, it was invented by Our Lord Himself when He spent forty days and nights in prayer and fasting. Even He, Who never sinned venially, did that much.

That is the reason for this reminder at the half-way mark to "Do Penance!" And that was His warning to us -- it's the warning that rings out every day -- in the bells that awaken you in the morning; in the bells that call you to church. You read it in the Bulletin. You see it in the example of other students as they move back and forth from Adoration, and Mass, and Communion, and the Grotto; as they make the Way of the Cross; as they deny themselves the little luxuries that are ordinarily a part of their day.

As yet, very many have taken very lightly the Bishop's admonition to substitute Mass and the Lenten Series for being dispensed from fast and abstinence. Very many have made very little Adoration. Very many have not been impressed at all by the urgency of doing penance these days.

This is the half-way point -- a good time to stop and reflect, and ask yourself what has happened in your case. When it comes right down to the matter of self-denial, have you been cowardly? You have either profited by grace, or you have ignored it.

Fortunately another half of Lent remains to you. It isn't too late yet to get into the spirit of the holy season. You can start tonight with attendance at the Lenten Series at 6:45. Come over to the church and listen to Father Tom Brennan, CSC. He will give you the lift you'll never get from a "Lucky." Be good to yourself, and get moving along the Lenten highway. This is easy at Notre Dame.

Seniors who pass up the Lenten Series for the Marriage Institute might recall that knowledge, plus the grace of God, make a happy combination in one's preparation for the vocation of marriage. Our Lenten "graces" terminate at 7:10 -- in ample time to get over to Washington hall for the "knowledge." Seniors need both. There is also much knowledge on matrimony available at the Dillon hall pamphlet rack. Never mind the price on the pamphlets -- use them.

You will remember the venerable little lady in black who used to trudge slowly back and forth to the church; who spent hours on hours in the Adoration chapel, telling her beads in reparation for the sins of all of us -- at times when many of us should have been kneeling alongside her. Or maybe you saw her sitting quietly in the caf with her roll and coffee, far removed from the chatter of your world. Anyway, she slipped just as quietly off to God last Friday, and was buried Monday. We'll miss people like her -- she could have been responsible for many blessings on our campus. In your charity, remember her who prayed so much for you. R.I.P.

PRAYERS REQUESTED - Deceased: grandmother of Chester Morris of Alumni; mother of Dr. Charles Schwinn, '45; Lt. (J.G.) Joseph R. Juricic, '54; aunt of Ros Botton managed to become a Walsh.