

Religious Bulletin

April 27, 1929

What's Fifty Years?

Fifty years ago today Father Sorin blessed the corner stone of the present Main Building. Four days previously, fire had destroyed its predecessor, practically wiping out the University. Father Sorin was in Canada at the time, on his way to France, and Professor Edwards was despatched to call him back. The scene was enough to take the heart out of a strong man, but Father Sorin was a man of Faith. He knew what had built and supported the Notre Dame of 1842-1879, and with rugged courage he began all over again.

The ruins were still smouldering, the bricks too hot to be scraped away for the start of a foundation, but Father Sorin wanted to begin his work on the feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, which fell on the Sunday following the Wednesday of the fire, so a stone was placed in the ground and Father Sorin blessed it as the corner stone of the new Main Building. In September the building was ready for the students.

You have heard some of the stories of those four months -- how the first check, for one hundred dollars, that came for the new building, Father Sorin sent off to an orphan asylum, to make sure he had the prayers of God's little ones; how the whole community turned to and cleaned brick; how Father Sorin himself used to lay down his trowel now and then to take out his beads, saying he could do more with them (he was then forty years a priest); how the bricklayers worked fourteen hours a day. The sweat that went into that mortar was honest sweat; it glued the bricks into an honest building.

What's fifty years in a work like Father Sorin's? He saw the fruits of thirty-seven years of labor swept away, and the faith that had built for those thirty-seven years laid another corner stone in four days -- never knowing where a cent was to come from but knowing that God and His Blessed Mother would provide as they had in the past.

Fifty sets of students have passed through those halls that Faith built, under the patronage of the Queen of Heaven whose figure surmounts the dome. In half a century hundreds, even thousands of men have left the comforting arms of Notre Dame to lend their influence in the furtherance of Christian charity and culture. And hundreds, perhaps thousands, have come to rest in their Father's House -- and the work of Notre Dame is hardly begun.

And in this month of May another great dream of Father Sorin will approach fulfillment, when a start is made towards Perpetual Adoration. What will they say in another years? Will there be any memory of the men who began this holy practice, which is usually the privilege of convents of cloistered nuns? In another fifty years it will still be said that the work of Notre Dame has just begun. In those days they will bless the man who laid the cornerstone of the Main Building, and they will give a double blessing to the boys who laid the cornerstone of new graces, Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Mother's Day.

What flowers are you gathering for your spiritual bouquet for your mother? The Novena will begin May 1, next Wednesday, but you want to have more than the Novena to mark on your greetings. Make your visits to the Blessed Sacrament, visits to the Grotto, Holy Communions, Masses heard, other prayers. You can't afford to be stingy with the mother who brought you into the world and has done her duty before God to make you a good man.

Visits.

While we are taking steps to honor the Blessed Sacrament by Perpetual Adoration, we must not forget that Our Blessed Lord remains ever present in our hall chapels. We have our duty of visiting Him there daily if we would keep this privilege.