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Why Wreck The Team's Chances?

Now that everybody is happy and whispers of national championships are in the air, it is safe to say a word about Notre Dame football. And it is not too late to show you what part you can play in bringing about the result you seem to crave.

The aim and function of Notre Dame education are as far removed from the aim and function of secular education as eternity is from time, as heaven is from earth. The secular school, as its name implies, builds for time; Notre Dame builds for eternity. The secular school aims to make good citizens for the commonwealth; Notre Dame's purpose is to make the best kind of citizens for the commonwealth by making good citizens for heaven.

What the school stands for its football represents. Far from being an exception to this rule of consistency, Notre Dame football is preëminently representative of the aim and purpose of the school. And if God in His inscrutable Providence has deigned to make His Mother's blessed Name known and honored through the humble medium of a clean and popular sport, who are we to say that such a humble service is undignified?

Notre Dame football is a spiritual service because it is played for the honor and glory of God and the exaltation of His Blessed Mother. When St. Paul said: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God," he included football as well as everything else that is not sinful; and when we make our morning offering of all the thoughts, words, and actions of the day to God, we include honest recreation as well as food and drink and study. Tradition at this school has made this spiritual service more intense because daily Communion and prayer have been made part of the training schedule, each game is dedicated to some saint, and the shocks and bruises and disappointments of the season, as well as the glory of victory, have been offered for the Poor Souls or for some particular soul in affliction.

What part does victory play in this service? The combination of consistent victories, brilliant, gritty playing, and man-killing schedules has given the Our Lady's team the largest and friendliest public following in the country. And as sport writers puzzle and scratch their heads over this phenomenon, they come closer and closer to acquainting the public with the ideals that dominate both the school and the team. Catholic schools know what makes the difference, and when they seek a coach from Notre Dame they invariably ask: "Is he a daily communicant? Is he likely to exert a good spiritual influence on our School?"

But just as prosperity may kill faith and send generations of apostates to hell, victory may rob Our Blessed Mother of the glory that should be hers. Kids do crazy things when they lose their heads, and kids at Notre Dame have done some shocking things when victory intoxicated them. To pray for victory and then commit mortal sin to celebrate it comes very close to tempting God. To pray for victory to cover bets is an outrage to the dignity of prayer. To pray for victory and then not thank God for it is childish ingratitude.

If vile liquor and worse theatres are the aftermath of a Chicago game, can you hope for a good season? Ask those who attended the Navy game last fall. If a victory over the Army is followed by Orgies, can you hope for luck? Ask those who witnessed the disaster on Cartier Field last fall. If there are 2000 Holy Communions on Saturday and 1100 on Monday can you feel that you have been duly grateful?

The honor of your school is at stake. You cease to be individuals when you come here, to the outside world you represent Notre Dame, and it is not your parents, or your head training or your lack of brains, but the school that gets blamed if you lose your head. A good team, with strong reserves, is something. Don't wreck the team's chances.

PRAYERS: Tim Moynihan is quite ill in the hospital. Jos. Lauterbach, a student last year, is quite ill with pneumonia.