

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
February 20, 1931.

Way of the Cross Tonight.

In the church at 7:00, for Brownson and Carroll. In the hall chapels at 7:30.

Don't Slip.

If you are going away over the week-end, find the Catholic Church in your home town or wherever you are; hear Mass and receive Holy Communion Sunday and Monday. Have the backbone to stick by your resolutions.

Loss And Gain.

The late Bishop Canevin, of Pittsburgh, was much interested in the problem of losses to the faith in the Catholic Church. How far he progressed with his study of statistics in the matter we do not know. The results would be interesting. But aside from such absolute data there is plenty of evidence all around us that there are great losses going on all the time. See how many fallen-away Catholics you can name in your own parish; look over the number of Irish names in the Protestant ministry and in the rolls of some lodge... in these and many other ways you can see for yourself that to have the faith is no pledge that you are going to keep it.

The problem is one of loss and gain, however, so it is a relative problem. In spite of heavy losses the Church is moving forward rapidly; statistics on conversions, on new churches, schools, and other ecclesiastical buildings demonstrate this; so do such less tangible factors as the reception given to two recent Papal pronouncements -- the Encyclical on Christian Marriage and the inauguration of the Vatican radio. That the losses more than offset the gains in the absolute is quite evident from the fact that the numerical increase of Catholics, century by century, has been steadily greater than the increase in the world's population.

Ireland received the faith when the Arians fell away; Germany and Poland made up for various Greek defections; there were more Indians baptized in America in the sixteenth century than there were defections in Europe during the rise of Protestantism. Some one, some where, gets the faith that is tossed aside by an unworthy Catholic. And that is all gain, so far as the Church is concerned.

It is said that a French apostate, when asked why he left the Church, replied: "It's those Ten Commandments. They are too personal." They are still personal, and they still cause people to turn away, as did the disciples who "walked no more with Him" when our Lord told them that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood if they would have life in them. Our Lord let them go; He did not change His doctrine, He did not interpret it, to bring them back. He asked faith. This Catholic falls away because he will not give up a girl who is an occasion of sin; another will not go to the Sacraments because he is unwilling to restore ill-gotten goods - whether it is the railroad fare of the ride he stole or the cash he "borrowed" to make good his gambling losses; a third grows lax because his non-Catholic wife doesn't get him up for Mass on Sunday - and generation after generation of his descendants is lost to the faith; a fourth finds the moral guidance of Ben Lindsey or Margaret Sanger more to his liking than the word of Christ's Vicar on earth; a fifth, with a good memory but no common sense, reads Spencer and Kant instead of his catechism.

The Church is well rid of all of them. While they remain in her fold they are the inconsistent Catholics who keep non-Catholics from inquiring into the faith. Their loss is the Church's gain. The graces they reject will go to others more worthy.