

University of Notre Dame

Religious Bulletin

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"What Went You Out Into The Desert To See?"

A year ago James Manion came here from Nebraska for a Catholic education. He was a good boy—you could see that, for he had a golden smile that welled up from a good heart. His Catholic parents had taught him to love the faith in which they had baptized him; their example had encouraged in him strong convictions of character. He was, in short, the sort of boy Our Lady loves to draw to her school by the lake, for there budded within him all the qualities that go to make a good Notre Dame man.

Then came the Freshman Mission. With his classmates from Carroll Hall he assembled in the church on the night of the opening Sunday, to learn what constitutes a Catholic education. He heard the preacher describe a scene in his home that night—a vacant place in the family circle, and a feeling of lonesomeness for a boy who was not there . . . a brave unselfish mother, and a noble, self-sacrificing father . . . a mother who had gone down into the valley of the shadow of death that he might be; a father who saw himself living over again in his son, and who would be willing to give everything that the son might always be a good man.

He listened on, and he heard proposed as a concrete example of a Catholic college man a man who never saw a college, and who was not a Catholic in the strict sense of the word—a man whose dress was not collegiate, but the coarse skin of a camel; whose fare was locusts and wild honey; whose class room was the bleak desert—but whose teacher was the Holy Ghost, Who taught the heart as well as the head.

John the Baptist was proposed as an ideal for Catholic college men because he was a man of character, a man who had learned his lesson so well that the Master could say of him that no greater man had been born of woman. He was "no reed shaken by the wind;" no soldier, no Pharisee, no king's prison, no woman's wrath ever stopped his mouth, but only the executioner's axe. He was not "clothed in soft garments," but he set a certain fashion as to dress, for since his time men and women have worn hair shirts under princely garments; and the example of his frugal fare has been followed by all who fast and do penance for their own sins and the sins of the world.

James Manion heard, and he believed. Trained to follow his convictions, he adopted the normal life of a daily communicant at Notre Dame . . . and his quiet smile deepened as he drew daily closer to God. He never complained. Everything was always all right with him. He carried his patient resignation so far that only last week, when he was leaving for home, his physician said of him: "He is such a good patient that he is a bad patient. He will never complain, and that makes diagnosis hard." But Jim was satisfied. He had come to Notre Dame to learn how to die—and he had heard and believed that school is not merely a preparation for life; that it may be the only life we will ever know.

He died yesterday morning during six o'clock Mass. The priest was reading the Gospel of the day: "What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken by the wind? . . . Amen, I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist: YET HE THAT IS LESSER IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS GREATER THAN HE." Jim's ears couldn't hear that on this side of eternity, but he heard it on the other side, and we are sure that he died with a smile.

There will be a Requiem Mass tomorrow morning for the repose of his soul. It will be at 6:25, in the church, and you will all want to be there and offer Holy Communion for his eternal rest and for the comfort only God can give to the parents to whom He entrusted Jim's beautiful soul.

Prayers.

Deceased: Roger Cavanaugh, brother-in-law of Father John Cavanaugh, C.S.C.; the fathers of Tom Feeley, '31, and Walter and Derwood McAloon (ex-'27 and '28); an uncle of Fr. Frank Maher, C.S.C.; Robert Burke's grandfather; Wm. A. McCarthy's aunt; two friends. Ill: Fr. H. Bennett, S.J., a sister of James and Ray Gerend; Fred Erdle's father; George Cannon's brother; two relatives of Wm. Quenan; an aunt of Paul Gray. Four special intentions.