

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
April 27, 1933

An Alumnus Drops a Hint on Culture.

Every once in a while one hears the complaint that there is not enough culture at Notre Dame. It comes from all sorts of critics. To enumerate a few -

1. Those who confuse culture with tea parties and parlor manners;
2. The subscribers to all the Book-of-the-month clubs;
3. The (rare) protagonists of classical literature;
4. The purists who deprecate bad English;
5. The high school orators who can't find enough worlds to conquer; and, finally,
6. Those who have the true idea of culture as "refinement of civilization."

The answer is, of course; civilization first, and then culture.

A chance observation by an alumnus in his reply to the current alumni questionnaire gets at the heart of the problem (which is a problem, but has a solution). In his reply to the question, "Have you ever regretted going to Notre Dame?" he states:

"No - without qualification. As I look back through the years in the light of what I hope I have learned from them, I see in Notre Dame the greatest educational institution within my knowledge. Even students who came there in my time as ill-mannered bullies felt its influence, and if they did not acquire good points, at least their numerous bad ones were softened."

In the broad sense, of course, there are as many cultures as there are civilizations, and the world has witnessed a good many of these. At present the field is narrowing down to two varieties - Christian and pagan culture. If Notre Dame as a center of Christian culture has not yet reached quantity production in its output of Christian gentlemen, it is because it has been in the field only ninety years. The foundations of the thirteenth century cathedrals were laid in the sixth and seventh centuries, when the Church first took hold of the barbarian hordes and prepared them by the graces of baptism for the civilization that we call Christian.

Notre Dame has not had to start from scratch exactly, but some of the raw material here earns its name. Give us a chance. Come back three centuries from now and see what the sacramental life of Notre Dame will have done for ten generations of Notre Dame men. The field of culture - Christian culture - is the soul. We are teaching you now that you have souls. Your sons, when they come here, may know that the soul is to be saved; your grandsons may advance a step beyond the fear of hell to the beginning of the love of God; and what their grandsons may do presents possibilities - provided no throwback intervenes. They may even get to the point of avoiding venial sin.

The most prominent obstacles to culture observed on the campus at present are:

1. The notion that money is important;
2. The idea that to be manly - tough - one must be coarse and profane;
3. The acceptance of movie philosophy as a criterion of love and marital happiness.

Pray for sense! And close your ears to the jazzy world about you so that you may hear the voice of Wisdom when It speaks.

CHARITY: Bengal - \$5; 51¢ (mite box). The poor - \$2; \$3.15; \$3.60; \$10 (N.D. Club of Milwaukee); \$10.

MASS, Friday, 6:25, Sorin chapel, for Richard and Wm. Schmitt's father (A.I.E.E.).

PRAYERS: A cousin of T. C. Pinkley was killed in an auto accident recently; an uncle of Jas. Moneys is very ill. Four special intentions.