

University of Notre Dame  
Religious Bulletin  
November 7, 1933

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Sing a Song of Victory.

A certain number of synthetic Catholics (of the kind that visit fortune-tellers) are asking the question: "How is it that Notre Dame can lose after so many Communions have been offered for the team?"

The answer is three-fold:

1. "So many" communions have not been offered for the team. Last Saturday's 1700 is more than 400 larger than the number on any previous Saturday.
2. The appeal, when one is made for the team, is not for victory, but for the spiritual and bodily welfare of the team, and for the spiritual benefits one expects of athletics in general, and football in particular.
3. When one prays for victory, it must always be with the proviso, "if it be for the best."

Number One needs no extended comment. The figures are there, for anyone who wishes to read them. That argument falls of its own weight.

Number Two. We cannot recall a season, not even the famous "fall of 1928" that has been marked by such physical protection and such remarkable spiritual effects - first for the team, and, latterly, for the school. Not a bone has been broken, and the few injuries, while painful, have apparently not been serious.

The spiritual benefits to the team are manifold, and most of them are too intimate for discussion. But have you noticed that the papers remark on the clean, hard play of the team, and on the courage, fight, and perseverance, in spite of an apparent jinx, that has marked the work of the players. These things are more precious than victory: they mean more to the men in their preparation for life, for they indicate points of character.

Have you noticed, too, how many beautiful things have been said of Notre Dame by the counter-critics who have rushed to our defense? No previous season within our memory has been marked by such a wealth of discerning criticism of Notre Dame, such tributes to her power as an educational institution. That is a distinct spiritual benefit; it enhances the power for good of your Alma Mater, which has been regarded by too many light-headed people as "just another football school."

Number Three. You were told at the beginning of the season, in a speech at the first pep meeting, that it is proper to pray for victory if you want to, provided you make the condition, "if it be for the best." And you were told, too, that the Religious Bulletin has asked for prayers for victory on only one occasion - when the 1924 team went to Pasadena with the intention of making the Blessed Virgin the Queen of the Tournament of Roses. Finally, you were told that victory will be ours when we deserve it, and not until then.

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Notre Dame can take it - can take it standing up. If we should lose every game this season we would still be the winners if the spiritual effects we have pointed out - and others which we have avoided mentioning - continue to shine forth.

This is not the plaint of the loser. It is not the apology of the school that goes in for character training only after the football team fails to click. It is in no sense an apology. It is simply the emphatic re-statement of certain fundamentals which the Bulletin has always stressed, but which some people have overlooked in prosperity.

PRAYERS: Ill - Relatives of Don Love; Francis Matthys (appendicitis operation); a friend