
Fred Snite, Frequent Communicant.

Last June the whole reading world turned in admiration to Fred Snite, an exemplary Notre Dame man. Observe from the following editorial (New World, July 30) how his spirit is winning its way:

Fred Snite is young in years but certainly old in suffering. Few people in history have been made to endure the unmitigated pain of lying motionless for nearly a year in a mechanical contraption which at best is cramping, nerve-wracking and oppressive. The fortitude of the young man has been noticed by everyone and admired so deeply that the sufferers of the world have taken heart at the ability of a fellow human being able to undergo indescribable torment with a smile on his lips.

He exemplifies perfectly the Catholic Actionist. He receives Holy Communion frequently, a habit he acquired at Notre Dame University, which is perhaps the foremost Eucharistic university in the country. Of course, its curriculum is superb from the standpoint of academic excellence. Its athletic prowess has immortalized the name of Notre Dame from coast to coast. But its character building quality is most exceptional.

There can be no question in the minds of educators that the Eucharistic generation has produced spiritual heroes through the frequent contacts with Christ. In the Notre Dame Daily Bulletin this idealism is constantly held up before the eyes of the students. The results have been astonishing. Nearly seventy per cent of the student body approach the altar railing every day during the school year and graduates of the institution have been able to ascend the very heights of literary, commercial and industrial success, and still retain their loyalty to Christ in the Eucharist.

The latest example of supreme victory is the spirit of the young man in the iron lung. He has conquered by not being conquered by the ravages of disease and pain.

You yourself certainly saw last summer the pictures, broadcast nationwide, of Fred in his iron lung coming back from China to his home in Chicago, a journey of 12,000 miles by land and sea. Encased in his metal jacket Fred has lain helpless just 557 days with never a moment's rest from his forced breathing. And through it all "I have never heard him complain," says Fred's father. Recall that picture. You saw a big smile reflected in the mirror, didn't you? As you studied the picture you were sure of one thing: the smile wasn't forced; it wasn't posed. It was natural.

That smile wasn't developed by years of soft, flabby living and of self-surrender to pleasure. It came spontaneously from a heart that had learned self-control and courage in frequent Communion here at Notre Dame, from a mind which in those student years had come to know the full meaning of the prayer, "Thy will be done!" Ah yes, in the light of Fred Snite's heroism our daily "trials" are indeed momentous. We must get up and retire at certain times; we can't come and go as we please; we can't drink whenever and wherever we should like to; we must restrain our eyes. Fred never gets up, takes only what his nurse puts into his mouth, sees only what is reflected in the mirror just above his eyes. Once when he was told by his father after months of that torturing regime; "It may take seven years before you can leave the iron lung," he replied cheerfully, "Well, Dad, let's figure on nine years instead; if it's any less we'll be that much to the good."

Notre Dame is proud when she develops strong minds, strong bodies; but above all she is proud to develop strong souls, big souls that can "take it" and smile. Better than a thousand intellectual giants or All-Americans Fred Snite is teaching the all-conquering moral power of the human will fortified by grace.

PRAYERS: (deceased) Phil Callery. Ill. Ed Schroeter (Hov.); Ed Rorke; Sister Grace, C.S.C.; Chester King; father of A.J. Rizzi; mother of William Rieke. 4 special ints.