

University of Notre Dame
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Famous Come-Backs

Augustine is now a Saint -- but not because of his youth. At fifteen he was sent away to school. This was a mistake, because it gave the youngster free reign over his likes and dislikes. There was no cultivation of will power.

The atmosphere could not have been worse. He was surrounded by pagan living, and pagan ideals -- which is another way of saying that he met up with wild orgies, excessive drinking, sensuality of every sort, and daring sinful love. The consequences were inevitable. Augustine returned home an addict of the lowest vices. His conscience was gone. To make things worse, his father approved this sort of life, saying that the sowing of wild oats was a sign of manhood.

At seventeen, Augustine left home once more. This time he went to Carthage, the center of pagan learning and pleasure. There he became the most gifted, and the most sensual, of scholars. Students followed after him for his brilliance, and for his recklessness. He was really a "Big Man On Campus."

About the time Augustine's conscience began to prick him, he found an excuse for his evil life in the doctrines of Manichaeus -- a philosopher who taught that sin could not be resisted; that passion was necessary. At the age of 20, Augustine became disgusted with himself and his sins. He continued his excesses -- not because of any real desire, but only because of the force of habit. He wasn't free to do anything else; he had become the slave of sin. This thought became maddening, and humiliating.

The real break with his sinful habits came at the age of thirty-three -- with the help of St. Ambrose, and his mother, St. Monica who prayed incessantly for her wayward son. Augustine went from virtue to virtue, but not with ease. He had a fight on his hands until he died. From time to time the old visions would revive, and the passions in his soul would reach out for the old pleasures he had once tasted. To suppress temptations, he worked without thought of hours, preached, wrote, and gave a helping hand to the needy. Thus did he keep his nature under control -- and so became a saint.

And Here At Notre Dame...

any sinner can find inspiration in this great come-back. In fact, some of the local gentry (?) who are riding high, wide, and reckless; who haven't started Lent yet, are in somewhat the same position as Augustine in his college days.

But he's a great one to study, and from whom to draw courage -- the sooner the better. Last week, we buried two students who were given only half of Lent to gather up their resources, put their affairs in order, and settle their accounts with God. We have reason, thank God, to believe that they were prepared for the sudden call!

If you have not yet begun Lent in earnest, take courage and start tomorrow. It may be later than you think! This is the time to make a great come-back. Now! for, unless you do penance, you're doomed, yes doomed!

Wednesday Is Rockne Day

Twenty-three years ago an airplane crashed on the Kansas plains and took the life of a Notre Dame immortal -- Knute Rockne. Remember him in your Masses and Communions on Wednesday. He still belongs to the family of Notre Dame, and always will!