

University of Notre Dame
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What Are You Reading ?

We're not kidding ourselves or you --

About all the reading most of us do personally is a quick glance at the headlines, especially of the sports section. When we finish reading text assignments for class, we've had enough reading. Then comes T-V -- where the "eyes" have it, because nothing more is required of us. And it's a lot more restful than outlining a chapter on the history of Western Europe, too.

It's good to watch T-V occasionally; maybe even informative.

But it's up to all of us to develop a taste for good reading. Being University minds, we're not too flattered at being "taken in" by a bundle of trash where neither the content nor the style is worthy of our minds or our time.

Good reading material helps us to be articulate and informed -- it can also help to entertain us. We know there is no substitute for accurate information. And today we have 545 Catholic publications helping us to understand not only the Church, but also the point of view taken by the Church on current problems. Yet, almost half the Catholics in the United States never see any of these periodicals -- according to the poll findings of the Catholic Digest. And do you need to read these? Only last week, in a Senior Class here on campus, not one man of the 50 present could explain the Pauline Privilege !!

We won't always have chapters on Western European History to outline for class. And there will come a time when University minds turn elsewhere for reading material. At such time we should be willing and able to keep the mind active by serious reading. The wisest of men read out of a philosophy of life, as they eat out of a philosophy of health. Mental garbage is as scrupulously avoided by the eyes in reading, as another kind of garbage is avoided by the lips. And certain "hard" reading, such as Plato, and Aquinas passes into the mind, giving it consistency and strength. Each person is entitled to his preferences, yet the fact remains that, for the complete development of the mind, there must be serious and intelligent reading -- not just reading.

After a time, useless reading weakens the mind rather than strengthens it. And then reading becomes an excuse for the mind to lie dormant, while thoughts are poured over it "like chocolate over ice cream. Then the mind is like an hourglass, through which ideas pass like sands, nothing remaining." Ultimately we are content with the picture magazines, You know -- no effort required.

The easiness with which reading material can be procured today has much to do with the ministering to lower tastes. In the old days, only a few had time to absorb learning. Now, when reading is accessible to all at every drugstore, the discrimination has ceased.

But, you retort, our education is rightly preparing us to make a living. True -- but educators have not forgotten that since man has more leisure than working hours, it is also necessary to teach you how to spend your leisure. Bishop Sheen says: "Give a man a taste for the intellectual, the spiritual, and the moral, and you make him a happy man. Reading civilizes the conduct of men, and suffers them not to be barbarous."

The Catholic Press does this job in a superb manner. And this is Catholic Press Month.

PRAYERS -- Deceased: aunt of Al Mannion, '47; friend of Sam Merra of Dillon; uncle of Richard Galle of Scripps. Ill: Mr. James McGarry; father of Martin Kenehan (O-C).