

University of Notre Dame

Tomorrow: Masses as on
Sunday in Sacred Heart.
No Adoration.

Religious Bulletin
May 9, 1956

Friday: Adoration resumes
with Zahm, Cavanaugh, and
Farley Halls.

If You Can't Clean It Up, Forget It!

To be brief about an unpleasant subject -- the Cubs have come upon lean years, even lean days in this season. But it wasn't always thus. The boys from the Windy City, give them half an opening, will tell you that their Northside favorites used to be very good -- in fact they belonged in the Majors -- and there are records to prove it. Not the least of the bright stars in that era was one "Gabby" Hartnett, a catcher who made an occasional hit; and who used to snap his peg to second base without stirring from his haunches, and with lightning speed too. And that's true.

Another pleasant thing about Hartnett was his ability in the "potato" circuit, and at K. of C. gatherings. He used to entertain with endless humor and sparkling wit -- even to the edification of stag smokers where an occasional lapse in good taste was easily over-looked, and maybe expected. Not so with Hartnett, because the way he could clean up another's smutty story was uncanny. And if he couldn't clean it up, he forgot it. Like Will Rogers, and Snuzzle Durante, and Fred Allen, he was funny but never filthy -- he didn't have to be; he was too clever. It is little wonder that Hartnett is still in demand, still entertaining.

It's good for the younger generation to remember a man like Hartnett. It's even good for University men to study his sense of humor -- and to reassure themselves that much of the stuff pawned off today as laughing matter isn't funny at all -- just filthy. And filth is a cheap substitute for genuine wit. Here no intellect is required at all; no cleverness. It dulls your sensibilities. And in the end it leaves you poorer for having wasted your sense of humor on the drivel. Watch the poverty of the comic who trades in filth; and pity the poor souls who comprise his egghead audience. It's a perfect case of the dull leading the dumb.

Invariably the humor on these levels is sourced in the unholy use of what God intended to be holy and reverent, even to the sacred things associated with the mystery of life, and motherhood. This week, as we think of the honor and dignity belonging to our own mother, we're in no mood to associate her with anything that is filthy, or cheap. We want everyone to know that her vocation is a holy one, and sublime -- this participation with God in bringing new life into the world!

Sometimes, even here on campus, a would-be hero with a filthy tongue as his only claim to fame (with little head and less muscle) needs to be told that dirty stories don't become classy by going to college. Sometimes he needs to be reminded that speech is a gift of God, to be used in His honor and our own salvation. Sometimes he needs to be told that fun and filth are not synonymous. He needs to be reminded that:

Smutty stories drag a college man down; and that he should aspire to legitimate culture and proper finesse. Not that anyone wants him to be snooty or soft, mind you; but if he aspires to be a gentleman, vulgarity is out.

He hurts himself. He harms others -- and how much he harms them he'll never know until the very last day when Christ holds the General Judgment. Right now, when he retails his rot, perhaps some poor kid on the edge of the crowd; terrifically tempted and trying hard, is pushed into sin. His own foul mouth in itself is enough to answer for, without adding another man's sins -- and another's -- and another's -- and another's ...

Sometimes you can't escape a dirty story -- but you never have to repeat it. And if you can't clean it up, forget it.

PRAYERS - Deceased: Prof. Daniel O'Grady (Philosophy); father of Rev. Leonard Collins, CSC; father of John Reynolds of Walsh; grandmother of Lee Hinderscheid.