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RELIGIOUS



BULLETIN

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Office of University Ministry
University of Notre Dame

I Became A Catholic ...

*John Mennell
Alumni Hall*



Last Sunday I became a Catholic. In Alumni Hall's evening Mass I was baptized, confirmed and received my first Communion. While these sacraments marked my official initiation into the Church, they were the culmination of things that had begun many years before.

When I came to Notre Dame as a freshman in August 1983 I had many expectations for the school that I had dreamed about attending. Notre Dame was not what I thought it would be, and in many ways that was good. I did not realize how Catholic the school really is. I had heard about ultra-religious schools, and many other colleges that were affiliated with some religion or another, but that religion did not play a big part. It seemed that college and religion were not compatible at acceptable levels. I found out differently.



People asked me why I came to Notre Dame if I was not a Catholic. My answer was that I had wanted to go to Notre Dame since I was in fifth grade. That year my father was a visiting professor in the Law School. My family and I established friendships that are strong today. When we left nearly 10 years ago I knew I wanted to come back. I was inexplicably tied to Notre Dame.

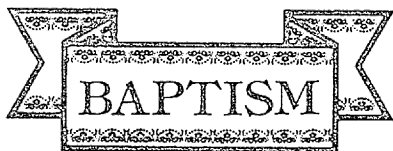
As a freshman I saw and respected the Catholic faith that surrounded me. More important than the actual Catholicism that was debated on all levels and subjects was the Christianity that was so important to what this place stood for. Many of my classmates had attended Catholic schools as long as they could remember and Notre Dame was just a logical progression. For others it was a very conscious decision that brought them here. Whatever the reason, they espoused ideas and beliefs that were very attractive in their similarity to those with which I had been brought up.

Although I was not Catholic, I did not feel left out at all. The community welcomed me, accepted me for what I was and encouraged me. I began going to Mass. I had gone to Mass for a few years following my family's stay at Notre Dame, but had then gone to other churches and other services in high school. In my high school I was hurt by the denial and rejection of any religion. It was a sort of rebellion against parents because they made their children go to church. High school students only went to church if they were forced to by their parents, and the Catholics seemed to have it the worst because of confirmation classes.

At Notre Dame there was more healthy encouragement to go to Mass than any other action. I was impressed by my peers who thought it was important to go to church. The Notre Dame community encouraged people to join rather than reject. I enjoyed Mass for what it represented and what it said but mostly for the feeling of community. People who had been arguing earlier over some trivial matter were now standing together on something vastly more important. I wanted to be more a part of it than I was.

Once I began my Rite of Christian Initiation classes last fall, the support from the Notre Dame community seemed to grow. One of my roommates acted as my sponsor, answering my questions and encouraging me. Everyone I met who found out about it seemed as excited about it as I was.

When the time came for my baptism, the Alumni Hall Chapel was packed. While it was mostly the regulars, I was amazed at the number who showed up to support me. In the following week people came to me and told me my actions had helped their faith.



During this past year three Notre Dame students have been preparing to enter the Church by participating in the R.C.I.A. (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) program conducted by Fr. Andre Leveille, C.S.C.

KATHY BROMMELAND A sophomore from Farley Hall was baptized on Sunday, April 6th.

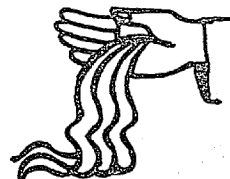
JOHN MENNELL A junior from Alumni Hall was baptized on Sunday, April 13th.

JOHN HINES A senior from Zahn Hall will be baptized on Thursday, May 15th.

CONGRATULATIONS AND GOD'S BLESSINGS!

As I said that night in the reception after Mass, I love college. The college life that I enjoy is not one that could be found anywhere. It is one special to Notre Dame because of the faith that is so prevalent in this community. The love, support and encouragement that I have felt here is truly a tribute to Notre Dame and everything Our Lady stands for.

Not only were these ideas present in my peers, but in the administration, faculty and staff. Catholicism seemed to be the common bond on which these intelligent people agreed. Through these similar ideas and beliefs, Notre Dame is more than a group of people who come to Indiana to study or teach but rather a community concerned for its members.



Notre Dame Community is Invited

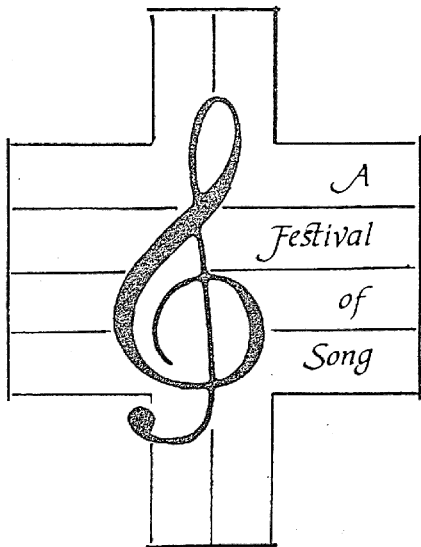
Mass of Thanksgiving
for

Kevin Hurley who will be visiting N.D. this weekend.

Main celebrant: Fr. David Tyson, C.S.C.

Homilist: Fr. Andre Leveille, C.S.C.

Sacred Heart Church, April 27, 4:00 p.m.



Celebrating Sacred Music in the life of the Church

featuring the voices & talents of

Notre Dame's Chapel and Folk Choirs

Wednesday, April 30, at 7:00pm, Sacred Heart Church