

(Sermon delivered by the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President of the University of Notre Dame, at the Funeral of Mr. Arch Ward, Chicago, Illinois, July 12, 1955)

"Everyone who believeth in Me, even though he be dead, shall live, and everyone who liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever." (From the Gospel of the Requiem Mass)

Every minute of every day, someone is born and someone dies on earth. All of us take much of this for granted as we pass through the middle ground of our own lives. Occasionally, a birth touches our family and we share for a few moments the hopes that attend each new life that begins. Then, too, suddenly a death occurs in our circle of friends and we pause for a moment to assess a life that has been and is no more on earth.

This pause that we share in common this morning is good for all of us, even though it is mingled with sadness and sorrow. The very sadness and sorrow testify that here is a life that was good, a human presence that will be missed. Every life, our own included, carries with it a great potential for good or evil. If we so often leave the good unrealized in our lives and become enmeshed in evil at times, perhaps it is because we do not pause often enough to assess our own lives, to ask ourselves where we are going, and if the days of our life add up to something good, something that will be missed when our lives are finished.

You see, there will come a day when for each one of us the sands of life run out, when God, the Giver of life, will ask us what use we have made of our talents, when our families and friends will look at our record, as we are looking at this man's record today. We need not fear for him. His work is done, at least, almost done, for he has one last task to perform for us this morning.

Arch Ward wrote millions of words, spoke hundreds of thousands more, in his lifetime. They were good words that carried a great message to millions of people. But the greatest message of his career is this final word he speaks to us today -- the story of his life, what he lived for, what he cherished, what his life has meant.

St. Thomas Aquinas once said that there are only three really important endeavors in life: to have faith in the right things, to hope for the right things, to love the right things in life. You could summarize all of our lives, and Arch Ward's too, by looking at the things he had faith in, hoped for, and loved.

Arch told me one day that anyone could easily arouse him to anger by poking fun at the three great devotions of his life: his religion, his school, or his paper. Take a look at each of these, and you will see the heart of his life.

First, his religion. There was a practical, solid quality to Arch Ward's Catholicism that had the character of a squarely hit ball or a perfect play. In a world that often neglects religion, he lived his, and it affected everything he did in life. It showed intimately in his devotion to his beloved wife and family. It endowed him with a sensitivity to everything good. It gave him a scorn for hypocrisy in any form and a passion for integrity and fair play. Perhaps most of all his religion was manifested by the greatest of all virtues which he practiced daily: charity - the love of God and his fellow men.

St. John tells us that if a man professes to love God whom

he does not see, and does not love his fellow men around him, that man is a liar. Arch Ward was no such liar. Look at the army of people who mourn him today, and you will measure the catholicity, the universality of his kindness and love. He was friend to the young and old, to Protestant, Catholic, and Jew, to colored and white, to the great of this world and to the most humble. And to all he gave the best gift he had to offer -- himself, and whatever he could do for them. His good wife tells me that she never heard him say an unkind word about anyone, or ever knew him to refuse a call, no matter what the hour of the day or night, because he did not want to miss the opportunity of helping someone.

This is rare praise, and I am sure that in eternity, Arch Ward has begun to learn the full meaning of those words that Our Lord spoke on earth: "Whatsoever you do for one of these, my least brethren, I say that you have done it for Me...for I was hungry and you gave Me to eat, thirsty and you gave Me to drink, naked and you clothed Me."

Yes, it will take Arch Ward and each of us an eternity to realize that faith, and hope, and love of God can add a new dimension and an eternal value to our human lives that God Himself has promised to take an eternity to reward adequately.

Then there was his school. Notre Dame stole his heart at an early age, in his student days, and his passion for Notre Dame, the school of Our Lady, deepened with the years. He was clear about what he had faith in, what he hoped for, and why he loved Notre Dame so fiercely and served her so well.

Partly it was the fighting spirit that makes the difference between the mediocre team and the champion; partly it was the will to compete with the best and be measured by the finest; partly again, it was the sense of honor and integrity he prized there, the will to win, but not by devious means.

Since the days of Rockne, everyone who has directed athletics at Notre Dame has depended upon the sure wisdom of Ward when there were problems to be solved, his frank criticism when things did not look right, his courageous support whenever unjustly attacked. Athletics were his world, but he wanted them not on any terms, but in their proper perspective and with their real values which he cherished. He would have no less than this at his school.

For his constant efforts to keep our spirit and our ideals high, we recently awarded Arch Ward an honorary doctorate at Notre Dame. No one has ever cherished the honor more, earned it with more devotedness, or borne it with greater dignity. He was a Notre Dame man in every sense of the word, whose life might well be epitomized by the words inscribed over the memorial door of our University Chapel: "For God, Country, and Notre Dame, in glory everlasting."

Then, finally, there was his paper, the Chicago Tribune, and his profession of sports journalism and promotion. Here he had faith in the value of competitive sports, hope for what it could accomplish and has accomplished so uniquely in America, and he loved the thrill of the contest, the great heart of the champion. And yet, loving these things, he loved more widely, and with a vision broad and rare. Most promoters ultimately promote themselves, but Arch Ward's promotions went beyond himself, even beyond the people and the sports promoted, to the ultimate benefit of the world, its youth, and its poor.

In all of this, he teaches us a most important lesson: that it matters not so much what we do in life, but how we do it, and for what purposes. Arch Ward brought great talent, great vision, and the best element of human generosity to his profession. His life, his profession, his paper have become the instrumentality of great good to many people, and in the process, he himself has become immortalized in the hearts of millions. Here, too, in eternity he must fully realize the meaning of Our Lord's words, that we must lose our lives to gain them.

Here, then, is the sermon that Arch Ward preaches to us and to the world today: that every life has eternal value if a man will have faith in, hope for, and love the right things; that everything good in life is a means of bringing us to the knowledge and love and service of God; that no other kind of life is really worth living, for as St. Augustine has said: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and the heart of man is restless until he rests in Thee."

We have prayed throughout the Mass this morning that Arch Ward may rest in peace and enjoy happiness for all eternity. While we offer our deepest sympathy to his beloved family, we take consolation in the beautiful words of the Preface of the Requiem Mass: For unto Thy Faithful, O Lord, life is changed, not taken away, and when the abode of this earthly dwelling is dissolved, an eternal habitation is prepared in heaven.