

(Address delivered by the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C. to the General Faculty on October 2, 1985, Notre Dame, Indiana)

This is the 34th time that I have had the opportunity of addressing the University faculty at the beginning of the new school year. Very few of you were here when I first addressed the faculty in 1952. Looking back, I am continually amazed at how much we have changed as a university during those past three decades and more. Institutional memories are short, so bear with me for a few historical facts.

The student body has more than doubled and the number of faculty has tripled in the past 33 years. The operating budget has gone from \$10 million to \$162 million. Faculty salaries have risen from among the lowest to among the highest in the nation. The academic level of the student body is up about 50%. Total student aid has surged from less than \$250 thousand in 1952 to more than \$37 million today. In addition during this same period, our financial aid endowment has grown from a mere \$100 thousand to \$50 million. Research has gone from almost nothing to over \$20 million last year. Endowment was minimal, under \$10 million in 1952. It is over \$306 million today, placing us among the top twenty in private universities. There were no women faculty members then; over a hundred today and climbing. Also, no women undergraduates then, 2600 now and climbing, too. There were almost no minority faculty or students in 1952--many more today, but not as many as there should be. Our endowment for minority student financial aid is currently in excess of \$5 million, but it must be increased if we are to open our doors to more minority students.

We then had a crowded Library with 250,000 volumes; now a large half empty Library with more than 1,500,000 volumes and over 840,000 microfilm units as well. Then our art collection was a few

paintings along the walls of the old Library. Now we have what is reputed to be the fifth best art collection among American universities numbering more than 14,000 pieces. Very few graduate students then. Today, there are almost 2,000 students enrolled in graduate programs on this campus, giving us a full-time equivalent of almost 1,400 combined graduate, law, and M.B.A. students. Last year, 489 graduate and professional degrees were awarded by Notre Dame. More than half of our current academic and support facilities were non-existent then. The University is practically debt free and has the highest possible credit rating.

Let me add quickly that this record is due to the dedicated efforts of many people, among whom Father Ned Joyce and Jim Frick deserve special attention since they have been in continual service during all this period.

Hearing this record, one might legitimately be tempted to say, "We have arrived. We can now relax and celebrate, maybe even take a sabbatical from all of these efforts on so many fronts." Right? Wrong!

I regret saying this, but we still have a long way to go, not as far as in 1952, but still a long way because we are now competing with the few best universities in the land. Having successfully worked our way through five ever larger fund raising campaigns, we are now embarking on a sixth, larger than all of the others put together. Is this a new form of masochistic self-flagellation or even hubris? Neither, I think. It is a move dictated by our dreams for the future of this place. Hopefully, when the massive goal is

announced in 1987, we will have more than two-thirds of the \$300 million goal already in hand or pledged.

The greatest amount of our goal is for faculty development and student aid and academic programs. Buildings represent a minor amount of our goal because the University is substantially completed and, thank God, relatively new and well maintained. We are hoping to bring our endowment to over a half a billion dollars since this, plus faith, is the guarantee of continued progress and avoiding the growing dilemma of either hopelessly high fees or curtailing our steady upward movement.

You will be hearing more of this campaign before it is publicly announced about a year and half from now. I am sure that many or all of you will be asked to help as the campaign gets into high gear. Even so, I did want you to know what is already under way, and has been, during the last year or two, under the direction of Bill Sexton and his staff. The Trustees, especially our Chairman, Tom Carney, the Provost, Tim O'Meara, the Vice Presidents, the Deans, and others in the academic order have also been deeply involved in planning, some also in early execution through many fly-in weekends for special benefactors during the past two years.

We are also deeply indebted to our Board of Trustees who have generously supported both the vision and the planning and, in due time, such as now, are among the first being asked to contribute to this historic campaign.

It is, in a way, unfortunate that so much of what I have already said has had to be in numbers, since this is the easiest way to measure growth and progress, namely quantitatively. That, however, is only a small part of what we are about.

The total endeavor of Notre Dame transcends numbers, important though they are. The inner life of this place, its past, present, and future, must be understood in terms of ideas or concepts, the two most central of which, from Father Sorin's time until ours, are the ideas and ideals of vision and faith.

If you want to really understand the impact of vision and faith upon Notre Dame, look first at the log cabin and then all around it at the rest of the University. Then look inside the heart and mind of Sorin and try to understand how only seeing that log cabin he could call the place L'Université de Notre Dame du Lac and could have visualized what was yet to be. Years later, when Notre Dame was a small, but for those days, respectable college, the vision kept breaking through. Sorin said, "It may not be a university yet, but if there is ever to be a great Catholic university in America, it will be here." Vision alone gives us only a visionary, in the pejorative sense of that word. But join vision and faith, and mountains begin to move. How many mountains needed moving, and still do.

In the university world, we interiorize our mountains. The central one that we are always climbing, to change the metaphor, is quality or excellence. If a university is not an oasis of quality in a sea of mediocrity, it does not deserve the name university. But quality does not come out of the blue, or black, like summer lightning.

Quality must be born, nurtured, grow, and mature. It must be achieved step by step, day by day, with persistence, fidelity, and dogged determination.

In an academic institution, excellence must be born of a thousand good academic decisions and very few bad ones. Money may be required, indeed it is essential, but money cannot create institutional academic quality. Only people can: persons of quality, excellence in mind and heart and spirit, excellence geared to the great transcendentals of truth and goodness and beauty. This is even more true of a great Catholic university where the universal transcendentals are ultimately joined to, and identified with THE TRANSCENDENTAL, the ultimate, absolute, the mysterious One in Three who is the indescribable and unspeakable truth, beauty, and goodness to whom we are called, the personified academic Holy Grail we seek.

Try to reduce this vision and this faith to numbers and you run right into the dichotomy Descartes aptly described as: L'esprit de finesse et l'esprit geometrique.

Sorin knew his numbers: a few devoted helpers, mostly without a high school education, an ox cart of household goods, blankets, cooking pots, shovels and axes, so many of each, and, finally, \$300 in cash. If he went with the numbers, he would have called Notre Dame: primitive country one-room school house. But despite the numbers, he spoke from a great vision and a great faith, and that prospective one-room country school house became L'Universite' de Notre Dame du Lac.

In a sense, for us today, the situation is reversed, but the need for a perspective reflecting vision and faith is no less important. We have much better numbers. We could be complacent and accept them and the situation they reflect with some pride of accomplishment. That would not be an act of vision and faith, but of resignation. That would be the end of a great dream.

Rather, vision and faith would spur us onward and upward, to be what we might yet become: something unique in all the world, a truly great Catholic university, a place where vision and faith are not just institutionalized in a university, but personified in all of its faculty, students, administrators, staff, and especially, in its almost 80,000 alumni throughout the world.

We would not then be satisfied at being good, which we are. We would continually aspire to be the best which we can become. You know what this requires: Great teaching and research, not the one or the other, but both, a relatively rare phenomenon in the same person. It means good students and demanding academic programs that make these good students even better men and women in mind and heart as they grow here. It means great facilities, classrooms and laboratories, libraries and computers, social and living quarters that contribute to the educational process, an ambience, a beautiful campus, that inspires the best and discourages the worst in us.

Above all, there is that all-persuasive spirit that characterizes what we are and what we are doing, all of us caught up in one of the greatest endeavors to which men and women may aspire--to seek and find and teach what is true in a world of falseness, sham, and deceit; to lead the way to goodness by the way we live our lives in response to grace and inspiration, and, finally, to cherish the beauty of it all that is also ours to have, to portray, and to give.

Vision tells us continually today that this is what we are about, that we can settle for nothing but the best if we are engaged in one of the best of all professions. Faith tells us that it is all possible, despite the mountains to be moved, even within ourselves, despite the routine, the ennui, the frustrations that

beset the best of professions and blunt the best of intentions, dulling our youthful aspirations with the abrasions of passing years. Faith keeps the vision bright. Faith also tells us ^{that} we need help to create corporate excellence. We need the constant good will and sensitivity that makes working together possible, we need the courage to transcend the petty envy and spite that could put us at cross purposes in our high endeavor, the jealousy that narrows our vision and cheapens our academic efforts. We also need courage to shun like the plague the selfishness and stinginess that is the opposite of the magnanimity that our high endeavor requires of all of us.

In so many academic institutions today, even in some reputed great, these virtues born of faith are conspicuous by their absence. One senses a jungle rather than an academic family and a community of caring and respect. I suspect that many university presidents would not expect such virtuous advice as this to be received with any grace by his colleagues. Rather it might be ridiculed as naive or pollyannish. Not here, I trust. It is precisely because there is so much good will and friendly spirit in the very nature of this special place that we can truly aspire to be different, to be ever more an endeavor truly inspired by vision and faith.

Also, it is precisely because we are unique, in so many ways, but especially in our dreams for this place, that we can honestly ask benefactors to help us beyond the normal measure of generosity so that we may become even better, even the best.

I am often asked: How does an institution solicit support? The answer is quite simple. People support an endeavor that is different and unique and true to what it proclaims itself to be. If

we say that we want to be a great university and then compromise our commitment with low standards and suffer low performance, we do not deserve to be supported and we will not be. If we say we are unique in wanting to be a great Catholic university--something that almost never was--and then pay little attention to the primacy of the spiritual over the material, if we compromise our rich religious values into nothingness, anomie, or valuelessness; if we give empty lip service to the demands of our faith, if we do not really love our neighbor, especially our close-up and disagreeable neighbor, if we do not worship or pray together--and alone--because the secularity of the age may be shocked at the sight; if we abide in injustice here or anywhere; if we allow our faith to degenerate into empty and meaningless formulas--if we do any or all of these and still profess to be a great Catholic university--we deserve to see our support dry up and wither away and it will. I even hope it will, because we will not deserve support. We may do some or all of these faith practices badly, true enough, but if our commitment is obviously solid and serious and we are trying to do better, we will not have to blow a trumpet to prove it. People will know we are different and unique and they will support us generously, especially if we have all educated their children.

Searching out truth is a slow and laborious process. Pursuing goodness, is no less so. Possibly more difficult in the long run. Anyway, a great Catholic university and all its community members must simultaneously pursue and cherish for themselves and others both truth and goodness, perfecting both the mind and the heart, in themselves and in their students, and therein lies the real beauty and uniqueness of our common endeavor.

Some may say, all well and good for Catholics, but I am not a Catholic. I would remind you that Catholic with a capital "C" means that one is of the Catholic or Christian faith. Catholic with a small "c" means universal, in the original Greek meaning of Katolikos. I would take it that this University must be Catholic in both senses. We must be Catholic in all that it means to be true to our basic Christian faith and we must also embrace the world--in other words, be ecumenical in our faculty, student body, and staff. We always have been and I trust we always will be. This is an important part of our American tradition. Our basic charter was written in 1844 by a Methodist, Senator Dufrees.

As to vision, I believe that we all, Catholics, Christians, and non-Christians, share the dream of all that this Catholic university can yet become. I would have to admit that many non-Catholic and non-Christian members of our faculty and students have been more dedicated to the basic values and aims of this University than some Catholics have. So much for a common vision. While we do not have, as for example Brigham Young University has, a totally shared faith, I believe that there are few here who do not find their religious faith important in their lives.

I mention this matter explicitly because "The Catholic Character" of the University is important to its total life, past, present, and future. I also mention the ecumenical nature of the University, too, because our history would be truncated without an understanding of this important feature of the University's life.

Let one fear be put to rest, once and for all time: No one who has been accepted here as faculty, student, or staff is a second class citizen, if not a Catholic. At the same time, we do look hard

for outstanding Catholic faculty, too, because it is as essential for us to have Catholics as it is for the Hebrew University to have Jews or for the University of Kuwait to have Muslims. All that being said, I know of few religious universities as ecumenical as this one.

Ecumenical also and importantly means sincerely standing for something and then reaching out in friendship and understanding to someone who sincerely stands for something else. Ecumenism is not like a goulash where everything is mixed together and stewed until it becomes an undistinguishable mélange. As I said during a minor flap last year, we have a Catholic Theology Department that is also ecumenical in that we have other religious faiths represented and respected, just as a Catholic theologian would be at Harvard, Princeton, and Chicago which have Protestant theological faculties.

Let me conclude by requesting your prayers for the success of the campaign mentioned earlier. But even more, may I request your prayers and your efforts to achieve that for which we request this monumental support: that all together we may, in our times, make Notre Dame a great Catholic university ever true to the vision and faith that gave it birth one hundred and forty-three years ago in what was then a wilderness.

Vienna, Austria

July 25, 1985