

Who Is Your Ideal Notre Dame Man?

There is a lot of hero-worship around a place like Notre Dame. With all the knocking and goofing that goes on there is plenty of eulogy, plenty of idealization. There is something very pleasing in the fact that when a chap is singing the praises of a pal (behind his back, of course), he generally tries to sum it up by saying, "He's an ideal Notre Dame man."

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The meaning of that phrase is generally subjective. Perhaps through the Religious Survey we could make up a composite Notre Dame man by taking a vote on the qualities he should possess; but that man would be the Notre Dame man of our time only, and would still be subjective. What we mean by the expression will be determined by our own ideals---our theoretical ideals, whether or not we work hard towards them ourselves.

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There is not a normal young man at Notre Dame without some sort of an idealization of the Notre Dame man; and there is not a boy here with such an ideal who does not see it worked out, to some degree at least, in some other student on the campus. His ideal may be his pal, or he may be a hero worshipped from afar, too sacred for intimate confidence, too heroic for daily contact.

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We need a tangible ideal. There is so much double-crossing in life, so much sordid self-interest, so much shrewdness, so much downright cruelty, so much mistrust and suspicion, so much viciousness and black-heartedness, that we need something to restore faith in human nature when it is buffeted and shaken. We want something in flesh and blood that proves that we can be better than we are, that we can keep on climbing. The Church gives us the Humanity of Christ, the sinlessness of the Blessed Virgin, the fortitude of the Saints, as tangible ideals to encourage us.

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Who is your ideal Notre Dame man? What are his virtues? What are his vices? For which do you realize him? (for which virtues that means. No registered student at Notre Dame, no matter how swaggering a front he puts on, has it in his heart to idealize a man for his vices.) What vices can you make allowances for in your ideal?

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Is your ideal Notre Dame man a daily communicant? Has he a good face? Has he an honest eye? Does he give you the impression that he has a good mother? Is he reverent with sacred things? Is he a good sport? How brave is he? How loyal? How dependable? How humble? How considerate of the feelings of others? How respectful towards women? How simple? How cheerful? In what activities does he engage? Is he an athlete? a poet? a good student? a plugger? How strong is his faith in God? Does he pray? Has he a strong body or a frail body?

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For how many and for what faults can you make allowances in your ideal? We must make allowances for human nature, because none of us are perfect. Can you still love and worship your ideal, can you still draw inspiration from him if you find that he is a thief? a liar? a cheat? a philanderer of women's hearts? a weakling? a back-biter? a sower of discord? an atheist? a perjurer? a murderer? Your heart will not let you idealize a man for any of these qualities; how many of them will it allow you to overlook? Does it hurt you to hear him curse and swear and tell impure stories? brag about impurity? crab the other fellow's act? Can you still respect him if he neglects the sacraments, misses Mass or comes late, scoffs at holy things?

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How close do you come to fulfilling your own ideal of the Notre Dame man?