

Religious Bulletin

November 11, 1927.

Prayer and the Army Game.

On the morning of November 4, 1920, Roge Kiley stopped for a moment as he was leaving the basement chapel to ask what could be done to enable the football team to receive Holy Communion the next morning, which was the First Friday. He explained that the team would reach Albany on the way to West Point at 8:20, and would leave again on the West Shore at 8:40, allowing twenty minutes in which to leave the train, receive, and return. Later in the morning, at Spanish class, Paul Castner asked the same question.

A telegram was sent to a priest in Albany to ask him to make arrangements for the tea at St. Mary's Church, near the station, or at any other church that seemed convenient. When the boys arrived there the next morning they were met by a flock of limousines and conveyed to Farrell Institute, with its beautiful Grotto of Lourdes, where Holy Communion was administered and breakfast was served. Mrs. Farrell, who headed the committee of ladies who arranged the event, gave orders to have the train held until the team returned.

The next day, as usual, the team received Holy Communion in the church adjoining the Military Academy, and then proceeded to win the game, 27-17. On Sunday morning the pastor stood at the door and greeted the Catholic cadets as they filed into Mass with their long faces. "I won that game for them," he said. "I had those boys in here at Mass yesterday morning. I would do as much for you if you would come around."

With only two exceptions (both on the way to Nebraska) the team has stopped on Friday whenever necessary to receive Holy Communion. Once since that time Notre Dame tied the Army, and once it lost. The defeat came two years ago, when the Army took a page from Notre Dame's book. On that occasion during a public assembly the Catholic students were asked to receive Holy Communion for the service eleven, and on the morning of the game all the Catholic members on the squad (there were nine of them, if memory serves) received the Sacraments at Father Duffy's church in New York City.

Prior to 1914 Sister Bertha, a devoted old nun at St. Marys, had supplied medals to our football teams. In 1923 this custom was revived at the request of the team. St. Joan of Arc was then chosen patroness of the Army game, and has retained that title since then. This year again our boys will go into battle with the Army with her medal and with a prayer to her on their lips. She is the patroness of soldiers, and we took her when they neglected her. Her special mission in life was to supply manly courage when it was found lacking in the men of France.

A few years ago one of the players on the Army eleven became a Catholic, and it was stated at the time that his favorable impression of the Catholic Church came from his observing the prayers of our players. And the example of our team taught the cadets to pray. Will they outpray you this year? On the morning of the Army game last year there were two hundred Communions more than the previous day. During the eight days preceding the game there were 10,000 Communions. During the eight days before we met Carnegie Tech there were 7,000. Learn your lesson bit by bit.

Prayers.

James McQuaid asks prayers for his mother who is ill. Eddie Mahon, of the Chemistry Department, thanks you for the prayers you have said for his little son, and hopes that you will continue them. Three special intentions are recommended, and one act of thanksgiving. One of these intentions is the welfare of an expedition down the Grand Canyon, a very hazardous undertaking. Vincent Carey, who makes the request, made the trip last summer and knows its dangers. Wm. Singer asks prayers for a deceased uncle.