

Some Statistical Reflections.

January was what you might call a bad month for spirituality. It had its peaks -- notable ones -- but it had a bad start and a bad finish, and what went on in between was merely a panic of fear, not a solid epidemic of virtue.

It was the worst month of the year, by far. It came on the heels of a hectic holiday season, in which the worship of the world absolutely sealed the minds of most of you to the lofty spiritual purpose of Notre Dame. Your attitude for the first ten days after the return was an absolute pain in the neck -- a pouty groaning for the flesh pots of Egypt. Then came the panic, which grew steadily in volume until the first day of examinations; and from that peak there was a steady decline of faith, a turning away from God, a lapse once more into the enervating feather-beds of worldly comfort. "Lord save me, I perish," the prayer of the foolhardy St. Peter when he walked on the water, was about the only prayer that arose from your lips last month.

Take a look at the statistics for Holy Communion last month:

					585	545
766	724	1021	1108	1179	1157	1183
1481	1269	1269	1361	1412	1590	1583
1754	1573	1576	1599	1609	1697	1586
1682	1352	1195	861	765		

The total number of Holy Communions from the opening of school to January 31 was 170,804; last year the number was 152,853. The daily average increase was 100 even. At the end of December the increase over last year was 128; January was so bad that it dragged the average for the whole semester down 28 points. The January increase this year was only 26 a day. A day-by-day comparison of the loss and gain this year will help you to see the point. Bear in mind that classes began two days earlier in the week last year, and that the month ended two days earlier; the days off-set by these changes are set below in parentheses:

			(-434)	(-681)	-694	-496
-535	-336	-162	-62	22	13	-100
82	19	28	100	160	298	241
279	233	194	189	151	156	160
247	22	-77	(861)	(765)		

The last two figures, while they are represented above as a gain, would, if they were compared with the corresponding days of the week past year (Feb. 1 and 2), show losses respectively of -10 and -236.

Find all the excuses you want. It is true that we had a two-day start before the first Friday of January last year, and that it took us eleven days this year to reach the point attained on that first Friday -- the third day back at school. It is true also that hundreds of students took their cuts and did not return to school till Monday; and that we had two days of registration this year, with a rather complete exodus. Find excuses and explanations wherever you like: the fact remains that there was great faith in prayer during one small stretch in January, and a forgetfulness of God the rest of the month. If God can help you pass, why don't you ask Him to help you be good?

There is only two bright spots in the above tables: The first one shows an increase of 297 for the first Tuesday, the day we began the Novena for Health; the second one shows an increase of 100 on the first day of exams and of 298 on the first day of the Church Unity Octave, two days later. We won't even suggest that other reasons might be found for these increases; we will accept them as hopeful signs.