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In The Spirit Of St. Francis Xavier.

Here at Notre Dame we take our football seriously. That doesn't mean Wall-Street fashion, as a betting proposition; or Carnegie-Report fashion, as paramount to other interests; or C.C. Pyle fashion, as work instead of play. To recall to your minds just what football means to Notre Dame, we reprint a couple of paragraphs from the Bulletin of October 8:

"Notre Dame football is a spiritual service because it is played for the honor and glory of God and the exaltation of His Blessed Mother. When St. Paul said: 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God,' he included football as well as everything else that is not sinful; and when we make our morning offering of all the thoughts, words, and actions of the day to God, we include honest recreation as well as food and drink and study. Tradition at this school has made this spiritual service more intense because daily Communion and prayer have been made a part of the training schedule, each game is dedicated to some Saint, and the shocks and bruises and disappointments of the season, as well as the glory of victory, have been offered for the Poor Souls or for some particular soul in affliction.

"What part does victory play in this service? The combination of consistent victories, brilliant, gritty playing, and man-killing schedules has given to Our Lady's team the largest and friendliest public following in this country. And as sport writers scratch their heads over this phenomenon, they come closer and closer to acquainting the public with the ideals that dominate both the school and the team. Catholic schools know what makes the difference, and when they seek a coach from Notre Dame they invariably ask: "Is he a daily communicant? Is he likely to exert a good spiritual influence on our school?"

This year's season has furnished a brilliant example of the spiritual service of Notre Dame football. With an attendance of 570,000 spectators at nine games, and a capacity attendance of 122,500 at one game and 300,000 applications for the 80,000 seats at another, there is no doubt about the popularity of the team. Press comment has been, for the most part, exceptionally friendly, and there has been notable absence of two features of a generation ago -- caustic comment or a conspiracy of silence on the part of the press. Furthermore, the press has been eager for more material than it could have on the spiritual side of the players:

Scores of communications have told us of the edification that has come from observation of the spiritual side of Notre Dame football. One man is thrilled to see a player go up from the benches to serve a Mass when a priest comes out alone; another is moved profoundly when three guests at his home turn down his wife's hot sausages and cakes because they want to receive Holy Communion the morning after the game; a high school team writes for the "medals the Notre Dame men wear;" a nun writes that her pupils are praying for the coach and the team; priests here and there all over the country, urging their parishioners and their Holy Name Societies to frequent Communion, quote the example of the team.

Tomorrow is the feast of St. Francis Xavier, one of the first followers of St. Ignatius and the Apostle of India. He is said to have converted more than a million people. He did things in a large way. St. Ignatius won the heart of Francis when he was a brilliant, somewhat worldly young student at the University of Paris, by repeating to him constantly, "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffer the loss of his soul?" And that is the spirit in which the members of the team of 1929 are asked by their school to accept the national championship. One hundred years from now, some pokey scholar may dig out of an ancient magazine an account of the fleeting glory of the football championship of this year; but the players will have eternal glory in heaven if a hundred years from now they will be surrounded there by fans, total strangers to them now, whom they won to love of God. In this spirit, then, thank God tomorrow in Holy Communion for the championship of 1929.