

Church Unity Octave  
January 18-25

University of Notre Dame  
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Leave names at rack  
in Sorin Hall

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"The Smart Thing To Do."

A wise alumnus wrote in his questionnaire:

"I haven't taken a drink since graduation. It was the smart thing to do. To live I must keep my head clear, and it keeps me out of trouble."

Would that all of you were that smart! What a silly thing it is that Catholic young men and women, who have never suffered from the false philosophies against which the descendants of the Puritans are rebelling, should be caught in the whirl of protest.

The Catholic Church has always taught the virtue of temperance, and Catholic countries have been, in general, temperate countries.

Puritanism rebelled against anything joyful in life, because they regarded religion as the hard, grinding service of an Awful God, Who was first of all an inexorable Judge, and then - perhaps - a Saviour of the elect.

They did not rebel against liquor at first - probably because liquor didn't make them particularly merry. When they saw that liquor made other people merry - and when used in moderation made them easier to get along with - they cursed liquor as an evil in se.

The Catholic Church had long preached total abstinence as well as temperance. She did not, of course, condemn liquor as an evil in itself; on the contrary, she always taught that it was one of God's creatures, and like all of them, subject to abuse. Where the abuses existed, she taught that complete abstinence, from a virtuous motive, combined two excellent ends: 1) It was a splendid penance, which could be offered for one's own or for another's sins; and 2) It gave absolute protection to those whose hereditary traits or environmental conditions pointed to danger.

The Catholic Church appealed to the will; fanaticism appealed to the law. The Church was making splendid headway with the pledge for total abstinence in places where mines and factories and similar industrial projects strained men's nerves and made alcohol a menace to them; but her campaign for self-conquest was interrupted when fanaticism got the upper hand. When the law said, "Thou shalt not," and said it unreasonably, it became roguish to say, "Just watch me." Another amendment to the Constitution had just "emancipated" women (whatever that means - they seem to have wild ideas about its meaning themselves) and the silver flask became part of the "new woman's" equipage.

Catholics have been silly enough to follow the mob of swaggerers instead of being themselves. There was some excuse, lame though it was, for the Puritans; when the pendulum swings too far in one direction, it swings just as far in the other. Catholics had not their philosophy of the Puritan, so they had nothing in their own hearts against which to rebel. They followed suit simply because they were smart enough to do independent thinking.

Do you want to start something very sensible? Suppose two thousand Notre Dame students took the pledge to abstain from intoxicating liquor: what effect do you think that would have on the boys and girls in the Catholic grade schools of the country? You read that splendid letter the other day from young Pat who hates girls and likes the Notre Dame spirit. Don't you think that little Pat would get a new idea of what toughness means if he heard that two-thirds of the students at Notre Dame are off liquor? Let's have your opinion. Letters on this point are now in order.

PRAYERS: Fr. Connerton, C.S.C., asks prayers for his father, who is not expected to recover. Prof. McCole's father died yesterday. Bernhard Glockner and Lucian Kempf ask prayers for their fathers who are ill. Three special intentions.