

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin

January 19, 1932

Encouragement From Our Superior General

My dear Father O'Hara:

Your *Religious Bulletin* for January 13th in which you treated of the Total Abstinence Pledge interested me greatly.

For years I have recommended to our Notre Dame boys the Total Abstinence Pledge in honor of the Sacred Thirst of Jesus Christ.

Addressing the student body a year or two ago I said: "Young men, if you were to come to me and say, 'Father, out of gratitude to God and to my parents who are slaving and economizing to give me a college education I want to get everything good out of my days at Notre Dame; what is the advice you have to give me?'—without hesitation I would answer: "Take two resolutions. The first includes daily assistance at Holy Mass and daily Holy Communion. The second is to promise Jesus Christ in honor of His Sacred Thirst to abstain from the use of alcoholic drink, at least during your years at Notre Dame.'"

The spirit of the Total Abstinence Pledge is essentially Catholic. The motives inspiring it are many. We may take it to make good in life. God alone knows how many ruined lives can be traced to intemperance. There are armies of young men who gave every promise of being God's noblemen, the joy and glory of their loved ones, who through intemperance have sounded the depths of moral depravity, broken the hearts and disgraced the names of all who loved them.

We may take the pledge in order the more surely to bridle passion, avoid sin and escape damnation.

We may take it, and this is the highest motive, to honor the Sacred Thirst of Jesus Christ and in union with Him to atone for sin, especially for the sin of intemperance. Nothing speaks to us more eloquently of the awful malice of drunkenness than the cry of Christ upon the Cross, "I Thirst." Ruined homes, where the half-starved wife and children drag out a miserable existence, heart-broken mothers, wives and sweethearts, crime—including murder, suicide and theft, which so often follow in the wake of intemperance,—eloquent as they are in condemning this sin, are silent beside the one word which leaped unrestrained from the hitherto uncomplaining lips of our Blessed Saviour—"Sitio"—"I Thirst."

No day passes, my dear Father, without my saying a special prayer for Notre Dame and her sons. Included in the prayer is a special request to the good God that He will inspire an ever increasing army of Notre Dame men to take and keep the Total Abstinence Pledge throughout life.

With every best wish and a fervent prayer that God will bless you and your wonderful boys during 1932, I am, my dear Father, yours devotedly in Christ,

JAMES W. DONAHUE, C.S.C.