

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
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Why The Pledge Campaign Can Succeed.

The first Religious Bulletin proposing the campaign for the pledge outlined for you the Catholic principles of temperance and gave a brief statement of how the Eighteenth Amendment put an effective check on the work the Church was doing to arouse the Catholic conscience against the abuse of liquor.

The Prohibition movement put the Church in a false light. Catholics felt that the appeal to force to prevent traffic in liquor was unwise, unjust, and uncalled-for, so they opposed the Prohibition movement, and the popular mind, especially the fanatical mind, associated the Church with the liquor traffic. Hysteria was precipitated by the Eighteenth Amendment, and in the heat of popular clamor - for liquor on the one side and for capital punishment for law-breakers on the other - the Church maintained a wise silence.

We have now reached a point where clear thinking is possible, even though many heads are still muddled. It is said that the United States Government has spent fourteen billions of dollars in ineffective attempts to make the country dry - and that, in our opinion, is the smallest item of damage that has been done by the movement. Dollars can be replaced - but not souls. We will have to wait until Judgment Day to find out how many homes have been wrecked, how many children crippled for their life struggle, how many souls lost in the experiment.

Enough damage has been done for the present generation of Catholic college students to see that something must be done - and that the effective thing to do is to return to the Catholic attitude, to take up where the Church was forced to leave off when hysteria gripped the land. Drunkenness is a sin, of a peculiarly degrading type, because it robs a man of the spiritual faculties which distinguish him from the beast - his reason and his sense of responsibility. Intemperance is a vice. Temperance is a virtue of a high order; total abstinence is an act of a high order of the virtue of temperance. And total abstinence, at least for a time, is the most effective protest against the intemperance of both the fanatics who made the law and the fanatics who undermined their health to defy it.

You have had a chance to see this damage; some of you have felt it. One student, who has taken the pledge for life, writes: "My resolution did not arise from momentary enthusiasm; it arose, rather, from convictions formed over a good many years. If I could impress upon the minds of young men the suffering I have endured from the habit of drink in certain ones who were dear to me; if I could write upon their minds what I have seen happen to certain ones addicted to drink (and they were young men, too), they would do the same with their cards as I have with mine."

It isn't the smart thing to do any more. That sort of smartness fades and leaves a bad taste - in the mouth and in the mind. Your older brothers (and perhaps even your older sisters) had a much harder time than you have in resisting invitations to drink. Perhaps your older brother escaped marrying a drunken woman - but did all his friends? Perhaps your older sister is not joined till death with a drunkard - but have all her friends been that fortunate? Liquor fixes its talons in certain individuals. You may be one of these marked men. You can cheat the vulture by total abstinence - and no fortune teller can assure you with any degree of accuracy that you are not of the type that liquor can "get." If you are cocksure that it will never bother you, at least help your neighbor by signing the pledge till Easter. Your little act of sacrifice may save his soul - and save his future family from the tragedy of a drunkard's home.

PRAYERS: Deceased: Fr. Thomas Hennessy, C.S.C., a former professor here; Lieut. F.X. Kelley, ex-'26; Ed Gleason's mother. Ill: Jas. Carmody's father; the mother of Austin McNichols, '17; Ed Lager (operation); a sister of Arthur Shields; the wife of the coach at C.C.H.S., Ft. Wayne; two friends of students, one dying. Four special intentions.