

University of Notre Dame Religious Bulletin

October 13, 1932

Gentleman, Scholar, and Saint



PROF. MARTIN J. MCCUE
C.E. '79; M.S., '81

With the death of Professor McCue last Monday, another link with the past was broken. Or was it? When we reflect on the fact that he was buried on the feast day of his dear old friend, Father Sorin, we may better say that another link with the past was forged—for Notre Dame is of the Communion of Saints; she lives for the things of the spirit; for her the life beyond the grave is more real than the life of this earth; with her “there is no accounting of days,” and we may better say that the death of Professor McCue has given us another intercessor, and of our very own, before the throne of God. You have been told time and again that in the case of daily communicants, sudden death is a special mark of divine favor. It seems that in the case of these friends of God, who have sought him out with haste every morning, lest they lose any mite of grace that He has appointed them for that day, their very desire for the closest possible union with Him has inclined Him to take them swiftly, and without the long agony of pro-

tracted illness, when their measure of merit is made up. And the sudden death of Prof. McCue—he dropped dead while he was reading—recalls the remark of St. Charles Borromeo made while playing chess, that if he were to be called in half an hour he would go on and finish the game, which he had begun for the glory of God.

As student and as professor, Martin McCue spent more than half a century at Notre Dame. He loved this place so much that when personal matters made it necessary for him to leave, four years ago, he didn't dare return even for a visit—not even when he came to South Bend on business last summer. He wrote to a friend that even a little visit would have made the pain of a new separation unbearable. He never saw the new Engineering Building which one of his former students presented to the University last year.

Prof. McCue was a thorough Christian scholar. Although he had few equals in his field of applied mathematics, he was not merely a mathematician. His culture was Catholic in the fullest sense. His mind was remarkably keen, his tastes covered wide ranges of thought, and his reading covered, it seemed, every worthwhile interest. As an agile controvertialist he was very popular among his fellow-professors. And he had few equals among teachers as an inspirer of youth. Between his intense interest in the pupils who came to him and his dogged sense of duty, no student in his classes had a chance to lag. When he set his signature to a diploma you could take for granted that that man was an engineer.

While the Catholic Church reserves strictly to herself all judgment of the heroicity of virtue required for sainthood, we can say in the broad human sense that Martin McCue was a saint. His cultivation of the life of his soul was as intense as his pursuit of mathematics. He hated sin with all the ardor of his spirit; he was child-like in his simple, eager pursuit of virtue—always without show and pomp, which he feared and despised. He loved to serve Mass, but he sought out a dark corner of a chapel to exercise this act of devotion, lest some one would think him holy and not pray for him when he died. It is too bad more students didn't see him on the step of the altar, kneeling up straight as an arrow, although he was in his seventies; it might have made better Christians of some of them. But his humility would not tolerate this publicity, and many things will be told of him in death that would have wounded his humility had they been known in his lifetime.

Every Catholic in this University, from the highest professor to the youngest freshman, has the duty of Christian charity to pray for the repose of the soul of this lovable patriarch who did so much for the upbuilding of Notre Dame. Offer Holy Communion for him tomorrow—at the early Masses if you wish. There will be a solemn Requiem Mass in Sacred Heart Church at 8:00; classes will be dismissed for the hour so that you may attend.

Prayers.

Mrs. Harper requests prayers for her father, who is not expected to live. Bernard Cousino's brother has received the Last Sacraments. Tom Lupton, ex-'32, writes that his father is very ill. Two friends of students are in critical condition. An uncle of Joe Spalding died recently. Four special intentions.