

Third Sunday
Bengal Collection
N.D. Indulgence

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
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Novena for Exams
begins Tuesday

A Little Common Sense on the Sunday Mass.

For the last several years at Notre Dame we have provided four Masses for students on all Sundays during the school year. These Masses are at 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, and 9:00. They require the services of four celebrants, two preachers, two confessors at the 6:00 Mass and four at each of the others, plus a prefect or two at each Mass to maintain a certain amount of order in your going and coming.

This would mean a total of from fifteen to twenty priests - almost half the community members on the faculty at Notre Dame - employed in your service in the church on Sunday morning. Some others have duties in the halls, others have chaplaincies to fill, still others are sent out to help in parishes in South Bend and neighboring towns.

These wants could not be filled without certain combinations of duties. Some priests hear confessions at more than one Mass; two hear at the four Masses - after saying their own Masses earlier than six o'clock to be at your disposal promptly. That is something of a strain, of course, but nobody is kicking about it.

The Masses are made as convenient and profitable for you as may be. The hearing of confessions is a privilege you can seldom have in parish churches; the sermons are short and pithy, well worked out in advance, and connected in a central theme for each semester. The Canon Law requires the sermons (Canons 1344 and 1345) and they are made to suit your needs. You are held accountable in conscience for the teaching they impart; you cannot plead ignorance of their content as an excuse for later actions.

Although the number of Holy Communions is large at times - 800 at one Mass on rare occasions - a Low Mass seldom lasts longer than 50 minutes, nor a High Mass longer than 70 minutes. This is not much time to give to God each week as a minimum obligation.

It would seem, then, that the University should not be expecting too much of you in asking you to fulfill your Sunday obligation at one or other of these four Masses. However, when a check was made in December, it was found that 542 students took care of their consciences elsewhere that morning. The parish Masses, a Mass here or there in a hall chapel, the Mass for the employees of the dining hall, Masses down town, in the infirmary, claimed devotees who "could not" attend the student Masses.

It is possible that with all the facilities provided, one or another student may have duties which make it impossible for him to attend any of these Masses. We know of two such cases - no more. Consequently, it would seem to be pure selfishness which leads the other 540 to absent themselves. Selfishness, of course, always causes disorder and discontent - and discontent on the part of the man who satisfies himself as well as among others who envy him, for the man who satisfies himself at the expense of the common good is always finding new wants for which he can find no satisfaction.

Briefly, if one man has a right to absent himself from these common exercises, so have 2779 others. He exercises a species of snobbishness by getting away from the "common herd." He doesn't fit in, and in an organization as closely knit as a boarding school the man who doesn't fit in should be elsewhere.

And now a word about waiters. Every Sunday prefects are annoyed by students leaving Mass early - often before the Communion of the Mass (which is the first prayer said by the celebrant after he returns to the altar after locking the tabernacle), thus missing Mass - and these men who depart early invariably say in the vernacular "I gotta hash." If the 7:00 Mass does not give them a chance to fulfill their obligation, they have no business there; the 6:00 and 9:00 are for their convenience. If they can't accommodate themselves to this arrangement, there are others who can.