

University of Notre Dame
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Moral Courage.

You may talk through your side teeth, wear your hat at a rakish angle, cuss like a salt-sea sailor, swagger like a Bowery bum, and still be so morally soft that a flea could push both his whiskers clear through your midriff.

You're pure putty, after all, unless you have moral courage. And moral courage is not a mere physical attitude, but something deeper, closer to the spine.

Without moral courage, a man sits and weakly hopes, vaguely hopes, week in and week out, to do this or that good thing, but never does it. He longs for this or that mastery over himself, but never acquires it. Why? Because fear -- fear of effort, fear of failure, fear of risks, fear of criticism, fear of ridicule, fear of displeasing friends -- keeps him from it. He lacks the determination to decide quickly and definitely just what he ought to do. He lacks the strength and generosity to put forth the effort that his goal requires. He lacks the steadfastness and fight to keep pushing on stubbornly, against all obstacles, to the end.

What such a man needs to do, first of all, is to think. Some day he ought to sit down by himself in the chapel and try to find out just what is keeping him from becoming the kind of man he wants to be. Do his past confessions reveal that he has been committing the same sins week after week? Most probably they offer a key to his failure.

Has he ever talked over his hopes, his difficulties, his failures, with any priest? If he suffered from some serious bodily ailment he would go to a doctor. Why doesn't he show the same wisdom when his moral or intellectual good is at stake? A priest can help him frame a program that will correct his difficulty. A priest can give him the encouragement necessary to follow out that program.

Such a man needs also to pray. So far, in spite of his time at Notre Dame, he has missed the lesson that Notre Dame wants most that he should learn. Degree with honors, personality plus, valuable contacts -- nothing counts much if he leave Notre Dame a moral weakling. Let him earnestly pray God to see that.

Late Starters.

Those who ate their turkey late Thursday night and didn't start with the rest Friday morning, can begin their own private Novena for Purity at tomorrow morning's Mass. To get in the full nine days, they should end it on the morning of December 11, three days after the Feast.

Advent.

Tomorrow will be the first Sunday of Advent, an important period in the liturgical life of the Church. These four weeks of Advent we are reminded of the thousands of years between the Fall of Adam and Eve and the coming of Christ. During this time we are to think deeply on the havoc wrought by sin and of the great benefits Christ bestowed on mankind by His Incarnation and Redemption. It is a time of penance, of preparing the way for the coming of the Lord. Christmas will mean very little to you in a spiritual way unless you first enter into the spirit of Advent. Ask the Blessed Mother during your Masses and Holy Communions this month to give you a deeper understanding of sin and of her love and of the love of Christ for you. You know that, according to the doctrine of the Church, it was upon the fiat of Mary that your redemption and the redemption of all men depended. As a Notre Dame man, you might refresh your mind this Advent on the sound reasons for venerating Mary.