

Mass Friday 6:25  
(deceased parents)

University of Notre Dame  
Religious Bulletin  
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Return your  
questionnaire

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Personal Sanctification and Catholic Leadership.

Herein we take issue with an alumnus.

Asked in the questionnaire a year ago to suggest what Notre Dame could do better to fit its graduates for their place in life, this alumnus said: "Notre Dame provides little opportunity for developing leadership. Personal sanctification is beautiful, and certainly necessary, but it won't convert a careless world."

Perhaps it is because so many people have such ideas about personal sanctification that the question about sanctity and the dull personality was asked in the present survey of students.

Our Lord proclaimed the power of good example when He said, in the Sermon on the Mount: "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven." The pagans said of the early disciples: "See these Christians, how they love one another." The silent preaching done by good example has done more than anything else to break down prejudice.

On the other hand, how many non-Catholics are there like Gandhi, who are turned away from Christianity's beautiful principles by the ugly practices of bad Christians. If we want to bring the matter right to our own door on the campus we may observe that of all the reasons given by non-Catholic students for not becoming Catholics the one most frequently heard is that the bad example of individual Catholics deters them.

Personal sanctification is all-important to the missionary, cleric or layman. It is all right in theory to make the distinction between the preacher and his doctrine, but in practice a great many people will not make it - most people nowadays do not. The man who wants to retain his free-and-easy self-made moral system is especially glad of an opportunity to call us hypocrites if he can find an excuse for doing so.

Our alumnus is probably led astray because he has not had occasion to observe much work of conversion that can be attributed to personal sanctification. He has probably failed to note that there isn't much personal sanctification centered in any large group in this country. It hasn't really had a chance to show.

We have had this interesting experience with it at Notre Dame. More non-Catholic students come into the Catholic Church after leaving Notre Dame than do here. This may be due in part to opposition at home, or to a defense attitude set up by the student himself. However, investigation of individual cases of alumni converts has convinced us that another important cause is at work. It is this:

Many non-Catholic students (not all) on coming to Notre Dame find themselves in the most congenial moral atmosphere they have ever known. The prevalence of certain fundamental virtues is recognized - and welcomed. The sound moral tone of the vast majority is usually attributed to the Catholic religion. As time goes on, however, much of this is taken for granted, and less thought is given to the underlying cause of what is now a commonplace. When they go out into the world, however, they find harsh selfishness and decayed morals all too prevalent. Gradually there comes back to them, and in softer tones now, a recollection of generosity, honesty, chastity, self-denial, sobriety, as they saw these virtues lived at Notre Dame. A new interest in Catholicity comes.

Not every man is born to lead. But for those who have within them the qualities of leadership, the best training for spiritual work is personal sanctification.

PRAYERS: Deceased - three friends of students. Ill - John Liley's mother; an aunt of Glenn Porter; E. L. Doherty. One thanksgiving and three special intentions.