

Gaps for Thursday: 9:30;
10:30; 11:30; 12:00; 2:30;
5:00.

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
October 2, 1935.

From Father O'Hara's Opening Sermon.

An old brother once said of Notre Dame: "This place will make a saint or a devil out of you." He spoke truly. If you are not a better man after four years here, you will be a worse, very likely a far worse man, for your responsibility increases in proportion to the graces you reject, and the graces you are offered here are infinite.

Notre Dame differs from many schools--from most schools, I may say--in that its first concern is with character....Some people describe education as a process of teaching men to think. If that is all that education does, then I am in favor of illiteracy. Some very bad men think. And some very bad men have been trained to very clever thinking. Some great inventors have lived to regret their inventions, when they saw them turned from their beneficent purpose to debauch, to destroy, and to kill.....

Here you will find that education of the mind and the heart, of the intellect and the will, go hand in hand, but Notre Dame places the will first in order of importance. Notre Dame wants brains, but if there must be a choice between brains and virtue, we choose virtue. The Catholic Church, which after God it is our highest ambition to serve, wants men of fine intellect, but first of all they must be good men, and we would be untrue to our mission were we to conceal this fact from you.

Again, Notre Dame differs from many schools in that it does not despise the lessons of the past. Is this a distinguishing mark? Unfortunately, yes. In the last decade the flare for experimentation has gone to unbelievable lengths. A whole school of pedagogy has been built about the theory that the chief purpose of a university is to develop what is called the inquiring mind. Young men and women are encouraged to a sort of universal scepticism. They are told that there are no fixed laws, that two and two need not make four, that the trial and error method must be applied to the Commandments just as much as to the problems of chemistry and physics. Any attempt to curb such experimentation is called a restraint of academic freedom, and a return to the dark ages. For these blind guides there are no fixed, eternal principles, and there is no lesson from the past that can be accepted without the tests of personal experimentation.

Notre Dame does not despise proper academic freedom but it repudiates the all too common notion that free investigation must have no limits. It recognizes the limits imposed by metaphysical and mathematical certainty. It questions no axioms. It insists that there are certain fundamental truths without which there can be no intellectual certitude. It questions no matter of divine revelation, and it accepts without question every decision of the universal church when she exercises her office as God's teacher in matters of faith and morals. It gives you the assurance that you are unquestionably right when you accept a truth or perform an action according to her dictates. However, Notre Dame and the Catholic Church do not ask you to accept this supremacy of the church without full examination of the historical and philosophical proofs that the Church is God's divinely-appointed teacher. She asks you to examine these proofs thoroughly and impartially, that you may give a reasonable account of the faith by which you accept the Church's teachings.

...Outside the field of faith and morals, outside the field of metaphysical principles, there is a proper field of speculation, and in this field Notre Dame encourages you to roam with the greatest freedom, and the most eager curiosity. It gives you rules for correct thinking and it tries to lay before you the accumulated knowledge of the past as a guide to your investigations. To the confusion of those who would see warfare between science and religion, Notre Dame has achieved distinction in several fields of scientific research, and we thank God that we see no lessening of scholarly zeal in search of such truth. Our blessing is on its quest.

PRAYERS: (Deaths) daughter of Bill Brown, '29; grandaunt of Lindsay P. Phoebus. Four special intentions. Critically ill: Father of Professor William Roomer. Ill: sister of William Driscoll, ex '30.