

Mass Tues. after 1st Sunday in Lent, p. 179. 2nd col. of Saints, p. 660; 3rd of living and dead, p. 661.

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
March 2, 1936.

Lenten Services Wednesday night, 7 and 7:30. Father Hoff will preach.

Catholic vs Secular Colleges--V.

Let us suppose--contrary to fact--that state and secular universities teach nothing against Catholic faith and morals. Let us suppose--also contrary to fact--that the environment at state and secular colleges is friendly to a reasonable Catholic life. Is there still a raison d'etre of the Catholic college and university?

Herbert Spencer defined education as a "preparation for complete living." In actual life man does not merely exist and act within the confines of a profession or business. De facto, he normally founds and heads a family. He tries to satisfy the social demands of his own nature. He tries to discharge somehow his obligations to God.

To meet reasonably these requirements he must possess a culture, a consistent attitude towards life as a whole. It is the business of the college or university to impart such culture to students.

Have the secular college and university any unified view of life to impart? What for them relates physics to metaphysics, philosophy to science, education to religion, religion to morality? Is not the secular educative process, of necessity, split up into so many closed compartments? (And, by the way, what but secular education is to blame for modern business and professional and political men who consider their office and its activities altogether divorced from their creed?)

Catholic education starts with this basic conviction: that there is only one perfect synthesis of truth,--that to be found in the person, the life, and in the teaching of Christ. Catholic education answers, as Christ answered, three fundamental questions: What is man? Where does he come from? What is to become of him finally? By answering these three questions, Catholic education puts unity and consistency into the preparation it offers for life.

Secular education strives to prepare men to spend this life happily. Divorce, birth control, sterilization, are all argued on that basis. Catholic education, on the contrary, emphasizes the next life. The great human mistake is to seek for transitory happiness in this world while sacrificing eternal happiness in the next.

Secular education develops natural virtues and faculties; it aims at inculcating social respectability, and stops there. Catholic education develops the natural chiefly as a foundation for the supernatural--for a life of grace, begot and continued by reception of the sacraments, by prayer and other devotional practices.

Catholic education does not ignore the natural. It too attempts to train the polished gentleman, the competent professor and doctor and scientist and engineer and business man, but, in the process, it points always to the secondary function of any of the arts and sciences.

The welfare of the individual soul is directly the concern of Catholic education. Society will be right if the individual is right. That's the Catholic theory. Secular education endeavors to perfect the individual, but it does so to discharge its duty to society which supports it. Fitness for society, with its varying standards is, for the product of secular education, the final norm of success.

These briefly-traced, radical differences between secular and Catholic education explain why the secular university can never be the Catholic ideal. Acquisition of learning is but a part--and not the most important part--of the true educative process. Education in the full sense is not complete until a life, the Catholic life, is actually adopted and practiced.