
"Rammed Down Our Throats."

"A person should be absolutely free in his dealings with God. That's one relationship in which discipline is not to enter. There'd be more fellows who'd get up and go to morning and night prayer and to Benediction if they weren't compelled to do so."

That's the way one sophomore looks at it --a sophomore who, in spite of a good start on Ash Wednesday, has suffered a severe attack of vacationitis ever since Washington's birthday.

That sophomore has much to learn about himself--and about human nature in general--if he really thinks young men do much better left entirely on their own.

Discipline, which minimizes laziness and sloppy thinking and self-indulgence on the football field, is o.k.; it makes a better team. Discipline in the classroom is o.k., too; it helps make keener students.

But discipline becomes unsacred, sacrilegious, when employed against a student's weaknesses, to help him know, love, and serve his God more fittingly. There's a bit of sophomore logic for you.

Religion itself is, on the contrary, precisely a discipline, a divine discipline which makes, not just any kind of followers, but disciples, children of a discipline.

Get this clearly: divine doctrines are not submitted to the free choice of men; but "He who believes shall be saved; he who believes not shall be condemned."

The commandments of God and of the Church are not timidly suggested as possible norms of morality. They are "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" pronounced with divine wisdom amidst the thunders of an eternal sanction.

Strict discipline is imposed by the Church upon all Catholics, old and young: they must attend Mass on Sundays and holydays; they are to fast and abstain on appointed

days; they must confess their sins at least once a year, and receive Holy Communion at Easter-time. These are minimum requirements, urged under pain of mortal sin.

Discipline is salutary, too, in the conduct of mature men and women who heroically give their lives to God in the religious state. Look to the rules governing religious orders and congregations and societies. Look to the discipline imposed by the Church upon secular priests.

Boys who insist upon "doing as they please" about their duties to God are ignorant of human nature and they miss the whole point of a divine religion.

Protestantism it is true, introduced the principle of private interpretation, of private observance, of pick-and-choose, of do-as-you-please. But we are Catholics. And Catholics stand, first of all, for obedience to God and to his lawful representatives.

Nobody is forced to the heroic by the Church; nobody is forced by the University to do the heroic. The chief and ultimate purpose of Notre Dame is to help you save your soul. Some wholesome moral and religious habits are necessary in the process.

Nearly all of the religious program here is left to your free choice. Happily, the majority of students eagerly make the most of the program.

But if, for you, a five-minute morning prayer and a five-minute night prayer, and an occasional Benediction, required as part of University discipline, are too much;

If you are too big or too proud to observe that minimum of religious discipline, you had better go to some other University that has not the salvation of your soul ever foremost in mind. As the President told you in his opening sermon last September, Notre Dame will try to get along with its present program, in spite of your absence.

PRAYERS: (deceased) father of John Read (Fr.); aunt of Tom Doody (Car.); Mr. L.I. Ahlering, father of Joe Ahlering; father of Donald Scorsietti (Sor.), 1st anniv. Ill, father of Al Smith Jr. (Al); father of Chas (Sor.) and Robt. (Al.) Duffy; uncle of Tom O'Shaughnessy (Dil.); cousin of Matt Merkle (Car.); Homer Holloway; friend of Jerry Rothlein (Al)