

University of Notre Dame
RELIGIOUS BULLETIN
April 6, 1943

Edwin R.
Matthews



December 30, 1922

March 29, 1943

Late Monday night, March 29th, in Saint Joseph's Hospital, South Bend, Edwin Ralph Matthews gave back his soul to God.

Eddie Matthews was a freshman in Architecture on the campus his home was Zahm Hall; he came to us from a great Catholic family of South Orange, New Jersey. Eddie was the first member of Notre Dame's Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps to die. He was buried in his ROTC uniform, as he would have liked it. On Thursday, April 1, the entire corps assisted at High Mass, sung for the repose of his soul by Father O'Donnell, President of the University.

Eddie Matthews was sick less than a week. A terrible blood-stream infection ran through his system like fire, and destroyed his poor body, for all its agile vitality, in six fevered days. But there was no infection in his unconquerable Christian soul.

The striking thing about Eddie Matthews' character was his total Catholicity. From the day of his first Holy Communion, some twelve years ago, until a week before he died, he did not miss a single Sunday Holy Communion. He missed hardly a day during his two short years at Notre Dame. The great action of his life was serving Mass since the beginning of the school year. He often served the six o'clock Mass in Zahm Hall's Chapel, or in the Basement Chapel of Sacred Heart Church. He served six o'clock Mass the day brief agony began for him. There in the "Religious Bulletin," Bishop O'Hara, then pastor of Religion, wrote: "At the hour of death our greatest consolation will be the Masses we have heard and the Holy Communion

received." If that is true — and surely it must be — then Eddie Matthews died consoled.

People say that delirium brings out the subconscious, the real, the hidden self. Eddie Matthews was delirious for three heartrending days before he became quiet. In his ravings he recited the Hail Mary literally hundreds of times, and made acts of contrition; he said the server's prayers at Mass over and over again, until it broke your heart to listen. During all that time not one dirty word passed his lips. Eddie Matthews' subconscious, hidden life was a life of prayer.

Eddie was peppery, alive, full of discussion and argument. You loved him while you argued with him. Zahm Hall misses him intensely, and Notre Dame will not forget him. The agony of separation is for his family almost unbearable, but to them, we of Notre Dame say (to Dad and Mother Matthews, to John A. Jr., and Ensign Bob — N. D. '43 — and Mary, and Sanford, and Elmer, and Donald, and young Peter). If you have lost a son and brother on earth, you have gained a powerful protector in heaven. There is a devotion to the dead in Christ as well as for them. Eddie's life has been changed, not taken away. The pale, obscure light of faith has flowed over for him into the indescribable glory of The Vision, and now he sees in all their grandeur the Divine Mysteries of the Trinity, and of Jesus and Mary, which you have all so truly believed. And there he will be waiting for you, when in God's merciful wisdom it shall be time.

May God love him always, and keep him forever in His Peace!