

Communions Sunday: 1886.
(Sunday Communions a week
ago: 2087.)

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
September 24, 1951

Missals are in. Inquire 107
Cavanaugh, 107 Howard, 117
Dillon.

"He Advanced . . ."

There is always reason, and more reason now than ever, to refresh our minds on the meaning of Christian education. We shall find a satisfactory answer in a very brief account of the growing years of Jesus Christ: "He advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men."

First of all, He "advanced." This is the key word. We do not advance merely by moving from one place to another. We advance only when we march steadily forward, consciously and resolutely pressing toward a goal which is worthy of our dignity.

Students can get out of school without getting much out of their schooling. They can leave with the same little bundle of bad habits with which they started. They can be graduated without any notable change in character or personality, without a keen interest in their own progress. . . without a clear idea of what they ought to be as a result of their education. When this does happen there has been no real advancement.

All these powers of mind, heart and soul are capable of ever-increasing development by more and more continuous and mature exercise. If education is the process of making us all that we can become, it can never be completed on this earth and must never be stopped. Even the most promising student may fail to realize this, and so fail to reap the full harvest of his talents and the full benefit of his education.

In what direction did Jesus advance? First, in age. There is nothing to do about getting older. In our present school system physical education is given sufficient attention to insure a reasonable and necessary care of the body, a conservation of health and cultivation of strength.

But there is another point of greater importance: Christian education regards and reverences the body with all its functions, as a work of God, the habita-

tion of His spirit, the agent of His will, the partner of the soul. That is why we must avoid excess and abuse that weaken the body and render it unfit.

Jesus advanced also in wisdom. Youth is really a time of serious thought and critical decision. Wisdom is not the exclusive attribute of age.

A student who knows the difference between the cells in his brain or his blood stream but not the difference between his body and his soul, has acquired some knowledge but he has gained no wisdom. A student who knows the correct answer to a problem in mathematics but not the right answer to a problem in human conduct has grown in knowledge, but he has not advanced in wisdom. Our purpose in educating the student is not merely to enlarge his capacity to know but also to deepen his power to think and understand.

Finally, Jesus advanced in grace with God and men. Here we touch the very highest function of education. If man is a creature of God through the Blood of His Son, created primarily to know and love and serve God, elevated to a supernatural life by sanctifying grace; and if this life of all living must be preserved at the cost of everlasting death, then it is clear to all who believe, that education has a tremendously important job to do.

God's grace is necessary for the perfection of nature. In our schools we can only do our best to direct and dispose the student to recognize his own need of grace, to show him where and how to get it, to persuade him to use it for his own betterment.

We know we must train him to take his place in society as a loyal and useful citizen. We also know we enhance his hope of success in his chosen field if we have helped him to become an obedient child of God, a devoted brother of Christ and of all men in Christ, a worthy member of God's kingdom on earth, a deserving heir of His kingdom in heaven. . . (Digest of Bishop Purcell's graduation address--June 1951.)

Prayers: (deceased) friend of J. Mertens; grandmother of J. Hutchinson. Ill: a child cancer; Fr. Schulte; step-father of W. Purcell; Don Page (polio); 2 Sp. Int. (Dayton Club Mass for Bob Raney, '48; Walsh chapel 7 a.m. Tuesday.)