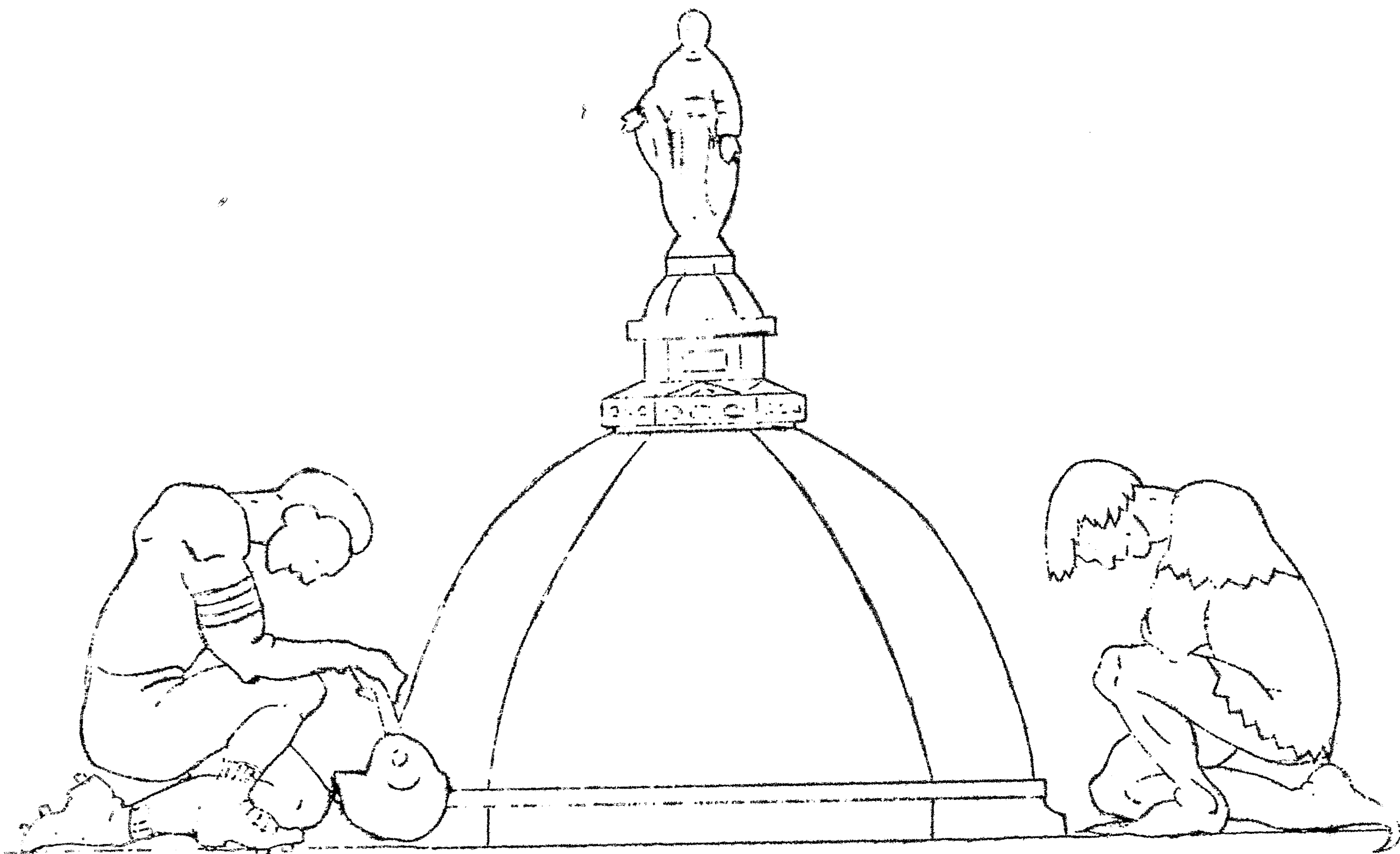


THE JUGGLER OF NOTRE DAME



The Tumbler of Our Lady is a legend about a monk who before entering the monastery lived only by his art as a minstrel. One day, disturbed because he could neither sing nor pray well--all he could do was tumble--he tintoed into the chapel crypt of Our Lady.

Now above the altar was carved the statue of Our Lady, the Holy Mary, and this minstrel did come before this image right humbly.

Sweet Lady, said he, scorn not the thing I know, for with the help of God I will essay to serve you in good faith, even as I may. I cannot read your hours nor chant your praise, but at least I can set before you what art I have. Truly I would make choice for you of all my best tricks in great number. . . Now may I be like a kid which frisks and gambols before his mother.

Lady, who art never stern to those who serve you aright, such as I am, I am yours. . . Lady, whom all the world proclaims, I do this not for mine own sake but for yours, and above all for the sake of your Son. Do not despise your servant, for I serve you for your diversion.

Then commenced this minstrel his merry play, leaping low and small, tall and high. . . Again and again he leaped and played till at last, nigh fainting with weariness, he could stand no longer on his feet, but fell to his knees, and smote his breast, and sighed and wept, since he knew no better prayer than tears, nor no better worship than his art.

The legend continues and tells us that the gracious Queen blessed her juggler. She descended from her throne and herself "fanned his neck and body and face to cool him, and greatly did she concern herself to aid him, and gave herself up to the care of him."

Before the S. M. U. game Father Joe Barry used this legend to point out for the football team assembled for Mass and Communion that in a good sense they too were Tumblers of Our Lady. . . "I am naive enough," he said, "to believe that just as the Madonna accepted and blessed the art of her minstrel, so she too accepts and blesses the art of you men. . . This is in full accord with what Saint Paul asks us to do: 'Whether you eat or drink or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God.'

"Saint Dom Bosco used his bag of tricks to draw homeless boys closer to God and His mother. . . Only on the day of judgment will we know how many souls learned to love Our Lady more, learned more about her Son in daily Communion, because they first heard about Notre Dame through her football team.

"With pointed purpose we paraphrase the preface to the "Song of Bernadette": To those who believe in football as it is played at Notre Dame no further explanation is necessary. . . To those who condemn it as a fraud or profitless venture no explanation will suffice."