

University of Notre Dame
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A Notre Dame Education

An old Brother at Notre Dame, a wise and wonderful man, made this observation about the school: "This place will make a saint or a devil out of you." And he spoke truly because, if you are not a better man after four years here, you will be a worse, and very likely, a far worse man. Why? Because your responsibility increases in proportion to the graces you reject; and the graces offered you here are almost infinite. You have to be on the alert to dodge them!

Notre Dame differs from many schools -- yes, from most schools -- in that her first concern is with character. We don't go along with the thesis that an education is simply teaching man to think. If that's all education does, then it would be better for some to remain uneducated. Some very bad men think. And some very bad men have been trained to very clever thinking.

On this campus you will find that education of the mind and the heart, of the intellect and the will, all go hand in hand. But the beginning of all education is in the will. Notre Dame wants brains; but they must be accompanied by virtue. The Catholic Church, which after God it is our highest ambition to serve well, wants men of fine intellect; but first of all they must be good men; and we would be untrue to our mission were we to conceal this fact from you.

Again, Notre Dame differs from many schools in that she does not despise the lessons of the past. Is this a distinguishing mark? Unfortunately, yes. In the past two decades the flare for experimentation has gone to such lengths that a whole school of pedagogy has been built about the theory that the chief purpose of a university is to develop what has been called the "inquiring mind." For students in some quarters there are few, if any, fixed laws; and the trial-and-error method is to be applied to the Commandments just as much as to political science. To curb an experimentation is called a restraint of academic freedom, and a return to the Dark Ages. For the blind guides of these students, there are no fixed, eternal principles; and there is no lesson from the past that can be accepted without the tests of personal experimentation.

Notre Dame does not despise proper academic freedom. But she recognizes the limits imposed by metaphysical and mathematical certainty. She questions no axioms. She insists that there are certain fundamental truths without which there can be no intellectual certitude. She questions no matter of divine revelation, and she accepts without question every decision of the Universal Church, when the Church exercises her office as God's teacher in matters of Faith and Morals. And she gives you the assurance that you are unquestionably right when you accept a truth, or perform an action dictated by that Church. Furthermore, Notre Dame asks you to examine these proofs thoroughly and impartially, that you may give a reasonable account of the Faith by which you accept the Church's teachings.

Otherwise, Notre Dame gives you the rules for correct thinking, and lays before you the accumulated knowledge of the past as a guide to all your investigations. There is a proper field of speculation -- and in this field she encourages you to roam with the greatest freedom, and curiosity. To the confusion of those who would see war between science and religion, Notre Dame has achieved distinction in several fields of scientific research, and keeps the Faith, too.

PRAYERS -- Deceased: Jack Wahl, '43; Victor LaBedz, '26; father of George Kane of St. Ed's, aunt of Roger Frydal of Farley. Ill: grandmother of Walter Arnold, '56; the grandfather of Larry Richart of Badin, 5 special intentions.