

How's Religion Doing on Notre Dame Campus?

Campus unrest this year has covered subjects from war and draft to student power and racial equality. Colleges of all sizes and in all sections of the nation have been shaken by movements of renewal and reform even where protest and revolution have not made headlines. Campus religious life has also been changing.

What has happened to religious practice on a major Catholic campus is reported in the following article about the University of Notre Dame published in the Notre Dame Alumnus, March-April, 1968:

"What has happened to religion on campus?" Alumni ask that question in a resentful sort of way.

With equal verve students reply: "It's dead!" And they add, "It's not so much the Catholic religion anymore as it is Christianity."

The answer stuns Notre Dame parents and grads. And the gulf of understanding widens still further because the point in question is that aspect of a Notre Dame education which has meant most to Alumni. But religion also has great meaning in the lives of today's students. The understanding, interpretation and practice of what Alumni and students consider "religion" are at opposite ends of the pew.

"The difference is simple," notes Rev. Louis Putz CSC, rector of Moreau Seminary, who has been a hall rector and professor of theology at Notre Dame since 1939.

"Notre Dame in years past reflected the attitudes and practices of the pre-conciliar Church. Now we're living in the post-conciliar era and emphasis has switched from a 'no-no' attitude to a 'go-go' mandate."

In those old days, Notre Dame was a model Catholic university. Glowing reports from the campus told of the thousands of students attending daily Mass. Religiosity was measured by the endless lines of men waiting to hit the confessional. And visitors were always impressed by host charts that were faithfully tallied each day in each hall chapel.

May devotions at the Grotto were something to behold. The entire student body poured into the shrine every evening to say the rosary. Underlying this spiritual fervor was a unique brand of discipline which, in the eyes of Notre Dame followers, produced a unique kind of man.

People had admiration for an educational system that demanded morning Mass checks, bed checks, no girls on campus after dark, no cars and "lights out" by midnight.

In these terms, Notre Dame has, indeed, changed. Religion's sacrosanct ritual has been dispelled and will not likely return. What was good for the boys in the old days apparently is not quite so good for today's boys.

"The days of absolutes have gone," Father Putz observes. "Students now reject the statistical measure of one's religion and, instead, search for a more meaningful qualitative life."

This new sense of religion on the campus is reflected by the student's antipathy toward the war in Vietnam; by his compassion for the impoverished; by his disdain for the institutionalized Catholic church and its purely legalistic outlook; and for the double standard observed by most Catholics today. Instead, students are looking for a per-

sonal Christ-centered way of life, an existence that attempts to live the story of the gospels.

"Eliminate some of the hypocrisy and phoniness that exist in the Church today," said a Farley Hall resident in answer to a religion survey. "I think that is why many young people have left the Church because they have found little sincerity and true Catholic love."

Such attitudes, however, aren't usually expressed by first-year men at Notre Dame. A freshman usually comes to the university steeped in the traditional Catholic background fostered by his family and his earlier formal education. But after a year or two in the academic community he comes across new ideas about religion.

"At this stage," believes Rev. John Dunne CSC, professor of theology at Notre Dame, "the young man goes through a transition, a developmental process. He is passing from the faith of childhood, which is not really his own faith but that of his parents and teachers, to a faith that is his own."

This Father Dunne terms a personal search, a quest for meaning in life, the rediscovery of that religion in an entirely new concept.

The search that Father Dunne describes is not purely academic. More than merely debating notions of formal religion, this generation of students develops religious understanding by relating their classroom talk to the realities of the world.

In many instances students feel a personal call for social action. In their own way they want to be witness to Christ. The manifestations range from a simple anti-war dem-

onstration on campus to devoting an entire summer working in Spanish Harlem. Others travel to Latin America on behalf of the Committee for the International Lay Apostolate (CILA) working with the poor in Chile, Bolivia and other countries. And still others travel on weekends to Chicago where they work in neighborhood slums.

"In short, you can describe their feeling as one of care," believes Rev. Joseph Simons CSC, former dean of students who now works out of the Counseling Center.

"Their care is not only for others but for themselves," Father Simons says. "I find that today's student is a troubled one. He's in conflict with his parents. His inherited religion turns him off and what's more, he's confronted with the draft. In conclusion, he says to himself, 'Now when I need help, what does Catholicism do for me?'"

The University can help most by encouraging him to continue his search for himself, Father Simons believes. "And I don't think we're doing too bad a job on that score because the kids keep coming to Notre Dame and they stay."

But not all students are that intensely affected by religion. Some manage to ignore it completely and for some others it has little if any meaning. There is quite likely no average Notre Dame student; instead there are categories in which most students find themselves. These include:

- the group of intensely religious students who, rather than calling themselves Catholic, look upon their mission as being simply Christian. Though a minority group on campus, their number is growing significantly by attracting others through the more progressive liturgical services and by enlisting students in their apostolic projects.

- the group of traditional Catholic students who merely fulfill Sunday obligations. Their religious faith has been formed more out of ritualistic habit than by personal ascertainment.

- the indifferent students for whom personal convenience guides religious activities. They don't try to think out their lives as Christians. They just exist.

- the rebels who detest the hypocrisy and ambivalence they feel is widespread in Catholic society. These students react negatively to anything related to the institutional Church.

- and, finally, a group which finds no personal meaning whatsoever in the life of the Church.

In bygone days, Notre Dame enforced a number of safeguards that, on the surface at least, insured the Catholic character of the University. These included the mandatory Mass checks, a restricted number of theology and philosophy courses, the availability of chaplains and easy access to a chapel from any place on the campus. Today—except for Mass checks—these same conditions exist although their effectiveness is often questioned.

Students, in particular, are critical of required theology and philosophy courses. They would opt for relaxation of the 22 mandatory hours. They would substitute a greater variety of theology electives having relevance to the moral issues of the day.

Rev. James Burchaell CSC, a Cambridge scholar and assistant professor of theology, favors the retention of a required number of courses on the same basis as "this place requires" so many English courses.

"The real hangup in teaching theology," Father Burchaell adds, "is that we have to undo all the religious education students have received in English school. They aren't ready to explore theology. Theology courses, instead of just preachings, should be subjects in which students learn what yesterday's and today's Christians have thought."

Rev. Joseph Fey CSC, University chaplain, sees the immediate need for full-time hall chaplains who have been trained in psychological counseling.

"Pastoral care," he notes, "is in greater need on this campus than ever before. What's more, the students not only need it, they are asking for it."

Just recently Father Fey completed a visitation tour of students in their residence hall rooms. He observed, "the secret to turning on the students is in your willingness to talk and to mix with them. They've got to know you... and to feel you do care."

He especially noted, "the head-ones, let me tell you, are really the great ones to talk to."

Both the students and the administration feel that one way to retain the religious character of Notre Dame is to develop a truly Christian community. Their hopes rest in large part on the "stay hall" program which would permit students to remain in one hall through all four years at the University. They feel students would get to know their fellow residents better and there would be greater continuity in social and religious life.

Just as important to these students is the liturgy of the Church. They "relate" to the more progressive Masses. They feel these give a greater feeling of friendship and intimacy with Christ and their fellow man.

The proposed \$2 million chapel, to be constructed among the high-rise dormitories on the east side of campus, has come under considerable fire from students. In their mind, God no longer comes alive in beautiful wood edifices but, rather, in today's people.

The "best" Masses on campus just aren't found in Sacred Heart Church. "It's far too impersonal there," believes one undergraduate. The action is found in hall chapels such as Dillon at 11 p.m. each night, in Morrissey and Moreau-Phillips halls; at Moreau Seminary chapel on Sundays; and late Saturday night at Holy Cross Hall.

Will Notre Dame remain Catholic? Will there be a significant difference between the Notre Dame of tomorrow and the secular state universities?

Speculation is mixed. But most members of the University's community feel a dominant Christian character will prevail if particular care is given these areas of campus life:

- the creation and development of meaningful liturgy throughout the campus.

- the creation of a truly Christian community with particular respect to residential hall life.

- less emphasis on mandatory religion and philosophy courses and greater efforts to improve the caliber of theology teachers and electives.

- the dedication by the University and members of the community to the real moral problems of the here and now.

- the training and placement of more qualified priests in a campus-wide pastoral program.

Regardless if one calls it Catholicism or Christianity, "religion" on the Notre Dame campus is on the rise. God is

very much alive.

He's no longer found in the May processions nor at the late-Sunday morning Masses at Sacred Heart Church. Rather he is found in the emerging Christian community of the halls; the ghetto schools of South Bend; and the slum ridden neighborhoods of Chicago.

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Benedictine Primate In Visit

Elmira—The Abbot Primate of the world-wide Benedictine Confederation, the Most Rev. Rembert Weakland, O.S.B., is visiting Mount Saviour Monastery, at Pine City this week.

Abbot Rembert, formerly of St. Vincent's Archabbey, Latrobe, Pa., was elected by the Benedictine superiors in Rome last September to head the international Confederation for a six-year term. He is the first American to hold this office.

Abbot Rembert is in the United States for six weeks to visit Benedictine communities. He resides in Rome, where he is Abbot-Chancellor of the International College at Sant' Anselmo.

Recently Pope Paul VI appointed him to the Concilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council. He is an expert on church music, and before his election as Abbot Primate was chairman of the music advisory board of the U.S. Bishops' Commission on the Liturgy.

The Benedictine Confederation which Abbot Rembert heads is composed of 18 national or international federations. Abbot Rembert represents these federations to the Holy See, and serves as a coordinator of communication between them. His responsibility covers 12,000 Benedictine fathers and brothers who live in 200 monasteries and 23,000 Benedictine sisters and nuns in 400 convents. Mount Saviour is one of the two dozen monasteries in the United States.



Abbot Primate Rembert Weakland and Very Rev. Damasus Winzen examine the 14th Century sculpture from the School of Paris of Our Lady Queen of Peace located in the Chapel of that name.

Bias Measure Suggested

Look at Your Family Tree

London—(NC)—John Cardinal Heenan of Westminster has asked English Catholics to take a good look at their own family trees before passing judgment on new immigrants in this country.

In a pastoral letter on racial harmony that was read in all churches of the archdiocese on Trinity Sunday, Cardinal Heenan asked all Catholics to stamp out racism by setting a good example among friends and fellow workers.

A controversy has been raging in this country over the Labor government's new race relations bill, which would out-

law racial discrimination in all housing, in hiring by public and private employers and in the use of the phrase "no colored" in help-wanted advertising.

Attracted by greater opportunities for jobs and income, increasing numbers of colored immigrants have come to Britain in recent years, most of them from former British territories and holding British passports. The influx of these immigrants has created racial tension in Britain.

"Catholics have no excuse of their withhold friendship, because most of them are them-

selves descendants of immigrants," Cardinal Heenan's letter said.

"By our friendship we show our gratitude for all that the immigrants are doing for this country. Without their labor, our health service would collapse."

Cardinal Heenan asked Catholics to treat immigrants "as we would treat Christ Himself and we shall deserve to hear Him say: 'I was a stranger and you took me in.'"

The cardinal called upon each parish to make immigrants feel welcome in taking part in parish activities. He said that coming to a strange country they may be shy in coming forward.

Speaking of England's immigration control, Cardinal Heenan said it is not fair to brand the government as "wicked" because of the restrictions. "Without adequate provision of houses, schools and public utilities the social life of the whole nation will be endangered. Those in authority as well as immigrants need our sympathy."

A new emergency immigration law now severely restricts the number of immigrants coming to this country. The most controversial section of the law curbs the right of British citizens of Asian ancestry from Kenya in east Africa to enter Britain.

already serious diffusion of resources."

- Attempts to solve seminary problems in an ecumenical manner with the "physical clustering of Catholic and Protestant seminaries, either on the campus of or in close proximity to one or more major institutions."

- In regard to the last point, the students estimated that such a theological center, with some 2,000 to 2,500 students including 1,000 Catholics, would cost Catholic sponsors some \$3.5 million a year for operating expenses.

- "At the outset," they said, "we would envisage about five such centers to be created in the immediate future, at a total cost of approximately \$250 million over the next five years. The hour is late, the need is desperate, and we do not honestly feel that there is any further room for delay."

Five Seminaries Proposed

Baltimore—(NC)—Sweeping changes in the current seminary system and the immediate establishment of five large experimental ecumenical theological centers at a cost of some \$250 million to the Catholic Church have been recommended by a group of seminarians at St. Mary's Seminary, here.

The recommendations were outlined in a 15-page open letter to all of the bishops in the United States.

The students told the bishops that "seminary education is in crisis"; many of those leaving seminaries are going so because of the "inability to tolerate" the system any longer; and that those remaining "are being inadequately trained and insufficiently prepared for the ministry."

Cited as the major problems of the seminary system were:

- Diffusion of resources due

to the large number of relatively small seminaries spread throughout the country.

- Inadequate staffing, including "poor professor-student ratios and insufficient levels of professional competence."

- Uniformity of training with "few if any options for specialized training."

The problems are of such scale, the students maintained, "that there is an immediate need of a full-scale, professional level study of the long term needs of our seminaries. Such a study should be carried out by professional experts in the fields of theology, education, planning and administration."

As interim programs they recommended:

- A moratorium on establishing new seminaries, as their creation would only add to "an

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• the creation of a truly Christian community with particular respect to residential hall life.

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• the dedication by the University and members of the community to the real moral problems of the here and now.

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