

## Welcome to Our Lady's University

CALEB VAUGHAN  
Editor-in-Chief

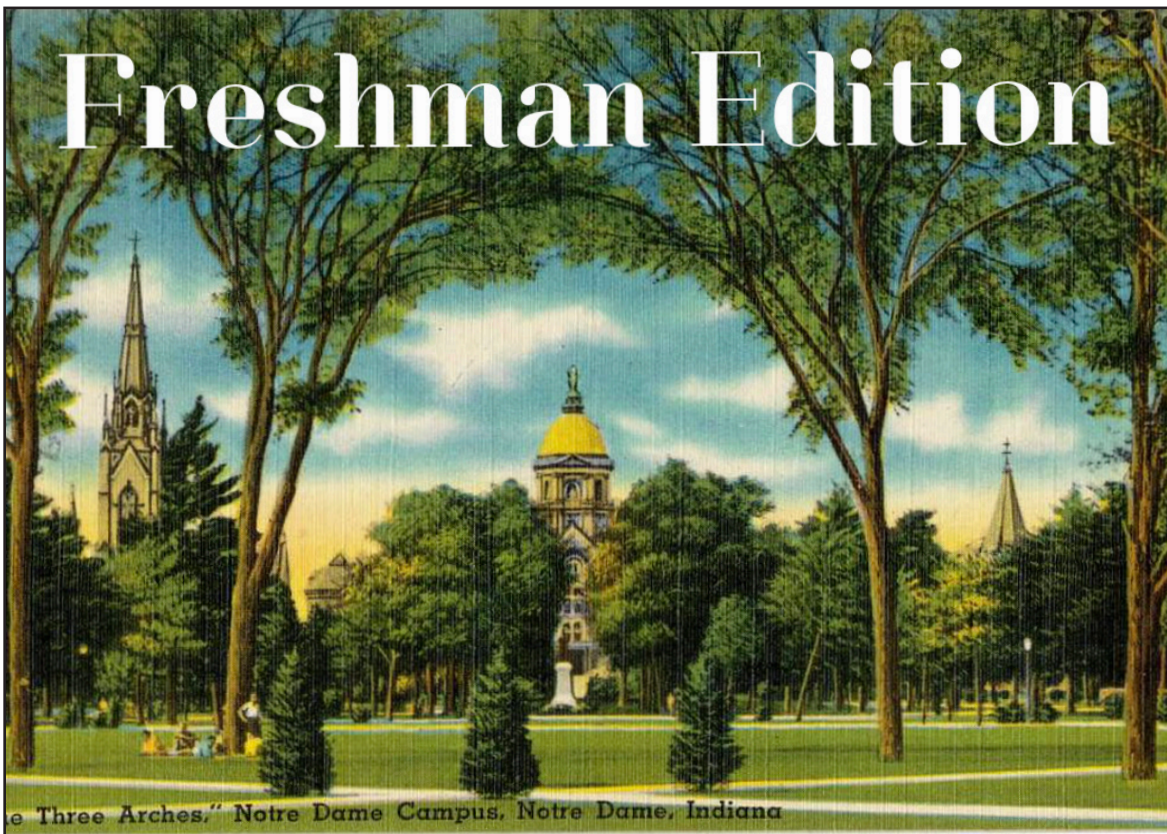
Class of 2030,

Welcome to Our Lady's University. Congratulations on earning a spot at the world's preeminent Catholic university, in its most competitive cycle yet. Your resumes are undoubtedly impressive, but they are not what brought you here today.

No, it was Our Lady who chose you for this great institution. Why you? I'll offer one possibility, drawn from St. John Henry Newman's meditation, included in this edition: You have your mission here at Notre Dame. It is particular to you, and it cannot be accomplished without you.

This uniqueness of your vocation is understandably daunting, so allow me to offer three lessons I learned in my freshman year, which I hope will prove valuable to you—to cultivate beauty, to excel as an act of devotion to Christ, and to remember what true success is.

The first lesson was in a faculty lecture to the men of Morrissey Manor in which David Richter, professor of Civil Engineering, recounted how reading novels influenced him during his undergraduate years. Great literature reminds us that every moment is beautiful, part of a larger work being divinely authored. These novels cultivated a sense of beauty that enriched his coursework, relationships,



“The Three Arches,” Notre Dame Campus, Notre Dame, Indiana

and everyday life. Ultimately, it was this beauty that led him to Holy Mother Church. Richter urged us all to pursue this beauty during the academic year, and I encourage you to do the same.

The second lesson was from Santiago Schnell, then dean of Notre Dame College of Science, now provost at Dartmouth. At the 2023 de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture's (dCEC) Bread of Life Dinner, Schnell articulated a compelling vision for Catholics living in the world. He called for excellence in our chosen field of study. When

one's excellence is realized, others take notice. The respect Schnell earned through his excellence in science allowed him to spread the Gospel of life. So devote yourself to your studies, and endeavor to work excellently for God's glory.

Third and finally, I was deeply moved by the keynote lecture John O'Callaghan, Professor of Philosophy, delivered at the dCEC's 2023 Fall Conference. He discussed what it meant to fail as a human being. Is it poverty, or stupidity, or meekness, or dependence that render us failures? In the eyes of the

world, perhaps. But let us recall our purpose: Christians are on this earth to witness to Christ. When we fail to witness, we fail as people. Our lives must reflect His; our faces must be radiant with Christ. This is true success.

At the conclusion of his lecture, O'Callaghan challenged the audience to look into his face and discern whether it reflects God's love. I challenge you in your first year to ask yourself this question every morning, and to seek an answer in the faces around you.

I chose these three examples to demonstrate that college is unique

in its access to great minds. If we allow it, our professors will teach us great academic and moral lessons. Inspired by Richter, I have consistently kept great novels nearby. They have proven a supplement to my engineering studies, a far superior study distraction to my phone, and a reminder of God's beautiful authorship. Schnell reminded me that study can be an act of devotion to God. O'Callaghan's words have stuck with me through academic and moral failures, reminding me that only one of those is ultimately important.

Before I arrived at Notre Dame, I worried that I would struggle to live a life of faith on this campus. I had heard that Notre Dame had lost its way—that it was Catholic in name only. On a more basic level, I was concerned that I would lose my habit of prayer. Would my roommate think it strange if I knelt by my bed at night to pray? As it turns out, this was a foolish concern, not least because there was no space in my freshman quad to kneel down and my bed was raised six feet in the air. More importantly, it was foolish because just two floors beneath my room, Jesus Christ was present in the tabernacle. What a blessing it is to have constant access to the Blessed Sacrament!

While a student, you will find these and many more treasures of the Church readily awaiting your encounter. This campus is

*continued on pg. 5*

## How to Avoid Another Blowup at Notre Dame

*“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love.” - John 10:15*

DAN PHILPOTT  
Faculty Advisor

Another blowup. The recent eruption at Notre Dame over the appointment of an abortion rights advocate to the directorship of the Liu Institute is the latest in a succession of public controversies that span my twenty-five years on the faculty. They arrive as often as the fall football season. The Dome puts forth a policy, bestows an honor or makes an appointment,

or a professor pursues a panel, performance or some other activity, almost always dealing with sex, gender, marriage or life, that detonates outrage.

Each blowup leaves wounds—people angry, friendships frayed, colleagues factionalized, alumni disillusioned, the university disunited and the Dome's moral authority compromised. Can the blowups be avoided?

Yes, they can, through clarity about the principles that govern the university, resolve to abide by these principles on the part of

university leaders and acceptance of these principles by everyone. These principles emanate from Notre Dame's unambiguous profession to be a Catholic university. Entailed in 'Catholic' is truth, what Catholics assert when they recite the Nicene Creed and from which flow the Church's moral teachings. Truth is the *telos* of the university as health is the *telos* of Memorial Hospital and winning football that of the Pittsburgh Steelers. Truth is what may guide Notre

*continued on pg. 2*

## Tamara Kay Forced to Pay

*Judge rules Kay must pay Rover's \$200k lawyer fees after failed defamation suit*

EDITORIAL STAFF

Tamara Kay, former Notre Dame professor who sued the *Irish Rover* for defamation in 2023, has been ordered to pay over 200,000 dollars to the *Rover* to cover attorneys fees. The trial court, which originally dismissed Kay's lawsuit in 2024, ruled on May 15, 2026 that the plaintiff must pay defendant *Irish Rover's* attorneys fees at a sum of

204,000.80 dollars.

Tamara Kay filed suit against the *Irish Rover* on May 22, 2023 for defamation on the grounds of two articles: W. Joseph DeReuil's October 2022 piece titled “Keough School Professor Offers Abortion Access to Students” and Luke Thompson's March 2023 article titled “Tamara Kay Explains Herself to Notre Dame Democrats.”

The *Rover* filed to dismiss this

*continued on pg. 5*

INSIDE

Meet the Staff  
Campus - Page 3

Recommended Clubs  
Campus - Page 4

Fr. Dowd Interview  
Religion - Page 7



**THE *IRISH ROVER***  
WWW.IRISHROVER.NET

**STAFF**  
**Editor-in-Chief** Caleb Vaughan  
  
**Publisher** Eddie Giuntini  
**Executive Editor** Jack Krieger  
**Managing Editor** Gabe Hockstra  
**Layout Manager** Isabella Avila  
**Websmasters** Matthew McBride  
Harrison Barkley  
**Social Media/Events Coordinator** Sofia Fair  
**Campus Editors** Henry Omanga  
Clare DiFranco  
**Culture Editor** Andrew Blake  
**Politics Editor** Ray Webber  
**Religion Editor** Clare Hettich  
**Humor Editor** Joseph Ferguson

**FACULTY ADVISORS**  
John Cavadini,  
*Professor of Theology*  
  
Martijn Cremers,  
*Dean of the Mendoza College of Business*  
  
Sherif Girgis,  
*Associate Professor of Law*  
  
Father Bill Miscamble C.S.C.,  
*Professor of History*  
  
Walter Nicgorski,  
*Professor Emeritus, Program of Liberal Studies*  
  
Daniel Philpott,  
*Professor of Political Science*  
  
John Sikorski,  
*Professor of Business*  
  
Nicholas Teh,  
*Professor of Philosophy*

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Mary Frances Devlin, ND '22  
Sophia Martinson, ND '18  
Alexandra DeSanctis Marr, ND '16  
Gabby Girgis, ND '12  
Mary Daly Korson, ND '10  
Jonathan Liedl, ND '11  
Joe Lindsley, ND '05  
Zef Crnkovich, ND '22

*The Irish Rover is a 501(c)(3) organization.*

THE FINE PRINT

Founded in 2003, the *Irish Rover* is an independent, Catholic newspaper published fortnightly by students of the University of Notre Dame du Lac, and, as such, it receives no funding or official recognition from the University. Indeed, the ideas presented herein are not necessarily those of the University, although they probably should be.

The *Rover* was established by Notre Dame students who desired a strong and organized conservative voice on campus with the primary purpose of keeping the University true to its founding mission as a Roman Catholic institution. The *Rover* seeks to facilitate part of what the University's mission statement desires in its community: "a forum where through free inquiry and open discussion the various lines of Catholic thought may intersect with all the forms of knowledge found in the arts, sciences, professions, and every other area of human scholarship and creativity." To provide this forum, the *Rover* offers a distinctive kind of coverage that includes campus news, religion, politics, culture, history, and humor.

Out of civility, the *Rover* will not critically mention names of students, professors, or administrators, unless the person is either a well-known member of the community, or he or she has openly sought publicity. Unsigned editorials represent the majority opinion of the *Rover's* Editorial Board, while content in individual columns represents the views of each respective author and should not be construed as representing the views of the entire staff. All comments and questions regarding the *Rover's* policies and editorial content, as well as Letters to the Editor, may be directed to the Editor-in-Chief, Caleb Vaughan, at editor@irishrover.net or PO Box 46 Notre Dame IN 46556. These letters may be printed anonymously, upon request. Also, please visit our website www.irishrover.net, where you can peruse archives and subscribe to the paper.

## Avoiding Blowup

*continued from front*

Dame through its disagreements and help to diffuse its blowups.

Two principles are paramount. The first is simply that all aspects of life at the university ought to be governed consistently with Catholic teachings. The second is that the freedom of inquiry ought to be protected in teaching and scholarship, including conferences, invited speakers, and public engagement—what may be called in the sphere of inquiry. The second principle, like the first principle, is grounded in the Catholic mission and its attendant truth.

Each principle poses demands on parties to our blowups. Administrators have a duty to maintain them. All have a duty to respect them. Likewise, all have a duty to respect the expression of inquiry even when it contradicts Catholic principles. Respect for both of these principles, each grounded in truth, would do much to avoid the blowups and their wounds.

The first principle follows simply and readily from Notre Dame's profession to be a Catholic university. To be Catholic is to hold that God has established a moral order consisting of immutable principles. The principles, though, are not true because the Church teaches them but rather the Church teaches them because they are true, founded in natural law and confirmed by the inspired Magisterium.

Notre Dame commits the university to the truth of these principles at the outset of its mission statement, where it says that all of its activities image Jesus Christ, his Gospel and his Spirit. To live in friendship with Jesus Christ is to abide by his commandments and to live in fidelity to the moral teachings of the Gospel, empowered by the Spirit.

The principles that usually feature in the blowups are firm, clear, and constant, without a shadow of turning, in the teaching of the Church. The prohibition of abortion is a straightforward application of the Fifth Commandment, thou shall not kill, to human beings living in the mother's womb. Correlative to the Sixth Commandment, all sexual acts are to be ordered to the begetting of human life and to the union of a man and woman in marriage. Complementing these principles is compassion, mercy, and friendship for everyone who encounters hardship in them. The entirety of moral principles—taught by Jesus, found in the Bible, confirmed by the Church, known by reason—guide a Catholic university in all of its activities.

Appointments of leaders of centers and institutes readily

fall under these principles, this truth. The Dome stated this clearly amidst the recent blowup: "Those who serve in leadership positions at Notre Dame do so with the clear understanding that their decision-making as leaders must be guided by and consistent with the University's Catholic mission." The principles most obviously pertain to organizations overtly dedicated to justice: the Kellogg, Kroc, and Klau Institutes; the Institute for Social Concerns; the university's initiatives on democracy, ethics and poverty; as well as the Liu Institute, whose website declares its justice commitment. All organizations in the university, though, fall under its principles. Heads of these units speak and act for the university and pursue ends on which the university bestows its moral authority in establishing and endowing the units—some of them at tens of millions of dollars. A public advocate for the contrariety of the university's principles, then, is unsuited for a directorship, and appointment of such a person begets a blowup.

The same goes for hiring faculty. If the purpose of teaching and scholarship is the pursuit of truth—here again, Notre Dame's mission statement concurs—then a candidate who publicly opposes the principles (and stands by his position at the point of hiring) ought not to be hired.

The same goes, too, for bestowing honorary degrees, appointing people to advisory and leadership councils, and everything else a university does. Critics may cry censorship and if they have a headache might invoke ghouls of the Catholic past—the Index, the Inquisition. But is conducting the life of a university according to moral principles any different from what Jewish, Mormon, Muslim, and for that matter, secular universities do? Secular universities indeed have been the most morally fervent in recent years in their speech codes and their cancellation of speakers (see here and here), yet even apart from their excesses apply criteria of justice in hiring and promoting faculty, appointing leaders and sundry other matters.

Alas, Notre Dame's principles have been violated more than a few times in the past several years, sparking more than a few blowups, including the performance of the Vagina Monologues (2006-2008); the bestowal of an honorary degree on President Barack Obama (2009); Notre Dame's extension of marriage benefits to same-sex partners (2014); awarding the Laetare Medal to President Joe Biden (2016); coverage of contraception (2018); a "reproductive justice" lecture series (2023); and the recent Liu Institute directorship

appointment.

Wounds result. In Catholic teaching, moral principles not only define wrongs but also are contours of happiness and portals to friendship with God. "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love," Jesus teaches (John 10:15). Wrongs wound most the souls of their doers. Educators compound the wound by teaching wrongs as right, not least to the body of students. "Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven," Jesus also teaches (Matt 5:19). Finally, these wrongs compromise the credibility of the Catholic mission. To flout a firm moral teaching is to disclaim its Source.

What, then, of the second principle, academic freedom? Does a thorough pursuit of truth in the academy leave room for it? In fact, academic freedom is a precious principle that is to be preserved—and is itself grounded in truth. Again, Notre Dame's mission statement: "The University insists upon academic freedom that makes open discussion and inquiry possible."

At Notre Dame, as at most universities, every professor and student is granted freedom in the sphere of inquiry—teaching, scholarship, public advocacy. Academic freedom means that a student or professor may express a view without suffering a material penalty: a lower grade, censorship, a loss of job or position, the denial of tenure or advancement to an academic rank, or any other sort of sanction. The purpose of this freedom is to protect the sphere of inquiry and its defining activity—the pursuit of truth. This inquiry, only genuine when it is performed freely, activates the person's capacity for and interest in truth, is characteristically human, and manifests human dignity. Thus, it merits protection.

Academic freedom does not aim to establish a neutral sphere of knowledge, a zone sequestered from the Catholic mission, or a pact of reciprocity by which opponents agree to tolerate one another's offenses. True, an implication of academic freedom is that it protects speech—writings, lectures, dramatic productions, and other activities belonging to the sphere of inquiry—that contests Catholic truth. But adherents to the Catholic mission ought to exercise their own freedom by engaging such speech through dialogue in faithfulness to the pursuit of truth.

What does engagement look like?

In recent years, a colleague and I developed a course, *Why the Church?*, that examines the case for the Catholic Church with respect to the reasons why

young people have departed from it in recent years. The course was based on the method of *disputatio*, where students were assigned readings on both sides of several issues—science, sexuality and marriage, history, the veracity of the Resurrection—and encouraged to argue for or against the teaching of the Church. I and my co-teacher also made clear that our purpose was apologetics, a defense of the teaching. I recall a day that I taught a discussion section of the course and argued about marriage and sexuality for 50 minutes with the students, some three quarters of whom questioned the Church's teachings. I did not downgrade them; they did not seek for me to be fired; and the Church's teachings were taught.

Another example. In 2022, the Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government sponsored a public debate on abortion between Notre Dame alumna Alexandra De Sanctis and journalist Jill Filipovic. The two disagreed ardently and shared dinner together. It was a rare example of this issue being discussed publicly and civilly at Notre Dame.

Gray areas, fuzzy lines, and hard cases attend academic freedom, as they do any principle. Like free speech and freedom of religion in a democracy, academic freedom is bounded by what is defamatory, violent, obscene, illegal, and threatening. It is worth repeating that protecting the sphere of inquiry in no way contradicts the duty of university leaders to shape the sphere of inquiry according to Catholic truth—creating (and dismantling) departments, prescribing the curriculum, hiring professors, and the like. While not all shows or events that promote anti-Catholic values ought to be prohibited, they must be criticized; it is entirely fitting to ask how FTT came to be a department that stages drag shows rather than, say, Karol Wojtyła's *The Jeweler's Shop*.

The two principles, then, are that the Catholic mission governs all aspects of life at the university and that academic freedom be respected. They are consistent and each grounded in Catholic truth. Were the members of the university to respect and abide by these principles, each restraining their temptation to subvert them, another blowup could be avoided.

*An original edition of this article was published 15 April 2026.*

**Daniel Philpott** is a professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame.



# Meet the 2026-2027 Rover Staff

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Caleb Vaughan, '27</b><br/><i>Editor-in-Chief</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Morrissey Manor</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Chemical Engineering</p> <p><b>Minor:</b><br/>Theology, Business</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>Visitation Hall</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>National Championship</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>Spend time meeting your professors. They are all experts in their fields!</p>                                                                                   | <p><b>Jack Krieger, '28</b><br/><i>Executive Editor</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Morissey Manor</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Economics &amp; PLS</p> <p><b>Minor:</b><br/>Constitutional Studies</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>Top floors of Hesburgh Library</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>The first snowball fight!</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>You might not find good friends immediately. That's okay. Use this period of waiting to find true friends and figure out what is important to you. Trust in God's good timing.</p> | <p><b>Gabe Hockstra, '29</b><br/><i>Managing Editor</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>O'Neill Family Hall</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Economics</p> <p><b>Minor:</b><br/>History</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>CoMo Lounge</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Notre Dame vs Miami</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>Seek out great professors who will challenge your learning even if their course topic seems less interesting than alternatives.</p> | <p><b>Henry Omanga, '29</b><br/><i>Campus Editor</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Duncan Hall</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Philosophy &amp; Psychology</p> <p><b>Minor:</b><br/>Constitutional studies</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>CoMo</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>The Miami game. 11/7. ND by a million.</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>The library (with the exception of floors 9+) is such an overrated study spot.</p>                          | <p><b>Clare DiFranco, '27</b><br/><i>Campus Editor</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Lyons/Zahm Hall</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Accounting &amp; Italian</p> <p><b>Minor:</b><br/>Marketing</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>Ivan's Cafe at the Raclin Museum</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Broomball</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a Freshman:</b><br/>I wish I knew that Como has daily adoration. In fact, I didn't discover this until my junior year! The exact hours are online, but during class hours during the week, popping into the adoration chapel for some silence is a great way to take a break from your busy schedule and spend some time with Jesus.</p> |
| <p><b>Andrew Blake, '28</b><br/><i>Culture Editor</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Keough Hall</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Political Science/PLS</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>Knights' building</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Being back on campus and spending time with friends.</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>Get involved! Go to dorm Masses, the nightly rosary at the grotto, or join some of the Catholic clubs. The Catholic community is super welcoming so put yourself out there.</p> | <p><b>Clare Hettich, '29</b><br/><i>Religion Editor</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Pasquerilla East Hall</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Program of Liberal Studies &amp; Theology</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>I'm gatekeeping this one! But I do like studying at LaFun</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>The Easter Vigil!</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>Packing up to go home for breaks takes way longer than you think, especially while trying to take midterms or finals and say goodbye to friends...</p>                             | <p><b>Joseph Ferguson '27</b><br/><i>Humor Editor</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Sorin College (Off Campus)</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Program of Liberal Studies</p> <p><b>Minor:</b><br/>Business &amp; Economics</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>Charron Family Commons in O'Shag</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Winning the National Championship</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>Broomball and O'Rourke's karaoke.</p>                     | <p><b>Isabella Avila, '27</b><br/><i>Layout Manager</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Grojean Hall</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Computer Science</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>Remick Family Hall</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Interhall sports &amp; broomball</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>Things takes time but get involved, especially with the <i>Rover</i>, because you'll get to know great people.</p>                                         | <p><b>Ray Webber, '28</b></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Siegfried Hall</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Philosophy</p> <p><b>Minor:</b><br/>Constitutional studies</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>10th floor of Hesburgh Library</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Night Game versus Miami</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>The first couple weeks of adjusting to college life are not properly representative of the ND experience. Once you make friends, find a club you like, and trust in prayer, everything comes into place.</p>                                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Matt McBride, '27</b><br/><i>Webmaster</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Carroll Hall (Off Campus)</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Mechanical Engineering</p> <p><b>Minor:</b><br/>Corporate Practice &amp; Theology</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>The Backer</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Winning a national championship</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>Decio cafe is the best use of flex points.</p>                                                                                         | <p><b>Harrison Barkley, '27</b><br/><i>Webmaster</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>St. Edward's Hall (Off campus)</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Mechanical engineering</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>Empty classroom in Flanner Hall</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Notre Dame's national championship run</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>Decio Cafe is the best lunch spot on campus.</p>                                                                                                                                                     | <p><b>Eddie Giuntini, '27</b><br/><i>Publisher</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Stanford Hall (Off Campus)</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Aerospace engineering</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>Windmoor Library</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Broomball</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>I wish I knew that the South Bend Motor Speedway existed.</p>                                                                                               | <p><b>Sofia Fair, '27</b><br/><i>Social Media Coordinator</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Pasquerilla West Hall</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>Accountancy &amp; Theology</p> <p><b>Minor:</b><br/>Business Honors Program</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>Hesburgh Reading Room</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Notre Dame football winning the national championship.</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>The <i>Rover</i> is the best place to find friends!</p> | <p><b>Lucy Trotter, '27</b><br/><i>Editor-in-chief Emerita</i></p> <p><b>Dorm:</b><br/>Pasquerilla West Hall (Off campus)</p> <p><b>Major:</b><br/>PLS &amp; Music</p> <p><b>Minor:</b><br/>Philosophy</p> <p><b>Favorite study spot:</b><br/>Hesburgh Reading Room</p> <p><b>Event most excited for this year:</b><br/>Natty run</p> <p><b>Something you wish you knew as a freshman:</b><br/>Always go to O'Rourke's karaoke. No exceptions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

Write for the Rover, email [editor@irishrover.net](mailto:editor@irishrover.net)





# Rover Recommends: Campus Clubs

Listed below are several clubs that the *Irish Rover* staff recommends to students who are interested in diving deeper in their faith. We hope this will be a helpful guide as you navigate your first year on campus.

## Right to Life

At Right to Life (RtL)—the largest non-academic, student-run club on campus—we resolve to promote a culture of life in the Notre Dame community through prayer, service, education, and community. Guided by Church teaching and animated by the Holy Spirit, we wholeheartedly believe that all life has value, from conception to natural death.

Our mission is twofold: first, through club programming, Right to Life seeks to build up a community of passionate, pro-life leaders who are unafraid to defend the sanctity of human life at every stage. Whether at lectures with prominent pro-life speakers, RtL bonfires and dances, service events around the South Bend community, or at our weekly Mass to pray for the sanctity of life, Right to Life seeks to be the voice for the voiceless—a true force for good.

Secondly, Right to Life strives to foster a culture of life by supporting student mothers and families in their decision to choose life. From promoting pregnancy resources in dorms to throwing baby showers, providing peer to peer support and offering free babysitting services, the Right to Life community pledges to radically support pregnant mothers as they embrace the gift of life.

Join Right to Life as we seek to make Notre Dame a place of radical love toward every mother, father, and child. Learn more about our events by visiting our website and join our email newsletter and GroupMe to stay connected! We hope to see you at the bonfire, at Mass, at the lectures, and at the March for Life in D.C., but until then, Go Irish, Save Babies!

## Students for Child-Oriented Policy

Students for Child-Oriented Policy (SCOP) focuses on promoting the wellbeing and safety of children through education and advocacy. It is pro-family, pro-marriage, pro-adoption, and pro-education, and it is anti-sex trafficking, anti-pornography, and anti-substance abuse. It is known for its petition to ban pornography on campus wifi, and it hosts a myriad of events involving each club pillar each year. Our biggest events of the year are our attendance of the Sexuality, Integrity, and the University Conference at Princeton each fall and WRAP (White Ribbon Against Pornography) Week in the Spring. To inquire or join, please email Andrew Blake at [ablake5@nd.edu](mailto:ablake5@nd.edu) or Caroline Cure at [ccure@nd.edu](mailto:ccure@nd.edu).

## Knights of Columbus

The Notre Dame Knights of Columbus is a student organization and local council of the global Knights of Columbus organization. Since our founding in 1910 by a group of Notre Dame students—including the future Cardinal John Francis O'Hara, C.S.C.—as the first Knights of Columbus college council in the world, Council #1477 has had a long and proud history. Thousands of Knights have volunteered tens of thousands of hours, raised millions of dollars for charity, and made immeasurable strides in their faith.

We encourage all practical Catholic men to consider joining an organization that makes a real difference in the community by becoming a member of the Knights of Columbus. While membership is limited to Catholic men, all are welcome to attend council events and participate in charitable activities.

Contact Grand Knight Max McNiff at [jmcniff2@nd.edu](mailto:jmcniff2@nd.edu) for more information.

## Children of Mary

Filii Mariae (Children of Mary) is a student group dedicated to enriching the spiritual life of Our Lady's university by the promotion of Latin liturgy and Catholic devotions drawn from the Church's tradition. The club's principal event is the very source and summit of the Christian life: the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Each Saturday and Sunday of the academic year, Filii Mariae hosts Latin Masses in Alumni Hall's St. Charles Borromeo Chapel.

For those who wish to follow the texts of the Mass, hand missals are provided in the chapel for both the Saturday (Ordinary Form) and Sunday (Extraordinary Form) Masses. In addition to offering Latin Mass, Filii Mariae also sponsors traditional Latin Compline (i.e. night prayer) on Sunday evenings.

By offering the liturgy according to both forms of the Roman Rite and including important elements of the Roman liturgical patrimony, Children of Mary offers those in the tri-campus area the opportunity to join a vibrant community of committed Catholics in the worship of God in intentional continuity with the tradition of the Church.

In addition to its liturgical offerings, Filii Mariae also sponsors traditional devotions. On Sunday evenings, the group hosts rosary walks around St. Mary's Lake (weather permitting) and traditional first Saturday devotions including adoration, benediction, and confessions.

Children of Mary also strives to foster community among its members. In addition to events throughout the year, the club hosts brunch in South Dining Hall every Sunday after Mass.

Saturday Ordinary Form

Masses take place in Alumni Hall at 10 a.m. (9:30 a.m. on football home game days). Sunday Extraordinary Form Masses occur in Alumni Hall at 10 a.m. Our regular schedule has already started, so feel free to join us anytime for Mass! More information can be found at <https://childrenofmarynotredame.wordpress.com> or by emailing [mary@nd.edu](mailto:mary@nd.edu).

## Militia of the Immaculata

Founded by St. Maximilian Kolbe in 1917, the Militia of the Immaculata (MI) strives "to lead every individual with Mary to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Students in MI will develop their devotion to the Blessed Mother, whose intercession has provided many graces in their lives. Secondly, they'll fall into a routine of prayer that will improve their interior life with our nightly rosary. Thirdly, they'll be surrounded by a strong community of firm believers whose faith serves as an inspiration for all their actions. Finally, they'll have lots of fun!

Highlights of the semester include a Rosary at the Grotto every night at 11 p.m., our opening MI Mass on September 12, a retreat at the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe at Marytown on October 5, a Marian procession on October 7, a Marian consecration Mass on December 9, Grotto Evangelization with the Miraculous Medal on home game days, several Marian feast day Masses, and many more! Though members are by no means required to participate in all these wonderful experiences, we would love to have you join us for as many as possible.

With any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at [ndmi@nd.edu](mailto:ndmi@nd.edu). Please know of our prayers for you at the start of this college year!

## Sorin Fellows

An offering of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture (dCEC), the Sorin Fellows Program provides integral student formation in the Catholic moral and intellectual tradition.

Through this program, Sorin Fellows are supported by the de Nicola Center and provided opportunities to encounter role models and befriend peer mentors who exhibit virtues of integral formation, consider enduring and contemporary issues through the lens of the Catholic moral and intellectual tradition, nourish their interior life and appreciation for the spiritual heritage of the Catholic Church, and discern and cultivate their gifts and talents through grant funding and internships. The Center supports over 600 Sorin Fellows at the undergraduate and graduate levels, representing nearly every field of study from across the range of the university's constituent colleges and schools.

By actively participating in and contributing to the life of the de Nicola Center, Sorin Fellows also play a crucial role in amplifying Notre Dame's witness to human dignity, authentic human freedom, and the common good in the global public square.

The over 600 undergraduate and graduate student Sorin Fellows on campus have access to superb programming ordered toward personal formation in the Catholic tradition. Programming includes a weekly Mass, periodic Masses each semester, annual pilgrimages (destinations have included Rome, Israel, and the UK to date), and a family tailgate during football season. Additionally, there are dinners at faculty homes, lectures from faculty on topics related to human dignity and the common good, exclusive audiences with speakers for the Center's annual Fall Conference and with other invited speakers throughout the year, a women's formation group, and more.

Open to all, applications to the Sorin Fellows program may be submitted year-round and are evaluated once each semester. Once you become a Sorin Fellow, you have access to all the activities listed above, in addition to the de Nicola Center's competitive pool of funding for professional and personal formation-oriented activities. Sorin Fellows can receive funding for retreats, living expenses for internships, and participation in academic conferences. Start your application now to become involved with an indispensable network of students who care about the university's Catholic mission!

## Ethos

Founded in 2023 at the University of Notre Dame, Ethos is a small-group-based program dedicated to helping men grow in the virtue of chastity as they prepare to become husbands, fathers, and men of God.

When we think of addiction in today's society, one that rarely comes to mind is pornography addiction; yet 91.5 percent of men today have seen porn in the last month. Men rarely discuss it; most have no one they can turn to to receive help. Lust is even named as the leading cause of divorce in over half of marriages. It's a silent pandemic that's hiding in plain sight.

Ethos is here to change the narrative. Based within Notre Dame dormitories, the program consists of weekly meetings, as well as daily accountability calls and readings alongside fellow men walking the same road. It's a structured, community-based, and data-driven program that leads men to real results—40 percent go completely clean, and over 80 percent see a significant reduction in their usage. Ethos, said one member, "is more than just a program, it's a movement of renewal."

If you're ready to break free

from the chains of lust, to grow in chastity, and take a step towards becoming the man God wants you to be, please consider joining your dorm's Ethos group here: [www.ethosnational.org/join](http://www.ethosnational.org/join).

## OCIA - Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

At the heart of the Catholic faith is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ within the community He established, the Catholic Church. Each year, many Catholic students complete their initiation into the Church by celebrating their Confirmation, and many non-Catholic students choose to convert to Catholicism. Other students find themselves curious about Christianity and seek answers to basic questions about faith and the faithful. Whether you're just starting to explore or you're ready to take the plunge toward becoming a Catholic, Campus Ministry is ready to accompany you as you discern God's call to full, active Christian life in the Catholic Church. At Notre Dame, we have two tracks to assist a person setting out on their journey toward becoming a Catholic Christian: the OCIA Process and the Short Course Process.

The OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) Process is the default track by which non-Catholic individuals discern and are welcomed into the life of the Catholic Church, as well as for Catholics who are coming back to active practice and desire to be confirmed. OCIA provides a gradual apprenticeship in what it means to be Catholic, offering the opportunity to study Catholic beliefs, learn how to pray, learn the ins and outs of the Mass and the Sacraments of the Church, and explore what it looks like to live an intentional Catholic life.

We also offer the Short Course Process for those who desire to enter the Catholic Church and have already been well-rooted in Christian faith within another Christian denomination, as well as for active, practicing Catholics who are seeking Confirmation. The Short Course serves as a one-semester process of Sacramental Preparation for previously-baptized individuals with substantial experience studying, living, and practicing the Christian faith. The Short Course focuses on what makes Catholicism unique, as well as what it means to believe, pray, and live as a Catholic Christian.

We are always in need of fully-initiated (confirmed), practicing, faith-filled Catholic sponsors to share their faith with those journeying toward becoming Catholic or being confirmed in the Church. If you're interested in serving as a participant or a sponsor, please email Brett Perkins ([brett.perkins@nd.edu](mailto:brett.perkins@nd.edu)) at any time.





## Kay Lawsuit *continued from front*

suit according to Indiana Anti-SLAPP laws, which are designed to quickly dismiss frivolous suits thought to purposefully intimidate individuals or organizations. Special Judge Steven David of the St. Joseph County Superior Court granted this dismissal, finding that the *Rover's* reporting was "true" and "not made with actual malice."

In accordance with Anti-SLAPP protections, Kay was ordered to pay for the *Rover's* attorney fees.

After two unsuccessful appeals to the Court of Appeals of Indiana and the Indiana Supreme Court, and a February 2026 virtual hearing to determine the extent of damages, Kay is finally required to pay the *Rover's* legal fees for both the initial dismissal case and the subsequent appeals.

This sum exceeding 200,000 dollars comes despite an affidavit

presented by the plaintiff alleging the value of the defense is in the range of 50,000 to 70,000 dollars. Meanwhile, the defense claims the actual value of attorney time and labor to be around 255,000 dollars. Ultimately, the court ordered Tamara Kay to pay the sum of 200,000 dollars to compensate the defense's legal fees.

James Bopp, Jr., lead counsel for the *Irish Rover*, told the newspaper he was happy with

the settlement. It is common in cases like this, he says, to receive approximately 80 percent of the requested amount.

In a statement produced by James Bopp Law Firm, Bopp writes, "Dr. Kay's suit was a classic meritless attack on speech in connection with a public issue, and Indiana's Anti-SLAPP statute was created for just such situations." He continues, "We were happy to defend the *Irish Rover's* right to free speech in this

case, and requiring the plaintiff to pay the defendant's legal fees gives the Anti-SLAPP statute some real teeth."

Kay has 30 days from the date of the decision, May 15, to pay the amount or appeal this order.

Kay did not respond to the *Rover's* request for comment.

*This article was originally published online 24 May 2026.*

# Notre Dame Theology Ranks Number One, Again

## *Professor highlights program's growth, orthodoxy*

CALEB VAUGHAN  
Editor-in-Chief

For a university that prides herself on academic prestige, Notre Dame's highest ranked department often flies under the radar. But in the last three out of four years, Notre Dame's theology department has ranked first in the world, above institutions like Harvard, Cambridge, and Yale.

Undergraduates interested in theology at Notre Dame can choose from two majors, three minors, or a supplemental major. The majors include theology and a joint theology-philosophy major. Students may also add a supplemental major in theology or minors in theology, Catholic social teaching, or liturgical music ministry.

Since 2015, the total number of undergraduates studying theology has doubled, and is growing at seven percent annually—a trend that shows no sign of slowing. This number accounts for enrollment in both majors and minors in theology, but the recent growth has been driven primarily by an explosion of minors, which now total around 500: over five percent of the undergraduate student population.

This trend is not mirrored at other universities. According to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, majors in the humanities are on the decline, especially in the area of religious studies.

Professor Anthony Pagliarini, Director of Undergraduate Studies in theology, pointed to three catalysts for the growth in theological interest, bucking the national trends.

First, the students attracted to Notre Dame are increasingly devoted to their faith, Pagliarini



Image by Notre Dame Theology

told the *Rover*. While the number of Catholic students has remained at a steady 80 percent through the years, Pagliarini noted that today's 80 percent "probably includes a lot more people who are deliberately and thoroughly practicing their faith." He called it a sort of "self-selection" as the American culture trends more secular to the point where faith has to be a deliberate choice.

While Notre Dame is drawing more religious students, it also brings in students from more diverse backgrounds who have little to no religious experience. To address this, the theology department has introduced "an alternate version of Foundations we call fundamentals," Pagliarini said. This alternative to the required first theology course is specifically designed for those with no exposure to Christian theology.

Secondly, Pagliarini said, "What we do as a theology department ... is not religious

studies. ... What we do here as a theology department is theology." In other words, Notre Dame is less interested in studying world religion from an anthropological perspective, but rather more from a desire to contribute to an understanding of the Catholic faith—and ecumenically other faiths as well. This professedly Catholic approach, unique among Notre Dame's peers, attracts a different type of student than religious studies programs at Duke or Oxford.

The third reason for the growing interest in theology is that the department "put[s] a lot of time and effort into the required courses. These are not perfunctory, leftover on repeat," Pagliarini told the *Rover*. The professor noted that in fall 2023, only five to ten freshmen entered Notre Dame intending to major in theology. By the end of spring 2024, 50 freshmen were enrolled in a theology major and 178 had declared

minors.

This trend is not unique to 2024; it has been seen in each of the past several years. Pagliarini, who speaks with every student that declares a theology major or minor, credits the required introductory course with a major role in the theological interest of the student body.

Despite the number of students the Foundations of Theology course brings into the major, the university once considered removing the theology requirements from the core curriculum. A 2015 report from the *National Catholic Register* revealed that Notre Dame's most recent curriculum review—led by Gregory Crawford, former Dean of the College of Science, and John McGreevy who now serves as university provost—suggested dropping the theology and philosophy requirements.

In response, Professor John Cavadini told the *Register*, "The core curriculum, with

the theology requirement, is probably the most important component of Catholic identity." Another prominent Notre Dame theologian, Sister Ann Astell, commented to the *Register*, "Philosophical and theological study is simply the indispensable, defining mark of Catholic education."

Father Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C. wrote in 1962 as president of Notre Dame, "The Catholic university must strive mightily to understand the philosophical and theological dimensions of the modern problems that face man today."

"It goes without saying," Fr. Hesburgh continued, "that the Catholic university cannot fulfill this essential function in our day unless it develops departments of philosophy and theology as competent as its departments of history, physics and mathematics."

The theology department—boasting current and emeritus faculty such as John Cavadini, Ulrich Lehner, Gary Anderson, and Cyril O'Regan, recipient of the prestigious Ratzinger Prize—upholds this "essential function."

More information on Notre Dame's theology department can be found at theology.nd.edu. Prospective majors or minors can contact Professor Anthony Pagliarini at apaglia1@nd.edu.

*An original edition of this article was published 12 February 2025.*

**Caleb Vaughan** is Editor-in-Chief of the *Irish Rover*. He can be reached at [cvaugh2@nd.edu](mailto:cvaugh2@nd.edu).

## Welcome *continued from front*

alive with the Sacraments. Over 200 Masses are celebrated in the various chapels each week,

Eucharistic adoration is available on weekdays in Coleman-Morse, confession lines regularly stretch to the back of the Basilica three times a day, and hundreds of prayers are offered each day at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The *Irish Rover* exists to promote this extant goodness and stand against those forces which pull the university away from her Catholic mission. This 'Freshman Edition' offers a showcase of our archives to familiarize you with

the *Rover*.

Please feel free to reach out to me at [cvaugh2@nd.edu](mailto:cvaugh2@nd.edu). I truly hope these four years will be filled with Christ's joy. Let us leave this place a more perfect reflection of God's kingdom than we found it.

In Notre Dame,  
Caleb Vaughan  
Editor-in-Chief





# Catholic University Dean to Serve as Director of McGrath Institute

*Capizzi replaces long-term director John Cavadini*

LUCY TROTTER

Editor-in-Chief Emerita

Catholic University of America Dean Joseph Capizzi took over leadership of Notre Dame's McGrath Institute for Church Life starting July 1.

Capizzi served as the dean of the School of Theology and Religious studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he taught since 1997. Capizzi previously served as the executive director of the university's Institute for Human Ecology.

Capizzi assumed the role of McGrath-Cavadini Director following Cavadini's 26-year leadership of the institute. Cavadini directed the institute to global recognition and aided the theology department in reaching its ranking as the premier program of its kind in the world, where he formerly served as chair.

"I'm really excited by the opportunity to build on John Cavadini's work on behalf of the Church and Notre Dame. The staff at McGrath is incredible and I'm deeply moved by the thought of working with them and colleagues throughout the university," Capizzi told the *Rover*.

Capizzi holds a master's and doctoral degree in theology from Notre Dame, where he was a John A. O'Brien fellow. A moral theologian, he has written and lectured on just war theory, bioethics, the history of moral theology, and political liberalism. He and his wife have six children.

The McGrath Institute is one of 17 university institutes that report to the Office of Provost John McGreevy. McGrath partners with dioceses, parishes, and schools in its work to address pastoral challenges with "theological tools and spiritual formation," according to its website.

Directorship of any university institute must be approved by the institute's college dean and the provost.

Capizzi "rose to the top of a competitive national search" for a new McGrath director, McGreevy noted in the university announcement. "We were impressed with his energy, leadership experience, deep understanding of and commitment to the University's Catholic mission, passion for the life and future of the Church and ambition to help us realize the possibilities of this great University," McGreevy said.

The hunt for a new McGrath



Image by McGrath Institute for Church Life

director began over two years ago in July of 2024, when McGreevy announced over email that "the process of searching for a new director" would begin that fall. The announcement took both the public and the Notre Dame community by surprise.

David Osborn, chairman of McGrath's advisory board, told the National Catholic Register at the time that "advisory council members were aware that succession discussions were underway," but were "surprised" at the announcement's timing.

Another Notre Dame theologian told the Register the abruptness of McGreevy's decision was "surprising and alarming."

Cavadini is recognized as a leading Catholic theologian,

previously serving on the International Theological Commission and the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. He was named by Pope Benedict to the Order of Knights of St. Gregory the Great.

The university was unable to find a new director after a year-long search and Cavadini continued to direct McGrath during the 2025-2026 academic year.

Capizzi described his new position as a "great gift and frankly, a challenge," in the university announcement, saying, "McGrath has a well-earned reputation for helping the Church address pastoral challenges by drawing on a wide and talented pool of leading academics."

"I am grateful to John Cavadini for his role in shaping McGrath's vision and guiding it for so many years. I cannot wait to be a part of its unique mission and dedicated community of scholars, friends and students," Capizzi added.

McGreevy acknowledged Cavadini's "tireless service" in the university announcement, saying, "All of us are in John's debt. [...] His cultivation of the institute's signature programs, his capacity to attract external support from foundations and his passion for connecting the worlds of the University and the Church have elevated not only the McGrath Institute but Notre Dame."

Cavadini resumed his role as a theology professor at the university when Capizzi began his new position on July 1.

*The original edition of this article was published on 15 June 2026. It has been slightly revised to reflect the current date.*

Lucy Trotter is a senior majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies and piano performance, with a minor in philosophy. She is Editor-in-Chief Emerita of the *Irish Rover*. Reach her at [lspace@nd.edu](mailto:lspace@nd.edu).

## Fr. Dowd Speaks with the Rover

*University president shares vocation story, discernment advice*

NICO SCHMITZ

Editor-in-Chief Emeritus

Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C. entered into his new role as president of the University of Notre Dame on July 1, 2024, following the retirement of Father John Jenkins, C.S.C. last year. Earlier this summer, Fr. Dowd took some time to share with the *Rover* his advice on vocation, as well as his own experience as a priest of the Congregation of Holy Cross.

**Schmitz: How would you describe your vocation story?**

**Fr. Dowd:** The oldest of two children, I grew up in Michigan City, Indiana. My sister is 11 months younger than me. My dad was a 1956 Notre Dame graduate and he passed on to me his affinity for Notre Dame. Growing up just 30 miles from campus, we visited Notre Dame often. I would not describe my family as overly pious, but Church was important in our lives. The Sisters of the Holy Cross who served in the grade school I attended and the diocesan priests who administered our home parish were kind to my sister and me. They were also very attentive to



Image by Notre Dame News

my mom during a time when my dad struggled with health issues. Their care made a significant impression on me. In retrospect it seems that God began calling me through their example and, from an early age, I began to think about being a priest. I was also blessed to have some great priest-teachers at Marquette High School in Michigan City.

**Schmitz: What led you to the Congregation of Holy Cross?**

**Fr. Dowd:** While a student at Notre Dame, I met the Priests and Brothers of Holy Cross. I was especially drawn to Holy Cross because of the Community's focus on education. Besides my interest in education, my calling to the priesthood was very much grounded in Gospel-oriented idealism and Catholic Social

Teaching. I felt myself called to radically identify with the most vulnerable, to learn from them, and to be their champion. I graduated from Notre Dame in May of 1987, having double majored in Psychology and Economics. I entered Moreau Seminary the following fall.

**Schmitz: How does your vocation as a priest intersect**

**with your academic work and your role as a professor?**

**Fr. Dowd:** I see my vocation as a religious and a priest intimately bound up with the desire to move beyond my comfort zone, to deepen my understanding of the world, and to grow in awareness of God's presence. For me, that's what research and education are about. As a professor, I have this awesome opportunity



Fr. Dowd Interview  
*continued from page 6*

to accompany students as they grow in understanding, awareness, and their calling in life. In essence, my vocation is at least in part to help them to discover their vocation, discover their gifts, and put their gifts at the service of others.

A little background: After making first vows and beginning theological studies at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley in 1989, I requested to spend a year and a half of my seminary formation with our Holy Cross Community in East Africa. This request was largely motivated by a desire to move beyond my comfort zone and a youthful appetite for adventure. My request was granted and I went off to Kenya. I resided with African Holy Cross seminarians and brothers in a large ‘slum’ of Nairobi called Dandora, where Holy Cross priests administered a parish. After studying theology at the Jesuit School of Theology in Nairobi for one academic year, I went to work at the parish, teaching catechism and directing a program that paid school fees for children from the poorest families in the area. I visited hundreds of families in

their homes to determine their financial neediness. My time in East Africa was an eye-opening, challenging, and immensely rewarding experience. I found myself inspired by people who refused to let material poverty rob them of their humanity. I grew in awareness of the international mission of Holy Cross and the global reach of the Church while becoming intensely interested in the social and political changes that were occurring in much of Sub-Saharan Africa at the time.

My first three years as a finally professed religious and Holy Cross priest (1993–1996) were spent at Notre Dame, where I worked in Campus Ministry while also serving as assistant rector in Flanner Hall and associate rector of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. I had the honor of working under Fr. Richard Warner, C.S.C., Director of Campus Ministry at the time, who inspired me greatly. His leadership brought out the best in others. He exuded humble confidence. He was never too busy to spend time with students, especially those who were struggling. I loved working with students and helping them to recognize God’s presence in their lives.

After three years in Campus Ministry at Notre Dame, I began

graduate studies at UCLA. I enjoyed my graduate studies immensely, choosing to specialize in the field of comparative politics. Due largely to my experience in Kenya a few years earlier, I focused my research on Sub-Saharan Africa. I fell in love with the research, especially since it allowed me to return to East Africa and brought me into contact with the social and political dynamics I was most interested in understanding.

Upon completing my PhD at UCLA, I applied for a faculty position at Notre Dame and joined the Political Science Department in 2004. The Department was welcoming and supportive. My research largely focused on whether and how Christian and Islamic religious communities affected support for democratic institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. I taught a variety of courses, from lecture courses with over 100 students to small seminars with as few as 12 students. I thoroughly enjoyed both research and teaching (I still do, though I have less time for it now.).

*Schmitz: How does your position as the president of the university intersect with your identity as a priest?*

*Fr. Dowd: My religious vows*

and priesthood are central to my identity. Among other things, I see my role as a priest as one who helps people to believe that there is more to life than what meets the eye and that God is with them. Quite simply, priests are called to build bridges that help people to connect with God and each other. While celebrating the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, is the most profound way a priest serves as a bridge builder, a priest is also called to build bridges by the way he lives his life while not celebrating the sacraments. A priest is called to bring people together across the differences that all too often divide them and help them to encounter God in each other. However imperfectly, this is what I strive to do as a Holy Cross priest.

In my view, the president’s responsibilities also include bridge building. The president is called to serve the entire Notre Dame community and to promote a strong sense of community across differences, ensuring they do not divide us. The president’s responsibility also entails making sure that our community does not become closed in on itself, but is instead turned outward in service to and focused on the great challenges of our time. I think Fr. John

Jenkins has done a wonderful job in this regard and I hope to build on his legacy.

As president, my responsibilities entail ensuring that we are always striving to deepen and further our Catholic mission and identity; to ensure that we are a community of learning pursuing truth and grounded in charity. For me, this responsibility is intimately bound up with my calling as a religious and priest.

*Schmitz: What recommendations do you have for any student at Notre Dame discerning religious life?*

*Fr. Dowd: Be open and do not be afraid to follow your heart. Talk with someone you trust and who knows you well about what you are thinking and feeling. If you are at Notre Dame, Holy Cross, or Saint Mary’s, do not be afraid to talk with a Holy Cross religious or priest you know.*

*This article was originally published online 31 July 2024.*

Nico Schmitz is Editor-in-Chief Emeritus of the *Irish Rover*. He can be reached at [nicholas.schmitz@icloud.com](mailto:nicholas.schmitz@icloud.com)

# St. John Henry Newman meditation (March 7, 1848)

God knows me and calls me by my name. ...  
God has created me to do Him some definite service;  
He has committed some work to me  
which He has not committed to another.  
I have my mission—I never may know it in this life,  
but I shall be told it in the next.

Somehow I am necessary for His purposes...  
I have a part in this great work;  
I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection  
between persons.  
He has not created me for naught.  
I shall do good,  
I shall do His work;  
I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth  
in my own place, while not

intending it,  
if I do but keep His commandments  
and serve Him in my calling.

Therefore I will trust Him.  
Whatever, wherever I am,  
I can never be thrown away.  
If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him;  
In perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him;

If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.  
My sickness, or perplexity, or sorrow may be  
necessary causes of some great end,  
which is quite beyond us.  
He does nothing in vain; He may prolong my life,  
He may shorten it;  
He knows what He is about.  
He may take away my friends,

He may throw me among strangers,  
He may make me feel desolate,  
make my spirits sink, hide the future from me—  
still He knows what He is about.  
...  
Let me be Thy blind instrument.  
I ask not to see—  
I ask not to know—I ask simply to be used.

# Just One More Conference Away From World Peace

## *Kroc center finds, world yet to be informed*

WILL GRANNIS  
Staff Writer

The Kroc Center for International Peace Studies, known across campus for their seminars, lectures, addresses, webinars, colloquia, dialogues, keynotes, symposia, workshops, addresses, panels, fora, symposia, roundtables, conferences, webinars, addresses, conventions, retreats, keynotes, colloquia, and talks (not to mention their renowned discussions) recently announced that world peace is finally achievable with “just one more interfaith panel.”

This is a more optimistic view than the one that the Kroc Center has long maintained; for the last ten years, world peace has been “two to four more lectures away.” The furthest the world has ever been from peace was in 2003, when the Kroc Center estimated

that it would take as many as fifteen more colloquia to finally end war globally, a huge increase from the six symposia that Francis Fukuyama thought were needed at the end of the nineties.

For more information about the new estimate, the *Rover* spoke with Emily Cumenism, director of the Kroc Center’s “Just One More” initiative. “Just One More” is aimed at continuously bringing about world peace through “the next event.”

“Our current theory,” Ms. Cumenism explained, “is that after our next interfaith seminar, the chemical reactions involved in the use of gunpowder will stop working. There’s another camp, although they’re less popular at the Kroc Center, that believes that when the Israelis, Palestinians, Ukrainians, Russians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Chinese, Venezuelans, Haitians,

Houthis, Pakistanis, Indians, gang members, drug cartels, polluters, police, Republicans, Democrats, opponents of the Kroc Center, and other evil-doers finally hear the words of our next roundtable, they will all, in unison, realize that peace is the answer. A few fringe theorists hypothesize that our next talk will actually cause crop yields to triple, a second Holy Land to sprout into existence, and cars to run on good vibes alone.”

“What we all agree on, however,” she emphasized, “is that it is desperately necessary that we host another workshop, which will then solve all of our problems. We see this all the time; people quit working towards the goals for which they’ve sunk so much cost right before they finally achieve them. Ninety percent of gamblers quit right before they would have finally

hit it big. Even in my past job, where I was a lobbyist for asphalt companies, I saw city planners stop adding lanes to highways just one lane before they would finally eradicate traffic.”

Hu Mann-Ature, a visiting scholar at the Kroc Center, disagreed. “I’m not sure that the problem is systemic, at least not in the way that my colleagues think it is. We can’t ever lecture away concupiscence, the Fall, or the bedrock fact of scarcity. In fact, I thi– AHHHHH!!”

Mr. Mann-Ature’s quote was interrupted by a manic-eyed Emily Cumenism, who tackled him. Ms. Cumenism then began to break down, with sobs of “Just one more! Please! One more and I promise that we’ll be done. Please, I’m actually begging you!”

*[Editor’s Note: This reporter is currently being held hostage by the Kroc Center in the Jenkins-Nanovic*

*basement.]*

The Center is demanding that Fr. Dowd ban war globally, endow a permanent position for each Kroc staff member, and give the opening address at their next 12 fora. For more information on the Center’s upcoming events, go to [kroc.nd.edu](http://kroc.nd.edu).

*This article was originally published 8 November 2024.*

Will Grannis is just one more all-nighter away from getting his workload under control, just one more cookie away from starting that wedding diet, and just one more dollar away from finally having enough money. He comes from a city that’s just one more bill away from solving America’s problems. He can receive just one more email at [wgrannis@nd.edu](mailto:wgrannis@nd.edu).





CENTER FOR  
CITIZENSHIP & CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

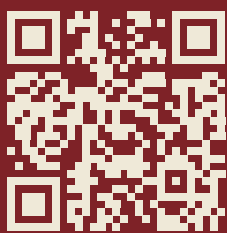
2026

# JEANIE POOLE O'SHAUGHNESSY MEMORIAL LECTURE

Join our esteemed panel as they reflect on the tragic events of September 11, 2001, after 25 years.

**Friday, September 11**  
**3:30-4:45 p.m.**

Leighton Concert Hall,  
DeBartolo Performing  
Arts Center



Learn more at  
[constudies.nd.edu/events](https://constudies.nd.edu/events)

## PANELISTS



**Hon. Brett M. Kavanaugh,**  
associate justice of the Supreme  
Court of the United States



**James J. Dunne III,** Notre Dame  
trustee; vice chairman and senior  
managing principal of Piper Sandler



**Rev. Edward A. "Monk" Malloy,**  
C.S.C., president emeritus,  
University of Notre Dame



**Jennie Bradley Lichter '04,**  
senior advisor to the March For  
Life Education and Defense Fund