

Grand Opening for DEI Center

PwC-funded center opens in LaFortune Student Center

MICHAEL CANADY
Campus Editor

The Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) celebrated its grand opening on September 21, 2023. The center, funded by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), now occupies the second floor of LaFortune Student Center.

The purpose of the center is “to provide a safe and welcoming environment where students can foster a culture of belonging, collaborate to address issues that are important to them, and enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts at Notre Dame,” according to the center’s website.

Fr. Gerry Olinger, C.S.C., Vice President for Student Affairs, told the *Rover* that the center “provides yet another critical opportunity for students to find belonging and deepen connections with one another and with God.”

He continued, “It is my hope that the center will help to encourage and develop the various talents, differing perspectives, and diverse backgrounds of the students who enjoy the space and in turn make Notre Dame a richer and better place for us all.”

This recently opened center



The Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the LaFortune Student Center. Image by Irish Rover

currently houses the administrative offices of the Multicultural Student Programs and Services (MSPS), the Gender Relations Center (GRC), and the Office of Student Enrichment (OSE). The center also houses the student groups PrismND (Notre Dame’s LGBTQ+ undergraduate student organization) and Diversity Council ND, an assembly of student leaders under MSPS that “explores issues of diversity at

the University of Notre Dame in an effort to promote awareness, understanding, and acceptance of all differences that make up the Notre Dame community.”

The grand opening featured a blessing, presided over by Notre Dame President Fr. John Jenkins, C.S.C. At the event, he remarked that it was “a wonderful day for Notre Dame.” He stated that the opening of the center was “a next step for

Notre Dame to be fully the kind of community we aspire to be ... the best version of ourselves.” He further thanked God for “the blessed diversity which [He has] bestowed upon us as our gift.”

Rev. Hugh Page, a Professor of Theology at Notre Dame and an episcopal priest, also spoke at the blessing. He emphasized that the opening of the center pushed the university forward on the “pilgrimage toward becoming

the very best version of Notre Dame.” Rev. Page continued, “At a moment in our national life that is so fractious and so divided, [DEI centers] serve as signs of community and hope that make clear our commitment to solidarity and to justice ... they serve as sanctuaries, as sacred spaces that embody and ground our commitment to an ethic of compassion and all-encompassing love.”

Julia Thomalla, Secretary of PrismND, also spoke at the blessing. “My fellow PrismND officers and I have been so privileged and grateful to find our new home in our brand new beautifully renovated office, especially as PrismND is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.” She continued, “Each one of these offices is essential to nurturing Notre Dame as a place where everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from, is accepted and valued.”

The speakers emphasized that the center embodies a “safe space” for underrepresented student groups. Jo’Vette Hawkins, President of Diversity Council ND, reiterated this idea. In her speech, she said, “With the opening of the center, *continued on pg. 3*

U.S. News Reveals Updated University Rankings

Notre Dame and other private institutions fall multiple places

NICO SCHMITZ, W. JOSEPH DEREUIL, & LUKE THOMPSON
Editor-in-Chief, Opinion Editor, & Campus Editor

The *U.S. News & World Report* released the popular “Best National University” rankings last week, with the University of Notre Dame falling two spots from number 18 to number 20.

The CEO of *U.S. News & World Report*, Eric Gertler, told USA Today that this year’s rankings reflected “significant” changes in methodology. He explained, “Measurements of student outcomes, including borrower debt and post-graduate earnings, were weighted higher in this year’s list.”

The *U.S. News & World Report*

official press release regarding the change in methodology explains more specifically that there is “Increased weighting on a schools’ success in graduating students from different backgrounds.”

The *USA Today* report continued, “In last year’s rankings ... donations from alumni were weighted at three percent in a university’s overall score—now that number is zero. Class size went from eight percent to zero. Another change involves research: if professors are cited in major publications, that can boost a school’s score, too.”

The elimination of alumni donations and class size as determining factors harmed the rankings of other private universities in a more significant

manner than Notre Dame. Private institutions fell an average of 16 spots, while public institutions rose by an average of eight positions.

Significantly, Wake Forest University, a private research university with an enrollment of close to 9,000 students, fell 19 spots from number 29 to number 47. University of Chicago fell from number six to number 12.

Unlike Wake Forest and UChicago, Notre Dame did not provide a news release on their fall in the rankings, though its decline was less dramatic.

In response to the new rankings, Wake Forest University President Susan R. Wentz stated, “It is unfortunate that this year’s methodology no longer rewards *continued on pg. 5*

What is the Crucifix Initiative?

Notre Dame curates classroom crucifixes from around the world

MARGARET MATHIS
Staff Writer

The recently announced Crucifix Initiative aims to bring beautiful crucifixes from around the world to classrooms and other areas of Notre Dame’s campus. These crucifixes will serve as classroom tools and instruments for deep reflection.

The initiative was launched in 2019 by Dr. Mark Roche, a German language and philosophy professor and former Dean of the College of Arts and Letters. Roche told the *Rover* that he thought of this project when he was dean. Through the initiative, he hopes that these crucifixes will “make

students much more aware of Catholicism as an international institution instead of just an American phenomenon.”

Dr. Roche explained, “When you are in a classroom with one [of these unique crucifixes], you can incorporate it into your teaching. One semester I had a classroom with the world cross from Peru in it, and during another semester I had one with a Ukrainian crucifix in it. I was able to talk to students about these particular crosses and their history.”

Furthermore, Dr. Roche told the *Rover* that he has been deeply influenced by the thought of the 20th-century philosopher Simone Weil and her writing on the integration of *continued on pg. 6*

THE *IRISH ROVER*

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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, humor and sports.

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, Nico Schmitz, at NDIrishRover@gmail.com 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.

“Beauty will save the world.” – Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*



Image by photoessays.nd.edu

Our Gold Standard

ELIZABETH HALE
 Managing Editor



After witnessing the five-month process of re-gilding the golden dome, one may question whether this painstaking and expensive task—manually applying 1,250 delicate strips of imported Italian gold sheets to the top of the second-tallest building on campus—was worthwhile. Why did Notre Dame endeavor to re-gild the Golden Dome? Was Our Lady not bright enough before?

Some may think this project was a waste of university resources, plentiful though they are. But it is not excessive or superfluous. Essential to the mission of the university is the pursuit of excellence, and pursuing exterior beauty is a crucial part of this excellence. The re-gilding of Our Lady is one manifestation of this pursuit.

It is not that the Blessed Virgin atop our Main Building was not plenty golden before, but she was not as bright as

she could have been. A symbol of Our Lady's protection of the university, it is important that the statue accurately reflect the woman that it symbolizes. It was not sufficient for Our Lady to be good enough. She had to be beautiful. She had to be excellent.

This pursuit of excellence is reflected throughout campus. Much like the re-gilding of the Dome, maintaining the perfectly manicured grounds is no small undertaking. The exterior beauty seen through these investments has led *Travel + Leisure* magazine to name Notre Dame the third most beautiful college campus in America, and Architectural Digest recognized that, at Notre Dame, “everything on these grounds works in harmony to create a place as beautiful as it is educational.”

This is not done by accident. Our university grounds are beautiful because they are meticulously kept. Our groundskeepers beautifully maintain 1,250 acres of foliage, turning flower beds and changing planters by season. Notre Dame was recognized for its beauty because it is excellent in the small things, and it strives for beauty.

This year, the university's institutional message—“Gold”—reflects this knowledge. An obvious ode to the regilding of the Golden Dome and statue of Our Lady, this theme communicates the university's standard of excellence in all her pursuits. People come to Notre

Dame because she is excellent. This is what attracts people to her.

If our own excellence and beauty were to be pursued as ends in themselves, we would cease to be attractive, and we would never excel. All our pursuits must be ordered toward Christ—not only that we may find Him, but also that through our example, others may too.

Since pursuit of excellence is an attractive quality, these exterior aspects of beauty are a fundamental part of the Great Commission: We were instructed by our Lord to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

When Christ is the source and final cause of that excellence, we attract others to Him. It is by our excellence, then, that we are called to preach the gospel and to draw closer to Christ. But if we are repulsive to others, even interior piety may be insufficient to draw others to Christ. Neither can we excel if we are living in a way that is ugly and discordant. Thus, when Dostoyevsky stated that “Beauty will save the world,” this beauty should refer to harmony both interior and exterior. Neither of these will ever be achieved without a well-ordering of our lives toward a standard of excellence.

We should try to achieve a gold standard. It is good to dress

well for class, to workout, eat healthy, pray regularly, and live a well-ordered life. These things lose their luster, though, when they are oriented toward our own gratification.

In dressing well, the goal is not to be “fancier” than those around us. The goal of putting on a nice outfit is to honor those around us, not to one-up them. In working out, the goal is not merely to look good, but to live a well-balanced life. In praying every day, we do not try to appear holy, but to actually become holier. A life lived in proper order is not for our own glorification, but to become beautiful so that we may attract others to Him who made us beautiful.

Notre Dame's institutional message is very good. We should all seek the gold standard. The beauty of Our gilded Lady on the Dome points us to her son, and it is by taking care of her that we take care of Him for whom she was created. When we look to Our Lady, we should be renewed in our desire to become beautiful so that we may attract others to her son. We should become excellent for Him.

Elizabeth Hale is a junior studying political science with a minor in Constitutional Studies. She loves gold, particularly when it is in the form of earrings and bracelets. For more information on how to send her such gold, email ehale@nd.edu.

WRITE FOR THE ROVER, EMAIL NSCHMIT2@ND.EDU



What is the Initiative on Race and Resilience?

College of Arts and Letters' key initiative sponsors controversial programming

NICO SCHMITZ
Editor-in-Chief

The College of Arts and Letters, with support from the Office of the Provost, launched the Initiative on Race and Resilience (IRR) in January of 2021. The initiative is an “interdisciplinary program focused on the redress of systemic racism and the support of communities of color both within and beyond the Notre Dame campus” according to the College of Arts and Letters official website.

Mark Sanders, Director of the Initiative on Race and Resilience and Professor of English and Africana Studies, described the initiative as a “a think tank on race—an intellectual and physical space at Notre Dame where people will come together to address issues of race and racism, both systemic and interpersonal.”

Sarah Mustillo, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, affirmed the initiative’s strategic importance both for the College of Arts and Letters and the university as a whole in the 2021 launch of the initiative. She stated, “This is an opportunity for Notre Dame to be a significant voice in the challenging, ongoing conversation about racism and the role it currently plays and has historically played in our society.”

In addition to focusing on race-centered research, the initiative was also founded to “emphasize interdisciplinary and comparative study of race and ethnicity” and to “empower African American

communities and other communities of color through engagement opportunities, especially through the arts.”

Despite the emphasis on race-related research and programming, the Initiative on Race and Resilience has co-sponsored several events with a tenuous relation to race and ethnicity.

In 2022, the initiative co-sponsored an event titled, “Post-Roe America: Making Intersectional Feminist Sense of Abortion Bans.” In 2023, the initiative co-sponsored a controversial event titled “Trans Care + Abortion Care: Intersections and Questions” that featured a “Black trans abortion doula, public intellectual, and abolitionist community organizer,” as reported on by the *Rover*.

More recently, the *Rover* reported the Initiative on Race and Resilience is a co-sponsor for a November symposium on the history of drag that will include a live drag performance for Notre Dame students, although the initiative did not respond to request for confirmation.

Additionally, the initiative pledged its support for an upcoming panel on “Criminalizing Reproduction” that will focus on “the new threats ahead now that abortion access has been banned in several states” regarding “reproductive punishment.”

Director Mark Sanders in his 2021 “Letter from the Director” explained the unique position of the Initiative on Race and Resilience. He writes, “You may ask why an initiative instead of

a center and an institute? The initiative on race functions as a center or institute in terms of space, programming, and funding, but is designated an ‘initiative’ to signal that it is one of [former] Provost Marie Lynn Miranda’s highest priorities.”

According to the organizational chart from the College of Arts and Letters, the Initiative on Race and Resilience is the only program under the title “initiative.” Unlike centers, institutes, and programs, the Initiative on Race and Resilience reports directly to the Dean’s Office. Others, such as the Rooney Center for American Democracy, for example, report to the Associate Dean of Social Sciences.

With such a unique position within the university, it is unclear where the initiative receives its funding. However, in his 2022 “Letter from the Director,” Sanders wrote that he would like “to thank Marie Lynn Miranda for her moral and financial support of IRR.”

Provost Miranda stepped down from her position in December of 2021 and was replaced by Professor John McGreevy. The Initiative on Race and Resilience has maintained its status as an “initiative” and has continued its programming.

The letter also thanked the College of Arts and Letters, specifically noting that the initiative “deeply appreciate[s] the vision and steadfast support of Dean Sarah A. Mustillo, I. A. O’Shaughnessy Dean of the College of Arts and Letters.”

The initiative’s “About” page

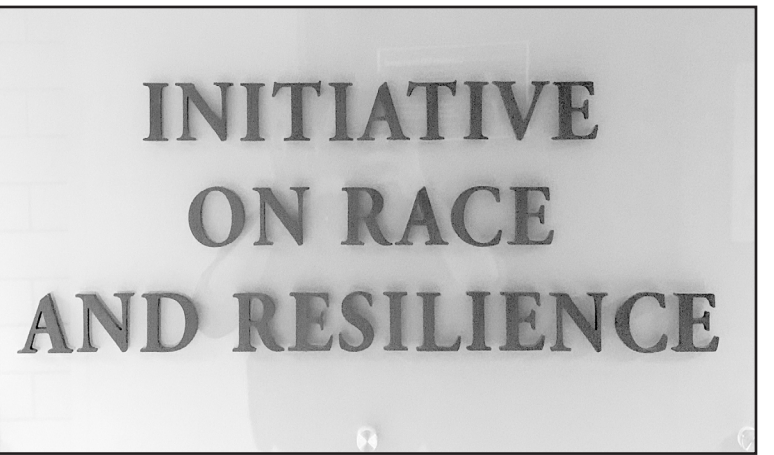


Image by the Irish Rover

affirms Sander’s appreciation, describing that the program is “led by Notre Dame’s College of Arts and Letters with additional support from the Office of the Provost.”

Sanders described his emphases of the initiative for the upcoming years in his 2022 letter, specifically citing his concerns that “the big lie that the 2020 presidential election was stolen continues to metastasize in the form of state laws aimed at suppressing and/or nullifying the votes of people of color.”

He explained his concerns in more detail, stating, “Birtherism, voter suppression, the prospect of voter nullification, the panic over Critical Race Theory, and the attack on the Capitol Building all serve as efforts to reject multiracial democracy and thus to return this country to its past as a herrenvolk democracy in which only one ethnic group exercises democratic freedoms.”

Sanders’ 2021 announcement letter shared a similar focus on President Donald Trump and the 2020 election as a

motivating factor of the creation of the Initiative on Race and Resilience. Sanders wrote that the “the circumstances under which Notre Dame is creating this initiative are pressing and dire”: one of which is that the “45th President of the United States actively pursued the nullification of votes by millions of Blacks across Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin to overturn an election that he clearly lost.” Sanders then continued, explaining that “[Trump] incited a white nationalist mob to attack the Capital Building to prevent the ratification of the Electoral College vote.”

Sanders did not explain or provide evidence for these claims in his letter. Sanders also did not respond to multiple requests for comment from the *Rover*.

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DEI Center

continued from front

“With the opening of the center, we now have a dedicated space where every member of the Notre Dame community can experience the value of diversity.”

Vice President of Student Affairs Fr. Olinger offered the concluding blessing.

As the *Rover* reported in 2021, the funding for the center by PwC came in the form of an initial \$1 million gift, which will be supplemented by an additional \$9 million over the next five years. In recent history, representatives from PwC have also taught the portion of the Moreau first year experience course on “micro-aggressions” and “inclusive leadership.”

The motivation for the center was expressed through the 2021 Boards of Trustees Task Force Report, which was created “to assist the university in its efforts to become a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community,” according to the Task Force Report website.

The report cites a disparity in the “sense of belonging” between the minority and majority

student populations. It states, “Building a more inclusive culture is the single most important task before us, as it is foundational to everything else.”

The new center also fits into “Notre Dame 2033: A Strategic Framework,” the recently released 10-year plan that describes the need for “diversity and inclusion.”

The *Rover* also reached out to the directors of the offices housed in the center, all of whom directed the *Rover* to Ana Reyes Lam, Assistant Director for Communications and Operations for the center.

Reyes stated that the center is “committed to helping all students, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, find a place on campus where they feel welcomed, safe, and excited to be their authentic selves.”

Moreover, Reyes claimed that the center will be useful for “hosting more programming, facilitating and increasing support and involvement with students to address topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and creating a social gathering space for our campus

community.”

The center also “offers spaces that can be reserved through NDCentral and SAORes by all recognized student clubs and organizations and members of the campus community,” Reyes noted. “These spaces include executive meeting rooms (the History Makers Room, the Champions of Diversity Room, and the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi room) and a community kitchen.”

Notre Dame has also hosted talks that referenced DEI, and some have expressed possible dangers when overemphasizing DEI over other ideals.

In a lecture titled “What Makes a University Catholic?” given at Notre Dame last spring, Bishop Robert Barron responded to a question on how diversity and inclusion fit into the ideals of a Catholic University. In his response, Bp. Barron stated, “My complaint with the diversity, equity, and inclusion stuff is not that those are bad things; but they’re not absolute values; they’re relative values. When you absolutize them, then trouble emerges.” Instead, Bp. Barron advocated for the “absolute

values” of “justice and love.”

Fr. Jenkins echoed a similar sentiment in his homily at the Opening of the Academic Year Mass on August 22. In reference to St. Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians, he remarked, “Paul’s words remind us that our gifts and the differences among us are valuable only in so far as they contribute to the good of the whole, and in making that contribution, they find their purpose. Now Paul’s words are particularly apt for our university community as well.”

Daniel Philpott, Professor of Political Science, also remarked upon the relationship between Notre Dame’s commitment to DEI and her Catholic identity. He told the *Rover*, “Seeking to heal the wounds of racial injustice and to promote the inclusion of minorities are indispensable parts of a Catholic university’s mission. Equally vital is that a Catholic university does this according to the gifts and principles of the Church.”

Philpott repeated that the university’s efforts must be aligned with Catholic Church teaching, “particularly in the matter of marriage and sexuality,

lest its Catholic approach lose credibility and moral authority.”

Philpott also expressed concern because of the secular nature of the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion. He stated, “I worry that the DEI language links us to approaches that are predominant today in public law and the policies of corporations, universities, and other institutions, but which are secular and not rooted in the Church’s theology, divine reality, moral doctrine, and teaching about the human person. Aspects of the predominant DEI approach are in sharp tension with the Church.”

The center is open from 7 a.m. to 2 a.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 2 a.m. on weekends.

Michael Canady is a sophomore from northern Virginia studying classics and constitutional studies. He is also an avid soccer player and sports fan, but all of his favorite teams have been losing recently. To suggest other teams to root for, contact him at mcanady2@nd.edu.



New Campus Group Promotes Fertility Education

Alumna begins meetings to promote authentic women's healthcare

MERLOT FOGARTY
Staff Writer

A new women's fertility awareness club on campus strives to educate women on the gift of God's feminine design. Michelle Bennett, the founder of the group, received her Masters in Biological Sciences from Notre Dame in 2022 with research focusing on maternal and fetal health. A mother of one daughter with another child on the way, Bennett felt a desire to start a group dedicated to educating women on their natural biology "with a sound philosophical background."

Bennett was trained as a fertility educator through Natural Womanhood—a program dedicated to women's health literacy—this summer and began leading a group of 10–15 girls through Natural Womanhood's Cycle Mindfulness Curriculum this August.

Natural Womanhood is a national secular organization founded in 2012 on the principles of natural law and theology of the body. They strive to educate women about their bodies and teach that "fertility is not a disease in need of a cure but a pivotal aspect of comprehensive women's health."

Cycle Mindfulness Clubs (CMC) provide peer-led support and education "where young women can gather to learn about and discuss personal questions about their fertility and cycle health," approaching "fertility as a gift, and as a positive and integral part of what it means to be human."

"These aims of our club align with principles of natural law and theology of the body, which promote the distinct gifts of



The Life Monument. Image from franciscanmedia.org

women and their personal dignity," Bennett told the Rover.

Pope St. John Paul II began his series of 129 lectures on the 'Theology of the Body' in 1979, following up on Pope Paul VI's groundbreaking encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*. This document addressed the objectives of the sexual revolution and called on Catholics to remain faithful to God's design of marriage, sex, and family life.

In the encyclical, Pope Paul VI urged the scientific community to develop a safe, moral, and holistic alternative to the birth control pill. He hoped that Catholic scientists may, "by their research, establish the truth of the Church's claim that 'there can be no contradiction between two divine laws—that which governs the transmitting of life and that which governs the fostering of married love.'"

In 1985, the Saint Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction was founded

with these goals in mind. Research through the Saint Paul VI Institute has contributed to immense improvements in natural fertility regulation, reproductive education, and genuine life-affirming care for women, children, and families. South Bend's Saint Joseph Hospital bears the fruit of this call through its FertilityCare Center.

Other organizations that uphold these principles of human dignity and natural fertility have been gaining momentum among both Catholic and secular scientists alike. CMCs provide college women with the education and support they need to take control of their health and fertility despite a healthcare system that fails them. Bennett agrees that the "general societal consensus is that natural cycles and fertility are a burden." She says "it is this falsehood that [CMC is] confronting. Women's healthcare is severely lacking in general medicine, and

we want to empower women through charting to read the signs of health that their body is communicating in order to get the help that they need to live happily and healthfully."

The weekly curriculum will cover topics such as charting, hormones and emotion cycle syncing, common cycle problems, ovulation, anatomy, common treatments and medications, sexual desire through the cycle, and good cycle health practices.

Adeline Kershner, a Notre Dame sophomore and the group's co-leader, welcomes this community as a place to provide material that is otherwise lacking in women's reproductive education. "There is a common gap in our previous education when it came to learning about how our bodies work. Naturally, as we enter young adulthood, we want to address these gaps in our knowledge. This group provides Notre Dame women

the opportunity to learn essential facts about our bodies that will help us lead healthier and happier lives," she said.

Senior Claudia Parisi praised the holistic approach that the group provides, especially because of the lack of information women are given on the reality of their cycles and fertility. She told the *Rover*, "Society doesn't teach girls that understanding their cycles provides insights about how to live the healthiest life at that moment."

Parisi added, "There's an assumption that these methods are only used by Catholics once they are married and looking to have kids ... [but] tracking also provides essential knowledge that women can use to live healthy lives beyond starting a family. ... Understanding this allows women to be better equipped in living out their femininity in a whole and healthy way."

A devout Catholic, Bennett says this group provides a "practical application of the Catholic Church's teaching on women's dignity and an active participation in the promotion of the feminine genius through our appreciation of our feminine embodiment."

The group will meet every Thursday at 6 p.m. in the Hesburgh Library. Women interested in learning more can reach out to Michelle Bennett, FEMM Fertility Educator, via mcarloso2@alumni.nd.edu.

Merlot Fogarty is a senior studying theology, political science, and constitutional studies. She is proud to boast three copies of *Humanae Vitae* and would love to talk about Pope Paul VI's hot takes with you; email her merlot.fogarty@nd.edu.





McGrath Receives Grant for the Holy Family Initiative

Lilly Endowment Inc. gives \$1.25 million grant for the expansion of Hispanic ministry

BARTOSZ KAROL CHRAMIEC
Staff Writer

The Lilly Endowment Inc. recently donated \$1.25 million to the McGrath Institute for Church Life to expand their Holy Family Initiative for Family Catechesis.

Katherine Angulo Valenzuela, Program Director for the Holy Family Initiative, told the *Rover* in an interview that the initiative's mission is to "catechize Hispanic parents, re-empowering them as teachers of the faith within their homes." She continued, "This catechetical program addresses the increasing disaffiliation of young Hispanic people with the Church by creating a culture of affiliation."

The McGrath Institute piloted the Holy Family Initiative in 2022 in partnership with the Diocese of San Antonio, Texas. In this initial year, faculty from McGrath visited three select parishes in the diocese, offering bilingual workshops on various topics pertinent to Catholic life such as the importance of looking to Scripture for role models.

Lilly Endowment Inc., the philanthropic organization that granted \$1.25 million to the Holy Family Initiative, is a philanthropic foundation based in Indianapolis, Indiana that, according to its website, endeavors to "help individuals reach their full potential, families to thrive, and communities to flourish through grants to a range

of charitable organizations."

The endowment principally donates to religious organizations of various denominations, community development initiatives, and educational institutions. Notre Dame has received grants from the endowment multiple times in the recent past, such as a \$35 million grant last year to fund research to address public health and environmental issues, which will be located in the interdisciplinary research building currently under construction on the east side of campus.

Angulo Valenzuela said that the recent grant will support the initiative's expansion to the Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina. The initiative already had its first workshop at three parishes in this diocese, with about 130 parents in attendance.

In the interview, Angulo Valenzuela noted that the "Hispanic realities"—the lived experience of Hispanics in diverse areas—are vastly different in the two dioceses. In San Antonio, there is a larger variety within the Hispanic community: there are Hispanic families who have been in the United States for up to eight generations and who do not speak Spanish, as well as recently immigrated families that speak Spanish at home. Meanwhile, in Raleigh, the Hispanic community is relatively new and is rapidly growing as more and more Hispanics immigrate to

Raleigh.

The Diocese of Raleigh was chosen as the second place for the program to be piloted so that those working in the initiative can better address the particular needs of different Hispanic communities in the future.

Angulo Valenzuela told the *Rover* that many families are unable to attend parish programming because of difficulties arranging childcare. She elaborated, saying, "This is even more true for Hispanic parents who are often working schedules where meals may feel rushed." To alleviate these stresses, the initiative—with the help of the hosting parishes—offers meals and childcare for workshop participants.

In the workshops, a recurring theme was biblical imagination, which is the idea of modeling our lives on the lives of biblical figures. For example, Dr. Leonard DeLorenzo, Director of Undergraduate Studies for the McGrath Institute recently offered a session on the Holy Family as the exemplar of domestic life.

According to Angulo Valenzuela, the idea of biblical imagination was something new for those to whom the initiative ministered. Despite this, she noted, it seemed to "have helped facilitate reconciliation within families." She further said that many parents had a negative relationship with their older children and that these sessions,



Statue of the Holy Family. Image by the Irish Rover

especially a session on the parable of the prodigal son, made them realize the importance of healing these divisions. "By the final session, older teens and young adults were in attendance with their families," she said.

Angulo Valenzuela hopes that the initiative will help these Hispanic communities, including by helping "parents take charge of passing the faith to the new generations when communication (language) and education has in many cases broken their relationships." She also hopes that the initiative will aid "parents identify the difference between a good family

and a good Catholic family."

The McGrath Institute plans to open this initiative to all dioceses in the United States after operating in the dioceses of San Antonio and Raleigh for at least three years.

Bartosz Karol Chramiec is a freshman living in the Cinderblock Palace who intends to major in the Program of Liberal Studies. If you know how to befriend a chipmunk without it disappearing immediately, email him at bartosz.chramiec@nd.edu.

U.S. News Report

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institutions for some of the elements of the Wake Forest experience that we value most."

The news release continued, "The positive impact of these commitments," which include "consideration of small class size and teaching by professors with a terminal degree" have contributed to "Ninety-eight percent of Wake Forest graduates being employed or enrolled in graduate schools of their choosing within six months of completing their undergraduate degree."

The University of Chicago noted in their statement that the "U.S. News & World Report made changes to its ranking for 2023 which we strongly believe work against the interests of students who value an in-depth academic experience," also mentioning the

lack of consideration of class size and the "educational achievement level of instructors in the calculation of rank."

Notre Dame's fall to 20 continues a general trend of modest decline since the school was ranked number 15 in the 2017 edition of the *U.S. News & World Report*, in a tie with Cornell, Rice, and Vanderbilt. Contrary to this trend, Notre Dame did rise from number 19 to number 18 in 2022.

Along with updating their methodology, *U.S. News & World Report* is seeking to adjust the mission of their rankings system, focusing on "helping students find the school that is right for them," articulated Gertler. According to Gertler, this is "the core of everything we do in our education vertical."

To this end, Gertler continued: "U.S. News will continue to release new tools that will enable

students to explore different criteria based on their individual interests and needs, helping them choose the best possible school for their academic and professional success."

Considering both this year's new criteria and Gertler's comments about the future, Notre Dame's increased admissions of diverse applicants from a variety of ethnic and educational backgrounds could bode well for the school's future in the rankings. Notre Dame's class of 2027, the most recent class admitted into the university, was both "the most selective and diverse class in [the school's] history."

According to *The Observer* report on the class of 2027, "20.5% of the class is first generation or Pell recipients, 34% of the class identifies as students of color and 8% of the class is international."

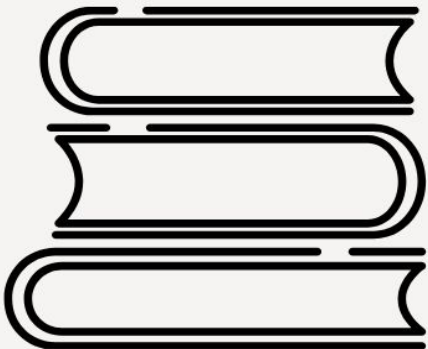
This increase in admissions of students from different ethnic and educational backgrounds is part of a concerted effort on the university's part that they plan on expanding in the coming years, according to an interview with Micki Kidder, Vice President for Undergraduate Enrollment, obtained by *The Observer* in their report.

"This isn't a one-time outreach that Notre Dame makes to a diverse group of prospective families and assumes that they're going to apply to Notre Dame," Kidder said. "We really need to authentically invest in relationships so that we can continue to increase the diversity of our applicant pool."

This focus on increasing admissions numbers from students from less common ethnic and educational backgrounds, coming just as *U.S. News & World Report* is

emphasizing this metric in their rankings could help Notre Dame prevent similar falls down in the rankings in coming years.

Nico Schmitz, W. Joseph DeReuil, and Luke Thompson are seniors currently in or notably departed from the Program of Liberal Studies. When they are not unnecessarily co-writing *Rover* articles, you can find them passionately arguing about the merits of said departure from "The Program." If you are considering joining PLS, email wdereuil@nd.edu for reasons against doing so and nschmit2@nd.edu or lthomps7@nd.edu for reasons why you should.



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The History and Experience of Marian Consecration

Marian devotion on campus

KATHRYN BOWERS &

CHRISTOPHER DE LA VIESCA
Religion Editor & Staff Writer

Marian consecration, an ancient tradition in the Church whose roots stretch back to the foot of the Cross, still remains a powerful part of the Catholic practice of students and professors at the University of Notre Dame.

To “consecrate” means to set apart for sacred use. This is seen in Scripture, as sacrificial offerings and food were blessed and separated for sanctification, and as Moses sprinkled the blood of the Covenant to consecrate the Israelites themselves.

One such form of consecration is Marian in character. Famously encouraged by St. Louis de Montfort, the 18th-century French priest, in *Total Consecration to Jesus Through Mary*, consecration to the Blessed Virgin has seen a resurgence, particularly through *33 Days to Morning Glory* by the American priest Fr. Michael Gaitley, M.I.C. Such recent saints as Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa of Calcutta have encouraged this devotion.

Far from a modern novelty, Marian consecration is founded on a central episode in the life of Christ. When Jesus died on the Cross, He told his “beloved disciple” John, “Behold thy mother.” Entrusting His Blessed Mother and His beloved disciple to their own mutual care, Christ provided the pattern for Catholics throughout the centuries to set themselves apart both as children and custodians of their mother, the Mother of God.

In response to this episode, certain devoted saints

throughout Church history formulated more specific consecration formulas with prayers to recite and reflections on which to meditate. In the eighth century, for example, Saint John of Damascus, in a homily on the Assumption, prayed, “O Lady ... to you we consecrate our mind, our soul, our body, all that we are. We honor you as much as we can.”

The most famous form of this devotion, however, is *Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary* written by Saint Louis de Montfort. His method of consecration involves a series of passages from Scripture and other spiritual works for reflection followed by a series of litanies, prayers, and the rosary for 33 days, ending with the official Act of Consecration.

Marian consecration is well established in the Catholic Church, both East and West, with approval and encouragement from several popes, and admirable examples to follow from various saints. According to *True Devotion to Mary* by St. Louis de Montfort, Marian consecration disposes Catholics to greater graces from Jesus through Mary and unites them to Christ on the Cross.

Professor of Theology John C. Cavadini shared his perspective on Marian consecration in an interview with the *Rover*. In the past, he was inspired by students to undergo the consecration: “I felt like I needed to know more about it, and I needed to try to experience it myself.”

Marian consecration appealed to Cavadini because “some of the language in which the consecration is accepted and articulated seemed very beautiful to me.” Cavadini described it as “a language of self-giving, self-giving over to

Mary, which is a way of giving yourself to Jesus.”

According to Cavadini, Marian devotion has a critical place in the Christian life. “The structure of Christian faith is going through Mary to Jesus ... it’s only by contemplating Mary’s role in the Incarnation that we are contemplating as deeply as possible the self-emptying of the Word in becoming incarnate.”

He continued, “The consecration is a specification, you could say, of this basic structure of Christian faith ... which really is captured in the phrase ‘Mother of God.’” Quoting John Damascene, Cavadini concluded, “The whole of the Gospel is contained in that phrase [i.e., Mother of God].”

The Militia of the Immaculata, a student organization at Notre Dame, leads a Marian consecration every semester using Fr. Gaitley’s *33 Days to Morning Glory*. Fr. Brian Ching, C.S.C., the chaplain to the club and usual celebrant of their consecration Masses, explained that “Marian consecration is a way of concentrating our focus on the life of the Blessed Mother knowing that she is a shining example of a life of virtue, holiness, and devotion. Our love for and devotion to her, expressed through the act of consecration is a way of recognizing her special role in helping guide us to her Son.”

One student, freshman Joseph Muraski, explained to the *Rover* why he decided to do the consecration this semester: “My friend initially planted the seed, but I finally decided to begin the consecration because it was through Mary’s intercession that I was able to attend Notre Dame. And since I



Angelos Akotantos

owe my being here to her, I feel obligated to give myself and my time here to her.”

Though Muraski has already done the consecration once, his experience doing it at Notre Dame is distinct. “Doing this as I adjust to college life has been a great help to remind me what I should be focusing on, which is prayer and giving myself in order to serve God. It has also helped me to be grateful for so many things throughout everyday life as well as the great things God has done for me.”

Kathryn Bowers is a junior from Dallas, Texas who enjoys listening to music in Italian. Email her with other music recommendations at kbowers2@nd.edu.

Christopher de la Viesca is a junior in Fischer Grad and studies mathematics and theology. He also plays the piano and has a passion for the Traditional Latin Mass. Contact him at cdeLavie@nd.edu.

Crucifix Initiative

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academic study and prayer. He summarized her work: “Our school subjects teach us a mode of concentration that is actually central for prayer. Prayer is not going into a church and ‘la-la-ing’ yourself into thinking, but it is an intense concentration.”

According to Dr. Roche, reflecting on crucifixes allows for deep meditation because “every crucifix is different. For example, some crucifixes put more focus on the suffering of Christ than others, and each one emphasizes some other aspect [of the Passion]. Acknowledgements of Christ are awakened if students take the crucifixes seriously.”

Dr. Roche was inspired by a personal struggle to concentrate during prayer. He told the *Rover*, “The first time I prayed in German or went to Mass in German, I had a certain kind of

special concentration. That concentration can sometimes be lost when you are going to Mass in your native language. For students, I hope that [these crucifixes] will awaken a knowledge of different cultures and give students an appreciation for the way in which different cultures approach our understanding of the Catholic Church.”

The initiative has already brought 40 different crucifixes from over 20 countries to Notre Dame. One of these crucifixes is a Japanese “butsudan” style crucifix. A butsudan is a small wooden box with closed

doors that usually open to reveal a Buddha. While Christians were being persecuted in Japan from 1614 to 1873, Japanese Catholics held crucifixes in these butsudans in place of Buddhas so that they



Image from Notre Dame Campus Crucifix Initiative

could hide evidence of their faith by closing the doors.

Another of these crucifixes is a Slovakian plum-wood cross fashioned with a metal and cotton corpus made by the

artist Igor Kontúr. The wood used for the cross came from a plum tree which was destroyed in a lightning storm near Kontúr’s parents’ house in Slovakia.

The crucifixes brought by the initiative have been placed in Jenkins-Nanovic, Decio Hall, Coleman-Morse, and other academic buildings.

The Crucifix Initiative also announced a contest (ending in the spring of 2024) for undergraduates to design and construct their own crucifixes. These crucifixes will be judged on their creativity and uniqueness, and all crucifixes will be given to the university to be displayed across campus. The winner will receive a cash prize of at least \$500.

The contest encourages students to create religious art,

which St. John Paul II calls “an eloquent example of aesthetic contemplation sublimated in faith.” In his *Letter to Artists*, he writes, “Art remains a kind of bridge to religious experience. In so far as it seeks the beautiful, fruit of an imagination which rises above the everyday, art is by its nature a kind of appeal to the mystery.”

Margaret Mathis is a junior studying classical languages who plans to become an attorney. She runs a dress-hemming business out of her dorm room and enjoys hand-stitching Cicero quotes or the Notre Dame leprechaun onto everything she owns (which qualifies as “fair use” according to U.S.C. Title XVII Ch.1 § 107 [1]). Reach out to her at mmathis@nd.edu.



Providence Against Pessimism in *Regime Change*

Notre Dame professor Patrick Deneen's recent book presents a bold way forward

LUKE THOMPSON
Campus Editor



The evidence, as I understand it, suggests that we ought to be as deeply pessimistic as is compatible with a belief in Divine Providence."

Alasdair MacIntyre delivered these words at the conclusion of his 1989 lecture, "The Privatization of the Good." In its context, this quotation bemoans the difficulties created by liberalism's removal of the question of the human good from the public sphere. Regarding this question, MacIntyre argues that liberalism's attempt to formulate moral rules for society without reference to a shared conception of the good has made the existence of shared moral rules impossible. And it has poisoned the chance for any public pursuit of this shared conception of the good.

Obviously, such an argument lends itself to quite a bit of pessimism. A necessary condition for the flourishing of society is missing. Furthermore, there are very significant structural obstacles to rediscovering and restoring this common conception of the good. Despite this bleak picture, MacIntyre qualifies his assertion by stating that we only ought to be "as deeply pessimistic as is consistent with a belief in Divine Providence [emphasis added]."

Though neither MacIntyre nor this statement are mentioned in the work, this qualification animates Notre Dame professor Patrick Deneen's recently published book *Regime Change*.

Deneen's previous book, *Why Liberalism Failed*, offered limited solutions for the deep problems of our liberal political order. *Regime Change* seeks a path forward amid discouraging circumstances by applying timeless concepts of political thought to the present situation. In doing so, Deneen displays the practical socio-political consequences of belief in Divine Providence as alluded to by MacIntyre.

Even if evidence may call for pessimism, belief in Divine Providence compels him to pursue optimal solutions according to both timeless standards and present circumstances. In *Regime Change*, Deneen remains committed to his philosophical resolutions about the role of government and the proper environment that allows for a flourishing human life. At the same time, however, he acknowledges the dire present state of things and the immense difficulties facing any effort to change the *status quo*.

Central to the project of *Regime Change* is an attempt to identify those elements of modern circumstance that might serve as 'seeds' for a revived, postliberal political order. Indeed, we cannot know the designs of

Providence. But Deneen's line of argumentation indicates that our belief in its existence nevertheless guarantees that, if we choose the correct course, it is possible to attain our ends, including the common good.

Understood in the light of this belief, Deneen is neither a dejected detractor in his harsh critiques of the existing order, nor a naïve optimist in his proposal of the path to a postliberal future. Rather, he is a thinker rooted both in reality and in the Catholic understanding of Divine Providence.

Suffice it to say that this praise of Deneen's balanced approach, both wary of the challenges posed by the current state of the liberal regime and hopeful in the light of Divine Providence and timeless truths of political thought, was not the typical reaction of reviewers of *Regime Change*, whether right or left.

It would seem that many reviewers did not even follow Deneen past the first sentence of the work. Deneen opens the book stating, "No sensible reader of the news could look to America and think it is flourishing." But many readers were not willing to admit this much, pillorying the book for spreading a message of doom regarding contemporary America. If this fundamental premise of Deneen's argument is rejected, there remains little room to engage with the remainder of the work. If things are going well, regime change can be nothing other than a threat. Reviews which object to Deneen's argument from its outset will be unsatisfying to those who do find his launching point compelling.

Others were willing to see the deep problems within the liberal regime but regarded his condemnation of liberalism *per se* as unwarranted.

These two categories of reviewers were quick to declaim Deneen's proposal for a society predicated on limits and order as both unnecessary and dangerous. But these reviews, in their fundamentally different reading of present circumstances and the effects of liberalism, share too little common ground with Deneen's argument to truly engage with it in its full depth, thus serving more as polemics against the thesis of Deneen's first book than true reviews of his second.

Still, a few others concurred

with Deneen both in his diagnosis of our society's ills and in identifying liberalism as the cause of these issues. Yet even these did not admit that liberalism's crisis requires a move beyond classical liberalism, the ideology of the American founding, even questioning if such a move is possible.

the Roman Empire, the eclipse of paganism, and the dawn of Christianity necessarily led to different political forms than the city-states in which ancient philosophy had developed. Because of this, the further development of political thought required that "the Machiavellian Project" come along "to lower the goal of human life." politically speaking and otherwise.

Developing these two ideas, Anton adopts an interpretation of the ancient-modern divide that holds that the original American political order, as framed by America's Founding Fathers, represents a best-possible compromise that applies as many of the lessons from ancient philosophy as possible while still respecting the fundamentally different conditions of modern politics. Therefore, according to Anton, the possibility of a political community ordered towards a unified conception of the good and bounded by unchosen obligations is not possible under the conditions of modernity.

But even as he agrees with Deneen on the dire present state of things and can even identify many of the same causes of our present discontents, Anton cannot go so far as to believe in the possibility of regime change, let alone endorse it. In his view, the best that can be done is to return to the precarious—but altogether much better—state of things that existed at the time of the American founding. For Anton, modernity has actually changed the aim of political life, and therefore Deneen errs by aiming too high at an end that was eclipsed by modernity. Even if classical liberalism does contain the source of our present ailments, Anton says that we cannot seek a future beyond its framework. Rather, we must try to maintain liberalism's delicate balance for as long as possible. Now that we have lost it, there is no way back. With our interests severed and disconnected, there is no way to reintegrate them or prompt all to aim at the common good. It would seem Anton's final assessment is far more pessimistic than that of *Regime Change*.

But in answering this objection, I propose that Deneen might appeal to the notion of Divine Providence—that I earlier posited animated much of his work in *Regime Change*. If the ends of political life are rationally and

therefore universally determined, how could they be subject to change by the rise of modernity, a mere change in historical circumstance? Anton says that they are. But if we are to be *as pessimistic as is compatible with a belief in Divine Providence*, then we cannot be so pessimistic as to assert that the ancient ideals of the ends of government (if they are true) could possibly be changed by the turns of history.

A belief in Divine Providence entails a trust in the idea that human events have been so governed as to always allow us an opportunity to reach our true ends if we act according to the proper virtue in whatever circumstance we encounter. Rather than accepting that historical or present circumstances can alter the timeless standards by which we measure our political life, a confidence in Divine Providence demands that we apply these same timeless standards to our present circumstances. That is precisely what Deneen does in *Regime Change*.

In forging this way forward, though it is not an easy or perfectly developed path, Deneen accomplishes something truly impressive (or at least admirable). He has proposed a rediscovery of the possibility of widespread virtuous citizenship, something that many believe is impossible to attain in modernity and others reject outright.

The conditions for virtuous citizenship, in which citizens govern themselves and serve some active role in the government of society towards the common good, have been continually depleted in a liberal regime. Those with power are incentivized to pursue unfettered progress (the apparent interests of the elite class), and those who do have interests in maintaining the social bounds necessary for liberty and widespread virtuous citizenship have little voice in the regime.

Virtuous citizenship may be practiced, but only against the grain of the regime's dominant principle and thus only by very few and never with much success. But in *Regime Change*, a path emerges by which virtuous leaders might surpass the constraints of the current liberal regime, opening the door for widespread virtuous citizenship for the many and the few alike in the future.

Luke Thompson is a senior from Flagstaff, Arizona majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies, political science, and theology. As a former politics editor (currently in exile in the campus section), he could only be kept away for so long. To discuss the need for regime change in the realm of college football, reach out to him at lthompson7@nd.edu.

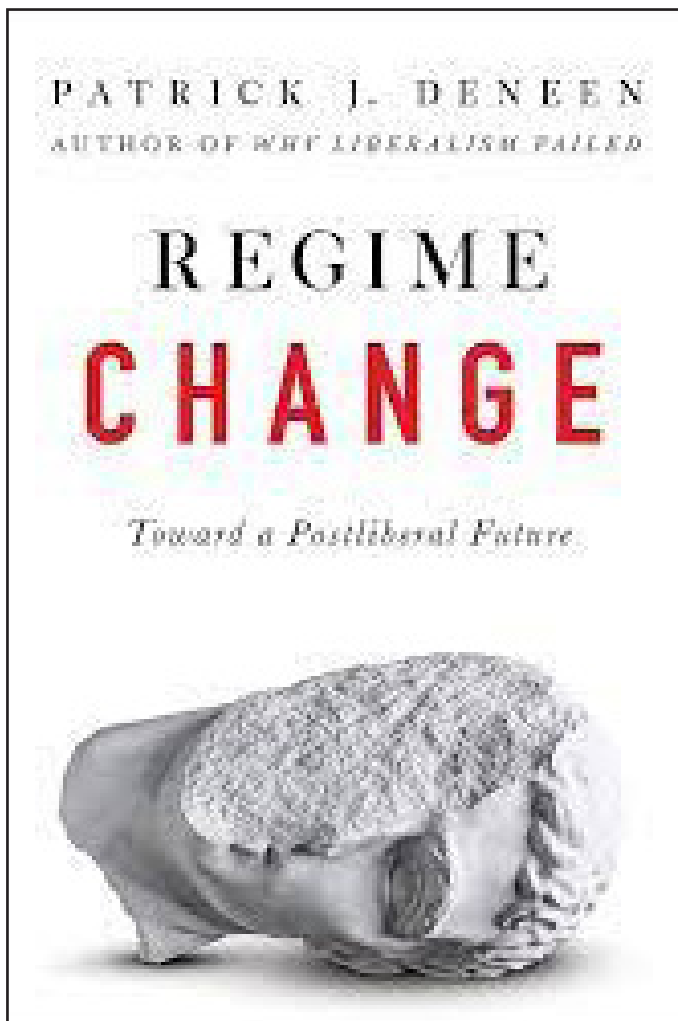


Image from Penguin Random House

This type of review, exemplified in Michael Anton's article in the *Claremont Review of Books*, serves as an interesting reflection on whether Deneen's argument truly constitutes a move beyond liberalism in all its forms and whether that development might be possible or desirable.

In his review, subtitled "No one knows the way out of our present morass," Anton echoes Deneen's deep criticism of the modern liberal regime and its disastrous effects on the common good. But he questions whether the current state of the liberal regime is the result of an inevitable slide necessitated by the classical liberal character of the American founding. He instead suggests that these deleterious effects result from a corruption of the American founding which must be healed rather than abandoned. In support of this argument, Anton cites the political philosophy of Leo Strauss, which he says points out a deep conflict between the ancients and moderns both in terms of philosophy and conditions for political life.

Anton puts forward that Strauss's thought holds that "ancient philosophy is fundamentally sound" and that "modern philosophy ... is fundamentally flawed." But in terms of politics, the rise of



American Atlantis

A society that is never willing to die cannot truly live

W. JOSEPH DERUIL

Opinion Editor

[This article originally appeared in the American Postliberal on July 21, 2023]

We have a water which we call Water of Paradise, being, by that we do to it, made very sovereign for health, and prolongation of life,” writes Francis Bacon in his 1626 unfinished work *New Atlantis*. The short novella describes a utopian civilization in which both want and illness have been cured, and the citizens, devoid of physical need, flourish. Health and longevity of life is the first priority of the ruling class, and in the long course of human suffering, they have once and for all been achieved.

We are undoubtedly progressing towards the world of Bacon—modern priorities, and the premises upon which society operates, are the same utopian ones that inform Bacon’s liberalism.

In a recent article by Timothy Cardinal Dolan, the American cardinal claims that health and life, while goods in themselves, must be ordered to something higher—a goal that was especially easy to forget during the throes of COVID. Dolan questions, “Did we do enough? Did we raise the point that spiritual consolation given to patients was as essential as the bodily care?”

Health is a good, but when considered the essential good, neither Christianity nor civil society can flourish. Yet the moral justification for nearly every policy proposal assumes life as the highest good—“Abortion bans put millions of women and girls at risk,” says the United Nations; “Air pollution from burning fossil fuels causes over 50,000 U.S. deaths” annually, claims a study by *Yale Climate Connections*; “The Science Is Clear: Gun Control Saves Lives,” reads one headline in *The Scientific American*. Indeed, every moral issue is tied back to saving life in the abstract, instead of promoting its flourishing. The same is true for Bacon, who was looking for eternal life in all the wrong places.

Bacon was among the first to propose a health-centric society—a “scientocracy.” And the world has progressed towards this world since his articulation. Reshaping policy questions in terms more robust than preservation of life is a precondition to forming a good society. For granting life as the highest good (as seen through COVID restrictions limiting access to the sacraments) will eventually pit more robust moral goods against the will of

society, and religion will not stand a chance.

New Atlantis was written in response to an earlier utopian work, in which the term was coined, by St. Thomas More. More’s *Utopia* provides a succinct explanation of the Christian goal that was subverted by Bacon. Rather than Bacon’s goal of extension of life and assurance of health, More’s fictional society seeks “freedom and culture of the mind,” so as to lead its citizens towards true happiness. More spends time contrasting this utopian society with contemporary Europe’s political scene. Unlike *Utopia* and *New Atlantis*, each of which have a clear and unique orienting principle around which the society functions, practice does not align with principle in the real world. More describes sixteenth century Europe as a place where the Christian faithful strive for a substantive vision of justice, but where the rulers pursue only power and wealth: the elites abuse the lower class for their own gain. Both authors seek to provide an alternative vision of governance to this predicament.

More’s solution is to paint the picture of an ideal pagan society. In this, he shows the theoretical functioning of a society that perfectly abides by imperfect principles. This society lacks Christianity, but it functions better than contemporary “Christian” Europe. In doing so, he provides an example for Europe to follow in their amending and perfecting the laws among Christian people.

More’s arrangement is seen most clearly through the conversation towards the beginning of *Utopia* between Raphael Hythloday, the fictional discoverer of Utopia, and a cardinal who is a British state official. “Most princes apply themselves to the arts of war ... instead of the arts of peace,” laments Raphael. He then critiques the British punishment for theft, revealing the structural flaws of the regime: it harshly punishes the criminals it systemically creates. The lords’ greed creates the decision between theft and starvation for a whole class of individuals, yet thieves are punished with death: “This way of punishing thieves goes beyond the call of justice and is not, in any case, for the public good.” The cardinal’s courtiers mock Raphael’s propositions, except when they believe they can gain favor with the cardinal through praising them.

Yet through this discussion, More reveals the hypocritical Christian practice of the time. The courtiers justify their misdeed through selective scriptural citation. They practice Christianity privately, but it does not influence policy. The

governance of Utopia corrects many of the vices of Europe, acting as a means of self-evaluation.

Raphael first contrasts Utopia and Europe through his description of the Utopians’ punishment. Their punishment’s aim “is to destroy vices and to save men,” as opposed to the cruelty of the British regime. This society also emphasizes the dignity of workers—no one is treated like a “beast of burden.” Health is not disregarded, but life is a means towards achieving higher goods, both for the individual and society.

This context clarifies the modern perversion of Christianity first expressed by Bacon. For Bacon, knowledge is the “greatest jewel.” The individuals in Solomon’s House—the society of elite scientists who manage the affairs of the nation—choose upon whom to bestow it. The society functions because certain keepers and developers of knowledge eradicate the burdens and scarcity of goods in life. This eliminates the need for conflict and allows man to flourish. Many of the inventions in Solomon’s House are undeniably beneficial to mankind. They mainly pertain to health and life. For instance, drinking the “Water of Paradise” mitigates the greatest evil in their society: death. The Father of Solomon’s House says, “We also have fair and large baths, of several mixtures, for the cure of diseases.”

In many ways, the society tries to undo the effects of the Fall. Death, hard work, and limited knowledge were imposed upon mankind through sin. The society of Bensalem addresses sin by uprooting its effects—they discover the goods that allow man to return to his prelapsarian state and instruct the people how to make use of them. Indeed, the effects of sin are dispelled through human invention—those inventions in Solomon’s House. This circle of men set an ideal, and society strives to attain it. The work of men saves men. Politics is the sole means of man’s salvation, for the effects of sin are dispelled



Thomas More *Utopia*, 1518

by the arrangements of men: The people are made happy by the scientific working of the elites and the removal of suffering.

Creating a flourishing political community should be upheld as a noble end of politics. The goal of the modern “scientocratic” man is attractive, but men must be careful in embracing it, for it leaves aside the most important aspect of man’s nature. Believing that man can leave behind his own nature in the pursuit of worldly perfection creates a false happiness for mankind, striving towards which will not form man according to his telos. A properly ordered ideal does not remain purely material. Nor does it flee to the opposite extreme, ignoring man’s need to improve material conditions.

Perhaps surprisingly, More’s articulation of the proper use of political ideals is not foreign to the American political context. A nearly identical formulation was expounded by the nineteenth century American Orestes Brownson. Brownson writes in his 1842 essay “Parker’s Discourse”: “The sensible does not stand opposed to the Ideal, nor the spiritual. Sensibility is as truly a medium through which we rise to God, as through which we attain to nature.” He then clarifies the middle ground that More takes—recognizing both lived reality and a robust notion of human flourishing—“Let no one, then, try to abstract the Ideal from the contingent existence which represents it, and think to make it, thus abstracted, an object of knowledge”; and he

continues, “And let no one try to confine himself to mere contingent existence; for unless he recognizes its Ideal, he cannot recognize even it.”

The scientific utopians of today, unconsciously taking their inspiration from Francis Bacon, do not aim too high, but they aim too low. They take an ideal towards which to strive—that of everlasting life on earth—not realizing that there is a better end for man. Shaping policy with physical death as the primary evil and life as the highest good forms citizens according to a false religion. It deforms consciences and wreaks havoc on human flourishing.

Many learned along with Cardinal Dolan during the COVID regime that *even if* lockdowns and masks increased your chance of living by some small percentage point, they were not always worth adhering to. This knowledge must not leave the public consciousness. The only way to rebuild society in harmony with human nature is a renewed knowledge of the things worth the price of death. A society that is never willing to die will inevitably become a strangled scientocracy, unable to truly live.

W. Joseph DeReuil is a senior studying classics and philosophy. He can be reached at wdereuil@nd.edu.



Supreme Court Elena Kagan Visits Notre Dame

Supreme Court Justice discusses her appointment, cancel culture, and more

WILL GRANNIS
Staff Writer

Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Elena Kagan sat down for a conversation with Dean G. Marcus Cole of the Notre Dame Law School in the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center on September 22. The Friday discussion, the second event of the 2023–2024 Notre Dame Forum season, covered topics ranging from Kagan's life before serving on the Court to her philosophical qualms with originalist jurisprudence.

Kagan served as dean of Harvard Law School from 2003 until 2009, when she was appointed the nation's first female solicitor general. In 2010, after only fourteen months as solicitor general, President Obama nominated Kagan to the Supreme Court, where she filled the vacancy of retiring Associate Justice John Paul Stevens. She was the first woman to occupy the seat, and, as an academic, had notably not argued a single case in front of any court at the time of her appointment.

Dean Cole began the conversation by focusing on Kagan's life prior to her nomination. When asked if she thought her experience as an academic gave her a different perspective from her fellow justices, she responded that she thought it had a greater effect on how she wrote her opinions than the outcomes of her rulings.

"Justice Barrett is essentially an academic. And we're the only two on the court now ... I'm not sure that academic background leads to a particular kind of judge. I'll tell you the way I think it's affected me most I wanted to figure out a way to present ideas in a way that is comprehensible to people."

Kagan also reflected on her

time as solicitor general (a position sometimes referred to as "the tenth justice") and how it affects her current work at the Supreme Court. "It's the coolest job in the world ... I would have loved to have spent a few more years there. But when the President calls and says he's ready to appoint you to the Supreme Court, I think it's the wrong answer to say 'I'd really like to be Solicitor General.'"

One of the most notable lines to emerge from Justice Kagan's confirmation hearing was her now-famous quote: "We're all originalists now." When asked about the line by Dean Cole, she explained that it is actually an incomplete fragment. "The sentence goes, 'So in that sense, we're all originalists now.' Well, you can tell from 'in that sense' that was a more complicated statement. It came after a long discussion about why I was not an originalist in the conventional understanding of that term, but instead why I thought that constitutional meaning evolved, developed over time, and why that was consistent with, consonant with, what the framers wanted and consistent with the document that they gave us."

Dean Cole steered the end of the conversation towards her experience as dean of Harvard Law School. He questioned her about how she would approach current phenomena within academia such as cancel culture and the threat it might pose to free expression in the classroom. Justice Kagan's response once again highlighted her desire to persuade others. She said, "Educational institutions are supposed to be about learning, exchange, and engagement with ideas, including ideas you don't like. And, if nothing else, nobody has ever managed to persuade a person who they don't understand."

Kagan continued, "So put



Justice Elena Kagan sits for her official Supreme Court portrait, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States.

yourself in another person's shoes and try to figure out where that other person is coming from and why she thinks what she thinks in order to persuade that person ... That sort of exchange is what universities and other educational institutions are all about. And, I should say, maybe especially law schools."

Sophomore Shri Thakur responded positively to the justice's visit, saying, "I very much appreciated the opportunity to attend Justice Kagan's talk. I was particularly impressed by her eloquent refutation of originalist philosophy, even if her own jurisprudence is often an incoherent perversion of the classical common law tradition."

At the closing of the talk,

Kagan voiced her support for Notre Dame football but denied allegations that she would be the ESPN College Gameday guest picker. As a token of appreciation for her visit, Dean Cole presented Justice Kagan with a large "Rule Like a Champion Today" sign, which she accepted and promised to display in her chambers.

Justice Kagan is one of several Supreme Court Justices to speak at Notre Dame in recent years. Justice Brett Kavanaugh gave the keynote address for the law school's Federal Courts Symposium this January. Justice Amy Coney Barrett, an alumna and former professor in the law school, delivered the conference's keynote the previous year. Additionally,

Justice Clarence Thomas delivered the Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Studies' 2021 Tocqueville Lecture.

Kagan's lecture is available for viewing on Notre Dame Law School's YouTube channel.

Will Grannis is a junior studying honors mathematics and theology. While he can in theory be reached at wgrannis@nd.edu, he is notoriously bad at responding to emails and so it is much easier to get ahold of him in his hammock between Zahm and Stanford.

Dante Now! Returns to Campus

Divine Comedy celebration highlights long history of Dante studies at Notre Dame

DANIEL MARTIN
Staff Writer

The Center for Italian Studies and the Devers Program for Dante Studies hosted its annual *Dante Now!* event consisting of community recitations of Dante's *Divine Comedy* with students across various fields of study.

Participants gathered to read aloud selections from the poet's most famous work, culminating in a recitation of Dante's prayer to the Virgin at Notre Dame's Grotto of our Lady of Lourdes

(Paradiso, 33.1-21). The event on Friday, September 22 marked 11 years since *Dante Now!* was inaugurated in 2012.

Dante Now! is dedicated to celebrating the work of Italian poet Dante Alighieri, often referred to as the "Father of the Italian Language." Professor Theodore J. Cachey Jr., the Ravarino Family Director of the Center for Italian Studies and the Devers Program in Dante Studies, explained to the *Rover* that Dante earned himself this title "because he proved in his poem, the *Divine Comedy*, that the Italian language could be used to express the whole

of reality—from the lowest depths of hell to the heights of the empyrean and beyond."

Cachey also noted Dante's approachability for Italian speakers even today. He told the *Rover*, "Linguist Tullio De Mauro has demonstrated that 80% of the vocabulary used in modern Italian can already be found in Dante's poem. This is why students at ND who study Italian and Dante can easily read Dante's poetry in the original, even though it was written over 700 years ago." *Dante Now!* gives students the chance to celebrate the most famous figure in Italian

literature and engage with Italian culture more broadly.

Anne Dunn, a student of Italian language at Notre Dame, said, "This event was an incredible opportunity to practice the beautiful language I have been learning in class. It was a great joy to share Dante's poetry in the original Italian with the broader Notre Dame community and even some Ohio State fans who watched our group walk across campus." Dunn's favorite part of the event was the prayer to the Virgin at the Grotto.

Professor Cachey, who co-edited *Dante Now: Current*

Trends in Dante Studies, further commented on the political and social centrality of the poet, noting: "Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, envisions a united Italian national identity, both linguistically and culturally. This vision predated Italy's eventual political unification in 1861 by several hundred years. Dante's poem greatly influenced Italian patriots of the Risorgimento [Italian unification], including notable figures such as Garibaldi, Mazzini, and Cavour, ultimately leading to Italy's political unification. continued on pg. 10



Rover Reviews: Sound of Freedom

Film confronts horrible reality of child trafficking

VIANNA SCHLAPP
Culture Editor



This past summer, millions of theatergoers encountered the gut-wrenching reality of child sex trafficking in the film *Sound of Freedom*. This movie tells a story about the fight between good and the gravest of evils, spanning genres of drama, suspense, and action to inform the public about the horrible truth: Every year over 1 million children become victims of sex trafficking.

The film stars Jim Caviezel—famous for his portrayal of Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ*—in the role of Tim Ballard, a federal agent who arrests pedophiles. Through a moving encounter with a young boy he saves from traffickers, Ballard feels called to leave his job. He decides that instead of simply arresting those responsible for the continuation of child sex trafficking, he must find a way to liberate children from these horrors and bring them to safety.

Caviezel captures the audience in his portrayal of this real-life hero whose bravery saves countless children. The film does not solely focus on Ballard, but on telling the stories of the child survivors, specifically a brother and sister. These children, Timoteo and Rocio, are the core of *Sound of Freedom*—they are the ones whom Ballard seeks out unceasingly and ultimately reunites with their loving father.

Sound of Freedom depicts the great evil present in those people who violently strip a child's innocence for pleasure or financial gain. The viewer witnesses a fraction of the despair of those who live the horrors of trafficking without hope or freedom. *Sound of Freedom* challenges its viewers to confront the depths of evil in the world,

but does so without harming the viewer through graphic depictions of child trafficking.

The message of the film is incredibly important in the United States of America, the country that is the largest consumer of human trafficking in the world. As Caviezel's character comes to realize in *Sound of Freedom*, "You can sell a bag of cocaine once. A five-year-old child, you can sell them five to ten times a day for ten years straight." He discovers how traffickers have relied on the darkest recesses of humanity to make human trafficking a \$150 billion-a-year international criminal enterprise based on the exploitation of the most vulnerable who are most worthy of protection.

Mainstream media coverage of this film has been almost entirely negative, labeling the film as a "QAnon tinged thriller" catering to conspiracy theorists. The film is not partisan, but rather begs the viewers to attend to the exploited and vulnerable children in the world who are abused each day. Instead of turning their efforts to fight for the protection of these children, the mainstream media is focused on avoiding the reality

of child sex trafficking because it

evil in our world. He told viewers that in seeing the depiction of incredibly evil people who would use innocents for their own gain, he was able to fully appreciate the brave men and women who were willing to lay down their lives in the service of others. Fr. Mike ended his message teary-eyed, reminding us to pray for these children, speaking to the film's great emotional power.

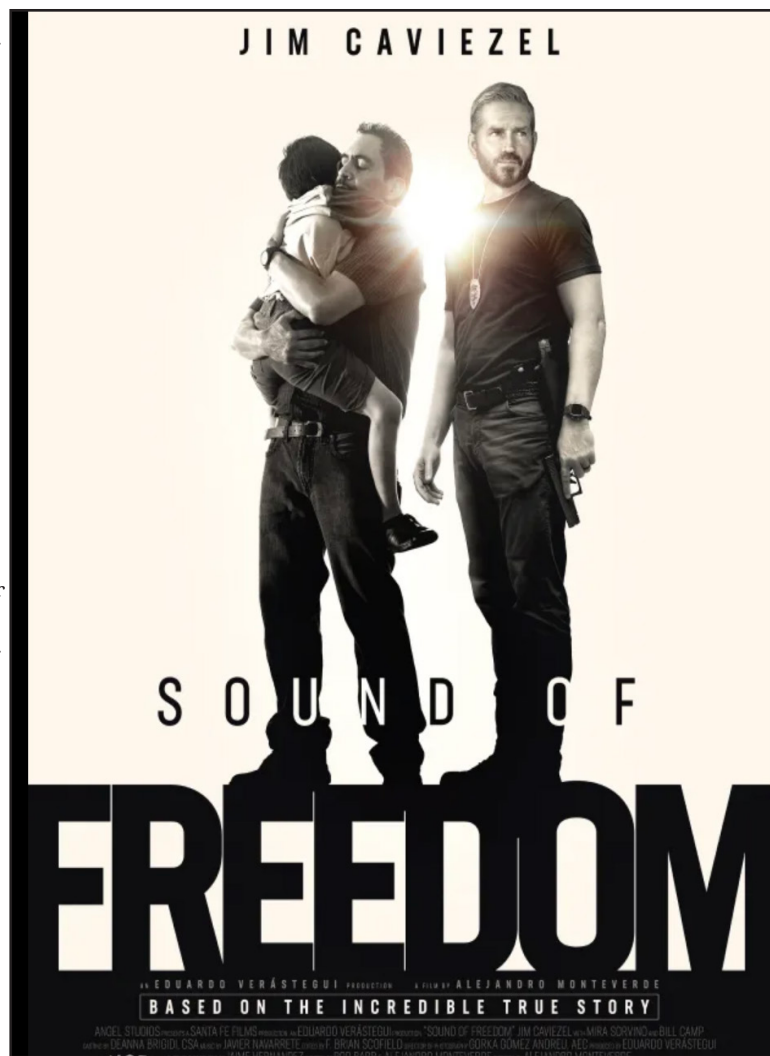
Yet even in the great perversion and evil of human trafficking, there is still hope.

In *Sound of Freedom*, the labors and sufferings of a few virtuous individuals save children who

believe that each person has invaluable dignity because God created them in His image and likeness. The Church and its members have a special obligation to protect children and their innocence. Catholics are called to nurture and protect children, body and spirit, so they may be safe from the evil that has entrenched itself in the lives of those who perpetuate the abuse of children.

Ending child sex trafficking is perhaps the most common-sense battle of the day, yet remains an unsolved issue. This fight against trafficking includes eradicating child pornography and fighting against a culture that unceasingly consumes sex without any regard for the dignity of the human person. The fact that forced child sex continues in our own backyards speaks volumes about this fallen world, and Catholics and American citizens have a great obligation to defend the sanctity of all human life.

While *Sound of Freedom* is difficult to watch, it is necessary to confront the reality of these evils and work towards a world where child sex trafficking and the abuse of children is absolutely abhorrent and unthinkable.



Sound of Freedom Promotion Poster. Image from Angel Studios.

is an ugly truth, uncomfortable to contemplate.

Other critics argue that *Sound of Freedom* inaccurately depicts the majority of trafficking cases today since in the film two children are taken from their loving father against his will. The sad reality that was not portrayed in the movie is that many children who are trafficked know their trafficker and live in vulnerable home environments.

The influential host of the *Bible in a Year Podcast*, Fr. Mike Schmitz gave the film a positive review, pointing to the great struggle between goodness and

would have likely spent the rest of their lives in modern-day slavery. In the real world, organizations like Operation Underground Railroad save hundreds of children from sex trafficking. Some Catholic religious orders focus their whole apostolate on loving and serving survivors of sex trafficking. Many safe houses and centers exist specifically to care for child victims because many trafficking victims cannot return to their unsafe home environments.

This film holds special importance for Catholics, who

Viana Schlapp is a junior majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies with a theology minor. She spent the summer working at a beautiful maternity home in North Dakota, where she watched *Sound of Freedom* in a packed theater. If you would like to further discuss this movie, email vschlapp@nd.edu.

Dante Now!

continued from pg. 9

political unification. The *Divine Comedy* has also had a no less significant global impact as a classic of modern literature."

Notre Dame holds a distinct reputation as a preeminent center for Dante studies in North America. Although the Devers Program in Dante Studies was formally established in 1995, Notre Dame has boasted an extensive collection of Dante's works for over a hundred years. According to the Devers Program, "The Zahm Dante Collection in Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of Notre Dame" ranks among the most important and historic Dante collections in North America. The fifteenth and

sixteenth century imprints, which constitute the heart of the Dante collection, were primarily acquired in 1902 by John A. Zahm, C.S.C. from the Italian 'Dantophile' Giulio Acquaticci. The collection currently holds nearly 3,000 volumes of rare editions and critical studies ranging from the Renaissance to the present."

When asked why English speakers can benefit from reading Dante, Professor Cachey responded: "For the great Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges, the *Divine Comedy* was 'the best book mankind has ever written ... It is a book that everyone ought to read. Not to do so is to deprive oneself of the greatest gift that literature can give us. Why should we deny ourselves the pleasure of reading the *Commedia*?' I couldn't agree more."

Dante Now! community

recitations were followed by a lecture entitled "Dante, Jazz, and the Black Radical Tradition" delivered by Professor Joseph E. Rosenberg, an Assistant Professor in the Program of Liberal Studies.

Daniel Martin is a junior in the Program of Liberal Studies from Skippack, Pennsylvania. He has minors in Italian as well as Irish Studies. In his free time, he can be found attempting to complete his homework solely by the power of "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle."



Image from Notre Dame Center for Italian Studies



Notre Dame Forced to Acknowledge Outlandish Religious Group

JOE RUDOLPH
Staff Writer

Three weeks ago Notre Dame's Diversity Council approved an initiative entitled "Fairness And Religious Tolerance." This initiative, according to the council, "cultivates a supportive environment for religious freedom; students will be allowed and encouraged to worship whomever and whatever they want with the aid of the university."

Understandably, the practicing Catholics of Notre Dame were critical of such a policy. "I went to social media and wrote a condemnation of this legislation with a lot of exclamation points ... I mean a lot," said Erin Knacky. But some went even further.

Rafa Leulle attempted to shove the council's legislation right back in their faces. Consequently, he created a religious reformation at Notre Dame. It all started when he stood on a table in South Dining Hall, and said, as an act of protest, "If they say we can worship anything and be

respected for it, then why don't we worship our food?"

And that's what happened.

Much to Leulle's surprise, his exigent statement was met with wild applause. "And so I thought to myself as I was looking down at my watered down pasta," said Mike Candy, "Could I really make a religion out of my spaghetti?" Canady's observation was not desolate. It seems as though many people had pasta that night, leading to the greatest religious reformation that has ever occurred on campus grounds. Two weeks after Leulle's protest, Pastafarianism has become the second most practiced religion on campus.

Though some claim it's satirical, Pastafarianism consists of hundreds of thousands of devoted followers who firmly believe that a supernatural being, with unlimited power and undying tenderness, created the universe: the Flying Spaghetti Monster. Guided by a gospel and Eight Commandments, titled the "I'd really rather you didn'ts," The Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster is "legit and backed by hard science," according to their

mission statement.

Much of the Catholic student body has publicly expressed opposition to the outlandish group. Both sides, however, were happy that, despite their cultural differences, the conflict they shared had not turned physical. Two days ago, that changed.

"We went to the Campus Dining administration with a petition to ban pasta in the dining halls because of the outrageous religious practices that were going on in there," said Jason Capulong, a Catholic freshman. "I told Dr. Nurfingham, 'Hey, you don't see me or the other Catholics sneaking laxatives in non-spaghetti-oriented foods, do you?'" That seemed to resonate with him."

Subsequently, Ned Nurfingham, the Director of Campus Dining, made a public announcement in South Dining Hall two days ago. The dining hall was packed, and tensions were high. Dr. Ned began his address with a bombshell: "We will no longer be serving pasta in the dining halls." A food fight ensued. And thus, the ninth Crusade began.

The Catholics were prepared to

fight that day. "The initial tomato attack by the Pastafarians was definitely detrimental to parts of our ranks, but our response was much more impactful," said Madeline Jennings. "One of my friends brought a spud gun just in case, and after the tomato volley, he got off the ground and fired a potato that hit this Pastafarian square in the face and knocked her unconscious. That definitely raised morale."

Things only got worse. "Soon the Pastafarians started bringing soup into the fight," said Kevin Gates, a mild-mannered Catholic. "That was one of the most graphic and awful experiences I have ever witnessed in my entire life."

As the fight progressed, it turned into war. Crimes were being committed, enemies were taken prisoner, and food was being used as a nearly fatal weapon. "There were no casualties, thankfully, but of the 1,580 members or so that participated, 1,145 were hospitalized," said one of the campus nurses. "I left Philadelphia to get away from scenes like this."

"I should've gone to Gary Community College," complained one exasperated student.

"I tried to climb a streetlamp to avoid the terror," said a hospitalized student. "But it was greased with Crisco. I felt like a tender piece of meat sliding down a bone into the jaws of a pack of hungry dogs."

A consensus regarding the battle's victor has not been achieved yet. "If you want my expert opinion, this just goes to show that there are no winners in war," said Jonah Fairbank, a freshman on campus. "I literally saw a guy get buried in squash. You call that victory?"

Moving forward, many students are left in a state of terror. "What other foods are they going to ban?" asked Sheila McCourtney, a senior on the softball team. "If they take away my fruit loops, I'm gonna bust someone's teeth."

To issue a complaint, please contact jrudolp3@nd.edu.

The Rover's Practical Advice for Soon-to-be Preppers

Heed Campus Safety and prepare for the Zombie Apocalypse

MADELYN STOUT
Layout Manager

My fellow soon-to-be preppers,

The time has come. In honor of the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) "Preparedness 101: Zombie Apocalypse Guide" and Notre Dame Campus Safety's upcoming September 28 event, I present the *Rover's* most practical advice:

1. Grab the children. It is never too early to start educating them on the importance of "Stranger, Danger," especially if said strangers turn out to be dead. The Survival Mom blog has some great tips on how to homeschool prepper children.

2. Learn how to locate a zombie-free camp. Apple and Google Maps may not be

helpful once the zombies take out the power grid. Step outside of Hesburgh for a bit and learn to read the sun or the way moss grows. Note: Avoid looking directly at the sun—you may need your eyesight to identify the walking dead.

3. Here in America, we take our Second Amendment rights pretty seriously. While remaining mindful that this is not *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare*, one should be prepared should they come across a zombie. Take lessons in Krav Maga (like I have) and consider stocking up on knives. Those dining hall knives have a hard time cutting chicken, so I recommend going to an Army Surplus. If you need advice, I'm sure a few good ol' boys can tell you which pocket knife brands to avoid and which ones have extra tools.

4. If you are not sure what a radio is, you should learn. I've heard the ROTC kids know how to operate one. My advice: You should perhaps buddy up with one of Notre Dame's finest soldiers—they may prove useful on various fronts of the coming apocalypse. The difference between 10-4 and 10-9 can save lives. Wilco. Over and Out.

5. As the prophets of *The Walking Dead* and the *Army of the Dead* have indicated, stay away from big cities like Atlanta and Las Vegas if at all possible. Now is the perfect time to peruse Zillow and save money for the down payment on a nice, rural farmhouse with more than a few acres of land. You should also learn how to bush hog and clear land. After all, you can't be too careful—you don't want zombies hiding out on your property. If you need

help learning how to control burn and use a tractor, I know some people.

6. Social distancing may prove to be useful in this case. Expect further guidance from the CDC to roll out soon. Six feet may not be enough in certain situations.

7. Need help deciding which survivalist brands to choose from? Don't even know where to begin? Begin by binge-listening to conservative podcasts and pay particular attention to the ads. You can also visit prepperwebsite.com, where you can keep up on the latest in prepper news and reviews. [Editor's note: *This article was made possible through the generous support of My Patriot Supply. Use code "Brenston" for 20 percent off your next purchase*].

8. Finally, what is better than a canary in a coal mine?

An intelligent dog. Every good soon-to-be prepper needs to think about adopting and training a dog immediately for the post-apocalyptic wasteland. Remember folks, it behooves a watchdog to bark.

TEOTWAWKI is coming. Don't be idle—be prepared and learn how to prep today. **Madelyn Stout** is in the process of packing her bug-out bag and looking on Craigslist for a bug-out vehicle. While she refuses to disclose her bug-out location, she can be reached at mstout2@nd.edu until she moves off-grid or the zombie blackout occurs. After that, you might be able to reach her on a radio, under the callsign "Tally."

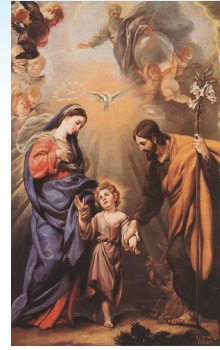


It behooves a watchdog to bark. Good, Rover.

Write for The Irish Rover

*An independent newspaper committed to
upholding the Catholic character of the
University of Notre Dame*

Contact editor in chief, Nico Schmitz
(nschmit2@nd.edu) to learn more!



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