

Fr. Mike Schmitz Visits Notre Dame

Popular podcasting priest lectures on Theology of the Body

ELIZABETH HALE
Managing Editor

Most of the popular podcasts “Bible in a Year” and “Catechism in a Year,” Fr. Mike Schmitz, visited Notre Dame on Friday, February 23 and Saturday, February 24. The world-famous priest from the University of Minnesota Duluth came to give a lecture titled: “Life After the Apple: How to Love After the Fall.”

Fr. Mike celebrated Mass for the university on Friday, February 23. Forty-five minutes before Mass began, students had already filled the basilica to standing-room only.

In his homily, Fr. Mike preached the importance of choosing the good. He began his homily by joking about people’s stupidity, using warning labels as an example: “I went through a bunch of warnings because I was interested in this ... There was a warning label on a chainsaw, and it said, ‘Do not hold the wrong end of the chainsaw.’”

He continued, to the laughter of the congregation, “Another said on a clothing iron, ‘Do not iron clothes while wearing them.’”

Fr. Mike explained that we need these ‘warning labels’ in our



Image by the Irish Rover

spiritual lives, too. He said, “In Deuteronomy chapter three, the Lord says through Moses, ‘Here then, I have placed before you life and prosperity, death and doom.’ Choose life, everyone ... At the end of the day, you get what you choose. What am I choosing?”

Sophomore Elliott Kirwan told the *Rover*, “My favorite part of his homily was his emphasis

that God gives us free choice over how we live, but that we have responsibility for what we choose. If we desire heaven, we can choose it, but we must act in a manner that will send us on that road.”

Senior Janey Olohan told the *Rover*, “Attending Mass with Fr. Mike was truly a one of a kind experience. I have yet to see the basilica so full as it was on Friday

in anticipation of his Mass ... Fr. Mike encouraged every student and parent in the audience to take advantage of the gift they have been given and to use their freedom to choose to be saints.”

The next day, Fr. Mike spoke in the basilica. Like the Mass the night before, the basilica was standing-room-only at least a half hour before the keynote address began.

Fr. Mike’s lecture had its basis in Pope John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*. Fr. Mike described the human condition before the fall, as found in Genesis chapters one and two. He began by describing Adam’s original solitude.

He said, “How does Adam know that he is alone? Adam was not just by himself; Adam was made for another, and he was without that other ... How did Adam know he was made for another? Basically, he saw his own body and was like, ‘What’s that for?’”

Fr. Mike continued, describing how the fall has ruptured our relationships: “The moment their eyes were opened, [Adam and Eve] experienced shame. They covered up the parts of their bodies that differentiated them male or female ... In this moment, [Eve’s] eyes are opened, and she sees something in Adam’s eyes that she has never seen before but you have seen every day of your life.”

He then explained that there is one lie to which every man since the fall has fallen prey: “The lie that has infected every man’s heart is the lie that says ‘You are not enough. You are not a man.’ If you don’t do this, you aren’t competent.’ Every man you’ve ever met, this lie has [affected] to

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Students Fight Pornography with WRAP Week

Students for Child-Oriented Policy raises awareness about pornography use on campus

ELIZABETH MITCHELL
Staff Writer

Students for Child-Oriented Policy (SCOP) recently hosted White Ribbon Against Pornography (WRAP) Week, an annual initiative aimed at raising awareness about and fighting against pornography use and addiction. This year, the events occurred from February 11–16, coinciding with both Valentine’s Day and Ash Wednesday. The club hosted Catholic speaker Jason Evert to deliver the keynote address.

SCOP Co-President Evan Bursch told the *Rover*, “WRAP Week is an opportunity to demonstrate to the Notre Dame community the importance of fighting pornography.

The [pornography] industry promotes sex trafficking, abuse, and child pornography, and we have a duty to educate people. By working to eliminate the demand, we can help to stop this industry and those trapped in addiction.”

Prayer was a central element in the week’s programming, with students gathering at the Grotto to pray a nightly Rosary for “those struggling with an addiction to pornography.” August Berchermann described to the *Rover* how praying the Rosary with SCOP led him to “realize the true scale of the pornography addiction problem.”

WRAP Week kicked off with a Sunday brunch, featuring a talk by senior Josh Haskell.

He shared his testimony about overcoming pornography addiction, speaking to how addiction “invades every other aspect of life” and personally caused him to be “dull and self-seeking.”

Haskell also noted the importance of having conversations about pornography, even for those not currently struggling with an addiction, and getting the necessary help for those who are. He then spoke about the availability of a wide variety of resources for those who struggle with pornography addiction on Notre Dame’s campus, including Magdala Ministries, a group for women, and AsceND, a group Haskell co-founded for men. In all, almost 200 students

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Bishop Rhoades Speaks about the Modern Workplace

Tenderness, strength, and truth essential to law and business

MADELINE HUIE
Staff Writer

Bishop Kevin Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend delivered a lecture entitled “Staying Tender, Strong, and True in the Modern Workplace” hosted by the MBA Association and the St. Thomas More Society on February 15, 2024.

Bishop Rhoades’ lecture centered around his claim that virtues such as tenderness, strength, and truth are indispensable to the legal and business professions. The Holy Family—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—should be looked to for their examples of these virtues,

the bishop said.

Bishop Rhoades also spoke to those who might view Mary’s tenderness only as a viable example for wives and mothers. He said, “We need to look more closely at Mary’s tenderness. It is not disconnected from strength and courage. In fact, Mary, who held her son tenderly in His arms following His bitter crucifixion, first stood courageously at the foot of the cross.” The bishop went on to say that this tenderness is a main calling of those in the legal and business professions, noting that the virtues required to care for clients and those in need are exemplified not just in Christ

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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.

“In faith she entrusted herself to God without reserve and ‘devoted herself totally as the handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son.’” – John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*



“It’s Just the Best School I Got Into” And better reasons to go to Notre Dame

ELIZABETH HALE
 Managing Editor



As the spring semester nears its midpoint, an ever-increasing stream of high schoolers and their parents arrive on campus. Admitted students receive a barrage of information from admissions workers, telling them why Notre Dame should be privileged with administering these four formative years of education.

Representatives from the Notre Dame admissions office likely posit a very diverse set of answers to the question, “Why Notre Dame?”—a required essay prompt for all Notre Dame applicants. This is understandable, for, even after spending multiple years studying here, it is not an easy question to answer.

In answering this question, undoubtedly, some students looked to the Notre Dame admissions website to discover how the institution views itself. But unfortunately, those who did so would have found very different answers than the predominantly Catholic atmosphere of the university might suggest.

In its own terms, Notre Dame

distinguishes itself from its “aspirational peer” schools by its commitment to a “Spiritual Identity” that forms students to become a “force for good in the world.”

The university, however, misunderstands what “a force for good in the world” is, thereby undermining its very own “spiritual identity.” Notre Dame attempts to prove its spirituality in secular terms, reciting various community service statistics: “More than 80 percent of Notre Dame students participate in service or service learning before they graduate,” “Roughly five percent of each graduating class spends a year or more in volunteer service,” and “800+ Notre Dame graduates have served in the Peace Corps.”

While it is commendable that the university prioritizes service to others, these statistics are an unfortunate reduction of what it means to be a “force for good in the world.”

This metric minimizes the distinction between Notre Dame and the Ivy Leagues—what makes Notre Dame special in this case is merely its secular prestige. If Notre Dame is insufficiently spiritual—insufficiently Catholic, rather—then it limits possible answers to “Why Notre Dame?” to the all-too-familiar “it’s just the highest-ranked school I got into.” This need not be the case.

Students are welcomed to campus by Bl. Basil Moreau’s famous line “the mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart.” But this should not vacuously encourage students to merely become a “better person.” Rather, through a Notre Dame education, pupils should become like Christ in all

things.

Spiritual identity is not equivalent to how many students volunteer on the weekends. It is more accurately equated to how many students graduate further along on their path to sainthood, having gained a greater intellectual capacity to pursue sanctity in their station in life.

Moreau understood the heart as the central mode of connection between God and man. The heart is the symbol of God’s love for man and man’s love for God, through which we may become like Christ. Moreau once charged his priests, “The sight of the Savior’s adorable heart should say to each one of us ... ‘Look at this example and make a faithful copy.’”

Our Blessed Mother—depicted atop the golden dome and in numerous images around campus—perfectly conformed herself to Christ through her *fiat* and seeks to help us do likewise. She has faithfully copied Our Lord, her son, and she desires to help us be faithful imitators of him.

Mary, then, is the model of education. It is by her virginal gift of self that she came to possess completely her son and to be possessed completely by him. In her seven sorrows she joined perfectly in her son’s passion and fulfilled that vision of Moreau’s for his students “to become like Christ in all things.” She exemplifies the truest form of pedagogy, as she leads her children to the foot of the Cross to join in Christ’s suffering, thereby becoming like him.

Bl. Moreau’s vision for an institution that forms forces for good in the world means more

than a vague attempt to become a “good person.” Rather, it is a call to conform ourselves to Christ as exemplified by Mary atop the Dome and in all the Catholic imagery around Notre Dame.

Our campus is architectonic. Students should be reminded of the ultimate purpose of our education every time we step into a classroom and see a crucifix on the wall. Likewise, the most iconic symbol of our university, the Golden Dome, presents us daily with a challenge to become like the one who watches over us, leading us to her son.

So, “Why Notre Dame?” Because Our Lady is central to the mission of the university. If this institution is to form its students to become “forces for good in the world,” namely saints, and to educate them in the truth, it must turn to the example of Our Lady, who was the primary educator of Our Lord, the one to whom we are to conform.

By embracing this tradition—this authentic spiritual identity—Notre Dame will set itself apart as the educational institution of our day and age. But it is only in this embrace of Bl. Moreau’s vision to form students to Christ that she will do so.

Elizabeth Hale is a junior studying political science and Italian. She wishes the admissions office would also emphasize the integral role that the God Quad squirrels play in the university’s prestige. To hear more, email ehale@nd.edu.



What Are We Teaching Our Students?

DANIEL PHILPOTT

Days after Hamas's October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel—killing over 1200 men, women, and children, beheading babies, murdering the elderly, killing more Jews in any day since the Holocaust—hundreds of students at our nation's most prestigious universities protested ... Israel.

A thousand students at Harvard condemned their university for complicity in genocide, holding "the Israeli regime entirely responsible for the violence" and stating that the attack was "both morally just and politically necessary" and "the natural and justified response to decades of oppression and dehumanization." Protests also took place at Yale, Columbia, and many other universities. Assault, vandalism, harassment, and hostile rallies—including 500 such incidents on college campuses—skyrocketed against ... Jews.

Controversy ensued. Thousands condemned the protests, billionaires pulled donations from universities, and three university presidents stumbled when questioned about their tepid responses to the protests at a hearing of the U.S. Congress, leading to the imminent resignation of the President of the University of Pennsylvania and the later resignation of the President of Harvard University after she additionally faced plagiarism allegations. Hindering these presidents from appealing credibly to free speech, hoisting them by their own petards, to borrow Shakespeare's poignant phrase from *Hamlet*, was their own universities' dismal track records of preserving free speech. The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression placed Harvard dead last in 248th place, Penn a "below average" 189th, and MIT an "average" 136th place.

But for me, the question arose: What are we teaching our students? Prominent writers asked the same question: David Brooks, the *New York Times* columnist; Robert George, a

professor at Princeton; Peter Berkowitz, a scholar at Stanford's Hoover Institution; and Ezekiel Emmanuel, Vice Provost and professor of medical ethics and health policy at the University of Pennsylvania. Strengthen the teaching of ethics, revive classical learning and the traditional disciplines, fortify freedom for the pursuit of truth, and carry out civil debate in a setting of intellectual diversity, they counseled sagely. What remains jarring to me, though, is that the student protesters appeared oblivious to the simple, indispensable, pervasive set of laws that make up the moral order of the universe—what has long been called the natural law.

Hamas's attacks flouted the oldest of moral norms, do not murder, killing civilians directly, intentionally, and brutally. They also trampled upon the norm of aggression, attacking people who were not attacking them. "The wrong the aggressor commits is to force men and women to risk their lives for the sake of their rights. It is to confront them with the choice: your rights or (some of) your lives!," wrote philosopher Michael Walzer in his classic, *Just and Unjust Wars*.

The prohibitions of murder and aggression are norms of the natural law. They define wrongs that are *malum in se*: admitting of no exceptions, wrong in all circumstances, moral absolutes. No matter how just one's cause or how oppressed one may be, one may never perform certain deeds. These norms and their absolute character are the backbone of international law. The prohibition of aggression is the central norm of the United Nations Charter, and the prohibition of killing civilians is foundational in international humanitarian law, the Genocide Convention, the International Criminal Court, and human rights conventions.

Apprehended through the exercise of conscience, natural law norms are ones that a person "cannot not know," as philosopher J. Budziszewski put it. Other norms of natural law include prohibitions of

lying, adultery, and stealing, the command of beneficence, and the many correlates of these norms. They are what philosopher Alan Donagan has called "common morality" and are widely shared among world religions, as C.S. Lewis demonstrated in his book, *The Abolition of Man*. It is the natural law that Hamas flagrantly flouted and its allied student protesters disdained.

Natural law cuts in many directions, making demands on the powerful and the rich, the dispossessed and the poor, knowing not right or left. It supplies the standards by which we can and must assess whether Israel also has heeded moral restraints in its military response. Has it fought discriminately? Proportionately? Treated its prisoners justly? Dehumanized Gazans in its language? Natural law offers the standards, too, by which we may judge Israel's settler policies and its long-term treatment of Palestinians, including their claims to self-governance—as well as Israel's own claims to the protection of its nation and people. Natural law norms ground the natural rights found in the *Declaration of Independence* and the core rights set forth in the *Constitution of the United States* and grounded Abraham Lincoln's arguments to end slavery and Martin Luther King's campaign for civil rights. Natural law also calls the U.S. to account for the carpet bombing of cities in Germany and Japan during World War II, its nuclear deterrence policy, overtly racist laws and policies that persisted well into the mid-twentieth century, and laws permitting taking the lives of unborn persons. Apart from the norms of natural law, judgments about these matters are elusive.

Natural law is hard to come by in today's western universities. The recent protests at our nation's leading universities bear the marks of a newly resurgent postmodernism and its close cousin, postcolonialism, among their professors. Following the thought of Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Michael Foucault,

they regard standards of morality and justice to be contextually dependent, lacking in universal validity, and conforming to configurations of power. Absent universal standards, they accept no restraints on the means through which the oppressed may resist the oppressor. Thus, Hamas's attacks could be a "natural and justified response" to oppression.

Postmodernists and postcolonialism, though, lack a basis for claiming that any action at all is "natural or justified," including that any of Israel's actions are unjustified, or colonialist, or oppressive. In positing pervasive power, they, too, hoist themselves by their petard and display one of the great paradoxes in academia: The people who campaign most vociferously for social justice are the ones who most lack grounds for it.

It is mainly Catholic universities that teach and reason about the natural law, though far from unanimously. They are poised to do so. Although the natural law is knowable through "unaided reason," meaning the exercise of rational capacities apart from sanctifying grace, the Church yet stabilizes it, anchors it, fortifies it, and preserves it to be taught. God's revelation of natural law to Moses on Mount Sinai makes clear the law and its divine source. The Catholic magisterium, inspired by the Holy Spirit, further confirms the natural law and the contents of its correlates. Some Christian moral norms extend beyond what the natural law alone can know and are based on the teachings of Jesus—mercy, forgiveness, and gift—yet are consistent with and complementary to the natural law. Because knowledge of the natural law becomes clouded by sin, the finiteness of the mind, and the corrupting influence of cultures that distort and negate it, the Church offers sacraments as remedies that heal the mind and the will so that people can know and live the natural law. A Catholic university, then, is fortified by the Church in its mission of conveying the natural

law.

Catholic universities render a service to their students, the Church, and the political common good by teaching the natural law and reasoning about its meaning for policies and institutions. They have a long history of doing so. In 16th century Spain, Catholic "scholastic" philosophers, following the thought of Thomas Aquinas, drew on natural law to defend the natural rights of Native Americans who were being conquered and enslaved. Spanish scholastics, the Dominican Francisco de Victoria most prominent among them, also laid the foundations for modern international law when a system of nation-states was taking shape on the European continent. Centuries later, after World War II, Catholic philosophers such as Jacques Maritain, John Courtney Murray, SJ, Yves Simon, and Heinrich Rommen, all of whom had dedicated their scholarship to furthering the revival of Thomas Aquinas that Pope Leo XIII had commended in 1879, turned to natural law to provide a foundation for universal human rights and for the rights and democratic governance on which the American Republic was founded. These foundations, Murray argued, were being eroded by the relativism and scientific positivism prevalent in the western university.

Catholic universities may be "forces of good," as President John Jenkins has called the University of Notre Dame to be, if they remain confident in the Church's truth and teach the natural law. When Catholic universities become wobbly in this truth, they lose their potential to shape society and are only shaped by it.

Daniel Philpott is a professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame and an *Irish Rover* faculty advisor.

WRITE FOR THE ROVER, EMAIL NSCHMIT2@ND.EDU



Riley Gaines Comes to South Bend

Former NCAA swimmer speaks on transgenderism and SMC admissions policy

BRIDGETTE RODGERS

Culture Editor

Former University of Kentucky swimmer and women's sports activist Riley Gaines visited South Bend to give a talk for Notre Dame and St. Mary's students on February 16. Gaines, a 12-time All-American swimmer, spoke about the parallels between her story and the recent St. Mary's transgender admission policy decision, which has since been repealed.

Gaines said that the initial statement released by St. Mary's was "nothing short of an abomination ... a total remission to what their mission statement is."

Gaines rose to prominence after sharing her story of competing against transgender athlete William "Lia" Thomas in NCAA women's swimming. She has since founded The Riley Gaines Center at the Leadership Institute, which focuses on combating "the dangerous gender ideology that's spreading rampant and unchecked throughout society."

During Gaines' senior year in 2022, Thomas, a female-identifying transgender swimmer from the University of Pennsylvania, entered the NCAA women's swimming division. Thomas later won the national championship in one event, sparking widespread controversy. Thomas also tied with Gaines for fifth place in another event at the championship. Afterwards, Thomas posed for a photo-op with the trophy, while Gaines was told to hold the sixth place trophy for the photo.

The event, originally intended to be held on Notre Dame's campus by The Network of Enlightened Women (NeW), was disallowed by Student Activities Office (SAO) due to unforeseen circumstances after

multiple conversations with campus and national partners. The event was later moved to an off-campus event space closer to the St. Mary's campus.

Senior Madelyn Stout, president of NeW, shared with the *Rover*, "While we were unable to host Riley on campus, I'm grateful that our tri-campus community was still able to welcome her. The work she is doing to protect women's spaces is incredibly important—especially in light of the cultural erasure of what it means to be a woman." [Editor's note: Madelyn serves as Layout Manager of the *Rover*.]

Stout introduced Gaines at the talk, saying, "Riley Gaines is a leader in defending women's single-sex spaces, advocating for equality and fairness, and standing up for women's safety, privacy, and equal opportunities."

Gaines advocates maintaining single-gender sports and has toured various colleges around the nation in the course of her advocacy.

One freshman from Notre Dame said, "As someone who was involved with the sport of swimming during the time Riley Gaines was competing, I was able to see firsthand the issues she had to face. While I understood that there seemed to be a lack of support for Riley and the other females competing at the 2022 NCAA Championships, hearing her talk about the events she had to go through shows the complete failure by the NCAA."

Senior Janey Olohan commented, "You could see the raw emotion in her as she told her story about literally having her hard-fought title stolen from her by Lia Thomas. As someone who swam for ten years, I was deeply moved by Riley's story and by her courage to take action to stand up for women in sports everywhere who give their all

to the sports they love and who deserve to be recognized."

Although her advocacy began as a response to the encroachment of a female-identifying swimmer in her own competition, Gaines has since expanded her message to draw attention to the broader issue: Accepting men in arenas designed for women is harmful to and unsafe for women.

Recounting her experience sharing a locker room with Thomas, Gaines expressed, "I think the best way to describe this experience was an utter violation of our right to privacy. It felt like betrayal. It was traumatizing, and not just because of what we were forced to see or how we were forcibly exploited: It was traumatic for me to know just how easy it was for those people who created these policies to totally dismiss our rights without even a second thought, without a forewarning."

Another freshman from Notre Dame observed, "It was heartbreaking, but not surprising, to hear that [the NCAA] put how they wanted to be perceived in the media over the women competing."

Gaines also spoke about the recent controversy over the St. Mary's transgender admission policy, which ensued after the school announced in November that it would begin to admit people who are not female but "who consistently live and identify as women."

After concerns were expressed and the policy became national news, St. Mary's subsequently repealed this decision.

President Conboy's announcement of the reversal in an email to the student body stated the original decision was meant to be "inclusive."

In response to this sentiment, Gaines emphatically stated, "If it was inclusive, it wouldn't be a women's college: [The college] was explicitly meant to be exclusive."

being a faithful disciple of Jesus in the workplace, treating others with respect, kindness, and compassion. It means witnessing to Christ and His goodness at work as well as at home."

Bishop Rhoades stressed that "truth" should be understood to mean loyalty and faith to another, just as it is used in Catholic vows of matrimony. The bishop used the examples of St. Homobonus, St. Matthew, and St. Thomas More as models in truth for those working in business or law, pointing out how each of these men was able to be faithful to God despite pressures to use their human power against God's will. He gave examples of each man intentionally choosing to serve God over business or legal prowess, instead taking the more difficult path that ultimately led two of them to martyrdom.

Bishop Rhoades said of St. Homobonus, the patron saint of businessmen and women,

"He was a devout Catholic and looked at his employment as a gift from God. He was scrupulously honest, very hard-working and industrious, and enjoyed great commercial success ... The more his business grew and prospered, the more he gave his money away to the needy."

Again mentioning a saint of the business world, Bishop Rhoades spoke of the apostle St. Matthew: "St. Matthew is patron saint of financial professions because he left behind his occupation as a tax collector to follow Jesus. To be true to Jesus and His teachings, he could not continue to participate in government-sanctioned larceny." The bishop remarked that St. Matthew did not compromise his belief in God by remaining in his dishonest work, instead leaving his occupation behind to follow Christ.

The bishop also mentioned the patron of the law school



Image by the Irish Rover

Gaines touched on what she thinks led to the reversal: "Whether it's corporate America or academia, or whatever realm, they don't follow red or blue, they follow green, they follow your dollars. And once these dollars started to dwindle, they changed their policy back, but not because they really believe it."

Amidst this unfortunate reality, Gaines also shared, "I am incredibly grateful for the leadership of Bishop Rhoades. I have seen his support and his leadership on this issue, and I think that's something that certainly needs to be applauded."

Returning to the broader issue, Gaines emphasized how the work she and many other women around the country and on our own campuses are doing is not meant to be divisive. She highlighted the importance of being "pro-woman" rather than "anti-trans," demonstrating the centrality of protecting and supporting women, saying, "How in the world could we as women, as female athletes, expect someone to stand up for us if we weren't even willing to stand up for ourselves?"

Throughout the evening, biblical truth was centered as an important part of the discussion of transgenderism. In telling her story, Gaines exhorted the audience to listen to the call of God in their own lives.

In her closing remarks, Gaines sought to inspire audience members to continue working to uplift femininity and womanhood, imploring them, "Do not forget about it, do not become complacent, do not put your head down and think, 'Oh, well, we did our job.' No, that's the first mistake, is when you start to do that."

After hearing Gaines' story and perspective, a male Notre Dame freshman remarked, "Riley's message was inspiring to hear and it reminded me that all of us, men or women, play a part in keeping women's athletics safe."

Bridgette Rodgers is a sophomore studying political science and theology. She evidently isn't capable of writing her own byline, so please send ideas to brodger4@nd.edu.

Bishop Rhoades *continued from front*

but in Mary as well.

Bishop Rhoades also emphasized that men and women possess the same virtues in complementary ways, including the virtue of tenderness. He emphasized that the Catholic tradition provides many exemplars of virtue for both men and women: "Women may be more drawn to look to Mary as an example of tenderness, and men may be more drawn to look at Joseph as an example of tenderness."

Speaking to the students of the Mendoza School of Business and the Notre Dame Law School, Bishop Rhoades advised them on remaining true to the ideals of tenderness, strength, and truth in the workforce: "Showing loving kindness in the worlds of business and law may seem like a tall task, but it basically means

group that co-hosted the lecture: St. Thomas More. More's willingness to remain true to his faith and convictions despite the threat of death from King Henry VIII should serve as an example of the extent to which those in law and business need to remain true to Christ above all, Rhoades said.

The bishop concluded his lecture with a Q&A session, where he was asked a variety of legal and business ethics questions. Most notably, Bishop Rhoades recommended to all that if they should find themselves in a workplace where their religious views were not being respected, they should look seriously for alternative places of employment. The bishop noted that while modern workplaces do not often promote the same views as their employees, the distinction between difference in belief and restriction of practice is one that must be carefully

discerned in cases of such ethical concerns in the workplace.

Bishop Rhoades concluded by remarking that he would continue to pray that the business and law students of Notre Dame grow in these virtues through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He also spoke to Right to Life of Notre Dame on February 19, and responded to Cardinal Mario Grech's lecture on the role of a synodal bishop on February 26.

Madeline Huie is a sophomore majoring in music performance, theology, and classics. She enjoys spending her non-existent spare time drinking coffee from her wombat mug while crocheting too many blankets. Please send classical music suggestions or random inquiries to her at mhuie@nd.edu.



WRAP Week *continued from front*

are currently involved in these programs.

Haskell told the *Rover*, “It is interesting that porn is one of the most statistically common struggles in the world, but one of the least discussed. WRAP Week is important because it sparks that conversation. Conversation is a necessary step to raise awareness and get people on the road to freedom.”

Another signature event of WRAP Week was pornography awareness tabling. Representatives from the club passed out donuts, white ribbon pins, and flyers for porn addiction support groups. Upon approaching the table, passers-by were asked trivia questions about pornography use to raise awareness about the issue. Questions highlighted surprising figures about the consumption, exposure, and content of pornography, pointing to studies that reveal ninety percent of men and sixty percent of women struggle with an addiction.

The following evening, the university welcomed chastity speaker Jason Evert for an event titled “College Dating 101.” The talk, which drew over 400

people, promised attendees six dating strategies that would protect future marriages from divorce.

Evert defined chastity as the ability “to love and know if you’re being loved.” He stated his frustration with the way the current culture views sexuality, citing the harm that this modern mentality does to individuals. In this discussion, Evert directly addressed pornography, stating how lust is not simply a man’s problem but a “human problem.” Speaking to the women of the audience, he said, “You were never created to be porn. You were created to be loved.”

Additionally, Evert touched on the issues of promiscuity and hookup culture, sympathizing with what he called the “third degree burns” that arise from sexual wounds. He continued, “So many young women have given away so much that they don’t feel anything anymore.”

Evert instead encouraged abstinence, which he called “the best preparation for sexual intimacy inside of marriage” and “an expression of love.” Evert advised establishing clear boundaries when dating, arguing that the absence of such guidelines “won’t bring the person closer to you ... It’ll just

make it harder to break up.”

In the last part of his talk, Evert outlined a positive vision for how to live a life of chastity. He advised students to “return to God and ask Him for what we need” and to “surround yourself with the right people.” Additionally, he counseled a four-step strategy to combat sexual temptation at the moment it arises, based on the Sign of the Cross. He also stressed the importance of the Mass in fighting lust, turning a typical critique of frequent Mass attendance on its head, “Daily Mass is for people who have nothing better to do ... Because there is nothing better to do than the sacrifice of Mass.” Evert concluded his talk by encouraging the students not to lose hope in the quest to live a chaste life.

WRAP Week concluded with a bonfire party on Holy Cross Hill on Friday evening, February 16. Despite dropping temperatures and falling snow, attendees enjoyed listening to music and spending time in one another’s company.

Freshman Emily Ledford told the *Rover*, “I think the bonfire was definitely a fun way to end WRAP Week, and seeing how many people came just showed how we are all in this fight

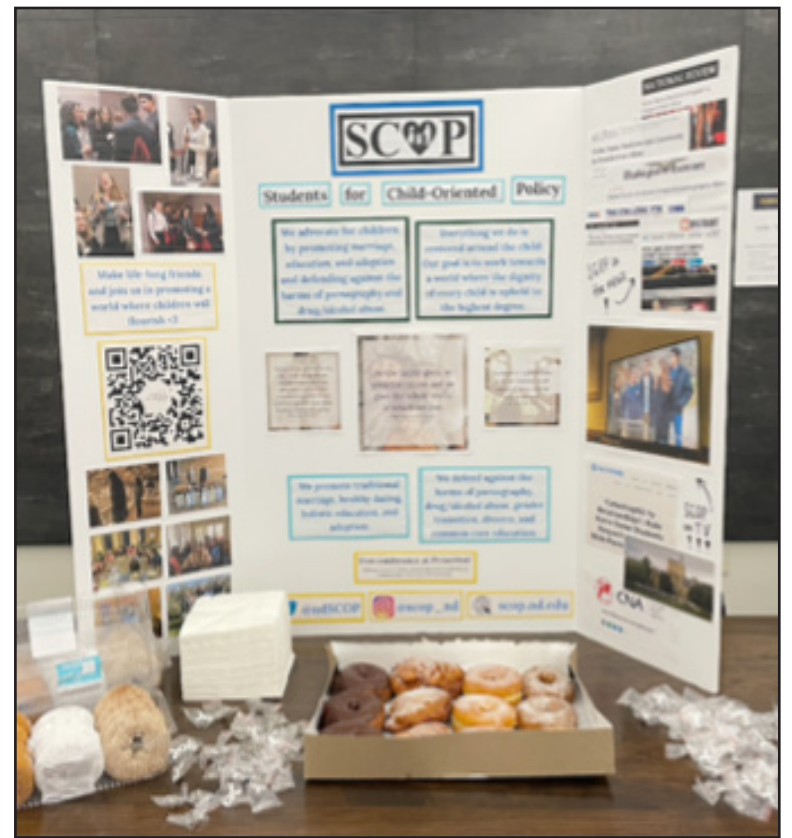


Image by SCOP

together to end pornography and to promote a solid Catholic culture on campus!”

This WRAP Week marked SCOP’s ninth annual observance of the initiative since the club was founded in 2014.

Elizabeth Mitchell is a freshman currently studying marketing. She is also a firm believer in promoting a healthy Catholic dating culture at Notre Dame. Any young men interested in helping her personally contribute to this trend can reach her at emitche8@nd.edu.

Fr. Mike *continued from front*

one degree or another.”

Fr. Mike then described the lie that has come against every woman. He said, “This lie is affecting every woman you have ever met. From your grandmother to your little sister. She hears it every single day: ‘You are not worth loving as you are.’”

He offered some examples of how that lie manifests itself in women, saying that they believe if they were just a little “smarter ... prettier ... skinnier” then they would “be worth loving a little more.”

He continued, “There are some people who say, ‘Well I’m not playing that game. The lie is not going to affect me.’ They are

the sweatpants and hoodie girls ... Put the Notre Dame cap on and say, ‘That’s my style; that’s my vibe. I never wear anything else. I’m not playing that game.’ I’m not trying to accuse anyone here ... I’m just saying that sometimes we don’t play a game because we think we will lose.”

In an interview with the *Irish Rover*, Fr. Mike spoke to the universal importance of his message. He said, “I really like speaking to college students, whether it be at a secular university or a Catholic college, because everyone’s dealing with the same stuff. The point of the talk is that this is what is common to all humanity, not even just young people, not just college students, but everyone.”

He continued, “So, the reality is that we’re made on purpose,

and we’re made good, but we all experience brokenness. We experience brokenness in a number of ways, and one of those ways we experience brokenness is in our relationships. We don’t know how to love well.”

Fr. Mike also told the *Rover* that he enjoyed his time on Notre Dame’s campus. When asked about his favorite part of Notre Dame, Fr. Mike said, “I love that building that has all the Christopher Columbus paintings on the inside.”

Director of Marketing, Communications, and Events for the University of Minnesota Duluth’s Newman Center, Lauren Hopke, explained the importance of correcting our false understandings of the human person. She told the *Rover*, “When you go onto a

college campus, you see that our encounters with beauty can be kind of challenging and untrue. A naked body can be one of two things. It can be a vulgar thing, or it can be a beautiful thing ... To know the truth of the fact that you are your body and what you do with your body matter can change the way that you live the rest of your life.”

On Friday night, the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture hosted Fr. Mike in the Morris Inn for a private reception with select Sorin Fellows. Elliott Kirwan attended the dinner and said, “Fr. Mike was very warm, friendly, and relatable. He has a gift for filling the room with a sense of humor and joy. He is present to whomever he is speaking to in a way that makes one feel seen and known, even

when it is a brief conversation.”

Notre Dame Campus Ministry, the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, the McGrath Institute for Church Life, the Folk Choir, and the Hallow App all co-sponsored Fr. Mike’s visit to campus in conjunction with Student Government.

Elizabeth Hale is a junior studying political science and Italian. Her favorite part of Fr. Mike’s visit was meeting someone who speaks faster than she does. For tips on how to not be exhausted by more evenly-paced talkers, email ehale@nd.edu.





Matthew Crawford Lectures on Gratitude

Sheedy Program hosts bestselling author of “Shop Class as Soulcraft”

AEDAN WHALEN
Staff Writer

Dr. Matthew B. Crawford argued that the modern tendency to try to control all domains of life endangers gratitude and grace in his February 22 lecture titled “Gratitude and the Modern Condition.” The lecture was hosted by the Sheedy Family Program in Economy, Enterprise, and Society, with cosponsors by the Center for Social Concerns; the Program on Church, State and Society; the Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government (CCCCG); the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture; and the Business, Ethics, and Society Program.

In the lecture, Crawford emphasized “the primacy of receiving over making,” arguing that deferral to an outside force “require[s] a kind of courage. It is that of entrusting oneself to that which has not been made by oneself, and never could be made, but which supports and makes possible all of our making and doing.”

Crawford defined gratitude as that which “we feel when someone does something for us outside of the realm of

exchange.” He argued that gratitude leads to a proper orientation of being. It liberates the person from resentment, entitlement, and grievance. Crawford continued, “Grace and gratitude have the same root, whether one is speaking etymologically or psychologically,” before examining how the pursuit of ever-increasing control can destroy opportunities for gratitude and weaken humanity.

Many students appreciated Crawford’s message, including Junior Dillon Tarle. Tarle told the Rover, “It is an important message for modern society to take to heart. Often it seems as if people are more focused on what they can get out of society ... rather than what they can give back.” Tarle expressed his wish that Notre Dame would present messages similar to Crawford’s, remarking, “the university’s role in helping shape the individual through education has become secondary and is often neglected.”

Others, including senior Tim Sullivan, were more interested in Crawford’s analysis of the ills of modern society. Sullivan found the lecture “very interesting, in that it attempted to trace many problems of the modern condition to a culture

of convenience and ‘safetyism,’ something which resonated with my experience.” Further, Sullivan appreciated Crawford’s “emphasis on risk-taking and self-ownership, [finding it] very apt for our times, even if countercultural.”

Crawford also headlined a private breakfast seminar with the CCCC’s Menard Family Tocqueville Fellows on the morning of the lecture. The group discussed Crawford’s 2009 book *Shop Class as Soulcraft* and examined how its ideas could be applied to the present day.

Tocqueville Fellow Giancarlo Donahue found the conversation enlightening: “As someone looking to go into a white-collar job, [Crawford’s argument] forced me to consider the slippery slope of a career marked by generalities rather than by concrete work.” Donahue believes that Crawford’s “viewpoint is one that most college students try to push aside, which is exactly why

those students need to consider it more fully.”

Crawford is a senior fellow at the University of Virginia’s Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, a contributing editor at *The New Atlantis*, and—as he discusses in his books—a motorcycle mechanic. Beyond *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, he has authored other philosophical projects such as *Why We Drive: A Philosophy of the Open Road* and *The World Beyond Your Head: On Becoming an Individual in the Age of Distraction*. He

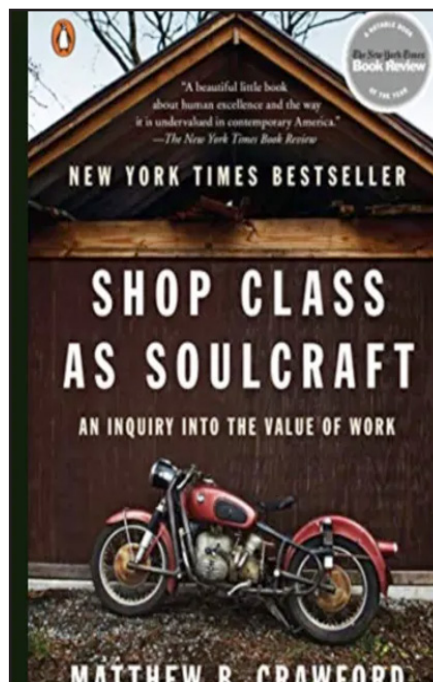


Image by the Sorin Fellows Program

earned a doctorate in political philosophy from the University of Chicago with a focus on ancient political thought.

Aedan Whalen is a sophomore in the Program of Liberal Studies and also studies political science. When he’s not attending a reverent Novus Ordo Mass, you can reach out to him at awhalen3@nd.edu.

Polish Lenten Practice on Campus

Traditional “Bitter Sorrows” celebrated at Notre Dame

BARTOSZ KAROL CHRAMEC
Staff Writer

The Bitter Sorrows (*Gorzkie żale*) is a traditional Polish Lenten devotion, sung during adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. It was prayed for the first time at Notre Dame in the Log Chapel on the first Sunday of Lent this year. Fr. Brendan McAleer, C.S.C. presided over the devotional service, which was organized jointly by the Militia of the Immaculata and the Knights of Columbus.

The devotion is a musical meditation on the Passion of Christ and the sorrows of His Mother. The name “Bitter Sorrows” is derived from the opening lines of the invitatory, the first hymn of the devotion: “Come, O come ye bitter sorrows.” In Poland, this devotion is sung on the Sundays of Lent in the afternoon.

Junior Jakub Wielgus, a Polish-American from the suburbs of Chicago who helped organize the service, commented: “To a Polish-speaking Catholic like myself, the Bitter Sorrows are one of the things that make Lent special. So the fact that more people are learning about and praying with them through a translation is beautiful. To me, it felt like bringing a piece of home

back with me to Notre Dame.”

The Bitter Sorrows were published anonymously in 1707 in Warsaw under the title “A Bundle of Myrrh from the Garden of Gethsemane, or the Sorrowfully Bitter Passion of the Son of God, [...] a Meditation.” They have been attributed to the Vincentian priest Fr. Wawrzyniec Stanisław Benik, C.M.

According to the records of the Confraternity of St. Roch, its members tried to observe Lent by meditating upon the Passion of Christ with the *Fasciculus myrrhæ* (“A Bundle of Myrrh”), a Latin devotion based on the mystery plays of the Middle Ages. The complex structure of the *Fasciculus myrrhæ* and the fact that it was in Latin made it hard for members of the confraternity to meditate with it.

At the same time as the Confraternity of St. Roch struggled with the *Fasciculus myrrhæ*, they would organize processions of penitents on the streets of Warsaw in Lent. They would, however, purposefully organize these processions at the same time as a rival confraternity at a church next door, causing the two confraternities to argue over which procession had precedence. These arguments caused such a public disturbance that the pastor of Holy Cross Church, Fr. Michał Bartłomiej Tarło, C.M.,

forbade the Confraternity of St. Roch from organizing Lenten penitential processions at all in 1707.

Because of this ban on organizing Lenten processions and struggles with praying with the *Fasciculus myrrhæ*, the Confraternity of St. Roch decided to create a meditation on the Passion in Polish with a structure based on the office of Matins, now called the Office of Readings.

The Bitter Sorrows begin with an invitatory, followed by three “parts,” each composed of three hymns. Each part meditates upon a different element of the Passion. The first hymn of each part is sung by all and is simply called the “Hymn”; the second hymn is a litany called the “Soul’s Lament over the Suffering Christ”; and the third hymn is called the “Soul’s Conversation with the Sorrowful Mother.”

The verses of this last hymn—the words of the Sorrowful Mother—are sung by the women congregants, while the words of the soul are sung by the men, keeping an element of the mystery plays from which this devotion descends.

After they were published, the Bitter Sorrows spread quickly across Poland and Lithuania, with even the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania,



Image by the Irish Rover

August III, praying the devotion. The devotion was brought to the United States by Polish immigrants in the 1850s and to this day is sung in Polish churches across the country.

Great Polish saints such as St. John Paul II and St. Faustyna Kowalska meditated with this devotion. St. Faustyna received a vision of Christ during one such meditation.

Sophomore Paul Gates, an undergraduate seminarian who served for the Bitter Sorrows on February 18, reflected on his experience: “Our culture is currently trying to expel grief from our lives, even though it is natural that we grieve, cry, and struggle in response to loss. We cannot skip grief, just as we must first hail the Cross before we can

experience the hope that comes from it. The Bitter Sorrows did a tremendous job of materializing my grief for the Lord, giving me the appropriate words to express to Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar how sorry I am; how grieved I am by His death; and how much I love Him.”

The Bitter Sorrows will be sung twice more this Lent, on March 3 and 24 at 3:30 p.m. in the Log Chapel.

Bartosz is a local Bitter Sorrows expert and would gladly procrastinate by answering questions about them via email. Contact him at bartosz.chramec@nd.edu.



Notre Dame Screens New Film, *Join or Die*

Democracy Forum screens documentary and hosts author of Bowling Alone

CATALINA SCHEIDER GALIÑANES
Staff Writer

Author and professor Dr. Robert Putnam visited campus for a discussion with Professor David Campbell following a showing of the film “Join or Die.” The event occurred in Mendoza’s Jordan Auditorium on February 21. The event was presented as a part of the Notre Dame Forum, which focuses on “The Future of Democracy” this academic year.

Putnam, formerly a professor of public policy at Harvard, received the National Humanities Medal in 2013 for his contribution to studying community, citizenship, and institutions. He is one of the most prominent political scientists in recent decades and the author of 15 books, including the bestseller *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, published in 2000.

“Bowling Alone” provided the foundation for a 2023 film by sibling director and producer duo, Rebecca and Pete Davis, titled “Join or Die.” The film—only available through private screenings—emphasized the importance of civic associations, clubs, and local connection. It begins with the proclamation: “This is a film about why you should join a club.” By incorporating social science data and interviews of Americans engaged in community building,

the film presents the importance of social capital and why declining social participation raises concerns. It also draws upon Putnam’s 2020 book, *The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again*, which concludes with an optimistic attitude towards civic engagement and democracy’s future.

University President John I. Jenkins, C.S.C. established the Notre Dame Forum, now in its 18th year, in 2005 in order to orient Notre Dame programming towards a specific “issue of importance to the university, the nation, and the larger world.” This year, it focuses on the state of American and global democracy.

The film screening and conversation was also cosponsored by the Department of Political Science, the Notre Dame Democracy Initiative, and the Rooney Center for the Study of American Democracy. Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C., Notre Dame’s President-elect, said in his introductory remarks before the screening, “Our belief is that it is possible to enhance, improve, and refine American democracy

and democracy more globally.”

Following the screening, political science Professor Jaimie Bleck moderated a brief question and answer with Putnam and

reawakening.”

Although not a Catholic, Putnam praised the unique moral position the Church occupies in public life as well as the influence of Pope Francis during the interactive portion of the event: “I think Pope Francis is the most important figure in the world right now ... because he speaks with a moral voice, unequaled, about our obligations to one another ... upstream of it all is morality.”

When contacted for comment on the event, as well as its connection to Notre Dame’s Catholic identity, Campbell said, “One thing that sets Notre Dame apart from many other institutions of higher education is the ‘moral vocabulary’ that one finds on campus which, I would hope, resonates with students of all faith backgrounds.”

Campbell went on to emphasize that the film “demonstrates that while it is important to understand what makes democracy work, it is just as—perhaps even more—important to engage in efforts to make democracy better. The film highlights a number of groups around the country that are doing the sort of grassroots social-

capital-building that will benefit their communities, and thus all of us.”

Molly Foote, a sophomore studying marketing, told the *Rover*, “The film emphasized that we are not on this journey of life alone ... it is essential that the next generation actively participates in local organizations in order to save our democracy.”

In addition to chronicling Americans’ declining participation in social clubs, “Join or Die” also explores decreasing religious affiliation. Regarding the religious element of social capital, Nathan Lavery, an exchange student from the United Kingdom studying political science, said, “No doubt the issues of isolation and polarization have largely been caused by the decline of religion in society,” and yet “the film gave me real hope for the future—I feel that I can be a part of the change necessary to our society.” Students seemed to respond positively to the film, with some waiting over an hour following the event for the opportunity to meet Putnam.



Image by the Irish Rover

Professor David Campbell, the Packey J. Dee Professor of American Democracy and director of the university’s Democracy Initiative. Attendees asked Putnam and Campbell about their perspectives towards liberalism and technology, as well as their hopes for the future. Putnam closed his remarks with an exhortation: “Things are not determined by history. We have agency ... It’s your choice if we attain a better society or not,” concluding, “This country, and indeed, this world, needs a moral

Catalina Scheider Galiñanes

is a junior from the Washington, D.C. area majoring in economics and political science with a minor in constitutional studies. She is available to discuss liberalism, Virginia elections, and country music at cscheid2@nd.edu.

Trump Defeats Haley in South Carolina

Former governor humiliated in home state

SHRI THAKUR
Staff Writer

Former President Donald Trump decisively won the South Carolina GOP primary on Saturday, February 24, dealing a massive blow to the state’s former governor Nikki Haley. Trump’s victory comes on the heels of another notable win in Nevada’s Republican Caucus on February 15 and in the U.S. Virgin Islands on February 8. This was the penultimate race before Super Tuesday on March 5.

The Associated Press called the race for Trump almost immediately after polls closed at 7 p.m. EST. With 99% of votes counted, the former president led Haley by over 20 points, 59.8% to 39.5%. The result was overwhelming but not particularly surprising; Trump had consistently been predicted to defeat Haley in pre-election polls, even in light of the fact that the latter has been a central figure in South Carolina politics for over two decades. Haley served as a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives from 2005 to

2011 and then later as the state’s governor from 2011 to 2017. Haley vacated her office when she was appointed by President Trump to serve as ambassador to the United Nations.

Born and raised in South Carolina, Haley placed special emphasis on the outcome of the Palmetto State’s primary. Her focus was so intense that she chose not to campaign in the earlier contest in Nevada, where she suffered an embarrassing defeat to the “none of these candidates” option on the state-run Republican primary ballot.

Despite Haley’s efforts in South Carolina, which included a massive advertising campaign and dozens of campaign events, she did not come remotely close to victory. Trump dominated almost everywhere, especially in Horry County (Myrtle Beach), where he won 67% of the vote, and in the state’s highly evangelical northwest corner. In the rural Bamberg County, where the former governor was born, Trump led Haley by a margin of 65% to 35%. In Pickens County, home to Haley’s alma mater Clemson University, the margin was even more lopsided—32%

for Haley to 68% won by the former president. Finally, in Lexington County, where she once served as a state legislator, Haley was defeated by a margin of 58% to 41%.

If there was one bright spot for Haley’s performance, it was her wins in Charleston and the Lowcountry, where she was aided by the crossover votes of Democrats and independents. Haley also won Richland County, home to the state’s capital of Columbia. Turnout, around 755,000 votes, narrowly exceeded that of past competitive primary elections in South Carolina.

Exit polls showed Trump’s victory was driven by strong support among white evangelical Christians, young voters, those who considered immigration as their top issue, and those who supported a federal ban on abortion. By contrast, Haley did well among highly educated voters and those who identified as moderate or liberal. Just as in New Hampshire, Haley was likely aided by South Carolina’s open primary system, which allows voters to participate in the primary of their choice regardless of previous party affiliation.

In his victory speech, Trump thanked the many South Carolina politicians that had stood with him in his efforts to win the state. These included Governor Henry McMaster, as well as Senator Lindsey Graham and Senator Tim Scott. Scott, who was appointed to the Senate by then-Governor Haley in 2012, is an outspoken supporter of President Trump’s campaign. Trump continued by claiming that “the Republican Party has never been so united” and said he would call the general election “tomorrow” if he could. He did not mention Haley in his remarks.

For her part, Haley congratulated Trump on his overwhelming victory in the state. She began her remarks by stressing the need to tell the “hard truths” of politics. Despite seemingly admitting defeat and acknowledging that the polling for the states ahead did not favor her, she did not suspend her campaign. Haley justified this decision by claiming, “Donald Trump cannot beat Joe Biden,” ignoring polls showing Trump leading Biden convincingly in almost every swing state.

Despite her decision to remain a candidate heading into Super Tuesday, signs began to emerge by Sunday that Haley’s expansive donor network had lost confidence in her path to victory. Most notably, Americans for Prosperity Action, a neoconservative group backed by the powerful Koch family, announced they were ending spending on behalf of her campaign.

Notre Dame students expressed satisfaction with Trump’s strong performance but also continued fatigue with the flailing campaign that has been run by Nikki Haley. Sophomore Owen Lynn told the *Rover* that Haley represents a “brand of conservatism that died with the election of Donald Trump in 2016.” He added that Haley’s defeat in her home state, despite “a relentless effort by the Republican establishment and the donor class” to boost her, reveals that the GOP after Trump’s emergence “remains that way.”

Elliot Anderson, the President of Notre Dame’s College Republicans, echoed Lynn’s

continued on pg. 9



Against Catholic Political Apathy

The case for Catholic engagement in an imperfect political order

PJ BUTLER
Politics Editor



With the 2024 elections a mere eight months away, American Catholics will once again be faced with a choice. As always, this election will undoubtedly be ‘the most important of our lives,’ a true ‘inflection point for democracy.’ But amidst a rapidly changing political landscape and growing opposition to the integration of Christian values in American political life, Catholics must reject the temptation of apathy or withdrawal.

Catholics in America are enigmatic in their electoral behavior. Polling shows that the Catholic vote is split evenly among Democrats and Republicans. Some argue that Catholics do not prioritize their faith in the ballot box, and others attribute this unpredictability to differences in prudential judgements of faithful Catholics.

In another time, the latter explanation may have sufficed. Today, however, the political landscape has undergone a significant shift: One side of the ideological spectrum has grown increasingly hostile to allowing Christian beliefs to play *any* role

in political decisions and policy-making. While astute observers of politics recognized long ago that such a phenomenon is simply the result of liberalism arriving at its logical conclusions, this transformation has gone from noticeable to an inescapable contradiction.

On February 23, Politico national investigative correspondent Heidi Przybyla took part in a panel on MSNBC to discuss the project that has become the new favorite bogeyman of the American left: “Christian nationalism.” Prophesying the alleged dangers of a Trump presidency aligned with Christian political priorities, Przybyla said, “The thing that unites them all as Christian nationalists—not Christians, by the way, because Christian nationalism is very different—is that they believe that our rights as Americans [and] as all human beings do not come from any earthly authority. They don’t come from Congress, from the Supreme Court. They come from God.”

Though Przybyla and her allies argued that this clip was taken out of context, the journalist held firm to her conviction that Christian nationalism is a malignant cancer on American political life because its adherents are “using it for a man-made policy agenda.”

Bishop Robert Barron, bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester in Minnesota and founder of Word on Fire, responded to the MSNBC clip with a video reflection. Przybyla’s comments, Barron said, were “one of the most disturbing and, frankly, dangerous things [he’s] seen in a political conversation.”

Taking Przybyla at her word, it is evident that the loudest objections to the broad “Christian nationalism” movement are coming from individuals who would deny that the Bible, Catholic theology, and the natural law can ever inform politics and lawmaking. “Rights,” in Przybyla’s telling, are merely a cudgel for beating anyone who wishes to order society in accord with the truth out of politics entirely.

But even for those who, hearing comments such as Przybyla’s, have concluded that practicing Catholics no longer have a home in the Democratic Party, a new malaise has struck: political apathy—the belief that political participation is ultimately meaningless.

In the eyes of politically apathetic Catholics, the two major political parties are, despite surface-level differences, really reinforcing the same agenda. This is most evident in the

parties’ broad agreement on economic policy, approach to foreign affairs, and preservation of the entrenched political establishment. These people have a point. If American politics since 2015 can teach us anything, it’s that the uniparty is real. What’s changed, however, is the existence of an alternative strong enough to fight back against it.

Another group of people, including a number of well-intentioned, faithful, and devout Catholics, argue that politics is a distraction. They recognize that American society in 2024 is a mess, but they are skeptical of political solutions to societal problems because they believe participating in them risks muddying their souls. Instead of trying to improve things as they are, they advocate for a strategy of retreat from political life altogether.

Recently, this dissatisfaction and frustration with political engagement has been reflected in broader conservative discourse. Some commentators have pointed to Oliver Anthony, who captured the anxieties of Appalachian life in his song “Rich Men North of Richmond,” as a heroic avatar of ordinary Americans who have been left behind by a rigged system. Even those who do not

reject political participation, such as Turning Point USA president Charlie Kirk, have called for conservatives to skip college and take up a trade—like plumbing or carpentry—to avoid higher education altogether. But despite the allure of withdrawing from hostile institutions and systems, exit is not a viable long-term solution for fixing what ails our nation.

There is no “return” to earlier times. There is no going back to simpler ways of life, at least if we want to win. We can only move forward. Going to Mass often, getting married, and raising a family in a close-knit community of other devout Catholics are all commendable goals, and we should never lose sight of our final end. But failing to address political questions—especially in an age so rife with confusion and outright hostility to the mission of the Church—is a hopeless, fatalist abdication of duty. The hour is late, but Catholics must engage with the political order before we find that our voices have been drowned out.

PJ Butler is a senior studying political science and theology. You can email him at pbutler3@nd.edu.

Examining Notre Dame’s Democracy Initiative

Strategic framework and university forum confront “anti-democratic attitudes”

NATHAN DESAUTELS
Staff Writer

As part of its 2023 Strategic Framework, the University of Notre Dame announced five new strategic initiatives for the next decade: arts, data and computational science, ethics, poverty, and democracy. During the 2023–2024 academic year, the university’s democracy forum has highlighted the Democracy Initiative, led by David Campbell, the Packey J. Dee Professor of Political Science.

In 2005, President John I. Jenkins C.S.C. established the university-sponsored Notre Dame Forum to encourage the campus community “to focus on a central theme of particular importance to the University, the nation, and the larger world.” This year, the forum emphasized the theme “The Future of Democracy.” The website homepage explains, “Our goal is to invite reflection and dialogue across different disciplines on the rising threats to global democracy and strategies for reinvigorating democracy in our nation and across the world.”

“[The study of democracy] is especially important now, as democracy is under threat around the world,” Professor Campbell told the Rover. “Historically, Notre Dame has been a global leader in the study of democratization, and democratic backsliding especially

in—but not limited to—Latin America. More recently, the university has also made it a priority to raise our profile in the study of American democracy.”

When asked why he believes Notre Dame chose democracy as one of its five new initiatives, Professor Campbell responded, “The university’s leadership has rightly recognized that Notre Dame has a unique opportunity to contribute to the global conversation about the state of democracy. We already have a running start, but hopefully through this initiative we can ensure that Notre Dame’s voice is heard around the world.”

Notre Dame’s focus on democracy extends beyond the parameters of the democracy forum and the Democracy Initiative. The Rooney Center for the Study of American Democracy, headed by Professor Matthew Hall, is in the middle of its multi-year-long January 6, 2025 Project. According to the Center’s website, the project is aimed at “[Understanding] the social, political, psychological, and demographic factors that led to the January 6, 2021, insurrection and continue to threaten the stability of our democratic system of government.”

The site continues, “For all practical purposes, American democracy may die on January 6, 2025, unless deliberate and concerted steps are taken to avert

this crisis.”

In a video titled “Anti-democratic Attitudes in America” Professor Matthew Hall explained his and the center’s role in the “defense of democracy,” saying, “My early work focused on judicial behavior and constitutional law. More recently, I’ve shifted to anti-democratic attitudes, conspiracy theories, misinformation, polarization, and what cultural and institutional factors drive the rise of anti-democratic ideas in our society.”

Professor Hall also articulated what combating “anti-democratic attitudes” might entail, explaining, “It might look like media engagement, trying to push out a message that centers the national conversation on democracy.” The professor added, “How do you take someone who’s starting to believe authoritarian ideas and turn them around—we don’t know yet—and we need better answers drawn from psychology, sociology, and political science.”

What concretely defines “anti-democratic” attitudes was left unclear, and some students thought that the ambiguity from the initiative and the university itself was part of a larger contradiction. Junior Elliot Anderson, president of Notre Dame College Republicans, told the Rover, “The university’s persistent messaging of ‘Defending Democracy’ is puzzling: The Notre Dame Political Science

Department and its proxies have demonstrated that they are only concerned with democratic norms when they threaten the ruling elite’s status quo.”

The Notre Dame Forum has already presented several high-profile political figures in its events this academic year. A conversation between Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Todd Young (R-IN) titled “Civility and Bipartisanship in a Time of Polarization and Gridlock” saw the two elected officials discuss means to resolve hyperpartisanship in America. In another event, Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan discussed her life and work in the context of democracy with Dean G. Marcus Cole of the Notre Dame Law School. More recently, professor Steven Levitsky delivered a lecture on “Threats to Democracy,” emphasizing the dire consequences of increasing polarization.

Rather than address specific points of divergence in how the American regime might be structured, each event offered vague antidotes to the problems that they presented.

Anderson continued, “There have been no statements made to defend former President Trump as he bears these outrageous show trials aimed at preventing him from running again. The initiative seems to lose all interest in democratic norms when they apply to the leading conservative presidential candidate. Is it

misinformation to point this out when Kagan and Professor Levitsky, both radically anti-Christian and anti-conservative figures, are the initiative’s foremost speakers?”

Sophomore Eric Gordy attended the forum’s recent screening of “Join or Die” with social scientist Robert Putnam, noting, “The event seemed to be targeted at supporting a certain neoliberal agenda, casting doubt on the alleged bipartisan nature of the forum. By focusing on figures like Hillary Clinton and Pete Buttigieg, it was clear that the center promotes a specific kind of democracy, one not aimed at including conservative-minded Americans.”

Despite skepticism about the Democracy Initiative and its underlying motivations, the coming years will see the university continue to promote democracy heavily as it follows through on its administrative goals. On February 29, the Rooney Center will host Bill Donahue, the Rev. John J. Cavanaugh, C.S.C. Professor of the Humanities, for his talk “The Student Becomes the Teacher: German Lessons for American Democracy.”

Nathan Desautels is a junior studying political science and philosophy-theology. Er wird seine Reise in Deutschland genießen.



Et tu, Revuetè?: A Roman Revue

Keenan hosts its 48th annual Revue to a sold-out Stepan Center

JOSE RODRIGUEZ
Staff Writer

The men of Keenan Hall took the stage for the 48th annual “Keenan Revue” before a full Stepan Center on the weekend of February 22. The theme for this year’s Revue was “Et tu, Revuetè?: A Roman Revue,” a reference to a line from William Shakespeare’s play *Julius Caesar* that was expanded to include a broader Roman theme.

On the selection of the theme, Director Jack Lewis told the *Rover*, “The theme is something we discuss[ed] all the way back in October and November at our initial staff meetings with our 39-person staff ... We really wanted to do something that wasn’t necessarily pop-culture themed” as “the past two years have been ‘High School Revuesical’ and ‘Back to the Revueture.’”

Lewis continued, “We thought we could integrate it into a ton of elements in the show ... Here, because the Rome theme is so widespread, we could include Roman songs, toga costumes for everyone ... there were just endless opportunities.”

Leading up to the show, Keenan residents participated in Rome-inspired promotional events, including a reenactment of the assassination of Julius Caesar in North Dining Hall, a chariot racing competition to earn tickets as prizes, and a day where the Keenan Knights wore togas to class.

Holy Cross senior Brian Murphy praised the theme, saying, “I like how the theme isn’t just a copy of something that already exists, like a movie. It feels like its own thing. The graphics and tickets were amazing, especially since they weren’t just a redone trademark that I’ve seen before. They made me excited to go to the show.”

Senior Mattie Lossing reflected on this year’s Revue, saying, “As someone who’s been to the last three Revues, this one was my favorite. They did a good job integrating the theme into the show with the costumes during performances and the songs that they chose. Whereas the last Revue didn’t really feel like High School Musical, this felt like a Roman Revue.”

The Keenan Revue draws in an audience of 6,000 students annually across all three nights.



Image from Keenan Revue

In previous years, tickets were sold in the LaFortune Ballroom, but due to the remodeling of the second floor of LaFortune Student Center and the construction of the PwC-funded Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, tickets for the show were distributed in the Dahnke ballroom for a second year in a row. All nights were sold out by the end of distribution.

Though all three shows have traditionally started at 7 p.m., the Saturday show began at 4 p.m. this year to avoid a time conflict with the Bengal Bouts finals.

Co-producer Domenic Fabe told the *Rover*, “We started the Saturday show early due to a conflict with the final round of Bengal Bouts. We as a Keenan Kommunity have a lot of involvement in Bengal Bouts,” including two Keenan residents who were scheduled to fight in the finals. Fabe continued, “After trying unsuccessfully to move the weekend during which the Revue would take place, it just made sense for us to move the start of the Saturday show that way we could guarantee the involvement of every Keenan guy across all three shows.”

The Revue is funded entirely by Keenan alumni, allowing tickets to be free for current students. In lieu of paying for tickets, attendees are encouraged to donate money to Dismas House, a non-profit organization that provides housing and educational opportunities for former prisoners, helping them transition back into society.

Junior Evan Hartman, who serves as Keenan Hall’s Dismas Commissioner, described the special relationship that Keenan has with Dismas House, stating,

“Every week, Knights of Keenan Hall cook and serve dinner for the residents of the Dismas House. During dinner, we engage in dialogue and share our oftentimes different perspectives.”

Hartman described the experience as “incredibly rewarding,” as it provides “insight into the challenges faced by the formerly incarcerated.” Hartman continued, “It has also helped me to be more mindful of the difficulties faced by this disenfranchised demographic.”

Sophomore Thomas Mazzurana, who was a singer in the Revue’s band, reflected on his involvement, “It has been an incredible experience these past two years. I have been able to creatively express myself through music with the Revue Band.”

Speaking of the preparation for the Revue, Mazzurana told the *Rover* that rehearsals “start once the spring semester begins; these rehearsals take place on Saturday mornings and the early afternoon.”

Additionally, all students involved with the show must attend rehearsals during “Tech Week,” the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the week leading up to the Revue, from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Fabe described Tech week, saying, “Tech week is always a grind. It’s a minimum 6-hour commitment for everyone involved with the show in any capacity and oftentimes even more than that for some people.”

Fabe described the experience as a community-building exercise, with the opportunity for everyone to perfect their role, saying, “there are plenty of mistakes that occur along the way, but as the week

progresses, we get more and more dialed in. With patience, the grind of Tech Week makes Thursday, Friday, and Saturday so much more worth it.”

After narrowing down the 70 original skits to the final selection used for the show, the head staff is “very proactive [in] reaching out to student groups,” to review each skit, according to Lewis. He continued, “We are really mindful of what exactly we want to present to them. We don’t want to often put them in a tough position where they have to axe a bunch of things.” Despite this mindfulness, Lewis recognizes the importance of reaching out to different cultural groups, because “it is 200 guys making a show and that’s not exactly the most diverse perspective.”

An event technician at EventSys, the audio visual production company responsible for setting up the show’s technical equipment, told the *Rover*, “I’ve been working long enough to remember a time before these skits had to be approved by all sorts of groups. Back then, the Revue was far more politically incorrect, and the students did not hold back.”

According to Lewis, however, the involvement of these student groups is vital to the Revue’s success, as “It’s always been our paramount goal to make the Revue a fun, accepting, and inclusive thing enough for everyone ... so, the involvement from PrismND, Diversity Council, MSPS, and Res Life is absolutely critical. We wouldn’t have the Revue without them.”

Known for covering an array of contemporary campus issues, The Revue included satirical

commentary on Fr. Jenkins’ retirement and selection as commencement speaker, the demolition of Fisher and Pangborn Halls, and the campus-wide electric scooter ban.

Another key staple of the Revue is the inclusion of targeted jokes against other dorms, often poking fun at a specific dorm stereotype. Among these jokes included lines such as, “Ryan’s personality is Canada Goose” in the skit “Super Smick,” a reference to Breen-Phillips Hall as “The white whale” in “Random Roommate,” and the line “She can barely see St. Ed’s Ken” in the Barbie spoof, “Trouble in the Dreamhouse”.

Lossing appreciated the campus references, saying, “I think that the dorm humor and stereotypes are an important part of bringing the whole campus community together. They’re not always correct, of course, but sometimes I find myself agreeing with a line about Howard, and all I can do is laugh.”

A freshman in Pasquerilla West commented on the Revue in a more critical light: “I thought that the Revue fulfilled its purpose of being entertaining in an unhinged way. The production was impressive, the music was fairly well done, and the majority of the jokes landed. While I would not say that these things ‘make up for’ the shameless disgustingness, I think it is important to recognize what the performance’s aim was when reviewing the Revue.”

Mazzurana, reflecting on the significance of the Revue, told the *Rover*, “The Revue is one of a kind. It is an unmatched opportunity for the Knights of Keenan Hall to bond ... Seeing the student body collectively come to Stepan and watch our production is incredible; hearing tremendous amounts of cohesive laughter not only makes me smile, but makes me proud to be a Keenan Knight. Long live the Revue!”

Jose Rodriguez is a senior studying computer science and theology. He served on the Keenan Revue staff for the past two years as a graphic designer. Jose wrote this article on his floor because his futon was being used as a prop for the Revue. Invite him to write on your floor by emailing him at jrodri27@nd.edu.

Haley Defeated

continued from pg. 8

sentiment, calling Haley’s defeat indicative of “the declining relevance of neoconservatism in the United States.” He called on Haley to immediately drop out, arguing that “Americans, and especially conservatives, have rejected Nikki.”

Junior Luca Fanucchi was slightly more conciliatory, saying that he “respected the effort Haley is putting into her

campaign,” but argued she is “just wasting money.” He added that “Former President Trump will be the nominee, and we need to unite behind him and beat President Biden.”

After the February 27 primary in Michigan, the race will move to Super Tuesday on March 5, when Alabama, Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and

American Samoa will cast their ballots. Polls show Trump’s lead in these states ranging from anywhere from 30 to 70 points.

Shri Thakur is a sophomore studying economics and constitutional studies. If he lost an election to “none of the above,” he’d probably retreat from polite society and relocate to a small town in rural France. You can contact him at sthakur3@nd.edu.

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Dating Under the Dome

Students reflect on struggle to find balance in a polarized dating culture

DANIEL RUEDA-RAMIREZ

Staff Writer

The 2023-2024 academic year has brought questions of dating at Notre Dame to the forefront of campus dialogue and inquiry. Last semester, Right to Life and Students for Child-Oriented Policy (SCOP) hosted a talk given by Notre Dame Professor of Philosophy David O'Connor titled, "Get Married Already: Lessons from a pro-life life."

This semester, there have been two talks addressing this topic. Last week, Catholic speaker Jason Evert visited campus to give a talk titled "College Dating 101" at the start of SCOP's White Ribbon Against Pornography (WRAP) week, and Suzy Younger, the Notre Dame Campus Ministry Marriage Prep Coordinator, gave a talk with Catholic marriage and family counselor Adam Smith entitled "Dating Under the Dome."

All of the events have been highly attended, demonstrating an interest in dating and marriage amongst the student body. Even more indicative of a campus interested in relationships is found in looking at the highly popular campus matching algorithm, Marriage Pact. Just months ago, over 3,000 Notre Dame students opted in to take the Marriage Pact survey that then assigned them an algorithm-generated relationship match.

In order to gauge student's current views of dating and

marriage, the *Rover* surveyed over 60 students from across the tri-campus.

The results suggest many reasons as to why students are not currently in relationships and the difficulties faced when trying to establish something long-term. The inability to commit was a common factor in deterring relationships.

Some students commented on how the preeminence of career prospects over relationships is one of the main drivers for the lack of commitment in the dating culture at Notre Dame. A senior from Keough Hall remarked, "Pressure to establish oneself in a career, the pursuit of advanced degrees, and attaining financial security are all common reasons why many Notre Dame students—even if they hope to be married and form families—tend to put off or end serious dating during their undergraduate years."

Other respondents noted that finding people who are willing to commit to a long-term relationship can be difficult. A freshman from Pasquerilla East Hall (PE) replied, "I think it's honestly hard to meet people because it's such a small campus. I went through about five talking stages, short and long term, before finding my current boyfriend because either the guy wasn't interested (just wanted to hook up or not at all interested) or I was not seeing anything long term."

Though some students desire more commitment in their

relationships, many students also had concerns about the level of commitment that dating at Notre Dame usually entails. A senior from Breen-Phillips (BP) noted, "ND kids also don't casually date, like it's a very odd thing if someone is going on dates but not dating that person yet." The perceived necessity of officializing a romantic relationship before going on a single date may deter some from beginning relationships.

In addition, students described how the beauty of getting to know another person through conversations on dates is lost when people immediately jump from being strangers to being in a romantic relationship.

Many couples also feel pressured to get the "ring-by-spring," which can hasten the relationship process. This is in part due to the prevalent notion that college is the place to find your future spouse.

In order to find a balance between these two extremes, dating immediately versus waiting to define the relationship, students indicated that there is a need to recover the notion of going on dates without having an officialized relationship status. A senior from Lewis Hall said, "I wish guys would just ask girls on dates, especially first dates, and be clear about what they mean (i.e., 'I'd love to take you out on a date.')."

And while these casual dates are crucial, students also found it important to emphasize that casual dates should not imply

being physically intimate with one another.

If there are two ends to the spectrum, and one is the "ring-by-spring" culture, students mentioned that the other end would be hookup culture. Even though some feel pressured by "ring-by-spring," many indicated that they do not like the alternative any more.

"Hookup culture is a detriment to society," a sophomore claimed. "It is fundamentally a lie which destroys those involved and damages their ability to love."

A sophomore from Pasquerilla West Hall (PW) was concerned that "no one addresses the issues of an increasing destruction of self esteem and craving for short-term, intense emotional cycles."

The aforementioned freshman from PE confessed, "I am against hookup culture. Last semester my first two sexual experiences were hook-ups and they made me feel negatively about myself."

She is certainly not alone. NIH research shows that "feelings of embarrassment, loss of self-respect and sexual regret are ... common [after hooking up]. For example, approximately three quarters of sexually active college students report at least some regret over past sexual experiences."

Over 85% of respondents stressed the importance of non-sexual physical affection in dating relationships. Research from the Institute of Family Studies affirms this, as "people with premarital partners are 161% more likely to

dissolve their marriages compared to people who tie the knot as virgins." Given that 91.2% of surveyed students expressed the desire to get married, the trend of premarital sex must change if students want their marriages to last.

Despite this difficulty some students experience in determining the right amount of commitment at certain points in a relationship, many Notre Dame students have found a balance and are thriving in their relationships. Of all the top 50 colleges in the US, Notre Dame has the highest marriage potential at approximately 15% above the natural average.

A student from Holy Cross College shared, "I am very happy with my current relationship ... We both have the patience to know that love isn't always easy ... People always picture love as a perfect, all happy sort of thing. While it is true, it is just true in a different way. The happiness comes from growing with that person, not necessarily what you're doing all the time and how you're feeling at that moment. We are able to realize that issues aren't going to stop us from loving one another."

Daniel Rueda-Ramirez is a freshman from Baumer Hall studying business analytics and theology. If you want to know more specifics about the relationship survey or just chat about anything, you can email him at druedara@nd.edu.

Rover Remembers George Strake Jr.

Longtime supporter of Catholic education passes away

NICO SCHMITZ

Editor-in-Chief

George Strake Jr., a Notre Dame alumnus and a longtime supporter of Notre Dame's Catholic identity, passed away earlier this month. Strake, the former Texas Secretary of State and Chairman of the Texas Republican Committee, passed away peacefully on February 9 at 88 years old. His wife, Annette, preceded him in death just two months prior.

Strake was a graduate of the Notre Dame Class of 1957 where he received a degree in Economics and served as the Senior Class President. As the class president, Strake presented John F. Kennedy with the "Patriot of the Year Award" at the Washington Day Exercises, a Notre Dame tradition that subsided in the 1970s. Strake himself was the 1993 recipient of the The Rev. John J. Cavanaugh, C.S.C., Award. This honor is bestowed by the university on an alumnus who is "performing or has performed outstanding service in the field of government, patriotism, public service, local, state, and national politics, etc."

In addition to his political and business career, Strake

Jr. was a philanthropist for national organizations and in his local Houston area. His obituary recounts, "He served as a board member of numerous organizations, including, Rotary Club of Houston, The C Club, of which he was a founding member, Boy Scouts of America, Albert & Ethel Herzstein Foundation, University of St. Thomas [Houston], San Jacinto Museum of History and many, many more."

As a Notre Dame graduate and devout Catholic, Strake Jr. was a generous supporter of Catholic groups on campus, including the *Irish Rover*, Students for Child-Oriented Policy, and NDVision. The Strake Foundation also funded course development in the College of Arts & Letters relating to Catholic identity and funded fellowships for student summer experiences. Strake Jr. also served on the College of Arts and Letters Advisory Council. Strake Jr.'s father, George W. Strake, was a member of the University of Notre Dame Board of Trustees.

Fr. Bill Miscamble, C.S.C., a friend of George Strake Jr. and professor of history, told the *Rover* that Strake "was a true loyal son of Notre Dame. When I think of him, I go immediately to the

inscription over the east door of Sacred Heart Basilica— 'God, Country, Notre Dame.'"

Miscamble continued, "He was so deeply committed to all three. His faith was deep and his love for Christ and our Church led him to expend his energies in service to so many worthy causes. I am very grateful especially for his commitment to Notre Dame and for his efforts to uphold her Catholic identity and mission. We can all be thankful for the support he gave to our school as a whole, and for the generous aid that he gave to certain centers and institutes that play important roles in upholding Notre Dame's central mission."

Michael Bradley, Editor-in-Chief Emeritus of the *Irish Rover* and graduate of Notre Dame, echoed Miscamble's sentiments, stating that upon meeting Strake as an undergraduate, he saw that Strake's "love for Notre Dame, his zeal for the university's Catholic character, and his belief in the paper's mission were all apparent."

Bradley continued, "George Strake's generosity toward the *Rover* has been indispensable, and unmatched, for many years; without his support, the *Rover* as we know it would not exist."



Image by Dignity Memorial

In addition to his lasting mark left on dozens of organizations, such as Notre Dame, Strake Jr.'s legacy is continued through his six children, 17 grandchildren, and 19 great-grandchildren.

Hundreds took to Strake's obituary page to share their memories and condolences. One comment, left by Strake's pastor in Houston read, "His love of the Catholic Church and its rich faith, combined with his dedication to the love and service of family and society made George a true shepherd of the flock of Christ and

a profound example of committed discipleship. Our world is a better place because of the lives of love of George and Annette Strake."

The post concludes, "Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them."

Nico Schmitz is a senior from Los Angeles, California in the Program of Liberal Studies. You can reach out to him at nschmit2@nd.edu.



Rover Reviews: Quad Artwork

Avante-garde sculptures distract from Notre Dame's beauty

JACK THORNTON
Staff Writer



The Raclin Murphy Museum of Art opened to the public on December 1. The new museum, designed by Robert A. M. Stern Architects (RAMSA), has replaced the Snite Museum of Art as home to Notre Dame's art collection. The 40-year-old Snite Museum, relatively small for an institution such as Notre Dame, was dwarfed by the ever-expanding campus.

The completion of Raclin Murphy gives the Notre Dame community cause to reflect on the purpose of art, and its significance in our lives. Joseph Becherer, director and curator of the new museum, told *Notre Dame Stories*, "The arts are one of the most profound elements of human condition, and one of the greatest gifts we can share with one another." He added, "They can offer insight, understanding, joy, even healing."

Many Notre Dame students do not have the time, however, to frequent a museum like Raclin Murphy. Computer science third year Nolan Kyhl notes that, if he experiences art during the typical day, it is often "on [his] way to class." Kyhl, like the majority of Notre Dame students, engage with art on campus primarily through the architecture and sculptures that define the campus environment. The Notre Dame classics such as "First-down Moses," the "Holy Hand-off," and "Fair-catch Corby" are well-known and loved by students, but alongside the busier walkways of campus, recent

years have seen the installation of several new abstract, avant-garde statues.

These modern attempts to decorate campus, found near main academic buildings and around South and DeBart Quads, are a familiar yet uninspiring sight to students on campus. Just in front of Riley Hall, there is what looks like a neon-green I-beam with various embellishments, bolted into the ground. To its left, another large metal sculpture, this one a sort of rusty brown, looms over the sidewalk. At its base, the inscription "SHORE 99" names the artist and year of completion. The sculpture appears, at one point, to have been occupied by a rather messy bird.

At the edge of South Quad, perched on a small, four-legged pedestal, stands what is called by some students the "screaming torso." The statue's black face, twisted in a sort of howl, contrasts with the narrow, white chest and belly beneath it.

Moving now to DeBartolo Quad. Like a pair of confused sentries, a pair of abstractions stand on either side of the entrance to McKenna Hall. The first is named "Koinonia" (a transliteration of the Greek word for friendship) by Alison Helm. It is a turquoise sculpture



Image by the Irish Rover

of metal and glass, consisting of a series of ovals standing on end. The second is "Kanzan"—named for a species of flowering cherry tree—by Michael Todd: it is a brown ring with a few pieces of metal at its base. Moving further down the quad, there are what appear to be two large pieces of stone or wood, balanced on top of a pair of giant wishbones.

Has Notre Dame added something valuable to her students' experience by erecting these sculptures around campus? Has she succeeded, as Becherer claimed, in offering "insight, understanding, joy, even healing," or, as the university website put it, "reminding us of the uniqueness of the human spirit?" The

students themselves seem to think that she has not.

When asked about the pieces described above, Kyhl told the *Rover*, "Those examples have always struck me as not trying to make any statement. They seem neutral and vague so I'm left wondering why someone decided to make it that way."

Annamarie Todd, a junior studying chemical engineering, said, "I have to say I've always thought the bust statue outside of O'Shag was a little creepy. I don't know why, but it always made me think of someone dying from lung cancer ... The other ones I can't say much about. Maybe it's just me but they're a little too abstract for my taste."

Luke Shah, a first year finance student, was not as gracious: "Scattering the garbage in grandma's attic across South Quad doesn't do our beautiful campus any favors."

There is a note of contradiction in the abstract ugliness of these sculptures. They feel out of place amid pieces like the Word of Life mural, or the stained glass of O'Shaughnessy, or the statue of Our Lady atop the dome. Notre Dame students are moved not by novelty and abstraction, but by beauty and significance.

Todd, for example, noted her appreciation for the scene of the woman at the well outside of O'Shaughnessy. "I just think it's a really beautiful piece of art that tells a story in a really cool way."

When asked what kinds of pieces he would like to see around campus, Kyhl said, "If I were to add another piece of art to campus I would choose ... something that would elevate people to think more highly of education. Maybe that could be a beautiful scene of a professor and a student, or a student discovering beauty in their work."

What is the purpose of art at Notre Dame? Nathan Desautels, a junior studying philosophy and theology, told the *Rover*: "Art, especially at a Catholic institution, ought to respond to the dynamic impulses of the Holy Spirit. Would few, if any, say that these works respond to the dynamic impulses of the Holy Spirit?"

The choice to litter the campus of Our Lady's University with abstract sculptures that can only be fully appreciated by those educated in the fine arts is ultimately grounded in an elitist mentality that cares more for the expert than for the common man, and values the avant-garde over the beautiful. These pieces take away from, rather than adding to, the Notre Dame experience.

Jack Thornton is a PhilThe junior. He looks forward to enjoying a lucrative career as a theologian, the only position that will never be replaced by AI. Contact him at jthorn22@nd.edu.

A Good Joke I Heard on Friday

My friend Emma told it to me.

JAMES WHITAKER
Humor Editor

What do you call a sleepwalking nun? *A roamin' Catholic*

James Whitaker is a graduate student in the Theology department. But he wasn't always. He was born at a young age in New York to his parents, who were present for his birth. After several arduous years of gaining the ability to talk and a semblance of literacy, he began writing. His first preserved written opus, written circa 2005, is reprinted here, unchanged and with the author's permission: "Once upon a Time There Was a Boy Named Jakob He got Lost! He Found a Bat and a lion! His Dad found Him They Were HAPPY. The end." He was clearly destined for greatness.

Whitaker then moved from New York to the Washington D.C. area where he adjusted to the southern climes and swampy airs. At his elementary school, he began to broaden his horizons with extracurriculars: there was an after school chess club, at which he never won a single game (and still hasn't to this day), as well as an early morning Spanish club, which he only joined because his crush Sarah was there. He was placed in an advanced math group which would skip the ordinary math lessons and play sudoku instead. At least, he assumes it was advanced math. It is equally possible that he just wandered off, started playing sudoku, and was convinced by his egotism that he was special.

Following these years at a public elementary school in northern Virginia, he attended a Christian K-12 school. His transition was smooth and successful, and it was at this time that he became close friends with Josh Gilchrist, Executive Editor Emeritus of the *Irish Rover*. It was at Gilchrist's suggestion that, in his later years, Whitaker joined both the cross country team and the choir, wherein he was just as adequate as he was in Spanish and chess. The two boys also did Boy Scouts together. Whitaker can't right now remember whether they also did Cub Scouts together. He suspects so.

In the midst of his rigorous studies between the ages of 10-14, he was also being trained to play the pianoforte and the violincello. Eventually, because his father was a drummer and his older sister a guitarist, he had shunted onto him the meek and humble duty of learning the bass to complete the family band. He put a rather mild effort into this duty, and yet went on to play bass for his church's praise and worship band.

Since he is finally halfway to the word minimum assigned by the *Rover* editors,

Whitaker's life story will continue swiftly along... It was in his sophomore year of high school when Whitaker, with Gilchrist, was first exposed to philosophy and patristic theology, beginning in both of them not only a lifetime pursuit of the 'life of the mind,' so to speak, but also a reinvigorated interest and pleasure in the contemplation of God. They 'caught the bug' to such a degree that they would spend their lunch hours reading Aristotle and Aquinas, hungry for an intellectually rich account of beauty, truth, and God.

And yet, despite the beginnings of an intellectual life and a spiritual renewal, high school presented to Whitaker a number of spiritual struggles which he had not the fortitude or discipline to endure. In the words of Saint Augustine, "*Veni Carthaginem, et circumstrepebat me undique sartago flagitiosorum amorum ... Quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare, et oderam securitatem et viam sine muscipulis.*" But it is by God's grace that He permits His children to stumble. When a young child falls and skins his knee, there is nothing he longs for more than the embrace of a parent. Likewise, it was through His son's very prodigality that God beckoned him back to Himself: "his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him."

Whitaker parted ways for a while with Gilchrist, the one for the University of Virginia and the other for a year of study abroad. In those three years of undergraduate study, Whitaker studied Greek and Latin and began an up-close and personal encounter with the Fathers of the Church, on and in their own terms. At this same time, in his tenure as president of the G. K. Chesterton Society, he grew fond of writing in a way that was edifying and, once every blue moon, humorous. And in the first semester of his graduate studies of Theology at Notre Dame, he was received into the Catholic Church on December 5, 2021, sponsored by his good friend.

If you are interested in writing spiritual autobiography or creatively meeting a 700 word-minimum on an assignment, you can request professional advice at jwhitak5@nd.edu.

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