

SCOP Renews Push for Pornography Filter

Petition reaches over 600 signatures

JACK KRIEGER
Staff Writer

The Students for Child-Oriented Policy (SCOP) recently hosted its annual White Ribbon Against Pornography (WRAP) week, with the specific focus of implementing a pornography filter on the campus Wi-Fi. On March 24, SCOP announced a petition, written by co-presidents Theo Austin and Kate Apelian, that “call[s] for Notre Dame President Fr. Robert Dowd, C.S.C., to take immediate action to promote a pornography-free campus.” As of publishing, the petition has been signed by over 600 students.

This year’s WRAP week movement against pornography was not the first instance of a student-led push for a filter. SCOP’s petition comes two years after the most recent proposal, which was voted down in the Student Senate in 2023. And in 2019, SCOP initiated a campus-wide petition with over 2400 signatures that was rejected by then-university president Father John Jenkins, C.S.C.

But despite the past failures, SCOP noted that the new



Image from Matt Cashore

presidency under Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C. provides a renewed hope for a filter. Austin told the *Rover*, “My hope and prayer is that there will be no need for further labor in this end, that President Dowd will push this change through the admin and porn will be removed from access on University internet.”

Similar student-led initiatives for a pornography filter have been successful at other Catholic universities, including Franciscan College of Steubenville, Christendom College, and Holy Cross College—in 2009—as well

as the Catholic University of America (CUA).

During his tenure as CUA president, John Garvey implemented a pornography filter in 2019, following student requests. Garvey is now the JJ Clynes Visiting Professor of Law at Notre Dame’s Law School. He told the *Rover*, “[The CUA ban] seemed to be fairly uncontroversial among the students, and I was delighted to do what they asked. I’d had it in mind myself, but their request made it all that much easier.”

CUA’s filter was inspired by SCOP’s original petition in 2019, after a CUA student read

that Notre Dame’s motion to block pornography on its Wi-Fi failed.

That same year, CUA’s student government passed a resolution to “prohibit access to the top 200 pornography websites through the campus network.” It was subsequently implemented by then-university president Garvey.

Despite the possibility of students getting around the filter, Garvey supported the students’ initiative. “It makes a statement,” he explained. “Catholic universities exist to teach students, among other things, how to live a life of

virtue.” He continued, “If you can prevent a certain amount of it from being accessible or appearing on computers, the fewer invitations [there are] to engage in things that you probably shouldn’t in the first place.”

SCOP’s petition makes a similar argument: “With a filter, every time students attempt to access pornography, they would encounter Notre Dame’s enduring message that pornography is destructive and exploitative. Further, for those students who struggle themselves with addiction to pornography, it will provide them with an additional opportunity to abstain from use and heal.”

Garvey continued, “It seemed to everyone like a good idea. ... I think that most people were coming to recognize that it’s a fairly unhealthy phenomenon. You see the American Bar Association, the National Institutes of Health, even the United Nations saying it’s a bad thing.”

SCOP’s petition cites university policy, “Responsible Use of Data & Information

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SMC Invites Mary McAleese for Commencement Address

Community raises questions, concerns about Catholic identity

LYDIA POE
Religion Editor

In a move sparking heated debate, Saint Mary’s College (SMC) invited Mary McAleese, former president of Ireland, to deliver the commencement address for the class of 2025. McAleese, who will also receive an honorary J.D., has become a polarizing figure, particularly among alumnae and current students who raise concerns about her stance on Catholic teachings.

On March 6, SMC President Katie Conboy announced the invited speaker in a campus-wide email: “We are honored to welcome Dr. Mary McAleese,

former president of Ireland, back to Saint Mary’s. ... She has been a global role model for women for almost three decades.”

Belles for Life, Saint Mary’s pro-life student group, was among the first to voice concerns. With nearly 75 members, the organization drafted a letter to the administration, urging the college to reconsider its invitation to McAleese. The group’s primary concern centers around McAleese’s well-documented advocacy for policies that conflict with Catholic teachings, particularly on issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage.

The letter states, “We cannot, in good conscience, remain silent

about a speaker who openly admitted she had ‘no hesitation’ in voting to repeal Ireland’s eighth amendment, effectively legalizing abortion and denying the preborn the right to life. During the Synod on Synodality in Rome, McAleese spoke prominently at a ‘counter-synod’ advocating for changes in Catholic doctrine on women’s ordination, same-sex marriage, gender ideology and abortion. Inviting someone whose views contradict core Church teachings on abortion and other issues risks compromising the College’s Catholic identity.”

The national and local response to the announcement

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Norwegian Bishop Speaks on Transcendent Healing of Christ’s Wounds

Modern cries for help, ancient answers

LILIAN LEWEN
Staff Writer

The McGrath Institute for Church Life (MICL) invited Norwegian Bishop Erik Varden to give a talk titled “Living with Wounds: The Passion in Theology and in Our Lives” on Wednesday, April 2 in Geddes Hall. Bishop Kevin Rhoades provided the introduction to the talk, which was attended by over 150 people and quickly became standing room only.

Bp. Varden, a convert from Lutheranism, is a Trappist monk and the first modern Norwegian-born bishop of Trondheim. A Professor of

Syriac, Monastic History, and Christian Anthropology at the Pontifical Athenaeum of Saint Anselm in Rome, he is also the author of several books, including the most recently published *Healing Wounds: the 2025 Lent Book*.

According to Susan Coyne, the Assistant Director of Events and Administration for MICL, “Professor John Cavandini [the Director of MICL] met Bp. Varden at a conference in New York City in February 2023. After reading the Bishop’s book, *Chastity*, Professor Cavandini invited Bp. Varden to come to Notre Dame, and the Bishop was able to schedule the visit in

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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, and humor.

Out of civility, the *Rover* will not critically mention names of students, professors, or administrators, unless the person is either a well-known member of the community, or he or she has openly sought publicity. Unsigned editorials represent the majority opinion of the *Rover's* Editorial Board, while content in individual columns represents the views of each respective author and should not be construed as representing the views of the entire staff. All comments and questions regarding the *Rover's* policies and editorial content, as well as Letters to the Editor, may be directed to the Editor-in-Chief, Michael Canady, 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.

“Catholic doctrine and discipline may be walls; but they are the walls of a playground.” - G. K. Chesterton



Image by Matt Cashore

Walls and Bridges

BRIDGETTE RODGERS

Executive Editor



The *Rover* is too harsh!” “The *Rover* needs more bridge-building!” “The Church emphasizes both walls and bridges, right? Why doesn’t the *Rover* do both?”

The *Rover* often receives criticism like this from students, faculty, and administrators, who claim that we divide and polarize at the expense of bridge-building or seeking unity. These arguments are not completely ill-founded. The Church has a duty to be a “light to the nations,” to “open wide the doors for Christ,” as Pope John Paul II declared in his inaugural address as pope.

But today, attempts at bridge-building too often ignore love’s inseparability from the walls of truth. At this moment, this is the mission of the *Rover*: to remind Notre Dame of her walls—her Catholic character, her purpose, her namesake.

Vatican II, Pope Saint John Paul II, and all the great ‘bridge-builders’ of the Church understood that bridges mean nothing without walls—in fact, they’re dangerous without them. In a recent homily on the same topic, Bishop Barron addresses this issue: “Have we been passing through a time in the Church when we’ve allowed the walls to be breached? The stories and the law that define us as a people are no longer being told in the same persuasive way.

What that leads to is a loss of purpose, a loss of identity, a loss of mission.”

Similar to the universal Church, Notre Dame cannot hope to maintain its distinctly Catholic identity when its messaging is limited to loving the sinner, with no mention of hating the sin. A frequent risk of activities that seek to “build bridges” is that little effort is made to preserve the “buildings,” so to speak, that already exist.

Perhaps an application of this principle to a specific issue can elucidate my point more clearly. There are few issues more discussed in the pages of the *Rover*, at Notre Dame, and in the global Church, than the issue of pastoral care for the LGBTQ community.

At Notre Dame, the current approach on this issue is one of ‘acceptance.’ For example, the university’s last post for the month of June celebrated the LGBTQ community: “This #PrideMonth, in keeping with our Catholic character, we seek to build a community in which all students are welcome, feel a sense of belonging, and can flourish on campus and in our Notre Dame family.” Another post stated, “Happy #PrideMonth! We celebrate all LGBTQ+ identities and reaffirm our commitment to being a welcoming, safe and supportive place for ALL members of the Notre Dame family.”

The *Rover* has already written numerous editorials on this topic, but the message bears repetition: Love without truth is not love at all.

Then-Cardinal Ratzinger explained it well in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons.” He wrote, “We wish to make it

clear that departure from the Church’s teaching, or silence about it, in an effort to provide pastoral care is neither caring nor pastoral. Only what is true can ultimately be pastoral. The neglect of the Church’s position prevents homosexual men and women from receiving the care they need and deserve.”

The letter continues emphatically: “All support should be withdrawn from any organizations which seek to undermine the teaching of the Church, which are ambiguous about it, or which neglect it entirely. Such support, or even the semblance of such support, can be gravely misinterpreted.”

Notre Dame might think that its “bridges” fit within this framework of pastoral care. The university sees its mission as one that welcomes all beliefs in the name of a universally-accepting “Catholic mission.” This acceptance, however, inevitably causes an ambiguous rhetoric in the university’s communication, that, as Ratzinger shows, comes with a grave risk of misleading many of the faithful.

At surface level, words like “welcoming,” “belonging,” and “flourishing” do not explicitly contradict Church teaching. But at best, Notre Dame’s statements are *ambiguous* about Church teaching on LGBTQ issues, and as Ratzinger points out, any hint of ambiguity on this topic is fatal.

In matters of doctrine on homosexuality, Notre Dame has an important obligation to provide pastoral care to this community—LGBTQ issues are a current and urgent social problem, and the Church must respond. Ratzinger is clear, however, that no amount of good intention can replace truthful and faithful teaching. Any neglect on Notre Dame’s part to point her students to the freedom found in the truth

of Christ’s teachings is a failure in her mission of education.

Through our reporting on the LGBTQ issue and other campus controversies, the *Rover* helps to sustain the walls that are in place to protect the university from the harms of societal pressure that target this university.

Yes, this might mean less emphasis on “bridge-building,” but when the bridge being extended by the university is not supported by the walls that define our identity and tradition, those bridges are meaningless. Perhaps in a different time, the *Rover* will need to emphasize bridges to reinvigorate the apostolic mission of the university. But in 2025, Our Lady’s University needs the *Rover* to maintain the structure that supports her pastoral efforts as a university.

The purpose of creating a bridge to meet someone “on the margins” is not to stay on the other side of the bridge. It is to then accompany that person back over the bridge and return to the Church—a place of true love and mercy.

The *Rover* emphasizes ‘walls’ not to make Catholicism ‘exclusive’ or ‘harsh,’ but so that, defined in the truth, Notre Dame can properly fulfill her true apostolic and educational mission for all.

Bridgette Rodgers is a junior studying theology and political science. She likes bridges, as her name suggests, but she also likes walls. You can contact her at brodger4@nd.edu.



Faith, Virtue, and Rocking at Life

“If Christ is risen, then nothing else matters. And if Christ is not risen, then nothing else matters.” – Jaroslav Pelikan

DALE PARKER

For the past three years, I have mentored dozens of students in the Business Honors Program. There are few things as rewarding as mentoring, and I am certain that I have learned just as much from my mentees as they have from me. But now that I am leaving Notre Dame, I can talk about one aspect of mentoring that has always been a source of amusement to me.

All of my mentees may remember that in our first conversation, I ask them to rank the following items in order of their objective importance: faith, family, formation (= education), friends, fun. These are the “five F’s.” One’s claimed priorities say much about a person’s character, and open the doors to many fruitful conversations. Much can be said about this exercise, but I want to focus on one pattern that the majority of my mentees evince: putting “faith” in second, third, or fourth place. I always smile to myself when the mentee makes this ranking decision. I smile because whether Christianity is true or false, the ranking is absurd.

Here is my case: If Christianity is true, then we live in a universe in which a God

has become man, died at the hands of men, rose again, and by that death and resurrection has saved us from eternal punishment, unlocking instead an eternal happiness beyond human comprehension. But it’s not just “pie in the sky”; in Christianity, happiness even in this life is a consequence of our friendship with and imitation of Christ.

But if Christianity is false? Well, as an atheist friend once told me, “The only logical options are Catholicism and atheism.” (Newman argues for the same claim in the *Apologia*). I have heard others make the claim. Well, in the case of atheism, Catholicism would be a beautiful fable, and hence our lowest priority. No fable is more important than one’s family, friends, education, or even leisure.

So, what does it even mean to put faith in second, third, or fourth place? I can paint something of a common picture. It means imagining Catholicism as a nice reminder to engage in service activities and be kind to people. It means imagining Mass to be a nice time to gather with friends, sing a few songs, and hear some inspiring words from an old book, commented on by a nice man in a robe. (How far this is from Chesterton’s “thick steak

and red wine” Catholicism.) Frankly, it would be vicious for such a faith to hold priority over one’s friends and family, and I could only praise those who made such faith a middling priority.

The question is, how to make the faith a plausible first priority? There is, of course, the *unum necessarium* of making one’s faith a “love affair” with Christ, as Chesterton also put it. Nothing is as important as that. But for now I would rather point to something that may seem rather unrelated—that for many students, there is both scant knowledge of the virtues and great anxieties.

Virtues—when I ask mentees, “What do you most need to grow in right now?” they often refer to their desires to work out more or eat healthier foods. Yawn—and not the question I meant. I was asking what was keeping them from eudaimonia—which I like to translate as “rocking at life.” And the rungs of the eudaimonic ladder are the virtues. What does a eudaimonic man look like? I once wrote a description:

“He eats and drinks the right amount, gets sufficient rest, and has a good work/life balance (Temperance). He is self-confident but humble, charismatic, patient, and

generous; he finishes what he begins and loves challenges. But most importantly, he is not discouraged by life’s inevitable failures. He knows how to get up whenever he falls (Fortitude). He is a quick and accurate decision-maker who seeks others’ advice (Prudence). He is someone others can rely on. He is affable and supportive to his friends and a respectable colleague who is attentive to his duties (Justice).” Such a person is rocking at life.

Anxieties—the great plague of students. And what is an anxiety but a fear of what may happen? And what is “what may happen” but an outcome? But one cannot control outcomes—therefore, if one is attached to them, one will always be anxious. So I say: Focus on what you can control, which are the virtues; and remember that we can only develop virtue through difficulties. So, look forward to, embrace, and celebrate difficulties as the chance to become a “rocker at life.” (Incidentally, this attitude is characteristic of fortitude, the key virtue for the anxious). Then let outcomes take care of themselves.

How does all this relate to faith as a first priority? Faith taken seriously is a response to an encounter with a real Person and our true love. And how

does one respond to a lover but by doing what he loves? Well, we know what this lover loves: “If you love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15). This doesn’t mean following a bunch of arbitrary rules! His commandments are to love, the only thing that can make us truly eudaimonic—but to love, we need the virtues, without which we cannot love others as he loved us.

In other words, our great “love affair” with Christ will make his life (the most virtuous of all lives) connatural to our own. Daunting? Indeed—but only a goal that big and that beautiful could set the stage for our first priority.

Dale Parker is a former editor of the *Rover*. He teaches in the Mendoza College of Business and St. Thomas More Academy. In the fall he will start teaching at Thomas Aquinas College in Massachusetts. Contact him at dparker5@nd.edu.

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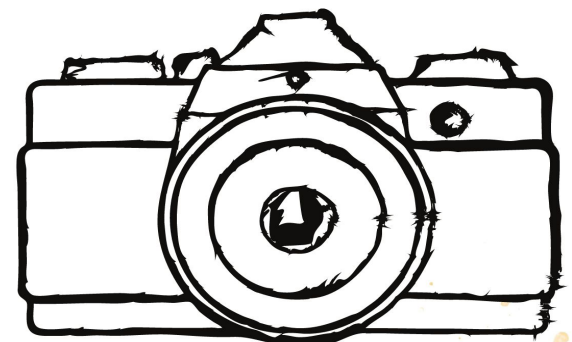


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Fall 2025 course recommendations

The following courses are recommended on the basis of the professor’s demonstrated commitment to Catholic education and the positive experiences of the Rover staff. This is by no means a complete list of every excellent class offered in the upcoming fall semester, but we hope that this will provide readers with a starting point as they prepare to register for classes.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS

Classics

Ancient Heroes: from Achilles to the Avengers, Aldo Tagliabue (CLAS 20350)

Ancient Virtue, Elizabeth Mazurek (CLLA 20400)

Livy, Ovid, and Early Rome, Elizabeth Mazurek (CLLA 40062)

Introduction to Christian Latin Texts, Luca Grillo (CLLA 40016)

Beginning Greek I, Tadeusz Mazurek (CLGR 10001)

Intermediate Greek, Tadeusz Mazurek (CLGR 20003)

Greek Texts in the Roman and Judeo-Christian Worlds, Aldo Tagliabue (CLGR 30050)

Constitutional studies

Catholicism and Politics, Daniel Philpott (CNST 30215)

Philanthropy and the Common Good, Jon Hannah (CNST 30423)

Jurisprudence and the US Constitution, Fr. Bill Dailey (CNST 30446)

Catholicism, Sex, Law, and Politics, Margaret Freddoso (CNST 30657)

Foundations of Constitutional Order: Political Philosophy of Citizenship & Constitutional Government, Susan Collins (CNST 30638)

Economics

Principles of Microeconomics, Kirk Doran (ECON 10010/20010)

Statistics for Economics, Forrest Spence (ECON 30340)

Introduction to Economics and Catholic Thought, Joseph Kaboski (ECON 33150)

French

Images of the Priest in French Culture, Fr. Gregory Haake (ROFR 30605)

Global Affairs

Keough Ethical Practice Seminar, Clemens Sedmak (KSGA 23000)

History

Christianity, Commerce, and Consumerism: The Last 1000 Years, Brad Gregory (HIST 20390)

Introduction to Islamic History from Muhammad to the Mongols, Deborah Tor (HIST 30080)

Philosophy

Introduction to Philosophy, David Cory (PHIL 10101)

Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, David Cory (PHIL 30301)

Political Science

Education Law and Policy, John Schoenig (POLS 30154)

Junior Writing Seminar: Tocqueville’s Democracy in America, Patrick Deneen (POLS 43001)

Program of Liberal Studies

Literature I: The Lyric Poem, Matthew Rickard (PLS 20201)

Scientific Inquiry: Past and Present, Tom Stapleford (PLS 30412)

Theology

Foundations of Theology: Biblical and Historical, Anthony Pagliarini, Fr. Andrij Hlabse, Jennie Grillo (THEO 10001)

Foundations of Theology: Biblical and Historical, Ian Gerdon, Jay Martin, Leonard DeLorenzo (THEO 10002)

Saints and the Theology of Warfare, Sr. Ann Astell (THEO 20264)

The Nuptial Mystery: Divine Love and Human Salvation, Tim O’Malley (THEO 20425)

Theology of Marriage, Fr. Paulinus Odozor (THEO 20606)

God’s Grace and Human Action, Joshua Lim (THEO 20803)

The Mystery of Death: Theological & Philosophical Perspectives, Jay Martin (THEO 20848)

Catholicism and Tradition, Jenny Martin and Tom Stapleford (THEO 30802)

Introduction to the Old Testament, Anthony Pagliarini (THEO 40101)

The Christian Theological Tradition, John Cavadini, Katie Cavadini (THEO 40201)

Issues in Sacred Architecture, Duncan Stroik (THEO 40209)

Mystery of God, John Betz (THEO 40247)

Religion and Literature, Cyril O’Regan (THEO 40823)

Discipleship: Loving Action for Justice in the Catholic Social Tradition, Margaret Pfeil (THEO 20560)

MENDOZA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

God and Business? Mary Hirschfeld, John Sikorski (BES 20702)

Intro to Entrepreneurship, Laura Hollis (BAEG 30500)

Business Law Concepts, Laura Hollis (BALW 30100)

Corporate Governance and Catholic Social Teaching, Martijn Cremers and John Sikorski (BES 40470)

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering

Introduction to Design Thinking in Engineering, Michael Seelinger (AME 20210)

Thermodynamics, Donny Hanjaya-Putra (AME 20231)

AME Laboratory I, Paul Rumbach (AME 20216)

Aerospace Dynamics, Paul Rumbach (AME 40451)

Engineering

Engineering Design, Andrew Bartolini, Jim Schmiedeler (EG 10117)

Integrated Engineering and Business Fundamentals, Mike Kitz and Todd Taylor (EG 40421)

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

Math

Principles for Calculus, Kathryn Mulholland (MATH 10150)

Calculus I, Kathryn Mulholland, Brian Mulholland (MATH 10550)

Calculus Problem Solving, Kathryn Mulholland, Brian Mulholland (MATH 13550)

Biology

Biology I: Big Questions, David Medvigy (BIOS 10171)

Biomedical Ethics, Paul Scherz (STB 20637)

Science, Theology, and Creation, Fr. Terry Ehrman (STB 20888)

CORE REQUIREMENTS

Theology University Seminar, Sr. Ann Astell (THEO 13183)

Literature University Seminar: The Myth of Troy, Elizabeth Mazurek (CLAS 13186)

Literature University Seminar, Susannah Monta (ENGL 13186)

College Seminar: Time and Mortality, Deborah Tor (CSEM 23101)

College Seminar: The Roots of the Ring, Dave O’Connor (CSEM 23101)

Writing and Rhetoric, Ian Gerdon, Matthew Capdevielle (WR 13100)

Moreau First-Year Seminar

Moreau First-Year Seminar, Jenny Martin, Matthew Capdevielle, Andrew Bartolini, John Schoenig, William Mattison, Luca Grillo, Eric Sims, Sr. Ann Astell, Santiago Schnell, Joshua McManaway, Katie Cavadini, Susannah Monta, Fr. Gregory Haake, Tim O’Malley, Brian Mulholland, Mike Seelinger, Leonard DeLorenzo, Forrest Spence, Anthony Pagliarini, Neil Arner, John Sikorski, Clemens Sedmak, Susan Collins, Jay Martin, Vanessa Chan (FYS 10101)





SCOP Petition

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Technology Resources Policy,” which states, “When using Notre Dame’s information technology resources, users must ... Never use University resources to post, view, print, store, or send obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit, or offensive material, except for officially approved, legitimate academic or University purposes.”

The petition continues, “Our University’s own policy acknowledges this danger of pornography, condemning its access on campus using any Notre Dame technology resources, including the campus internet. ... The University has refused to take any steps to enforce this policy prohibiting porn. We ask that the University rectify this so

that their policy may actually affect what it dictates.”

Garvey also noted that a Wi-Fi filter “is easier to put in place if the student government is behind it.” In 2023, student senators John Soza and Ayden Ellis attempted that by proposing a porn filter to student government. After lengthy debate, it failed in an anonymous vote, 11-24. Arguments opposing the filter expressed concerns that a filter would threaten inclusivity or set a bad precedent of “ban[ning] anything related to the LGBTQ+ community on campus.” One senator upheld the “value in the free will to choose not to watch porn instead of having someone else choose for you.”

Before the 2023 student senate proposal, a 2018 SCOP Petition received 2400 signatures by university

students, alumni, faculty, and staff. It was rejected by then-president Fr. Jenkins, who offered individual, opt-in filters in place of a campus Wi-Fi filter. To this, SCOP responded, “An ‘opt-in’ filter would teach that degrading others, especially women, is a matter of individual choice. It would say to students, ‘If you choose to go the extra mile to respect women, we support you.’”

Regarding the technological implementation of a filter, the Office of Information Technologies (OIT) told Soza in 2023, “Attempting to implement such a filter would have both technology and staff costs as we do not currently have the devices we would need to operate for this.” In 2019, however, then-head of OIT told SCOP that implementation of a filter “would be neither

technologically difficult nor costly.”

While acknowledging the limitations of a website-specific ban, Garvey said that at CUA “[the filter] was fairly easy to put in place and as effective as it could be.”

In addition to the petition for a pornography filter, SCOP’s WRAP week included other events focused on the harms of pornography and sexual violence.

The week began with tabling to inform students about pornography and its negative effects in Duncan Student Center. Josh Haskell, Notre Dame alumnus and founder of Ethos National, delivered a lecture on his work combating pornography. Ethos National is a multi-college program dedicated to helping college men break their addiction to pornography. To conclude

WRAP week, SCOP held a screening of *Sound of Freedom*, a 2023 film about child sex-trafficking.

Austin reflected on the week, saying, “This [work] is important because this university is founded to be a force for good, that our students may be formed to effect change in our world. We want Fr. Dowd to know we are on his side.”

More information on SCOP programming and the proposed porn filter can be found on SCOP’s website.

Jack Krieger is a freshman studying international economics and constitutional studies. He liked *Sound of Freedom* far better than Hollywood did. Reach him at jkrieger@nd.edu.

Right to Life Hosts Annual “You Are Loved” Week

ND Forum panel focuses on perinatal care

SAM MARCHAND

Politics Editor

Notre Dame Right to Life (RtL) hosted its annual “You Are Loved” Week from March 31 through April 6. Events included tabling, rosaries, a candlelit vigil at the Grotto, two Masses, and a panel discussion. The week concluded with the *Ave Maristella* ball and a Sunday brunch celebrating undergraduate families.

The panel, which Right to Life co-hosted with the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture (dCEC) took part within the year-long 2024–25 Notre Dame Forum lecture series themed “What Do We Owe Each Other?” This installment, titled “Upholding the Dignity of Mother and Child,” focused on issues facing pregnant women considering abortions and the steps healthcare providers can take to address them.

Jackie Nguyen, president of Notre Dame RtL, introduced the speakers, which consisted of Doctor Kate Callaghan of Beacon Memorial Hospital, Notre Dame Professor Mary O’Callaghan, and Erin Lynch, Director of Counselor Training at the Women’s Care Center in South Bend. The panel was moderated by Petra Farrell, RtL faculty advisor and Director of Culture of Life Initiatives at dCEC.

Callaghan, who serves as Associate Director of Memorial Family Medicine Residency, opened. “I am not a parent myself, but I not infrequently tell those dearest to me who are parents that I think that being a parent is the hardest job on the planet.” She said, “It’s beautiful and rewarding, no doubt, but that beauty and reward is hard won.”

Lynch then spoke about her experiences at the Women’s Care Center. “When I meet

with a woman, I invite her into a conversation.” Describing the approach the Center takes to caring for newly pregnant women, she said, “Our goal when we’re talking to a woman isn’t to scare her or shame her out of a decision if she’s considering abortion,” rather, it is “to really understand her, to understand her circumstances.”

Professor O’Callaghan, a Visiting Fellow in the McGrath Institute for Church Life, spoke on her own experience with pro-life advocacy. “I absolutely ground my work very much in the disability rights movement.” Comparing the current narrative on the status of the unborn to eugenicists of the early 20th century, O’Callaghan said, “We’re

really seeing a repetition of the eugenics movement in perinatal medicine.” Commenting on priorities for governmental reform, O’Callaghan clarified, “In terms of establishing precedent for legislation, we absolutely need to work for justice and to ground our work in rights.”

In a conversation with the *Rover*, O’Callaghan described how the Church can increase its support for women who would seek abortions. Recommending “ministries of accompaniment,” O’Callaghan said, “Physical support is crucial, of course, but not sufficient. ... There are no ministries which support mothers who receive a prenatal diagnosis in every diocese; every parish should be ready to step

up and provide support for families who experience this.”

O’Callaghan remarked that progress in the prolife movement needs to come on the legal and personal fronts. She told the *Rover*, “Legislative reform is absolutely necessary.” However, she also emphasized limitations in the law’s ability to prevent abortions, saying “Justice does not go far enough; we need compassion as well. Banning abortions won’t remove the fear and hopelessness that can accompany an unplanned or difficult pregnancy.”

The panel received positive reactions from students. A freshman in Siegfried Hall told the *Rover*, “I’m glad that we’re having events that show abortion as more than just a

political issue.” A McGlinn Hall sophomore added, “As a woman, it makes me feel more like the Church is here for us with speakers like this.”

Sam Marchand is a sophomore studying political science and finance from Beaumont, Texas. He squanders much of his spare time by reading the Current Events section of Wikipedia preparing arguments for ND Speech & Debate, of which he serves as president. He can be reached at smarcha3@nd.edu.



Image from Notre Dame Right to Life (Instagram)



SMC Commencement *continued from front*

has been largely negative. The announcement attracted coverage and criticism in the National Catholic Register and CatholicVote. Loretto Trust sent a letter to President Conboy, stating that the invitation is “an unambiguous betrayal of Saint Mary’s College Catholic identity.”

Students, alumnae, and parents have also expressed mixed feelings about SMC’s invitation of McAleese.

Brigid Hull, a SMC senior who studied abroad in Ireland, stated, “I am excited and proud that we will be welcoming Dr. McAleese to campus for our commencement ceremony.”

Hull added, “Fortunately, due to the leadership of brave individuals like Dr. McAleese, I was also able to witness the healing and bridge-building that has come through peaceful conflict resolution and dialogue in Ireland.”

Hull referenced McAleese’s interview with Notre Dame’s Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion last year. In the interview, McAleese discussed her presidency’s focus on building bridges between divided communities.

Hull noted, “Dr. McAleese led by example during her presidency by seeking out intentional conversations with her neighbors, especially those with different political or religious views than her own. I think that Dr. McAleese’s vision for a society that is grounded in good neighborliness is a Christian ideal that is worth striving for.”

In a letter in *The Observer*, Conboy responded publicly to Belles for Life’s letter saying that she was “proud of our students for using their voices and advocating for what matters most to them.” She noted, however, “I have to point out that both the article and the letter relied on limited research and also circulated misinformation.”

Conboy wrote, “The Church’s positions on the rights of LGBTQ+ people and on women’s ordination are matters that Dr. McAleese has spoken about since the 1980s, before she was President. I do not believe these are matters the Church forbids its membership to discuss. Indeed, Church teaching continues to evolve: while the Catholic Church clearly forbids same-sex marriages, Pope Francis has voiced his support for civil unions since 2020, and in a document released by the



Image from the Eriugena Review

Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith Dec. 18, 2023 (*Fiducia supplicans*), he formally approved ‘spontaneous blessings’ by priests and deacons for same-sex civil unions. The Synod on Synodality made room for discussion of a women’s diaconate, and Pope Francis created a commission to study it. It is not a closed topic.”

Conboy finished her response, “On May 17, Dr. McAleese will be welcomed to campus, and she will deliver our commencement address. As she put it, her talk will consider ‘the pursuit of peace among warring neighbours, which was and remains the mission Christ confronted me with when I was born in Belfast.’”

In response to Conboy’s letter, Belles for Life established and promoted a change.org petition. As of April 7, over 1,250 supporters have signed the petition. One signer mentioned, “There are so many successful authentically Catholic speakers to choose from. Why give this pro-abortion, anti-Catholic woman a platform, much less an honorary degree from a Catholic women’s college?”

Conboy told the *Rover* that her letter spoke for itself, but that she was prompted to publish it because she “wanted to be sure that people understood that [McAleese’s stances] were really complex issues.”

In reference to McAleese’s vote to repeal the Eighth Amendment, Conboy said, “A pro-life vote is much more complex than a pro-abortion one.” She noted,

“People seem to take it as a simple matter, when I think it was more complicated, and even the wording of the referendum was not about voting for something when it was something that kind of represented that way. So I just wanted to correct the things that I could correct in the record, and to express my gratitude to students for caring.”

The Belles for Life petition addressed this question: “Despite Bishop Kevin Doran of Elphin urging those who voted ‘Yes’ on repealing Ireland’s Eighth Amendment to consider going to confession, McAleese stated that she has ‘no intention whatsoever’ of doing so, and has not gone to confession to seek forgiveness for her decision since.”

On April 7, Conboy met with leaders of Belles for Life to discuss the issue. Alessandra Besachio, Belles for Life social justice coordinator, stated, “Ultimately, while I appreciated President Conboy’s willingness to meet with the board of Belles for Life, her disinterest was clear when discussing how and why Dr. McAleese was chosen for our Commencement Speaker, despite her public statements defying Catholic teachings. The meeting felt more like a kind formality and not like an opportunity to discuss real change.”

Besachio continued, “Discussions of future change were suggested by other faculty members in the meeting. However, Conboy was not the main advocate for the idea of

change, and presented herself in an unapproachable and passive aggressive way that was disheartening.”

Several students have echoed similar concerns, including a senior SMC student whose family has decided to forgo attending the commencement ceremony “due to the misaligned beliefs and morals of Dr. Mary McAleese.” She noted, “Once again, Saint Mary’s has made another decision that endangers its reputation as well as its relationship with the Catholic Church.”

SMC alumna Joan Grobowski (’83) called McAleese’s invitation a direct affront to Saint Mary’s Catholic identity. She told the *Rover*, “I stand for Saint Mary’s Catholic identity and its valuable place as a women’s college. I love my alma mater and feel strongly about defending its Catholic tradition, identity and heritage. I oppose former President McAleese’s participation in Commencement 2025 and urge [Conboy] to uninvite her and invite someone more inspiring, a more faithful Roman Catholic role model.”

In a statement to the *Rover*, alumna Sheila Ames (’65), expressed deep frustration over the administration’s decision, framing it as part of a larger erosion of Catholic values. Ames stated, “I was stunned and disgusted when I saw that Saint Mary’s had chosen McAleese.”

“I may be old, but I can still speak out about depravity,” she said. “I knew things were out of

control, but I had no idea they could stoop so low as to invite a heretic to speak at graduation.”

Ames reflected on a larger concern that the college has strayed far from its Catholic roots: “Catholic doctrine does not appear to be uppermost in our beloved college at all. In my era, we had to have an automatic Theology/Philosophy minor, along with a chosen minor. I learned so much about my faith, and it was formed and solidified in those four years.”

SMC’s 178th Commencement will take place at noon on Saturday, May 17 on Le Mans Green. In addition to the address from McAleese, honorary degrees will be presented to McAleese, Sister Helen Prejean, C.S.J., and Sylvia Acevedo.

[Editor’s note: Lydia Poe serves as the Vice President for SMC Belles for Life.]

Lydia Poe is a junior from Shawnee, KS majoring in finance and management. When she’s not hunting down adequate South Bend barbeque, she’s trying to survive endless “Not in Kansas anymore” jokes. It could be worse, though—she could live in Missouri. She can be reached at lpoe01@saintmarys.edu.

WRITE FOR THE ROVER, EMAIL NDIRISHROVER@GMAIL.COM



McGrath Holds Conference on Women in the Church

Conference addresses divided culture in Church on mission of women

ALLISON BOWMAN
Staff Writer

In honor of the upcoming 30th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's "Letter to Women," the McGrath Institute for Church Life (MICL) and co-sponsor, the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture (dCEC), hosted a conference entitled "True Genius: The Mission of Women in Church and Culture." The three-day conference ran from March 26-28 and drew over 258 registrants, with additional non-registrants sitting in on some sessions.

According to the MICL website, the conference centered around revisiting and extending the letters of John Paul II, with an "aim to offer a positive countervision to, on the one hand, the growing anti-feminism in some Catholic circles and, on the other hand, the widely-held perception that the Church is anti-woman."

Theology professor Abigail Favale directed the conference. Favale, whose scholarly work focuses on "the meaning and dignity of women," recently taught a course titled, "Catholicism and the Sexes" this fall semester. In an interview with the *Rover*, Favale explained the purpose of the conference, which focused on the polarizing conversations surrounding women in the Church: "A lot of women have never heard pro-woman defenses of certain church teachings, like contraception and abortion, that tend to be at odds with secular feminist views. So there's a need to speak about the Church's vision in that area."

The conference also addressed the increasingly heterodox views about women's roles circulating in Catholic circles, occurring on both the left and right. Leftist circles attempt to erase all differences between men and women, seeing motherhood as a burden. Favale noted, on the other hand, that more right-leaning circles offer a narrative "that women should be subservient to men and should never work outside the home, even [suggesting that Natural Family Planning] is illicit."

Favale continued, "The Church's vision, especially as articulated by John Paul II, really offers an alternative to both



Image from McGrath Facebook

of those extremes, and I think there's a need to recover that vision, but also deepen it."

The three-day conference featured six plenary sessions, three panel discussions, and a speaker roundtable that allowed for interactive engagement from the audience. Each day centered around a specific theme: "From the Heart of the Church," "Sentinels of the Invisible," and "New Feminism." According to the MICL website, the conference tackled each of these themes of dialogue with the approach of "reflecting on the past and revitalizing the present."

Thursday featured Melissa Moschella, Notre Dame McGrath philosophy professor, who delivered a keynote address titled "The Female Body and A Culture of Life." During her speech, Moschella outlined the confusion in our culture regarding the relationship between the rights of women and children, especially unborn children. Moschella remarked, "It turns out that a culture that sees sexual expression, as before personal identity, is necessarily also a culture that rejects women's unique biological capacity for motherhood."

Moschella continued by highlighting the popular false narrative that there is a conflict between protecting the rights of women and protecting the rights of unborn children. Moschella told the *Rover*, "Women's rights

are actually things that have been bad for women, both individually and for society, things like the promotion of birth control or abortion on demand have in a variety of ways, led to situations both in terms of romantic situations and in terms of healthcare that have actually been contrary to women's true interest and rights."

On Friday, the final day of the conference, discussions and events focused on a "new feminism" within the Catholic Church. Helen Alvaré, professor of law at the Antonin Scalia Law School and consultant to various Holy See initiatives concerning women, delivered the keynote address, "New Feminism, Then and Now." Alvaré recounted her experience as a woman who worked intimately with the Holy See in the frontlines of the "new feminism" phase thirty years ago.

Alvaré critiqued the hyper-focus on worldly justice for women, arguing that the culture demands a greater emphasis on the eternal vision within the Church. She called for a new era of feminism that she coined "Feminism 2.0." This new era embraces a woman's indisputable gift of sharing her capacity for vulnerable life. Further, Alvaré emphasized that Christian feminism is not primarily about mankind, but should instead be centered around God, remarking, "If we breathe new life into the Great Commission

begun in Genesis, then a new feminism 2.0 will be truer to God's will for us and assist some of the dilemmas that feminism 1.0 left standing."

Other invited speakers included scholars from Notre Dame, Franciscan University of Steubenville, St. John's Seminary in Boston, as well as sisters from the Sisters of Life and the Sisters of the Little Way of Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, along with other scholars from different universities and institutions.

Notre Dame senior and conference attendee Maria Murinova told the *Rover*, "I was really excited because I've been talking to a lot of my friends just about feminism in general, like is it all a bad thing? Are there redeeming aspects of it? How do we think about ourselves as women in the Church today and what does that look like in society?"

Murinova continued, "What I appreciated the most was that it wasn't just intellectual conversation, there was a lot of practical knowledge being given and it was from women who were married, single, have an academic life, religious life, or just speaking to their experience as a mom."

Maureen Ferguson, wife and mother of a current student, traveled from Washington, D.C. for the conference. Ferguson, who grew up in the generation of "JPII Catholics," has always been

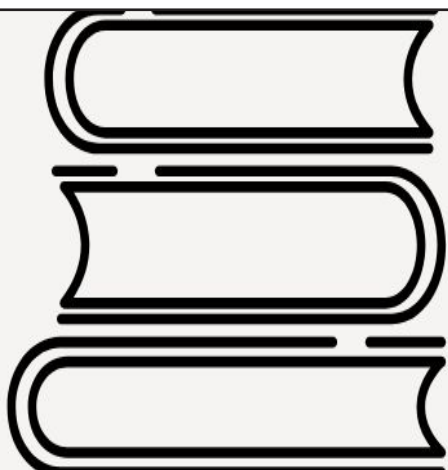
interested in the role of women in the Church, a topic John Paul II emphasized during his papacy.

Ferguson told the *Rover*, "The conference was excellent and gave me much material to think about on the education of future generations of Catholic women. I was fortunate to grow up at a time when this was a topic that received a lot of attention from a beloved and popular pope, but I think it's one that still needs scholarship and thought from Catholic scholars. The speakers and panelists did a fantastic job of presenting a genuine portrait of the Catholic woman."

She added, "My advice for young women at Notre Dame is to read John Paul II's 'Letter to Women' and *Mulierius Dignitatem* so they can come to understand the meaning of 'the feminine genius' and the description of women as 'sentinels of the invisible.'"

Information on the conference, including recordings of lectures, can be found on the MICL website.

Allison Bowman is a sophomore studying economics and constitutional studies. She can be reached at abowman9@nd.edu.



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Bishop Varden

continued from front

March 2025.”

Bp. Varden began his talk by showing the audience a clip from Gracie Abrams’s February concert in Madrid. Abrams, in her song “Camden,” expressed her hopelessness and her belief that she is an open wound, singing, “All of me, a wound to close / But I leave the whole thing open / I just wanted you to know / I was never good at coping.” Bp. Varden used the song to illustrate the current generation’s “consciousness of being wounded [that] permeates our anxious times like a mist of sadness.” He then noted how striking it is that the Church affirms Christ’s wounded body on the Cross is where the wellspring of life is found.

It took the Church five centuries to refine her conceptual framework of the Incarnation before she felt comfortable enough to graphically depict the Crucifixion, Bp. Varden explained. However, he noted that in spite of the great care the Church took to fend off Arianism and its denial of Christ’s divinity, “We, too, like our predecessors in the faith in the fourth century, find it difficult to maintain these extreme opposites together, believing in Christ as fully God and fully man, and we tend to err on the side of his humanity.”

Bp. Varden explained that there are two consequences of our lapse into either implicit or explicit Arianism. The first consequence is that we tend to “fetishize our wounds” and woundedness, making them our identity and using them to cultivate anger. The second consequence is that we become ashamed of our woundedness and our wounds—we want to hide them or eliminate them outright. He went on to say that support for abortion, euthanasia, and even eugenics follows in the wake of these consequences.



Image by the Irish Rover

The answer to our woundedness, Bp. Varden said, is the healing power of Christ’s wounds. “Wounds can be healed, and what is more, wounds can even become sources of healing, as we see in so many of the great high medieval representations of Christ, where the blood marks of Christ’s hands and feet and side are represented as flowers, as the flourishing of a new creation. So meditation on Christ’s wounds is more than devout exercise.”

“Meditation on Christ’s wounds,” said Bp. Varden, “is constructive revolt against serial fallacies. ... The Gospel account shows wounds not just done away with but rendered glorious. The Gospel account of Christ’s appearances after the Resurrection showed him still carrying the wounds, but show, as in the encounter with Thomas, how his woundedness

becomes a way of enlightenment and of healing for others.”

Bp. Varden pointed out the fact that the wounds the Church venerates and that we find healing in are real wounds: Christ’s wounds are a physical reality. “The source of Christian hope is not wishful thinking. The source of Christian hope is not pleasant pious platitudes. The source of Christian hope is the conviction that a transforming benevolence has saturated human suffering even in its most extreme manifestations, is saturating it now reaching right into the very depths of hell, and that no desolation, therefore, is final ... By His wounds, we are healed ... [and] our Time is literally crying out for it,” Bp. Varden concluded.

The floor was then opened for questions. Bp. Rhoades inquired as to how Bp. Varden would respond to the modern desire

for miracles and deemphasis of suffering. Bp. Varden replied: “I think what we mustn’t forget is the possibility that healing comes. God’s intention is always healing. On that point, the Scriptures are unanimous in a complex way, but nonetheless ... healing can come about not only through miracles ... there is another form of healing that can come through the bearing on the wound, and that is why the Crucified remains the symbol of reference.”

To sum up his answer, Bp. Varden brought attention to the fact that the Christian call to bear the Cross is a call full of purpose, both for the individual and for others. He encouraged the audience to remind the world of the sense of suffering and the dignity of the patience suffering evokes.

When asked for his thoughts on the talk, Paul Quense,

a freshman, told the *Rover*, “Bishop Varden’s talk spoke to the wounds of so many in this age. He pointed to Christ on the cross as divinity touching human suffering and how the Christian life must be approached through the mystery of suffering and not in spite of it. Varden emphasized a message of hope, as there is a certainty we can have in God that wounds can be healed and can become sources of healing.”

Lilian Lewen is a freshman history and philosophy major from Indianapolis. If you’d like to hear her ramble on about Thomistics or rant about Irish terriers and their troubled history with Notre Dame, email her at llewen01@saintmarys.edu.

Rover Interviews OCIA Converts

Catechumens emphasize importance of mentors, community

KATIEBELLE THOMPSON
Staff Writer

This year, 25 catechumens will be baptized at the basilica Easter vigil service. In addition, 27 students will complete their full initiation into the Church on April 27 by receiving the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation, having completed the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA) program. Participants come from a variety of backgrounds and span all grades of the student body, from freshmen to graduate students.

The *Rover* sat down with two students to learn more about their conversion to the

Catholic Church.

Junior Ocean Leto comes from a Christian and Jewish family, but now finds Catholicism to be the “fulfillment of [her] faith.” She was first exposed to Catholicism through her teachers’ examples at Catholic middle school. After her bat mitzvah, she experienced an agnostic phase, and later converted to Protestantism. For a time, Leto thought she was non-denominational; all these experiences have helped her to more fully understand her faith.

This past summer, she began asking questions about the Catholic faith, and in the fall, went to Campus Ministry to talk with Brett Perkins, Assistant Director for

Evangelization & Religious Education. Leto recalled seeing an ad in her dorm that said, “If you have any Catholic questions, contact Brett from Campus Ministry.” She noted that her conversation with Perkins helped her decide to join OCIA: “He’s a convert [from Protestantism], so he had had the same questions I did. It was really relatable.”

Leto also identified her sponsor, Regan Grimmer, a Johnson Family Hall senior, as one influential figure in her conversion. “I had two retreats in the same weekend, one for OCIA, and one for ISI (Iron Sharpens Iron). I was praying to God to find someone on fire for the faith. When I saw [Grimmer] go up and give her

talk, it was the answer to my prayer.” The morning before, Leto learned that she had been assigned Grimmer for her sponsor.

Leto told the *Rover*, “The whole thing was approaching faith from a logical and spiritual realm ... it’s definitely about that opening of the heart, too. It was a very gradual process at first, with many questions to grapple with and lots of discerning prayer. But the more I looked into the Catholic faith, the more God showed me how beautiful and true it is in its most perfect form, and I could not turn back.”

Paige Ellis, a Ryan Hall freshman and OCIA catechumen, told the *Rover* about the family and friends

who influenced her conversion. “My grandma used to tell me Bible stories when I would stay at her house. ... I remember her distinctly telling me the story of Adam and Eve, and how God told them—in her angry voice—‘Don’t eat that fruit!’ She had a genuine relationship with God, something I wasn’t able to fully comprehend or appreciate until I saw her annotated Bible after she passed away. I thought it was a beautiful thing to be so devoted to reciprocating love to the Lord.”

Currently, both Ellis and her father are in OCIA programs. Ellis said she’s very grateful to be on the journey with him: “I

continued on pg. 9



OCIA Converts

continued from pg. 8

continue to be motivated by his willingness to learn. ... My dad embodies commitment, and that is something I also try to strive for."

The Notre Dame community also had a profound impact on Ellis' journey of faith. "I came to Notre Dame knowing I wanted to embark on this journey," she said, "but I honestly didn't know how or where to start. My close friend and sponsor, Allie Geiger, convinced me to come with her to the Campus Ministry fair, where I soon found the OCIA table and decided to sign up. Brett Perkins enhanced my excitement for the entire journey, making the OCIA community I was about to join



Image by Barbara Johnson for Notre Dame Magazine

seem as if it was a family."

Ellis continued, "[Perkins] himself inspires me with his faith, especially with his desire to help students like myself.

The students that are part of Campus Ministry as well, especially Sofia Benigno, who was my small group leader, have not only been mentors in faith,

but true friends. If it weren't for Brett Perkins, my friend, role model, and sponsor Allie Geiger, and all of the students with Campus Ministry that

Notre Dame introduced to me, I would be nowhere near the place I stand now on the road to Catholicism."

For any questions about becoming Catholic or the process, please contact Brett Perkins at brett.perkins@nd.edu.

Katiebelle Thompson is a writer from Virginia. In her spare time, she attempts to convert Chappell Roan fans to the one true playlist (the trifecta of classic country, classic rock, and blues). Join the Make Audio Great Again (MAGA) mission at cthomp23@nd.edu.

Unify Website Compiles Sacramental Resources

Student initiative promotes faith, community nights

EMILY COLEN

Staff Writer

When he first arrived on Notre Dame's campus, Owen Dorweiler found himself surrounded with a great wealth of faith resources provided on campus, but he saw a need for a streamlined and accessible Mass, sacrament, and event schedule. As a result, Dorweiler, now a sophomore, spearheaded the student-led project Unify to create and inspire a unified Catholic culture on Notre Dame's campus in Fall 2023.

Originally named "CatholicND," the project began with a website listing Mass times, confession schedules, and adoration times, largely promoted by 11:00 p.m. Rosary attendees.

After observing the various Catholic communities at Notre Dame, Dorweiler developed Unify to provide an interactive environment for these groups to come and commune in faith together. Dorweiler told the *Rover*, "[With Unify], Catholic students can come together in community just because we're Catholic, not because we're involved in these specific Catholic clubs and organizations, but just because of our faith."

As a student-based initiative, Dorweiler added that the Unify website sought to bolster attention to Notre Dame's Campus Ministry by virtually spreading the message of Ministry events to the greater tri-campus student body. Unify has also established a website page for Saint Mary's College (SMC) and Holy Cross College, allowing students within the tri-campus community to explore faith-based opportunities.

According to its website, Unify is a "Catholic resource for students, by students." Its page includes daily announcements

with a tentative weekly schedule outlining the various times and locations where Mass, confession, and adoration are taking place on Notre Dame's campus.

The website also boasts an updating calendar that allows students to add one-time events to their personal calendar.

Since the website's development in September 2023, Dorweiler has been able to track a significant increase in user engagement with Unify. He told the *Rover*, "There's at least 3,500 students that probably have used the site. So it's really beautiful to see how people are using it."

In its newsletter, Unify offers students the opportunity to share a reflection for the week. Junior Josh Weimer, writing for the September 2024 reflection, said, "While this beautiful group [Unify] aims to bring Catholics together in worship and community, another aspect of unity within the Christian life is a union between our own will and the Lord's will."

He continued, "We were all made to be in relationship with Christ, and He desires us to be united with Him. This not only manifests itself in our everyday practices, habits, and prayer life but also in our interior relationship with Him, especially regarding our trust in Him."

Nora McNabb, a SMC sophomore, is a contributor for the SMC page, updating the Unify website with SMC's upcoming Mass times, adoration times, and Faith Talk Fridays.

McNabb emphasized to the *Rover* the importance of valuing a unified Catholic community across the tri-campus: "At the end of the day, we're all united, because we're all the body of Christ."

After its name change to Unify in February 2024 to avoid confusion with similarly



Image from Notre Dame Campus Ministry

named websites, it has since expanded its mission to offering monthly Unify Nights consisting of a candlelit Mass, adoration, praise and worship, and fellowship.

With Unify encouraging tri-campus participation, Unify Nights grant students the opportunity to spend their Friday nights adoring Our Lord in the Eucharist among fellow students. Dorweiler remarked, "Our idea was, let's create this event that has community, that has adoration, and that also has Mass, but it's just centered around Christ and giving students this opportunity to just encounter the Lord every week."

Dorweiler stated that the previous two Unify Nights have received high attendance. With its growing popularity, he hopes to offer more Unify Nights throughout next semester and create more locations for events to take place. He continued, "Having something regular that students can go to builds up that more

regular community."

Sophia Cousins, a SMC sophomore, has previously participated in Unify Nights as a vocalist in the praise and worship portion of the event. Cousins shared with the *Rover*, "I think what strikes me the most about [Unify Nights] is the fact that 20 to 50 people will come on a Friday night just because they wanted to pray and because they love Jesus."

Cousins continued, "[Unify Night] gives people who want to do something beautiful with their Friday night the opportunity to do that, and also to meet other people who are excited about that."

As for the future plans of Unify, Dorweiler reflected on the growth it has achieved since its founding, and he is committed to empowering the Catholic culture of Notre Dame, with unity, faith, and community at the forefront.

Dorweiler continued, "We don't know what God wants for Unify ... the websites that we started with, and then there's

all this community forming now that I never even pictured when I started the website freshman year. So we don't know how big He will take it, but we're excited."

According to the poster for Unify Nights, the events are hosted at Siegfried Hall at 8:15 p.m. The third and final Unify Night of the semester will take place on April 30.

For more information about Unify and the daily faith events happening within the tri-campus community, visit their website or contact nd.unify@gmail.com.

Emily Colen is a sophomore from Grosse Pointe, MI, studying Speech Language Pathology with a passion for words—both spoken and written. For your thoughts on whether matcha lattes are best enjoyed in the spring—or just belong on a Pinterest board—you can reach her at ecolen01@saintmarys.edu.



ND Alumna Enters Race for U.S. Senate

Michigan State Senator Mallory McMorrow Announces Campaign

ELLA YATES
Staff Writer

Mallory McMorrow, Michigan State Senate Majority Whip and alumna of Notre Dame, has formally launched her 2026 campaign for the United States Senate. McMorrow spoke to the *Rover* in September of 2024, shortly after her appearance at the 2024 Democratic National Convention.

Originally from White House Station, New Jersey, McMorrow graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2008 with a degree in Industrial Design. She currently resides in Royal Oak, Michigan, just outside of Detroit. She entered Michigan politics as a Democrat after finding herself “fed up after the 2016 election,” and she is currently serving her second term in the Michigan State Senate, now representing the 8th district.

McMorrow claims to be “an ardent supporter of policies protecting reproductive rights, empowering local communities, and making Michigan a business- and family-friendly state.” One of her most pertinent legislative measures includes co-sponsoring Senate Bill 2, which repealed a law that criminalized abortion in Michigan. Her June 28, 2024 newsletter reads, “Michigan Senate Democrats remain



Image from McMorrow for Michigan

dedicated to continuing our efforts to protect basic human rights and eliminate barriers to essential reproductive health care here in Michigan.”

Despite identifying as Catholic, McMorrow has been a prominent voice pushing for expanded abortion access throughout the state. In an interview discussing her faith and the political issues she advocates for, she said that “religious freedom in this country means you are free to practice your own religion, not [that] you are free to inflict it on other people if they don’t agree.”

In her interview with the *Rover*, McMorrow said regarding abortion, “Something like 70 percent of Catholics believe abortion should be legal in most if not all cases. ... Abortion has been really demonized when it is a medical procedure that may be necessary throughout a pregnancy.”

The current incumbent for the Michigan Senate seat is Democratic Senator Gary Peters, last elected in 2020. In January 2025, Peters announced that he would not seek reelection in 2026. McMorrow is the first to announce a campaign to take over his seat. Currently,

Republicans hold a 53-seat majority in the U.S. Senate.

The 2020 Michigan Senate election proved to be a tight race. The incumbent Peters defeated Republican challenger John James by a mere 1.7 percent. The 2024 Senate elections showed even narrower margins. Democrat incumbent Elissa Slotkin defeated Republican challenger Mike Rogers by just 0.3 percent. However, Michigan voted red for Donald Trump over Kamala Harris in the presidential election by a margin of 1.4 percent.

Michigan’s swing to Trump after voting for Biden in 2020

was highlighted by the fact that 59 percent of Muslim votes in Dearborn, Michigan went to Green Party candidate Jill Stein, who has vocally supported Palestine. According to some analysts, Muslim voters, who have historically aligned with the Democratic party, shifted their vote due to the handling of the Israel-Hamas war.

Keough Hall freshman Quinn Reilly was critical of McMorrow’s stark policy differences with the Catholic Church, telling the *Rover*, “[McMorrow] didn’t represent Notre Dame’s Catholic values in the Michigan Senate, which makes me think she won’t in the U.S. Senate either.”

A sophomore from Grand Rapids, Michigan expressed a similar sentiment, saying, “McMorrow embarrassed Michigan at the DNC and I certainly won’t be voting for her in 2026.”

Ella Yates is a sophomore studying philosophy, political science, and theology from Western Springs, Illinois. She is currently in the process of building her classical literature collection. Anyone with recommendations should email her at eyates4@nd.edu.

IRR Panel Decries “Normative Whiteness” in Black Art

Forum discusses racial stereotypes depicted in media

ANDREW BLAKE
Staff Writer

The Notre Dame Initiative on Race and Resilience (IRR) hosted the second part of its annual “Forum on Systemic Inclusion” on April 2. This panel discussion and Q&A, led by Notre Dame and St. Mary’s faculty, centered on the book *Erasure* by Percival Everett and its film adaptation *American Fiction*. Panelists used these works to consider the stereotypes and expectations faced by African Americans and other racial minorities and examine the political impact of the perception of art by black artists.

Panelists included Scott Barton, Notre Dame professor of Africana Studies; Ann Marie Short, St. Mary’s College professor of English and Gender and Women’s Studies; and Pyar Seth, a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Notre Dame. Approximately twelve people attended the panel discussion, with more watching via Zoom.

The novel *Erasure* follows the response of a Black author, Thelonious “Monk,” who is angered by stereotypes

and expectations of African Americans. Monk’s view of these expectations is described in *Erasure*: “Some people in the society in which I live described as being black tell me I’m not black enough. Some people who the society calls white tell me the same thing.” Describing this perception’s impact on his writing, Monk adds, “I’ve heard this mainly about my novels, from editors who have rejected me and reviewers who I have apparently confused ...”

In the panel discussion, Short elaborated on these expectations, saying, “This particular dilemma is familiar for many people of color, when, for one reason or another, the way they externalize their cultural or ethnic identity falls short of some sort of preconceived expectation of authenticity.”

Short then connected these stereotypes to the inclusion and representation of minority groups in higher education and literary circles. She explained, “Both the novel and the film offer a critique of the way certain kinds of representation are appropriated to reinforce normative whiteness in American literary culture.”

Describing the error she feels occurs because of “normative whiteness,” Short added, “When representation requires the racialized other to be ... as different from ‘white’ as possible in order to be considered authentic, that emphasis on difference leads to reductive fetishization, which in turn gets commodified for the profit of cultural institutions like the publishing industry [and] higher education.”

Concluding, Short explained the story’s applications, saying, “Ultimately, the novel and the film are rather cynical in their approach to the limitations of performative representation and the potential to escape the reductive narrative systems they create.”

Seth then turned the panel’s focus to the “black literary tradition” and the question, “How do we write about blackness?” Seth shared difficulties faced in answering this question in the present day.

Alluding to President Trump’s recent actions against Critical Race Theory, Seth said, “Obviously, I think all of us are aware of this ... sustained assault on the humanities and

critical race theory ... this adds kind of another layer ... [i]t’s searching for a language to write and theorize about blackness in different ways.”

In light of these implications, one attendee questioned whether “all Black art is political” since “the Black body itself is ... racialized and politicized.” Referencing *American Fiction*, this attendee explained, “I think that he’s ... wrestling with this ... tension between, ‘Can I write art for art’s sake, or do I have to ... think about how it’s gonna be perceived or, make an argument?’”

Barton answered by pointing to a similar disagreement among black artists in the 1960s. He explained, “At that moment, the kind of call is to do something in line with civil rights and protest art ... [a]nd in that moment, there was a tension, and people were critiqued for not ... toeing the line and presenting something that’s an overt political statement.”

Seth added, “When I think about the political, it’s one thing to think about the stakes ... [and] I think there’s another kind of question about writing, practice, and process ... being

able to write in ways that ... feel authentic, real, and true to writers themselves...”

Short concluded, “[P]olitical is in the eye of the beholder ... some people might say [that] to not engage in politics is political.”

A Notre Dame graduate student attending the event shared her impressions of the novel with the *Rover*, saying, “There’s this idea that essentially, black artists or minority authors should be catering their novels towards the white majority’s understanding of the black experience and the stereotypes that white audiences have created about the black experience, and I think that this novel is a really bright commentary about that experience.”

Andrew Blake is a freshman studying political science and economics. He enjoys indulging in pleasures such as classical music and dino nuggies. He can be reached at ablake5@nd.edu.



Religious Liberty Clinic Helps Catholic School in Supreme Court

Notre Dame community reacts to Law School's spotlight on the national stage

SAM MARCHAND & KEVIN ANDREWS
Politics Editor and Staff Writer

The Lindsay and Matt Moroun Religious Liberty Clinic at Notre Dame Law School has recently been highlighted for its significant work in defending Saint Isidore of Seville Virtual School in Oklahoma in their case, *St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School v. Drummond*, brought before the U.S. Supreme Court. The case has recently been taken up by the Court following a disagreement about whether the school should receive public funding because of its religious affiliation.

Plaintiffs argue that the denial of inclusion in Oklahoma's charter school funding program is a violation of religious liberty constituting discrimination. John Meiser, Director of the Lindsay and Matt Moroun Religious Liberty Clinic, has been a strong advocate for Saint Isidore's participation as a charter school.

Meiser, quoted in a recent article, was heavily critical of prosecuting attorney Drummond's case, saying, "[His] disregard for religious pluralism is offensive—and his outmoded views on the law are simply wrong." Notably, the charter school was approved by the Oklahoma Virtual Charter School Board by a slim vote margin of 3-2.

Regardless of the Supreme Court's decision, this case will have major implications for the relationship between church and state and the role of Catholic schools in American jurisprudence. Education is a

staunchly protected right in the United States, and the Catholic church has played a large part in upholding that commitment to educate youth.

Students across campus reacted to the news of this case and Notre Dame's participation. Freshman Fritz Micko told the *Rover*, "It's a good precedent for a premiere religious institution to fight for other religious institutions to be judged by their content rather than religious affiliations."

In a conversation with the *Rover*, Ryan Sullivan, a resident assistant in Baumer Hall writing his senior thesis about school choice, offered insights into some of the theory behind the case and its impact.

Sullivan sees a unique opportunity for Notre Dame in aiding with the case, telling the *Rover*, "It has been very interesting to follow this case, especially with Notre Dame's involvement through the Religious Liberty Clinic. There are so many amazing professors here that do work related to school choice, religious liberty, and Catholic education, so it is pretty special to see ND and the Religious Liberty Clinic recognized in this way."

Going over similar cases in the past, Sullivan described comparable decisions, saying, "Over the last 20 years [cases] like *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, *Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer*, *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*, and *Carson v. Makin* show how the Court has repeatedly taken up



Image from the Religious Liberty Clinic

important questions of religious liberty like the ones at play here in *St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School v. Drummond*."

Remarking on the implications of the Supreme Court hearing the case for religious liberty, Sullivan quoted Chief Justice John Roberts' decision in *Espinoza*, "A State need not subsidize private education. But once a State decides to do so, it cannot disqualify some private schools solely because they are religious."

Sullivan also told the *Rover*, "Separate from the questions of Supreme Court jurisprudence in this case, I think there are also some philosophical considerations for how we view religious education's role in America today, as well as how we define public education."

Optimistic about the future of religious liberty in education, Sullivan described evolving definitions of public schools. He

said, "There is an increasingly popular understanding of public education as being an umbrella term for government-funded education that is administered by a diverse market of public and private schools, including religious schools."

Sullivan added, "Religious education has long played a vital role in our country and it is important that its legacy is protected and strengthened." However, Sullivan cautioned against blanket adoption of school vouchers, adding, "We must also be careful that school choice decisions and policies that bolster religious education do not come at the expense of our nation's traditional public school students, nor at the expense of the strong culture and mission that exists within religious schools as the state's involvement in their funding increases."

Sam Marchand is a sophomore studying political science and finance from Beaumont, Texas. He squanders much of his spare time by reading the Current Events section of Wikipedia preparing arguments for ND Speech & Debate, of which he serves as president. He can be reached at smarcha3@nd.edu.

Kevin Andrews is a sophomore in Keough Hall majoring in political science and economics. When not covering international war, he can be found in Duncan Student Center, wasting his Flex points, probably on Chick-fil-A. He can be reached at kandrew6@nd.edu.

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Image by the Irish Rover

Catholic Runs from Coast to Coast

Ultramarathoner visits Notre Dame to promote men's formation program

DARIUS COLANGELO
Staff Writer

Endurance athlete Johnny Kuplack visited Notre Dame on Friday, April 4, completing the two-thirds point of his 3,500 mile journey from Dana Point, California to Auriesville, New York.

Known as the *Via Magna* or "Great Way," his pilgrimage will consist of 100 Ultra-Marathons in 100 days, and is meant to raise awareness for Sebaste, an organization for young men that Kuplack co-founded.

The run has been an extraordinary challenge. Every day, Kuplack runs 35 miles, speaking with local families, students, and media. In his first week running, Kuplack noted how he stress-fractured his foot, further mentioning how he has also injured his achilles tendon and experienced muscle avulsions in addition to a variety of other health problems.

Joe Meyers, Sebaste logistics coordinator and friend of Kuplack, is also completing the *Via Magna*. Commenting on their journey so far, he said, "We wanted to do something really difficult, something hard ... there's literally going to have to be a hunk of bones sticking out of his foot or his leg for him to call it."

Nonetheless, this all

contributes to the spirit of pilgrimage, according to Kuplack. He said, "In true pilgrim fashion, we started this pilgrimage with no money, and so we've been traveling across the United States for the past 70 days living on donations."

In an interview with the *Rover*, Meyers said that Sebaste's mission is to "free young men from whatever is holding them back from entering a direct relationship with God." He specifically identified distraction, isolation, and addiction as the three key things that Sebaste is trying to address, with the goal of breaking these vices by pushing young men out of their comfort zone.

Designed to provide formation to young men through physical endurance, Sebaste's flagship program features an undergraduate men's summer experience in New Mexico. While growing in faith and community, participants construct an adobe rosary walk shrine, which Meyers noted is just three years from completion.

Kuplack additionally described how Sebaste seeks to push back against two extremes. Citing the rise of complacency among men, he said, "Half the guys we get, they're so addicted to comfort."

Kuplack also went on to detail

the danger of diminishing virtue to mere physical achievement, continuing, "And then there's the other half of the guys that are in the savage category. They're not warriors, they're savages. They're working out all the time. They're obsessed with their physical appearance. They might be very capable at physical endeavors: sports, fighting. But they're not warriors. They don't serve."

To both types of men, Kuplack asserts, Sebaste offers an alternative. Jokingly describing the program as "getting punched in the face," he explained how it both helps men who want to escape their idleness while also helping those who want to break down their ego.

Pete Nagy, a senior in O'Neill Family Hall, participated in the Sebaste program for three summers. Reflecting on his time with Sebaste, Nagy said, "I had an experience of friendship and brotherhood that was unlike anything I had experienced before." He continued, "It was real life, and something that I was yearning for." Moved by his experience to continue with the program, Nagy will return to New Mexico after graduation as a foreman for the rosary walk project.

In addition to its current work serving young men, the

Via Magna run is also the official public launch project for Sebaste as it undergoes a time of transition, looking to begin work with homeless shelters in poorer dioceses and federal Indian reservations.

"[Sebaste] is hoping to expand itself into a larger reality," said Meyers. "It's a pilot, so it's going to be small. It's going to be geared towards people in minor institutional, educational leadership roles, and it's going to involve a lot of corporal works of mercy, stuff with the same sort of adventure ethos as the shrine."

Meyers shared different ways to get involved, saying, "Yeah, send us 100 bucks for gas ... make noise about the run ... and take a look at applying for the programs if you think you're a guy who wants it."

While applications are closed for this year, Meyers said that "Notre Dame actually has probably pound for pound, the best group of guys that we've gotten out of any of the liberal arts colleges." Above all, he stressed, "If God wants us to happen, it's going to happen, and we're just going to try to do everything that He wants us to do."

"That's my mission, and that's my purpose, and that's why I'm running across the United States," Kuplack explained. "I

want to be able to get in front of people like you. I want to be able to see these guys again, talk to high school, college guys, grade school kids from all over all across the country. I want to tell them that guys, you know what, if you don't think there's a path forward, and you're stuck and you're despairing and you're one of the hurting and helpless, one of the lepers on the side of the road, where you're just clueless that you're in the middle of a war. There's a place you can come and we can help wake you up."

As of April 9, Kuplack is on day 82 of 100 and has run over 2,800 miles. He is on schedule to complete the *Via Magna* on Divine Mercy Sunday at the Shrine of the North American Martyrs in New York. Donations can be given at <https://www.sebaste.org/donate>.

Darius Colangelo is a sophomore majoring in honors mathematics and the Program of Liberal Studies. He can be reached at dcolange@nd.edu.



A Sanctuary of Beauty and Tradition

A new look into the history of Notre Dame's Lady Chapel

MARCELLE COUTO
Staff Writer

Tucked behind the main altar of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, the Lady Chapel is a space of luminous beauty and devotion. In the quiet stillness beneath its vaulted ceiling, many find a place to pray a Rosary or simply sit silently in the presence of God.

Through its magnificent artwork, this small chapel encapsulates Notre Dame's sacramental vision: the belief that God's grace is mediated through the material world, and in this case, in its artistic splendors. Despite all the grand history and art crowded into this small room, it remains intensely human in scale, intimately drawing the viewer into encounters with the Sacred Heart, the Passion of Christ, as well as the ever-present veneration of His cross.

The Lady Chapel's showpiece is a magnificent gilded altar.

With its twisting columns, sunburst centerpiece, and ornate angels, the altar indeed looks plucked from a Roman basilica. In fact, many believed it came from the studio of Gian Lorenzo Bernini—the same Baroque master who designed St. Peter's Basilica's baldacchino, and the bronze and gold encasement around the Chair of St. Peter.

While it is likely the creation of one of Bernini's pupils rather than Bernini's own hand, Notre Dame's founder Father Edward Sorin, C.S.C. purchased this altar on a fundraising trip to Europe in the 1880s. As one archive recounts, Fr. Sorin spotted the altar for sale in Rome in 1887 but initially balked at the price; after returning to campus and seeing the empty chapel awaiting adornment, he changed his mind and cabled Rome to buy it. By 1888, the glittering Baroque altar had arrived at Notre Dame, just in time to help complete the Lady Chapel for the basilica's consecration that year.

Beyond its artistic pedigree, the Bernini altar became a spiritual focal point for Notre Dame. Featuring a spectacular reredos with a radiating sunburst at its center, this halo of golden rays surrounds the monogram "IHS" and a smaller crucifix, symbolizing the Eucharistic presence of Christ.

Fittingly, Fr. Sorin chose this splendid altar as the place where the Blessed Sacrament would be adored by the campus community. "It is perhaps the most attractive altar in the church, and it is the one before which the students ... adore the Blessed Sacrament," noted one early account.

Flanked by the basilica's defining *ombrellino* and

tintinnabulum, it is also adorned with the papal keys and coat of arms, symbolizing Notre Dame's status as a papal basilica.

The altar's connection to the foundations of the universal Church are furthered by the fact that it carries a treasured relic—a small piece of wood from a table where St. Peter himself celebrated Mass. Just as the high altar of St. John Lateran in Rome encases the wooden altar of the Apostle Peter, Notre Dame's little "Roman" altar in the Lady Chapel invites the Notre Dame faithful to marvel at the continuity of the Eucharist from St. Peter's time to our own.

While the Lady Chapel is popularly named for Mary, its art reveals a combination of Marian devotion, Sacred Heart devotion, and Holy Cross spirituality—a blend of emphases dearest to Father Sorin.

On the chapel's ceiling is a luminous fresco entitled *Exaltation of the True Cross*, painted by Italian artist Luigi Gregori.

At the center of the mural, the Cross of Christ is lifted high by angels under a banner with the phrase "*Ave Crux Spes Unica*," the motto of the Congregation of the Holy Cross. The fresco depicts a triumphant vision: the Cross as the hope of the world, surrounded by a host of Old and New Testament figures carrying the instruments of Christ's Passion. In the foreground Gregori included Saint Helena, who is said to have discovered the True Cross in 4th century Jerusalem, and Bishop Saint Macarius of Jerusalem, who aided St. Helena's efforts. By elevating the relics of the Passion in art, Gregori's mural connected Notre Dame's chapel to the broader story of salvation

history and the zeal of Holy Cross missionaries.

Gregori also slipped a unique tribute into this scene. At the urging of Notre Dame's students, he added Saint Patrick into the assembly behind Saint Mark, holding a shamrock. This detail honored the Irish heritage of many early students and the patron of Ireland, linking the chapel's imagery to the Notre Dame family in a personal way.

If the ceiling celebrates the Holy Cross, the stained glass windows of the Lady Chapel shine a spotlight on the Sacred Heart of Jesus—another great devotion that animated Fr. Sorin.

In the east wall, one window shows Bishop Henri de Belzunce of Marseilles dedicating his plague-stricken city to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1720, a bold act of faith that tradition says helped end the Great Plague. Another window features Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, the 17th-century Visitation nun whose visions of Jesus revealed the image of His Heart ablaze with love—sparking the spread of the Sacred Heart devotion in the Church. Yet another scene highlights St. John Eudes, the French priest who developed liturgical feasts in the 1660s honoring the Heart of Jesus and Mary. Through these vivid colored panes, the chapel becomes a mini-gallery of Sacred Heart history: French saints, bishops, and visionaries all promoting love for Christ's Heart.

This focus was quite deliberate. Fr. Sorin saw Notre Dame's campus as a "City of the Sacred Heart," a fulfillment of French Catholic hopes in America. In front of Notre Dame's church, he even landscaped a heart-shaped garden (a *cour d'honneur*), and in 1893 installed a large statue

of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at its center, modeled after the statue at the famous Sacré-Cœur Basilica in Montmartre, Paris.

Notably, Mary is not absent in this thematic ensemble. In one Lady Chapel window, Father Desgenettes (pastor of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires basilica in Paris) is shown in 1836 dedicating his once-lifeless parish to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, sparking a miraculous spiritual renewal. And above the entrance to the Lady Chapel, Luigi Gregori painted a beautiful mural of the Coronation of the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven, completed in 1887. In that scene, Mary is crowned by Christ and God the Father amid a throng of patriarchs and prophets—a celestial honor for Our Lady at the culmination of her earthly life.

Brett Perkins, Assistant Director for Evangelization and Religious Education, told the *Rover* about his appreciation for the ceiling of the Lady chapel, saying, "The vision of heaven shown in the Triumph of the Holy Cross mural on the ceiling is probably my favorite feature. ... From the nave of the basilica, this mural appears as a continuation of the scene of the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven that is shown on the principal arch of the church, thus confirming Our Lady as the one who brings the Savior to us and through whom we come to Jesus and His Cross as our salvation."

The richly layered artwork of the Lady Chapel hints at an evolution in its identity over time. Originally consecrated as the Chapel of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in August 1888, it was one of several side chapels that received specific dedications at the consecration

ceremony.

Just a year after the church's dedication in 1889, however, a graceful new statue of the Madonna and Child was installed in the Lady Chapel's central niche. This statue, made in France and donated by a student sodality, depicts Mary crowned as a queen holding the infant Jesus. With the Madonna now presiding over the altar, people naturally began referring to the space as "the Lady Chapel," in keeping with the medieval tradition of a church's principal Marian chapel being called Lady Chapel. The name was used informally alongside the Holy Cross title within Notre Dame's community.

Throughout the late 19th century, there were even instances where Notre Dame's entire basilica was poetically called "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," reflecting Fr. Sorin's early dream to honor Mary under that title. In October 1878, after the church's completion, the formal name settled as the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with the side chapel keeping the Holy Cross dedication. Nevertheless, popular imagination had already claimed the apse chapel for Our Lady, eventually leading the tradition to continue to the title it currently bears today.



Image from the Library of Congress

Marcelle Couto is a senior studying theology and is in the Program of Liberal Studies. She can be reached at mcuoto@nd.edu.



Notre Dame to Halt Renovations

South Quad leads the charge

JACK KRIEGER
Staff Writer

Some students say that the University of Notre Dame is in a moral decline. These same students claim to have the answer.

Their petition begins, “Residence halls have become too nice. We’re becoming soft. Renovation by renovation, we are destroying the moral character of the student body. Saint Paul said it best, ‘Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.’ Sufferings produce character. Cushy dorms do not.”

An event was held to address this issue—the Dorms Endeavoring to Cultivate Character Conference. Or simply, the DECCC. It was hosted in DeBartolo Hall, room 101.

At the DECCC, there were many dorms present from across all of campus. They included Morrissey, Lyons, Howard, Stanford, Keenan, Farley, and most of Mod Quad. Carroll Hall was the keynote speaker.

One Howard Hall RA began the conference, “At Howard, we have some new residents—bats. We love our bat friends! Some dorms have dogs, but the Howard Ducks just prefer bats. For one, it helps ensure we all go to bed on time—no one

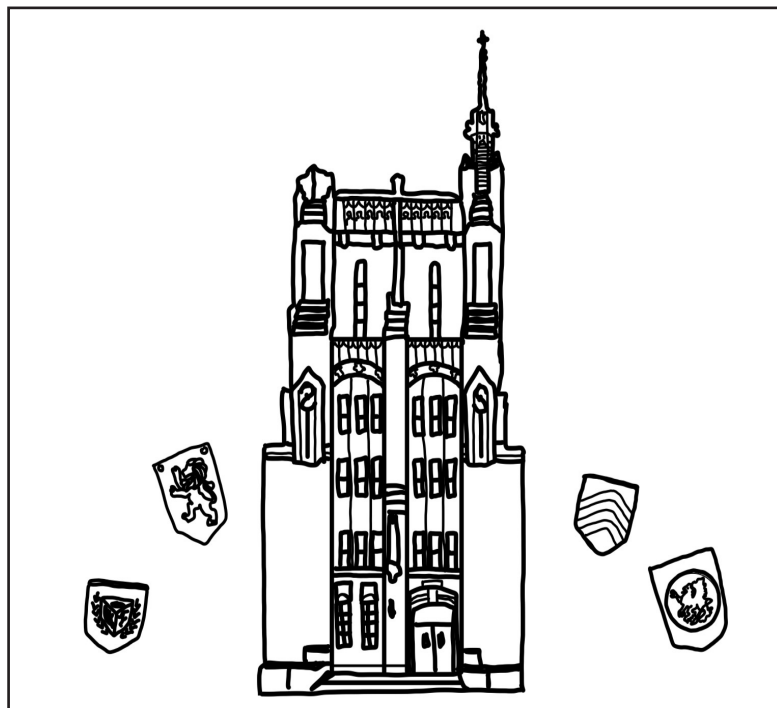


Image by the Irish Rover

wants to be up when they roam the halls.

She continued, “I think it’s important to give less-commonly domesticated animals a home. Notre Dame needs to increase its diversity within the halls. We can’t just allow only ‘normal’ animals in halls. We should open it to all animals of all kinds!”

Following this, a representative from Morrissey Manor spoke. “All dorms should be forced to bring their mascot into their dorm. We must hold ourselves to the same standards as others if our movement is to be credible. Howard should be a home not only for bats, but

for ducks too.” The assembly began to nod in approval. Some members of Stanford looked pleased, while other Griffins looked exceptionally concerned. The Morrissey representative neglected to mention that his mascot is the dorm building itself.

A member of Carroll Hall stood and began to speak in dissent. “We already have enough struggles in Carroll. If we were to join this movement, we would rapidly outpace all of the other dorms in character. The Vermin would be far too strong. It simply wouldn’t be fair to the other halls. Think of Graham Fam. They would be

crushed!”

Lyons Hall disagreed. “How is it that Carroll Hall is called the Vermin, but don’t open their doors to rodents?” (Notably, Lyons Hall also did not agree to the amendment). Carroll members began to mutter something about glass houses. Father Pete, charged with moderating, began to quote Matthew 7:5.

Carroll Hall later agreed to pass the amendment, if Lyons Hall agreed to do the same. Lyons Hall did not. They declined to comment.

Without the votes of Carroll and Lyons, the amendment failed. In its stead, a new proposal was brought to the university: mandatory mold colonies. “Many of us already have them, so this request should be a simple step in the right direction,” said a representative from Keenan.

Other ideas were also suggested, such as the removal of all air-conditioning units. “Our ancestors have thrived long before AC was invented. And isn’t it interesting,” put in one student from Sorin, “that mental illness is only prevalent where air-conditioning is plentiful?” A petition for this is currently in the works. It comes at a crucial time as warmer weather approaches.

Siegfried Hall, too, had a contribution. They suggested removing all shower curtains to “foster a greater sense of

community.” Though this failed to pass, it is unclear if Siegfried will move to implement this in their own hall.

As it stands, the petition for mold (Mold Builds Character—MBC) and another against AC (AC Is Causing the Death of the West—ACICDW) have been sent to Father Dowd, and can be found on change.org. Simply search, “Petition to Save Notre Dame.”

An alumnus of the class of 1971 weighed in, “Back in my day, mold was part of the experience. The mold was meant to mold you into a man who could conquer anything. And now it’s a health hazard? I tell ya, we are soft. And I tell you, ever since 1972 ...” At this point in the interview, the *Rover* conveniently forgot the rest of his statement.

Though the future of this movement is unclear, this much is certain: expect change.

Jack Krieger is a freshman in Morrissey Hall. He and countless others have already signed the petition. Join them by emailing jkrieger@nd.edu.

Group Chats for All

A reflection on modern democracy

RALPH EMERSON SLINKWORTH
Staff Writer

The journalistic vultures at CNN finally got some roadkill a few weeks ago, after the editor-in-chief of The Atlantic, Jeffrey Goldberg, was accidentally added to a group chat with top Trump administration officials. The chat wasn’t formed to discuss an upcoming bachelor party (“White House Boyz Cabo Week”), or an outing to The Masters (“Donnie’s Fellas Hit Augusta”), but rather how best to bomb Yemen (“March Madness: Middle East”). Therein lay the problem: Mr. Goldberg usually doesn’t get the latest briefings on secret military operations—much less a chance to give his tactical input.

Up till now, most Americans (even Reddit defense nerds and Lockheed HR managers) haven’t been able to pitch their aerial bombardment ideas to top brass. Little did they know, becoming a magazine editor could have let them in on the ground floor. The aforementioned CNN sticklers denounced the group chat as a grave threat to operational and personnel

security. They really are no fun—they are missing the point. Adding Mr. Goldberg to the group chat was a bold, brave decision meant to enhance our democracy and extend an olive branch to embattled Democrats.

For years, strategic military discussions have been handled solely by the mysterious creatures of the Pentagon. No one else got a say. Now, sources close to the president claim that new random numbers will be looped into executive group chats across an array of policy areas. Adding Mr. Goldberg was a pilot run to gauge the public’s reception. While the media clearly misunderstood, I’m quite excited for this initiative (and Donald, if you’re reading this, please add my number to “Tariff Sheriffs 2025”).

Real democracy-lovers can see how keying in



Image from Wikimedia Commons edited by the Irish Rover

random Americans to policy discussions will boost strategic brainstorming and empower fresh perspectives. A Miami drug dealer knows as much about supply and demand as Howard Lutnick, and who would say a Harlem sneaker peddler isn’t well versed in trading? These expanded group chats will usher in an era of governmental inclusivity that any upstanding Democracy should be proud of.

Of course, there was an ecumenical element to the plan as well. Our novel policy makers

will be chosen by lottery, not by party, race, or creed. This means that an open-borders activist from Los Angeles will have an equal chance to weigh in on the immigration group chat as a keep-em-out rancher from Laredo. In administrations past, invitations to policy powwows were decidedly partisan. If you weren’t in the ruling party, you weren’t getting a ticket. By giving Democrats a seat at the deliberative table, Trump makes a selfless peace-offering to beleaguered liberals everywhere. As we saw, the first number added belongs to a man with more left-wing bona fides than the average city block in Portland.

Nation-healing. Diplomatic. Polarization-shattering. Strategic. These words rush to mind when contemplating Trump’s new idea. Now, sadly,

no one can be forced to stay and contribute to these group chats (Mr. Goldberg exited his promptly). As the adage goes, you can lead a liberal to water, but you can’t make they/them drink. It is my sincere hope, however, that Americans will see this new opportunity for what it is: a chance to shape policy regardless of expertise or partisan affiliation. Going forward, strange texts you might’ve marked as spam in lesser days could just be your golden ticket to the policy world. See you in the group chats.

R. E. Slinkworth is a freshman communications major from Orlando, Florida. In his spare time, he enjoys prank-calling top defense officials and running modular airstrike simulations on rural polar bear communities in the arctic. He cannot be reached.

PRIESTHOOD ORDINATIONS

THE CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS
announces the Ordination to the Priesthood of

DEACON RICHARD BEVINGTON, C.S.C., DEACON NOAH JUNGE, C.S.C.
DEACON AARON MORRIS, C.S.C. & DEACON DAVID MURRAY, C.S.C.



Saturday, April 26, 2025

1:30pm EDT

Basilica of the Sacred Heart

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EVENTS HAPPENING ON CAMPUS:

Wednesday, April 9:

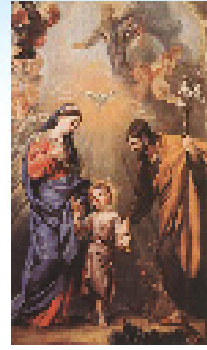
Shakespeare Monologue Competition
de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture
(Debartolo Hall 155, 8:15 p.m.)

Sunday, April 13:

Notre Dame Symphonic Winds and Band Concert
(Leighton Concert Hall, 3:00 p.m.)

Sunday, April 13 & Wednesday, April 16:

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater"
The Notre Dame Magnificat Choir
(4/13: Basilica of the Sacred Heart, 8:00 p.m.,
4/16: Our Lady of the Road, 6:00 p.m.)



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