

Goodbye, DEI?

Trump executive order to impact Notre Dame DEI initiatives

CATALINA SCHEIDER GALIÑANES
Staff Writer

President Trump’s recent executive order, “Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity,” may end the University of Notre Dame’s diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programming.

The directive writes that “institutions of higher education have adopted and actively use dangerous, demeaning, and immoral race- and sex-based preferences under the guise of so-called ‘diversity, equity, and inclusion.’”

The order, signed on Trump’s second day in office, terminates illegal discrimination and diversity promotion in federal agencies as well as in all federally funded educational institutions. Trump’s administration unveiled “a plan of specific steps or measures to deter DEI (whether specifically denominated ‘DEI’ or otherwise) programs or principles that constitute illegal discrimination or preferences” in the private sector. The programs cannot be merely renamed or repackaged.

Each federal agency will identify up to nine potential civil compliance investigations into



Image from Notre Dame Instagram

publicly traded corporations, non-profits, state and local bar and medical associations, or institutions of higher education with endowments over 1 billion dollars—this includes Notre Dame, which boasts an estimated 20.1 billion dollar endowment.

Notre Dame’s large endowment is not the only reason it may face the impact of Trump’s executive order. Notre Dame doubled down on creating DEI initiatives

and offices in 2023 and 2024, behaving contrary to national trends.

The university has undertaken recent rapid DEI expansion, although DEI has been in decline at other colleges and universities. With state legislatures proposing more than 85 bills to end DEI in institutions of higher learning, and 14 becoming law, other universities have already taken steps to decrease diversity focuses.

by a 10 million dollar gift from management-consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

At Notre Dame, the Student Affairs Office expanded in the 2024–2025 academic year to include a Diversity and Engagement unit, which houses the Center for DEI, the Multicultural Student Programs and Services, the Gender Relations Center, and the Office of Student Enrichment.

It is unclear if Notre Dame’s DEI initiatives will continue under the executive order and potential future investigations. The Division of Student Affairs declined to comment on the order and its implications for Notre Dame.

Trump’s recent order may also impact the Notre Dame Admissions Office. The executive order designates that all educational institutions that receive federal funds must comply with the 2023 Supreme Court ruling, *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* which ended affirmative action in college admissions.

Within 120 days of the order, the university is set to

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Notre Dame Community Responds to Los Angeles Wildfires

LA students recount horrors and reflect on community support

CLARE DiFRANCO
Campus Editor

For the last three weeks, wildfires have ravaged the suburbs of Los Angeles (LA), resulting in over 180,000 displaced LA residents and 27 confirmed deaths. The Notre Dame community has taken action in offering support and prayers for those affected by the LA wildfires within the community and beyond.

On the morning of January 7, a fire erupted in the Pacific Palisades, and that same evening, the Eaton fire began in Altadena. These were subsequently followed by the outbreaks of various blazes bolstered by the strong, dry Santa Ana winds. Adding to these breakouts was

the ignition of the Hughes fire on January 22, which has yet to be contained by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Many Los Angeles-residing Notre Dame students were home for winter break to witness the initial impact of the fires.

Freshman Matias Toro told the *Rover*, “My dad gave me a phone call when the fires started, returning from a shopping trip at Costco. Within the span of about 30 minutes, the fire covered the mountainside, reaching Altadena.”

Toro continued, “Overnight, we woke up to being in a ‘yellow’ evacuation warning zone, which meant that we had to be packed up and ready to leave any time they issued an evacuation

warning. Thankfully, with the grace of God, the fire was halted and contained about 15 blocks above us, but the aftermath was unreal.”

Toro described the impact of the fires on Altadena and the surrounding areas. He said, “The day after those Santa Ana winds on the seventh was absolutely devastating. Everyone got lightheaded when they had to go out, forcing most to put their N-95s on. Because a lot of the burnt Altadena homes were built from the seventies or older, asbestos, lead, and other crap rained down as ash on every surface.”

In an interview with the *Rover*, sophomore Oliver Wardhana recalled, “While I was lucky

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‘What Would You Fight For?’ Series Finishes 18th Season

Stories feature student, faculty research

ABBY STRELOW
Staff Writer

What Would You Fight For?’ a series of two-minute videos featuring the efforts and accomplishments of Notre Dame researchers, recently finished its 18th season on November 16, 2024. The shorts aired during football games on the jumbotron and played as shortened advertisements on live television.

Broadcast on NBC, the videos are produced by Beth Grisoli, Assistant Vice President for Strategic Communications at Notre Dame. According to the project website, the series showcases Notre Dame’s

commitment to “take action to find solutions to humanity’s most pressing challenges.” In the past, the series has focused on issues such as water sustainability, the opioid crisis, renewable energy, and literacy.

Every year, six videos are produced and aired before the second half of home football games. They are later archived on the project’s website and accompanied by in-depth articles that include interviews with faculty members, students, and those helped by Notre Dame’s research.

This season, the series featured six videos: “Fighting to improve education policies”; “Fighting to combat America’s mental health

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

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

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

**"If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."
 – Mark 3:25**



Image by Matt Cashore

The 'Woke' Participation Grade

MICHAEL CANADY

Editor-in-Chief



When judging Notre Dame's "Catholicity," promoters often cite events, lectures, and programming that demonstrate authentic Catholic teaching, and detractors emphasize events that clearly contradict the doctrine of the Faith. But what these Notre Dame critics too often miss is the attendance at these events, which reveals a significant finding: 'Woke' progressive events at Notre Dame attract far lower student participation than solid Catholic programming.

Examples of this poor participation grade for 'woke' events abound. In March of 2024, Student Government hosted the third-annual "PrideFest," a weeklong celebration of "LGBTQ+ students and their place on campus." In one of the week's three events—a panel discussion on "intersectionality"—the audience consisted of 15 students, including staff members.

In November 2024, several university organizations and departments hosted a panel on critical race theory topics titled, "What Does It Mean to Make Amends? A Talk on Reparations." Only 10 students were in attendance.

Last semester, the Gender Studies Program screened a film

that promotes transgenderism and abortion while demeaning family values—a message that was admittedly at odds with Catholic teaching, according to comments from the director. But despite the progressive themes of the movie, fewer than 15 undergraduate students were in attendance.

At a university of almost nine thousand undergraduates, a participation grade of 0.16 percent or lower is a failing grade. Compare that to several examples of regular high attendance at conservative, or authentically Catholic events on campus.

Most recently, over 430 students traveled on overnight buses to Washington, D.C. for the annual March for Life. (Even this large number represents a decrease after the *Dobbs* decision placed more emphasis on the states rather than the national level.) Like last year's class on Augustine's Confessions, the theology department's current one-credit class on C. S. Lewis is also filled to capacity—465 students. Even smaller events like Old College's Log Chapel Mass—every Tuesday at 9 p.m.—regularly draw over 75 undergraduates.

The Sorin Fellows Program with the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture (dCEC) is yet another example of authentically Catholic programming. Providing "integral student formation in the Catholic tradition," the program boasts a membership of over 500 undergraduates.

These examples and many others demonstrate that events rooted in the truths of the Catholic Faith clearly attract more Notre Dame students than the events steeped in the 'woke' secular culture—a culture expressly opposed to Catholic teaching and traditional Christian values more broadly.

By contrasting the leftist culture to Catholicism, you may think I do an injustice. 'Woke' liberals can be Catholic too, right? On issues of Catholic moral doctrine, the answer is no. A strong correlation exists between faithful Catholics and those who hold conservative values—and this is not unique to Notre Dame. A study by Pew Research Center found that among Catholic adults who attend Mass once a week or more, 50 percent identified as conservative while only 15 percent identified as liberal.

This is not to say that there are no left-leaning students at Notre Dame, or that a vast majority of Notre Dame students are conservative Catholics. As several recent presidential polls suggested, students on campus tend to fall evenly on both sides of the political divide.

But the attendance trend suggests a curious possibility: Left-leaning students are more moderate than they are 'woke.' If 'woke' events are as sparsely populated as I have demonstrated, the political identification of left-leaning students doesn't actually indicate the strength of 'woke' culture on campus. When analyzed more closely, the seemingly even split between left and right is imbalanced: left-leaning students are moderate, right-leaning students are strong, active Catholics.

Events promoting critical race theory or LGBT ideology have no place at Notre Dame. They are obscene and scandalous on a campus dedicated to Mary, Mother of God. Certainly, it is a silver lining that so few students even attend them, but the university's administration should recognize that most students don't need—or want—the events.

So what do these poorly attended events accomplish

anyways? Simple supply and demand principles would direct administrators to acknowledge them as a waste of time. The underlying reason is the emphasis on "inclusion" and "belonging," cited by recent DEI and LGBT initiatives as supposedly "Catholic" values. Aside from these misunderstood principles of Catholicism, the aim of achieving "belonging" is inherently a futile one.

The 15 students on the entire campus who support radical anti-Catholic gender ideology, abortion-on-demand, and racial extremism shouldn't expect to agree with the Catholic mission of the university. Nor can they expect to *belong*. The university would have to give up its Catholic mission for the sake of a tiny minority of students. For these fringe participants, "belonging" is only found if the university ceases to be Catholic—see Georgetown for reference. Meeting impossible, harmful, and anti-Catholic demands is not the answer. The university must respond with a charitable invitation to the Truth of Christ, where one finds real happiness, and where one truly *belongs*.

'Woke' ideology is crumbling, and Trump's election—expressly opposed to DEI and transgenderism—was a vindication of that trend on a national scale. Regardless of broader political affiliation, normal Americans—and normal Notre Dame students—don't fall for woke insanity. The university's administration needs to get with the times and stop catering to the 0.16 percent.

Michael Canady is a junior from Falls Church, Virginia. He can be reached at mcanady2@nd.edu.



Students Attend Annual March for Life in Washington D.C.

Over 400 students attend National March

XAVIER ANDERSON
Staff Writer

Over 430 students from the University of Notre Dame joined the March for Life in Washington, D.C. this past Friday, January 24. The trip was organized by the Notre Dame Right to Life Club (RtL), allowing students to join thousands of marchers from across the nation in protest for the defense of preborn children.

Although the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 has given more power to the states in determining their abortion policies, March for Life, a pro-life non-profit organization, has continued to host a national rally in Washington each year. Information from their website details the further commitment to the pro-life cause, saying, “The goal of the national March for Life is to not only change laws at the state and federal level, but to change the culture to ultimately make abortion unthinkable. ... We will continue to march every January at the national level until a culture of life is restored in the United States of America.”

RtL Club president Jackie Nguyen also explained her convictions for why the club continues to march, telling the *Rover*, “Fighting for the unborn and the sanctity of life will not stop until the dignity of every life is upheld, and Right to Life will continue to march until then. Beyond advocacy, the March for Life strengthens the culture of life within the Notre Dame community. As the organization’s largest annual



Image by Notre Dame RtL

event, it draws hundreds of students to Washington, D.C. for a weekend of prayer, witness, and fellowship.”

Students departed from Notre Dame on Thursday night and arrived at St. Charles Borromeo parish in Arlington, Virginia early Friday morning. In preparation for the March, pilgrims prayed a holy hour of adoration in the church, followed by Mass celebrated by Father Terry Ehrman, C.S.C., professor of theology and RtL club chaplain.

When asked how the faith shapes the mission and values of RtL, Fr. Ehrman told the *Rover*, “The Roman Catholic faith and its teachings about God and the goodness and dignity of each human life are the foundation and form of the Notre Dame Right to Life club. The club welcomes people of all faiths and no faith, if they will participate in the mission of promoting a culture of life.”

Fr. Ehrman continued, “Prayer is one of the constitutive

pillars of ND RtL. The March for Life trip is intentionally a pilgrimage of prayer for the end of abortion. Prior to the March on Friday morning, the students, faculty, and staff gathered for a Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration before Mass whose focus this year was on charity and living out the command of Jesus Christ to love one another.”

Upon arriving at the National Mall, marchers attended a rally near the Washington Monument. The event featured notable political figures, including Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, and Vice President J. D. Vance. The event also included speeches from pro-life activists, including abortion survivor Josiah Presley, Mama Bear Care CEO Beverly Jacobson, Live Action president Lila Rose, and longtime pro-life leader serving as co-chair of the Pro-Life caucus, Representative Chris Smith, New Jersey Republican.

Junior Kevin Sadler found Jacobson’s testimony particularly powerful. He told the *Rover*, “It was inspiring to hear how amidst the pressure from doctors to kill her disabled daughter, she chose to embrace the struggles of motherhood with courage and love so that she and her daughter may experience the beauty of life together.”

The incoming president of March for Life, Jennie Bradley Lichter, also spoke at the rally. Lichter, a Notre Dame graduate, attended the March for the first time through the university. In a November 2024 interview with the *Rover*, she explained how this trip was instrumental in her career as a pro-life activist, saying, “To be able to attend, as I did, as a college freshman, I think it really helped to knit me into the pro-life movement. ... There’s a very, very direct connection between my Notre Dame experience and my current work.”

Lichter further praised the Notre Dame RtL club and its advocacy, telling the *Rover*, “Being vocal witnesses to the beauty and dignity of unborn life and caring for vulnerable moms, the way that you all do at Notre Dame Right to Life ... is so important just to show [that] we are still here. ... I would really encourage young advocates to lean into your joy and to take the long view, and never to give into discouragement.”

Ellen Burks, a sophomore who co-led the trip, told the *Rover*, “For students looking to get more involved in the pro-life movement on campus, I would suggest simply attending events and learning as much as you possibly can about life issues. Notre Dame Right to Life offers so many amazing opportunities for that, and really all it takes to get involved is to show up and make connections with fellow members of the club.”

For students who stayed on campus, RtL hosted a 24-hour Eucharistic Adoration Vigil for Life.

The next RtL event is its weekly Mass and Adoration on Friday, January 31, in the Stanford Chapel.

Xavier Anderson is a sophomore from northern Virginia studying finance. He can be reached at xanderso@nd.edu.



DEI News

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receive guidance from the Attorney General Pam Bondi and nominated Secretary of Education Linda McMahon regarding compliance with the *Students for Fair Admissions* ruling.

The president has already taken steps to implement his order. All employees in any of the now-defunct federal diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility offices

were immediately placed on administrative leave. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt “gladly confirmed” the news via a post on X last week.

President Trump stated that “Americans deserve a government committed to serving every person with equal dignity and respect, and to expending precious taxpayer resources only on making America great,” in a related executive order, “Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs

And Preferencing,” signed on Inauguration Day.

Professor of political science Daniel Philpott has previously articulated the conflict between DEI and Notre Dame’s Catholic character. In response to the DEI center’s creation, he told the *Rover*, “I worry that the DEI language links us to approaches that are predominant today in public law and the policies of corporations, universities, and other institutions, but which are secular and not rooted in

the Church’s theology, divine reality, moral doctrine, and teaching about the human person.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church similarly highlights that each individual is born with equal dignity and respect—the individual is not secondary to a larger idea of diversity or inclusion. It states in Paragraph 356, “Being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone.”

Catalina Scheider Galiñanes is a senior with double majors in economics and political science and a minor in constitutional studies from the Washington, D.C. area. She is available to discuss traditionalism and tariff trade policy at cscheid2@nd.edu.



Grubhub Robots Debate Continues

Students call for ban, express support

LUCY SPENCE
Managing Editor

Nearly two years have passed since Notre Dame partnered with Grubhub and Starship to introduce a fleet of food delivery robots on campus, and students still have mixed feelings. Originally numbered at 30 robots in 2023, the fleet grew to 50 in 2024 and delivers orders from a number of campus eateries.

Executive Director of Campus Dining Luigi Alberganti commented in a university announcement on the arrival of the robots: “The robots will provide increased accessibility to our campus units by conveniently bringing the food to our customers, filling a void in the service that we currently have. ... The fleet of robots will have such a positive impact on campus. They are part of our ongoing effort to bring innovative solutions to Campus Dining, they’ll expand our omnichannel retail strategy and they’ll provide flexibility and accessibility for our students.”

Following this announcement, nearly 400 people signed a petition titled “Manifesto Contra Robota” that sought the removal of the robots, citing concerns for the pedestrian character of campus. Written under the pseudonym “Ned Ludd,” the petition states, “The robots represent a [regrettable] commercialization and privatization of our shared campus.”

The robots present equal situations of frustration and relief for students on campus, depending on busy schedules, disabilities, athletic commitments, and sickness. The *Rover* sent out a survey to dorms and student groups to measure the approval rating of the robots among students. Respondents were asked to give

their thoughts on the robots, the state of the pedestrian culture on campus, and the efficiency of the delivery vehicles.

Out of 149 respondents, 92 percent reported that they used the robots an average of zero times a week, and eight percent reported they used them one to two times a week. Of these respondents, six percent were student athletes.

Overall sentiment towards the robots was generally negative: the largest percentage of respondents for each question consistently thought the robots were unnecessary on campus, said they diminished the pedestrian culture on campus, and declared they would support a ban of the delivery vehicles.

When asked if they thought the robots were needed on campus, 66 percent of respondents said they were not, 23 thought they were, and the final 11 percent were ambivalent. Similarly, 45 percent stated they would approve a ban of robots, 30 percent said they would not, and the final 25 were ambivalent.

Many respondents left negative comments about the robots’ continued presence on campus.

One student wrote: “They’re ugly and we’re capable. Get rid of the robots. Let friends support each other, let students learn time management, let bodies get fresh air.”

Another noted the incongruence of the ban on scooters and the continued allowance of the robots: “It seems hypocritical for the university to ban electric vehicles for students while remaining perfectly happy to continue profiting off of [the robots] itself.”

Some responses merely reflected the distantly amused attitude most students have towards the vehicles: “The presence of Grubhub robots



Image by Pexels

on campus is barely noticeable and only really provides opportunity for amusement. I’d be disappointed to see them go.”

Another said, “I’ve never known anyone that uses them, mostly they just exist as funny characters that people will mess with.”

Other students and athletes pointed out the benefits of the delivery method: “I don’t use them every week, but they are definitely worth having in my opinion. I’m glad there’s a cheaper alternative to DoorDashing for days when I simply don’t feel like getting out of my dorm.”

Some noted the help the robots give to sick or busy students: “While people take advantage of the robots, using them for convenience instead of necessity, they are a great addition and arguably necessary. For example, if a student is sick and can’t make it to the dining hall, or if they are cramming for a test and otherwise wouldn’t eat, the robots are convenient and a great resource, especially for the busy college student.”

For campus cafe and restaurant workers, however, the Grubhub robots can be a source of added stress and inconvenience to the day. Kali Stalboerger, a student worker at Au Bon Pain, told the *Rover* that the robots can disrupt

the normal flow of work in the eateries: “The robot orders can definitely be annoying, since loading them stops the flow of the in-person pickup orders being given to customers and of sales being made in the front of house.”

Stalboerger continued, “Personally, I don’t think I’d necessarily support a robot ban, especially because of their convenience when people are sick around campus. ... There are also other circumstances when having Grubhub robots makes a lot of sense, like in recent weeks when we have had subzero temperatures.”

She added, “However, I wish people would not use them when they could just as easily come pick up orders in person. It would definitely help me not to have to bring as many orders out and disrupt the rhythm of preparing orders inside.”

Others have noticed a number of malfunctions in the robots’ deliveries, such as missed or late deliveries. Twenty percent of surveyed respondents reported they have noticed a decline in the efficiency of the robots, and others commented that the machines presented a danger on campus: “They are also kind of dangerous to people who use bikes—I’ve almost gotten knocked over by a robot who couldn’t sense me,” one

respondent noted.

Organizations have been founded on campus to address the concerns raised about the robots.

Notre Dame students Patrick McFarland and Davide W. Thompson, recognizing the faultiness of the Grubhub delivery system, founded CARI in 2024, a food delivery app that offers cheap, reliable, and personal food delivery. Run by college students for college students, CARI gives flexible employment opportunities for students through bike delivery and ensures dependable food service.

The petition in favor of banning the Grubhub robots is still active and can be viewed online.

Lucy Spence is a sophomore from northern Virginia majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies and piano performance. Her favorite pastime on campus is riding the Grubhub robots, so she personally would be sad if they were outlawed. Send her other transportation ideas at lspace@nd.edu.

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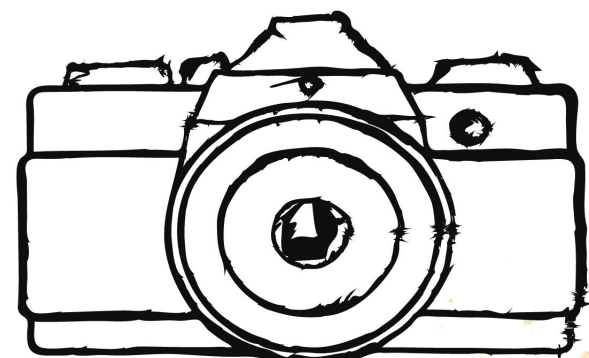


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If you are interested in joining the *Irish Rover* photography team, contact ndirishrover@gmail.com





LA Wildfires

continued from front

that my house survived, many of my friends were not so lucky. I personally had to evacuate in a hurry, originally thinking the fire was only a few minutes away from destroying my neighborhood since the blaze was so massive.”

Wardhana, a resident of Dunne Hall, expressed the support he received from Notre Dame and his hall community. He said, “Through it all, I received support through all of my friends, dorm mates, the school, and even my rector who sent words of support. They definitely brought positivity through such a stressful time.”

Graduate student Keaton Rodgers evacuated his family home in Santa Monica, California. He told the *Rover*, “The emails I received gave me a sense that the Notre Dame community was looking out for me even if I wasn’t affected nearly as much as others. I was thankful for some friends and professors that reached out to ask how my

*Image from pixabay*

family was doing. This meant a lot to me.”

Organizations within the university offered resources, services, and prayer opportunities to Notre Dame students and community members from the Los Angeles area. In an email to its members, the Notre Dame California Club wrote, “Our hearts pour out for everyone who has been affected by the recent LA area wildfires. We also cannot understate the difficulty of being away from home at this

time, unable to directly assist our families and communities ...”

The email contained an invitation to a Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart dedicated to “those affected and the recovery efforts.” It also included links to the University Counseling Center and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority.

In addition to its network-oriented support, students and members of Notre Dame alumni club have responded to the crisis by serving members of the greater

Los Angeles community through donation drives and volunteering.

Notre Dame’s Alumni Association provided outreach to Notre Dame families and other residents of the affected areas. “The ND Club of Los Angeles set up donations and led in-person volunteering opportunities. They collected gift cards for ND students and alumni who lost their homes in the fires,” Rodgers said.

Toro described his volunteer efforts within his hometown: “Before I returned to Notre Dame, my younger sister and I spent the last days of our winter breaks volunteering in St. Andrew’s—the K–8 school we both attended—helping sort donations from other St. Andrew’s families.”

He continued to reflect upon the Catholic response to the fires. “It was heartbreaking to see that almost 40 percent of the families at St. Andrew’s, many of whom I knew, had lost everything in the fires. However, seeing our

Catholic community unite to support the most vulnerable in such tough times gave me hope in our faith,” Toro remarked.

He continued, “There’s a perception of Los Angeles as a ‘godless’ city, but it’s actually the largest archdiocese in the United States, and from that weekend onwards, the LA Catholic community has demonstrated a beautiful example of what true love of God and neighbor look like in harshest times.”

The Notre Dame Club of LA is also collecting donations for Notre Dame students and alumni impacted by the fires. The donation link can be found on their website.

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WRITE FOR THE ROVER, EMAIL MCANADY@ND.EDU

Football Season Emphasizes Culture, Faith

Students express pride after historic football season

KAYLEY LUFRANO

Staff Writer

The Notre Dame Fighting Irish began the 2024 season with a deep incorporation of faith under the leadership and example of head coach Marcus Freeman. In addition to his emphasis on character formation, Freeman led the team to the College Football Playoff, culminating in the program’s first National Championship appearance since 2013.

Freeman, a father of six and a recent convert to Catholicism, has made family and faith the cornerstone of the program by hosting holiday events, reinstating the pregame Mass tradition, and supporting a player-led Bible study, helping to nurture a team culture of humility and trust in God.

Prior to his conversion to Catholicism, Freeman reinstated the long-standing team tradition of attending mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart prior to kickoff, a practice that had been removed in 2009 under Brian Kelly’s tenure as head coach. In a 2022 interview in the *National Catholic Register*, Freeman said, “So, to me, what better time is there to go have Mass? What better time to be able to really be on the edge of your seat to get every word that comes out of the priest’s mouth and to be as close to God as you can?”

*Image by Notre Dame Fighting Irish*

Throughout the season, and especially during the playoffs, fans noted the strong team culture promoted by Freeman and exemplified in the ongoing Peacock TV series “Here Come the Irish.”

The campus community was ecstatic as students, alumni, and fans set out for the championship game in Atlanta, Georgia. Freshman Lily Joy Santos described the atmosphere in the city: “The energy was insane. There’s just something about yelling ‘Go Irish!’ to a bunch of random people in green walking by and them yelling it back—everything was just so exciting.”

Sophomore Keiran Lobo also attended the game, and he described this spirit in a pregame interview with the *Rover*:

“The fact that we’re here for this right now is pretty special. It’s an exciting time to be at Notre Dame.” Fellow student Katiebelle Thompson added, “It’s my senior year, so I’ve seen the team through some kind of rough seasons, and seeing them make it this far felt so exciting. And I was just very proud of all the work they did to get to this point.”

The Irish faced the Ohio State Buckeyes in the National Championship game after a record-breaking year and near-spotless record. Despite a steady and promising opening drive, the Irish slowed down as the Buckeyes dominated on both sides of the ball. Despite a second half resurgence from Notre Dame, the Buckeye lead proved insurmountable, and Ohio State

triumphed 34–23.

Though they suffered a disappointing loss, the team maintained its characteristic loyalty to the traditions of the school. As the red and white confetti filled the stadium, the Irish joined their fans in singing the *alma mater* with their heads held high, facing the crowd.

Lobo reflected, “The *alma mater* is such a powerful moment. Even if we win or lose, we sing it with so much pride. It shows what makes Notre Dame special.” Freshman Samantha Lehman agreed: “[It’s my] favorite part of every single game. Win or lose, the fact that we always sing it with so much pride is pretty special.”

Notre Dame quarterback Riley Leonard, who has been a model of faith, perseverance, and humility all season, did not miss the opportunity to glorify God in the loss. Despite his evident disappointment, Leonard said in the post-game interview: “I’m happy to praise Jesus in the lowest of lows as well.”

Lehman observed, “The team’s humility and trust in God is what sets them apart.”

The university’s unwavering support for its football team followed the players back to campus, where the university hosted a “The Boys are Back!” welcome. In spite of bitterly cold weather, students, fans, and families lined the bus route along the streets of campus to congratulate the Irish on an

incredible year. The fans displayed signs and cheered as the team drove by, showing their support in both the highs and lows of the season.

Thompson, who attended, said, “I wanted to recognize all the team’s achievements. Seeing them make it this far felt so exciting, and I wanted to cheer them on as they came back home.” She continued, remarking how moments like this display what she loves most about the university: “I mean, we do have the saying ‘God, Country, Notre Dame’—it really is a second family [where] we all come together to support each other through wins and losses.”

Athletes and fans shared the familial sentiment. In a post-game press conference, team captain Jack Kiser, the record holder for the most games played at Notre Dame, reflected on his six years and highlighted the “character” of this place. “It’s the people that have made this place different.”

Notre Dame is set to begin the 2025–2026 football season at Miami, on August 31, 2025.

Whether it’s about faith, family, or football, **Kayley** would love to hear from you at klufrano@nd.edu.



Basilica Reliquary Chapel Reopens Following Renovation

Chapel showcases relics of saints, Virgin Mary

LYDIA POE

Religion Editor

In a project blending history, devotion, and design, the Basilica of the Sacred Heart has reopened its newly renovated Reliquary Chapel, creating a welcoming and intentional space for visitors to connect with hundreds of saints the collection offers.

In 2019, Tim and Mary Sullivan wished to foster devotion to the saints by highlighting the relics and establishing the Sullivan Family Saints Initiative. The project, after three years of design, saw first signs of construction in the spring of 2023, with the final chapel dedication in September 2024.

Duncan Stroik, Notre Dame architecture professor and Principal Architect for Duncan Stroik Architects, stated the Sullivan Family specifically asked for a Gothic style design. “I never had a client that asked me for a specific style design before,” Stroik noted, “Whatever we did had to be beautiful, had to be worthy, had to be appropriate for the saints and the relics, and had to fit in with the glorious interior of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart; we would try to make this the most beautiful chapel on campus.”

The greatest change to the Reliquary Chapel is its new orientation. Previously tucked away, the space is now prominently visible from the nearby Lady Chapel, drawing visitors in as soon as they enter the Basilica, with new, shallower display cases and a large central shrine section designed with mahogany wood and verde marble.

Father Brian Ching, C.S.C. mentioned, “The old chapel was oriented in such a way that it was not immediately



Image by the Irish Rover

obvious what was in it until you stepped into it; and the way the cases were designed, you were always a bit far from the relics themselves.”

After considering many different options, the design team decided an alphabetical layout would be the most helpful and user-friendly to make the relics more approachable for both first-time visitors and those familiar with the collection.

The collection houses 1,618 relics from 784 saints, with three notable additions in recent years: a relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati (both set to be canonized in 2025), and St. Gianna Beretta Molla. Among the most cherished pieces in the collection are a fragment from the manger where Christ was laid, pieces of the belt and veil of the Blessed Virgin, and St. André Bessette, C.S.C.

The renovation includes the creation of an online database, allowing visitors to search

the collection remotely. This modern addition ensures even those unable to visit the basilica in person can engage with the relics and learn more about their significance.

Stroik’s design for the central piece drew inspiration from the golden dome, Bernini’s Lady Chapel altar, and the basilica bell tower. This section highlights the True Cross and all twelve apostles and features an effigy of early Christian martyr St. Severa below.

The renovation project was a significant collaborative effort involving the basilica’s leadership, the C.S.C. superior, Duncan Stroik Architects, and various departments at the University of Notre Dame, including the Office of Facilities, Design, and Operations (FDO), Office of Development, and the McGrath Institute for Church Life.

Fr. Ching emphasized that “the team of people who came together to help us

create something is not only beautiful, but whose beauty points to something bigger than itself. Everyone who worked on this project had a deep understanding of how important this was.”

He continued, “The new chapel is certainly a beautiful space, but its beauty helps us to relate to the great cloud of witnesses we have in the saints.”

Stroik noted that Tom Stroka and Caroline Cole, Notre Dame architecture graduates, played a key role in the heavy lifting during the design process, and, although “it took many years to do the project, it’s all worth it and worth waiting for.”

Stroik specified some challenges that arose during the design process when considering the symmetry in an asymmetrical room, traffic flow during football weekends, maintaining the stained glass window visibility, and creating a central focus in the center.

“We were excited to propose something that would help the chapel feel like it was always there. My goal is that people go there, and say that, ‘Fr. Sorin put this in,’ that would give me great pleasure if people thought it was original because the point was that it was designed to be a traditional part of the basilica,” Stroik said.

Since the renovation’s completion, feedback from visitors has been overwhelmingly positive. Many have expressed awe at the beauty of the space, noting the quality of the design and craftsmanship. “People are stunned by the sheer beauty of the space, the quality of the design and millwork, and grateful for the opportunity to pray with the saints,” Fr. Ching stated.

“My family came to visit me, and after Mass at the basilica, we found ourselves drawn to

spending most of our time in the newly renovated reliquary,” Grace Katsekis, a junior biology major, told the *Rover*. “The display was magnificent. It was truly a peaceful experience for myself and my family to be in the presence of so many blessed saints’ relics. We each used the guide to find relics of our confirmation saints, it was the highlight of our day.”

“As far as Notre Dame projects go, it’s kind of small, right?” Stroik reflected. “It’s not a football stadium or new science building or new dorm. But yet, it’s a little gem, and it’s in our heart of the university, at the chapel and basilica.”

Looking ahead, Fr. Ching speculated that while the Reliquary Chapel renovation marks a significant milestone, it is not the last update for the Basilica. “We’ve been slowly taking out sections of pews, refinishing them (sanding and staining) and replacing them,” he shared. “There might be a few other things around the corner, but time will have to tell.”

Excluding Mass times, the reliquary can be viewed during the basilica’s hours, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Lydia Poe, a junior in finance and management, just claimed the prestigious title of second-to-last in her family’s CFP bracket challenge (thanks, Notre Dame). Now she’s bracing for March Madness to crush her hopes all over again. Feel free to send sympathy, mockery, bracket tips, or a well-timed “I told you so” to lpoe01@saintmarys.edu.

Trump Sentenced Without Penalty

Drawn-out hush money case ends

COLIN HEIL

Staff Writer

Amere 10 days before the inauguration, Donald Trump was sentenced to unconditional discharge on January 10 following his highly publicized and lengthy trial. The initial ruling by the court was handed down in May 2024 when Trump was found guilty on 34 felony counts relating to hush money payments to pornography actor Stormy Daniels. These payments were under scrutiny, as they were classified as legal fees when reimbursed by Trump’s attorney, Michael Cohen.

With the case having been drawn out substantially by Trump’s lawyers, involving the U.S. Supreme Court multiple

times in their challenges, the delayed sentencing came at a unique time. As the U.S. Constitution outlines, the Supreme Court “has never considered a case addressing whether a sitting president could be prosecuted” because the consensus has been that they enjoy immunity, but in this instance, the question was how to apply that logic of “absolute immunity” to an incoming president.

In the end, New York Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan gave Trump “a sentence of unconditional discharge, which includes neither jail time nor any other restriction that might impede Trump after his inauguration.”

Notre Dame students who

followed the lead-up to the election and its tumultuous aftermath shared their thoughts on the sentencing with the *Rover*. Sophomore Kevin Andrews expressed, “While I appreciate setting the precedent of finishing a case through, the hush money case was a reflection of Manhattan [District Attorney] Alvin Bragg’s political motivation from its inception.”

Bragg was present for the sentencing “in the gallery,” and has been accused by many of having political motivations, including by fellow Democrats. Former New York governor Andrew Cuomo said, “If his name was not Donald Trump and if he wasn’t running for president—I’m the former AG [Attorney General] of New

York—I’m telling you that case never would’ve been brought.”

Andrews continued, saying “Merchan’s sentencing of an unconditional discharge only allows for Trump’s adversaries to have a sound bite. ... Ultimately, the handling does not bring unity to a deeply divided nation.” Judge Merchan felt differently and emphasized that “it was the premeditated and continuous deception by the leader of the free world that is the gravamen of this offense,” and that the case was far from an overreaction to the alleged crimes.

Freshman Rodrigo Osorio commented, “Laws should apply equally to everyone, but it’s a weird situation because [Trump is] going to be the

president so realistically he can’t be in jail.” Osorio stressed the importance of laws applying to “people in power” because “what does that say to everyone else if the leaders aren’t following the laws?”

Judge Merchan took this into account in his deliberations but came to the conclusion that the “citizenry of this nation ... decided that [Trump] should once again receive the benefits of ... the Supremacy Clause and presidential immunity.” In this way, Merchan felt he was honoring a mandate by the people.

Freshman Chandler Davis expressed, “It’s alarming how the evangelical Christian

continued on pg. 8



Trump Completes Political Comeback

Executive orders mark first week back in office

SAM MARCHAND
Politics Editor

Donald J. Trump was inaugurated as the 47th President of the United States on January 20, 2025. Trump's return to the presidency following his victory in the November 5 presidential election is a historic comeback following his departure from office in 2021 and subsequent civil and criminal trials, as well as two assassination attempts.

Within hours of taking the oath of office, Trump signed a battery of executive orders. The wide-ranging orders address many of the issues Trump campaigned on, most notably immigration, foreign affairs, and ending DEI practices. He immediately withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement, which the U.S. had rejoined under Biden after Trump had left it during his first term, as well as the World Health Organization.

Trump also stayed enforcement on the suspension of TikTok's operations for 75 days pending further review. TikTok had been disabled for less than a day the Sunday evening before the inauguration, restoring services with an announcement that once in office, Trump would not enforce any penalties towards their data providers.

Keough Hall resident and TikTok connoisseur Nathan Ogden was enthused by Trump's actions, telling the *Rover*, "While I'm by no means a 'Trump guy,' I



Image by Wikimedia Commons

am thankful that somebody took initiative to not only save our app but work to increase the safety of American users on the platform."

Directly reversing actions of the Biden administration, Trump reinstated Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terror and reversed sanctions related to Israeli settlements within the West Bank, which is nominally under Palestinian jurisdiction. Hadar Hazony, a Ph.D. student in political theory and constitutional studies, described the impact of Trump's policy shift on Israeli politics, telling the *Rover*, "There is already a sense amongst people on the Israeli right that the Trump administration is going to be significantly more favorable. ... people on the Israeli right are going to feel emboldened."

Following through on campaign pledges to reform the federal workforce, Trump eliminated diversity, equity, and

inclusion (DEI) policies from federal hiring standards and set a full freeze on all hiring across the federal government. Everett Kelley, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, said, "His action is not about making the federal government run more efficiently but rather is about sowing chaos and targeting a group of patriotic Americans that President Trump openly calls crooked and dishonest."

Quinlen Schachle, a member of Notre Dame College Democrats, was disheartened, telling the *Rover*, "Trump overturning DEI hiring practices within the federal workforce displays a lack of respect towards the importance of women and people of color in the labor force." He added that the executive order demonstrates "a disregard for dismantling racism and sexism within hiring practices."

Controversially, Trump issued sweeping pardons for more than 1,500 people sentenced following the violence at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. The proclamation states that it "ends a grave national injustice that has been perpetrated upon the American people over the last four years and begins a process of national reconciliation."

Professor A. James McAdams, William M. Scholl Professor of International Affairs, told the *Rover*, "Regardless of party loyalty, anyone who thinks it's okay to pardon criminals in this particular case either doesn't understand the rule of law or has disdain for it. No rule of law, no democracy."

Sam Bley, a freshman in Keough Hall, agreed with the move, telling the *Rover*, "Trump released Americans who were falsely accused and slandered by the media."

Further, Trump's twelfth executive order titled "Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship" eliminated birthright citizenship as previously interpreted under the 14th amendment. As of publication, the order has been blocked in court by Judge John C. Coughenour of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington following a lawsuit brought by the attorneys general of 22 states.

The *Rover* reached out to faculty in the department of political science, but they declined to comment.

Put on notice by Trump's

rhetoric during his campaign, foreign leaders have taken note and have made overtures to the new administration. Japanese SoftBank CEO Masayoshi Son pledged 100 billion dollars in direct investment into the U.S., attributing this to Trump himself, saying, "My confidence level to the economy of the United States has tremendously increased with his victory." Son is also participating in a newly-announced 500 billion dollar AI development partnership along with Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI and Larry Ellison, CEO of Oracle. Additionally, Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman, in a call with President Trump, stated his desire to invest 600 billion dollars into the U.S. economy over the next four years.

Thus far, President Trump has followed through on dozens of his campaign promises less than two weeks into his second term. While still early in his term, it is clear that Trump has hit the ground running with a zeal and efficiency not seen in his first years in office.

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.

Israel and Hamas Reach Ceasefire

Long-Desired Peace Deal Comes to Fruition

KEVIN ANDREWS
Staff Writer

Just days before President Donald Trump became the 47th president of the United States and made his return to the White House, a long-awaited ceasefire deal between Gaza and Israel was reached. In the U.S., scholars have compared the ceasefire deal to the Carter-Reagan hostage deal in Iran in 1981. While President Biden has looked to take credit, applauding the work of U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, President Trump claims it was a work of his doing.

Trump posted on Truth Social saying, "This EPIC ceasefire agreement could have only happened as a result of our Historic Victory in November, as it signaled to the entire World that my Administration would seek Peace and negotiate deals to ensure the safety of all Americans, and our Allies."

Steve Witkoff, former New York real estate developer and Trump's Special Envoy for the Middle East was reportedly

instrumental in negotiating a deal with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, per Al Jazeera. This ceasefire deal seems to be a temporary breath of relief in a longstanding and ever-changing conflict between Israel and Palestine.

Following the example of then-university president Father John Jenkins, C.S.C., Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C. wrote in a note to the Notre Dame community on January 15: "And we are ever mindful of those who live amid violent conflict and war around the globe, including in Israel/Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, and elsewhere," as he launched his theme for the 2025-26 ND Forum "Cultivating Hope."

A movement toward peace seemed to be resoundingly positive as faculty and staff reacted to the ceasefire around campus.

Professor Tzvi Novick, Abrams Jewish Thought and Culture Professor of Theology, told the *Rover* about Jewish reaction to the ceasefire saying, "Most Israelis support the ceasefire even though it will mean the

release of some Palestinian prisoners convicted of terrorist killings because it will bring back the hostages and because they believe Israel has already achieved its basic war aims. The hostages' suffering has been a great open wound in Israeli society, which has perpetuated the trauma of October 7."

Novick also suggested that Trump's efforts working toward a solution should not go unnoticed telling the *Rover*, "Trump ran on a platform of ending wars, and there's no doubt that the pressure that he applied to end the conflict before his inauguration enabled the ceasefire agreement. He will get credit for his capacity to get things done, and his unconventional methods of international diplomacy will gain more credence."

Novick continued, "Ending the Gaza war is a necessary prelude to [the] expansion of the Abraham Accords, a stated goal of the incoming administration. Perhaps it will also lend a certain momentum to bringing Russia's war against

Ukraine to a conclusion."

Professor Michael Desch, Packey J. Dee Professor of International Relations, noted, "On the [one] hand, there are plenty of hardline pro-Israel folks (National Security Advisor Mike Waltz and former Senator and newly-confirmed Secretary of State Marco Rubio) who would be the Biden Administration on steroids re supporting Israel no matter what and putting the squeeze on Iran."

Desch added, "On the other hand, Trump clearly wants closer relations with Saudi Arabia and would love to claim credit for the Gaza ceasefire. My guess is that because the incoming president is in legacy mode, and the Saudis want the Gaza peace and are less hardline now versus Iran, we may still see him pulled in different directions but he'll trend toward 'let's make a deal' in Gaza."

Freshman Fritz Micko, a resident of Keough Hall, suggested "the ceasefire is a positive move in the right direction aiming to promote

peace in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East."

Junior Baumer Hall resident Gage Whitton echoed the positive sentiments of returning to peace in the Middle Eastern conflict, telling the *Rover*, "I think the deal is a positive because stopping the death from the war is a good thing."

Pro-Palestine group OccupationFreeND, the Notre Dame Jewish Club, and Professor Hussein Abdulsater in the Program of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies did not respond to requests for comment.

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.



Canadian Students React to Trudeau Resignation

Students witness end of decade-long Liberal regime

DAVID MURPHY
Staff Writer

After nearly a decade in power, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced on Monday, January 6, he would step down as leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. In his announcement, Trudeau stated his intention to remain Prime Minister until a new Liberal Party leader was chosen.

On Notre Dame's campus, the reactions of Canadian students ranged from excited to apprehensive, coinciding with a general feeling of uncertainty about the future of Canadian politics. To uncover these unique perspectives, the *Rover* interviewed several of these students.

Trudeau's announcement comes in the backdrop of growing discontent with his Liberal government, which has been in power since 2015. According to the Angus Reid Institute, Trudeau's approval rating sunk to just 22 percent, with 74 percent of Canadian voters disapproving of his performance, as of December 24.

These numbers represent Trudeau's lowest job approval rating throughout his tenure as prime minister, produced by Trudeau's deep unpopularity over several issues, including rising housing costs and unemployment—two issues associated with immigration policies carried out by the Liberal Party government. These problems have been compounded by high inflation, which in August 2024 spiked to its highest rate since 2011.

Trudeau has also faced pressure from newly elected President Donald Trump, who threatened a 25 percent tariff on Canadian goods and seemingly mocked Trudeau, referring to him as "Governor" and Canada as the potential 51st state. However, the final trigger for Trudeau's



Image from Wikimedia Commons

decision came when Canada's former Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Chrystia Freeland, abruptly announced her resignation from Trudeau's cabinet on December 16.

Her announcement, which came a day after Liberal Housing Minister Sean Fraser also resigned from Trudeau's cabinet, criticized several of Trudeau's economic priorities in the face of Trump's threats, including his plan to send 250 dollar checks to 18.7 million people, describing it in her resignation letter as a "costly political gimmick."

During his announcement, Trudeau announced that the Canadian Parliament, due to resume on January 27, would be suspended until March 24 to allow for a competitive Liberal Party leadership race to take place. Among the short-list of potential successors include Mark Carney, an economist and Liberal government advisor; Dominic LeBlanc, a close Trudeau ally and newly-appointed Finance Minister; and previously mentioned Chrystia Freeland, Trudeau's former

Deputy Prime Minister.

Following the resumption of the Canadian Parliament, all three main opposition parties claim they plan to initiate a no-confidence vote against Liberal leadership, likely kickstarting a general election this spring. The primary opposition candidate, Pierre Poilievre, appears the clear frontrunner. According to 338 Canada, Poilievre's Conservatives currently lead the second-place Canadian Liberal Party by 24 points—45 percent to 21 percent. This would give them 238 seats to the Liberal's 41, according to 338's projection model.

In their interviews with the *Rover*, several Canadian students at Notre Dame shared their thoughts on Trudeau's resignation. A Sorin sophomore from Toronto cited the sense of growing dissatisfaction with Trudeau's Liberal Party government.

"Cost of living has gone up for so many people," he explained. "[Canadians] see [Trudeau] as responsible, and him solely responsible."

The sophomore also gave his

opinion on who he would like to see replace Trudeau as party leader, citing Liberal government advisor and economist Mark Carney as a potential successor.

"I think he's probably the best leader for the Liberal Party, given that they're probably gonna become a minority and that they're gonna need a professional face, someone who's good with economics [and] can ride the ship," he stated. "That being said, I would like to see the country go in a new direction," he added.

Other students also reflected the desire for a new direction in Canadian leadership, expressing optimism at the news of Trudeau's resignation. Kerry Jiang, a Knott freshman from Vancouver, told the *Rover* he thought it was "the right decision for Trudeau to resign, so the country's economy can improve, and the overall cultural identity [of Canada] can become more unified."

Other students were more apprehensive. Carson Weber, a Sorin freshman from Toronto, shared his belief that while Trudeau's resignation represented a positive direction

for Canadian politics, it didn't fundamentally respond to the desires of most Canadian voters, indicating he would like to see a general election and change in party control.

"[Trudeau is] more so just buying time for the Liberal Party to hopefully recover before the election," Weber explained. "He's just going to eventually have another Liberal replace him until the election later this year, which a lot of Canadians are pushing to be moved up ... because they're unhappy with the leadership. By resigning, he's not really granting Canadians that wish for an election."

Weber told the *Rover* he planned to vote for Conservative opposition leader Pierre Poilievre in the upcoming general election. "I'm not a huge fan of him," Weber admitted, "but I do think that he's going to do much better than the current Liberals."

Regarding the situation as a whole, the sophomore from Sorin summarized Trudeau's resignation as the natural ebb and flow of Canadian politics.

"I think just generally speaking, historically, there's been ebbs and flows of conservatism and liberalism," he explained. "I think it's good for the country ... keeping the books and keeping various moral standings in check. They change, but they don't change too much."

David Murphy is a freshman studying political science and economics. When he is not crippled with schoolwork, he enjoys going on walks and working out in the gym. He can be reached by email at dmurph23@nd.edu.

Trump Sentenced

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church is so quick to support a man who has 34 felonies, most of which are in relation to him having relations with an adult film star." This comment was directed toward the fact that "about 8 in 10 white evangelical Christian voters" cast their ballots for Trump in the 2024 election.

Freshman Paul Masaka remarked that "since [Trump] has been elected, the people think he is capable of performing his job as president, but his charges should be sorted out after his presidency." Additionally, "[Trump] shouldn't be serving to get out of the charges."

While Masaka mentioned that the sentencing should have been postponed until after Trump's presidency, the



Image from rawpixel

sentencing was nearly blocked altogether by the Supreme Court on January 9. Trump's legal team, in a last ditch effort, appealed to the Supreme Court

to stop the sentencing process but was denied "in a narrow 5-4 ruling."

The deciding vote was Notre Dame alumnus Justice Amy

Durgin says unconditional discharge was "a great decision by the judge." He agreed "with the decision to not pursue anything further because the

Coney Barrett, "[who] cast the deciding vote along with the court's liberals and Chief Justice John Roberts." As a Trump appointee, the decision came as a shock to many, yet Trump responded with praise. In a Truth Social post, Trump said, "I appreciate the time and effort of the United States Supreme Court in trying to remedy the great injustice done to me by the highly conflicted 'Acting Justice,' referring to Judge Merchan.

Freshman Harry Durgin says unconditional discharge was "a great decision by the judge." He agreed "with the decision to not pursue anything further because the

office of the president is sacred, and the president shouldn't be prosecuted like that."

President Trump also emphasized at multiple points during the trial that it was "a political witch hunt ... done to damage [his] reputation so that [he'd] lost the election." To avoid "encroaching on the highest office in the land" as Merchan put it, inaction was the best action.

Colin Heil is a freshman studying political science from McLean, Virginia. In his free time he enjoys reading up on current events and can be found leaving the Rock/Duncan each night at closing time. He can be reached at cheil@nd.edu.



Ice Cream Mass Tradition Continues

Fisher Hall offers Holy Mass, ice cream, and camaraderie

MADELINE PAGE

Staff Writer

Every Wednesday night, candlelight fills the chapel of Zahm Hall as the men of Fisher gather for the 10 p.m. signature Ice Cream Mass. Presided by Father Greg Haake, C.S.C., the Mass is preceded by Eucharistic Adoration and Confession and now draws an attendance of nearly 40 people each week. At the conclusion of Mass, attendees move downstairs for a social hour including homemade ice cream and fellowship.

The ice cream tradition started when priests-in-residence Fr. Haake and Father Brendan McAleer, C.S.C. discovered the talent of a hall staff member in making ice cream and decided to combine his talent with a midweek opportunity for prayer and community. Ice Cream Mass became a regular event during the 2022–2023 school year, and has since become a staple within

*Image by the Irish Rover*

Fisher culture.

Ice cream flavors rotate weekly according to the discretion and creative license of their creator. Flavors range from classics such as cookies and creme, to more eccentric varieties, such as Ritz Cracker, a buttery treat with undertones of salt. Past student favorites have included butter pecan, and Batter Batter Batter, which is cake batter ice cream with pieces of cookie dough and brownie bites.

Harry Penne, a freshman in Fisher Hall, told the *Rover*

that he “knew from week one” that this signature Fisher event was a must-attend. “Ice Cream Mass truly fosters faith and fellowship,” Penne said, noting that his strengthened rapport with the men of Fisher is a direct result of the ice cream social.

Fr. Haake told the *Rover* about the effect of Ice Cream Mass on Fisher community, saying, “I look forward to this Mass every week, and it’s not just my anticipation to find out what flavor has [been] made. The enthusiasm of the students for

an encounter with Christ and community is always edifying.”

Ice cream Mass has also garnered a loyal following from students outside of Fisher. Caoilinn Flinn, a freshman from Badin Hall, has not missed one Ice Cream Mass—or flavor reveal—since the beginning of her time at Notre Dame. “There is something profound in knowing that we believe in the same God and like the same ice cream,” she shares. “Everyone comes with good intentions.”

After attending one Ice

Cream Mass upon invitation from a friend in Fisher, Carroll Hall freshman Max McNiff became a weekly participant. He is particularly moved by the “peaceful and reverent atmosphere for congregants,” as well as the unique camaraderie established over bowls of fresh ice cream.

The Fisher community welcomes you to join them for Ice Cream Mass in Zahm Hall Wednesdays at 10 p.m.

Madeline Page is a freshman studying biology. She has an unusual fondness for insects, and fancies that she is making a difference in the world by rescuing them from unfortunate circumstances. If you know of an insect in need, she can be reached at mpage4@nd.edu.



It behooves a watchdog to bark. Good, *Rover*.

What Would You Fight For

continued from front

crisis”; “Fighting for those with rare diseases”; “Fighting for NICU [neonatal intensive care unit] babies and their families”; “Fighting for religious liberty”; and “Fighting To Serve Others Before Self.”

Since the series’ start in 2007, it has become a nationally lauded project, receiving a Sports Emmy in May 2024.

One of this season’s highlighted projects, “Fighting for those with rare diseases,” features Professor Santiago Schnell, the William K. Warren Foundation Dean of the College of Science, and the story of Annie Hamilton, a Notre Dame student with Friedreich’s Ataxia.

Hamilton, a junior at Notre Dame, was diagnosed with the rare disease at the age of nine. Since then, her parents have dedicated their lives to finding a cure for Friedreich’s Ataxia.

“Notre Dame is fighting above its weight class in the rare disease space,” Annie’s father, Tom, says in the video. “It’s bringing in world class researchers and working closely with patients like Annie. ... Their patient advocacy program is teaching undergrads to be their voices and hands for those in need.”

In an interview with the *Rover*, Schnell emphasized the importance of research motivated by an understanding of human

dignity, saying, “At Notre Dame, our efforts in rare disease research and advocacy are rooted in the belief that every human life is sacred and irreplaceable. Rare diseases challenge us not only scientifically but also morally, calling us to embody the values of compassion, perseverance, and hope.”

Schnell continued, “As Catholics, we are called to cherish life, even in its most fragile forms, and to stand against solutions like euthanasia, which abandon those in need rather than embracing them with love and care. Through our research and advocacy, we seek to honor the dignity of every individual and to illuminate the nobility of the human spirit in the face of profound challenges.”

Another video this season, titled “Fighting for NICU babies and their families,” highlights the work of multiple researchers as they seek to improve conditions in neonatal intensive care units. The video describes the story of Jay and Elizabeth Tipton, NICU parents who were helped by Notre Dame’s research when their twins were born.

“We knew NICUs weren’t set up in the best way for the care of babies, so we decided to make changes,” says Doctor Bob White, a neonatologist, in the video. “We were the first NICU to provide rooms where mothers and babies could receive their

care together.”

White, who started the NICU at what is now Beacon Children’s Hospital in South Bend, worked with other Notre Dame researchers to explore how issues like hospital lighting, bedsharing, and breastfeeding affect children in the NICU and their families.

Other contributors to the NICU project include Kathleen Kolberg, associate dean of the College of Science, and James McKenna, a Notre Dame Emeritus professor of anthropology and the director of Notre Dame’s Mother-Baby Sleep Behavior Laboratory.

When asked about the scope of further work to support NICU babies, McKenna told the *Rover*, “Two big issues come to mind: the absence of adequate paid leave for parents of newborns or for taking care of elderly ill parents. The other related issue I would fight for is more active support and education for breastfeeding, obviously related to the leave issue, but deserving of more visible educational programs.”

According to many of the researchers, increasing public knowledge about such issues is essential to their research and the personal impact they hope to make. The ‘What Would You Fight For?’ project has not only helped to highlight the importance of hidden issues to

*Image by the University of Notre Dame*

its viewers, but has also served to increase funding, resources, and, most importantly, a sense of passion, for the causes they fight for.

Rachel Dubbink, a freshman computer science major, commented on the series and the issues it highlights, saying, “I think it’s special how Notre Dame is unlike any other college, with the fact that they’re willing to put their money towards protecting God’s creation and the dignity of human life.”

Dubbink continued, “I think them being so open about it and willing to broadcast it at their football games for all to see really just sets the stage for what everyone else should be doing ... protecting life at all stages, since it’s all God’s creation and we’re called to care for it and protect it.”

Another student, a freshman

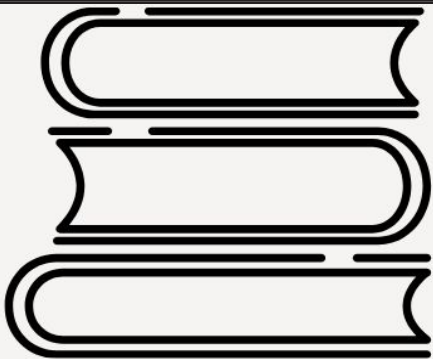
anthropology major, commented on the diversity of issues covered by the series, saying, “I appreciated the broad scope of fields that the series focused on. I was especially struck by the ‘Fighting for religious liberty’ segment because it highlighted the importance of solidarity and using Catholic principles to fight for social and political justice.”

“What Would You Fight For?” is set to continue in the next year, with new videos airing during the upcoming football season.

Abby Strelow is a freshman theology major who wrote an entire article but couldn’t think of a byline for it because she was tired. Help her out at astrelow@nd.edu.



Michael Canady <i>Editor-in-Chief</i> Pick: “The Arena” (G. K. Chesterton) G. K. Chesterton wrote a poem about Notre Dame football? Yep. Written in 1930 following his attendance at the dedicatory game of the stadium, this short work compares the intense gameday action to the bloody gladiator games of the Colosseum, another stadium with a golden statue nearby. But instead of killing for a pagan emperor, the Fighting Irish—the “Gladiators of God”—play for “Our Lady of the Victories, / The Mother of the Master of the Masters of the World.” A proposition for the university: Make this required reading for all Notre Dame freshmen, and put it on a plaque in the stadium. It would be so hype.	Bridgette Rodgers <i>Executive Editor</i> Pick: <i>PRAY: The Story Of Patrick Peyton</i> (Family Theater Productions) <i>PRAY</i> is a beautiful film documenting the life of Venerable Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., telling the story of his prolific life and witness with both acute accuracy and vivid scenery. After his ordination as a priest in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in 1941, Fr. Peyton devoted the rest of his life to the apostolate of prayer and the family, becoming a notable public figure. The film highlights the vast extent of his work, including the creation of a radio show and other media programs, hosted by famous Hollywood stars such as Bing Crosby, Ronald Reagan, and Frank Sinatra. On air, celebrities prayed the rosary and reminded people of Fr. Peyton’s slogan: “The family that prays together stays together.” <i>PRAY</i> is a must-see film for any Notre Dame student seeking to discover more about the saints and Notre Dame’s history.
Lucy Spence <i>Managing Editor</i> Pick: <i>Lord Peter Wimsey Mysteries</i> (Dorothy Sayers) If you’re looking for an entertaining read that’s digestible enough for a post-finals state of mind, Sayers’ brilliant and humorous series of mystery novels is the perfect choice. Set in the decades following the Great War, the stories follow the eccentric life of Lord Peter Wimsey, an upper-class English aristocrat whose unusually capable brains aid him in his personal hobby of sleuthing. Romance takes shape in the character of Harriet Vane, an intelligent, independent, and stubborn mystery novelist. Sayers blends ingenuous plot, witty prose, and literary backdrop in this wonderfully fun series that moves from the back alleys of London to the quiet halls of Oxford. For lovers of Wodehouse’s Jeeves, this editor can assure you that the austere butler lives on, this time in the shape of Wimsey’s man Bunter.	Clare DiFranco <i>Campus Editor</i> Pick: <i>Conversation with Christ</i> (Peter Thomas Rohrbach) <i>Conversation with Christ</i> is a short, practical guidebook on the principles of meditative prayer. Based largely on the writings of St. Teresa of Avila, the book outlines an effective approach to mental prayer in addition to the steps that can be taken to avoid aridity and distraction during time spent in silent prayer. This book is an excellent guide that will aid anyone in their prayer life, regardless of the stage at which they are in their faith journey. At the bottom line, everyone is called to relationship with Christ, and this is done by knowing who He is through daily, heartfelt conversation.
Caleb Vaughan <i>Campus Editor</i> Pick: <i>Hillbilly Elegy</i> (J. D. Vance) The harrowing memoir of the upbringing of America’s newest Vice President, J. D. Vance. Vance’s troubled youth testifies that the American Dream is still alive, the poorest in this country can still rise to the very top. His father was never present, his mother was cripplingly addicted to drugs, and yet Vance managed to piece his life together through marine discipline. This learned discipline and his natural aptitude propelled Vance through university where he graduated <i>Summa Cum Laude</i> in under two years with a double major and then onto a Juris Doctor from Yale. For the hillbillies he grew up with, an ivy league degree is treated as no less a fantasy than Harry Potter, and yet, he achieved. I have great hope that Vance’s background will make him a firm yet compassionate vice president and fierce defender of the disenfranchised, especially the unborn.	Elizabeth Mitchell <i>Culture Editor</i> Pick: <i>Kristin Lavransdatter</i> (Sigrid Undset) A Norwegian classic, Sigrid Undset’s <i>Kristin Lavransdatter</i> is a work guaranteed both to captivate as well as transform. The novel traces the life of a young girl named Kristin, as the reader is not only invited into the heights of her girlish revels and the ever-intoxicating allure of love, but also the raw reality of the unforeseen and tragic. It is in such moments that Undset demonstrates most powerfully the true nature of the Cross. Far from being an abstract symbol of a distant realm, for both Undset and Kristin, the Cross does not mask the sheer brutality of its nature, yet it remains nonetheless an unforeseen means of sweetness. Even devastating moments such as bearing the responsibility of your own mistakes, losing a parent, and confronting the reality of death are transformed in its rays. Harshly realistic, yet mystically hopeful, <i>Kristin Lavransdatter</i> is a strikingly beautiful insight into what it means to be human.
Lydia Poe <i>Religion Editor</i> Pick: <i>The Court Jester</i> (1956) <i>The Court Jester</i> (1956) is a comedic masterpiece—where mistaken identities and false pretenses create a delightfully hilarious and charming film. Hawkins, a bumbling everyman roped into overthrowing a tyrannical king, spends most of the film stumbling through plots, as if he happened to wander onto a medieval theatre set. What could go wrong? In the process, he becomes tangled in a series of misunderstandings, being mistaken for the king’s jester, an assassin, the princess’s suitor, and later, even knighted. <i>The Court Jester</i> embraces chaos and the glory of the underdog, suggesting how, sometimes, the world mistakes your cluelessness for brilliance. Maybe it’s time to stop stressing and start tripping through life with a little more confidence. If Hawkins can do it, so can we.	James Whitaker <i>Humor Editor</i> Pick: <i>Knock Knock Jokes For Kids: 365 Jokes for Each Day (and Holiday) of the Year</i> (2023) Deemed a holiday-specific joke book, this classic boasts to contain a year’s worth of “side-splitting one-liners,” despite the fact that the knock-knock joke is traditionally a five-line set-up. The listing for the book on Amazon specifies that the ideal age range is kids four–six and seven–nine. We highly recommend that children in the formative months between six and seven avoid the book’s contents. The book’s anonymous author posits that a deep engagement with the text will help readers to become “the hero of the lunchtime hangout.” The work’s opening pages are sure to grip any reader for a year’s worth of comedy: “Knock knock. Who’s there? Lenny. Lenny who? Lenny in, it’s getting cold!” Available for 4.85 dollars on Amazon.
Will White <i>Webmaster</i> Pick: <i>Attacks</i> (Erwin Rommel) <i>Attacks</i> by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel recounts the exploits of the feared German general during the First World War. Covering his experiences as a junior officer in campaigns that range from France to the Italian Alps, it is an instructive memoir by a highly effective officer. Highlighting the importance of aggression, tempo, and proper fire support in both offensive and defensive operations, it is an outstanding example of good junior leadership and infantry operations at the battalion level and below. Despite fighting as our enemy in two world wars and over 75 years ago, Rommel still has much to teach any leader today—military or otherwise.	Sofia Fair <i>Social Media Coordinator</i> Pick: <i>All the Light We Cannot See</i> (Anthony Doerr) Whether you’re in a World War II phase or looking for a quickly moving, substantial read, <i>All the Light We Cannot See</i> is the perfect journey through time and space. As it follows the lives of blind French teenager Marie-Laure and German soldier Werner from childhood into wartime, readers experience the tension between allegiance to country and family. Switching between the characters’ perspectives, this story highlights the goodness of knowledge and the power of truth in bringing people together. Follow up the enlightening read with the four part Netflix series, inspired by Doerr’s vivid storytelling and loveable characters.



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Lady Democracy, Dead at 249

Who Can Replace Her?

RALPH EMERSON SLINKWORTH
Staff Writer

At noon on January 20, 2025, Lady Democracy quivered, groaned, and finally collapsed onto the floor, dead at last. Why was this grave occurrence not picked up by the news, you ask? Well, as it turns out, it was. Every channel from C-SPAN to CNN shamelessly aired Lady Democracy's demise for the masses. Commentators from certain disreputable stations like Fox News were even rumored to crack a smile and nod adoringly, while Lady D publicly kicked the bucket.

I am speaking, of course, about Donald Trump's coronation as ruler of America, the Gulf of America, Greenland, and the Panamaga Canal. This coronation (in case you have a bad nose for leftwing metaphors) was also Democracy's death. What makes King Donald's reascendence so mind-boggling is that Americans were warned of the consequences months ahead of election day. Our nation's Preordained, Misinformation-Loathing, Mainstream, and Sacred Voices (Pelosi, Obama, Clinton, etc.) warned us that a Trump victory would shove a dagger deep into Democracy's ribs and twist it like an apple corer. Heedless and heartless,



Image edited by the Irish Rover

the American people voted for Trump anyway. And so, here I am writing Lady Democracy's obituary (in pencil, because pencil doesn't bleed when hit by falling tears).

Democracy's tragic passing strikes a nation still reeling from

global warming, monkeypox, and most of all from the Capitol bathrooms' reversion to archaic gender orthodoxy. Left in the rubble, Americans must now find a replacement for Lady Democracy. An obvious frontrunner seems to be Melania

Trump, whose devastating face-card glowered under a low-slung hat on Monday. The hat, as round and beautiful as a vinyl edition of "YMCA," exemplifies Melania's fashion *bona fides* and regal spirit. Should the First Lady have tumbled prematurely from TrumpForce One on her way into Washington, her hat's saucer-like brim would have floated her down as light as a feather.

Enough about the hat. The point is, Melania should be our new Lady Democracy. Aside from her personal style, Melania's birth in a communist land and subsequent hunt for republican shores demonstrates her deep commitment to representative government. Considering the late Lady D lived to 249 years of age, some might question Melania's longevity. This is rubbish. Her aforementioned husband Donald has only just begun his second kingship at the age of 97, meanwhile the average age in Congress is now 128. Clearly, Americans (and I would bet Slovenian-Americans) are living longer and longer. Melania is a safe, sustainable choice.

As an Unsacred but Impartial Voice, I must also mention Melania's chief rival for the perilous role of Lady Democracy. This would be the venerable Bishop Mariann Budde. Saint

Budde received laurels from the ashes of the liberal media this week after she gave a profound if scripturally dubious sermon to Trump. Budde, who never took a Notre Dame logic class, lauded the virtues of subjectivity and seemed to argue that multiple opinions can be simultaneously valid. Sources tell us that Trump whispered back, "Some are more valid than others." This also incidentally happens to sum up his immigration policy.

I digress. Regardless of your Melanian or Buddest affiliations, I trust you will share my dismay at the passing of Lady Democracy. Anyone who surpasses 200 years of age should at least be respected if not wept for. However long you choose to weep, know there is light at the end of the tunnel, and always write in pencil—unlike Democracy, it never bleeds.

Slinkworth is a junior anthropology major from Grand Rapids, Michigan. He enjoys painting allegorical scenes of populist leaders wreaking havoc on ideal Liberal states. In his spare time, he canvases for unpopular Democratic candidates. He cannot be reached.

Pilgrimage Trip Determined by Gladiatorial Fight

Combat mandatory for participation in pilgrimage

KATIEBELLE THOMPSON
Staff Writer

Students were concerned yesterday when they received an email from the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture (dCEC). "Your application to the Rome Pilgrimage has been found satisfactory," the digital scroll read. "In addition to attending preparatory lectures, there are other mandatory activities to complete before our departure. Your presence is requested in the Flannerian Amphitheater, one week from today, for a hands-on learning session focused on Roman history. This is mandatory, and any who refuse are unworthy of going on pilgrimage to the holy city of Rome."

Notre Dame student Exavior Andersonii was unsure what exactly he would be doing in the arena. "When I arrived, Phil just threw bronze armor to me, and I got to pick a weapon from the dCEC's martial supply closet. I went with the Pompeiian gladius because it has a pommel and a wood handguard, and those add a nice heft to the weapon."

Once in the arena, Andersonii found himself in a one-on-one combat with fellow student Max D. Meridius, who wielded

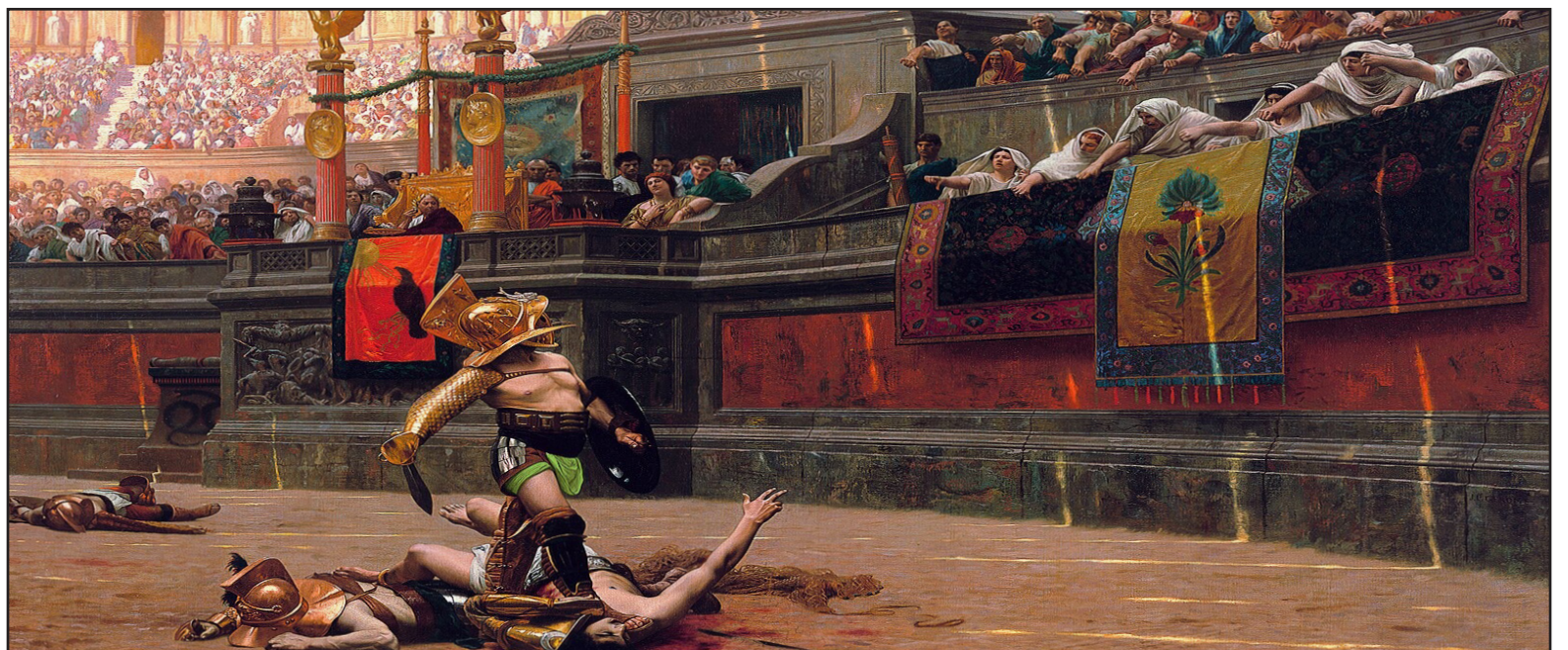


Image edited by the Irish Rover

a longer spatha sword.

From an alcove above, after the preliminary blowing of horns, the two discovered they were meant to fight each other in front of dCEC staff; the winner would keep their spot on the coveted Rome pilgrimage, while the loser's fate would be uncertain. A vigorous duel ensued, with Andersonii receiving several hits on the shoulder, and Meridius elegantly dodging Andersonii's jabs. Meridius also managed to hit Andersonii's heel, at which point he collapsed to the ground and began to fight on his knees.

At the last moment, Meridius maneuvered his opponent right into a trap, blade against the jugular, whence Andersonii dropped his sword and raised a finger, begging for mercy.

The distinguished elite of the dCEC Fall Conference looked on the fight with seeming approval, while the interns served grapes, honeyed dates, and olive oil focaccia for them to enjoy during the fight. Trader Joe's peanut butter cups were also provided. The eldest dCEC board member gave a thumbs up and uttered "mitte," signaling the end of the fight.

Andersonii was dismissed in tears, having lost his position on the trip, and was returned to the dCEC lounge for treatment by pre-med Sorin Fellows, while Meridius advanced to the next round to defend his prize. Meridius seemed ambivalent about his victory; when reached for comment, he only said, "Are you not entertained? Are you not entertained?!" in a loud voice.

Next week's mandatory pre-trip activity, according to insiders, is supposedly a naval battle on St. Joe lake.

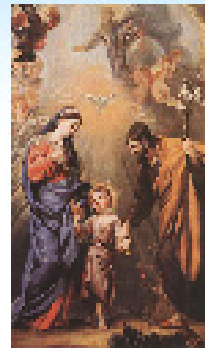
Katiebelle Thompson is a hardened gladiator from the edge of the empire, from the territory of Luckettsania. Her wartime epic, *De Bello Orgo*, will be published in summer of 2025, and tells the story of how one lowly intern in the Environmental Sciences department won her freedom from Organic Chemistry and conquered the wild, uncivilized lands of UNDERC. Send your order form to cthomp23@nd.edu.

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wnit.org/live

Executive Producer:
Duncan Stroik, Professor of Architecture