

DEI's New Name at Notre Dame?

DEI practices remain despite 'Catholic' rebranding

SIENNA STEPHENS
Staff Writer

In August, Notre Dame announced the renaming of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Center to the "Sister Thea Bowman Center," while Saint Mary's College followed suit, renaming its Division for Inclusion and Equity to the "Center for Belonging." Notre Dame's Office of Institutional Change also rebranded to the "Office of Belonging, Engagement, and Mission" in September.

All three announcements framed their rebranding as aligning student support services more closely with their Catholic mission and values.

These changes were announced in the wake of a January executive order by President Donald Trump, which directed federal initiatives to cut DEI-related funding. For years, DEI initiatives received significant support from federal and institutional funding, spending millions of dollars to grow their programs within different institutions, including colleges and universities.

The White House asserted that prior administrations imposed "illegal and immoral discrimination programs" in the name of DEI, which favored

"identity" over students' merit. Marking a sharp pivot in the federal stance on DEI, the executive orders placed university DEI programs under close scrutiny. Trump's executive order clarified that it applies to DEI programs "under whatever name they appear."

Harvard, after a legal dispute with President Trump, renamed its "Office for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging" in July to the "Office of Community and Campus Life." Columbia did the same, scrubbing its websites of any DEI language. The University of Pennsylvania changed its

Diversity and Inclusion website to "Belonging at Penn," according to *The Daily Pennsylvanian*.

While most universities have rebranded their DEI programs, at least in name, evidence shows that the changes only exist on the surface level. This past summer, a released video clip from the University of Iowa exposed the school's intention to continue its DEI initiatives under a rebranded guise. "We're essentially finding ways to operate around [the ban]," one school official said on camera. In addition to the Trump administration, Notre Dame has also faced pressure from Indiana

Attorney General Scott Rokita.

The announcements from Notre Dame and Saint Mary's raise questions about the motive behind the name changes: Are Notre Dame and Saint Mary's changes truly faith-driven reorientations, or subversive responses to a shifting political movement?

In an August 27 email to students and faculty, Vice President of Student Affairs Father Gerry Olinger, C.S.C. announced that the DEI office would be renamed the Sister Thea Bowman Center. Fr. Olinger wrote, "Servant of God

Sister Thea Bowman was a Black Catholic religious sister, teacher, musician, liturgist, and scholar known for her radiant joy, deep faith, and tireless commitment to unity in Christ."

Fr. Olinger continued, "Our hope is that, like Sister Thea Bowman, the Center will serve as a space rooted in faith, connection, and conviction that inspires trust, reverence, and a true sense of belonging among all Notre Dame students for many years to come."

The Sister Thea Bowman Center's website states that it "exists to provide a welcoming environment where students can foster a culture of belonging and engagement at Notre Dame." The homepage advertises other resources like the Multicultural Student Programs and Services, the Gender Relations Center, the Diversity Council, and PrismND. Similarly, the Saint Mary's Division for Belonging Center website states that the new division's work is grounded in the college's "Catholic mission and values: learning, community, faith, spiritually, and justice."

The new Sister Thea Bowman Center website also features events that are indistinguishable

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New Moreau Program Highlights Notre Dame's Catholic Character

Students praise improved course content, peer-leaders

ANDREW BLAKE
Staff Writer

This fall, Notre Dame launched its redesigned Moreau First-Year Seminar (FYS). Led by Wilsey Professor of Theology William Mattison, the revised curriculum seeks to foster deeper discussion among students and emphasizes the university's Catholic character. The new curriculum has been welcomed by professors and upperclassmen, though current first-years hold divided opinions on the program. Notre Dame first began requiring the Moreau first-year course in 2015. According to Mattison, the original Moreau course was created to replace a physical education course previously required by the university. Mattison told the

Rover, "The curriculum was not unconscionable, but it wasn't strong at all."

In the previous Moreau course, taken over two semesters, students discussed topics including root beliefs, suffering, "resume" vs. "eulogy" virtues, exclusion and barriers, race, and consent.

In designing the new Moreau curriculum, Mattison said that the university completely reconsidered the course's content. He explained, "They wanted to revamp the program and make it more fitting for a Notre Dame credit-bearing graded part of the curriculum."

New to this Moreau curriculum is the Moreau *Commonplace Book*. As Mattison told the *Rover*, "The idea is that the *Commonplace Book* would gather readings and

[provide a] space to reflect on them." He continued, "There's great voices: Aristotle and C.S. Lewis and Thomas Merton and Martin Luther King [and] Helen Keller. You got to wrestle with these voices. You can agree with them or not, but it's not a blank slate."

The new curriculum also features peer leaders, who share "testimonials" to show how course material may be applied to life as a Notre Dame student. Mattison commented that these peer leaders "might be the most successful part of the course."

Junior engineering student Owen Diamond shared his experience as a peer leader with the *Rover*, saying, "It has been deeply rewarding to reflect on my own

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Christian Persecution in Nigeria Goes Unnoticed

Students, alumni raise concerns amidst media silence

CLARE HETTICH
Staff Writer

Three weeks ago, Father Matthew Eya, a Catholic priest in Nigeria, was shot and killed while driving back to his parish. Far from remaining an isolated tragedy, this incident is part of a larger, decades-long pattern: the persecution of Nigerian Christians.

According to the *Catholic World Report*, at least 160 Nigerian priests have been kidnapped or killed in the past decade. At least 850 Christians suffer extreme conditions in jihadist camps, and three churches per day, on average, have been destroyed, looted, or shut down—largely perpetrated by Muslim terrorist

group Boko Haram. EWTN claims that more Christians were killed or kidnapped in Nigeria than in any other country in 2024.

One analysis from Notre Dame's *Under Caesar's Sword* project notes that these persecutions have been predominantly ignored by both the Nigerian government and the United Nations. The issue has also received only minimal media coverage.

Freshman Teresa Harkins told the *Rover* she had not heard any news about the persecutions outside of her high school classes: "I took AP Comparative Government and Politics and Nigeria was one of the core

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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, Lucy Spence, 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.

“For the glory of God is the living man, and the life of man is the vision of God.” — St. Irenaeus

*Image by Notre Dame Basilica*

Notre Dame's Liturgy Problem

KEPHAS OLSSON
Executive Editor

How should Catholics pray?

On Notre Dame's 'Faith' page, Notre Dame's prayer is rightly advertised: "75+ priests serving as hall rectors, administrators, and professors," "32 residence hall chapels," and "200+ Masses celebrated weekly." Masses are abundant, holy priests are everywhere, and opportunities to access the sacraments are plentiful. In this important sense, Notre Dame's Catholicism is as alive as ever.

But Notre Dame has a liturgy problem.

This problem is a difficult one to analyze and discuss, largely because the men and women that make Notre Dame's liturgies tick are good people. Some issues are easy enough to dissect, and the *Rover's* reporting often focuses on these topics: pro-abortion speakers, drag shows, and Pride Masses clearly have no place on our campus. The Mass, which presents as sacrifice the "source and summit of the Christian faith," is more important than all of these. Notre Dame boasts impressive Mass attendance, in part because of extra-liturgical initiatives which encourage dorm Mass attendance and foster community in post-Mass gatherings. These are laudable—thank God for reverent Masses, milkshakes, and for dorm Mass communities! But for all this, it's far too easy to lose sight of the true center of Christian worship. How so?

At Notre Dame, the danger is anthropocentrism, and with such a danger it is easy to mistake the symptoms for the cause. This danger manifests as liturgical abuses—from the changing of the prayers of consecration, to the frequent disobeying of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal's directives on extraordinary ministers and liturgical postures, to "lay preaching" by rectors and students, to extremely irreverent treatment of the Eucharist—but is not limited to them. These abuses are symptomatic of a generally anthropocentric approach to liturgy, wherein decisions about the Mass are made not on the basis of what is fitting for God, but what is desired by men.

Questions of liceity are simpler,

and the Church's answers to these demand our total obedience. Questions of fittingness within the bounds of the licit are much more complex. The liturgy is the Church's public prayer, "an action of the whole Christ." What does She tell us? What most fully accords to the richness of Her tradition? These questions afford an opportunity for liturgical excellence.

Undoubtedly, some students *like* hymns the USCCB has declared unfit for liturgy (six of which are in the newly purchased Gather IV hymnals), *like* holding hands around the altar during the Our Father and Consecration, and *like* standing or sitting throughout all of Mass. True, some students might feel uncomfortable with a liturgy that, per Vatican II's *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, preserved Latin language and gave Gregorian chant "pride of place" in the liturgy. Students *like* participating as extraordinary ministers—which Pope Saint John Paul II's *Redemptionis Sacramentum* laments in contexts such as Notre Dame's, and they *like* the use of pianos in liturgy—which *Tra Le Sollecitudini* explicitly forbids and Vatican II's *Musicam Sacram* forbids by implication.

The orientation of the priest at Mass vividly illustrates this dilemma. Under the *ad orientem* posture, still assumed as normative in the language of the Roman Missal, the priest leads the people East in presenting the Eucharistic sacrifice, proceeding with them towards Christ's triumphant return, traditionally in the East. Under the *versus populum* posture, the priest turns away from the tabernacle and faces the people. The *versus populum* posture is nowhere mandated by official liturgical books, and yet has become the nearly exclusive orientation at Notre Dame. Are we to march towards Christ or towards ourselves?

Ironically, those whose preference is for traditional liturgies are the only students largely not catered to; the Basilica includes little Latin in any of its liturgies, and never employs the *ad orientem* posture (which is present in three of the 200+ Masses weekly).

In St. Irenaeus' second-century work *Against Heresies*, a maxim is established: "The glory of God is the living man, but the life of

man is the vision of God." God rejoices in our humanity, but our fullest humanity is found in union with Him. This maxim might be read liturgically, too. God delights in our worship of Him, in our vision of God, in the re-presentation of the sacrifice of the Son to the Father in the Holy Mass. Unfortunately we, especially in the case of liturgy, *do not always know what is good for us*. So we must look to Christ's Church, to centuries of liturgical tradition, assuming always a posture of submissive humility, and asking always: What most suits His worship? How can we best obey His Church?

Father Joe Corpora, C.S.C. made a quip in a letter to the editor published by The *Observer* a few years ago, defending Dillon Hall's weekly "Milkshake Mass": "Years ago, there was a funny line about Notre Dame, known in many ways for its sports: 'Liturgy is an indoor sport played at Notre Dame.' Let our worship spaces all over campus be places where we welcome everyone as enthusiastically as we welcome fans in our athletic venues."

Football is perhaps an apt analogy for Notre Dame's liturgical anthropocentrism. At Notre Dame games, winning is one priority, but it is not the *only* priority: The fans count, too. So Notre Dame sells beer and pretzels, invites pilots to fly over the stadium, supports a marching band, and otherwise prioritizes both the team and its fans. In football games, this makes sense. Imagine a winning team without fans, or ideal conditions and an 0–12 season! Neither work.

At Notre Dame Masses, there is often a similar attempt. But it is incoherent. At any given Sunday Basilica Mass, to give an easy example, a churchgoer might hear vocalists, organ, piano, drums, or guitar. Genres might include Gregorian chant, hymns, gospel, polyphony, folk, baroque motets, mariachi, and modern compositions, to name a few. The result is musical whiplash, a bizarre and abhorrent medley of musical styles that jar even the deafest attendees. The implication is clear: There is no *right* musical style, so music must be made to suit everyone. The question of the fittingness of music for the Mass is almost unasked.

Some defend liturgical anthropocentrism at Notre

Dame as a means of getting people in the door. This is not a liturgical position that holds up under much scrutiny; the logical conclusion of this approach in fireworks and karaoke machines is, for most at least, a step too far. But some attempts of this sort are less extreme and more dangerous. Hymns, prayers, or homilies which mention God's justice, punishment, and final judgment might scare people off. So they are quietly done away with. God is quietly made therapeutic.

The scale of these compromises is far less important than the central question: What should our *criterion* for liturgical choices be?

Calling students to obedience and repentance is a great work of spiritual charity. This is Notre Dame's opportunity. The stakes are simply too high to afford therapeutic liturgy, so high that Cardinal Ratzinger, in his *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, described such liturgies as "a feast that the community gives itself, a festival of self-affirmation ... an apostasy from the living God, an apostasy in sacral disguise."

What can be done? As long as student voices are a priority, students' practice of personal piety and student-led dorm initiatives can effect positive change. Liturgical practices should not be chosen because students want them; they should be chosen because they express the fullness of the Church's worship. But if these practices are achieved through student activism, so be it.

The Notre Dame Liturgical Choir will perform Mozart's *Requiem* at 9:30 a.m. in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on November 2, All Souls Day. Attendees who follow the text will find that Mozart's music worships a God who is Love, but who also is Justice, and who demands nothing less of us than our entire selves. May this Mass serve to aid Notre Dame in fostering liturgies that prioritize His worship, not our desires; liturgies that are theocentric, not anthropocentric. In these lie the true fulfillment of the human person, a genuinely Catholic anthropology.

Kephas Olsson is a senior studying in the Program of Liberal Studies. Please send any questions or comments to kolsson@nd.edu.



Be Grounded in Reality

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God.” — Romans 12:2

JOHN SIKORSKI

Faculty Adviser

I recently had the opportunity to take a group of new faculty to Fr. Hesburgh’s offices on the thirteenth floor of the library. Besides the usual historic mementos—handwritten notes from politicians, pictures with presidents, and souvenirs from travels (even in an SR-71!)—I was struck anew during this visit by the most obvious objects: the books. Despite Fr. Ted’s mixed legacy, one thing is surely admirable: he was a devoted priest who was grounded in reality. These books are windows into the reality Fr. Ted sought to understand; unlike Fr. Ted, even on this campus shaped by his legacy, I worry students are losing the ability to be squarely grounded in reality.

In his office, the visitor is surrounded on all sides by books thick and thin, new and old, academic and popular. But two things struck me anew during this visit. First, the sheer diversity of topics: Churchill’s *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, treatises on the role of the laity in the world, strategies for peace building, deliberations about civil rights, and insights into aeronautics. Not only are the topics diverse—but it is also clear that Fr. Ted voraciously read these books. Being an academic, I could not resist the temptation to peruse them. We find, like relics within them, handwritten correspondences with the authors; asterisks annotating points deemed important; underlining marking significant points; question marks perhaps indicating challenge and doubt.

Fr. Ted sought wisdom and understanding by reading books, which gave him insights about the “signs of his times.” Not only the books, but also his travels, time spent in nature, encounters with popes, paupers, and presidents were all encounters with the very real. They were encounters with flesh and blood, north and south, spring and fall, poverty and wealth, life and death, sin and grace.

On October 22, the Church celebrates the Feast of Pope St. John Paul II, who reminded us in his first encyclical that there is one ultimate reality: “The Redeemer of man, Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and of history.” This radical claim is embodied in our own university mission statement. We take our inspiration from “Jesus Christ as the source of wisdom and from the conviction that in Him all things can be brought to their completion ... [presupposing]



Image by Wikimedia Commons

that no genuine search for the truth in the human or the cosmic order is alien to the life of faith.”

The difficulty with these claims, though, is that they make demands of us. There is a truth; the truth is found in the Person of Christ, who reveals the human face of God. We must be obedient to and respond to the truth. By responding to His call, not merely out of external obedience but out of an inner reorientation of our hearts, we are called to love as He loves. But this love is demanding. And it is a messy kind of love—the kind demonstrated by the saints like St. Teresa of Calcutta, who carried the maggot-infested dying to a home filled with love; and Dorothy Day, who loved little by little each day amidst the wretchedness of the urban poor; St. John Henry Newman, who battled profoundly dark bouts of depression and spiritual darkness; and St. Carlo Acutis, who offered the suffering of his cancer for the pope and the Church.

Living and loving while grounded in reality—here in a dorm, in a classroom, among a student club, and amidst faculty members—means that reality can offend, hurt, challenge, and even make us feel uncomfortable. But what happens if we don’t ground ourselves in an awareness of reality, of Christ in our midst? We will descend into the chaos that is evident in our society; the use of violence, force, and power. The imposing of my will, my truth,

my reality upon you. Political assassinations, protracted wars on global levels; on local levels, the cancellation of speakers who are deemed offensive, the “unfriending” of people on social media with whom one disagrees, and all the familiar manifestations of a culture deeply wounded and broken.

If we shirk the hard task of being grounded in reality—encountering God’s love and loving the other for his own sake, pursuing truth together—we will further descend into the imaginary world of social media echo chambers, AI-generated deep fakes (including, now, videos), cursory and shallow curiosity encouraged by a constant access to and flow of information. Turning to these modes of existence (according to my students, sometimes for eight hours a day!)—as either distractions from the hard work of dialogue, or comfortable escapes into the company of those “like us,” or relaxing diversions from the thousand pinpricks and difficulties of each day—cements us further in a world that is of our own making, and not given to us.

To live in reality is to encounter Christ and, in Him, to find one another—through disagreement, dialogue, discourse—and by means of such attentive encounter to be led more deeply into wonder and awe: wonder and awe that I am standing in front of another immortal being; wonder and awe

that this being can communicate God to me; wonder and awe that God has placed Him and me in this world together; wonder and awe that there even is a world to begin with. What a gift!

The inability to recognize the gift results in a hyper-focus on myself and my world I have created. Our university will be a training ground for highly paid utilitarian technocrats, rather than a place of encounter, where our study, teaching, research, and service embodies and sends forth a community in service to the truth—to Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church, and to the real world God has made.

Reading books, genuinely encountering others, being grounded in the world-as-it-is (with all its joys and sorrows), will enable us to genuinely work for a culture as-it-should be, but this task requires that we should be demanding of ourselves, even when others are not being demanding of us. TikTok, Sora, Instagram, Snapchat and all the like will not demand anything of us, except all that really matters—our attention and our ability to live in reality. Taking time simply to go outside on a walk, to reflect, to pray, or to stop and talk to a fellow student or professor (put the phone down!) leads us beyond ourselves to awe and wonder about the uniqueness of every individual, and perhaps even to seeing them as a gift. Awe can help us to grow in sincerity,

to show gratitude, and to admit of our need for help. Wonder can inculcate a generous spirit within us that turns our hearts toward others.

In this month dedicated to the Rosary, we would all do well to turn once again to Notre Dame, Our Lady, who was grounded in the ground of all reality. He Whom the world could not contain but Who contained the world chose to take up a home in her womb. This reality led her to respond in wonder and awe: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked with favor on His lowly servant.” That is the reality by which we should live.

John Sikorski is a founding editor of the *Rover*, a moral theologian, and an Assistant Teaching Professor in the Business Ethics and Society Program.



Moreau program *continued from front*

growth throughout my time at Notre Dame while guiding first-year students through the beginning of theirs.”

The new curriculum also requires students to choose and attend multiple co-curricular events throughout the semester. These events include tours of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, poetry readings, and campus retreats. The previous Moreau curriculum included similar activities, though they occurred during class time. Mattison explained the reason for making them co-curricular, saying, “As opposed to having a class day at Father Ted’s office and another . . . walking around and seeing the Holy Cross sites on campus, we’re trying to do things during class time that invite students to intellectually wrestle with those things.”

The initial impressions of the new curriculum have been favorable, particularly among those familiar with the prior model. Moreau peer leader David Rae told the *Rover*, “In my opinion, this new course model does a better job of meeting students where they are at and encouraging them to engage with the material and with each



Image by Moreau First-Year Seminar

other in a more personal way that I hope will shape their time at Notre Dame in positive ways.” Rae concluded, “I would have loved to have been able to take this Moreau.”

Natalie Ceonzo, who also serves as a peer leader, criticized the original Moreau course’s assignment model, specifically the usage of “QQCs,” in which students selected a quote, asked a question related to the material, and connected it to their lives. Ceonzo argued that the QQC had “no limits, no directions, [and] no wrong answers” and “ . . . if anything is game, a student only gets as much as he gives—and most of us freshmen did not give much of anything if we didn’t have to.”

Ceonzo emphasized the direction the new curriculum

provides students. “Moreau now has the ability to orient students towards not just any growth, but growth in line with the university’s Catholic character,” she explained.

In the new curriculum, students read the Congregation of Holy Cross Constitutions and writings from authors such as St. Francis of Assisi and Servant of God Dorothy Day.

Moreau faculty are similarly supportive of the change. Professor Forrest Spence, who has taught both Moreau curriculums, told the *Rover*, “I’ve always enjoyed teaching Moreau, but find that the new material and format is an easier platform to generate meaningful discussion.”

While professors and upperclassmen seem supportive

of the change, the opinions of current first-years are divided. Keenan Hall freshman Benedict Althoff told the *Rover* over email, “I have thoroughly enjoyed the Moreau program here at Notre Dame. I believe it does well to summarize the credo of the university.”

However, Althoff added, “Many times having to read and write a reflection is just another burden on top of our schoolwork. It can sometimes take awhile to read the texts, watch the videos, and write a reflection.”

Keough Hall freshman Ben Anderson was similarly conflicted. When asked his thoughts on his peer leader by the *Rover*, Anderson responded, “[Her] constant energy is nice to bring to a class that most people, including myself, view as another thing they have to do.”

In addition to their required co-curricular events, all first-year students attended “The Moreau Signature Event,” an address by Notre Dame President Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C. on the topic of hope on Tuesday, October 7.

In his address, Fr. Dowd told students to consider, “What does it mean to hope, to hope in God?” and “How can we cultivate hope on and beyond

this campus?” He compared his struggles in baseball as a child to the “slumps” encountered in ordinary life.

“It [often] takes someone to help us to snap out of these slumps,” Fr. Dowd continued. “It takes someone to help us to believe . . . that regardless of the struggle in our lives and the world around us, God will always be with us, and, in the end, God’s love wins.”

Fr. Dowd then pointed to the Blessed Virgin Mary as the exemplar of hope and called students to emulate her, saying, “She lived in an occupied land, and despite the injustice, violence, and all that her people endured, she believed.” He continued, “She leaves room for God and she leaves room for others and, because of this, she is quite literally pregnant with promise and possibility.”

Students interested in applying for a position as a peer leader can visit the Moreau First-Year Seminar website.

Andrew Blake is a sophomore in Keough Hall studying political science. He can be reached at ablake5@nd.edu.

March for Life President and Notre Dame Alumna Delivers Keynote

“Respect Life Week” promotes 2026 March for Life pilgrimage

JOSHUA BARNARD
Staff Writer

Notre Dame Right to Life (RtL) hosted its annual “Respect Life Week” the week of September 29. Programming included numerous social and spiritual activities, including a weekend retreat, Log Chapel Mass and soirée, and a bring-a-date bonfire. Jennie Bradley Lichter, president of the national March for Life, delivered the keynote address.

RtL president Anna Kelley, spoke on the purpose of Respect Life Week. In a comment to the *Rover*, she called it “a week full of events to promote a culture of life on campus through spirituality, education, and service.”

“I think Respect Life Week is a great way to engage the larger pro-life community on campus,” Kelley said. “Any and all students of the tri-campus community are welcome to Right to Life events throughout the year, but I think having a special week like Respect Life Week helps students feel especially invited in to learn more about the club, our mission, and a part of the community.”

The Catholic faith, which RtL calls “the most powerful means of bringing about change” played a major role in the week’s events. Programming began with a spirituality retreat, featuring Father Drew Clary, C.S.C. and Professor Paul Blaschko as speakers. Later in the week, Father Karl Romkema,



Image by March For Life

C.S.C., director of Old College, celebrated Mass in the Log Chapel for the RtL club and hosted an Old College soirée. Tabling events and prayer services were also offered throughout the week.

At the heart of the week’s events was keynote speaker Jennie Bradley Lichter ’04, President of the March for Life.

Lichter began by discussing the first time she attended the national March for Life—as a student at Notre Dame. A proud alumna of Lyons Hall, she described her experience attending the March for Life and the formation it brought her in propelling her mission, saying, “It was so fun to look back on that day and how

we were just so moved by the experience of being surrounded by tens of thousands of other people, and especially other young people, and surrounded by the joy of and energy of the prolife movement.”

Lichter spoke about the current state of the American pro-life movement in light of both the recent *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision and the position of the current presidential administration. She remarked that “a reach goal for the movement is to enact an abortion ban after a particular gestational age. . . . It doesn’t seem to be in the cards in the near term. At the federal level, the President has made that clear.”

Lichter expressed optimism

regarding these legal and political developments, citing numerous polls suggesting that young people are moving in an increasingly pro-life direction. However, Lichter stressed that the prolife movement must not dismiss the legal and social attacks on life that continue to occur since *Dobbs*, including recent legal losses in many states including Kansas and Montana.

Lichter described four key elements of a prolife future; “First, speak the truth boldly. Second, invite people in through the power of the transcendentals. Let them lead the way. Third, seek increased legal protections for babies in the womb and mother for life policy. And fourth, walk with moms.”

In addition to continuing the legal fight against abortion, Lichter emphasized an appeal to the transcendentals and reshaping the culture in a prolife direction through love and compassion. “Truth, beauty, and goodness speak to the heart of every person, and they cut through the noise.” Lichter called for the prolife movement to “walk with moms” and to be witnesses to the beauty of human life.

Lichter repeatedly discussed the role of young people in transforming the culture in a prolife direction. Concluding her talk with a call to prayer, she encouraged all students at Notre Dame to continue to pray and proclaim the truth boldly with love and through sharing in the gift of life. “I invite you to pray

intentionally about how you can apply your own strengths, talents and passions to the defense of the unborn . . . with God’s help and with our eyes fixed on Him who is our reason for hope, our bedrock reason for hope, we are building a culture where every life is welcomed, cherished and protected.”

Following Lichter’s speech, Notre Dame Right to Life officially opened registration to attend the 2026 March for Life pilgrimage, announcing a theme of “Marching with the Saints.” As the *Rover* reported, over 430 Notre Dame students attended the 2025 March for Life last January.

Reynaldo Guillen, an Old Collegian and director of the Notre Dame March for Life pilgrimage, told the *Rover*, “The March reminds us that every human life—no matter how small or vulnerable—is a gift worth defending with love, fortitude, and compassion. My goal is to help students recognize that our witness begins long before we reach Washington, D.C. and continues long after we return home.”

Joshua Barnard is a sophomore living in Dunne Hall. He is a philosophy-theology and history double major with a minor in constitutional studies. He can be reached at jbarnar2@nd.edu.



“Take a Second Look” Initiative Continues to Grow

Theology program offers students a new encounter with Catholicism

ABBY STRELOW

Staff Writer

Over the past two years, the McGrath Institute for Church Life (MICL) has launched the Take a Second Look (TASL) program, designed to support the university's theological pedagogy. Through extracurricular discussion groups and speaker series, the program aims to support theology professors and existing theology courses in the core curriculum as they invite students to “take a second look” at the beliefs of the Catholic Church.

According to the MICL website, the initiative aims to “persuasively engage and encourage students to ‘take a second look’ at the beauty and profundity of the Catholic faith that they thought they had left behind, outgrown, or had never considered relevant to their lives in the first place.”

A key dimension of the TASL mission is combating the rise in religious disaffiliation amongst young people by awakening theological curiosity. John Cavadini, MICL Director and Professor of Theology, told the *Rover*, “Students now are looking for something more than they were 10 years ago. But they don't know what it is that they're looking for.” He continued, “They're not planning on majoring in theology. But if you do it right, they see that theology is not just another academic discipline; it's the science of revelation. [Theology] has as its object God, as God has revealed himself, and therefore all of this beauty.”

According to Joshua McManaway, Academic Director of TASL, the crisis of student disaffiliation is caused by a twofold issue: lack of meaning and lack of community.

McManaway cited this lack of community as a reason for the



Image by University of Notre Dame Department of Theology

creation of the 200 to 300 student “supersections” of Foundations of Theology, Notre Dame's first theology requirement, taught by Anthony Pagliarini, Director of Undergraduate Studies for Theology and Associate Teaching Professor, and Father Kevin Grove, C.S.C., Associate Professor of Theology. The classes are accompanied by “Conversations of Purpose” discussion groups that are formed in residence halls, giving the students a built-in community where they can feel comfortable asking meaningful questions.

McManaway told the *Rover*, “We saw the wild success of these supersections because we created these little pockets of community. People would go to their dorms and have these discussions. ... Our thinking was that this provided people a space to actually ask the real questions, to hash it out, to raise doubts ... to think about, is this really intelligible or not?”

“We receive a lot of students who stopped learning anything about the Catholic faith in middle school, and Confirmation for them was a kind of graduation,” McManaway continued. “Imagine trying to live your life with the knowledge that you had as a 12-year-old for any other realm of your life! And

so the hope was to show [that] there's a real credibility, there's intelligibility here.”

Another critical component of TASL's mission is exposing students to the richness of the Church's teaching across a variety of disciplines, with the hope that they will integrate the truths of Catholicism into their own studies and out to the world.

An essential part of building such a culture, according to Cavadini and McManaway, is enabling different theology professors to teach from their unique skillsets, doing what they already do best.

In Pagliarini's Foundations “supersection,” the students are taught to sing Palestrina's arrangement of *Sicut Cervus*, a Latin choral motet. Timothy O'Malley, Associate Director for Research at the McGrath Institute, Academic Director of Notre Dame's Center for Liturgy, and Professor of the Practice in Theology, also assists with the initiative, teaching a popular course titled “Nuptial Mystery” on the Catholic vision of marriage.

As part of the TASL initiative, two one-credit theology courses were taught by Fr. Grove and Bill Mattison, Wilsey College Professor of Theology, in the spring semesters of 2024 and

2025. Fr. Grove's course, on *The Confessions* by Saint Augustine, required students to write their own “spiritual autobiography” in the style of the saint, while Mattison's course on the works of C.S. Lewis ended with students composing their own “Screwtape Letter.” Both classes were extremely popular, with hundreds of students filling DeBartolo 101 each week to learn about the rich heritage of the Christian intellectual tradition.

McManaway listed the classes as examples of TASL's success, saying, “It's about putting resources in the hands of very capable teachers, creating a community of practice amongst the professors who can talk about best practices in the classroom, but then really just being very hands-off and letting people do what they do best.”

While each professor takes a different approach, McManaway said, “The kind of common thread between all of the classes is on showing the credibility of the Catholic faith, the generosity of the Catholic faith, even that it's not just about having answers, but it's about the fact that you are loved and that you're made for love.”

The recent success of TASL has coincided with an increased engagement with the Catholic faith among Notre Dame students.

Last year, Notre Dame's student body saw a historic surge in conversions to the Catholic church, with a record number of 52 catechumens entering the Church through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) program.

Alongside the rise in conversions, Notre Dame's Department of Theology was ranked first in the world for the fourth year since 2020. It is also the home of

more than 800 theology majors and minors, many of whom did not originally plan on studying theology. According to Cavadini, “Somehow they're majoring or minoring because they saw something, they took a second look, or they were offered a second look, and it was persuasive to them, and they wanted to find out more.”

He continued, “Notre Dame has an impact, for good or for ill. Sometimes for ill, but a lot of times it's for good, and I want to amplify it. ... It's very difficult to change your culture negatively by denouncing something; generally speaking, you don't change things that way. If you want to change a culture, it has got to be by attraction, by persuasion, by getting people to take a second look.”

Abby Strelow is a sophomore majoring in theology and PLS who unfortunately did not buy a large enough bookshelf for her dorm room. She would like to formally apologize to her roommate for the piles of Platonic dialogues on the floor that are currently making it hazardous to walk. (Sorry.) Send her suggestions on book organization at astrelow@nd.edu.

WRITE FOR THE ROVER, EMAIL NDIRISHROVER@GMAIL.COM

DEI Programs

continued from front

from those held previously by the DEI center. Programming this year includes an LGBTQ & Allies “Welcome Back Picnic,” “Engage and Evade: How Latino Immigrant Families Manage Surveillance in Everyday Life,” and “Past, Present, and Future: Celebrating LGBTQ History at Notre Dame.”

This programming evokes memories of the “PrideFest Library Lawn Celebration,” “Immigration Week 2025,” and “GloboLGBTQ+ Film Festival” hosted in previous years by members of today's Sister Thea Bowman Center.

As in previous years, the Center also co-sponsored Campus Ministry's race-specific retreats for Asian, Black, and Latino first-year students.

The Sister Thea Bowman Center declined the *Rover's* request for an interview, both in person and over email. Saint Mary's Division for Belonging also declined to comment.

One Notre Dame sophomore worried that the new name would cause confusion. She told the *Rover*, “When you hear ‘Sister Thea Bowman Center,’ it doesn't really tell you what the office is for.” She continued, “With DEI in the name, you knew it was tied to diversity and inclusion. Now it feels less clear what the center actually does for students, especially in terms of student support.”

One freshman at Saint Mary's College, living in McCandless Hall, told the *Rover*, “It feels like you're getting stripped away from something that works to bring cultures and communities together.” She continued, “I don't

think it makes sense to change the names when the names were already there to include everyone.”

Other students, however, expressed support for the changes, saying the new names feel more welcoming and less political. A junior at Saint Mary's College said, “It feels more comforting and freeing in general because it sounds more inviting to many different groups rather than what DEI usually is interpreted as.”

Faculty members at Notre Dame also offered mixed reactions. Darren Davis, Snyder Family Mission Professor of Political Science, shared a critical perspective on DEI initiatives nationwide, telling the *Rover*, “In an ideal world, DEI initiatives would not be necessary within universities as it has created the appearance of a lack of merit and intellectual rigor, which has led to divisiveness.”

When asked about the recent rebranding at Notre Dame and Saint Mary's, Davis admitted to being unaware of the name changes, but praised the decision to name Notre Dame's center after Sister Thea Bowman. He replied, “There is great merit to acknowledging Sister Thea Bowman in this way. She is in the process of canonization. As a religious sister, teacher, musician, liturgist, and scholar, she made major contributions to the ministry of the Catholic Church. Because of Sister Bowman's accomplishments and contributions to the Church, I do not see this as political.”

While the center has been renamed, no evidence of deeper changes to programming is present. Recent alumnus and former board member of Democratic-Socialist group SolidarityND, Connor Marrott, told the *Rover*,

“By renaming the center while maintaining its mission, Notre Dame is basically saying DEI is just as Catholic as banning birth control or invoking one of the many ‘religious exemptions’ the university likes to pull out when it's convenient.” Marrott approves of the change.

Sienna Stephens is a freshman from Cleveland, Ohio, studying Secondary Education and English. When she is not catching up on work or doing her readings for classes, you can find her around campus drawing in her sketchbook or iPad. To see her latest artwork or to get in contact, you can reach her at sstephens01@saintmarys.edu.



“Those About to Live Salute Thee”: Chesterton’s Enduring Wisdom for Our Lady’s University

Dale Ahlquist on the front-porch poet’s visit to Notre Dame

ELIZABETH MITCHELL

Religion Editor

Dale Ahlquist is President of the Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton and co-founder of the Chesterton Academy Schools Network. He discussed Chesterton’s famous visit to Notre Dame with the Rover.

Editor’s note: This interview was edited for the sake of brevity and clarity.

Irish Rover: G.K. Chesterton came to Notre Dame in the fall of 1930 as a visiting professor. Could you discuss what he did while he was at Our Lady’s University?

Dale Ahlquist: At the time of his visit, Chesterton was one of the most famous writers in the world, and so it was a great coup for Notre Dame to get him as a visiting lecturer for six weeks. Chesterton gave 18 lectures in Victorian literature and 18 lectures in Victorian history, all in Washington Hall. Students had to sign up to get in, and there were 500 slots for each series.

It was all the buzz on campus when Chesterton arrived, as he came at the same time that the Notre Dame football stadium was opened and dedicated. He was there at the opening of the football stadium with Knute Rockne and got a huge ovation when they introduced this English writer who, of course, was very much a Catholic celebrity at that point in his career.

What did Notre Dame think of Chesterton?

First of all, the students who went to the lectures were very impressed. No transcripts were made of any of the lectures—the only records we have are some student notes, which are in the university archives. Three students took notes from the literature lectures, and one person took notes from the history lectures. But their notes are just full of great Chesterton quotations.

Chesterton himself made no notes. He would go up to the lectern with just a scrap of paper in his hand, and usually what was on this piece of paper was a few drawings and doodles—who knows what use that piece of paper was to him! But there was an interesting article written by the editor of the student newspaper, who actually chastised the fact that not all 500 tickets for his lectures were claimed, complaining that people did not take advantage of this great literary figure in their midst.

But many students were very enthusiastic, as well as a lot of the faculty and staff. A good number really took the chance to get to know Chesterton personally, inviting him to parties, where he sat and mixed with the students.

Was Chesterton able to engage with campus life outside of the

classroom?

Yeah. Another place students would go visit was the private residence in South Bend where Chesterton stayed. It had a front porch, and in the evening, Chesterton would sit out on this porch—something they don’t have in England—thinking it was the most novel and neighborly idea there was. As soon as he’d set up, he would start smoking his cigar and people would just come by and visit him.

One of the most remarkable things that came out of those recorded conversations was how up-to-date Chesterton was on modern literature. First, he quoted T.S. Eliot’s “The Four Quartets,” which is the only reference that we have of Chesterton reading that work. Though he regarded Eliot as very much a modernist, he also saw him as someone with profound insight and absolute command of these modern poems.

The other thing, as far as fun stories go, is students claim they had to carry him up the stairs and down the stairs of Sorin Hall—which I think is sort of an exaggeration, but it makes for a very good story.

Chesterton wrote a poem about his time at Notre Dame called *The Arena*. What strikes you from that poem and what messages do you think that we can glean from it today as readers?

Chesterton wrote *The Arena* directly after his visit to Notre Dame. He sent a handwritten

manuscript of it to the University President, Father O’Connell, who was just shocked and honored that he wrote this original poem for Notre Dame. It was widely published as a result.

The overarching image that Chesterton uses is the gladiators of ancient Rome—drawing out the differences in these two events, as well as their similarities: though the football stadium is an arena, the games are a “bloodless battle,” and instead of the Roman gods overlooking the arena, it’s the Virgin Mary, because she’s there on the gold dome that Chesterton could also see from his seat.

But then comes the great conclusion, “Queen of Death and deadly weeping/Those about to live salute thee.” Isn’t that great? Just the opposite of what the gladiators would say to the Roman emperor—“We who are about to die, salute thee”—the football players look up and say, “We who are about to live salute thee,” such that Chesterton can say it’s “holier bread and a happier circus.” There’s really some nice images from that poem.

What do you think Chesterton would say to Notre Dame today?

I think something that really impressed Chesterton when he arrived on campus was that, here, in the middle of the country, was this place that was honoring Mary. It was named for her, and this was the great presence—really, he knew it then, just as it is now—that Notre Dame is the

heart of the church in America. Notre Dame is the barometer people look at to figure out what’s going on with the Catholic Church in America.

He also already noticed that America had this image of Notre Dame as being just a football school. He says, no, the intellectual atmosphere there is very strong, and there’s much more to the school than football, and he could see why. Intellectuals were drawn to it—and clearly, he was one of the great giant intellectuals of the first third of the 20th century, coming all the way from England to speak at Notre Dame.

One of the great lines Chesterton says is, “The purpose of education is to prevent us from taking educated people seriously.” The whole point of education is not to be a great intellect, but to be a better servant of God. And if the education isn’t filled with a true Catholic perspective and informed by the Catholic faith, it really is an empty education. I think he would always try to remind every Catholic school that it is really set apart from secular education. Chesterton saw that then—it’s one of the reasons why we named the Chesterton Academies for him. He knew that a Catholic school had to be very distinct from a secular school. It has a different outlook altogether, and a different focus, but one that’s much more full and certainly much more relevant.

Where should students who are interested in learning more

about Chesterton look?

The introductory book that I always recommend is *Common Sense 101: Lessons from G.K. Chesterton*. It’s very accessible, and the way I write is that I just quote Chesterton—that’s really the great strength of the book. I also just had a new book come out with Ignatius Press, *I Also Had My Hour: The Alternative Autobiography of G.K. Chesterton*. Putting it together was the result of years of research, and I have actually manufactured an autobiography where Chesterton is writing about himself in his own words, strung together from his massive journalism. It’s truly a new look at Chesterton that his own autobiography didn’t reveal, because he spent most of his own autobiography writing about other people. So it’s the book that probably has the most information about Chesterton of any other book ever written.

Elizabeth Mitchell is a junior in the Program of Liberal Studies and theology. She also is a proud alumna of Chesterton Academy of the Twin Cities in Hopkins, MN. To rave about the genius of Andrew Wahlquist’s radio production of *The Man Who Was Thursday*, email her at emitche8@nd.edu.



Image by The Catholic Thing



Nigerian persecutions *continued from front*

countries, so we talked about the Muslim-Christian split ... but I haven't heard anything current."

One alumnus and member of the Notre Dame Club of Nigeria said, "I do not find it surprising that there are no widespread conversations about this as foreign policy activism in the U.S. is characterized by cherry-picking. Many of those concerned with human rights do not have religion on their checklist and when they do, you find that those concerned with the plight of the Rohingyas, for instance, do not share the same sentiment with the plight of persecuted Christians and vice versa."

Kimberlie Orr, International Legal Fellow at the Lindsay and Matt Moroun Religious Liberty Clinic and Term Teaching

Professor of Law, thought the issue has been largely ignored due to the ubiquity of violence worldwide. "There's so many instances around the world that I think take away focus. It kind of dilutes the focus that can be paid to any specific issue," Orr explained. "I think that would also be a contributing factor to why, in this specific instance, [Nigerian Christians are] getting a little bit less attention."

Despite the dire situation, many have expressed hope in the possibility for action. Already, Notre Dame has shown solidarity with Nigerian Christians in a few different ways.

As Orr mentioned, "Last year, [the Religious Liberty Clinic at the Notre Dame Law School] sponsored this event where we actually had a priest who had been abducted and wrote a book about it, and he did a book talk

POLITICS

... so we were able to give him a platform. Having those who have actually been impacted is really important."

Orr also discussed how Notre Dame is working with other organizations this year to free two religious prisoners of conscience, and Nigeria is one of their countries of focus.

When asked what else students can do at Notre Dame to support the persecuted Christians in Nigeria, the alumnus of the Nigerian Club told the *Rover*, "A key aspect of solidarity for ordinary Catholics will be to present well-researched priorities for Congress' engagement with the issue, one of which should be that in countries of concern, the state and the law should work justly for people of all faiths and persuasions just as is fundamentally the case in the United States. Those at Notre

Dame are called to a degree of solidarity commensurate with their education, influence, and affiliation with Catholic Social Teaching."

Orr proposed additional practical strategies: "It's talking about it. It's writing it. It's inviting scholars to maybe write some more scholarship on it. It's inviting speakers.... You can reach out to members of Congress and say we want Nigeria to be a focus of what's happening with their International Religious Freedom policy."

Harkins, meanwhile, expressed concern that raising awareness would be meaningless without concrete action, such as advocating for education in Nigeria. "I think education is always a good step in the right direction. Because these actions [of violence] are driven by thoughts.... So [it's helpful] if you can get at the thoughts,

and also maybe try to understand where these people who are doing this stuff are coming from, and what's motivating them—and go to the root of the issues."

Ultimately, Orr mentioned the importance of prayer in this crisis: "Even keeping people in your hearts and praying for them, I think, can be a really important mechanism available."

Clare Hettich is a freshman from Potomac, Maryland majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies. She loves helping de-rail seminar conversations onto philosophical tangents and keeping the vending machines in Hesburgh in business. If you're involved in a theological debate, please include her by emailing chettich@nd.edu.

Partisanship During the Pandemic

CCCG hosts Stephen Macedo to discuss elite failures in COVID response

FINN SAIVAR

Staff Writer

The Center for Citizenship & Constitutional Government (CCCG) hosted Princeton Professor Stephen Macedo for a talk on October 3 centered on his latest book, *In COVID's Wake: How Our Politics Failed Us*. Co-authored by Frances Lee, another Princeton professor, the book explores how political and scientific elites failed in their efforts to deal with the virus that shut down the world in 2020.

Macedo described the COVID-19 pandemic as the "biggest global crisis since World War II" and discussed pandemic research pre-COVID. He noted that most research did not recommend any preventative measures outside of pharmaceutical drugs. Macedo added that the World Health Organization reported, before the outbreak of COVID, that "contact tracing, quarantining of exposed individuals, entry and exit screenings, internal travel restrictions, border closures [are] not recommended under any circumstances."

Macedo quoted a John Hopkins University report stating, "It is important to communicate to political leaders ... the absence of evidence surrounding many non-pharmaceutical interventions [lockdowns] and the adverse consequences that may follow from them." Yet, despite widespread distrust of lockdown methods, Macedo said that "all of these measures were undertaken in short order" once the pandemic began.

Macedo then discussed initial protests to the lockdowns. He listed Dr. Michael Osterholm, one of the "world's leading experts on epidemiology." Osterholm, in reference to the nation's quick adoption of quarantine measures, said, "We've got people literally just following each other off the



Image by Wikimedia Commons

edge of a cliff because they're not thinking."

Dissent, however, soon died off. According to Macedo, "tolerance for dissent waned" as people began to think of the lockdown as a "war on COVID." As in war time, if the cause was going to succeed, "everyone need[ed] to be on the same page." Toleration of dissenting ideas quickly diminished, even among the scientific community that had once denounced these quarantine methods.

To show just how drastically opinion had shifted, Macedo referenced the Great Barrington Declaration. In this report, three acclaimed scientists—Sunetra Gupta of Oxford, Jay Bhattacharya of Stanford (who visited ND last year to discuss COVID), and Martin Kulldorff of Harvard—spoke out against the quarantine. Cognizant of the previously researched effects of lockdowns, they argued that the best path to general immunity among the population was to "allow those who are at minimal risk of death to lead their lives normally to build up immunity

... through natural infection." The declaration came out in October of 2020, well into the lockdown.

The report was dismissed by many in the government and medical community. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institute of Health, told the *Washington Post*, "[The declaration] is a fringe component of epidemiology, it's not mainstream science. It's dangerous." As Macedo pointed out, however, "What [the Declaration] was saying was a lot what people were saying ... a few months before."

At that point in time, then, Macedo argued that "measures were more predicted by partisanship than COVID virulence."

Macedo moved on to discuss the "strongly partisan" nature of the lockdowns. The extent of quarantine measures were almost entirely split along party lines. In Democratic states, Macedo said, "lockdowns and various other measures [were] more stringent." Schools were closed for months on end, with some,

like those in California, "staying closed for much or even all of the 2020 to 2021 school year."

On the other hand, many Republican states reduced restrictions early on. Although all governors shut down their states initially, "Republican states started opening much more quickly and tended to stay open," Macedo noted. Florida hardly closed down at all.

Despite these differences, Macedo argued that "California did no better [than Florida], having had much more stringent lockdown measures."

Medical experts continued to advise lockdown measures, however. Macedo acknowledged that there was a lot of "misinformation around getting the virus and recovering" put out by scientists in hopes of encouraging people to get the vaccine.

Macedo said he was supportive of promoting the vaccination campaign, but he admonished the conduct of the scientific community, saying, "Don't lie about all these scientific facts. ... It's the kind of thing that

encouraged great distrust of public health officials."

Macedo continued with another quote by Francis Collins from a 2023 interview, in which he said, "What I did was wrong. ... We failed to say every time there was a recommendation, 'Guys, this is the best we can do right now. It's a good chance this is wrong.' ... We wanted change to happen in case it was right, but we did not admit our ignorance, and that was a profound mistake." Macedo lamented this "lack of humility" present in scientists during COVID, which he believed "degraded discussion" during this all-important time period.

In closing, Macedo stressed, "We need greater toleration of disagreement and respect for dissent, even when it's coming from the other side of the political spectrum. ... We need greater humility on the part of experts and elites."

Mercedes Curran, a CCCG Tocqueville Fellow who attended the lecture, wrote to the *Rover*, "Prof. Macedo's lecture brought to light the large gaps between the preexisting recommendations for managing public health crises and the approaches our health officials took at the beginning of the pandemic."

She concluded, "Overall, I was very grateful to hear Prof. Macedo's lecture, and appreciated his dedication to these issues that risk being overlooked as 'crisis' reactions. His work raises important questions on the responsibilities we owe each other, our political leaders, and our health researchers."

Finn Saivar is a freshman from Nashville majoring in political science who loves football, golf, and history. You can reach him at fsaivar@nd.edu.



College Republicans, Democrats Clash in Campus Debate

BridgeND hosts first event of its kind in three years

KEVIN ANDREWS

Staff Writer

BridgeND hosted a debate between Notre Dame College Republicans and College Democrats on October 8, the first such event in nearly three years. Shri Thakur and Luke Woodyard represented the College Republicans, and Alex Young and Alex Funk represented the College Democrats. Professor and director of the Kroc Institute's Mediation Program Laurie Nathan moderated.

Debaters tackled key issues such as immigration, tariff policy, political violence, and the Israel-Palestine conflict in front of a filled Danke ballroom on Wednesday evening.

Republicans touted Trump's successes with economic gains from manufacturing, border security, and took several jabs at the Biden administration, while the Democrats highlighted alleged authoritarian overreach, criticized deportation policy, and discussed Obamacare.

Professor Nathan posed the first question, addressing immigration, to the Republican side, asking whether or not recent enforcement actions represented "executive overreach," or were simply "the implementation of a stricter immigration policy to address the leniency of past administrations."

The Republicans presented ICE enforcement as a strength after they stressed President Biden's mishandling of the border, saying, "Ten million illegal immigrants ... poured into our country, overwhelming our cities, sending the price of housing soaring, and in many cases committing heinous crimes against our people." Democrats pushed back, saying, "This [ICE tactic] is an



Image by BridgeND Instagram

example of authoritarianism. No more due process rights under this administration because the Republican Party is not the party of law and order." They also highlighted the need for amnesty and lack of immigration reform legislation.

On healthcare, the parties sparred on comments revolving around the Democrats' support for healthcare for illegal immigrants and the prior passage of Obamacare. Democrats began the segment by arguing that "Republicans shut down the government," and argued the Big Beautiful Bill (BBB) threatened to kick millions of people off their health insurance. Republicans, conversely, blamed Democrats for the shutdown, pointing out they had voted for the budget they are now blocking in March.

The Republicans continued, "By shutting down the government, [Democrats] are threatening essential health care services for Americans right now, including health care for women and children, telehealth services for Medicare, and community health centers that don't have funding anymore." The Republicans also criticized Obamacare and claimed that the BBB did not cut Medicaid but only instituted

a 20-hour work requirement to receive it.

The debate then moved to tariffs. Republicans defended President Trump's tariffs as "affirming the fundamental principle that making things in America matters," while Democrats criticized them as causing inflation. The Republican side argued that "tariffs don't cause inflation ... because they don't change the money supply," and pointed out that inflation was much lower today than under the Biden Administration.

The Democrats responded, "Tariffs do cause inflation. Ask your professor."

The two parties seemed to reach common ground when discussing the war in Israel. Democrats began the segment by discussing the need to hold Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "accountable" for Israel's actions in Gaza, while still referring to Israel as an important strategic ally. Republicans agreed to some extent, arguing that, "We agree that what's happening in Gaza is a humanitarian crisis. We agree that the Israeli conduct in the war has gone way too far. And we agree that the broader escalation of this war in the region is not in American interests."

Republicans added, however, that Biden had failed to restrain Netanyahu and that the recently brokered ceasefire was the result of President Trump's actions alone, while Democrats tried to take credit for the peace deal.

Both sides condemned political violence, but the Republican side drew a distinction between the words of the College Democrats and the actions of the national party. They specifically pointed to the refusal of national Democrats to call on Virginia Attorney General candidate Jay Jones to withdraw from the race after text messages were leaked showing him wishing death on a political opponent and his children.

"[The Democrats] can give speeches on how much they love dialogue all they want. But if they're not willing to sacrifice a little bit of political convenience for this cause, then they don't believe in it at all," the Republicans said.

The debate concluded with questions on both the flaws in the Democratic and Republican parties and some audience questions, which included topics such as the Epstein files and illegal immigration.

Lewis Junior Lily Vonderwell told the *Rover*, "I was impressed by the turnout on Wednesday and found it comforting, regardless of what side they are there for, that so many ND students were taking an interest in the debate. Genuine interest and time invested is the first step towards combating the 'globalization of indifference' that was quoted from Pope Francis, at least in the realm of politics."

On the question of which side performed better, freshman student Declan Harrington perceived a decisive Republican victory, telling the *Rover*, "At

Bridge ND, much like in the 2024 election, the intellectual and moral superiority of Republican leadership was evident in the rhetoric of Shri and Luke. The debate offered a glimpse of our nation's future in action. I'm looking forward to the next event and another Republican victory."

Conversely, Baumer sophomore Quinlen expressed some frustration with both sides, saying, "It's a shame that neither party of the debate accurately depicted the genocide that is ongoing in Palestine, but rather tiptoed around the issue that should have been directly addressed in a very clear and open way."

Senior Keough resident Connor Whalen added, "From the beginning, I was pretty impressed by the event. There was a great turnout, and people were pulling chairs from all over into the ballroom to have a place to sit. I was a little underwhelmed by the depth of the discussion, though. There was a very limited time allotted to a given topic, and there was never any direct back-and-forth allowed between the two sides."

He concluded, "Overall, I'm glad I attended, and I hope there are a lot more debates and forums for controversial discussions moving forward."

Kevin Andrews is a junior studying Political Science and Economics. He can be reached at kandrew6@nd.edu.

Director of ND Democracy Institute Criticizes Trump's University Compact

Professor decries "fascist political tactics"

HALEY GARECHT

Managing Editor

The White House recently sent a "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education" to several colleges and universities, outlining new standards for schools that receive federal funding. In an *Observer* article discussing the compact, Matthew Hall—David A. Potenziani Memorial College Professor of Constitutional Studies and Director of the Rooney Democracy Institute—was quoted as calling the compact, along with several other White House actions, "fascist."

The *Rover* interviewed Hall via email to clarify his comments and discuss the relationship between democracy, free speech, and higher education.

In early October, the federal document was sent to nine

schools for "agreement and feedback," according to the *Wall Street Journal*. The compact seeks to hold universities who benefit from federal funding accountable to U.S. government "priorities," summarized in 10 points. The standards include nondiscrimination in admissions, hiring, and student treatment, along with a tuition freeze for five years and increased financial transparency.

One key focus of the agreement is free speech—consistent with previous Trump orders, the document cites anti-semitism as a major concern on college campuses.

On October 8, the *Observer* published an article summarizing the compact, supplemented by reactions from students and faculty members.

According to the *Observer*,



Image by Notre Dame Department of Political Science

"Hall ... argued the compact was a 'fascist' tactic." The article continued with a quote from Hall, "All fascist politicians adopt similar tactics, and one of the most important tactics is to create a sense of unreality by undermining objective facts. Therefore, fascist politicians are threatened by independent institutions that are designed to distinguish fact from fiction: courts, independent government agencies, the press, scientists, and—of course—universities."

"The compact being presented to universities is a blatant, unprecedented attempt by the executive branch to take control of public and private universities," Hall continued.

Hall then discussed other instances of "targeting" by the Trump administration, writing,

continued on pg. 9



"The fate of academic freedom in this country is likely tied to the broader struggle against these fascist political tactics that have similarly targeted independent agencies (like the Bureau of Labor Statistics), news organizations (like the New York Times), media outlets (like ABC and Jimmy Kimmel), private business (like prominent law firms), and any institution in society that refuses to bend the knee."

Aedan Whalen, Co-President of the Notre Dame College Republicans, found Hall's comments poorly timed. Whalen told the *Rover*, "During a national wave of murderous anti-conservative violence—particularly on

college campuses—a Notre Dame professor's deployment of the 'fascist' label is flagrantly irresponsible and deeply concerning. ... This inflammatory rhetoric amounts to yet another example of faculty and staff members' seething contempt for their conservative students."

Regarding his quotes on fascism, Hall wrote to the *Rover*, "I never actually said the compact was a fascist tactic. ... I was describing how fascist politicians operate in general to provide a background context."

Hall nevertheless compared the compact and fascist tactics, writing, "Fascists undermine free institutions, like the press and the universities. And the compact is a blatant attempt to take control of public and private universities. Fascism is a collection of political

tactics, so [no one] can definitely say that any one particular policy is necessarily fascist."

On the relationship between the government and universities, Hall wrote, "The federal government definitely has a role in regulating higher education. Because the federal government provides funding to the vast majority of universities, it can set restrictions on how universities operate in a variety of ways. And of course federal civil rights law prohibits various forms of discrimination in higher education."

Hall argued that such regulations should not include free speech: "Generally speaking, governments do not promote free speech—the First Amendment's freedom of speech is a limit on the government's ability to restrict free speech. The way for

the government to promote free speech is to not regulate it."

In response to the compact's anti-semitism concerns, Hall said that the government already has rules in place to deal with such issues, including "Title VII of the Civil Right, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and the Equal Campus Access Act." He added that "ideally," universities would be regulated by legislation enforced by the executive branch.

When asked whether President Trump represents the American people better than unelected university presidents, Hall answered, "Even democratically elected officials can take actions that violate democratic norms. The constitution limits the powers of democratically elected officials in a variety of ways. ... It's too soon to know the long-term

effects of Trump's presidency on American democracy."

Although universities are free to refuse the compact if they forego federal funding, Hall argued that schools need government support in order to function: "In practice, it is not feasible for universities to completely forgo federal funding and continue to operate effectively."

Haley Garecht is a senior studying political science, constitutional studies, and Irish studies. This summer, she learned all about democracy, humidity, and the metro while working in the House of Representatives. For tips on navigating the red line, please contact her at hgarecht@nd.edu.

Liturgical Choir to Perform Mozart's *Requiem* Mass

Choristers express the significance of the All Soul's Day Mass

DARIUS COLANGELO
Culture Editor

Two years ago, hundreds of Notre Dame students filled the Basilica of the Sacred Heart for the Liturgical Choir's first performance of Mozart's *Requiem*. Last time it was a concert. This year, the choir and the accompanying orchestra will perform the *Requiem* for the 9:30 a.m. All Soul's Day Mass on November 2 in the basilica.

The nearly hour-long composition sets music for various parts of the Mass including the Kyrie, All Soul's Day Sequence, and the Agnus Dei. Senior chorister James Christian explained to the *Rover*, "The *Requiem* [was] written as a plea to Our Lord for His mercy to grant rest and peace to the faithful departed."

Liturgical Choir President James Kabele told the *Rover*, "Mozart's *Requiem* is not only one of the most beautiful choral pieces of music composed. It is not just a testament to Mozart, who died before this piece was finished, it is also a testament to all the faithful who have gone before us and are entering the communion of the saints."

The *Requiem* is a personal experience for many in the choir. In a comment to the *Rover*, Senior chorister Reese Connors said, "We understand that this was among the last projects of the composer at the time of his death at age 35. I'm [struck] by the idea of this every time I sing the *Requiem*, as it is a piece whose words lend an in-depth reflection on death and the need for divine mercy."

Connors continued, "I find it as an opportunity for a purgative, spiritual process: To pray for the dead, to meditate on my own death, and to offer it up as praise for God. I don't think we get the opportunity to do all three of those things in as profound [a] manner [as] within Mozart's *Requiem*."

The piece is difficult but



Image by Bridget Murphy

rewarding. Liturgical Choir Director Andrew McShane explained to the *Rover*: "Music that people love is very easy to teach quite frankly, so although we have spent a lot of time learning the various movements the learning has been quite easy."

Likewise, in a comment to the *Rover*, Junior chorister Teresa Pingel noted, "In many ways performing the *Requiem* is more of a mental challenge than anything else. You have to focus on many things at once: entering your part on time, with the right dynamic, remembering where to breathe and especially where NOT to breathe, sustaining your high notes, and watching our director, Andy, for any additional cues. It's a challenge but a very

rewarding one!"

Singing the *Requiem* during a Mass rather than a concert returns to the original intent of the piece as a *Requiem* for the dead. "This year will be the first time the liturgical choir performs the *Requiem* for a Mass," McShane explained. "I thought singing the piece in the context of a Mass would be a unique challenge. It was Fr. Brian Ching who approached me about doing it on All Soul's Day since it is on a Sunday this year."

Christian explained, "I am so excited to be able to sing it in the context of a *Requiem* Mass on All Soul's Day, where it will contribute to the reverence and mystery of the Mass in its truest form."

Singing the *Requiem* during a Mass also poses new challenges. McShane continued, "People always hear the Mozart *Requiem* movement after movement in succession so the challenge is to sing the *Requiem* in the context of a 'modern' liturgy. Singing the Mozart *Requiem* at Mass in 2025 will feel much different rhythmically than a 'normal' Mass. Another challenge is that the basilica is not specifically set up for choir and orchestra at Mass so we have to adapt the space for this unique event."

Overall, each choir member the *Rover* corresponded with was excited for the opportunity to share the *Requiem* with the broader Notre Dame community. Freshman chorister Lydia Tomko,

in a comment to the *Rover*, said, "Hearing the *Requiem* in the Basilica will be one of the most beautiful Masses you will have a chance to go to on campus. The beauty of the church and the glory of the Mass will be offered as a noble tribute by Mozart's setting, and the choir, which has been working with devotion, hopes to help share this beauty with as many people as possible."

Darius Colangelo is a retired chorister and junior majoring in mathematics and the Program of Liberal Studies. He loves coffee, and when he's not dozing off in the Grand Reading Room, he can be reached at dcolange@nd.edu.



“You Don’t Know the Life of a Showgirl”

Taylor Swift, art, and the quest for personhood

ELIZABETH MITCHELL

Religion Editor

At midnight on October 3, Taylor Swift released her 12th album, “The Life of a Showgirl.” Breaking Spotify history as the app’s most streamed album in a day, Swift’s newest creation sent a clear message to cardigan-donning fans and cautious skeptics alike: Her music will continue to influence the cultural landscape as we know it.

As its title suggests, “The Life of a Showgirl” is Swift’s most decadent album to date, complete with feathery headdresses, risqué costumes, and a dazzling array of jewels. Far from being mere ostentations, however, such glamor is precisely the means through which Swift presents a distinctly modern vision of personhood, in which a glorified self stars in a drama of its own creation.

As successful as this narrative may appear to its cheering onlookers, Swift reveals that the “life of a showgirl” is far less attractive than it may initially seem. The only way for the show to go on is to ignore and reject embodiment altogether.

While we may be quick to dismiss this view (and rightly so), Swift goes on to reveal a frightening reality: Perhaps we desire the “showgirl” life more than we would like to admit. Realizing the deep irony of the duplicity of the stage, yet finding ourselves bound to the curtain with ties of our own creation, Swift’s album serves as both a mirror and a cautionary tale. We can (but shouldn’t) follow the egotistical, body-abandoning showgirl life she has chosen. Nevertheless, through the tensions it lays bare upon our own hearts, Swift’s album leaves us wiser about the ill-placed desires we still secretly harbor.

Since her earliest days as a musician, Taylor Swift has been a storyteller. Her uniquely diary-like style of musical composition has sparked both admiration and curiosity amongst fans, as they frantically rush to decode each new reference, while simultaneously feeling refreshed by the singer’s tone of relatability and candor.

In many ways, “The Life of a Showgirl” is no different. Nevertheless, this album continues a trend in Swift’s style of presentation, started nearly five years ago, in which the singer increasingly attempts to present the contents of her life not merely as isolated snapshots, but cohesive ‘eras’ within an integrated, and explicitly theatrical, framework. By presenting her work in terms of a literary stage, Swift makes both a clear and bold claim: Her life has become art.

In “The Life of a Showgirl,” Swift again explores the idea of life as art with detailed intentionality



Image by People magazine/Mert Alas & Marcus Piggot

from the very beginning with her first track, “The Fate of Ophelia.” The music video for this song opens with a painting, which depicts a flower-strewn woman lying dead in the middle of a river. As the focus becomes clearer, the once-dead woman, now revealed to be Swift, sits up and walks about freely, revealing that the painting was really the set of a theatre the entire time. Posing inside another frame as a bird alights upon her arm, Swift gracefully moves from one scene to the next with a surprising level of command. No longer a mere passive actor in this drama, she reveals herself to be a person with direct agency in the way her story gets displayed.

Amidst the flowers, fire, and tossing waves, Swift argues we can each be the master and author of our own narrative. As she notes in an interview describing the meaning of another of her newest songs, “Opalite,” “I thought [opalite] was a cool metaphor because it’s man-made, and happiness can be man-made too.” To her, creating an entirely new self-image is as simple as merely “changing sets.”

Seeing one’s life as art has deep ramifications for materiality and the body. Perhaps unsurprisingly for a work called “The Life of a Showgirl,” much of the promotional materials, videos, and lyrics are intensely (and repulsively) erotic. As their sensuality draws the viewer’s focus towards a direct consciousness of the flesh, it seems at first as if embodiment in Swift’s conception is simply another stage tool for the dramatization of one’s own narrative.

And yet, in her title track, “The Life of a Showgirl,” Swift presents a slightly different

and notably more nuanced view of embodiment than our initial preconception may have revealed. Beginning the song with the expected view of the body as another decorous item for the stage, Swift describes a fictional showgirl named Kitty, who, “dancing in her garters and fishnets,” appears “glowing like the end of a cigarette.” Nevertheless, as the song continues on, Swift reveals how Kitty’s glittery exterior as young, beautiful, and unconstrained is merely a mask for the difficult and often arduous existence that is the real “life of a showgirl”: Characterized by “pain hidden by the lipstick and lace,” such a life far less desirable in practice than its artistic expression would make it seem.

These conflicting messages reflect Swift’s own experience of tension between the life she wants to live in art and the reality of her embodiment. In an appearance on Hits Radio, she described her attitude towards her show during the Eras Tour, “My main goal for two years was to get myself to that stage and give everything to that crowd, where the crowd is for three and a half hours every night. You’re like ‘Don’t get sick. ... If you’re sick, you’re doing the show anyway. If you’re sore, you’re injured, you’re hurt, you’re pretending that you’re not and doing the show anyway.’” Swift wishes to be the fictional showgirl who can effortlessly perform without concern for her body beyond its mere appearance. The real showgirl does not have it that easy. Her life is a living irony.

Having had the past two weeks to reflect on “The Life of a Showgirl,” I find my thoughts best summarized in the following

words, taken from Swift’s October 3 Instagram post: “It’s beautiful. It’s rapturous. It is frightening.”

Admittedly, I hesitate to use the words “beautiful” or “rapturous” to describe any product of pop music, much less “The Life of a Showgirl.” Nevertheless, there are attractive qualities about the album which it would be heedless to dismiss. At a very basic level, many of the songs are quite catchy. While there will always be the disgruntled subset of fans perpetually bemoaning Swift’s “modern” turn, it’s hard to hear songs like “The Fate of Ophelia” or “Opalite” (my personal favorites) and not nod along—even if only for the chorus.

Despite her glamor and fun melodies, however, it remains true that Swift is presenting a distinctly modern—and troubling—vision of happiness: Live your life as art, and free yourself (as much as possible, at least) from the constraints of embodiment.

Notably, even Swift’s expressed desire for marriage and family falls under this same self-directed drama. Certainly there is much to celebrate about one of the most successful women in the world stating that she desires more than just a life of wealth and comfort. Contrary to what some have claimed, however, Swift is far from embodying any sort of traditional values.

Under her vision, marriage becomes just another item on a personal “wish list.” Children, too, are reduced to an entirely subjective form of personal fulfillment, in which “you have your own set of wishes, and it doesn’t have to be like everybody else’s and theirs doesn’t have to

be like yours ... you just hope everybody gets their wishes.” Perhaps most strikingly, she replaces mutual, self-giving love with a life where you and your spouse live isolated from others and “tell the world to leave us the f— alone.” Such a vision is far from a model for conservatism.

In this light, “The Life of a Showgirl” stands in its most “frightening” character. As many of my conversations with peers over the past few weeks have shown, it’s easy to decry the “malaise of modernity” when referencing obvious issues with the album, such as Swift’s sexual promiscuity or her immature lyrics. Far more difficult, however, is to see the instances where the self-directed conception of life-as-art is so subtly embedded that we don’t even realize it is there—or perhaps don’t want to.

Our “wish list” might be different from Swift’s, but her music reveals that if we’re honest, we all secretly crave unlimited access to a life of our own design.

I’m all for enjoying “The Life of a Showgirl,” but perhaps we ought to approach the album with caution. We aren’t the directors of our own drama; our bodies come with limits; and even the height of “showgirl success,” it seems, is not enough to constitute true happiness. Though Swift ultimately claims she “wouldn’t have it any other way,” perhaps, cognizant of the inherent tension she raises, we can consciously forge a different path forward.

Elizabeth Mitchell is a junior majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies and theology. Reach her at emitch8@nd.edu.



DPAC Hosts Vocal Ensemble Chanticleer

Grammy Award-winning ensemble visits Notre Dame for the first time in 15 years

BENEDICT ALTHOFF
Staff Writer

Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center (DPAC) hosted the Grammy Award-Winning vocal ensemble Chanticleer on October 9, marking Chanticleer's first performance at DPAC in 15 years. Chanticleer performed a program titled, "Our American Journey," which celebrated 250 years of American independence.

Founded in San Francisco in 1978, Chanticleer is an all-male vocal ensemble famous for its a cappella performances. Dubbed "the orchestra of voices," Chanticleer began by performing and recording motets of the Renaissance, although its current work extends far beyond to other genres.

DPAC Senior Executive Director Sean Wilson was responsible for inviting Chanticleer to Notre Dame. "The artists we select to perform at DPAC perform at the highest caliber in their respective fields. Chanticleer's performance was no different," Wilson told the *Rover*. He continued, "They performed with insane precision and flawless intonation. These are attributes any choral musician, especially those student musicians in the audience, can admire."

"Our American Journey" was a tribute and synthesis of American choral works. In a comment to the *Rover*, Chanticleer associate Abi Mohr wrote, "Through the diverse voices, songs, harmonies, and rhythms of the nation's musical heritage, this program traces the evolution of the national sound."

The program began with Renaissance music of New Spain before transitioning to early American Protestant hymns. These included songs such as "Kittery" by William Billings and W. E. Glanton's "My Home Above."

These were followed by African American spiritual hymns such as "There is Balm in Gilead" and "Happy Shore." Mohr explained, "The program's cornerstone is a new commission from



Image by DPAC Instagram

Trevor Weston, exploring the relationship between traditional American hymnody and African American spirituals."

The responses to the performance were generally positive. Senior Elliott Kirwan told the *Rover*, "My favorite performances from the Chanticleer concert were probably the two spirituals that they did because of the depth of emotion. What makes that group so incredible is not just their individual talent which is outstanding but also the way in which they are totally on the same page in everything from the rhythm, to the pitch, to the style."

Some other hits of the program included "The Un-Covered Wagon," a reflection from the Native American perspective of America's pioneering past, and "Hee-oo-oom-ha," a textless piece that featured yodeling and other vocal techniques. The

program concluded with 19th and 20th Century folk music that included songs by Irving Berlin and Stephen Foster.

The day before the concert, Chanticleer had the opportunity to work with the Glee Club of Notre Dame. In a comment to the *Rover*, Brady Olson, a freshman member of the Glee Club, reflected on the club's experience with Chanticleer. "They did a masterclass with us where we essentially sang them a couple of songs and then walked us through it, breaking it down bit by bit. What they might do to attack that song and really bring it to their expert level. It was just super incredible to be able to work with such talented people and to hear the thoughts that go through their mind. Both working on songs like that and bringing their perspective to the table, it really helped us grow as a club."

Brady continued, "Their

technique is just fabulous, and it's really inspiring to see such great voices come to Notre Dame perform in the hall at the Glee Club does our practices in. It was just fantastic to see them up on that stage that I'm up on almost every day and just really inspiring overall."

Chanticleer member Vineel Garisa Mahal, who occupies the Tenor Chair of the ensemble, spoke to the *Rover* about Chanticleer's visit to Notre Dame: "We worked with the choir and the Glee Club and it was truly a remarkable sound. The fact that you all are able to have such a beautiful hall and that you all were able to have us is amazing. We are honored that you could have us here."

The next DPAC performance will feature the Glee Club for their Fall Concert on November 7 in Leighton Concert Hall. Tickets can be purchased on DPAC's website.

Benedict Althoff is a freshman studying architecture at the University of Notre Dame. Though he strives to sing like Chanticleer at Sunday Masses, he cheers too loud at the football game the night prior to do so. You can reach him at balthoff@nd.edu.



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



Image by Sauganash Study Center

HALEY GARECHT

Managing Editor

Graduation Year: 2022**Rover Roles:** Writer, Politics Editor, Editor-in-Chief, Opinion Editor**Favorite Article:** “Anti Homophobia” Display Targets Catholic Writers (2019)**Current Job:** Teacher & Communications Manager*Editor’s Note: This interview has been edited for length and clarity.***Irish Rover: How did you first get involved with the Rover?**

Nicolás Abouchédid: I started writing for the *Rover* my freshman year, in the second semester, after a friend of mine invited me to start writing in the politics section of the paper. After my freshman year, I was asked to be the editor of the politics section. My junior year, I was the Editor-in-Chief, and that was a real blast—one of the highlights of my time, without a doubt.

What’s your favorite article that you worked on during your time with the Rover?

One highlight article was when we reported [that] someone had put a door-sized poster in the middle of campus, right outside of a Debartolo Hall. [They] printed out dozens of articles from the *Rover*, pasted them on the poster, and painted over those articles in blood-red paint, saying, “There’s queer blood on homophobic hands.” It was really big, and they had circled in red paint the authors of all

those articles. My name, my colleagues’ names, and different professors. We got a lot of emails from donors and readers across the country who were interested. That piece was picked up by the *Daily Wire*, by *Fox News*—Michael Knowles talked about it. [It] was fun to see that the work we do actually has national relevance.

After I published that piece, the group of radicals doubled down, and they published a crazy article in the *Observer* linked with a video of them reading slam poetry about how they were going to come to my room with a crowbar. In any case, it was a fun experience to try to shed light on some of the things that were going on on campus. If the shoe was on the other foot, I think the university would have come down on whatever group that was, but the university [didn’t do] anything about it.

What impact do you think the Rover has, on and off campus?

I think the mission of the *Rover* is very unique, specifically looking after the Catholic character of the university. Just writing for a campus newspaper is a unique experience, as opposed to other things you could do with your free time. It really opens up a lot of professional options.

People love Notre Dame all over the country, all over the world, and there are many faithful Catholics who support it, and they appreciate reliable, well written, thoughtful opinion and reporting. So I can only

imagine [the *Rover*] helps people stay informed and keep Notre Dame in their prayers. I think it’s one of those few avenues that they have to keep up with how things are going on campus.

You mentioned professional options—how did writing for a newspaper help your career?

I think as a professional development tool, writing for a campus paper and getting involved is valuable. I learned how to work as a team, and ultimately, how to lead others, not in a way that was imposing, but in a way that everyone felt they were getting more out of [the paper] than they were putting in. That was a good experience for me and, of course, I could say on my resume, “I’ve led a team of 30 people.” That really made me proud.

What did you do after graduation?

When I was a senior, I wanted to move to New York City, and I was interested in journalism [and politics] generally. [I told] Professor Phillip Muñoz, and a few weeks later, he emailed me saying that the Manhattan Institute in New York City had reached out asking if any graduating seniors were looking for jobs in New York. In my interview, my future boss said they were looking for someone on the communications team to do a lot of the same work [I was] doing on the *Rover*, like editing and writing articles, and reaching out to people in the journalistic industry. She was

very eager to hire me because of my experience.

After two years in the Manhattan Institute, I decided I wanted to give teaching a try, and that’s what I’m doing now. I’ve been here for a year and a half at a high school in Niles, Illinois, called Northridge Preparatory School.

[Writing at the *Rover*] helped me land the job, because the headmaster of Northridge was eager to harness my ability to write well, to lead teams to get things done, to work on projects, and to take initiative. I teach classes, but I’m also now in charge of the media team here at the school. My ability to write well and to communicate effectively in the way that a journalist [does] has really come in handy.

Has your view of Notre Dame changed since you graduated?

Whenever I visit, and I try to visit at least once a year, I still love it. I still feel super grateful for everything that Notre Dame is and stands for, just like when I was at the *Rover*. You love Notre Dame, and that’s why you want to try to help it fulfill its mission. As a teacher now, I have many students who want to go to Notre Dame. There are good, strong, Catholic families who have concerns because they read about the problems there. But I always try to show the positive things of Catholicism at Notre Dame. There’s a lot of good going on. I always try to point out that there are still 30 daily Masses on

campus, and every dorm has a chapel, and there are so many priests on campus, and so many [students] will go to the March for Life. I try to highlight that at Notre Dame you can definitely live a full Eucharistic life.

Finally, do you have any advice for student journalists?

Dive right in and take initiative. If you give it a good go, you’ll realize that you’ll develop a lot as a professional, as a friend and colleague, [and] as a mentee. And opportunities will emerge at the same time—know that the articles that you write are things you can then use professionally later on. For instance, if you want to work in a world like journalism, or even a world where skills like that might translate, such as teaching, you then can graduate saying, “Hey, look at the work of my writing.” And people can quickly get a sense of your ability to write. I think that’s really helpful.

Haley Garecht is a senior studying political science, constitutional studies, and Irish studies. She’s running out of funny byline ideas, so please send any suggestions to hgarecht@nd.edu.

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Fighting Irish? More Like TNDMPWMOMNDS

Inclusive Council Excludes Every Other Suggestion

HALEY GARECHT
Managing Editor

On Saturday, the Notre Dame Office of Belonging and Engagement (OBE) sponsored a forum to discuss a new mascot for the university. Attendees debated fiercely for eight hours in search of a “more inclusive” logo.

Representatives from the DEI Sister Thea Bowman Center, Multicultural Students Programs and Services, Gender Relations Center, and Office of Student Enrichment filled Dahnke Ballroom as the day began. OBE Director Hugh B. Long opened with remarks on the need for a new mascot, calling the Fighting Irish “outdated, offensive, and, worst of all, exclusive.”

Long read a list of several groups excluded by the Fighting Irish mascot, including “people who aren’t Irish, people who are Irish but don’t like leprechauns, people who don’t have beards, people who do have beards but wish they didn’t, and people who don’t like green.”

After several hours of discussions, debates, small group sessions, large group sessions, medium group sessions, and braiding circles, a new mascot was proposed. Long took the microphone and announced

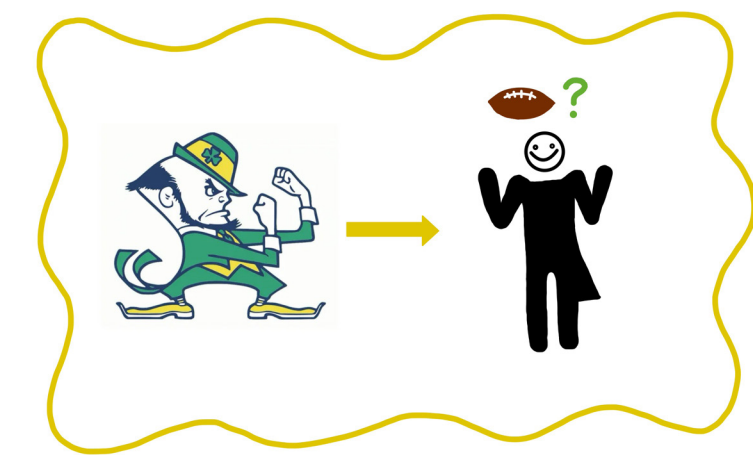


Image by Irish Rover

that Notre Dame would now be known as the “Fighting Western Europeans.” “This way, we ensure that other countries feel a sense of belonging, inclusiveness, and acceptance,” he explained.

Immediately, the room erupted with shouts. Representatives from the German and Polish groups charged the stage and forcefully shoved Long from his podium. One German student, Karl Opfer, grabbed the microphone and announced, “We have been silenced for too long! The West will no longer rule the cathedral of college football.” After whispers to his Polish peers, Opfer asked, “What about the ‘Fighting Europeans?’”

Screams once again filled Dahnke Ballroom. Opfer was booed offstage as shouts of

“Eurocentric!” “No fair!” “You big meanies!” came from the DEI Sister Thea Bowman table. Several administrators from the Multicultural Student Programs could be seen weeping.

After all participants were provided with a therapy dog, Long once again took the stage. “We have come up with a mascot who will perfectly embody Notre Dame’s commitment to inclusion, integration, and fellowship,” he said. “The Fighting Humans.”

Several members of the Gender Relations Center ran to the podium and tackled Long in I-formation. GRC Director Patrice Yarkey took the microphone and began a 20-minute speech, focusing on the word “human.” “Saying

human is basically saying man, which is basically saying that women don’t matter, which is basically super sexist,” Yarkey stated. “Oh, and we can’t say fighting either. Fighting basically means that boys are stronger than girls which basically means that girls suck, which is basically super sexist.” The Peace Studies graduate students echoed the sentiment.

While participants began discussions among themselves, Long crawled to the podium and called for attention again. After a long apology to Yarkey and other GRC staffers, Long tentatively proposed another mascot: “In honor of our commitment to honoring diverse perspectives, how about the ‘Bridge-Building People?’”

Although the idea was cheered by delegates from the DEI Sister Thea Bowman Center, one participant from the Office of Student Enrichment threw a chair at Long and yelled, “What about people who can’t build bridges, huh?” Another OSE member tore his shirt and exclaimed, “What about the environment?”

Chaos erupted as attendees began shouting their own ideas across the room. “How about the ‘Notre Dame People Who Do Sports?’” one cried.

“What if I don’t wanna play sports?” answered another. One representative offered “People Who Win Games,” which was quickly decried for “misidentifying teams that lose.” A desperate participant from PrismND suggested the “People Who Like Notre Dame” but was called out for “excluding people who identify as not liking Notre Dame.”

After another hour of debates, and several representatives visiting the “exclusivity rage room,” Long entered the stage, notably missing a shoe and several teeth. “Thank you all so much for your excitement and energy,” he said quietly. “I am pleased to announce that we have finally landed on a mascot we believe will be truly inclusive: The Notre Dame Moderate People Who May Or May Not Do Sports.”

One visiting delegate from PETA tried to protest the exclusion of animals, but was quickly booed by every person in the room.

Haley Garecht is a senior studying political science. If you liked her piece more than Mr. Whitaker’s, feel free to vote by emailing her at hgarecht@nd.edu

The Race to the Bottom

The first shall be last, and the last shall be first

JAMES WHITAKER
Humor Editor

One can easily read in the pages of the *Rover* how the pursuit for academic excellence often needlessly comes at the expense of Notre Dame’s Catholic character. We like to say that the two goods are not mutually exclusive, but we see that sacrifices are often made nonetheless. This time, however, it’s, uh, different.

At a recent press conference, University President, Father Bob Dowd, C.S.C. explained how he had been deep in his contemplation of Scripture and reading of the Desert Fathers. His meditation on Matthew 5, the Beatitudes, and heavenly reward “really got [him] thinking.”

“Notre Dame so often strives to be ranked first in every category, whether it be faculty-to-student ratios, study abroad participation, or financial aid. But our Lord is so clear—the last shall be first! We know that everything sacrificed for Christ’s sake will be restored a hundredfold in heaven. The only way for Notre Dame to be number one in heaven is to become the least impressive school on earth.”

In order to secure Notre Dame’s place as dead last in faculty-to-student ratios, Fr. Dowd began his efforts to increase the student population and decrease the



Image by Notre Dame Magazine

faculty. First, he announced that Notre Dame would be going test-optional, citing Matthew 7:1, “Judge not, that you not be judged.” He also removed any sort of cap from the number of students the university can accept per cycle. All applying high-school students are now functionally guaranteed a spot at Notre Dame, and Fr. Dowd anticipates the number of undergraduates rocketing up to 350,000 in the next academic year.

“Obviously we won’t be able to house all these students, and many will be relegated to living in tents around campus. But thankfully, this will destroy our ranking in student accommodations. ‘Blessed are the poor!’”

The new test-optional policy

does not stop with SATs and ACTs; all examinations at the school are now opt-in. Fr. Dowd expects this to cause the general quality of education to plummet. “Don’t the saints teach how the simple, humble, and meek have a better chance of heaven? I’d rather not be the reason that someone studied, lest the Pharisaical pride of the educated endanger their souls.”

His plans to reduce the number of faculty evolved in stages. At first, his more moderate plan was to be strict about ensuring Notre Dame faculty are predominantly practicing Catholics. “But why stop there?” he mused, mid-press conference. “Why investigate the orthodoxy of our faculty when we can have one guaranteed ace in the hole?”

Effective immediately, the only faculty member of the University of Notre Dame is Pope Leo XIV. The curriculum for most students now consists in reading his papal exhortations and praying he releases an encyclical sometime soon. His Holiness graciously agreed to come give a single lecture per semester in-person. The university can now proudly boast a 1:350,000 faculty-to-student ratio: the worst in the nation by a factor of 10,000.

Fr. Dowd’s new extremism extends to all corners of the university. In order to devastate the football team’s rankings, he implemented a new policy which restricts the team’s roster to graduate students studying Peace Studies.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God!” “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you!” ... “If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also! I fully expect this new team to hand the ball over when the other team seems to want it. If they get tackled, they’re going to get up and offer to be tackled again.”

The opportunity to study abroad is now limited to a single winner of a lottery, who spends a full year in Mishawaka, commuting to Bethel University.

In order to decrease the university’s graduation and

retention rates, admissions has started admitting octogenarians into a new 30-year BA program, hoping they’ll kick the can before the halfway point.

To undercut the faculty’s great reputation as researchers, professors have been banned from publishing. With the great abundance of time on their hands, Notre Dame professors have finally gotten around to grading papers, with comments, on time. The students have all been rather pleased about this change, but it incited in most professors a deep sense of panic. “It’s a disaster!” commented one professor in the History department. “Who will read my monograph on the aesthetic evolution of Finnish doorknob design in light of the development of sexual liberation among Finnish (and nearby) transgender youths?”

“This rocks,” Fr. Dowd commented contentedly, as riots broke out among the many homeless freshmen and the library went up in flames. “Heaven-Notre Dame is gonna be awesome.”

James Whitaker is a graduate student in the Theology department. If you liked his piece more than Miss Garecht’s, feel free to vote by emailing him at jwhitak5@nd.edu



Gaslight. Gatekeep. Girlboss. Archbishop of Canterbury selected

JACK KRIEGER
Staff Writer

On Friday, October 3rd, 2025 A.D. C.E., the new Archbishop of Canterbury was selected as the head of the Church of England. His name? Sarah Mullallay.

Mullallay is a historic choice. She is the first woman to ever fill the office, in a progression that has moved remarkably fast. It was little over thirty years ago that women were allowed to be ordained in the English Church. Now, contrary to centuries of teaching and tradition, it is a woman that is the foremost spiritual advisor to faithful Anglicans globally.

Sources close to Mullallay predict that Mullallay's leadership will lead to radical change.

"Wallpaper. Lots and lots of wallpaper. That's step one. We will have the best wallpaper around. People say we don't have beautiful churches. They are wrong—we do. But they're about to get a whole lot more beautiful. I have some good floral patterns in mind."

The *Rover* was also told that there was at least one administrative order of business, effective immediately. Mansplaining will be outlawed

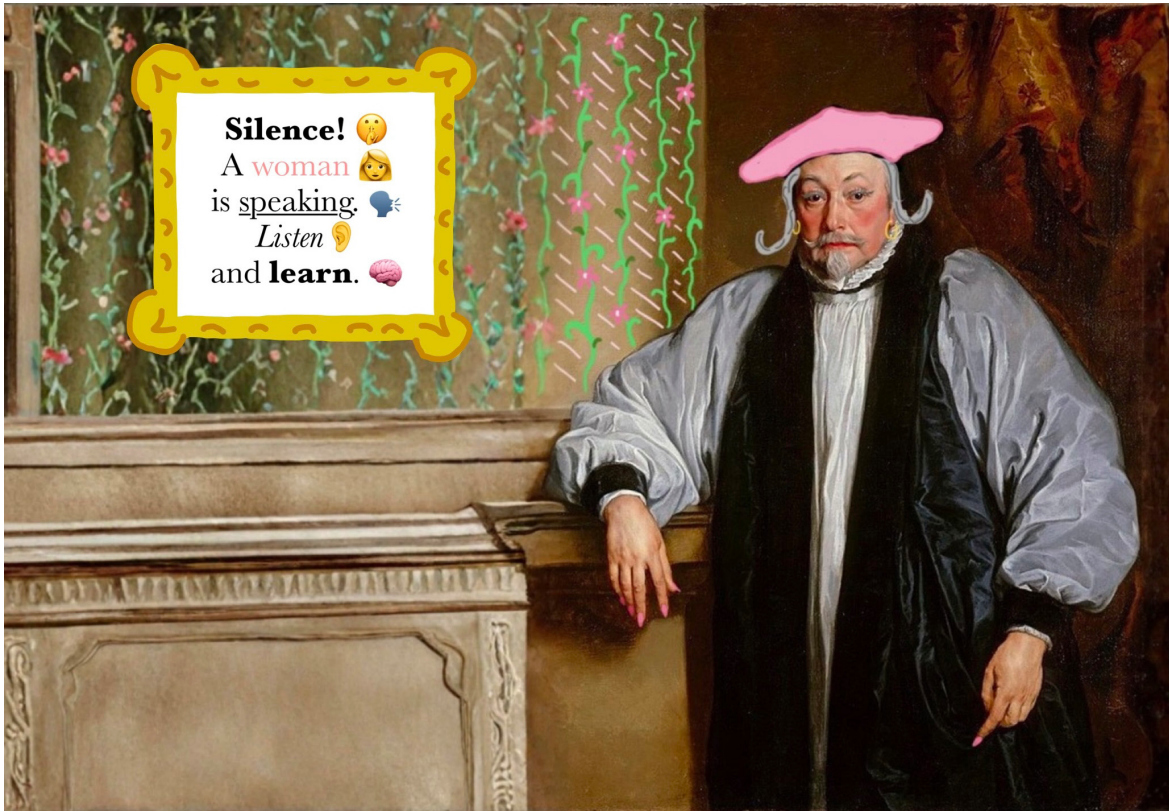


Image by Wikimedia Commons, modified

from the pulpit. (For those of you who don't know, mansplaining is when a man explains a facile topic in painful depth, such that even women can understand it.) ((This often takes the form of needless parenthetical tangents, long past when the point has been made.)) (((Is it starting to make sense now?)))

It appears, however, that matters of the faith will remain

constant. The Nicene Creed will still be said, psalms will still be sung, and abortions will still be permissible, just as the Church Fathers intended.

And yet, there are still concerns among clergy and laymembers. Some think that this is a grave error, and that reform is needed. They recommend schism, just like Henry VIII did in days of yore. As one layman said, "We shall schism on the beaches,

we shall schism on the landing grounds, we shall schism in the fields and in the streets, we shall schism in the hills; we shall never surrender!"

Others suggest, rather, that these parishioners are ill-informed bigots. "Who even is Paul? Why are you clinging to the social structures established by an educated man? They need to get off their high horse already." Upon hearing that St.

Paul was Jewish, many withdrew their comments.

They commented further, "She already was a compromise candidate. After all, she doesn't like euthanasia (what happened to 'Judge not, lest ye be judged,' anyhow?). But, give these blokes an inch and they'll take a mile. It's truly a shame what they've done to the English church."

Among secular commentators, Mullally's appointment has been met with great support. "It's just so important to have a woman in charge. Girlboss Sarah really captures what we've been pushing for: 'Silence! A woman is speaking. Listen, and learn.'"

Jack Krieger is the *Rover's* correspondent from across the pond. You can try to reach him at jkrieger@nd.edu, but the London police have arrested him for hate speech. Sentence? Death. His crime? He was too smart, good-looking, and witty.

UPCOMING CAMPUS EVENTS

Wednesday, Oct. 15th

Right to Life Lecture: Tim O'Malley, "How Far is Too Far?"
(7 pm, 115 DeBartolo)

Thursday, Oct. 16th

Grad/Professional Fellows:
Sorin Fellow Salon with Angela Knobel
(7 pm, 504 Flanner)

Friday, Oct. 17th

Basilica Organ Concert: "Thunder from the Sky"
(3:30 - 3:45 pm, Basilica of the Sacred Heart)

Tuesday, Oct. 20th

Hippocratic Society Virtual Seminar:
"Attention and Clinical Medicine"
(9 pm, via Zoom)

Saturday, Oct. 25th

"The Changing Face of Life-Limiting Prenatal Diagnoses:
Part 2 Clinical, Pastoral, and Ethical Considerations" - Diocese of
Fort Wayne-South Bend
(8:30 am - 4:30 pm, Geddes Hall Auditorium)

Wednesday, Oct. 29th

Film Screening: "Triumph of the Heart," RSVP required
(7:30 pm, 102 DeBartolo)

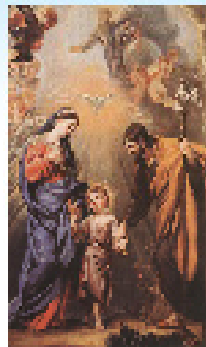
Thursday, Oct. 30th

Jus Vitae and CCCG Debate:
The Free Exercise Clause and Abortion
(12:30 - 1:45 pm, Eck Hall of Law)

Friday, Oct. 31st - Sunday, Nov. 2nd

Undergraduate Discernment Retreat:
Moreau Seminary and Scholasticate
(4:30 pm, through Sunday, Nov. 2nd, 12:30 pm)

Mozart's Requiem Mass:
Notre Dame Liturgical Choir
(9:30 am, Sunday Basilica of the Sacred Heart)



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National Vocations Awareness Week

(November 2-8, 2025)



Fr. Brian Vetter, C.S.C.

Middle School Science and Religion Teacher
and Associate Pastor at St. Adalbert Catholic
Church and School, South Bend IN

How is God calling you?

Here are a few discernment tips from the Holy Cross Office of Vocations:

- 1 Prepare your heart.** A religious vocation comes out of a foundation of focusing on discipleship and holiness. Attend regular Mass and Confession, reflect on Scripture, pray, and offer service.
- 2 Ask the question.** Ask for openness to hear where God is leading you and for the courage to respond generously once you hear it.
- 3 Listen for God's call.** Waiting for an answer takes patience, but God makes His will known to those who seek it with sincere hearts.
- 4 Address fears and questions.** Fears, doubts, and questions are natural, and the joy and peace of responding to God help to overcome them. If you think you may be called, yet still have questions, follow the QR code below to learn more or to be in communication with a vocations director.



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