

Vatican Invites ND Professor to Rome

John Cavadini speaks on formation of the laity

ROBERT MYLER
Staff Writer

In early February, the Vatican invited theology professor John Cavadini to present to the Dicastery for Laity and Family Life on the criteria for authentic lay formation. Pope Francis formed this dicastery, an administrative department within the Roman Curia, in 2016. According to the dicastery's website, the assembly considers "the formation of the laity in Christian life and the experience of World Meetings."

Cavadini, a professor of theology and the director of the McGrath Institute for Church Life, spoke to the dicastery about issues prevalent in current approaches to lay formation. At the end of the assembly, he had the opportunity to speak with Pope Leo XIV.

Cavadini recently sat down with the *Rover* to explain some of the contents of his presentation. He noted that the goal of lay formation is to deepen the spiritual lives of the laity, to form them "more and more ... into the full stature of Christ."

He commented that most

parishes rely on activities outside the liturgy to form their parishioners. "A lot of times this programming really attracts only a small percentage of the people in a parish or a diocese," Cavadini explained. "But somehow all the formation gets focused on these programs, so it doesn't reach very many people."

Cavadini's proposed solution is to create a parish community that incorporates programs such as these but is ultimately centered on the Mass: "It should be a whole culture of formation, so that someone who doesn't do any programming but comes to Mass ... is formed by participating in the liturgy."

"An authentic culture of formation should be biblical," Cavadini said. "And the liturgy is the primary place where people hear the Word of God, not only in the readings, but also ... [in the Canon of the Mass and] ... in the homily."

Emphasizing the Mass's spiritual impact, Cavadini said, "It's classical sacramental theology that Christ is at work in the liturgy. It's Christ's sacrifice. It's Him, offering Himself in the person of the priest. But it's

still Him, and it's Him who's speaking to us in the Word. So He's forming us."

Cavadini stressed reverence as a means of both honoring the gravity of the Mass and forming the laity. "[People are] formed in reverence if they see reverence ... in the priests and the ministers and everybody associated with the sanctuary," he said.

But not every Mass forms the laity in reverence, Cavadini explained: "The celebration of the liturgy often isn't reverent, or is minimally reverent. There's lots of casual stuff that happens. ... And so you're forming people ... away from an awareness of the mystery of Christ's sacrifice made present."

Cavadini noted that every aspect of the liturgy is an opportunity to show the laity that there is "something solemn, something transcendently awesome" about the Mass.

"People from the congregation [of my home parish] would come up and light the candles on the altar with matches, as though these are just ordinary candles. They're not. And then after Mass,

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MARCH ON THE DOME

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Faculty Responses to Christian Smith

Rover advisors on Notre Dame and its Catholic mission

STAFF

Christian Smith, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, published an article in *First Things* on February 13 titled "Why I'm Done with Notre Dame." Smith argues that Notre Dame fails to be Catholic in her intellectual life, which he calls the "heart and soul" of the university. He details what he sees as the primary reasons behind this failure, including certain departments, conservative activists, faculty, and administrators. The following letters are faculty responses to Smith's op-ed, which can be read in its entirety on firstthings.com.

On Not Giving Up

Professor Christian Smith made important contributions during his twenty years on the faculty of Notre Dame. I regret that his frustrations with the university

made him so unhappy that he felt obliged to depart. Obviously, he did so with a rather sour taste in his mouth. I trust that over time he may come to look back on his time here with more of a disposition of gratitude. God gave Smith the opportunity to make a difference here, and he did so.

There is perhaps some irony that Christian Smith's *First Things* article appeared right when there is controversy at Notre Dame over the appointment of Susan Ostermann to head the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies. Based on the criticisms Smith levels at "conservative activists who mobilize pressure campaigns" against Notre Dame, I assume that he would be critical of the efforts of those of us who have objected to the appointment of a pro-abortion advocate to a leadership position here. We supposedly

distract from engagement with the Catholic intellectual tradition, and yet it is precisely knowledge of this tradition and of the Church's moral teaching on the sanctity of life that leads us to speak up. What would he have us do—just stay silent? That supine course is an ill-chosen one. The fact that there is serious opposition to this awful appointment testifies to the vitality of the Catholic presence at Notre Dame and among the broad Notre Dame family.

Smith has been a thoughtful critic of both contemporary higher education in general and of Catholic higher education specifically. His book *Building Catholic Higher Education* deserved more significant engagement on our campus. This work and the criticisms he raises in his *First Things* essay mostly develop

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First Female Athlete from ND in Winter Olympics

O'Brien finishes seventh in bobsled event

GABE HOCKSTRA
Staff Writer

Former Notre Dame track star Jadin O'Brien competed for the U.S. Olympic Bobsled Team on February 20-21, finishing seventh in the two-woman event. The 2026 Winter Games took place in Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy.

O'Brien, who graduated from Notre Dame in 2024, is one of the most decorated track and field athletes in the program's history. Breaking the ACC record, she won three straight NCAA championships in the pentathlon from 2023-2025. She is also a two-time NCAA Runner-Up in the heptathlon, a ten-time All American, and two-time Olympic trials qualifier.

Soon after college, O'Brien

transitioned to bobsled training. In an interview with the *National Catholic Register*, O'Brien described receiving messages on social media after her 2025 track season from U.S. Olympic bobsled athlete Elena Meyers Taylor, who invited her to try the sport. In January 2026, after only a few months of training, O'Brien was named to the U.S. Olympic Bobsled Team. "It's crazy how fast this transition has happened," she told the *Register*. "But I've loved every second of it. Going to the Olympics has always been a dream of mine."

In an interview with the *Rover*, Director of Track and Field and Cross Country Matt Sparks praised O'Brien's achievement: "While Notre Dame has had

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THE FINE PRINT

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

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

"Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity" (1 Timothy 4:12)



Image by FaithND

Notre Dame Needs Her Students to Lead

ABBY STRELOW

Executive Editor



In recent weeks, Notre Dame has been the subject of endless controversy in the media. Alumni, university faculty members, journalists, and bishops from across the country have contributed to the debate about Susan Ostermann's recent appointment as the head of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies. Countless opinion pieces have been penned and beseeching letters addressed to administration about its apparent failure to act in accordance with Notre Dame's Catholic identity and mission.

As students, this barrage of noise can tempt us to confusion and frustration. When many from outside the university have written Notre Dame off in disgust or given her up to secularization as a lost cause, it can seem daunting to speak up in her defense. The Ostermann appointment, after all, is only the latest in a series of administrative decisions that have been criticized by faithful Catholics.

But students of this university know better. We know that the Catholic faith is *not* lost at Notre Dame. Despite media scandals, administrative mistakes, and the battle of ideologies that continues to rage on campus, we know that the faith is alive and well among the student body. The ever-increasing number of converts entering OCIA, our flourishing theology department, and a vibrant sacramental life enrich Notre Dame's campus and show that the Catholic battle is far from lost.

In a recent *First Things* article titled "Why I'm Done with Notre Dame," renowned sociologist and former Notre Dame professor Christian Smith described his reasons for leaving

the university. Frustrated by the administration's failure to live up to the grand mission statement it so boldly proclaims, Smith wrote that Notre Dame "excels at being Catholic when it comes to ... atmosphere, aesthetics, and worship," but that her intellectual life, which he calls the "heart and soul of the university," decidedly fails to be Catholic.

While Smith makes an insightful point about the necessity of the faith informing academics at Notre Dame, he is wrong that the studies, research, and teaching of the university are its "heart and soul." It is true that they are an integral part of education, definitional to the very concept of an institution for learning. But the heart of the university, the driving force which guides her mission, informs her goals and creates her culture—the very purpose for which she exists—is her students.

It is a tragedy that in our times the student is often pushed aside and neglected for the supposedly weightier concerns of the university, treated as an accident of education and not as its purpose.

Institutions of learning are ultimately not directed at research, prestige, or even the peaks of academic excellence, but rather the formation of its students in body, mind, and spirit. A university that fulfills its purpose well does not focus on awards or rankings; nor is intellectual achievement its principal goal. Prizes and rankings are secondary goods that may indicate a school's success, but do not alone constitute it.

It cannot and must not be forgotten that education is about the formation of an individual. The very word 'education' comes from the Latin verb '*educare*,' which means 'to lead out' or 'to draw forth.' Education is inseparable from leadership. It is an endeavor that is inherently personal, and it is centered around the student. Those who educate bear the important task of leading their students toward the good, teaching them to love what is beautiful and to thirst after what is true.

But students do not merely define the purpose of a university. They shape its culture, drive its mission, and influence the

direction of its academics, policies, and extracurriculars. When most high schoolers visit a prospective college choice, they don't ask to read the mission statement. They soak in the experience of being on campus—of being a student, surrounded by other students. They observe whether the people walking to class are smiling or merely glued to their phones, whether campus is bustling and energetic or dull and unalive. In the case of Notre Dame, they also see the crowd of students filling the basilica for Mass, the Grotto flickering with candles, and countless other signs of faith—from thousands of students kneeling for Mass at an ice chapel to a nightly Rosary that takes place regardless of frigid temperatures.

Notre Dame exists for her students. In seeking to educate them, she must also be formed by them, as the mind must always be informed by the heart.

The power we have as students in shaping the university should not be underestimated. And thus, we also bear a great responsibility to lead the administration that exists for our education's sake. We have the privilege and the task of holding our university accountable, requiring that it act in accord with its professed identity.

Perhaps now more than ever, this task is urgent. The students who participate in the university's flourishing sacramental life, who brave South Bend winter nights to pray the Rosary or go to Mass, and who bear witness to the strong life of faith that permeates work, prayer, and study on campus, must hold their university accountable to live up to her mission.

By appointing Ostermann as head of the Liu Institute, Notre Dame's administration is failing its students, and they should not take this failure lightly. Students deserve leaders who will live out the Catholicism that they advertise and who will stay true to Catholic teaching in a world of competing secular universities. At minimum, Notre Dame's students deserve administrators who match the level of faith that they themselves show every day. And it is their unique responsibility to demand it.

Notre Dame's heart is not

found in the approval of worldly institutions, the academic research she carries out, or the fame she earns by her achievements. The heart and soul of this university is her students. And it is an insult to them when those in authority treat the mission that the student body wholeheartedly believes in with such contempt. If those in positions of power at Notre Dame will not lead, they are failing to educate their students.

Catholicism is alive and well at Notre Dame, because it is alive and well in her students. But it is time that the student body stops meekly allowing its administration to act against the values that define a Notre Dame education. If the leaders will not lead, we must. We Notre Dame students should demand that we be formed in the values that are intrinsic to our university's mission. We ought not to settle for a subpar education focused on worldly standards, but instead require those in authority to offer us true leadership, a formation towards the good.

As a student of Our Lady's university, I challenge my peers to not give up on our beloved Notre Dame. We will not cease to defend her and fight for her, showing those who would give up that the spirit of faith on campus has not been extinguished. We must also do everything in our power to preserve that faith in the actions of our administration. Schedule office hours with the president; participate in this week's 'March on the Dome' to protest the Ostermann appointment; send emails and letters to the provost; write opinion pieces in the student newspapers. And above all, pray. Pray that Notre Dame may be a witness to the faith, that those in authority will make policies and decisions in alignment with her Catholic mission.

The faith of the students of Notre Dame testifies that Catholicism is far from lost at our university. By the grace of God, may we have the courage to preserve that faith for years to come.

Abby Strelow is a sophomore majoring in theology and the Program of Liberal Studies. She can be reached at astrelow@nd.edu.



Faculty Response *continued from front*

arguments that have been made by others at Notre Dame over the last 35 years and especially since the publication in 1990 of John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

His point about the university leadership's lack of vision and courage is presently on good display as we witness the cowardice of the administration to rescind a scandalous appointment. Words are spoken about Catholic mission, but they are not acted upon. Smith gets to the heart of the matter in addressing the centrality of hiring faculty for mission. He surely is also correct in pointing out Notre Dame's "craving for mainstream [secular] acceptance." Borrowing from Jacques Maritain, I call this "kneeling before the world," and it, too, is in evidence in the Ostermann case and much else.

But some of what Smith mentions badly misses the mark. His comments on the Theology Department are particularly ill-directed. That department now serves the Church and the university with notable distinction, and we should be extremely grateful to those faculty members who have built that department up so strongly. Also, his cheap shot at the Mendoza College of Business ignores the excellent work that is going on there now to deepen the knowledge of Mendoza students regarding Catholic social teaching.

But the major problem with Smith's article is that his lens is too narrow and self-referential. He ignores the realities that make Notre Dame—whatever its flaws and limitations—the most important place in Catholic higher education in the country. As Smith himself acknowledges, Notre Dame has major strengths. He notes rather perfunctorily that Notre Dame excels "in [Catholic] atmosphere, aesthetics, and worship." But he passes too quickly over this and ignores the vibrant sacramental life on this campus. This is rarely appreciated by those who want to hollow out Notre Dame's Catholicity, but it is crucially important—not only to the spiritual, but also to the intellectual life of this campus. It provides the essential food, might we say, to help faculty, staff and students to see their labors here not just as career or career-preparation but as a vocation.

Further, Smith largely ignores the contributions of so many of his one-time colleagues who labor to forge a distinctive Catholic university here. Undoubtedly, they too are frustrated at times—who could not be with academic administrators who seek to elevate a pro-abortion advocate to a leadership position?—but they



Image by Matt Cashore / University of Notre Dame

don't retreat from the fight. Their fidelity and commitment helped sustain Notre Dame before Chris Smith arrived and will sustain it going forward. Smith once explained that the many "models of faithful Catholic living and thinking" at Notre Dame had drawn him to enter the Catholic Church. They still live and teach and research here!

Yet, Smith is right to warn that Notre Dame's ambition to secure an enhanced place among major private research universities should not be pursued at the expense of either its Catholic character or excellence in undergraduate education. Here the present trends are worrying. Notre Dame's guiding strategic framework, prepared by the current provost, fails to set forth a distinctive vision for the university inspired by its Catholic character. It has the tone of a tepid Catholic NGO that, while appearing to elevate its religious mission, conforms overmuch to the spirit of the age. There is a disposition of accommodation running through the document. It reveals the insecurity of those who believe that Notre Dame's mission is to gain a place at the table with what passes for the contemporary academic elite. There is no recognition that our university holds a special responsibility to challenge and, dare we say, to convert a higher education sector that, in a significant manner, has lost its way.

For Notre Dame to overcome its fixations about ratings and its insecurity regarding how we are viewed by others requires that we be deeply rooted in our discipleship of Jesus Christ. When we have Christ, the Logos, as our guiding force and central inspiration, we can go forth well-armed to meet the substantial challenges we face. Smith's essay

aids in clarifying that Notre Dame must choose whether it will be a genuinely Catholic university or if it will be driven to conform to the flawed reigning paradigm of elite American universities. The academic leaders who appointed Susan Ostermann regrettably have chosen the latter course. Fortunately, there are many faculty and students who seek more than that soulless option. They want Notre Dame to fulfill its Catholic promise and to serve both Church and society in the manner charted by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. They want to fulfill the deeper and richer promise that takes the Gospels as its inspiration and which dares to ground our enterprise in the pursuit of truth.

Christian Smith found the cost of serving at Notre Dame too heavy for him. I regret that I never shared with him Father Sorin's words spoken after the great fire of 1879 about not giving up! Still, we must wish him well for the future and keep him in prayer. But those of us who continue to labor in this part of the Lord's vineyard must be about the work with fidelity. And that means, at least in part, that we must demand that the administrators here be true and honest executors of Notre Dame's Catholic mission. May we also adopt a disposition of gratitude and give thanks and praise to God that we have the opportunity to learn and study in this special place dedicated to Our Blessed Mother and her Son.

Fr. Bill Miscamble, C.S.C.
Professor Emeritus of History

Why I'm Not Done with Notre Dame

I joined the faculty of Notre Dame 42 years before Christian Smith began his 20-year tenure here. His essay explaining his

departure is a well-grounded and very important contribution to understanding this university's recent past and its present weaknesses. I am asked to reflect on why I have stayed.

In a nutshell, I am not done with Notre Dame because God is not done with Notre Dame. There have been signs along the way of these many years that Notre Dame can still be, in Professor Smith's words, all that "it can and should be." My experience here has been different from that of Professor Smith, perhaps because I came at another time and into a different department.

There was no family or personal history drawing me to Notre Dame. I came attracted by certain academic and spiritual features that I discovered while completing my doctoral studies at the University of Chicago. Notre Dame did not disappoint me in the first two decades here. Professor Smith acknowledges much good at Notre Dame and that there are "pockets" where the right things happen. I was blessed to come into two such pockets, a Political Science Department where political philosophy played a pre-eminent role and the Program of Liberal Studies where the disciplinary interaction and constructive dialogue that Professor Smith so sought was its very lifeblood. I experienced none of the loneliness that Professor Smith did. I found myself regularly with fine colleagues and excellent students engaged with the great books of our tradition and the big questions of human life. Our generally shared Catholic faith always was in play in those discussions. This is not, of course, to say that Political Science and PLS continue untouched by the failures of the administration that Professor Smith highlights.

In the 1980s, I and others became aware of the diminishing numbers of practicing Catholics in faculty positions at Notre Dame. This soon became a matter of public conversation throughout the university and among its alumni. I joined in these conversations and appeared in various public forums trying to get more effective administrative attention to what was happening. A majority of the faculty, however, expressed their view in a vote of the Faculty Senate affirming that academic prestige was to be preferred whenever it appeared to conflict with the Catholic mission of the university.

The faculty, alumni, and student friends made through such efforts have confirmed that the love of truth is the love of God and His grace is at work at Notre Dame. Among such true friends, one is encouraged and not at all isolated. This is where I belong, and I wish I was empowered to invite Professor Smith back and into our company.

Somewhat contrary to Professor Smith's argument, the circles in which I move see a connection between the underlying decline of Catholic faculty and Notre Dame's wobbly pro-life commitment. The latter, along with defiance of Church guidance, expressed so well by our learned bishop, is the fruit of a faculty disposed as it is and prevents Holy Cross leadership from being all it could be. What is worth fighting for? Clearly Notre Dame is worth fighting for, and some day, perhaps, God will grant the strength that Notre Dame can act as if it truly believed that innocent human life was worth fighting for.

Walter Nicgorski
Professor Emeritus of the Program of Liberal Studies and Political Science



What Ever Happened to Campus ID Cards?

Students weigh the benefits of phone dependent system

CLARE DiFRANCO

Social Media Coordinator

Nearly two years ago, Notre Dame shifted its student and faculty credential system, Irish1Card, to a completely digital base. Now, students are required to download an app which allows them to unlock classroom and residence hall doors, swipe into the dining halls, and spend flex points with the tap of their phone, rather than the tap of a card.

The change was first announced in a press release by CBORD on June 4, 2024. CBORD, one of the technology providers for the mobile Irish1Card system, listed user convenience and university sustainability initiatives as motivations behind this transition. The IT partner wrote, "With mobile credentials, users can seamlessly enter buildings, make purchases and manage their campus activities, all from their mobile devices. This integration underscores Notre Dame's sustainability goals, which include a commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2050."

Mike Hovestol, assistant manager of Notre Dame's parking and credentialing services, told the *Rover* that the university's shift to a digital credential system was initiated by representatives of the student body. Hovestol said, "The primary driver behind us being able to go digital in terms of funding was the Student Senate. ... They wanted to see the digital card on campus, and so that was the primary reason why we got the funding to actually move forward with the project"

Hovestol cited security as the primary benefit of a digital Irish1Card. He told the *Rover*, "The security behind the card usage was one of the benefits of moving to this. We made changes to all the readers. ... So everything is secure now that's used on campus when you tap



Image by Irish Rover

your phone or your card."

Hovestol also highlighted the environmental impact and convenience of this transition, saying, "We previously ordered roughly 10,000 cards a year, and that translates to 1,000 pounds plus of plastic that we don't use anymore." Hovestol added, "Seventy percent of the student body would replace their cards over the course of their time here on campus. ... And with the phones, they tend not to lose them as much."

Since the change was effected during the summer of 2024, current upperclassmen have seen both systems. They expressed varied opinions about their experiences to the *Rover*.

Senior Matthew Baldwin told the *Rover*, "I initially saw it as an unnecessary effort to modernize and digitize everything possible." Baldwin was an incoming junior during the first year when the digital Irish1Card was implemented. Although returning students were instructed to use the digital ID, their physical ID cards still functioned. "I was glad

when I heard that we were able to continue using our physical IDs since I never faced any issues with this system," he continued.

Despite his initial hesitations, Baldwin recognizes the benefits of the new system. "After I lost my ID, I switched to the digital one, and I did end up preferring the convenience of never having to take a physical card out. I do sometimes wish I could leave my dorm without having my phone on me, but as a whole I appreciate never getting locked out because I leave my wallet behind or lose my ID."

Sophomore Dominic Browne expressed a similar initial preference for the physical ID. "It definitely surprised me going in as a freshman. ... Not having the freedom to use a physical ID was really shocking," Browne told the *Rover*.

Unlike Baldwin, Browne was a freshman during the pilot year of the digital Irish1Card, but has since transitioned to using a physical card. He reported that the card office strictly enforced the digital ID, and that the process

of receiving a physical card was difficult. He said, "Immediately, I went over and just asked if I could get one. And they said, 'No, we're completely getting rid of it. And there's nothing we can do for you unless you have a special circumstance.'"

It took Browne multiple visits until he received permission to carry a physical ID. He explained, "I didn't have a good enough excuse the first time. ... I tried again. That didn't work." Browne gave up on his pursuit of a physical ID until the next semester. "I finally just said, 'All right, well, I'm giving up my phone for Lent', ... And they finally gave [an ID] to me," Browne said.

When asked about common reasons students provide when requesting a physical ID from the card office, Hovestol replied, "Students just want to move away from using their phone as much. And so that would be a case where you get them a plastic card."

Holy Cross College sophomore Andrew Hale, along with some of his friends, recently exchanged his

iPhone for a flip phone to detach from social media and time-consuming habits. The digital Irish1Card at Notre Dame, however, was an obstacle for Hale's friends at Notre Dame. He told the *Rover*, "Of those who did not [join], the only explanations they could come up with for why they couldn't do it was, 'I want to, but I need my phone so that I can get into my dorm,' or, 'I need my phone to enable two factor authentication,' and all school-related reasons that are not even remotely academic and could easily be solved by reverting back to a more reasonable, old school design."

About half of the student body has never experienced life on campus with physical ID cards because current freshmen and sophomores arrived after the digital system was established. Underclassman reception of this system is largely positive, although some express preference for a tangible ID.

Jane Cousino, a freshman in Lewis Hall, shared her appreciation for the convenience of the digital Irish1Card to the *Rover*. "It's honestly very helpful, as I'm prone to losing things. I like not having to keep track of as many items wherever I go."

Sophomore Ava Hall conceded this, saying, "I like how the Irish1Card is easy to use and hard to lose." Much like Browne, though, Hall expressed her personal preference for a card. "I also love having physical media which I am able to save and look back on when I am older."

Clare DiFranco is a junior studying accounting and Italian. Since she is a transfer student, she never received a real Notre Dame ID. If you know someone who can get her a convincing fake, reach her at cdifranc@nd.edu.

O'Brien in the Olympics

continued from front

a significant presence in the Summer Olympics, Jadin is in even more exceptional company representing Notre Dame in the Winter Olympics." Although Notre Dame athletes have won 48 medals in the Summer Games, the university is yet to garner a medal in a winter competition. O'Brien is the first female athlete from Notre Dame to compete in the Winter Games.

Sparks continued, "As a collegiate athlete competing in the pentathlon, she had to perfect skills in multiple track events. I have no doubt her ability to quickly adjust to the various track events allowed her transition to the bobsled over the last couple of months."

Despite O'Brien's remarkable



Image by Notre Dame Magazine

athletic ascent, her journey to the Olympics was not always easy. As a child, she was diagnosed with Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal

Infections (PANDAS). Her symptoms included obsessive thoughts, compulsive behaviors, and severe anxiety and depression.

As her family pursued multiple avenues for help, O'Brien found

inspiration from her confirmation saint, Thérèse of Lisieux, who also suffered from OCD as a child. Even now, her 'Little Way' and unrelenting trust in God help O'Brien to see competing in the Olympics as an avenue to glorify God, according to the *Register*.

Rodney Zuyderwyk, who recruited O'Brien out of high school and coached her for five years at Notre Dame, described the now Olympic athlete's perseverance after PANDAS in an interview with the *Rover*: "Even when you grow out of that, you still have a tendency to want to go back to those mental habits. ... She's always kind of had to continue to be mentally strong through those moments."

Zuyderwyk also commented on the role Catholicism played in O'Brien's athletic journey, saying, "Her faith played a huge part in

her being able to put everything in perspective." He told the *Rover*, "Learning to trust God with the final outcomes was a big part of her journey of letting go. ... Stop trying to control the outcome and give it to God and compete for God and compete for the joy of competition as he created us."

With the Winter Games now complete, O'Brien intends to return to track and field for the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.

Gabe Hockstra is a freshman from Aldie, VA studying economics. He can be reached at ghockstr@nd.edu.



Notre Dame Pressured by American Bishops to Rescind Ostermann Appointment

Over a dozen bishops condemn promotion of pro-abortion professor

LUCY SPENCE
Editor-in-Chief

Backlash against the University of Notre Dame is mounting as an increasing number of American bishops denounce the university's appointment of abortion advocate Susan Ostermann to direct the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies.

In a statement released on February 11, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend condemned the promotion of Ostermann, expressing his "dismay" over the appointment, which he said is "causing scandal to the faithful of our diocese and beyond." Citing Ostermann's numerous "outrageous claims" and "disparaging" remarks towards the pro-life movement, the bishop called on the university to "rectify" the situation.

Since Bp. Rhoades' statement, at least 12 other bishops have similarly expressed their opposition to the university's action. Critics include *Word on Fire's* Bishop Robert Barron of the Winona-Rochester diocese and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Bp. Barron expressed "strong support" for Bp. Rhoades' statement on X, calling Ostermann's appointment "repugnant to the identity and mission of that great center of Catholic learning." Bp. Coakley said Notre Dame exhibited "poor judgement in hiring a professor who openly stands against Catholic teaching."

Other bishops to endorse Bp. Rhoades' statement include



Image by Irish Rover

Archbishop Samuel Aquila of Denver, Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco, Bishop Michael Olson of Fort Worth, Bishop David Ricken of Green Bay, Bishop Donald Hying of Madison, Bishop James Conley of Lincoln, Bishop Michael Burbidge of Arlington, Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Springfield, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, former archbishop of New York, and Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kiun, former bishop of Hong Kong.

Bp. Paprocki called the decision "scandalous," saying, "Catholic social teaching cannot be selectively invoked while rejecting its foundational principle—the inviolable dignity of the human person from conception to natural death. To do so is not only intellectually incoherent but a direct slap in the face to the Church's moral tradition. Academic freedom does not obligate a Catholic university to entrust leadership to those whose public positions contradict essential moral truths."

Notre Dame has been the focus of heated controversy since the beginning of January, when it announced Ostermann's

promotion.

Ostermann, largely working in tandem with former Notre Dame professor Tamara Kay, wrote nearly a dozen articles in recent years promoting abortion as "freedom-enhancing," calling crisis pregnancy centers "propaganda sites," and vilifying the pro-life movement as one rooted in "white supremacy and racism."

"Notre Dame has publicly committed as a Catholic institution to the life and dignity of the human person. It affirms the Church's teaching that 'human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception' (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2270)," Bp. Rhoades wrote in his statement.

Referencing Pope Francis' words that described the promotion of abortion as a "false compassion" towards women, Bp. Rhoades called on Notre Dame to stand for the "inalienable right to life of mothers and their unborn children," as the Church does.

Bp. Rhoades listed several reasons disqualifying Ostermann for the role as director of the Liu Institute. He began with her

"ludicrous" misunderstanding of the term "integral human development," a principle of Catholic social teaching which guides the work of the Liu Institute. Ostermann, in direct opposition to Church teaching, used the same principle to support abortion on demand, the bishop argued.

"To the contrary," Bp. Rhoades wrote, "the Holy See, in statements to the United Nations, continues to defend the 'right to life' as one of the core 'pillars of integral human development' (e.g. Note regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2016)."

The bishop continued, "Also disqualifying is Professor Ostermann's work as a consultant for the Population Council. For those who have never heard of it, this is an organization dedicated to the promotion of abortion around the world. It has been linked to China's population control policies that have resulted in hundreds of millions of abortions of baby girls. It was also instrumental in securing approval of the abortion pill by the FDA, which is responsible for the majority of abortions in the United States."

Bp. Rhoades expressed great concern for the university's role in causing "confusion in the public mind as to Notre Dame's fidelity to its Catholic mission." He stated that Ostermann's work should "disqualify her from an administrative and leadership role at a Catholic university."

Addressing the question of respect for academic freedom at the university—an objection many have raised to those opposing Ostermann's appointment—Bp. Rhoades

wrote, "Academic freedom concerns the liberty of faculty to conduct research according to their own professional judgment and interests. This appointment, by contrast, concerns the official administrative appointment to lead an academic unit. Such appointments have profound impact on the integrity of Notre Dame's public witness as a Catholic university."

The bishop turned to the importance of Our Lady's intercession, asking the Notre Dame community to "say a prayer or light a candle at her grotto."

In 2009, over 70 bishops decried Notre Dame's invitation to then-President Barack Obama to deliver the commencement address and receive an honorary degree. Despite the strong opposition from Catholic leadership, the invitation was never rescinded by the university.

As of publication, there is no indication that Notre Dame plans to reverse its decision on Ostermann's appointment. On February 13, the university confirmed to *EWTN News* that her appointment would remain.

On Friday, February 27, students will gather in front of the Main Building at 6 p.m. to prayerfully protest the appointment.

A version of this article first appeared on the website on February 11, 2026.

Lucy Spence is a junior from McLean, Virginia majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies and piano performance, with a minor in philosophy. She can be reached at lspace@nd.edu.

ND Architecture Names 2026 Award Recipients

Notre-Dame de Paris restoration, Walsh building architects honored

BENEDICT ALTHOFF
Staff Writer

Notre Dame's Walsh School of Architecture announced the laureates of the annual Henry Hope Reed and Richard H. Driehaus prizes. Phillipe Villeneuve will receive the Henry Hope Reed Award for undertaking the complete restoration of the Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral. The Driehaus Prize will be awarded to British architect John Simpson.

The Richard H. Driehaus Prize, established in 2003, is given to a "living architect whose work embodies the highest ideals of traditional and classical architecture in contemporary society, and creates a positive cultural, environmental, and artistic impact," according to the Driehaus Prize website. This criteria complements the

Walsh School of Architecture's curriculum, which aims to promote "cultural continuity, community, and harmony with nature through mindful design." Past laureates include Leon Krier, Robert A.M. Stern, and Thomas H. Beeby.

John Simpson—this year's winner—is best known as the architect of the DNRC Rehabilitation center in Leicestershire, United Kingdom, the King's Gallery at Buckingham Palace, the Royal College of Music in London, and Notre Dame's own Walsh Hall of Architecture, constructed in 2018.

The jury citation for Mr. Simpson's selection reads, "John Simpson's commitment to exploring the generative dimensions of tradition has led to a career of exploring architectural design across a broad range of expressions. While thoughtfully

contextual with respect to local character and scale, his work also stands as a testament to the multiple building cultures that make up all traditions and offers solutions to the critical need for variety and uniqueness of place."

Stefanos Polyzoides, Dean of the School of Architecture, commented on Simpson's selection, "John Simpson has long maintained that traditional forms are environmentally sound and contribute to the sense of local identity."

Polyzoides continued, "[Simpson's] work amply illustrates that the practice of traditional urbanism and architecture does indeed facilitate the bonds of community by encouraging people of all kinds to share a common, living culture of building and to avail themselves of the opportunity to identify with, live, and flourish in its

distinctive presence."

Awarded in conjunction with the Driehaus Prize, the Henry Hope Reed Award is given to "an individual working outside the practice of architecture who has supported the cultivation of the traditional city, its architecture and art through writing, planning or promotion." Some of the award's most distinguished recipients include Ed Bass, Wendell Berry, and Vincent Scully.

As Chief Architect of Historic Monuments in France since 1997, Phillipe Villeneuve was responsible for the reconstruction of the Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral after the 2019 fire. Villeneuve's work as the Architect of Historical Monuments has been largely restorative rather than strictly architectural, which qualified him for the Award.

Villeneuve also delivered a

keynote address at the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture's Fall Conference in October of 2025. The speech was entitled "Reconstruction/Restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris: Doctrinal, Technical, Aesthetic, and Liturgical Choices."

Both the Driehaus Prize and the Henry Hope Reed Award will be presented in Chicago in March 2026. The Driehaus Prize winner is awarded with 200,000 dollars—the largest monetary architecture award—and the Henry Hope Reed Award winner with 50,000 dollars.

Benedict Althoff is a frosh architecture student living in Keenan Hall. For coveted Thursday night Revue tickets, email him at balthoff@nd.edu.



American Bishops and the White House

Examining the USCCB's response to the Biden, Trump administrations

MADELINE PAGE

Staff Writer

LUCY SPENCE

Editor-in-Chief

American bishops have long served as the Church's voice on salient political issues in the country. Their role as shepherds extends beyond the pulpit—they are “teachers of the moral law,” as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) writes. From statements regarding abortion and gay marriage to guidelines for public figures' reception of Holy Communion, bishops have frequently clarified Church doctrine to the faithful.

The *Rover* investigated major responses elicited from the USCCB during the Biden and Trump administrations, examining which political issues garnered the most attention from the ecclesial body, and under which administrations.

During the Biden administration's four years, the USCCB released multiple statements primarily responding to the self-proclaimed Catholic president's policies on abortion and human sexuality.

One week after he took office, Biden signed Executive Order 14079, which allowed U.S. taxpayer funds to be sent to organizations that provide abortions in developing countries. The USCCB “strongly oppose[d]” the action, saying it was “incompatible with Church teaching.”

In July of 2022, Biden signed Executive Order 14076, which protected access to “reproductive healthcare services,” including abortion. The USCCB response called the order “deeply disturbing and tragic,” and implored the president to “abandon this path that leads to death and destruction.”

Four days after he took office in 2025, President Donald Trump revoked the two executive orders. The USCCB responded positively to the reversal, affirming its support for the Hyde Amendment, which prevents federal funding of elective

abortion.

In addition to his promotion of abortion, in June of 2023 Biden signed Executive Order 14101, which aimed to “further strengthen and bolster access to affordable, high-quality contraception.” There was no official response from the USCCB following the order.

In June of 2022, Biden signed Executive Order 14075, which increased access to “gender-affirming care” for “LGBTQI+” individuals, including hormone therapy and puberty blockers. There was no official response from the USCCB following the order.

When Trump rescinded this order early in his second term, however, Bishop Robert Barron of the Winona-Rochester diocese, then-chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth, released a statement praising the reversal. He wrote, “It is unacceptable that our children are encouraged to undergo destructive medical interventions instead of receiving access to authentic and bodily-unity care.”

Unlike Order 14075, the USCCB publicly criticized Biden's Executive Order 13988, which addressed gender-identity or sex-based discrimination based on the Supreme Court case *Bostock v. Clayton County*. The USCCB wrote, “[The order] threatens to infringe the rights of people who recognize the truth of sexual difference or who uphold the institution of lifelong marriage between one man and one woman.”

One instance of support from the bishops came in December of 2024, when Biden commuted the death sentences of 37 men. Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio wrote, “This action by the president is a significant step in advancing the cause of human dignity in our nation. As we continue to proclaim the Gospel in a broken world, this act of mercy is a step closer to building a culture of life.”

In the first year of Trump's second term, the USCCB has released several statements criticizing the Republican

president, largely focusing on his approach to immigration and foreign policy.

Claims of misconduct and ill treatment of immigrants by the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) unit have gained national attention in recent months. The bishops' statements call for unity, citing the need for national security coupled with a respect for the dignity of all people.

In November of 2025, the USCCB's Office of Public Affairs released a rare “special message” lamenting the division caused by immigration policies, the first time in 12 years that the USCCB had released this kind of statement.

“Catholic teaching exhorts nations to recognize the fundamental dignity of all persons, including immigrants,” the statement read. “Human dignity and national security are not in conflict. Both are possible if people of good will work together.”

“We oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people,” the statement continued. “We pray for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement.”

The USCCB's 2026 report on religious liberty also expressed unease with the Trump administration's immigration policies, stating that “the U.S. bishops have been united in their support for the rights of immigrants and for every person to be treated with the respect their God-given dignity demands, regardless of immigration status.”

Responding to anxieties related to ICE detentions and unexpected deportations, some bishops have granted a Sunday Mass dispensation for immigrants. The report on religious liberty noted that although “nations have a responsibility to regulate their borders and establish a just and orderly immigration system ... there should be basic agreement about the rights of communities to be able to worship without fear.”

In addition to commenting

on immigration policies, U.S. bishops have voiced opinions on Trump's foreign relations, particularly his interest in annexing Greenland. In January of 2026, Archbishop Blase Cupich of Chicago, Illinois; Archbishop Robert McElroy of Washington, D.C.; and Archbishop Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey criticized Trump's foreign policies. In a joint statement, they said that “the events in Venezuela, Ukraine and Greenland have raised basic questions about the use of military force and the meaning of peace.”

Although many of the USCCB's recent responses to the Trump administration have been critical, bishops have also praised Trump's actions regarding abortion policies and the rights of vowed religious.

In a recent presidential message on National Sanctity of Human Life Day, Trump said, “As President, I pledge to always be a voice for the voiceless and to never tire in fighting to protect the intrinsic dignity of every child, born and unborn.” A statement released days later from the USCCB's Committee for Pro-life Activities chairman, Bishop Daniel Thomas, praised Trump's pro-life legislation.

Though bishops have expressed their gratitude for Trump's pro-life policies, a statement in October of 2025 clarified their unequivocal condemnation of the administration's support for in-vitro fertilization (IVF) treatments.

“Though we are grateful that aspects of the Administration's policies announced Thursday intend to include comprehensive and holistic restorative reproductive medicine, which can help ethically to address infertility and its underlying causes,” the statement read, “we strongly reject the promotion of procedures like IVF that instead freeze or destroy precious human beings and treat them like property.”

Another act which drew praise from the USCCB was Trump's Interim Final Rule, issued in January. The rule amended federal regulations requiring a minimum time outside the

country for vowed religious workers before they could acquire another religious worker (R-1) visa. The USCCB called the rule “a truly significant step that will help facilitate essential religious services.”

The *Rover* spoke with Professor Richard Garnett, the director for Notre Dame's Program on Church, State, and Society, regarding the intersection of the USCCB's reactions to the presidential administrations and the separation between church and state.

Garnett noted that the concept of separation between church and state is often misunderstood; rather than implying that “religious people should not be active in the public square or that religious convictions and commitments should never affect public policy,” Garnett said this divide means that “the state does not get to decide religious questions or interfere in internal church affairs.” Garnett emphasized that bishops' responses to the Trump administration in no way infringes on this separation.

Daniel Philpott, Professor of Political Science, echoed Garnett's statement. “[The separation of church and state] crafted something unique,” he told the *Rover*, “a democracy in which no one religion dominated and in which the state did not suffocate religion, yet one in which religion could participate freely and contribute vigorously to the common good. The arrangement has stood the test of time.”

Madeline Page is a sophomore studying biology. She prefers discussing phasmids to politics, but will respond to comments about either at mpage4@nd.edu.

Lucy Spence is a junior studying piano performance and the Program of Liberal Studies. Reach her at lspace@nd.edu.

Cavadini Invited to Rome

continued from front

they come up and just blow them out,” Cavadini said. He explained, “This is not reverent—these candles are ritually placed and ritually significant, and they need to be lit by the right ministers at the right time with the right reverence.”

Cavadini pointed out that liturgical music also impacts the laity. He emphasized that the lyrics greatly affect the laity's disposition towards the faith. “Look at the hymns of Isaac Watts, or the hymns of Charles Wesley. My gosh, he wasn't even

Catholic, but ‘Love Divine, All Loves Excelling?’ You can't ... sing that hymn without feeling deeply moved,” said Cavadini.

In contrast, Cavadini described much of contemporary music as “insubstantial.” He expressed a concern that if one uses lyrics that do not approach the mystery of the Mass reverently, “then you're going to start losing a sense of the mystery of it, and you're going to end up ... much more casual, much less ... reverent.”

Additionally, Cavadini identified devotional practices as instrumental to the formation of the laity. He recalled the influence that Eucharistic Adoration had on

his formation: “I remember my grandmother very sternly telling me ... ‘When the Eucharist is exposed [during Eucharistic Adoration], you're supposed to genuflect on two knees, and not just on one.’ And that was rigidly enforced—and I still do it—but it taught me something ... in my own body. I was apprehending the mystery present.”

He mentioned that there are many different devotions and liturgies that can form the laity, contrasting various liturgies he has encountered. Cavadini described how one priest celebrated “the regular, ordinary liturgy” in such a way that “you

just felt the reverence—it was ... almost consoling.”

Cavadini compared this experience to his experience with the Zaire Rite of the Mass in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: “You could say they have a kind of ritualized rhythmic movement. ... It's rhythmic and it's cool, but it's also reverent. So reverence comes in different idioms.”

Cavadini told the *Rover* that he expects the dicastery to publish a document synthesizing the ideas presented during the assembly. This document will then be disseminated through the Church and received in each diocese

where, Cavadini said, “People would be ... obliged to consider it seriously” as an exercise of the Magisterium.

Robert Myler is a freshman majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies and classics. He enjoys cross country skiing and wants the temperature to stay well below freezing until March at least. If you fell for the fake spring a week ago, email him at rmyler2@nd.edu.



Fulton Sheen: Apostle to the 20th Century

After six-year delay, Ven. Fulton Sheen's canonization process proceeds

LUKE FISHER
Staff Writer

Often called one of the greatest evangelists of the 20th century, Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen will finally be beatified after a six-year delay. In the wake of this news, Notre Dame reflected on his legacy and present importance.

After a six-year pause due to legal proceedings in the state of New York, where Archbishop Sheen was head of the diocese of Rochester from 1966-1969, the Vatican has approved his beatification to proceed. Although no official date has been set, it is expected to occur in 2026.

"He was a radio personality and then made the transition to television," Father Stephen Koeth, C.S.C., Assistant Professor of History, told the *Rover*. "He was wide-[reaching] and wildly, wildly popular, drawing 30 million viewers. That meant he wasn't just appealing to Catholics but non-Catholics too, in an era when American culture was still suspicious of Catholicism. [Archbishop] Sheen made Catholic philosophy and theology and Catholic teaching and practice understandable and approachable to the average

American."

The author of over 60 books during his lifetime, Archbishop Sheen won an Emmy in 1953 for his show *Life is Worth Living*. He fundraised millions of dollars for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and was responsible for bringing countless famous actors, politicians, musicians, communists, and atheists to the Catholic faith.

"He wasn't just some flash in the pan," recounted Father Wilson Miscamble, C.S.C., Professor Emeritus of History. "He saw the importance of spreading God's word and using new methods to do so."

Archbishop Sheen is often credited as the father of the Catholic evangelistic movement today, serving as an inspiration and model for contemporary figures such as Bishop Robert Barron and Father Mike Schmitz. He is also widely regarded for his spiritual depth and steadfastness.

"[Archbishop] Sheen always preached for prayer—Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament in a Holy Hour—and starting the day with one's relationship with God to nourish and help shape one's day," Fr. Miscamble explained.

One example of Archbishop Sheen's perhaps prophetic spirituality took place during

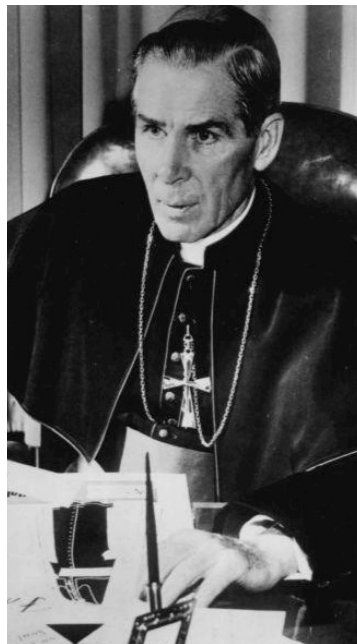


Image by Wikipedia

his show in early 1953. At the end of an episode examining communism's threat to religion, Archbishop Sheen proclaimed that "Stalin must one day meet his judgement!" Within a week, the leader of the USSR suffered a major stroke and died shortly after.

Yet, aside from his apparently prophetic predictions and high-profile convert-making, Archbishop Sheen inspired millions of Americans—Catholic and non-Catholic alike—to take on the issues of the spiritual life,

and he remains relevant today.

"I think the issues that Fulton Sheen addressed in his show, in his sermons, and [in] his books are as pertinent to now as they were in his day," remarked sophomore Max McNiff. "And I think that his example of taking on those issues with a great sincerity but also charisma was really great. The fact that his show was as popular as it was, even in the secular culture, really speaks to the kind of influence that Catholics can have. And if we can have that kind of influence today, we can really make a change in the culture for the good."

"It starts with striving for personal holiness," Fr. Koeth urged. "To be devoted to the Eucharist, to be devoted to Mary and the practice of daily prayer in some form. I think in this era we have to make sure that we study the Faith as [Archbishop Sheen] did and know it through spiritual practices and pious practices but also through scholarly work."

Anticipating his upcoming beatification, many Catholics from across America and the broader world are revisiting Archbishop Sheen and turning to his life as an extraordinary example of holiness.

"I think folks realize today that we need models for evangelization,"

said Fr. Miscamble, "and that Ven. Fulton Sheen can provide inspiration for how to evangelize and why it matters so much to bring Christ into a culture where there may be a lot of resistance to religious thinking. His beatification provides a sort of enormous boost to the idea that we are to go outwards."

Fr. Miscamble concluded, "We aren't a comfortable Church; our task is to reach out and engage the culture. And the students here at Notre Dame, they need to take their Christian faith out into the world and be evangelists themselves."

Luke Fisher is a freshman from Detroit living in Siegfried Hall. He is majoring in theology and also struggling his way through the Program of Liberal Studies. If he's not snacking during class or repeating the same joke for the 15th time that day, you can usually find him doing the chapel crawl around campus. To join in (or chat), reach out at lfisher8@nd.edu.

Notre Dame Students Experience D.C. Through Washington Program

Alumni, faculty advisors discuss Catholic roots

RAYMOND WEBBER
Staff Writer

Since its establishment in 1998, the University of Notre Dame's Washington Program has offered students the opportunity to engage with American political institutions while living in the nation's capital.

Similar to study abroad programs, the university allows students to participate in either a semester or summer program, where they spend time developing relationships and gaining experience in organizations of their interest. Administrators assist participants in obtaining internships conducive to their career aspirations.

Students receive academic credit for the internship program they choose in D.C., even if it is not explicitly political or policy-related. In addition to working a full-time internship, students are also required to enroll in a public policy course that allows them to connect with Notre Dame alumni and faculty working in the Capitol. Additionally, the program allows students to enroll in non-political elective courses taught by Notre Dame professors.

The mission of this program is deeply tied to the university's concern for cultivating a student body responsive to Catholic

obligations of citizenship and political participation. The official website of the program includes a quote from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), which states, "In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in the political life is a moral obligation."

Dr. Thomas Kellenberg, the Executive Director of the Washington Program since its founding in 1998, referenced this Catholic call to civic duty in an interview with the *Rover*. He specifically referenced an excerpt from the USCCB document entitled "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility" that writes, "As citizens, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. When necessary, our participation should help transform the party to which we belong; we should not let the party transform us in such a way that we neglect or deny fundamental moral truths or approve intrinsically evil acts."

As the leader of this program, Dr. Kellenberg sees the political participation accessible within the Washington Program as fulfilling an inherently Catholic vocation tied intimately to the identity of

the university.

In connection to its Catholic mission, one of the focal points of the program is the Human Rights Clinic, which offers "undergraduate students the opportunity to engage in meaningful, real-world human rights work through a variety of clinical projects and courses."

According to its website, students involved in the clinic have assisted death row inmates, victims of censorship, and persecuted journalists through participation in prominent legal battles.

Upon graduation, 22 percent of the program's alumni return to D.C. for their first positions in the workforce. Despite being primarily oriented toward a civic and political goal, 32 percent of alumni either enter into education, financial services, or non-profit industries. The leadership of the program consistently emphasizes that the networking available to students in this program reaches beyond political office.

Associate Director of the Washington Program Dr. Claudia Francis echoed this sentiment, telling the *Rover*, "Students intern at organizations across D.C.—not limited to government and policy, some work in media and private business. The professional

opportunities and discernment that the Washington Program provides sets our students up for success in future careers in policy, law, business and more."

She also commented on the program's priority of producing student-leaders committed to discovering the interconnection of civics and virtue. She said, "There are many ways that the university encourages students to 'be a force for good'; for many students who participate in the Washington Program, they find that calling to be shaping American government and policy."

Donal Connaughton, a junior who participated in the Washington Program in the spring of 2025, told the *Rover* the program balanced both conservative and liberal ideologies, saying, "With respect to the ideological framework of the program, it is very open to all opinions, given that they have some sort of logical or factual grounding. I never felt that there was any ideological pressure from program administrators or professors."

"On the topic of the political leanings of program participants, our cohort certainly had a healthy blend of liberal and conservative perspectives, but much of our class discussion was grounded in discussions that transcended

those boundaries," Connaughton added.

Julia Jacobson, a 2025 graduate now working with a public relations and consulting firm in D.C., attributed her success in finding a job in the Capitol to her "wonderful experiences" with the Washington Program.

Emma Duffy, a Notre Dame graduate and program alumna, commented on the ideology of program participants. "The students in the program had mainly liberal ideas, and it seemed to create a divide with those with more conservative ideals," she explained. "However, students are instructed that they cannot intern at certain organizations, such as EMILY's List, that include pro-choice agendas."

"There seems to be a disconnect between student views and the university rules," Duffy concluded.

Raymond Webber is a sophomore philosophy major. His favorite hobby is listening to Bishop Fulton Sheen homilies on YouTube. Contact him at rwebber2@nd.edu.



Students Divided Over Euthanasia Legalization

New York law puts assisted suicide in the political spotlight

ZACH NICHOLSON

Staff Writer

New York is at the center of a growing national debate after Democrat Governor Kathy Hochul reached an agreement with the state legislature to legalize “Medical Aid in Dying” (MAiD) for terminally ill patients. The law, set to take effect in July, allows patients with less than six months to live to request medication that will kill them.

In order to receive the lethal medication, patients must make a recorded request, undergo a mental health evaluation, and wait five days before the prescription is filled. Ever since Oregon first passed a similar law, the Death with Dignity Act, in 1997, adoption of medical euthanasia has been widely growing, with New York becoming the twelfth state to allow a legal form of physician-assisted suicide.

The controversy around New York’s decision mirrors that of Canada’s euthanasia policy. First legalized in 2016 for individuals with terminal illnesses, Canada’s Medical Assistance in Dying Law was quickly broadened to include people whose deaths were not necessarily foreseeable, namely those suffering from mental

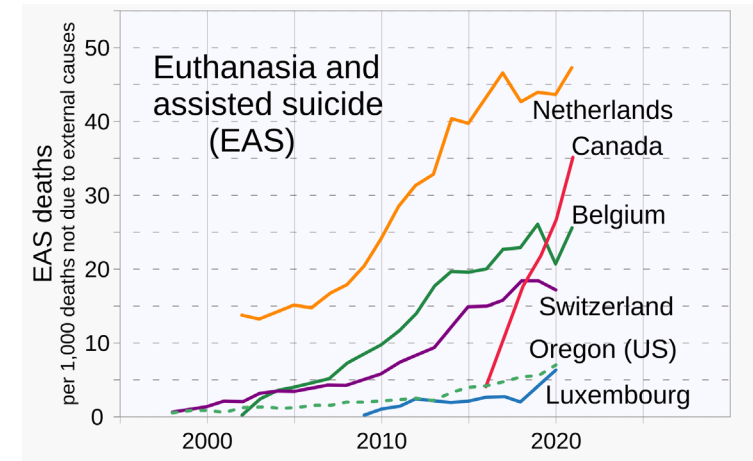


Image by Wikimedia Commons

illnesses like depression. Over the following years, MAiD has become the fifth leading cause of death in Canada.

Notre Dame students are divided over the new law.

Sophomore Kyle Ma told the *Rover*, “[F]rom the most fundamental sense, I’d say it’s probably more of a freedom; ... you want them to make a rational decision. You don’t want doctors pressuring them into making the choice.”

A student in Carroll Hall, who asked to remain anonymous, supported the legislation while recognizing possible religious objections: “If you know they’re going to die and they’re in a lot of pain, ... I don’t know if it’s kind to sentence someone to six

months of suffering.”

Others firmly opposed the law and rejected the framing of euthanasia as a freedom. One freshman told the *Rover*, “Autonomy allows us to make free choices, but freedom would come from pursuing the good and the virtuous path. ... [Assisted suicide] degrades the dignity of the individual.”

A student studying mechanical engineering explained, “[Y]ou’re just giving tools of painless death to the person and if it’s a sin I feel like it’s a little on them if they decide to end their life.”

Several opponents of the law appealed to their faith and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Peter Onder, a junior, told the *Rover*, “It’s a shame that

New York, like so many other jurisdictions in our country, has abandoned the sanctity of human life. The lie that New York is telling their citizens, the idea that ending a patient’s life on purpose is ‘healthcare,’ is abhorrent.”

Onder continued, “Other states and the federal government must oppose this law and protect the dignity of human life from conception until natural death.”

One freshman who criticized the legislation told the *Rover*, “It’s for God to give and to take life, in my opinion, and that’s in accordance with Church teaching. We should obviously treat people with compassion and respect, but Christ demonstrates very clearly upon the cross that good can come even from a difficult and suffering death.”

The freshman also expressed concerns about the implications of the law, saying, “History demonstrates that this is a slippery slope that can lead to extensions to perhaps people with disabilities or people that may be perceived with less dignity, simply as a result of things outside of their control. So I think ... this is an obvious no for anyone of Catholic conviction.”

Notre Dame Right to Life denounced the New York decision in a statement to the *Rover*,

saying, “[We seek] to promote the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death; thus, we strongly condemn and oppose any legislation that violates the dignity of the human person. We firmly believe that life is a sacred gift from God that needs to be preserved and defended above all else. Intentionally seeking to cause the death of an individual, regardless of motive, is morally unacceptable and is contrary to the respect owed to God.”

The Right to Life statement continued, “Physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia is an action that unnaturally damages families by fostering grief and trauma. The medical profession is also altered, reversing its commitment to healing into a promotion of death and abandonment. Our organization encourages all students to remember that every human being possesses inherent dignity and to strive to promote life in a world so often overshadowed by death.”

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Oui Are the Irish

Notre Dame sees revival in French culture on campus

LUKE FISHER

Staff Writer

The debate over whether to pronounce the name as “No-der Dame” or “No-tra Dahm” hints at the oft-forgotten French heritage of Our Lady’s university. In recent years, however, this Francophone culture has been experiencing a resurgence across campus.

Founded in 1842 by six Holy Cross priests from Sainte-Croix, France, Notre Dame’s French history runs deep. “Even before Father Sorin and his six companions arrived, there were already missionaries in the area originally from France,” Brother Jacob Eifrid, C.S.C., Assistant Teaching Professor of French and Francophone studies at the university, told the *Rover*. “[Fr]. Stephen Badin was born, lived, and studied all in France [before] he was ordained in the United States. Michigan, [northwest Indiana], and the surrounding areas were all ministered by French missionaries.”

“[The roots] are in our name,” said Karim Maziri, a senior studying global affairs and economics and one of the co-presidents of the campus French club. “[The name]—the University of *Notre Dame*—is a very big part. There’s a very big French identity on campus and we also have a pretty big

Francophone community and that Francophone heritage, too, from France. We’re seeing a lot more attention to it today.”

“France has the world’s most renowned [food], art, music, literature, and is a long-standing and beautiful civilization,” Br. Eifrid commented. “From religion to culture, there’s just something very captivating about it. It’s given so much and people are interested now in what it has to offer.”

Students have been able to explore their newfound interest in Notre Dame’s French culture in an ever-increasing number of ways. The offerings have expanded in recent years to include Café Français, a monthly social event with food and topics where participants spend an hour speaking only in French; a French language book club; and French-film suggestions, amongst others.

“Compared to other universities, our French culture is really strong,” said Kaitlyn Boston, a sophomore art history and French major. She explained, “We have all these different activities, like French Mass, a basilica tour in French, the club, an art exhibit. ... There’s always tutoring, there’s always food.”

The French way of life was a major element that drew Boston to study the language. She told the *Rover*, “I love the food, the environment, the way of life.



Image by Wikimedia Commons

People sit down to drink their coffee; they take their time and that’s something I really enjoyed about this culture. It’s less hustle and bustle ... and that made me really interested.”

“I’ve always appreciated how you can express your feelings in French. It’s a very in-depth language,” Maziri said. Highlighting the attraction of French culture, he said, “There’s [*sic*] so many similarities in the way they eat and live, in a very carefree manner.”

Maziri also explained how the French Club has been able to drive this revitalization, telling the *Rover*, “I remember myself freshman year: I went to a few meetings, and then I started

seeing things like a macaron workshop, a cheese workshop, and some other events. And I was like, ‘Wow, if they even speak a little bit of French here, we can continue practicing.’ And over the years, we’ve seen much more of an interest in that.”

Maziri emphasized the impact of faculty involvement, adding, “What I really like is the faculty helps, too. They promote [the club] in their classes. All the professors help us with our events. There’s a really active student and faculty role in it, and I think that’s helped us get it to the classes.”

Events held by the French Club, such as a yearly cheese making workshop, macaron baking events, monthly French

Masses, receptions, and a recent Valentine’s Day card writing event during Language and Culture Week, have all attracted large crowds.

Br. Eifrid encouraged students at Notre Dame interested in the resurging French heritage and culture: “Studying a language—especially French—opens you up to the world. [It] gives you chances for community, communication with people you’d never expect, [and] a plethora of opportunities in life. But that’s not the only thing. It’s to be a part of this beautiful and rich history, this civilization that’s [shaped] the world and brought together so many people because of [its] language and culture.”

Luke Fisher is a freshman from Detroit living in Siegfried Hall. He is majoring in theology and also struggling his way through the Program of Liberal Studies. If he’s not snacking during class or repeating the same joke for the 15th time that day, you can usually find him doing the chapel crawl around campus. To join in (or chat), reach out at lfisher8@nd.edu.



All That is Sacred Must Be Profaned

Visiting scholar Carl Trueman reflects on what it means to be human

JACK KRIEGER

Campus Editor

Dr. Carl Trueman is the Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government's (CCCG) 2026 visiting fellow. His recent work includes *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*, and he will soon release a new book, *The Desecration of Man: How the Rejection of God Degrades our Humanity*. On March 19, Trueman gave a lecture to introduce this upcoming work, titled, "All That Is Sacred Must Be Profaned," a reference to Marx's *Communist Manifesto*.

Trueman is an ordained minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and a professor of biblical and religious studies at Grove City College, as well as a contributing editor to *First Things* and a fellow with the Ethics and Public Policy Center. Though he originally studied Reformation history, Trueman's most recent work examines expressive individualism and identity.

In April of 2023, Trueman gave his first lecture at the University of Notre Dame through the CCCG. The talk centered on his book *Strange New World*, which chronicled the road to the sexual revolution. It was then that CCCG director Professor Phillip Muñoz offered Trueman a year-long fellowship in South Bend.

Whilst at Notre Dame, Trueman is drafting yet another book. This one is about St. Thomas Aquinas' virtue ethics, specifically geared toward Protestants. He told the *Rover*, "I think we live at a time when the recovery of two things—natural law and virtue ethics—are very important for all churches today."

He continued, "While natural law has enjoyed something of a revival in Protestant circles in recent years, virtue has been somewhat neglected." Trueman said that this book will be an attempt to encourage Protestants to think "more about how Thomas Aquinas, one of the great theologians of the Christian church, can speak to Protestantism today."

Along with lectures and writing projects, Trueman recently finished teaching a one-credit, five-week-long course called "The Abolition of Man." Students read C.S. Lewis' book of the same name, as well as excerpts from authors including Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Mary Harrington.

Mike Mora, a senior who took Trueman's class, reflected on his experience to the *Rover* in writing: "In every age, the Church has been called to stand firm. In the early Church, the battle was over Christology. In the 16th century, the lines were drawn over soteriology. Today, the assault has come upon anthropology itself. Dr. Trueman's course challenged me to think far more intentionally about how the Church can defend the dignity of the human person in our radically anti-human age."

Sophomore Tad Bates wrote to the *Rover*, "My favorite aspect of the 'Abolition of Man' class was Professor Trueman's careful articulation of what it means to be human, individually and collectively. He drew on a sound biblical anthropology and traced the divergence of Western civilization from that into the ideologies we cling to today. This challenged and clarified many of my beliefs about technology, work, rest, gender, marriage,

community, and the incredible value of human life."

In an interview with the *Rover*, Trueman spoke of the importance of Lewis' book in his own life: "Sometimes, you read a book that doesn't, in some sense, teach you anything new, but helps to clarify thoughts that you have already had. And that was my experience of reading *The Abolition of Man*." He continued, "When I read *The Abolition of Man* ... the third chapter made me realize that a lot of what I was intuitively feeling about the impact of technology on what it means to be human was fundamentally correct—that I was sort of onto something, that I was rediscovering something ... that Lewis articulated so brilliantly in the 1940s and that many others have articulated since."

One of the first readings in the class was a passage from Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*, where a madman proclaims the murder of God to deaf ears. Trueman told the *Rover*, "[Nietzsche] makes it very clear in that passage that if you kill God—if you get rid of God—you get rid of human nature as well. You need to redefine what it means to be human at that point. Nietzsche understands that the struggles over what it means to be man in modernity are at root theological, and that's what I wanted to get at in my new book."

The Desecration of Man, Trueman's upcoming publication, is an attempt to further cultivate the seeds that Lewis planted. He explained, "One of the things that I felt was muted or perhaps missing in [Lewis'] book was what I call the aspect of desecration, that what's going on with the nature of man at the moment—

what's going on with our attitude towards what it means to be human—is not simply the result of an economic or technological process. It's something that ... has to be accounted for theologically."

He continued, "I use the category of desecration because I don't think disenchantment is a fully adequate account of what's going on. We need to understand that there is an exultant, ecstatic delight taken in the destruction of what it means to be a human being."

During his recent lecture, Trueman expanded on these thoughts. He used the rhetoric of abortion as an example of desecration: "Sometimes we have to do things we'd rather not do, and if we've got to do those things, then let's make it safe, legal, and rare. That's quite a striking contrast to the language used in 2024 by the pro-choice lobby, which was that of celebrating abortion as a human right."

"It seems to me that the passion surrounding something like abortion in the modern world is not simply explicable in terms of disenchantment. Something else is going on."

He claimed that expressive individualism is, itself, a form of desecration, "because the values—of course, the traditions—that were being transgressed [by expressive individualism] were by and large formed in the crucible of Christianity."

Expressive individualism, however, is not the worst form of desecration: "Killing—murder—is the ultimate transgression, and ... putting a theological angle to this, it's also the ultimate desecration. It's the destruction of the image of God that's powerful. And how do you demonstrate

your superiority to God? You smash his image."

On a more positive note, Trueman said, "If the problem is disenchantment, it seems to me, the answer can be rather vague. The world's disenchanted, we need to re-enchant it somehow. What does that look like?" He continued, "If the problem is desecration ... the answer is consecration."

Though he acknowledged that consecration is different within various religions, Trueman focused on the Christian view: "The answer is the Church; the answer is the correct creed. The answer is a liturgy that grows out of and reinforces the teaching of that creed and a code that leads us in our daily lives through things like hospitality, to treat other people as human beings."

Trueman added that he appreciated seeing his students implement his teaching in real life: "When the students invited me to a reunion dinner next Sunday night, part of me thought, 'Yes!' ... They got the point of the course."

Despite his hope for a solution, Trueman concluded the lecture with his self-proclaimed "Presbyterian doom and gloom," saying, "In other words—put it this way—we are on the brink of using the exceptional abilities that come from being made in God's image to make ourselves into nothing exceptional at all."

Jack Krieger is a sophomore studying economics, theology, and constitutional studies. Email him at jkrieger@nd.edu.

When Does Life Begin?

Maritain Center lecturer defends ensoulment at conception

DANIEL BALOF

Staff Writer

The question of when life begins has profound implications for the ethics of abortion. On Wednesday February 15, in a talk entitled "When Does Life Begin? Thomist vs. Dualist Perspectives," Dr. Jason Eberl, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Albert Graegi Center for Bioethics at the University of St. Louis, provided a clear answer: ensoulment occurs at the instant that fertilization is complete.

Eberl outlined the two positions that have characterized the ensoulment debate since ancient times. Plato articulated what is now called dualism: a person is his soul, temporarily entrapped in his body. Aristotle, and later Thomas Aquinas, argued that humans are rational animals, a composite of soul and body—an idea now known as hylomorphism.

In the fall, the Jacques Maritain

center hosted Dr. Richard Swinburne, who argued for the dualist perspective. Graduate Maritain Resident Alexa Kawlewski noted that Eberl's talk was largely a response to Swinburne, with Eberl "presenting a different, more Thomistic perspective."

Eberl began with common ground. Dualism and hylomorphism agree that a body must be sufficiently organized to be rationally ensouled.

Disagreements arise when considering what "organized" means. Eberl first ruled out the "performance theory:" that to become ensouled, the body needs to be able to "perform" certain capacities. Since newborns lack numerous human capacities such as speech, this would place ensoulment anywhere from two months to three years after birth. Eberl made reference to Michael Tooley's book *Abortion and Infanticide*, which argues that performance theory, used to justify abortion, would also justify

infanticide, an unacceptable ethical consequence.

Instead, Eberl argued for "endowment theory:" a body must have the intrinsic potentiality to carry out the capacities of the soul to have that soul. A fetus is not "potentially a person, it is a person with potential." Even at the moment of conception, the fetus begins to develop. Of course, the fetus is reliant on the mother during gestation. But even though "it's not just doing it on its own, [there] is an internal drive" toward development that reflects the child's intrinsic potential.

While Aquinas himself did not think ensoulment occurred at conception, Eberl explained that Aquinas was operating with minimal knowledge of human reproduction. In the 14th century, it was entirely unknown that an individual fertilized egg developed into a human. Philosophers instead believed that it was some mixture of bodily fluids in intercourse

that led to the development of a human being.

Accordingly, Eberl acknowledged that while Aquinas certainly opposed abortion, he and many who place ensoulment later may not have considered it homicide shortly after conception. However, Eberl argued that modern advancements in embryology support the possibility of ensoulment occurring at conception.

Maritain Center Director Therese Cory commented to the *Rover*, "Prof. Eberl was able to give us a great picture of how Aquinas' metaphysics and up-to-date scientific knowledge work together to affirm the intrinsic dignity of the human person at all stages of development."

In a comment to the *Rover*, senior Chris Winter applied Eberl's comments to the question of abortion. "The question here is when a biological person becomes a metaphysical person," he observed, adding that

personhood is uncontroversially intertwined with human rights.

Lastly, Eberl remarked that, beyond mandating hylomorphism and acknowledging that God endows human bodies with their souls, the Catholic Church has no official teachings on when ensoulment occurs.

Students were left with much to consider. When asked "When does life begin?" first-year Ian Diez hesitated: "Can I think about it for two minutes?" "How about two weeks?" fellow first-year Sabrina Richter quipped.

Diez ultimately leaned towards Eberl's perspective, noting an intuitive simplicity to the old pro-life adage: "Life begins at conception."

Daniel Balof is a sophomore studying mathematics and philosophy. He is unsure as to whether or not he has a soul. Weigh in by emailing dbalof@nd.edu.



Notre Dame Doesn't Do Enough for LGBTQ Students

Authentic ministry must accompany, not merely affirm

ABBY STRELOW
Executive Editor

Scrolling through Campus Ministry's weekly email, I am never surprised to see advertisements for Bible studies, small groups, and prayer services. What catches my eye is the brightly colored rainbow graphic at times included in the email—an advertisement for an LGBTQ retreat, small group, or Mass.

I suspect that I'm not the only one who feels uneasy at the sight of these advertisements. When it comes to its faithfulness in controversial areas of Catholic moral teaching, many Catholics on this campus are suspicious of the university, and, by extension, Campus Ministry. And this skepticism is not unfounded, given that our university has publicly celebrated pride month and even hosted a drag show on campus. Events like these glorify disordered behaviors, and it is essential that we fight back against the tide of secularization and anti-Catholic agenda that they herald.

Sometimes, however, our legitimate distrust of Notre Dame's approach to LGBTQ issues causes us to immediately react with hostility to anything that hints of rainbow, without investigating for ourselves and offering a fair judgment. Instead of condemning Campus Ministry for what seems to encourage LGBTQ behavior, we owe it to our university and fellow students to consider what they are actually doing. What does Campus Ministry's pastoral approach to the LGBTQ community aim to do? How does it succeed, or fall short, of its goal?

To better understand how Campus Ministry tries to serve those who struggle with gender and sexuality issues, I spoke with Kaleb Reil and Joshua Velasquez, two Notre Dame students involved with Campus Ministry's LGBTQ outreach. Reil helped organize the LGBTQ retreat earlier this semester. Velasquez, a senior, has been involved with the ministry in various capacities throughout his time at Notre Dame.

What did I learn? We don't go too far when it comes to LGBTQ ministry. We actually *don't go far enough*.

Velasquez described his personal experience, saying that



Image by Irish Rover

"a lot of the positives of Campus Ministry's approach aren't programmatic." He emphasized that the first and most important step of ministering to those with LGBTQ experiences is to receive them as individuals with God-given dignity, something that Campus Ministry does very well. In addition, he said that staff members also recommend resources such as Eden Invitation to those who are interested in pursuing community and discipleship within the Church.

When it comes to official programming, Campus Ministry offers an "LGBTQ and Allies Mass" in Dillon Hall and an annual LGBTQ retreat—two events I was highly skeptical of.

Both Reil and Velasquez stressed that the liturgies are just what they claim to be: a celebration of the Holy Mass, specifically welcoming those with shared LGBTQ experiences, providing them a place to strive after holiness and virtue in a community that understands their unique struggles and brings them to prayer.

Similarly, Reil remarked that the LGBTQ retreat is actually a beautiful opportunity for those with shared struggles to pray together, bringing their specific intentions to God in community. These opportunities are not veiled attempts to subvert Church teaching, but resources for students to seek God.

Campus Ministry's approach to LGBTQ issues is fundamentally different from the university's celebration of pride month or the events hosted by the Gender Studies Department. If anything, offering Masses and

retreats to pray for strength to live in chastity and knowledge of God's love is *antithetical* to the pride movement. Moreover, the Church is clear that pastoral care is necessary for those with homosexual attractions or gender dysphoria.

Part of the problem is linguistic. What *should* we call such a Mass? The same-sex attracted Mass? Mass of people praying for chastity? Each option is either ridiculously long, haphazard, or links the programming to a sinful movement that seeks to replace the person with their sexual identity, wrongfully labeling people and rightfully eliciting suspicion.

Even as someone opposed to the pride movement, I find myself unable to escape its language—LGBTQ, community, allies—a frustrating testament to the difficulty of addressing issues whose terminology is dominated by secular ideology. While it is understandable to be frustrated with Campus Ministry's seemingly ambiguous marketing, we must remember that, given the limitations of language, there is often no way to label their events that would adequately express the good they are actually seeking to do.

Much of my skepticism towards many LGBTQ events was too strong. And yet, there *is* a problem with Campus Ministry's pastoral approach to those with LGBTQ experiences.

After my conversations with Reil and Velasquez, I realized that the real issue is that Notre Dame's LGBTQ students need a ministry that walks *with* them in their lives on campus. While Campus

Ministry does the necessary and important work of affirming individuals in their human dignity, its overall approach fails to go further and offer them practical accompaniment or advice for how they can live out their call to chastity in the context of Catholic vocation. Annual retreats and infrequent Masses are good and worthwhile, but individuals struggling with their sexual identity should receive guidance and prayerful partnership as often as other student groups.

According to Reil, Campus Ministry's approach often ignores the messy questions which come with the practical application of Church teaching. What does it look like to live a fruitful life of self-gift when all of the typical options for vocation are seemingly off the table? How do you deal with conflicting desires that do not just go away, even when you realize that you are made in the image and likeness of God? These are the questions that those trying to live in accord with Church teaching are asking. And they're not receiving answers—not from Notre Dame, at least.

Notre Dame owes it to her students to accompany them through these genuinely difficult questions. Failing to address these struggles and this process of discernment is doing a disservice to those striving for an authentic life of discipleship. Although LGBTQ issues are complex and often emotionally charged, they are necessary for an authentically Catholic approach to sexuality and gender. If the only things we offer to students who struggle are an occasional pat on the head or

a retreat focused on affirmation, we set them up for frustration and isolation.

But if Campus Ministry is going to develop a vibrant ministry in this area, it needs our help. We should encourage our university to strive for an authentic, Christ-centered ministry that walks with those who struggle with same-sex attraction in the unique challenges of their life of discipleship. In this way, we can work towards a Catholic alternative to the pride movement. We can do this while acknowledging that there *are* homilies, lectures, and events at Notre Dame that promote—and even pressure—acceptance of sin as someone's identity. But the failure of some to teach the truth does not mean we should cease preaching it to all.

Moreover, we cannot mindlessly sound the alarm against perceived problems without first taking the time to learn what is actually going on. If we want to be taken seriously when condemning Notre Dame's real failures, we must be willing to acknowledge when she does follow her precepts. In our climate of controversy, it's essential that we don't simply act as reactionaries who enjoy a fight for its own sake, clinging so much to the battle that we forget that there are faces on the "other side," and failing to give complex issues the nuance they deserve.

It is not only possible, but it is our responsibility, to defend the teachings of the Catholic Church wholeheartedly. But loving proclamation of the truth is not in opposition to a compassionate reception of the individual. We are called to speak the truth precisely *because* we love our neighbor with all the fierceness of charity Christ invites us to. This love requires that we ask questions and seek truthful answers instead of making hasty judgments. Above all, it invites us to defend the dignity of every individual with compassion as we embrace the fullness of the Church's teachings.

Abby Strelow is a sophomore majoring in theology and the Program of Liberal Studies. She can be reached at astrelow@nd.edu.



It behooves a watchdog to bark. Good, Rover.



ST (Sandwich Theologiae) I-II, Question 1.5

JAMES WHITAKER
Humor Editor

Article 1: Whether Uncrustables are rightly so called?

Objection 1: It seems that Uncrustables are not rightly named. For the Philosopher (*Prob. X.27*) observes that “the crust that forms on boiled wheat meal” has a notably different appearance than the bread itself. But Uncrustables have a uniform appearance with no darkened edges. Therefore, they are more properly called “Uncrusted” than “Uncrustable.”

Objection 2: Further, to be called “uncrustable” denotes a lack of potency with respect to becoming crusted. For something should only be called “uncrustable” when its potency to have crust has already been actualized, i.e., it is crusted. But Uncrustables are rather the only sandwiches without crusts in actuality, and are therefore more properly called “Crustables.”

Objection 3: Scripture and the Fathers together affirm that a crust is a meager and undesirable thing. Solomon says (*Proverbs 17:1*), “Better a dry crust with



Image by Wikimedia Commons, modified

peace and quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.” But Uncrustables are clearly desirable. Therefore, they have no crust and are rightly called crustable.

On the contrary, In Holy Scripture, Job says (*Job 7:5*), “My flesh is clothed with maggots and a crust of dirt.” And the Lord said that Job spoke rightly (*Job 42:7*).

Therefore, “crust” can rightly be said in multiple ways.

I answer that the concept of being crusted (i.e. having crust in actuality) and being crustable (i.e. having crust in potency only) can be thought of in four ways.

A sandwich may be crusted *materially*, in that its edges are characterized by the darkened and drier crust of bread. And in this sense, Uncrustables are in fact uncrusted and therefore crustable in potency.

A sandwich may also be crusted *formally*, in that all sandwiches have a delineating border to their physical form, being finite creatures contained in space. And in this sense, all sandwiches are uncrustable, being actually crusted in some sense.

A sandwich may also be uncrustable *efficiently*, in that no natural agent is capable of modifying the sandwich in such a way that it becomes crusted. In the same way, God alone is able to actualize man’s potency for sanctification, God alone is able to crust uncrusted sandwiches while natural causes are insufficient.

Most significantly, a sandwich may also be uncrustable *finally*, or *teleologically*, in that some

sandwich’s natural end is to be uncrusted, and that its perfection can only consist in its lack of material crust. And it is in this sense that Uncrustables are most properly named, because an Uncrustable *cannot be crusted* without enduring a corruption or deficiency directly contrary to its teleological perfection.

This suffices for the Replies to the Objections. For the first two consider only material crustability. The third objection is answered by a consideration of the Uncrustable’s natural end and the obstruction of material crust to that good end.

James Whitaker is a graduate student in the theology department. What a waste of an education. You can reprimand him at jwhitak5@nd.edu.



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