

Holy Cross Priests, Seminarians Attend Sheen
Beatification

Landmark American beatification celebrates Sheen’s evangelization

CLARE HETTICH
Religion Editor

Blessed Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen became the first American-born bishop to be beatified on September 24. Thousands of Catholics gathered in St. Louis, Missouri for the beatification Mass, celebrated by Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of the Diocese of Albano, Italy.

Bl. Fulton Sheen is considered the pioneer of modern Catholic evangelism. He authored over 60 books; won an Emmy for his T.V. show, *Life is Worth Living*; brought countless people into the Church, including many famous figures; and fundraised millions for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. In February, the *Rover* published a piece on Bl. Sheen when his beatification was first announced.

Father Karl Romkema, C.S.C., the director of Old College Undergraduate Seminary at Notre Dame, attended the beatification with a group of undergraduate seminarians from Old College. In an interview with the *Rover*, he spoke about Bl. Sheen’s significance.

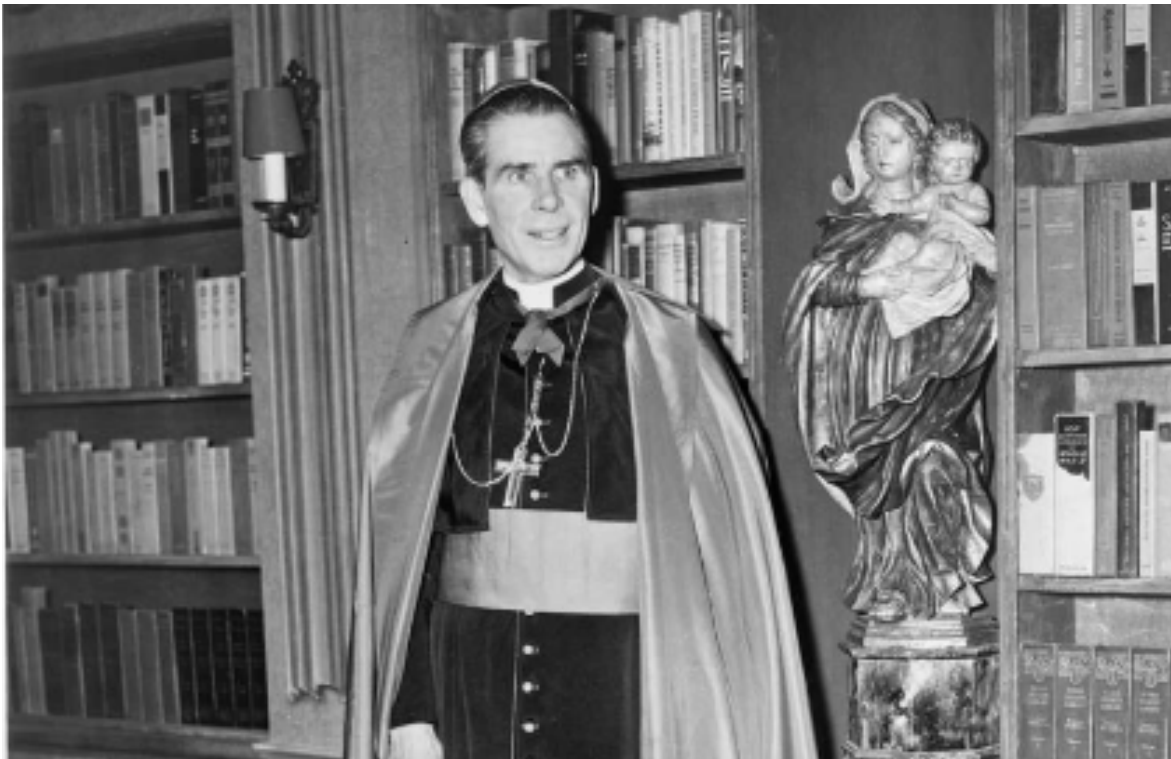


Image by Library of Congress

“[He is] one of the first blessed who we can look up on YouTube or on Spotify. ... We can listen now to the voice of a blessed, and that has some significance for anyone in the worldwide Church, especially in the English-speaking Church,” he explained.

Roughly 50,000 people

attended the beatification, according to The Catholic World Report. Attendees included 89 bishops, approximately 1,000 priests, and hundreds of deacons and seminarians, EWTN News reported.

“The place was packed to the gills,” Fr. Romkema said. He

described the vast number of attendees as a “highlight” of his experience and a chance to “[see] the American Catholic Church in miniature.”

Tommy Breza, a sophomore and a seminarian in Old College who attended the beatification with Fr. Romkema, wrote to the

Rover, “I was really filled with a greater hope for the Catholic Church seeing all of the bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians, and lay faithful celebrating this holy man’s beatification.”

“My greatest takeaway from this experience was that the Catholic Church, especially in America, is alive and growing,” Breza continued. “Bl. Fulton Sheen lived a Christ-like life that we can follow, and it seems that many Americans already are.”

Fr. Romkema expressed similar sentiments. “[People] came from all over the country to be in attendance, and there were men, women, children. ... It showed the ethnic diversity of our country, which was also kind of an homage to Bishop Sheen’s influence as he was the head of the missionary activity of the Church towards the end of his life.”

Events leading up to the beatification in St. Louis included a series of Holy Hours, a Mass celebrating the anniversary of Bl. Sheen’s ordination, and various exhibits on Bl. Sheen.

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University Consecrated to the Sacred
Heart

Bishop Rhoades Presides over Notre Dame’s Consecration

ANTHONY DU VINAGE
Staff Writer

In a solemn Mass and Eucharistic Procession, Bishop Kevin Rhoades consecrated the University of Notre Dame to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on Friday, September 25.

This follows the July 11 consecration of the United States to the Sacred Heart, an effort by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to renew a national devotion to—and appreciation for—the ultimate sacrifice of our Lord. Archbishop Alexander K. Sample of Portland and chairman of the USCCB Committee for Religious Liberty, referenced the support of many Popes, including Pope Leo XIV and Pope Francis, in a 2026 video explaining the reasons for

this national consecration.

The USCCB says, “We welcome God’s kingdom of justice, fraternity, and solidarity, remembering that God has a special place in his heart for those who are discriminated against and oppressed, and He asks us, His church, to make a decisive and radical choice in favour of the weakest.”

Besides participating in the consecration of the entire United States to the Sacred Heart, this consecration bears deep significance to the Notre Dame community specifically. Each and every priest of the Congregation of the Holy Cross is consecrated to Jesus’ Sacred Heart.

When Blessed Basil Moreau founded the order in 1837, he envisioned the life of the Holy Family lived out in the

devotion of each member of the Congregation. Thus, the priests are consecrated to the Sacred Heart, the brothers to St. Joseph, and the sisters of the Holy Cross to Our Lady of Sorrows. In this way, the Congregation can model itself after the holiness, chastity, and poverty of that most Holy Family. It has always been the mission of the priests of the Congregation to “ground [their] model of priestly charity in the Sacred Heart of Jesus—that heart pierced by the soldier’s lance in the final proof that Jesus offered all, every last bit of His life, for us,” according to their website.

In an interview with the *Rover*, Father Kevin Grove, C.S.C. Professor of Theology and director of the master of divinity program at Notre Dame, said, “From the

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Vatican to Award Cavadini
Ratzinger Prize

Notre Dame leads in recipients of ‘Nobel of Theology’

LUCY TROTTER
Opinion Editor

Notre Dame theologian John Cavadini will receive the 2026 Ratzinger Prize in December, the Vatican announced on September 22.

The prestigious award, nicknamed the “Nobel Prize of Theology,” was established in 2011 by the Joseph Ratzinger–Benedict XVI Foundation. Originally conferred on theologians for their work in patristics, theology, and Sacred Scripture, the award was expanded by Pope Francis in 2017 to include artists and other non-theologians.

Pope Leo XIV will present the award to Cavadini at the Vatican

Apostolic Palace on December 19.

Cavadini, who studies patristic theology with a focus on St. Augustine, has taught at Notre Dame since 1990. He served as Chair of the Theology Department from 1997 to 2010 and directed the McGrath Institute for Church Life from 2000 to 2026.

Cavadini is the third theologian from Notre Dame to receive the award, placing the university first in the world for its number of Ratzinger recipients. Cavadini follows professors emeriti Cyril O’Regan in 2024 and Reverend Brian E. Daley, S.J. in 2012.

Cavadini has served as a

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

Out of civility, the *Rover* will not critically mention names of students, professors, or administrators, unless the person is either a well-known member of the community, or he or she has openly sought publicity. Unsigned editorials represent the majority opinion of the *Rover's* Editorial Board, while content in individual columns represents the views of each respective author and should not be construed as representing the views of the entire staff. All comments and questions regarding the *Rover's* policies and editorial content, as well as Letters to the Editor, may be directed to the Editor-in-Chief, Caleb Vaughan, at editor@irishrover.net or PO Box 46 Notre Dame IN 46556. These letters may be printed anonymously, upon request. Also, please visit our website www.irishrover.net, where you can peruse archives and subscribe to the paper.

"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" Matthew 16:26



Image by Flickr

In Pursuit of the True Objective

JACK KRIEGER

Executive Editor



Notre Dame hosted its annual fall career fair last week. Over the course of three days, thousands of students eagerly searched for their next internship amongst the many companies arrayed on the seventh and eighth floors of Duncan Student Center.

The fall career fair offers a glimpse into the achievement culture that pervades Notre Dame's campus. Anxious students mill about, bearing their polished resumes, hoping to one day find success in the real world. This, it seems, is an essential step to finding happiness. Without discouraging the pursuit of a career—even a prestigious or lucrative one—let us reflect for a moment on why.

College is a springboard for the rest of our lives. Therefore, as many of us search for jobs, myself included, we must interrogate our motives. How much money is enough? What is success? *What is the Objective?*

This final question is key. In his poem, "The Objective," the late American author and poet Wendell Berry writes,

"Men and women, and children now pursued the objective as if nobody ever had pursued it before. /

The races and the sexes now intermingled perfectly in pursuit of the objective. /

The once-enslaved, the once-oppressed, /

were now free to sell themselves to the highest bidder /

and to enter the best paying prisons in pursuit of the

objective."

To Berry, the Objective is an obsession with the efficient and the comfortable. It supplants moral good with material good, and pulls us into a relentless pursuit of itself, uprooting us from our families and communities. The Objective, however, is ultimately insatiable. A life spent in pursuit of the Objective will look back on itself unfulfilled—and it will find itself no nearer to the Objective than it began.

There is more. Man's final end leads to something real—and it is not the Objective.

Thomas Aquinas writes that man's final end, or *telos*, "can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence:" spending eternity worshipping Him who created us for Himself. He continues, "man is not perfectly happy, so long as something remains for him to desire and seek." (*Summa Theologica*, I-II, 3.8).

Augustine of Hippo wrote similarly in his *Confessions*. "For Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

Therefore, man's final end cannot be wealth, prestige, or any other worldly good. Our *telos* is not GPA, extracurricular activities, lucrative careers, or any other accomplishment. None of these satisfy the insatiable desire for more. These things were made for us; we were not made for them.

That is to not to say that these accomplishments and material goods are evil; rather, wealth and virtue paired together can accomplish much good. Conversely, wealth and vice paired together can result in great evil. When material goods usurp the primacy of loving and serving God, they become idols.

When we treat wealth as more important than our commitment to God, the rightful hierarchy is abandoned and virtue crumbles. We are likely to steal—not only in what we take, but in what we fail to give, too. If we reduce the value of our education to a

means for material success, we are inclined to cheat ourselves and those around us. Using shortcuts like artificial intelligence as a crutch only hinders your development as a student and as a person. If you're using ChatGPT to write your paper, *you might not be made for a 4.0 this semester*.

That's not a bad thing. You don't derive your value as a person from your GPA; to not have a perfect transcript is not to be a failure. It's not worth selling your integrity for; as Christians we must remember that the ends do not justify the means. This misprioritization of material and moral goods inclines us to justify evil actions so that good may result. For this reason we must endeavor to order the many goods in our lives properly.

That said, the environment at Notre Dame poses unique challenges. As students at an elite university, we are afforded many privileges. We have access to an expansive alumni network, a wealth of professors, and an environment of accomplished peers driving one another forward. As a result, there are many professional opportunities for us here—many that come with wealth, influence, and prestige.

But opportunities beyond the professional sphere exist. We have, on one hand, the examples of the priests living around us in our very residence halls. We have a premier theology department which thrives by practicing theology, and not just learning about it. Ample service opportunities are available to students, from BridgeND to MercyWorks, as well as club opportunities through organizations like Notre Dame Right to Life. There are extensive opportunities for formation, all aspiring towards the education of heart and mind.

On the other hand, we see the decadence of football games, at times rampant careerism, and endless LinkedIn self-promotion. And though there are great opportunities for formation,

there are also many tantalizing opportunities in Chicago, D.C., and New York which, perhaps, should give us pause to question what exactly we're seeking.

Each of us was made to fulfill some particular purpose as part of the Body of Christ. Some of us are called to be lawyers, others to be teachers; some businessmen, and others engineers. Some of us are called to parenthood, others to celibacy. We are all called to excel, but each of us has our own task.

To excel in this is true success. All are called to serve and do God's work. The question, then, is:

Where are my talents best applied? In what career can I best serve God as he has made me to be? What kind of life should I live?

A portion of a meditation of John Henry Newman's was published in the freshman edition of the *Rover* weeks ago. I'd like to return to it now. In it, Newman prays to be God's "blind instrument." He writes, "I ask not to see. I ask not to know. I ask simply to be used."

Our common vocation is to be an instrument of God in all that we do on this earth: how we act in our affairs, great and small alike. Yet, our particular vocation, as Newman suggests, might never be fully known to us in this life. We may struggle between jobs; our role might always feel uncertain. For most of us undergraduates, our path forward is still being discerned.

Yet, our common vocation is clear. Therefore, we ask for constancy. We pray to keep our eyes fixed on the true objective. And we say together, *Lead kindly light*.

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Mandatory University Trainings Support “Sexting”

Official messaging raises questions about shifting campus norms

ABIGAIL SMITH
Staff Writer

The University of Notre Dame’s annual “Violence Prevention” module has taken a noticeable turn this year, prompting concern from students who say the content conflicts with the institution’s Catholic identity.

In previous years, the module focused primarily on emergency preparedness, including the “run, hide, fight” protocol to active-violence situations. This year’s course, titled “*Sexual Violence and Misconduct: Supporting Ourselves and Our Community*,” centers instead on sexual misconduct, consent, and interpersonal behavior. The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) told the *Rover*, “The University is dedicated to caring for students and their needs in the context of our Catholic mission.”

But Catholic students have expressed concern about portions of the training they believe conflict with Catholic teaching, particularly a section addressing “digital intimacy.” The module describes “sexting” as “sending and sharing intimate content” and presents it as “a common part of modern relationships.” The training goes on to list what it calls “positive reasons” some individuals engage in digital intimacy, including “sexual exploration and expression,” “casual flirting and fun,” and maintaining connection

with partners “during periods of time when they cannot meet physically.”

Caroline Cure, joint-president of Students for Child-Oriented Policy (SCOP), told the *Rover* that when the module shifts from neutral description to positive framing, “you make it okay,” especially to students who “are getting this material from a Catholic university and thinking, ‘Oh! This is okay!’”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) teaches that sexual expression belongs within marriage and is ordered toward both the unitive and procreative dimensions of the marital relationship. It identifies lust as a “disordered desire... when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes” (CCC 2351) and describes masturbation as “an intrinsically and gravely disordered action” (CCC 2352). Considering these teachings, students expressed discomfort at the module’s portrayal of sexting as inconsistent with the moral framework the University publicly affirms.

Ely McCrae, president of EthosND, told the *Rover* that the module left him “confused,” not because consent education is unimportant, but because the training “went beyond that ... if you are completely aligned with Catholic teaching, then consent is given.” McCrae questioned why a Catholic university would present

digital intimacy positively without grounding the conversation in its own moral tradition. “Notre Dame’s administration has good intentions,” he said, “but I’m confused about their lack of prioritization of core Catholic doctrines in this module. The Catechism should be the first source and then secular research can follow.”

The OIE also clarified that the University’s prevention efforts emphasize, “respect, agency, and accountability across all relationships,” and that the module was developed using “research-backed content from Active* Consent ... in consultation with student affairs.”

Active*Consent is a research organization that both provides research and seminars on “societal issues like consent, sexual harassment, [and] ... young people’s sexual experiences and attitudes since 2013.” They primarily serve to provide young people with the resources they need for sexual safety.

However, their research spans broader than just sexual consent. Active*Consent has done research on pornography’s influence towards students. While Active*Consent’s research often presents itself as descriptive rather than ideological, the organization consistently includes purported benefits of pornography alongside its documented harms.

In their study “Development

of a Measure to Assess What Young Heterosexual Adults Say They Learn About Sex from Pornography,” Active*Consent notes that “some qualitative research indicates that, for young people, pornography may be considered a valuable source of information about sex.” The study cites reasons such as facilitating “sexual experimentation,” offering “practical information about sexual acts,” and providing guidance on “body function, genital aesthetic, sexual identity, and understanding of queer sexuality.”

A second study “Toward a Model of Porn Literacy: Core Concepts, Rationales, and Approaches” similarly highlights what it calls the “positive effects” of pornography, asserting that it “provides an outlet to learn about sex that positively affects their lives.” Taken together, these articles treat pornography as a routine and morally neutral component of sexual development. Both studies are linked directly on the Active*Consent website—the same program that heavily informed the content of Notre Dame’s updated consent module.

Catholic students did not miss the implications of this module. Andrew Blake, joint-president of SCOP, noted that praising “digital intimacy” in a sexual-violence module is “ironic,” because sexting inevitably “leads to the objectification of the person ... one of the roots of sexual violence.”

McCrae added that modules like this “make the struggle of members—even in my own small group—question Catholic sexual morality, and it makes them struggle with it more.”

In response to student concerns, OIE released a message to the *Rover* from Father Gerry Olinger, C.S.C. and assistant vice president for Institutional Equity Erin Oliver written on September 2, stating that the module aims to “strengthen our community and reinforce a culture that honors the dignity of every member.” They added that “interpersonal violence is antithetical to the kind of community we want to build, and acts of sexual violence, discrimination, or harassment are not tolerated.”

As students continue to complete the training, questions remain about how Notre Dame intends to balance legal compliance, student safety, and its commitment to Catholic moral teaching.

For young men on campus struggling with sexual addictions, EthosND offers a confidential community of support and prayer.

Abigail Smith is a senior PLS, theology, and classical linguistics major. When she is not reading for class, Abby can be found singing with the Liturgical Choir and poorly playing spikeball with her friends. Contact her at asmith78@nd.edu.

Addisuna Coffee Co. Sponsors 18 Students in Ethiopia

Two Mendoza entrepreneurs reflect on company’s mission and growth

CLARE DiFRANCO
Campus Editor

Sparked by a devotion to his childhood roots as a shepherd in Ethiopia, Notre Dame graduate Izaiah Steury (’26) joined senior Daniel Cuesta in founding Addisuna Coffee Co., a specialty coffee company that fulfills educational needs of impoverished students. Since launching its flagship products in March 2026, Addisuna has already grown enough to sponsor a lifetime of education for 18 Ethiopian students.

In an interview with the *Rover*, Steury shared his inspiration behind the company and its mission.

“Addisuna came to be three years ago. I went back to Ethiopia, and I saw that there’s a lot of inequality and not a whole lot of opportunities,” he remarked. Testifying to the impact of education in his life, he reflected, “I’ve been super blessed to be adopted and [to have] come to the United States. Growing up a shepherd and having nothing, then coming to the U.S. and being able to graduate from the University of Notre Dame puts a really big perspective on how education is so important and where it can take you.”

Education was the avenue by which Steury sought to improve the lives of those who shared his background, and coffee was a clear path to make this support possible. He continued, “Coffee is a community ... every time you go to an Ethiopian house, you’re always going to have coffee.”

Steury reflected on how he met Cuesta and on how the two Mendoza students combined their talents and shared love for coffee to start Addisuna.

Steury explained, “I was looking for a logo, and Daniel was sitting to the right of me in my stats class—I saw one of his cards that he had on the table, and it said, ‘D.C.,’ and it was this kind of fancy logo.” Impressed by his graphic design skills and professionalism, Steury shared his story and asked whether Cuesta would help design a logo. To this, he responded, “Only if I can also be a part of this.”

In an interview with the *Rover*, Cuesta shared the significance of the company name: “The capital of Ethiopia is Addis Ababa. And the word for coffee in the Ethiopian language, Tigrinya, is ‘buna.’ ‘Addis’ from Addis Ababa means ‘new,’ and ‘buna’ in Tigrinya means ‘coffee.’ So ‘new coffee.’”

Speaking on what drew him to the mission, he continued, “We

realized that we both had a heart for orphans. Izaiah was adopted at the age of 11 ... My dad died when I was 16, so that means a lot to me too.” He continued, “Being Colombian, coffee runs in my veins ... I saw coffee as a way to honor my father ... I know the importance that it is to have a dad.”

After a year of development, Addisuna now sells two flagship products, “Sunbloom,” a medium roast, and “Daybreak,” a light roast. They source the coffee beans from Ethiopia and locally roast them in partnership with Quad Coffee Lab in South Bend. All roasts are “specialty coffee,” as defined by the Specialty Coffee Association scale, because its certified quality ratings reflect their commitment to “being the best in the world while doing the best for this world.”

Cuesta and Steury sampled many roast profiles before reaching a consensus on their two offerings. “The highest amount of caffeine is actually in the light roast because it preserves the original chemical bonds.” As runners, they wanted to “do something with more caffeine in it.” They also knew they needed a medium roast because it would provide “the kind of flavor everyone would love.”

Since March, Addisuna has

collaborated on events with the Monogram Club of Notre Dame and ASA, and has also expanded to local cafes and farmers’ markets in Northeast Indiana.

To further the company’s mission, Addisuna created a sister non-profit organization. Through the Addisuna Youth Foundation, patrons can directly donate to sponsor the education of Ethiopia’s youth.

Currently, Addisuna is sponsoring 10 girls and five boys, providing them with school supplies for the entire 2026 school year, including book bags, textbooks, pens and pencils, uniforms, and feminine hygiene products for the girls.

Additionally, Addisuna connected with three children in need of mobility assistance—a need outside of the company’s budget. Cuesta remarked, “We may not have enough to cover this, but I said, ‘Let’s just say we’re going to do it. Let’s commit.’ By the grace of God, the funds did arrive, and that’s been such a blessing.”

Reflecting on his and Cuesta’s dedication to the education of Ethiopia’s youth, Steury shared the story of his adoption following the death of his mother. He shared, “I was a shepherd and a farmer.” He explained, “I was five years old,

when my mother passed away, and then my dad left when I was younger.”

Connecting his personal experience to those shared by all Ethiopian natives, Steury remarked, “Barely 55 percent of students in Ethiopia actually pass 12th grade.” To Steury and Cuesta, education is one of the greatest gifts to give. “You learn how to do things, so you can think for yourself, you can build for yourself, and you can create opportunities for others,” Steury concluded.

Discussing the future of Addisuna, Steury remarked, “This is a dream of mine. And plus, if [the students] ever want to study abroad, it would be amazing to connect them to Our Lady’s University.”

Addisuna’s specialty coffee is available on the company’s online storefront, and you can donate to support more students’ education and future through the Addisuna Youth Foundation here.

Clare DiFranco is a senior studying accounting and Italian. To help fuel her routine overconsumption of caffeine, she has a bag of Addisuna beans on the way. She can be reached at cdifranc@nd.edu.



Decades of Sexual Abuse by Dorm Priests Uncovered

Past leadership failures and the response to new rector allegations

CALEB VAUGHAN

Editor-in-Chief

An external investigation into priest and rector Father Thomas King, C.S.C. uncovered stories of another priest-rector accused of sexually abusing college students for decades.

On May 28, 2026, the University of Notre Dame released a report culminating an investigation launched last fall into allegations of misconduct into former Zahm Hall Rector, Fr. King. The external investigation, referred to henceforth as the Cantwell Report, was conducted by attorney Helen Cantwell who has deep experience in conducting sensitive investigations involving allegations of sexual misconduct.

Cantwell's research involved over 100 interviews and 1,000 documents from current and former faculty and staff at Notre Dame and Holy Cross leadership, and the Dioceses of Fort Wayne-South Bend and Kalamazoo.

The report exceeded its goal of validating sexual misconduct by Fr. King, finding evidence of sexual misconduct by several other priests at Notre Dame throughout the 1980s to 2010s. The investigation verifies the purported misconduct in Zahm Hall, including Fr. King's alleged scheme of asking the boys to strip completely or almost naked so they could be weighed—ostensibly out of concern for their health. Some victims say that Fr. King's conduct included sexual touching and rape.

The report identified three additional perpetrators: Father David Porterfield, C.S.C., Father James Burtchaell, C.S.C., and Father Robert Huneke. Fr. Burtchaell was investigated in 1990 and forced to resign. Posthumous reports about Fr. Huneke's behavior resulted in then-university president Father Edward Malloy, C.S.C. launching a three-person committee to investigate clergy misconduct.

Fr. Porterfield

Allegations against Fr. Porterfield were also brought to this 2003 committee, but he remained in public ministry for several years thereafter. Fr. Porterfield is accused of grooming, propositioning, and sexually assaulting students over decades. Many of the reports include wearing down the victims' defenses by supplying alcohol.

Victims and families worked together for several years to gather an extensive timeline of allegations and the university's response—sourced from first-hand testimony, news clippings, and reports including the Cantwell Report. They have shared this research with the *Rover*. A small sample of the collected evidence is represented below:

Fr. Porterfield was first accused of sexual misconduct in 1981,



Image by Wikimedia Commons

when a student brought forth the allegations to a resident assistant (RA). In March of 1983, another report of misconduct was brought to the RA.

Within weeks of the second report of sexual misconduct, he was removed from Sorin Hall. The *Observer* reported in 1983 that his resignation came due to feeling "overextended," working as both a hall rector and sitting on the admissions board.

Less than a year later, Fr. Porterfield was back in the residence halls, now as an assistant rector in Grace Hall. There, he was again accused of sexual misconduct. Fr. Porterfield left the university following investigations into his conduct by the university and the Congregation.

Fr. Porterfield was reassigned to various parishes in South Bend, eventually serving as pastor at Sts. Casimir and Stanislas, later Sts. Casimir and Adalbert. In the 1990s through 2010s, Fr. Porterfield also served as a volunteer chaplain to South Bend Police and Fire Departments, and continued to lead Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) retreats as late as 2018.

The *Dallas Charter*, which has governed Catholic response to clergy sexual misconduct since 2002, requires "When a priest or deacon, not incardinated in the diocese/eparchy, is to engage in ministry in the diocese/eparchy, regardless of the length of time, the evaluation of his background may be satisfied through a written attestation of suitability for ministry supplied by his proper ordinary/major superior to the diocese/eparchy." Priests of the Congregation of Holy Cross report to the Provincial Superior.

Although reports of abuse by Fr. Porterfield were made as early as 1981, and then revisited in 2003, Fr. Porterfield was not relieved of public ministry. Following the 2003 investigation, he was reassigned as the Assistant Superior at Holy Cross House and then the Superior at Fatima House, a religious retirement

home.

The Cantwell Report states, "In regard to Fr. Porterfield, the University lacked a consistent and reliable system of records to track and manage restrictions on his activities, which allowed him to return to campus in 1984 and later enabled the unwitting referral by the Alumni Association of an alumnus to Fr. Porterfield for counseling in 2009."

Fr. Porterfield is now deceased, having passed away in 2025. Nevertheless, friends of the victims feel the report was not enough. The *Rover* spoke to multiple victim advocates relating to the Porterfield case.

One advocate, whose son was allegedly groomed by Fr. Porterfield, told the *Rover*, "There's so much more work to be done, but I think they just frankly want to move on because it's an eyesore to them." She wishes there was a much higher level of accountability on behalf of the university and the Congregation.

Another advocate, whose ex-husband was allegedly sexually assaulted by Fr. Porterfield in 1982, only learned about the history of abuse in 2010. Fr. Porterfield was still living and ministering in South Bend during that time. Her advocacy intensified on behalf of potential future victims, including her son, who was living in Sorin Hall in 2010. She told the *Rover*, "I wanted to protect people." She approached the police department, diocese, and university numerous times with her concerns.

As a result of the investigation, the university put out new guidelines for dealing with allegations of sexual assault by its faculty. As outlined in the announcement of the report, guidelines include a new oversight policy; enhanced information sharing, tracking, and reporting; and educational programming.

None of these new statements, nor any of the relevant existing policies, reference Pope Francis' *Motu Proprio* document *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* which, since

2019, has governed the process for investigating claims of sexual abuse involving priests for the universal Church.

It didn't take long for the new guidelines to be tested.

McGlinn

Shortly after the release of the Cantwell Report, a string of anonymously submitted accusations against Elizabeth Greenop, who joined McGlinn Hall as rector in fall of 2025, alleged serious sexual misconduct.

Allegations were made anonymously to Instagram account @shareyourstory.notredame. The account, whose first post is dated April 12, 2026, describes itself as "Sharing the stories of sexual assault, abuse, and stalking victims at the University of Notre Dame. For survivors, by survivors."

Between June 17 and July 7, 2026, nine posted submissions described grooming tactics and obscene sexual acts.

None of the posts currently mention Greenop by name. However, the third post (numbered #35) posted on June 30, intimates Greenop's identity by stating that the accused is the rector of McGlinn Hall. One post, made on July 3, originally included her name, but has since been redacted.

The reports were made anonymously, and cannot be confirmed to have come from Notre Dame students. The Instagram account uses a Google Form to collect stories of sexual assault. "All submissions to this form will be posted to the Share Your Story Notre Dame Instagram. We believe all victims, and thus all stories will be posted (given that they don't violate Instagram's terms of service). Submissions are strictly anonymous and no emails or identifying information will be collected."

Within two weeks of the first Instagram post, the university had placed Greenop on leave pending investigation. The account administrator reported

misconduct to the university with permission of the anonymous submitter of the first allegation.

In addition to Greenop's removal, the university took measures to further remediate the situation. Ally Liedtke, who was formerly rector of Ryan Hall, has stepped in as interim rector of McGlinn Hall. Director of Residential Life Breyan Tornifolio is also supervising McGlinn Hall.

Karen Kennedy, Associate Vice President of Residential Life, spoke to hall staff members, and separately parents of incoming freshmen. She assured them, "student and staff safety is our highest priority in Residential Life" and that "the McGlinn community is in the best possible hands" with Liedtke and Tornifolio.

She also commented, "There's not currently a finding of responsibility or wrongdoing, and we should all try to withhold judgment at this time as the university is investigating and taking this situation very seriously."

A sophomore transfer student shared her experience of being assigned to McGlinn Hall this summer with the *Rover*. "When I heard I was being put in McGlinn I was really nervous." The dorm assignments came out just 16 days after the *Observer* initially reported on the allegations.

She expressed frustration about the limited disclosure of information, stating, "I am disappointed by the lack of communication. I understand that the university can't say much about the issue, but they didn't address the issue to new residents until after Welcome Weekend. ... It feels as though we've kind of forgotten about the potential victims."

However, she praised the student leaders in her dorm, saying, "the ARs and RAs have been doing a good job making sure the girls feel safe and supported."

Meanwhile, Greenop denies all claims of misconduct. On August 18, Greenop filed a defamation suit against the anonymous submitters and anonymous operator of @shareyourstory.notredame. The complaint acknowledges that she has been placed on leave, but denies any wrongdoing and reports that Greenop had "fled the state." The complaint renounces "defamatory" statements made in each of the nine posts, and implicates the account operator.

Investigations and legal proceedings are ongoing.

Caleb Vaughan is a senior from Orono, MN. He can be reached at cvaugh2@nd.edu.



University Consecration *continued from front*

founding of the Congregation of Holy Cross, the Sacred Heart of Jesus has been one of its most important devotions. For Fr. Moreau, the Sacred Heart of Jesus expresses the outpouring of love that came with Word's taking up our flesh ... When our hearts become cold, worn, tired, or despairing, the Sacred Heart brings renewal of zeal, and of love of God and neighbor. Moreau taught that we should place our hearts into Christ's. It is only fitting that the Sacred Heart statue standing at the heart of our campus has the inscription 'Venite ad me omnes.'

Likewise, Father Greg Haake, C.S.C., Vice President of the Office for Mission Engagement and Church Affairs and rector of Coyle Hall, told the *Rover* that "The devotion—and consecration—to the Sacred Heart is fundamentally a call to love as Jesus did. ... 'Come to me all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.'"

He elaborated, "There's a promise and a call in there. Jesus promises to console those in need of His mercy and love, but he calls us to imitate that mercy and consolation in the way we live our lives. This means love for the poor and for sinners, for those at the



Image by Wikimedia Commons, modified by the Irish Rover

margins or for the vulnerable ... to give yourself over to a love that brings peace and that engenders hope ... As a University, it nourishes our mission to respond with love to a world in need."

Father Brian Ching, C.S.C. told the *Rover* that his team in the Basilica "has been working

closely with the organizers of the Consecration, the Bishop's Office, and Fr. Dowd's office to plan for the Mass, Procession, and Consecration." He went on to say, "Both the title of the Basilica and some of the art contained therein invite people to consider God's love through the Paschal sacrifice,

and the statue on God Quad stands as an ever present reminder to us of God's invitation to abide in his love."

All Holy Cross priests who provided statements or interviews emphasized the historical role of the Sacred Heart in the University and in the Congregation of the Holy Cross.

The structure of campus itself literally reflects the Sacred Heart; God Quad, aptly named, is in the shape of a heart when seen from above, and one cannot help but notice the flowers in the middle resemble the blood from a piercing through His heart by the lance of a soldier.

In the lead-up to the consecration, on the afternoon of Monday, September 21, a panel hosted by the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture and the McGrath Institute for Church Life discussed the theology of consecration to the Sacred Heart.

Professors John Cavadini, Jennifer Newsome Martin, Anthony Pagliarini, and Fr. Grove discussed the meaning of religious devotion, consecration, the Sacred Heart, and the effect of the consecration on the University of Notre Dame specifically.

Cavadini first spoke of the meaning of devotion and consecration. He told those present that "it is only in this expression of specifically religious devotion that the voice of devotion can be heard

in its purity, because there the act of will ... can be completely unreserved."

Martin went on to address the theology of the Sacred Heart specifically, emphasizing the work of Hans urs von Balthasar. She spoke of the suffering Sacred Heart as all enveloping and as the center of God's acceptance of humanity.

Pagliarini spoke about devotion found in Scripture, and the love that God has for His children. A love so great that it requires an act of devotion from us, this consecration being a perfect example. He even managed to lead the entire group gathered in singing "Love Divine, all loves excelling" during his talk.

Finally, Fr. Grove discussed the importance of the consecration to the campus community and its relation to the Blessed Mother, instructing all to pray as Bl. Basil Moreau did, "Oh Sacred Heart of Jesus, make me love you ever more deeply."

Anthony DuVinage is a first-year double major in the Program of Liberal Studies and Political Science. He lives in Carroll Hall, and can usually be found either in the PLS lounge or making the long trek back to his room. Otherwise, he can be reached at aduvinag@nd.edu

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Notre Dame Professors Comment on AI Development

Concerns raised over profitability, risk of slowing AI R&D

RAYMOND WEBBER
Politics Editor

As of September 2026, 3.7 trillion dollars have been spent on investments into America's major artificial intelligence (AI) companies, a figure nearly 12 percent of the U.S. GDP. However, the entire industry of AI is only projected to have produced 75 billion dollars in revenue this year, with major companies producing recent net losses of tens of billions of dollars.

Just last year, OpenAI posted a net loss of 38.5 billion dollars. This summer, the company announced that they will spend 750 billion dollars on AI infrastructure through 2030. Many economists and financial experts worry that the operating and infrastructure costs of AI development are too high to justify such massive investments.

A recent report from JP Morgan, the world's largest investment bank, claimed that AI companies need to produce 650 billion dollars in revenue in order for investors to earn a 10 percent return on current AI investments. Seeing that Google, Anthropic, and OpenAI are only projected to generate 95 to 100 billion dollars in revenue and are currently spending nearly 725 billion dollars on infrastructure, many experts are concluding that several investors will begin to withdraw their investments.

Ed Zitron, a prominent financial journalist, argues that a financial bubble is forming around AI. This is because 70 percent of Google, Amazon, and Microsoft's AI revenue comes from OpenAI and Anthropic alone. According to Zitron, this is problematic. "No one has proven that there is a sustainable business model. The only two companies that want to buy AI products are Anthropic and OpenAI, who can only buy it if they're given the money to buy it from the people that they're buying it from. If 70 percent of AI revenue comes from these two companies, there is no AI industry." In other words, the AI industry is keeping itself afloat.

Many of these same experts concede that AI technology is succeeding. The problem, however, is that the profitability of such technology does not translate into typical consumer demand. Torsten Slok, Chief Economist at Apollo Global Management, writes, "[The] AI boom's profits are currently being funded by investors rather than earned from customers. ... The upstream margins are real, but they are paid for out of capital



Image by Wikimedia Commons

raised by the layer losing money, not out of cash generated by end demand."

However, several researchers are concerned with the potential social consequences of a market that depends on such rapid technological development to succeed. Whistleblowers from Anthropic and OpenAI have come forward with concerns that the technology is advancing beyond control.

Jacob Coxon, AI whistleblower and former Anthropic researcher, wrote in an X post after resigning from his position, "Do not underestimate the power of this technology. ... These will soon be superhuman systems that can hack anything, revolutionize any field overnight, and acquire real power and resources." He also said that there is a 10 percent chance that this technology will lead to the end of humanity by 2030.

Dr. Michael Burry, who became famous after betting against the housing market prior to the Great Recession, called these doomsday AI resignations a "self-serving tactic" to account for slow economic growth and to bolster the appearance of future IPOs. If AI is powerful enough to end the world, investors may think it could have the potential for immense profit, he suggests. His comments are supported by the fact that NVIDIA's stock has grown 5.15 percent since the Coxon story came out.

AI's apparent technological growth has led many to conclude that investors will remain in the market. This is the opinion of Professor Timothy Loughran, a Professor of Finance at Notre Dame.

Specifically, he told the *Rover*,

"There is a low chance of a market collapse due to a lack of AI profitability. With many of these tech companies, they don't make money early. ... Just because there is a possibility that some investments won't work out, investors are still going to persist as we see billions of dollars being invested into AI R&D. ... You don't see people worried about the potential of collapse in the pharmaceutical industry just because there's a lot of cost and failed investments involved."

Loughran continued, "Investors are attracted to the idea that an AI investment can be a blockbuster investment and produce a huge return on investment, so I think AI profitability is in the future, and I think investors are looking longer-term. If you're putting in 500 billion dollars, you're in for the long run." Responding to a question about premature AI investments, he commented, "We really don't have the answers at this point, a major part of investing is uncertainty. Some investments will fail, but the market accounts for those particular failures."

Loughran also touched on the consequences of government restrictions. "When the government comes in, sometimes they don't want to work with lots of players, so they'll just pick the top five companies and claim them as the AI industry. So, government regulations just decrease competition while serving the major companies that caused the issues we're talking about."

Loughran's solution to the AI bubble is to allow the market to do what it usually does, and to allow the dynamics of competition to take place as they did in previous technological revolutions.

The *Rover* also spoke with Professor Paul Brenner, Deputy Director of the Data, AI, and Computing Initiative and Director of the Center for Research Computing at the University of Notre Dame. When asked about AI profitability, he responded saying, "Right now, we're primarily looking at the cost of AI research, development, and applications for Notre Dame. AI market drivers do not necessarily conform to the immediate economic profitability model. ... The profit-to-price ratio for NVIDIA is about as bad as it's been in a decade or so, despite its market success."

Brenner also stated that profitability is not the only current driver of the AI industry. "What's driving these investments is partially the potential profitability, but I think it's primarily because it's an industry being driven by a global competition that is seen as a race we cannot lose. That 'we' can refer to a company or a nation."

He added, "If you get behind in the AI race, you likely lose. So these companies will spend and raise as much money as they absolutely can, irrespective of profitability, and build up the data centers because it has become a winner-take-all industry. Right now, the AI industry is chiefly concerned with technological development to stay ahead of the race rather than strict profitability. Every incremental investment makes a tool that makes the next increment of your tool even better; it's an exponential race you can't get behind in. It seems like an irrational amount of investment, but it's what they need to do to keep up." He applied this same concept to the AI competition

between China and the U.S., which not only concerns economic consequences, but also national security and geopolitical stability.

Brenner continued, transitioning the conversation from market concerns to ethical concerns. "AI will replace jobs, as did the innovation of the laptop and the computer. More recently, we saw a seemingly irrational investment phenomenon with blockchain. ... If you wrote blockchain into a research grant, you had a much higher chance of getting funded, just as we see in AI initiatives. The societal challenge is not necessarily labor displacement itself, as we have endured displacements since the Industrial Revolution, but it is the speed and magnitude of displacement which truly impacts the human."

Expanding on the role of the human in an AI world, Brenner commented, "I absolutely believe that we must view these global competitions and these economic drivers from the standpoint of how they affect the human being, and we can do that by monitoring the speed of displacement. For that reason, there is deep investment at Notre Dame in making sure that people have fulfilling career opportunities in the face of such displacement and can work in an AI environment. We can absolutely get valuable and good answers out of AI technology, and what we do well at Notre Dame is raising the central importance on human impact and value. That is why the Pope's encyclical on AI is on display as you walk into our ND offices."

He concluded by saying, "We have to do both. We can't put our head in the ground and say shut it all off. You can make that personal life choice, but AI is here and is here to stay. At the same time, we must prioritize the value of the human being as the center of our mission."

Raymond Webber is a junior philosophy major. His favorite hobby is larping as an Übermensch whilst listening to music he Shazamed from Instagram Reels. Contact him at rwebber2@nd.edu.



A Closer Look at Academia's Political Diversity

Ideological imbalance among professors signals future trends

JACOB SCHIERL
Staff Writer

In elite universities across America, liberal faculty members overwhelmingly outnumber their conservative counterparts. This comes as no surprise: American academia has long been disproportionately liberal compared with the American electorate. In 1969, only a quarter of professors were found to be even moderately conservative.

In recent years, however, this ideological imbalance has become even more pronounced. According to faculty studies conducted by the Carnegie Commission National Survey of Higher Education, “between 1969 and 1998, the share of faculty identifying as ‘liberal’ or ‘far-left’ shifted only a tenth of a percentage point, from 44.7 percent to 44.8 percent.”

The UCLA-HERI faculty survey shows a much more significant shift movement toward the left in recent years. Between 2001 and 2015, the share of professors that identified as liberal increased by roughly 12 percentage points. More recent decades have featured a

Democrat-to-Republican ratio of around 11:1.

At elite universities, the numbers are more extreme. The *Harvard Crimson* reported in 2022 that more than 80 percent of surveyed faculty reported to be either “liberal” or “very liberal,” a jump of eight percentage points from the year prior. One percent of faculty reported to be “conservative” and none “very conservative.”

Harvard is no exception, as Yale and Princeton have recently achieved their own liberal benchmark: an absence of Republican-aligned donations among their professors. Yale professors made over 1,000 donations to political candidates in 2025. Not a single recipient was a Republican. The university currently boasts a 36:1 ratio of Democratic to Republican faculty.

As an author for National Affairs observes, religious schools generally “remain far more diverse politically than secular ones ... if one wants to be exposed to a broad spectrum of political ideas, it is still far better to attend Notre Dame or Baylor than Berkeley or Cornell.”

At Notre Dame, the ideological imbalance indeed seems to

present itself to a lesser degree. A study by the *Observer* found that 228 professors donated to a Democratic candidate from 2023 to 2026, while 15 donated to a Republican.

Faculty political affiliation does not necessarily dictate what professors teach, but it shapes the range of perspectives represented on campus. Professors at other universities have noted the consequences of a severe political imbalance. Ryan Owens, a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, described his experience on campus in a 2024 interview saying, “That left-wing, dogmatic orthodoxy exists. It’s omnipresent. You can feel it in the air.”

Universities have historically aimed to be bastions of free speech and open debate. At universities like Princeton, founded on a “bedrock commitment to free expression, where thoughtful people of all backgrounds may voice their opinions civilly,” professors are seemingly afraid to speak openly about their political leanings.

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) found that, across 6,269 professors at 55 universities,

more than half of conservative professors say they hide their views to keep their jobs.

According to several conservative professors at major universities, right-wing beliefs are increasingly being pushed out of universities, with many attributing the current political imbalance to the hostile environments these universities perpetuate. Jonathan Turley, a conservative law professor at George Washington University, accuses professors of having created a “hostile environment for anyone with conservative or libertarian viewpoints.”

There is concern that the more liberal a faculty becomes, the more difficult it is for conservatives to become part of the cohort. Another FIRE survey asked faculty whether a conservative would fit in in their department and 39 percent called such a candidate a “very/somewhat poor fit,” while only three percent said the same about a liberal individual.

As Owens explains, “faculty hire other faculty. And once you reach a tipping point where everybody—or at least the strong majority—thinks one particular way, now they’re able to hire only those who also think that

particular way.”

What the ideal political balance among faculty should look like is unclear. However, a grave disparity in the range of perspectives among professors can raise questions about whether a university can foster proper intellectual debate.

Notre Dame places an emphasis on the importance of a diverse faculty, starting with its mission statement: “The intellectual interchange essential to a university requires, and is enriched by, the presence and voices of diverse scholars and students.”

Notre Dame Professor of Political Science Vincent Phillip Muñoz has underscored that a university must encourage an exchange of differing perspectives, “Intellectual diversity, academic freedom, and freedom of speech are means to an end: the end of truth-seeking.”

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Chinese Spies Infiltrate American Universities

Recent investigation at Stanford sparks conversations over CCP espionage

RAYMOND WEBBER
Politics Editor

A recent investigation published at Stanford University reveals that a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) agent impersonated a Stanford student, using the alias Charles Chen, to collect information on students who were conducting sensitive STEM research on China relevant to geopolitical competition. “Chen” messaged students on an app monitored by the CCP to track the students’ research and recruit them to work in China.

Members of the Stanford community have long speculated that Chinese spies have been part of their university, but the recent investigation from the *Stanford Review* confirmed that “the CCP is orchestrating a widespread intelligence-gathering campaign at Stanford.”

According to the *Review*, the strategy of the CCP is a “non-traditional” approach to espionage: “The Chinese Communist Party has employed a ‘crowdsourced approach’ to gathering information at Stanford. ... The Chinese Ministry for State Security (MSS) uses civilians unaffiliated with the intelligence community to acquire and report sensitive information.” In other words, seemingly benign Chinese

students applying to American universities are using their relationships with fellow students to send critical information and intelligence back to the MSS.

The *Review* interviewed several people involved with the university who revealed details of these spy tactics. The *Review* writes, “A China expert, familiar with Stanford, who wished to remain anonymous, confirmed that of the approximately 1,129 Chinese International students on campus, a select number are actively reporting to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). China’s 2017 National Intelligence Law mandates that all Chinese citizens support and cooperate with state intelligence work regardless of location.”

This phenomenon of Chinese espionage at American universities is not limited to Stanford, as several other elite universities have revealed similar findings.

After a *Washington Free Beacon* report found that the University of Michigan’s partnership with Shanghai Jiao Tong University brought several spies to the American campus, Michigan withdrew from its partnership with the Shanghai university. The CCP-linked school, however, still maintains relationships with Yale University, Columbia University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University

of California-Berkeley, among others.

According to the *Beacon*’s report, “the Department of Justice has charged at least 12 University of Michigan students, researchers, and recent graduates—all Chinese nationals—with national security-related offenses. ... Five of them were accused of taking photographs of military drills. ... They all belonged to an engineering partnership between Michigan and Shanghai Jiao Tong, which was helping the CCP modernize its military.”

Even after the partnership with the Shanghai university ended, “At least six more Chinese students were accused this year of smuggling in dangerous biological materials, including parasitic roundworms and a fungal pathogen that federal prosecutors described as a ‘potential agroterrorism’ weapon,” the *Beacon* wrote.

The Department of Justice investigated Harvard University this past July for potentially violating “federal civil rights law by accepting foreign funding that carried preferences for students from particular countries.”

The *Harvard Crimson* reported that its university had “disclosed more than \$36 million in gifts from sources attributed to China and Hong Kong that carried financial aid preferences tied to students’ countries,

nationalities, geographic regions, or international status.”

Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon wrote to the University that Harvard “appears to be accepting these funds with restrictions and conditions from China-based sources and then providing this student financial aid with preference to foreign students based on their national origin, presumably Chinese,” the *Crimson* added.

More recently, the Trump Administration ordered 30 universities to audit their foreign research partnerships or risk losing their funding. Instead of conforming to these orders, “Many universities retained partnerships with their former Chinese partner institutions or established successor language and cultural programs under different names. Critics characterized some of these arrangements, particularly those that continued to receive Chinese funding or instructors, as rebranded Confucius Institutes,” *Time Magazine* reported.

In recent years, the University of Notre Dame has cut ties with several institutions due to alleged connections to the CCP. In July 2025, Notre Dame withdrew from the China Scholarship Council, a China-backed scholarship program. This action followed President Trump’s release of Proclamation 10043,

which encouraged universities to prioritize American interests and national security and suspended the entry of certain Chinese graduate students and researchers into the country.

Nevertheless, Notre Dame still operates an influential liberal arts college in China—the Beijing Global Gateway—and is engaged in various collaborative endeavors in China as a result of the program.

The university also continues to maintain the Greater China Scholars Program, which offers scholarships and grants for top students from China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. This program has brought 479 Chinese-nationals thus far to the school. Some critics, such as Father Bill Miscamble, C.S.C., are also concerned that the university has worked with corporations that benefit the CCP, whilst China actively persecutes the Catholic Church.

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



Notre Dame Graded ‘F’ for Free Speech

FIRE punishes Notre Dame for anti-porn policies

MARIE SPENCER

Staff Writer

Annually, FIRE publishes its College Free Speech Rankings, using student surveys and an analysis of university policy to compare how several campuses support diverse viewpoints and create spaces for open dialogue. As in previous rankings, Notre Dame performed poorly. FIRE ranked Notre Dame 232 out of the 261 colleges and universities mentioned, and the university received a failing grade of 54.0/100. Notre Dame also received a Spotlight Rating of red, indicating that FIRE believes that the university restricts free speech.

FIRE is a self-described “nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to defending and sustaining the individual rights of all Americans to free speech and free thought ... placing a special emphasis on defending these rights of students and faculty members on our nation’s campuses.” Each year, the organization releases its comprehensive College Free Speech Rankings, a ranking of universities and colleges across the United States, measuring how students perceive access to free speech on their respective campuses and how administrative actions censor students.

These rankings are determined by a number grade and a corresponding letter grade, with information taken from both student volunteers and the universities themselves. The student component of the grade involves participants filling

out surveys measuring how comfortable they feel speaking about a variety of topics on campus, how much they feel their campuses would allow certain topics and speakers on campus, and how much they feel their university administrations allow freedom of thought.

The university portion measures what, if any, free speech statements have been adopted by the university, and also consists of the Spotlight Rating, which measures how open the schools’ written policies are on free speech and expression.

This year, FIRE ranked The University of Chicago (UChicago) as the number one university for free speech, with a passing grade of 81.4/100 and a green Spotlight Rating. FIRE attributes this score to the confidence among the students that their administration will defend free speech, as well as the University’s adoption of the Chicago Statement and the Kalven Report on Institute Neutrality.

These two free speech statements are significant to FIRE’s assessment of a university, as the adoption of both statements results in an increase of six points to a school’s score, making these adoptions a third of the university portion of the FIRE ratings.

The University of Chicago itself wrote the original Chicago Statement, and that legacy is still present in the school today. As part of the first week of classes, UChicago requires all new students to learn about the university’s freedoms of expression principles, the history of the Chicago Statement at the

university, and meet in small groups in hopes of meaningful discussion surrounding freedom of thought.

Emma Di Domenico, a freshman at UChicago, told the *Rover* that she attributes the school’s high FIRE score to these university requirements, saying that their emphasis alone demonstrates how important freedom of speech is to the administration of UChicago. Other University of Chicago students echoed similar thoughts, with many referencing the orientation speech at UChicago which President Paul Alivisatos gave. He emphasized the importance of the freedom of expression, saying, “You chose to come to a place known for its dedication to free inquiry and expression, a place grounded with that idea and that thrives on the ability to exercise free expression. We work to guard that ability fiercely.”

On the other hand, the University of Notre Dame’s failing score can be attributed to its position on the adoption of the two free speech statements and the restrictiveness some of the 243 student volunteers mentioned they felt while on campus.

A university’s Spotlight Rating is determined by how much FIRE believes the university policies limit or protect free speech, with a red Rating—which Notre Dame has—indicating the university has “one policy that both clearly and substantially restricts freedom of speech.”

In the case of Notre Dame, FIRE gave the university a red rating

because of its policy regarding the use of Notre Dame resources “to post, view, print, store, or send obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit, or offensive material, except for officially approved, legitimate academic or University purposes.” FIRE saw this policy as a violation and restriction against free speech, and the Spotlight Rating reflected that.

Unlike Notre Dame, UChicago does not have a direct policy regarding the viewing, storing, or distributing of porn or other sexual materials. Rather, UChicago’s position on pornography sub-headed under several other policies, all which received a green or yellow rating. FIRE’s case-by-case method of rating schools’ free-speech policies allows some schools to receive higher scores because they do not have direct policies regarding certain topics. Because UChicago lacks such an explicit policy, FIRE did not evaluate the school on the same caliber of other institutions who did have such policies.

Additionally, Notre Dame received a lower score based on students’ responses to how comfortable they feel in sharing their opinions and speaking their mind on campus. Of the six student response categories, five of them received a D+ grade or lower, with those categories being Comfort Expressing Ideas, Openness, Self-Censorship, Administrative Support, and Political Tolerance. The Disruptive Conduct category received a B grade.

A Notre Dame student from the Class of 2026 told FIRE

“During a class, someone was sharing views on marriage and said they would never marry a Republican. I thought this was unreasonable but did not speak up out of fear that it might start a conflict.”

But does this “self-censorship” stem from fear, or is it because Notre Dame students want their peers to feel comfortable?

Evan Ragland, Associate Professor of History told the *Rover*, “Notre Dame students often seem more deferential and considerate than students I have encountered at other elite schools ... I think students are often polite and kind, and without prior practice in civil disagreement and discussion it’s not obvious how to combine politeness and rigorous debate in the classroom.”

Ian Diez, a Notre Dame sophomore, spoke highly of the university’s willingness and openness towards freedom of expression, saying “It seems to me that ND is willing to allow any and all expression, with the caveat that it does not hinder operations or cause disturbance or blatantly conflict with the university’s Catholic mission.”

The university’s FIRE ranking shows the balance Notre Dame must navigate between its respect for free expression and its core Catholic values.

Marie Spencer is a freshman majoring in Classics and Honors Math. When not in Hes, she can be found in the dining halls creating food hacks. Send her your best ones at mspence8@nd.edu.

USCCB Condemns ‘Mail-Order Abortion Industry,’ Calls for Prayer

Students emphasize importance of bishops’ exhortation

ROBERT MYLER

Staff Writer

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) released a nationwide statement on August 18 calling for American Catholics to pray and act against the rising use of the abortion pill. Coinciding with *Respect Life Month*, the initiative spans through the end of October.

In its official statement, the USCCB identifies “easier access to abortion pills” as coinciding with a climbing national abortion rate and “increased health risks” for women, naming the Food and Drug Administration specifically as an enabler.

“[The FDA] has enabled a nationwide mail-order abortion industry by allowing abortion pills to be prescribed in telehealth appointments and sold both at neighborhood pharmacies and online, circumventing state laws

that protect life in the womb,” the statement read.

The USCCB continues, “This leaves women vulnerable to suffering an abortion alone at home, without any medical supervision. It also sets up additional opportunities for exploitation by violent partners or human traffickers.”

Abortion pill use has increased in the U.S. in recent years, with 28 percent of abortions provided through telehealth in 2025, compared to seven percent in 2022, according to data from the Society of Family Planning.

The USCCB continues by outlining a three-fold mission: to promote education on issues of life; to encourage prayer, especially to St. Joseph, Protector of Life; and to petition pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies to stop producing and selling the abortion pill.

Therese Phelan, a Notre Dame senior and president of Notre Dame Right to Life (RtL),

spoke about the importance of educating people on the abortion pill in an interview with the *Rover*. “It is quite an understudied field and the pill is often prescribed prematurely and without regard for the potential side effects that it may have on a woman’s mental and physical health.”

RtL hosts many events aimed at increasing students’ knowledge around issues like the abortion pill. Although they have not yet hosted any events responding to the USCCB’s national invitation, Phelan said that the club “plans to address this later this year through a lecture or tabling event.”

Irish 4 Reproductive Health (I4RH), an unofficial student organization, has consistently promoted the use of Plan B, an abortifacient, and distributes pills on campus. The *Rover* contacted I4RH for a comment, but they were unavailable to sit for an interview before publishing.

Sophomore Madeline Anderson of Pasquerilla West

Hall told the *Rover* about her concern that the accessibility of the abortion pill has produced a lack of understanding of what it is and how it affects women. “The accessibility [of the pill] makes it just so casual,” she said. “Especially with it being mailed to your house, it’s just normal.”

Anderson remarked that this desensitization seriously hurts both mother and child. “I think women have a connection with their child no matter how young the child is,” she said. “And to just sever that in such cruelty, it also breaks the mother’s heart.”

Both Phelan and Anderson recognized that the USCCB’s message will be heard by many people who already adhere to the Catholic Church’s teaching on abortion, though they affirmed its benefit. “While the USCCB’s invitation will mostly be aimed at ‘already pro-life people,’” Phelan said, “I think that many pro-life people and even many Catholics do not understand the gravity of

the pill and the negative effect it has on our society.”

“I think it is a beautiful reminder of the position of the Church,” she continued, “and will serve as encouragement and education to many who may not fully understand the Church’s teachings.”

To help Catholics participate in the initiative, The USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities recently released a video presenting a guide for parishes and schools to take action during Respect Life Month.

Robert Myler is a sophomore studying the Program of Liberal Studies and classics. He loves to receive mail, so make his day by emailing him at rmyler2@nd.edu.



Sheen Beatification *continued from front*

Fr. Gregory Haake, C.S.C., Vice President of the Office of Mission Engagement and Church Affairs, attended the beatification as part of his official capacities. In an email to the *Rover*, Fr. Haake wrote, “The biggest highlight was the Beatification Mass, especially the moment at the beginning where the actual beatification took place. Bl. Fulton Sheen’s great nephew read a short biography, and then Cardinal Tagle read the apostolic letter declaring Fulton Sheen a blessed.

It was a dramatic moment filled with great joy.”

Cardinal Tagle preached the homily at the Beatification Mass. “The homily was all about what it means to be an evangelist, and even though Bishop Sheen became famous for his eloquence, he wasn’t beatified for his eloquence, which I think is a really good clarification and distinction,” Fr. Romkema said.

Fr. Haake praised Tagle’s homily, encouraging students to watch the recording online.

In addition to earning fame for his evangelization efforts, Bl. Sheen is the first American-born bishop to be beatified. Breza

emphasized the beatification’s significance to American Catholics. He wrote, “Bl. Fulton Sheen helped to revive a desire for Christ and His Church in the United States, and by His intercession, I think the Catholic Church will continue to grow. I think this beatification was proof that Catholicism, and thus Jesus Christ, is the future of this country,” he said.

When asked about Bl. Sheen’s significance for Notre Dame, Fr. Romkema commented, “He came out of the same devotional world of piety that we find ourselves in historically—a devotion to the cross above all,

a devotion to the Eucharist, a devotion to the Sacred Heart, to our Blessed Mother, and to Saint Joseph. All of those should be very, very familiar to students at a Congregation of Holy Cross institution.”

Fr. Romkema also highlighted that Bl. Sheen placed his learning in service of others. “[Bl. Sheen] had the highest awards that a student can attain. ... What did he use his mind for, though? What did he use his learning for? Not to outsmart someone. Not to hold his verbal reasoning skills over them, or to win an argument. ... He actually spoke from his heart, and he touched

the hearts of many people.”

He concluded, “Our learning, like Sheen’s, should never exclude the heart, and it should always actually have the intent of bringing the hearts of others along, along towards Jesus.”

Clare Hettich is a sophomore from Maryland studying theology and the Program of Liberal Studies. She would appreciate recommendations of Bl. Fulton Sheen’s writings or episodes sent to chettich@nd.edu.

Notre Dame Hosts AI Ethics Summit

Institute for Ethics and the Common Good, DELTA AI examine dignity and formation

HENRY OMANGA
Campus Editor

The Institute for Ethics and the Common Good (ECG) hosted the second annual DELTA Summit on AI, Faith, and Human Flourishing from September 21-23, bringing to Notre Dame’s campus “technologists, ecumenical faith leaders, educators, scholars, students, and policymakers for three days of events organized around the theme of navigating the AI transition in a way that centers human formation.”

The event was guided by the DELTA framework, an approach to AI ethics rooted in Christian tradition. The ECG conducted over 200 interviews with Christian faith leaders, ethicists, policy makers, technologists, and others to develop the framework.

DELTA is an acronym for Dignity, Embodiment, Love, Transcendence, and Agency. Founding Director of ECG and Professor of Philosophy Meghan Sullivan described the meaning of the acronym in an article. “The first letter is a call for human values to be at the center of everything we do with AI. The next four letters capture what is so remarkable and distinctive about human dignity.” The framework was introduced at the first summit in 2025.

This year marked the addition of 50 members of the GenDELTA Network, young adults ages 14-25 interested in wrestling with tough questions about AI and exploring how to tangibly support human flourishing and the common good. Adam Kronk, Director of the DELTA Network, described GenDELTA as “a group of young leaders that [the DELTA team] believe have the most agency in our society to get [AI] right.”

The summit kicked off with Mass in the Basilica of the Sacred



Image by Delta, modified by the Irish Rover

Heart, celebrated by Archbishop of Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich. In his homily, Cardinal Cupich posed a central question to attendees that would frame the summit’s discussion of AI: “What does it mean to be human?”

He continued, emphasizing AI’s potential to amplify the human tendency to ignore the dignity of others. “It presents us with a critical choice: we can allow AI’s deterministic logic to reinforce our human tendencies to replace the mystery of personhood with [predictive analytics] ... or we can let the coldness of the mirror shock us into remembering what makes us human.”

The summit’s events included keynote speakers, small group breakout sessions, and workshops led by the DELTA Faith and AI Rapid Response Grant Recipients.

In a Tuesday keynote, art historian Elizabeth Lev, who teaches at Duquesne and the Pontifical University of

Thomas Aquinas, offered an examination of Michaelangelo’s famed masterwork, *The Last Judgement*, pulling extensively from the history, literature, social and theological state of the time, to show both how Dignity, Embodiment, Love, Transcendence, and Agency played into the creation of the piece, but also how art has persistently moved human beings to experience them.

Bringing her examination around to the present, she posited that, “for the artists of artificial intelligence, the most beautiful, memorable, meaningful works of art have always revealed a pathos in an awareness of human suffering, mortality, sickness, weakness, and injustice as part of the human experience. The most enduring art has responded by uplifting and reminding viewers of DELTA.”

On Wednesday, Colin Fagan, Senior Manager for Global Strategic Partnerships at Special

Olympics International (SOI), moderated a discussion with Nathan Cook, Chief Information and Technology Officer at SOI, titled “GenDELTA: AI as an Agent of Change.” In it, they lauded the ability of AI to aid productivity and predictive analysis, especially for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, while stressing the dangers of implicit biases within LLMs and the inability of policy to police development.

Though there are evident pros and cons, Cook emphasized that the most important area of focus for GenDELTA especially is not comparison, but working towards a positive future. “Because I believe it is inevitable, we have to make sure the pros outweigh the cons. I don’t know that that’s organically going to happen if we don’t put effort into it. I think we have to set out to make the change that allows it to be positive.”

Notre Dame junior Jack Rankin, a member of the

GenDELTA cohort, told the *Rover*, “I found the DELTA Summit to be an incredibly illuminating experience. It allowed me to learn from tech leaders, education consultants, Orthodox priests, Renaissance art historians, and a fantastic group of college and high school students.”

When asked for his biggest takeaways for Notre Dame students, Rankin recommended the recognition that at the center of forming the future of AI actually lies a recognition about our humanity. “Being human is essentially to realize someone else is real, and then ultimately to realize them as made in the image of God. Someone can say this long before they actually believe it, and acknowledging one another’s humanity is a shared and sacred endeavor.”

In a statement to the *Rover*, the ECG offered an invitation to students. “We welcome Notre Dame students to engage with the framework and the growing list of resources and readings on our website. We also welcome student perspectives as part of our growing GenDELTA network, and students can email ethics@nd.edu to get connected.”

Henry Omanga is a sophomore from Houston, TX studying philosophy and psychology with a minor in constitutional studies. If you ever want to discuss the degradation of country music, the best superhero movie of all time (*The Incredibles*), or niche sports, he can be reached at homanga@nd.edu.

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Cavadini Awarded Prize *continued from front*

consultant to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine since 2003. Pope Benedict XVI appointed him in 2009 to serve on the International Theological Commission, which he did until 2014.

Cavadini expressed gratitude for the award in a statement, saying, "I have sought to live out my vocation as a theologian following the example of Origen of Alexandria, a third-century theologian, who repeatedly declared that he wished to be a *vir ecclesiasticus*, a man of the Church. At Notre Dame, I have been able to live out my vocation as a man of the Church and, at the same time, as a man of the academy."

"I would hope that honored with this award are all of my students—past and present and future, graduate and undergraduate—all of my colleagues in the Department of Theology to whom I owe so much, and all of the faculty and staff of the McGrath Institute for Church Life, of whose gifts I have

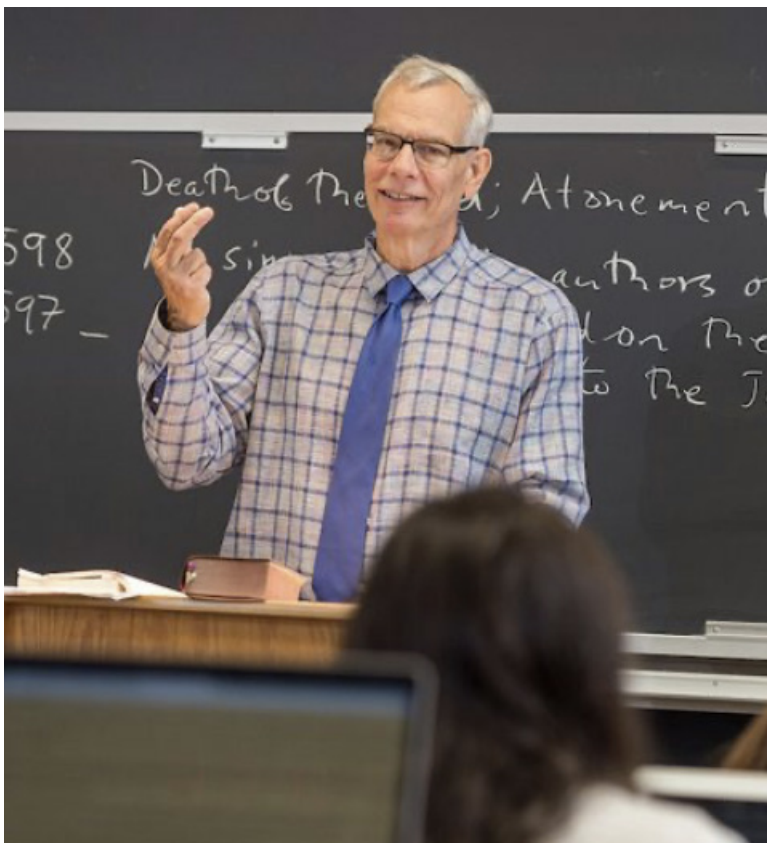


Image by ThinkND

been the beneficiary for the last 26 years," Cavadini continued. "Most of all, perhaps, I hope this award redounds, with gratitude, to the credit of Our Lady, the patroness of our University, under whose protection we have

flourished for the last 183 years, and may it be so for the next 183 years."

Father Roberto Regoli, president of the Ratzinger Foundation, described Cavadini as "a scholar who has addressed

the theology of the Church from antiquity through to the 21st century" in a Vatican statement.

"The American professor is an expert above all on the Church Fathers, especially Saint Augustine, but he has also engaged with the theology of our own time. He has written extensively on Benedict XVI and the theology of Francis," Regoli continued. "At Notre Dame, he directed the McGrath Institute for Church Life and dedicated himself to fostering theological life and faith in the United States and abroad."

"He is a person deeply committed both intellectually and pastorally," Regoli said.

Under Cavadini's leadership, McGrath rose to global prominence as an academic institute dedicated to serving the Church in all her pastoral needs.

Theology Department Chair Professor William Mattison told the *Rover* he was "overjoyed" at the announcement. "Dr. Cavadini is a man of the Church, and a man of the academy, and this award recognizes his outstanding contributions, in an integrated manner, to these distinct but related venues."

"[Cavadini] has always served the Church, the University, and our Department in a manner animated by theological excellence in the manner of 'faith seeking understanding,'" Mattison added. "We thank God for how this award recognizes [his] work."

Sophomore Dom DeHaven, a student of Cavadini, praised his professor's influence in the classroom, saying, "Cavadini's teaching has provided me with a framework for how to envision my life. ... He has taught me how to envision my life and the lives of others as ones particularly valuable, unique, irreducibly beautiful, and cherished."

Lucy Trotter is a senior majoring in piano performance and the Program of Liberal Studies, with a minor in philosophy. Reach her at lspace@nd.edu.

Lord of the Wings *Discovering the Father's Love in Insects*

MADLINE PAGE
Staff Writer

As I sat with the Lord in my dorm chapel, my prayer was interrupted by an unexpected visitor. A melodic cricket's chirping resonated from the flowers beneath the altar. He was likely lost, but I smiled as I listened to him serenading his Creator.

To the delight of bug enthusiasts like myself, insects are everywhere. They exist in every environment except the ocean (yes, even the Arctic!). Around one million species are named, but entomologists estimate that there are at least four to six million insect species—perhaps even as many as 10 to 20 million—inhabiting Earth. At any given moment, there are roughly 10 quadrillion insects alive on Earth. Scientist J.B.S. Haldane once quipped that God must have "an inordinate fondness" for beetles, which make up about 28 percent of known animal species. I would argue that this soft spot extends to the entire class Insecta.

For the casual entomophobe, these statistics may provoke distress or disgust. Rather than alarm, however, I intend to illustrate the tremendous extent of God's care for creatures that many regard as the bane of nature.

Consider this: the wings of each fly that you haphazardly swat away were embroidered with an intricate pattern of venation unique to each species by the hand of your heavenly Father. He ornaments the grasses with tiny, multicolored leafhoppers and



Image by Flickr

makes beetles sparkle like jewels in the sunlight.

"Since nothing that exists would exist without you, does it follow that whatever exists does, in some way, contain you?" St. Augustine wondered. In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul similarly proclaims that "What can be known about God is evident to them, because God made it evident to them ... ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made" (1:19-20).

Creation is part of divine revelation. The Lord's might is revealed in the strength of the red-legged grasshopper; his beauty in the iridescent thorax of the ebony jewelwing; his determination in

the intergenerational migration of the monarch; his goodness in the diligent self-sacrifice of the honeybee.

We would be remiss to discount anything that God has made. Even mosquitoes (the only insect that I struggle to love) were molded by his hands, created with a purpose—even if that purpose is a mystery that we may never understand on this side of heaven. Mosquitoes, too, point back to their Creator.

From microscopic fairy wasps to massive Atlas moths, God carefully crafted them all. From mayflies that live a mere 24 hours as an adult to ant colony queens that reign for up to 30 years, God carves out a specific niche in nature for each insect to fulfill. From the hundreds of

cockroaches that haunt residence halls to the millions of reclusive species that no human eye has yet beheld, God is constantly sustaining and breathing life into each tiny spiracle.

He dresses the lilies with beauty and splendor, and feeds every hungry sparrow (Matthew 6:28-30), and he tenderly, meticulously creates and cares for each little insect. God is eternally supporting them all; each insect has a unique note to sing in the symphony of creation (Psalm 148), without which the chord would be incomplete.

And if he so lovingly cares for the quadrillions of tiny creatures that are trodden underfoot daily, the majority of which the average human will never see or appreciate, how much more does

he care for you, his beloved son or daughter created in his image and likeness?

The astonishing abundance and diversity of the world's six-legged arthropods is a testament to God's meticulous care for some of humanity's least loved creatures. Their ubiquity is not an accident, but an invitation to contemplate what this care means in turn for you, his beloved.

I love the natural sciences because of the rich theology nestled within them; studying creation allows me to better meet its Creator. Entomology is a beautiful facet of biology that, I think, perfectly encapsulates the glory of God in all aspects of the world he has made.

So, I challenge you: take a second look at the ant scurrying busily across your path, the dragonfly quivering in the breeze, the bee diligently working its nine-to-five among the tulips. See the Creator's attention to the minutest details and his care for seemingly insignificant creatures—and mirrored in this, be reminded of his unfathomable love for you.

Madeline Page is a junior studying biology. As this article indicates, she has a fondness for insects. She is known in her dorm for saving cockroaches, rather than smashing them. If you have a cockroach that you would like humanely removed (and would like her spiel on why they are actually pretty cool), contact mpage4@nd.edu.



She Found His Grace

A conversation with founder of abortion recovery ministry

**RYLEN CHRISTOPHER
LASTRELLA**
Staff Writer

Research from the Guttmacher Institute shows that since Indiana's near-total ban on abortion, approximately 10,200 women have fled to other states to procure an abortion. Besides loss of life, such procedures often impose feelings of guilt, shame, and sadness on parents. Serena Dyksen, the founder of She Found His Grace, a non-denominational abortion recovery organization, corresponded with the *Rover* via email about this important topic.

Dyksen faced an unplanned pregnancy when she was 13 at the hands of an abusive family member. She was subsequently taken to receive an abortion. Dyksen later experienced another unplanned pregnancy, but this time chose life. However, she recounts that she did not feel whole until she encountered the love and grace God would bestow upon her.

Through her work, Dyksen experiences firsthand the barriers that prevent women from talking about abortion grief. She told the

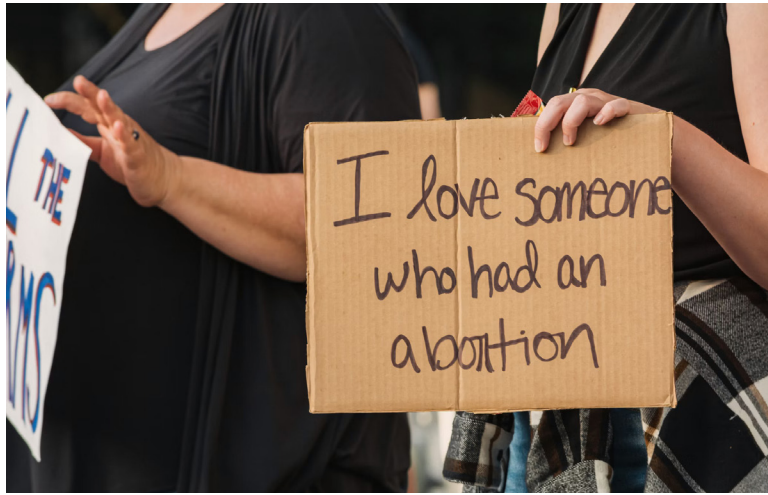


Image by Unsplash

Rover, "One of the biggest reasons is that many people do not feel like they are allowed to grieve an abortion. There can be so much shame, secrecy, fear of judgment, and confusion surrounding the experience. Some have never told anyone about their abortion. Others have tried to talk about their pain and have been told, directly or indirectly, that they made their choice and should simply move on."

Dyksen noted, "Someone may experience grief and relief at the same time. She may regret the abortion while also remembering why she believed it was her only option. She may love and miss

her child while still feeling anger toward people who pressured her. Sometimes people are angry with themselves, with God, with a partner, or with circumstances surrounding the pregnancy."

Dyksen also explained that her organization does not see abortion as a political issue and instead takes a holistic approach. "We see it as a moral and spiritual issue because it concerns the value of human life, the well-being of women and families, and the consequences that can follow an abortion decision," she explained.

Dyksen argued the politicization of abortion is another reason why women do not talk about

their grief. "Because abortion is discussed so publicly and passionately, people can also be afraid that sharing their personal pain will turn their story into a debate instead of an opportunity to be heard and cared for."

She explained that, when abortion becomes merely a political issue, "[We] lose sight of the woman who feels trapped, the child whose life is at stake, the man affected by an abortion decision, and the person who may carry grief for years afterward." Still, Dyksen recognized the importance of politics in forming pro-life policy.

She Found His Grace seeks to acknowledge and address the conflicting emotions present following from a Christian perspective. She explained, "[W]e create a safe place to name them, examine them in light of Scripture, grieve what has been lost, take responsibility where appropriate, and begin separating shame from conviction. Biblical conviction draws us toward repentance and restoration. Shame tells us to hide and believe we are permanently defined by what we have done. Those are very different messages."

"The goal is freedom ... [w]e want people to reach a place where

abortion is part of their testimony, but it is no longer the defining identity of their lives. We have watched God take stories filled with shame and use them to bring healing, purpose, and hope to other people," she concluded.

She Found His Grace is anticipating the opening of their Redemption House, a residential abortion recovery program located in Bremen, Indiana. The program is for women going through recovery and "need a deeper level of healing and an opportunity to step away from the noise and pressures of everyday life." This program is expected to begin in April 2027.

Students at the University of Notre Dame facing an unplanned pregnancy can seek support and confidential assistance at the Family Resource Center.

Rylen Lastrella is a junior studying in the Program of Liberal Studies and theology. He wants to remind readers to pray for the Holy Souls in purgatory, and to visit the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament often. He can be reached at rlastrel@nd.edu

Notre Dame Hosts Inaugural Arts Biennial

Arts Initiative plans international festival

MADLINE PAGE
Staff Writer

From January through June of 2027, the Notre Dame Arts Initiative will host the inaugural Notre Dame Arts Biennial, an art festival featuring over 100 predominantly free public events, including lectures, exhibitions, performances, and workshops. Programming will occur primarily on campus and in the larger South Bend community, as well as at a handful of select international locations.

The Notre Dame Arts Initiative was established in 2024, with the goal of collaboratively integrating research, teaching, and exhibition of the arts, as well as providing the Notre Dame and South Bend community with meaningful, intellectual artistic experiences. Stemming from this initial enterprise is the new biennial, spearheaded by Initiative Director and Professor of Art History Michael Schreffler, Managing Director Rebecca Struch, and Program Manager Laura Winkle.

According to their website, the biennial is "rooted in the belief that the arts are essential to communal flourishing."

The biennial's website continues, "[P]rogramming in visual, spatial, literary, and performing arts strengthens regional and global partnerships, facilitates symbiotic exchange through sustained community-campus interactions,



Image by Swanyay

and provides new platforms for arts research to positively impact the public."

Furthermore, the biennial aspires to embody creative communication in partnership with Notre Dame's Catholic identity. In an interview with Notre Dame News, university president Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C., stated that "the Arts Biennial exemplifies how the [u]niversity's commitment to the arts advances our Catholic mission by using creative expression to foster meaningful cultural exchanges and contribute to a thriving shared home."

Catholic-centered artistry is the focus of multiple aspects of biennial programming. "Of Heaven and Earth: Ukrainian Sacred Art and the Good Life" is an exhibit by the Nanovic Institute in partnership with the Ukrainian Catholic University, and features contemporary Ukrainian

iconography and sacred art.

Additionally, theology and the arts merge in "The Work of Human Hands: Liturgy and the Senses." This three day conference convenes scholars in disciplines such as theology, history, music, anthropology, and philosophy to explore "ways in which Christian and Jewish worship forms, employs, invokes, evokes, and plays on human sense perception—sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, kinesthetics and proprioception, as well as the imaginative faculties." Running from April 15 through April 17, the conference will conclude with the performance of a sung Vespers composed by Dr. J.J. Wright, Notre Dame professor and director emeritus of the Notre Dame Folk Choir.

The theme of the inaugural biennial is inspired by symbiosis, the scientific term for an enduring relationship between organisms.

Through this theme, the biennial "calls upon individual talents to strengthen community through collaborative planning, convenes audiences and participants through collective arts experiences, and encourages global connections through cultural exchange."

A variety of events spanning from exhibitions and performances at the Raclin-Murphy Museum of Art and the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, to visual displays at the Eddy Street commons, to an artist exchange program between Dublin, Mexico City, and South Bend is scheduled.

Highlights of the biennial include a fireside chat with Maya Lin, designer of the Washington, D.C. Vietnam Veterans Memorial, performances by the National Symphony Orchestra, South Bend theatre companies, Notre Dame students, and the "More Than: Artists in Collaboration for a Greater Good" exhibit at the

Raclin.

The "More Than" exhibition, which will open on January 31, is a core facet of the biennial's programming. Created through collaboration with other artists, or in communion with larger issues, the artwork is meant to "illuminate critical issues of cultural change, spiritual and historical journeys, social inequalities and opportunities, and environmental fragility, among other issues."

In collaboration with Notre Dame's international partners, the biennial will also showcase art forms from across the globe. Notably, the English-language premiere of visiting Chinese theatre director Wang Chong's piece *Lying Flat 2.0*, as well as the United States debut of the influential Peruvian dance group Qhapaq Qolla, will take the stage.

Although the biennial will not formally begin until January, the full list of programming and further details can be found on their website.

Madeline Page is a junior studying biology. She is currently enrolled in a course dedicated to a tenet of symbiosis: parasitism. She is unsure why God made so many diabolical little creatures, but is trying to trust that they, too, serve a purpose. Send answers to mpgae4@nd.edu.

Veils, Vespers, and Vocation

A Trad Guide to Dating under the Dome

ABIGAIL SMITH
Staff Writer

Welcome to Notre Dame, ladies! You now have 4 years until you have to be engaged! Here are 7 easy steps to trad dating at Notre Dame!

But first, a quick definition of “trad:” from the Latin *traditus*, meaning “handed down”

Trad (masc): creature who owns at least one wooden-beaded rosary and two opinions about the Council of Trent that he will share even if you do not ask. Often spotted:

- Speed-walking to the Basilica
- Debating Thomist metaphysics at SDH (because NDH is for unaesthetic sinners)
- Saying “I’m discerning” with the full confidence of a man who once made eye contact with a girl in LaFun and never recovered.

Trad (fem): creature who owns at least one chapel veil, two floor-length skirts (keeping those ankles covered!), and one pinterest board titled “Catholic Wedding Inspo.” Often spotted:

- Hosting a Bible study with homemade baked goods
- Praying 30 minutes before mass in her floral dress (even though it’s way too cold)
- Saying “I’m not rushing God’s timing,” while already knowing

the exact month she wants to get married.

Step 1: Curate Your Trad Aesthetic (Preferably Before First Friday Adoration)

Dating trad at Notre Dame begins with crafting an aura that whispers, “*I own a rosary for every liturgical season.*” Your wardrobe should consist of:

- Prairie dresses that look like they escaped from a Flannery O’Connor short story.
- A cardigan that suggests you drink tea while contemplating the metaphysics of love.
- Shoes that could survive both a lake walk and a spontaneous pilgrimage.

Carry a book everywhere. It doesn’t matter which one. The *Confessions* work. So does *Pride and Prejudice*. The point is not reading—it’s signaling.

Step 2: Make Your Entrance Like You’re Walking Into the Basilica in Slow Motion

Trad dating is 80 percent ambiance. Glide into the dining hall as if you are the protagonist of a Hallmark movie. Tilt your chin at a gentle, pious angle. Smile like you’ve just finished the St. Therese novena. If someone compliments your outfit, respond with: “Oh, this? It’s just something I threw on after morning prayer. I found it at a thrift store” (You did not. You spent 45 minutes choosing it

at Altar’d State.)

Step 3: Text Like You’re Writing a Letter from a Monastery

For those who are worldly enough to own a phone you may resort to texting.

Trad flirting is subtle, wholesome, and slightly confusing. Approved messages include:

- “Hope your day is blessed.”
- “Finished my reading for Theology ... Can you explain why the Council of Florence spent so much time arguing about the *Filioque*?”
- “Would you like to walk around the lakes?” This last one is the trad equivalent of “Wanna hang out?” and is considered a legally binding romantic gesture.

Avoid emojis except the prayer hands and the dove. Anything else is too chaotic.

Step 4: Maintain Standards So High They Require a Ladder

Your ideal trad man should:

- Know at least three chant tones.
- Have a favorite encyclical.
- Own a blazer that he wears unironically.
- Be able to quote Chesterton off the dome.
- If he cannot do these things, sigh gently and say, “I’m sure you’re wonderful, but I’m on a dating fast.” This phrase is the trad woman’s version of “It’s not

you, it’s me.”

Step 5: Choose the Perfect Trad Date (Hint: It Involves Ducks)

Notre Dame offers a wide array of trad-friendly date options:

- A walk around Saint Mary’s Lake, discussing the nature of beauty.
- Sitting on South Quad reading aloud from *Love and Responsibility* (satirical, but barely).
- Attending Vespers and pretending you understand Latin.
- Sharing a single hot chocolate from Cafe J because it feels cozy.
- If he suggests drinks at The Backer, respond as though he has proposed mortal sin. You only go there for girls’ night!

Step 6: The Soft Rejection—A Sacred Art

Trad women do not ghost. They release men back into the wild with grace. Approved lines include:

- “I’m focusing on my spiritual life right now.”
- “I’m discerning my vocation.”
- “I think God is calling me to a season of stillness.”
- “I’m on a dating fast.”

All of these mean “no,” but in a way that makes him feel like he was actually your vocational director rather than your “ex.”

Step 7: The Grand Finale—Let Him Lead (But Only in the Ways You Approve Of)

He opens the door; you choose the restaurant. He suggests a second date; you schedule it around your Bible study. He offers to pray together; you pick the prayer. This is not hypocrisy. It is (non-liturgical dancing) choreography.

CONCLUSION: Trad Dating at Notre Dame Is a Lifestyle, Not a Hobby

It’s part romance, part drama, part spiritual aesthetic. It’s wanting a man who can both debate Thomistic metaphysics and carry folding chairs after a dorm Mass. It’s believing courtship can be timeless without being tedious. Dramatic without being delusional. Holy without being humorless.

And remember:

- At Notre Dame, you’re not just looking for love. You’re racing to find your husband like a Basilica seat at Easter Vigil.
- Godspeed! May your heart be steady, your intentions clear, and your situationships NONE!

Abigail Smith is a senior who has survived three years of men using Aquinas as a pickup line. Contact her for a “lake walk” at asmith78@nd.edu

NOTRE DAME CENTER FOR
CITIZENSHIP & CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

RESPONSIBILITY VERSUS RED TAPE

WHY HUMAN JUDGMENT CAN'T BE STRAINED THROUGH A LEGAL SIEVE

Public Lecture with Philip Howard

Wednesday, October 7, 2026 | 12:30–1:45 p.m. ET | 1030 Jenkins-Nanovic Hall



Philip K. Howard is a lawyer, civic leader and best-selling author of *The Death of Common Sense* and, recently, *Saving Can-Do: How to Revive the Spirit of America*. He is chair of Common Good.