THE IRISH ROVER

SERVING GOD, COUNTRY, & NOTRE DAME SINCE A.D. 2003

WWW.IRISHROVER.NET VOLUME 24, ISSUE 4 NOVEMBER 4, 2026 • ST. CHARLES BORROMEO

NDLS Contests Ten Commandments in Texas Schools

Brief asks SCOTUS to defend religious liberty, reject state-sponsored religious instruction

Colin Milligan
Staff Writer



Image by Wikimedia Commons

Notre Dame Law School's Lindsay and Matt Moroun Religious Liberty Clinic filed an amicus brief with the Supreme Court in Nathan v. Alamo Heights Independent School District, a case disputing a Texas law which requires every K-12 public school classroom to display a poster of the Ten Commandments.

Filed on September 28, 2026, the brief sides with 16 Texas families who claim the law—Texas Senate Bill 10—is a violation of the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. A federal trial court issued a preliminary injunction against the law, but in April 2026, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit reversed the injunction, upholding Senate Bill 10. On August 17, the families filed a petition for writ of certiorari, asking the Supreme Court to deliver a final ruling.

In an interview with the *Rover*, Associate Clinical Professor of Law, Director of the Religious Liberty Clinic, and leader in the brief John Meiser, stated, "A misunderstanding that you see a lot in some of the coverage about this case is—and often in these cases about religious freedom or first amendment rights—they are presented as something like … there's one side that's pro-religion, if there's something going on that's otherwise supporting or promoting religion, there's a side that recognizes the constitution protects that, and there's a side that is anti-religion. That is not what this case is about."

The Religious Liberty Clinic does not oppose religious expression in public life, according to Meiser: "Scrubbing our public spaces, our political debates, and so forth of religion is a serious threat to both religious freedom and political flourishing. … But this case is about the line the Constitution draws against the government itself using its coercive powers to teach a view of religious truth." Meiser explained, "Since the Founding, our Constitution has recognized the danger of opening the door to that kind of government control over religion, and it's critical in my view that people who otherwise care about religious freedom do not shy from defending against that threat, as well."

Meiser emphasized that the brief's focus is to highlight the difference between individual religious exercise and government-mandated religious instruction. He explained, "To point out that the Constitution defends against [the latter] is not to deny the importance of religion or religious education or anything like that. It's to recognize that there are appropriate roles of the government and parents in the private sphere."

"On one hand, it has to be true, as the case Kennedy v. Bremerton held, that the Establishment Clause does not require or even allow the government to scrub all religious things from public life. But it is also true that the Establishment Clause does limit the way the government can bring in religion. This case asks some important questions on where that line is," Meiser said.

According to Douglas Laycock,

continued on pg. 6

Rover interviews ND student after ICE detention

Mark Mikhail speaks about his detention and release

Gabe Hockstra
Managing Editor

Notre Dame sophomore Mark Mikhail was arrested by ICE agents in Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on Friday, October 23 while traveling back to campus. Federal immigration officers transported Mikhail to a detention facility in Adelanto, California, where he was held for three nights before his release on Tuesday, October 27.

Originally from Egypt, and seeking asylum in the US based on persecution of Coptic Orthodox Christians in Egypt, Mikhail lives with his family in California.

On campus, Mikhail serves as president of the undergraduate Maritain Fellows. He studies biology and theology and lives in O'Neill Family Hall.

Mikhail shared the story of his arrest and detention in an interview with the *Rover*.

A man who identified himself as an airport staff member approached Mikhail while he was sitting at his gate in LAX and asked to speak with him around the corner. "I was confused, but then I went. I naively trusted him because of the airport tag."

"He showed me his ICE badge around the corner … and then two more officers showed up and then they were asking me for my papers." The agents told Mikhail they had obtained an arrest warrant against him.

"I showed them my papers. I gave them my ID. But I was very respectful with them, and I received the same treatment with them being respectful, but obviously it was very intimidating, just three officers showing up around the corner kind of surrounding you."

Mikhail described the officers as wearing civilian clothes. When he asked to take pictures of them or their badges, they refused. The officers then escorted Mikhail outside of the airport, handcuffed him, and transported him in a van to a detention facility in downtown Los Angeles.

Mikhail said that he talked with the officers about Notre Dame and their families and tried to show that he cared about them. "When I went to this LA facility, everybody treated me very well. They asked if I needed any water,

continued on pg. 11

McGlinn Rector Cleared of Sexual Abuse Allegations

Greenop promoted and restored following investigation

Clare DiFranco
Campus Editor

In an email to McGlinn residents sent Wednesday, October 28, the Office of Residential Life informed students that Elizabeth Greenop has been found not responsible of any allegations of sexual misconduct aimed at her.

"After a thorough investigation into anonymous online allegations against a rector and the purported corroborating evidence submitted anonymously to the university, there was no evidence to support that any of the alleged misconduct occurred," the email states. "Accordingly, the rector was found not responsible."

Allegations regarding Greenop's conduct were first voiced in posts by the Instagram account @shareyourstory.notredame. The account, self-described as "for survivors, by survivors," shares anonymous submissions from users who fill out a Google form linked in the account bio. With permission from the author of the first submission, the Instagram account owner formally filed a report to the university. Within two weeks of the original June 30 postings implicating Greenop, the university placed her on leave from her position and initiated an immediate investigation.

In an Instagram direct message with the *Rover*, @shareyourstory.notredame clarified that—

continued on pg. 3

INSIDE

Memento Mori* and the Catholic's Hallows' Eve – *Page 2

Pornography, Hookup Culture, & the Devaluation of Human Life– *Page 3*

Notre Dame Hosts First Diocesan Synod in a Century – *Page 11*

THE *IRISH ROVER*
WWW.IRISHROVER.NET

STAFF

Editor-in-Chief Caleb Vaughan

Publisher Eddie Giuntini
Executive Editor Jack Krieger
Managing Editor Gabe Hockstra
Layout Manager Isabella Avila
Websmasters Matthew McBride, Harrison Barkley
Social Media/ Events Coordinator Sofia Fair
Campus Editors Henry Omanga, Clare DiFranco
Culture Editor Andrew Blake
Politics Editor Ray Webber
Religion Editor Clare Hettich
Humor Editor Joseph Ferguson
Opinion Editor Lucy Spence Trotter

FACULTY ADVISORS

John Cavadini,
Professor of Theology

Martijn Cremers,
Dean of the Mendoza College of Business

Sherif Girgis,
Associate Professor of Law

Father Bill Miscamble C.S.C.,
Professor of History

Walter Nicgorski,
Professor Emeritus, Program of Liberal Studies

Daniel Philpott,
Professor of Political Science

John Sikorski,
Professor of Business

Nicholas Teh,
Professor of Philosophy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mary Frances Devlin, ND '22
Sophia Martinson, ND '18
Alexandra DeSanctis Marr, ND '16
Gabby Girgis, ND '12
Mary Daly Korson, ND '10
Jonathan Liedl, ND '11
Joe Lindsley, ND '05
Zef Crnkovich, ND '22

The Irish Rover *is a 501(c)(3) organization.*

THE FINE PRINT

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

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

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

"Thy dead men shall live, my slain shall rise again: awake, and give praise, ye that dwell in the dust." - Isaiah 26:19

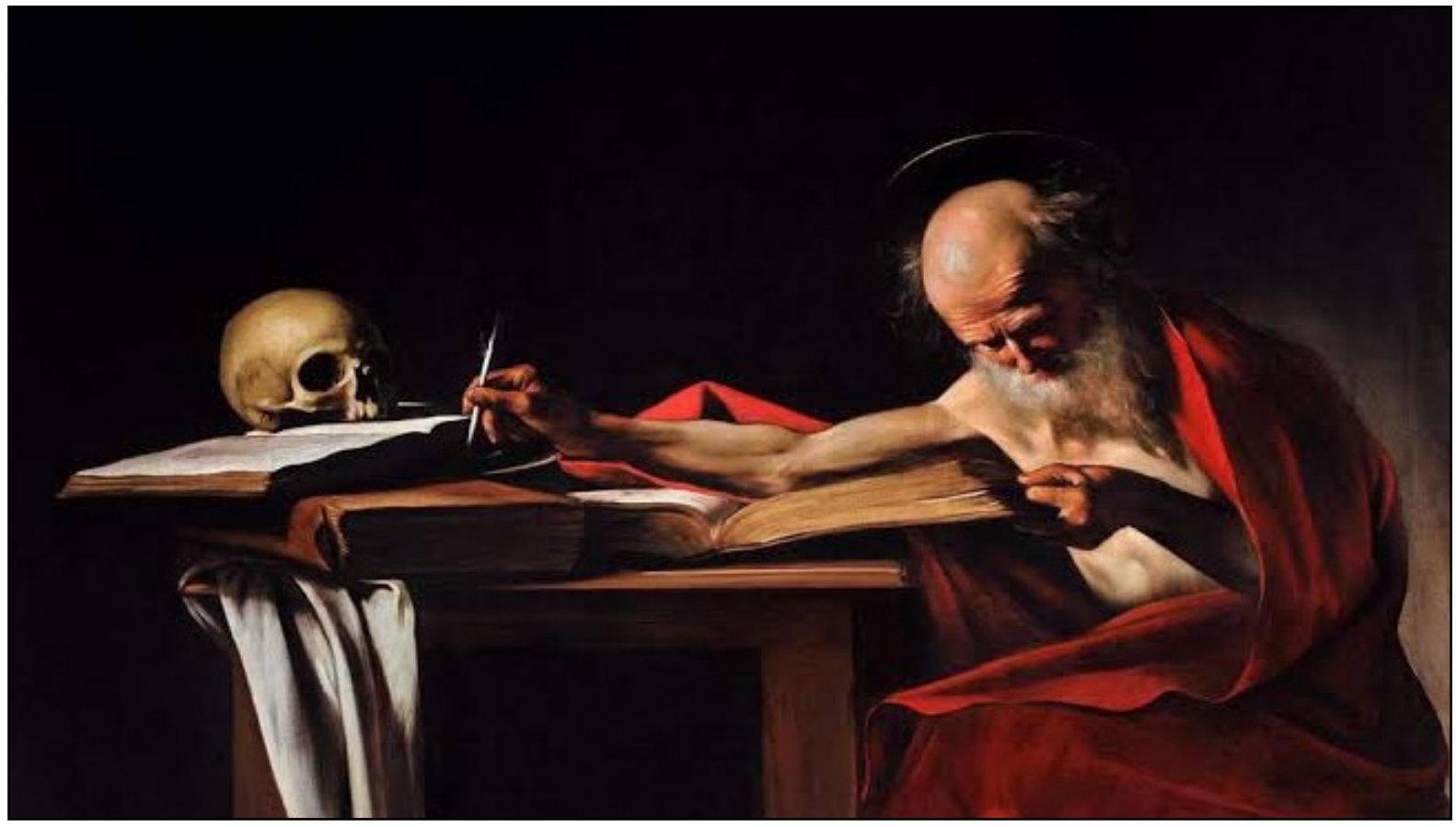


Image by Wikimedia Commons

Memento Mori and the Catholic's Hallows' Eve

LUCY SPENCE TROTTER
Opinion Editor



Last weekend, every horrid and demonic element of Halloween was on the big screen for Notre Dame students.

The DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, the on-campus source for student entertainment, offered a selection of satanic and pornographic movies indistinguishable from those that might have been offered at any secular university. A horror movie marathon list featured graphic films like "The Burning," "The Final Girls," and its sequel "Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma," brutally violent movies that feature graphic nudity and glorify transgenderism.

Additionally, there was no email sent by the administration to encourage students to consider the deeper message of Hallows' Eve, or to celebrate in a special way the Feast of All Saints Day. And the unsanctioned pro-choice club Irish 4 Reproductive Health celebrated the holy day by distributing packages of flavored condoms and morning-after pills.

Every October, debates between Catholics resurface about the redeemability of Halloween and its proper celebration. Is it right to dress up and decorate? Should we watch horror movies? Can we trick-or-treat?

While there are many evil and truly demonic elements of our culture's observance of the holiday that should be condemned, it strikes me that the tragedy of Halloween is not so much its secularization as it is our forgetfulness of the day that follows.

A Catholic "reclamation" of Halloween alone is an insufficient answer to modern man's great struggle with his finitude, a struggle that is all too clear in the gruesome horror with which Halloween presents death. A clear presentation of our final goal is needed, and nothing does this more beautifully than All Saints Day.

The first account of this feast—now a Holy Day of Obligation in the Catholic Church—dates back to Pope Boniface IV, who dedicated the Pantheon to the Virgin Mary and all martyrs in 609 A.D. Pope Gregory III later expanded the day to include all saints in 735 A.D.

On All Hallows' Eve, the remembrance of death was itself supernaturally oriented towards the beginning of new life. All traces of this anticipatory nature have disappeared, however, from our modern observance of Halloween. Our culture's revelry in the macabre and ghastly has no end beyond its own entertainment. In an ironic way, the debauchery of October 31 has encroached on the following two holy days the Church observes. This is the true tragedy of Halloween.

A beautiful aspect of All Saints Day is that it recognizes, as its name makes clear, *all* saints—known and unknown—who have reached Heaven. It is the feast for the many men and women who stand beside the figures we see in the stained glass windows of our churches. These "hidden" saints may not have a feast in the liturgical calendar of the Church, but they are in Heaven nonetheless and serve as models of the Christian life.

All Saints Day is a feast that should inspire the lay Catholic, whether it be the Catholic parents who take their children trick-or-treating or the Catholic college student going to his costume party. Lay Catholics have particular cause to celebrate the deeper meaning of the days following Halloween, knowing that the Church intentionally reminds them of their divine calling. Wherever or whoever he may be, the baptized Christian is given a particular vocation to holiness to which he is invited to say "Yes!", just as every man and woman in Heaven did.

I mention Notre Dame's wasted opportunities of formation not because I shirk from the death that Halloween puts (albeit in a warped way) at the front and center. *Memento mori*—Latin for "remember you must die"—is a phrase that has echoed through the centuries of the Church and stood at the center of many saints' spiritual traditions. I lament instead the way in which Catholics, and my university in particular, have failed to reintroduce the hope of All Saints Day to a broken culture.

As an educator, Our Lady's University is entrusted with the souls of her students. Instead of delivering a message focused on each student's unique call to holiness—a holiness that can and should be lived out on campus—Notre Dame was complacent in letting her students celebrate with profoundly misguided debauchery and immodesty.

The crazed hold that the night of October 31 has over the American mind has led Catholics to forget the anticipatory nature of the holiday. Halloween is a vigil, and its true purpose is to point man towards his ultimate destination by reminding him of his mortality. Halloween—more properly called Hallows' Eve—is meant to prepare us for the greater feast of All Saints Day.

In the face of the horrific, ghoulish, and depraved observance of Halloween that our society has presented as "normal," Catholics are called to reorient their celebrations towards the feasts of the following days, which remind us of the hallowed dead and the "cloud of witnesses" waiting to greet us in Paradise.

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

Pornography, Hookup Culture, & the Devaluation of Human Life

Co-founder of Ethos National Speaks on Sex, Human Dignity

Henry Omanga
Campus Editor

Students for Child Oriented Policy (SCOP) and EthosND hosted Simon Pels, co-founder and CTO of Ethos National, for a talk on October 27. Pels, a 2025 graduate of Notre Dame, returned to his *alma mater* to speak on society's relationship with sex and its development over the past 50 years.

Drawing extensively on statistics, he outlined how pornography and hookup culture have changed how sex is viewed, along with their downstream effects on human dignity. Pels said, "We have seen society's perception of sex shift towards something that is ordered towards the self, stripping it from its unitive and procreative aspects; we have seen a rise in people viewing each other as means to an end; and we have seen downstream effects on the perception of inherent value and dignity of the human person."

Pels began by examining the roots found in the sexual revolution, when Playboy, the birth control pill, no-fault divorce, and *Roe v. Wade* began to separate sex from its unitive and procreative aspects. The fault line between cultural attitudes about sex and its true purpose arose morally and in social perception, but also literally, as access to abortifacients and contraceptives proliferated in the 1960s.

The prevalence of porn has advanced quickly over the past 50 years to the point where 80 percent of men and 44 percent of women regularly consume pornography today. Pels emphasized how early explicit content can take hold of a person, often through social media: "The average boy is first exposed to explicit content at the age of 12, and minors are just getting straight-up pornography on their [social media] feeds. Even when they aren't, they're getting softer-core sexual content that often serves as a gateway towards pornography sites."

Further, the hookup culture, induced by devaluation of sex, has driven a wedge between the desires of men and women. Both desire a connection that goes unsatisfied. Pels pointed to the fact that "over the past 30 years, the percentage of men who say they want to marry has stayed flat, while for women it's fallen about 22 percent. And then, similarly with young men and women who want children, it's now 12 percent higher for men than women."

As a result of increasing differences between men and women, a majority of both genders now blame the opposite sex for the challenges that they are facing (79 percent of men and 53 percent of women). Additionally, four in 10 young college couples disagreed on whether they were exclusive when asked privately.

The result of a disordered view of sex and relationships, Pels claims, is that "people have started to view each other as means to an end, and that has challenged the notion of inherent value and dignity. This disordered view of sex is the root of issues like abortion and euthanasia, where a human life being inconvenient or a burden is a justification to discard a bad life … one in 20 deaths in Canada were the result of assisted suicide … where 46 percent of people who went through this named being concerned about being a burden."

But how do we combat the devaluation of human life, as evidenced by the increase in euthanasia and abortion? Pels proposed flipping the traditional script, particularly when approaching policy, pointing upstream to the causes rather than merely focusing on the effects. He called for legislation that focuses on forming youth, restricting early access to phones and explicit content, while forming them so as to cultivate a culture of life that will flow into the issues we see coming to a head today.

In an interview with the *Rover*, Pels emphasized the need for students to balance the use of hard data and moral assertions when discussing the issue, saying that "the statistical side is important for higher level, objective policy debates. For talking to individual people, you don't need to tell them, 'Here are the negative effects of pornography.' They know because they are seeing the effects themselves."

Practically, for students, he told the *Rover* that the "first step is to start working on yourself and making yourself worthy of being a husband or a wife. You have a duty to your spouse, you have a duty to your children, and that is not something to be taken lightly. … Learn to accept God's love, and take that and give it to another."

Sophomore Anthony Matos was struck by the need for decisive action against the silent crisis that pervades society today. He told the *Rover* that "we really need to go out and take a stand. Because if you're not going to be extreme, you're going to end up going with the rest of the culture."

Henry Pawl, a sophomore in Keough Hall, was impressed by how compelling the talk was, telling the *Rover*, "I wasn't expecting it to be so statistically backed. He didn't stipulate anything without a figure to go with it, and the data is just overwhelming that mainstream sexual looseness has caused mainstream unhappiness."

Pawl likened Notre Dame students' "work hard, play hard mentality" to our culture's current approach to sex, drawing on Pels' point: "I think it divorces two things that should be one. I don't think it's healthy to just work as hard as you can and then party as hard as you can. Those two ought to be integrated. It's similar to … when you remove sex from meaningful human interactions. You have to hold on to the wholeness of activities in general, whether that's sex and friendships, or whether that's work."

Anyone interested in joining EthosND or learning more about their mission can visit their website.

Henry Omanga is a sophomore in Duncan Hall studying philosophy and psychology with a minor in constitutional studies. When not busy attending talks on the sexual revolution, he can be found role playing Sesame Street in a Grover onesie. For proof, email homanga@nd.edu.

McGlinn Rector Cleared

continued from front

to ensure anonymity—no submissions to the account are verified for accuracy.

The owner of the Instagram profile and the authors of all submissions posted by the account, which are filed through an anonymous form, are unknown. According to the email update from the Office of Residential Life, the university's investigation "included numerous interviews with members of the residence hall community." During these interviews, no one claimed to have witnessed or been subject to the allegations against Greenop.

In response to the recent email announcement, an anonymous McGlinn resident told the *Rover*, "I think that most people from the dorm thought that she wasn't guilty, so everyone was relieved at receiving this news."

On August 18, Greenop filed a complaint to Saint Joseph County Superior Court for defamation against the anonymous authors of the allegation and anonymous user of the Instagram account @shareyourstory.notredame. The lawsuit accuses the anonymous parties, or "Doe defendants," of defamation, resulting in "lasting injury to her reputation, profession, and personal life, including the loss of her employment and livelihood as a rector at the University of Notre Dame."



Image by Eccekevin / CC-BY-SA-4.0

In an October 6 hearing, Judge Mark Telloyan of Saint Joseph County Superior Court granted the request by Greenop to subpoena Meta, the parent company of Instagram. This motion may allow Meta to reveal information including the identity of the Instagram account and authors of the anonymous submissions resulting in Greenop's removal. The court order allows Meta 30 days following the subpoena to notify the account owner and submission authors, and contacted individuals will have 30 days to object before Meta can share its findings.

The defamation suit cannot progress until the identities of the Doe defendants are revealed in court.

While the lawsuit is ongoing, the email announces that Greenop will continue her career at Notre Dame. Per the communication, "Liz will return from administrative leave in the coming weeks and has decided to take on a new role in the Division of Student Affairs as an Assistant Director in Residential Life." The university is searching for a new rector to serve McGlinn Hall beginning January 2027 at the start of next semester. Meanwhile, Ally Liedtke will serve as interim rector of McGlinn Hall for the remainder of this semester.

An anonymous student voiced frustration with the claims of the anonymous submissions with the *Rover*. Discussing the gravity and graphic details of the claims, she said, "It saddens me to think that someone's career was nearly ended over an untrue statement about a matter this serious." Further, the student continued to discuss the nature of the claim as a disservice to those subject to assault, asserting, "Making false statements like this discredits the voices of true victims."

Clare DiFranco is a senior studying accounting and Italian. Contact her at cdifranc@nd.edu.

The Devil Came to DPAC

FPA Presents C.S. Lewis' The Screwtape Letters

JOSEPH KURKOWSKI
Staff Writer

Hell was put on stage in a live performance of C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. On October 29, Notre Dame students filled the house at the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center (DPAC) to watch the sold-out show, featuring award-winning actor Brent Harris in the role of Screwtape.

The play was presented by the Fellowship for Performing Arts (FPA), a "not-for-profit New York City-based production company producing theatre and film from a Christian worldview to engage a diverse audience." The FPA first came to Notre Dame last fall, at the invitation of the Moreau Program. Senior Program Director Andrew Whittington remarked, "FPA—and their Campus Initiative team—are excellent, faith-filled partners and are eager to reach as many ND students as possible."

The Screwtape Letters follows a series of notes from a senior devil, Screwtape, advising his younger nephew, Wormwood, in the ways of tempting a human, his assigned "patient." Originally intended to be paired with a sequel of one angel training another in a similar style, the purpose of the book was to expose the constant and quiet influence of demons in our lives. As Lewis said, "the Letters show that there are no ordinary actions. It is a battle all the way from here to heaven."

Lewis includes a warning in the introduction to his book—which was also included in the program's playbill—saying, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them."

In the production, the FPA moved away from traditional horrors and instead portrayed the psychological reality of spiritual warfare. Artistic Director Max McLean described the setting as "a morally inverted world where up is down, good is bad, God is called 'the Enemy' and Satan is described as 'Our Father Below'."

The play itself is presented across two arcs. The first centers on the patient's conversion to Christianity and marriage that ultimately leads him to sanctity. The second is that of Screwtape himself who, in his attempts to drag the patient to Hell, becomes the "defeated devil."

Opening with an address given by Screwtape to the recent graduates of the Tempters' Training College, the rest of the performance focused

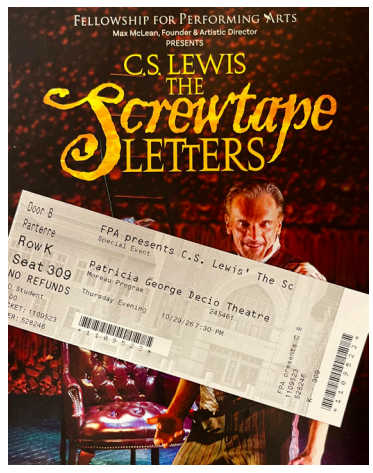


Image by Conlan Houston / CC BY-SA 4.0

on Screwtape's reactions and responses to the inexperienced Wormwood's letters.

Each scene consisted of the assistant devil Toadpipe recording Screwtape's verbal message to his nephew. When describing human situations, Screwtape would possessively force Toadpipe to impersonate human characters, making the letters more tangible to the audience while also revealing the truly manipulative nature of hell. In this way, he describes how Wormwood should distract and tempt the patient case by case. Brent Harris, who played Screwtape, expressed Lewis' humor through the ironic ways in which devils tempt humans.

Many of the seats in DPAC were filled by students completing their Moreau First-Year Seminar (FYS) co-curricular requirements. The Moreau FYS, a one-credit course required of all freshmen to promote holistic character formation, offered the show as a co-curricular event, giving tickets to 125 students who registered online.

In an interview with the *Rover*, Whittington said, "While the event was explicitly linked with our seminar's discussion on 'hope' (and how God's grace can transform brokenness and suffering), I suspect [the audience] picked up on a variety of connections between the performance and our Moreau FYS, including the significance of practiced, disciplined attention, friendship, family, and leisure in the pursuit of a life well-lived (the opposite of what Screwtape and Wormwood desire for their 'patient')."

Whittington also told the *Rover* that he hopes to continue working with the FPA, saying, "In light of the resoundingly positive and appreciative feedback we've received from students, and the high demand to attend the show (after Moreau-purchased tickets were all claimed, an additional 40 first-year students signed up for the 'waitlist' to potentially attend the show), we hope to work with the FPA to expand access to students next year and potentially move to a larger venue in DPAC."

Student responses when asked of their impression regarding the play were profoundly positive. Freshman Kristin Joseph told the *Rover* that though she entered uncertain of what to expect, the play made a lasting impact on her, saying, "They did an amazing job keeping it engaging and fast-paced with all the acting and stage effects. Seeing the play performed in such a memorable way helped me remember key points after, like the role that noise plays in distracting us from true prayer or how we are members of an eternal Church that spans space and time."

Freshman Marie Spencer told the *Rover* she enjoyed the creativity that went into making a visual performance from a storyline based on the exchange of letters. She emphasized, "When you think of *The Screwtape Letters* you don't necessarily think of the visual medium, but I think the production team did a wonderful job."

Joseph Kurkowski is a freshman in Morrissey Manor studying physics. He is not actually twins with Peter Kurkowski. Stop asking. If you really wish to ask him about this, he can be reached at jkurkows@nd.edu.

Notre Dame Prepares for Midterm Elections

Campus busy with midterm preparations, anxieties

ANTHONY DUVINAGE
Staff Writer

The 2026 midterms are here, and as ever, several centers across campus held events in the lead-up to election day. Many of these were notably forward-looking—both sides of the political spectrum have realized a turning point is here, and much of the campus discourse has addressed the direction of America and our politics.

The Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government hosted a debate on Wednesday, October 28 titled "Socialism, Populism, Centrism? The Future of Left Politics in America." The center plans to host a similar event on Friday, November 6, called "The Future of Conservatism After Trump." The two events—one on each side of the political spectrum—reflect the spread of views held by members of the university.

Rogé Karma, a 2018 Notre Dame graduate and *Atlantic* staff writer, moderated the October 28 debate between Matthew Yglesias and Bhaskar Sunkara. Yglesias is an opinion writer for the *New York Times*, podcast host of the *Slow Boring* podcast, author of the *Slow Boring* newsletter, and cofounder of Vox. Sunkara is the author of *The Socialist Manifesto*, a former vice chair of the Democratic Socialists of America and the founding editor of *Jacobin*, a socialist-leaning magazine.

Both Sunkara and Yglesias emphasized that progressive "moral purity" on social issues is holding the party back from doing what it is supposed to do: help the working class. Sunkara said, "It is an essential task … of any left in politics, to rebuild that connection and that social base, with the working class."

So what do students think?

Several students told the *Rover* that they had heard very little about the elections around campus, and that their exposure to politics happened over fall break. These same students who talked to the *Rover* had all voted, though a few only voted for down-ballot candidates and amendments.

One student told the *Rover*, "On campus, I haven't really thought about it. I'm busy. There are really no indications that it's happening." While some events pop up on campus, outside of the few posters or yard signs advertising them, the campus doesn't seem to change the views of students much during election season.

The same student also commented that it worried him that in his hometown, the party he did not vote for seemed very heavily favored. Students of both parties often expressed worry about the result of a win by the opposing party.

One said, "It can be a little daunting to think that the world is facing a huge change soon, and definitely that's discouraging sometimes."

Some, however, were more optimistic when it came to their party's odds. Jeidus DeSeranno, a freshman who voted Democrat, told the *Rover* that he was very sure that the Democrats would win in his state. He added that he was less worried about losing than he was worried about violence or, as he said, "civil war" if Democrats do win big. He said, "I hope that we can just stay together and move on."

Many left-leaning, politically active students who spoke to the *Rover* were less worried about their party winning, and more worried about the overall political climate. Several students whose opinions fell right-of-center seemed less positive overall, and a few expressed that they hoped the Republican party could find itself again in the coming years. Of the students the *Rover* talked to, there was nearly an even split between political parties.

Notre Dame is fairly unique among top universities in that it boasts a relatively even split between politically conservative and left-leaning students. FIRE says that Notre Dame has one conservative student to every 2.37 liberal students, but notably only interviewed 243 students in that survey. A more accurate picture may be painted by the results of the Notre Dame Marriage Pact. With over 3,000 respondents, it provides a more comprehensive picture of the state of the student body.

According to the Marriage Pact, 34.4 percent of respondents at Notre Dame identify as either socialist, liberal, or democrats, while 39.8 percent identify themselves as Republican or conservative. This gives a rough ratio of 1.16 conservatives to one liberal on Notre Dame's campus—nearly even. A 2024 Gallup poll said that the ratio in America is approximately 1.4 conservatives for each liberal, but in most universities liberal students predominate.

Given that Notre Dame is so unique in this way, it is not surprising that students feel they have to hide or hedge their opinions sometimes. The polarization on campus is reminiscent of the polarization found more broadly in American Catholicism, with a similar partisan divide.

Anthony DuVinage is a first-year PLS and political science major. He can often be found wondering why he can't write more eloquently, or absentmindedly sipping on coffee in the PLS lounge. If he's not there, he can be reached at aduvinag@nd.edu.

Digital Dating at Notre Dame

Students weigh in on various dating platforms on campus

CLARE DIFRANCO
Campus Editor

Every fall semester, the entire undergraduate student body receives an email announcing the opening of Notre Dame Marriage Pact. Since 2021, the annual release of Marriage Pact has become an exciting tradition for many students.

Unlike standard dating apps which allow users to "swipe" through profiles, Marriage Pact is a questionnaire-fueled algorithm that serves the role of matchmaker. Within days of filling out the form, students are paired with and given the email of another Notre Dame student based on their answers to questions regarding beliefs, interests, and preferences.

Marriage Pact was started by two Stanford University students as a final project in 2017. According to its website, since its pilot year, it has spread to 112 campuses.

Following the advent of Marriage Pact at Notre Dame, other match-making platforms have made their way to campus. Crosspaths, a dating algorithm started by Notre Dame seniors Nathan Gafney and George Gardey for Notre Dame students, first became active during the 2024-2025 school year.

In an interview with the *Rover*, Gafney outlined his and Gardey's inspiration for pivoting from a failed friendship matching platform, saying, "CrossPaths started as a hackathon project that my co-founder, George, and I actually finished dead last in." According to Gafney, in a test of the algorithm, two students who were already dating matched together, which inspired the current model of Crosspaths as a romantic matchmaking algorithm.

Unlike Marriage Pact, "CrossPaths uses a more sophisticated algorithm that incorporates AI to analyze open-ended responses and evaluate compatibility across several dimensions," and is designed to feel "uniquely Notre Dame," according to Gafney. He continued, "Rather than matching people based primarily on physical attraction, our goal is to connect students who share similar values, interests, and personalities, giving them a better foundation for a meaningful relationship."

While Crosspaths is free for users, Gafney noted that premium features are available "like paying five dollars to reveal your match early and choose between potential matches."

Crosspaths has gained traction in the last two years, growing from 450 participants in its first year to over 2,000 most recently. Gafney foresees continued growth and hopes to bring Crosspaths to other colleges, "particularly schools with similarly close-knit, faith-centered communities," he told the *Rover*.

This year, another platform, Ditto, started by two former Berkeley students, is now available at Notre Dame. The platform, which first emerged in an August 25 Instagram post by the *Observer*, involves a match-making algorithm using data from questionnaire inputs in addition to photos of the users. According to Ditto's website, the platform asks users to indicate their "type"—in terms of personality and looks—and the algorithm matches users accordingly. Unlike its competitors, Ditto sends users a weekly match and the option to schedule a time and location. While Ditto's inclusion of visual data creates an additional criteria on which to refine the matchmaking algorithm, users have raised questions regarding the security of the app's data policies.

In one anonymous Reddit post, a student commented on a San Jose State University page about the platform's questionable data practices. The user writes, "When they say 'a date every week' that is not [guaranteed]. [I've] had it for a month now and every week the ai hits me with the same 'we didn't snatch one for you this week bestie, but next week is looking promising!!!'"

Students from Berkeley and the University of California San Diego complained of data leaks and receiving unsolicited advertising and verification emails from the company in two other Reddit posts.

The *Rover* sent a poll to students to gauge the prevalence and effectiveness of dating forms on campus. Of 37 respondents, 75.7 percent have filled out Marriage Pact, 56.8 percent have filled out CrossPaths, and 8.1 percent have filled out Ditto.

Not one survey respondent reported that they are now dating their match from any of the apps.

Of the Marriage Pact respondents, 59.3 percent reported never connecting with their match, 22.2 percent reported that they went on a first date, and 18.5 percent reported attending multiple dates.

57 percent of respondents who reported filling out CrossPaths stated that they did connect with their match, while 33.3 percent attended a first date. 9.7 percent of CrossPaths respondents went on multiple dates with their match.

No Ditto respondents reported connecting with their match.

Students shared their experiences using these apps and weighed in on their opinions about the dating scene on campus.

"I believe that the college campus dating apps are a net positive and at the very least, are an opportunity for kids to meet each other on a platonic level," senior Anna Hale told the *Rover*. Speaking to the design of Crosspaths, she continued, "I am not a fan of the fact that you can pay to change your match—it seems like it sort of defeats the purpose."

An anonymous survey respondent emphasized that filling out the annual Marriage Pact was a frivolous activity rather than an effective means of meeting other Notre Dame students, commenting, "I personally believe that most people fill those out as a fun activity with friends. Dating involves a deep level of human connection that is simply not possible through dating apps."

Reflecting on dating at Notre Dame and the role of dating platforms, Hale discussed the presence of dating forms as a crutch to dating, asserting, "I think there is a fairly good dating culture on campus, but I would encourage the guys to ask out girls more. I think dating casually gives both parties a chance to meet more people and can be beneficial for discernment."

Clare DiFranco is a senior studying accounting and Italian. She is also a self-proclaimed matchmaker, and unlike AI, she doesn't require data centers and she never makes errors. Email cdifranc@nd.edu if you'd like to enlist her services.

"Black October" Cybersecurity Attacks Impact Global Institutions

AI used to solve the issue, but some suspect it may be adding to the problem

RAYMOND WEBBER
Politics Editor

Seventy percent of the internet is powered by a programming language called Hypertext Preprocessor (PHP), which—due to its prevalence in website programming across the globe—holds a majority of all the internet's data. As disclosed in an emergency release from the PHP Foundation, an AI-based detector has revealed two critical memory-safety flaws in PHP that have led to cybersecurity attacks from "malicious" unknown sources across the globe. Experts are classifying this mass cybersecurity threat as "Black October."

The National Security Agency (NSA) has suggested that any organization using private or sensitive information with a PHP website immediately take their work offline and patch their websites with PHP2Shell—an open-source, AI-based software patch. As a result, several foreign governments have restricted public web services and records and American hospitals have shut down critical technology in order to protect patient privacy.

Georgetown professor Dr. Elena Marchetti explained how the PHP vulnerability led to such extensive damage, saying, "When the interpreter that runs the code has a critical bug, every application sitting on top of it inherits the risk, regardless of which hosting panel or control software a site owner happens to use."

In the face of "Black October," the world's most powerful organizations, such as the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the NSA, and the European Union's cybersecurity branch (ENISA), have committed to using the AI-backed PHP2Shell in combatting this cybersecurity crisis.

Some critics worry that using AI to solve this problem is adding fuel to the fire. AI may act as a multiplier that disproportionately benefits the attacker since, when AI reveals a PHP flaw or when an NSA-approved patch is issued, hackers can use their own AI to reverse-engineer the patch and create exploitations in the programs more efficiently. Moreover, AI solutions can broaden the vulnerabilities of the PHP within the hacker's AI and can subsequently be used to weaponize the patch for its own advantage.

Even before "Black October," AI was creeping into cybersecurity. In June, President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14409, which replaced conventional cybersecurity controlled by public agencies with private tech companies that would broadly use AI in their programming patches. The order came in response to what American intelligence agencies deemed to be Iranian cyber attacks on American military bases.

Moreover, the current administration concluded that refusing to use AI in cybersecurity would leave the U.S. military at risk from foreign adversaries. Nevertheless, some attribute the consequences of "Black October" to the federal government's lack of regulation over cybersecurity agencies and the vulnerabilities in PHP that AI patches ultimately revealed to hackers.

Universities have not escaped the consequences of these cyber attacks: Amherst College has since revoked all access to its student learning management systems, Duke University has pulled many of their university-hosted public websites, and Northwestern University has reported disruptions for those attempting to apply to the school.

Although Notre Dame has not reported any recent cybersecurity attacks related to PHP and has not joined the elite universities contributing to the PHP2Shell, the university's Canvas page was attacked last semester during the final weeks of school, which disrupted final exams, altered studying hours, and created an outage that lasted weeks.

Unlike the case in "Black October" where the hackers are still unknown, Notre Dame's hackers were identified as the *ShinyHunters* who attacked 9,000 other universities globally.

The *Rover* asked Tracy Weber, Notre Dame's Vice President of Information Technology and the Chief Information Officer, how "Black October" has impacted Notre Dame's data and how the university has approached cybersecurity attacks in the past.

Weber told the *Rover*, "Cybersecurity is a top priority for the University of Notre Dame. The threat landscape is always changing, and we've been investing in our people, processes and defenses for some time so that we're ready when incidents like these happen. When the PHP vulnerabilities were identified, we activated our incident response process right away."

Weber elaborated, "Per protocol, potentially affected systems were taken offline while our teams worked closely with system administrators across campus. Each system came back online only after it had been patched and validated. Our investigation found no evidence that University data was accessed or that our systems were compromised as a result of this vulnerability."

Weber concluded by alluding to the concerns of AI involvement in cybersecurity, saying, "As for the future, AI is changing cybersecurity in both directions. Attackers are using it to move faster and at greater scale, and it's also giving defenders powerful new ways to spot and respond to threats. We see AI as a tool that strengthens the work of our security professionals, and we're thoughtfully exploring how it can help us protect the Notre Dame community."

Raymond Webber is a junior philosophy major. His favorite hobby is going to Nantucket and referencing the Lacrosse Segue Finance Pipeline. Contact him at rwebber2@nd.edu.

Ten Commandments
continued from front

Robert E. Scott Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus at the University of Virginia School of Law and prominent collaborator on the brief, the goal is to "try to preserve religious liberty for school children," as he said in his statement to the *Rover*. "Children are more vulnerable, they're a captive audience, and they have to be there," he went on to say.

Laycock added, "Things posted in the classroom are things you're supposed to learn. Stopping the Ten Commandments displays in the classroom is about preserving individual choice and freedom with respect to religion."

Similarly, Meiser wrote to the *Rover*, "We have to hold onto a real principle—a constitutional principle—and in my view that principle is that the government can't force people, using its coercive power, to take religious instruction."

In support of Texas Senate Bill 10, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton released a statement saying, "There is no reason any school district should be prohibited from displaying these foundational words that have guided our laws and values for centuries. The Ten Commandments reflect principles that shaped both our State and our nation, and students benefit greatly from being able to learn from them daily."

In the Fifth Circuit's ruling, the court stated, "Senate Bill 10 looks nothing like a historical religious establishment. It does not tell churches or synagogues or mosques what to believe or how to worship or whom to employ [and] … punishes no one who rejects the Ten Commandments, no matter the reason. It levies no taxes to support any clergy. It does not co-opt churches to perform civic functions. These are the kinds of things 'establishments of religion' did at the founding. Senate Bill 10 does none of them."

On the other hand, the brief's collaborators claim that the Fifth Circuit's ruling set a dangerously loose precedent for lower courts with regard to state-sponsored religious instruction. In an interview with the *Rover*, Nathan Chapman, the A. Gus Cleveland Distinguished Chair of Law at the University of Georgia School of Law said, "The lower court ignored prior decisions—[such as *Stone v. Graham*]—that were on point with this case on the grounds that they had not sufficiently relied on historical practices and understandings." The decision relied, in part, on Lemon v. Kurtzman, which established a standard that has since been cast out by the case Kennedy v. Bremerton.

Chapman said the brief's collaborators believe a decision in favor of Nathan "is fully supported by the history." He emphasized, "The lower court was not following precedent, and if the Court doesn't fix it, then other lower courts will not know whether they are obligated to follow precedent in this area as well."

Chapman continued, "We think it's a pretty dangerous interpretation because it's difficult to distinguish the Ten Commandments law in Texas from a law that would require reading the Bible in school," which would be "contrary to a lot of students' beliefs." He explained that such a decision would "leave in place a decision that opens the door for all kinds of indoctrination in public schools."

When the *Rover* asked her thoughts on the brief, a sophomore in Grojean Hall said, "I do not think that public schools should put any type of religious teachings in a classroom. I think that if a different religion, such as Islam, would put a verse from the Qur'an in a public school classroom, it would immediately get shot down." She argued that if parents would like to impart religious values to their children, they should send their kids to a private school. "Parents who send their children to these schools … have an understanding that these teachings will be implemented into their child's curriculum."

Seven other students whom the *Rover* interviewed sided with the Notre Dame Law School's brief, each arguing that religious expression should not be mandated in public school classrooms.

Not every opinion of those who worked on the brief about the case or Constitution is the same. Their explicit point of agreement, according to Meiser, is: "historically and today the First Amendment prohibits the government from ordering children to receive devotional religious instruction."

Colin Milligan is a sophomore PLS and theology major. His favorite hobby is reading and writing poetry. Contact him at cmillig5@nd.edu.

Left-Wing Thinkers Say Their Party Lost the Working Class

CCCG hosts panel, "Socialism, Populism, Centrism? The Future of Left Politics in America"

Luke Severson
Staff Writer

The Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government (CCCG) hosted a debate on October 28 titled "Socialism, Populism, Centrism? The Future of Left Politics in America." The event was co-sponsored by the Notre Dame Democracy Initiative, and was held less than a week before the November 3 midterm elections.

Bhaskar Sunkara is a prominent left-wing journalist and the founding editor of *Jacobin*, president of *The Nation*, and the author of *The Socialist Manifesto*. He is also the former vice chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, the nation's largest socialist group, which favors public ownership of major industries and an elimination of the branches of government. During the debate, Sunkara described himself as being "on the far left" and called his vision "fundamentally social democratic."

Defending the centrist position on the panel was Matt Yglesias. Yglesias is a self-described left-wing pragmatist who founded *Vox*, is the author of the *Slow Boring* newsletter, and is a contributing opinion writer for *The New York Times*. During the debate, Yglesias referred to himself and his allies as "DC moderates."

Rogé Karma, a staff writer at *The Atlantic*, moderated the event. Karma graduated from Notre Dame in 2018, where he was a Tocqueville Fellow. The event began with opening remarks from each panelist, followed by a moderated discussion and audience questions.



Image by Conlan Houston / CC BY-SA 4.0

Sunkara argued that the central problem facing the left is what he called "class dealignment," clarifying that "the association of the poor and working classes with parties of redistribution has shattered." He elaborated, "It used to be taken as generally automatic that 60 to 70 percent of people from the working and laboring classes would be, all things being equal, more predisposed to vote for the parties of redistribution."

According to Sunkara, without the working-class base, left-wing parties just become "assemblages of different special interests." He continued, "That's how you end up with a party like the Democrats under, let's say, Hillary Clinton in 2016, being perceived as being radical, because on individual issues they actually were influenced by extremely passionate—and at times radical people—while still offering no compelling overarching narrative for ordinary working-class people."

Although the panelists agreed that contemporary Democratic leadership is failing to address the needs of the working class, they disagreed on how responsible the party is for this outcome. Sunkara blamed economic forces like automation and globalization saying, "I don't think the Democratic Party abandoned working-class people so much as the economy abandoned certain groups of working-class people and the Democratic Party didn't respond effectively."

Alternatively, Yglesias directly blamed the party's abandonment of the working class on environmental elitism claiming, "The primary thing that has driven class dealignment globally is the rise of environmentalism."

He also blamed the party's failures on its inclination to go farther left whenever they encounter a loss of popular support for specific policies. "When you do that, you develop a party which, since 1996, is like a car whose steering wheel can only go left. They'll say, 'We lost a lot of Muslim voters, so we'll go to the left on Israel.' It's never that 'I'm going to try to court Muslim voters by being more open to traditionalist views on gender identity.'"

Ygelesis claimed that the Democrat leadership, by trying to attract fragmented groups of far-left cohorts, have become too disjointed and distracted to attract the average working class citizen. He explained, "On crime, people on the left are very comfortable talking about how poverty can be a source of crime, but they fail to acknowledge that high levels of crime can be a source of lack of economic opportunity."

On that same note, Yglesias also claimed that the left has ceded patriotism to the right. "You imagine a guy who has a flag flying outside his house, and you're imagining a Republican, right? Because the sentiment of patriotism is just associated with a political right. I don't think you're going to have redistributive politics in a country where people don't believe in the national community," Yglesias said.

Sunkara echoed Yglesias' communal sentiment, stating, "What I would like to see is a Democratic Party that spends more time investing itself into things like candidate recruitment of working-class candidates, that has less litmus tests." He articulated a political vision based on "respect for yourself, respect for your obligations to your family, respect for your obligations to your community," rather than an exclusive set of progressive social policies.

Despite their disagreements, both panelists criticized a politics organized around specific identity groups. Sunkara warned against treating the party as a collection of 'separate little groups' and said he would be "perfectly comfortable with far more Democrats running for office who are pro-life." Yglesias also said that Democrats should be more open to culturally conservative voters in an effort to appeal to the broader working class.

The panelists' disagreements came to a head over Abdul El-Sayed, the socialist Senate candidate in Michigan. Sunkara called him a 'great candidate' and praised El-Sayed for saying young men need more than legalized marijuana and gambling apps. "It's just objectively a vice," Sunkara said of marijuana. Yglesias said that being "more left-wing on economics and talking about Medicare for All without giving any ground at anything doesn't actually capture any working-class political upside." Yglesias predicted that El-Sayed would underperform in midterms due to being too progressive.

When an audience question raised concern over whether the panelists' efforts to attract socially conservative working-class voters would undermine essential social justice concerns, Yglesias said that even populist candidates tend to drift toward conventional progressive positions as their campaigns gain momentum.

Luke Severson is a sophomore political science major. His favorite hobby is listening to Dr. Taylor Marshall lectures. Contact him at lseverso@nd.edu.

French Unrest Spreads Across Europe

Professors comment on riots in France

Abigail Smith
Staff Writer

France's student-led protests began in mid-September as a teachers' strike over staffing. They have since grown into the country's greatest unrest in years, with violent riots causing major destruction to French infrastructure.

This Halloween weekend marked the third week of rioting, and according to the Interior Ministry, the demonstrations proceeded peacefully with 320,000 participants. Fearing a possible Halloween pretext, the French government prepared to limit the damages, instructing the marchers to stay out of the city centers and placing a curfew on minors.

The most violent night of the French riots thus far occurred on October 17. Roughly 550,000 people marched into Paris, Lyon, and Marseille while masked groups hijacked the marches by looting shops and torching vehicles.

Nearly 1,000 officers and gendarmes were reportedly injured, and in Limoges, rioters set fire to the city's 143-year-old town hall. Another mobilization of over 400,000 marchers occurred on October 24, as authorities deployed over 70,000 officers and enacted several curfews across the country.

However, the amount of resources being dedicated each week to defending French cities is a major financial constraint, with national debt nearing 120 percent of GDP. The unrest is also reshaping the 2027 election.

Protests inspired by the French student movements have spread across Europe, but catalysts differ by country.

In Spain, housing protests swelled after the televised eviction of an 87-year-old woman and concerns over the legitimacy of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's election rose. Similarly, German students met at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate to protest education and housing on October 31, while Belgian students have protested education costs since October 1.

In Italy, students, truckers, and farmers have violently protested living costs and fuel prices, which resulted in nine arrests and 371 temporary detentions across eight cities after rioters looted stores in Milan, Turin, and Bologna and stormed the Colosseum in Rome last weekend.

While mainstream coverage stresses cost of living, housing, school conditions, and bleak job prospects, conservative commentators in Europe point to far-left organizations and Islamic pro-Palestinian participation. French intelligence reportedly told ministers on October 1 that the protests were heavily linked to far-left politicians in the La France Insoumise (LFI) party along with allied left-wing anarchist groups. Experts interviewed by the *Rover* say these explanations are not mutually exclusive.

Father Bill Miscamble, C.S.C., a historian of how crises reshape nations, told the *Rover* that the French riots are "not a revolution." He claimed, however, "It is setting things up so that the choices for the French election next year will be two extremists, and that will be a very challenging circumstance for the French." Nevertheless, he believes Europeans will endure the violence, saying, "Europe has been through crises before, and significant leaders have emerged before who preserve order and maintain strength."

However, he acknowledged that the riots will have major implications for future European politics, arguing, "The unrest is revealing the inability of the French elite (Macron and his ministers) to address the problems in France."

Fr. Miscamble also pointed to weak leadership. "The leadership of Europe, especially of France, Germany, Italy, and Britain has been mediocre for the last quarter century," he claimed. With respect to the protestors, he believes that "high schoolers, the organized left, working-class people, and urban criminals," are stealing from high-class shops to "exploit the protest for their benefit."

Theology professor Gabriel Reynolds, who lived in France from 2016 to 2017, told the *Rover* that the conflicts in Europe are not merely a result of Muslim influence. "There is a significant Muslim population in the U.S. (8-10 million), and there has been practically no violence in the U.S. compared to France, Belgium, Holland, and Sweden."

Reynolds continued, "It doesn't have to be that way. There is something distinctive in Europe, but especially France. Because in France, you have this vibrant dynamic of public demonstrations, connected to the French Revolution, the 1848 Revolution, the 1968 student protests, alongside a rigid secularism and Muslim communities concentrated in the housing-project suburbs (*les banlieues*)."

He described the modern revolutionary sentiment in France as associated with "the anti-colonial struggle that has now migrated to France itself." He added, "The far left's revolutionary, anti-colonial rhetoric, from LFI especially, acts as an activator, an instigating effect in some of the culture of the Muslim population in France." He continued, "The culture of pride in French intellectual sophistication can add friction between French whites and Muslim immigrants."

Dr. Luke Foster, now a graduate professor at Hillsdale College who teaches at the annual Academia Tocqueville Summer Seminar in France after completing his postgraduate studies at Notre Dame, told the *Rover* that the date of the worst violence in France is itself a clue for who should be held responsible for the violence.

"Choosing the date of October 17 showed that these riots are a chance to repudiate the entire country and destroy what makes France," he said, alluding to October 17, 1961, when police broke up a march of Algerians in Paris during the final months of the Algerian War. It is now remembered as the Paris massacre of 1961.

Foster rejected the comparison to ordinary French unrest, stating, "For most of the last 60 years, the unions have had a very official legal status in France, and they typically coordinate demonstrations with the police in advance. There is a legitimacy to it."

Conversely, what happened on October 17, Foster said, uniquely made the day about Islamic resentment of the French. He called the extensive looting, the burning of the town hall, and even attacks on private homes different in kind: "That is new."

Foster described a secular left that has replaced the working-class concerns of the old left with newer, more mobilizable causes, and he says its alliance with Muslim activists is fragile. "The two factions don't actually agree and are using each other."

Nevertheless, he conceded that the protests have a certain legitimacy, saying, "The student grievances are not without basis, but the underlying problem is a state that is at once too intrusive and too powerless … Education and policing are both national, cabinet-level decisions, so an attack on the school is an attack on the state."

Fr. Miscamble points to France's 2027 presidential election as the signal for what Europe's future will look like. He expects the two leading contenders to be Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, which would leave the centrists nervous and voters facing two hard choices; furthermore, he expects greater upheaval if Le Pen wins.

Foster, by contrast, says he is hopeful. "I think this is more so a symptom than cause of collapse." He also points to a French intellectual elite that is self-confident and rooted in its own tradition, referencing a legacy of Charles de Gaulle and the Bourbons. "France has been through worse," he said, citing the Paris Commune of 1871, the French Revolution, and the defeat of 1940, "and has been reborn."

The capacity for humility, he said, aids renewal, and a short-term crisis that reveals France's problems "could actually help."

Abigail Smith writes for the Rover in hopes of saving the West one article at a time. When Abby is not defending Western civilization, she's probably defending the Oxford comma. Contact her at asmith78@nd.edu.

ND Alumnus Nominated to Serve as U.S. District Judge

Joseph P. Falvey set for Senate confirmation

Anthony Fedoruk
Staff Writer

President Donald Trump publicly nominated Joseph P. Falvey, a Notre Dame alumnus, to serve as a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Indiana on October 19. Falvey has most recently served as the Chief of the Appellate Division of the United States Attorney's Office of the Northern District of Indiana.

President Trump announced the nomination on Truth Social, writing, "Joe will strongly protect our cherished Constitution and Rule of Law in this important new role." Falvey is now set to undergo a U.S. Senate review and confirmation before assuming his role as district judge.

Indiana Senator Todd Young joined President Trump in commending Falvey's nomination, saying, "His extensive legal experience and commitment to public service will serve Hoosiers well on the federal bench."

Falvey received his bachelor's degree from Notre Dame in 2009, and served as an infantry officer in the U.S. Marine Corps for five years, deploying twice to Afghanistan. After leaving active duty, Falvey went on to study at Yale Law School and received his juris doctor in 2017. Following his time at Yale, he served as a clerk to Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts and worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Northern District of Indiana.

In a press release, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Indiana said, "Mr. Joseph Falvey has left a profound mark on the region's federal judicial landscape by successfully upholding critical legal standards, protecting public safety, and promoting law and order. … Falvey has set a commendable standard of excellence that has fortified the rule of law across the state."

United States Attorney Adam L. Mildred expressed his confidence in Falvey, stating, "His flawless judgment, steadfast character, and unyielding commitment to the rule of law make him an outstanding choice for the federal bench, and we are confident he will serve the Northern District of Indiana with distinction."

Falvey is not the only one in his family to be nominated to a federal judgeship in recent years. His father, Joseph L. Falvey Jr., was nominated by President Trump to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims in 2018. Falvey Jr. is also a graduate of Notre Dame, receiving his bachelor's degree in 1981 and his juris doctor in 1987.

Several current Notre Dame faculty members commented on Joseph P. Falvey's recent nomination.

Notre Dame Law School Professor Richard Garnett told the *Rover*, "Mr. Falvey is an accomplished lawyer, an outstanding teacher, and a conscientious public servant. If confirmed, he would be a credit to the judiciary." He added, "Our frayed politics can tempt us to see judicial nominations entirely through the lens of presidents and parties, but that temptation should be resisted. Mr. Falvey is an excellent nominee and has demonstrated all of the habits and qualities we all should want in judges."

Professor James O'Brien also expressed his confidence in Falvey to the *Rover* following his nomination. He said, "Mr. Falvey has a great reputation, a brilliant legal mind, and a strong moral character. As a Notre Dame Law alum, I am very pleased to see his nomination and am confident he will be a great addition to the bench."

Anthony Fedoruk is a senior political science major with a minor in theology. His favorite hobby is cheering on Philadelphia sports teams. Contact him at afedoruk@nd.edu.

Notre Dame Excluded from Newman Guide for 19th Year

Debate on student faith formation continues

KOLBE BARTA
Staff Writer



Image by Wikimedia Commons

For the 19th consecutive year since its inception, the Newman Guide list of faithful Catholic colleges has excluded the University of Notre Dame from its recommendations. Based on its requirements of Catholic identity, the Newman Society still holds that they "do not feel that students will have a reasonable chance of receiving strong support in the faith" at Notre Dame.

Managed by the Cardinal Newman Society, a Catholic non-profit that promotes fidelity to the faith across Catholic education, the Newman Guide "recommends colleges for their commitment to a faithful Catholic education," according to their website. Schools such as the University of Dallas, the Catholic University of America, and Thomas Aquinas College make up a few of the Newman Guide's recommendations.

The Newman Society's website lays out the criteria for being admitted to the Guide, including required thresholds of Catholic students and professors, availability of the Sacraments, single-sex student residences, a faculty profession of faith, and ideological conformity. The Newman Guide requires their recommended universities to prohibit any speakers or awardees that oppose Catholic moral teachings, and that at least 85 percent of faculty members and 80 percent of students are Catholic.

In deciding whether to add Notre Dame to the list, the Newman Society weighed the university's Catholic character against "clear examples of opposition to the faith from many on campus." To settle the matter, the Newman Society "spoke with the late Dr. Charles Rice, a faithful Catholic and long-time law professor at Notre Dame … [who] said that at Notre Dame, 'a kid who is struggling with his faith will sink like a stone.'"

Professor Rice was a faculty member of the Notre Dame Law School for more than 45 years. Rice was a U.S. Marine, a consultant to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and a committed Catholic and pro-life advocate. Before his passing in 2015, Rice was a vocal critic of decisions made by the university that did not reflect her Catholic character.

Rice especially took issue with the decision to invite then-President Barack Obama to be the commencement speaker at the 2009 graduation due to Obama's support for abortion. In response, Rice penned *What Happened to Notre Dame?*, a short book examining how Notre Dame had departed from its Catholic roots and how it might return.

The sentiment that Notre Dame has turned its back on its Catholic identity persists among faculty and outsiders today. Last year, Dr. Christian Smith left the university and penned a *First Things* article detailing why he could no longer stay at a school which "fails to be Catholic." Smith criticized Notre Dame's faculty hiring process, institutional and faculty timidity on Catholic issues, and its focus on becoming a globally recognized research university.

Smith views the goals of being an authentically Catholic university and an elite research university as incompatible. "As Notre Dame faculty engage with the Catholic intellectual tradition, their peers elsewhere work with total focus on scholarly productivity," Smith wrote. "Notre Dame faculty cannot be asked both to compete with their peers as scholars and to take on the extra learning and discussions that a robust Catholic mission requires. … The imperatives of Catholic mission are impediments to the success of a modern research university."

However, several faculty members and students point to key factors that indicate not a remnant of shouldered-out Catholics, but a thriving community at the center of campus life. Professor Richard Garnett, the Paul J. Schierl Professor of Law and Director of the Program on Church, State & Society, believes strongly in Notre Dame's ability to be a fully Catholic, elite research institution. "I believe it is clear that Notre Dame, although imperfect, is the best meaningfully and authentically Catholic institution of higher education in the world," Professor Garnett told the *Rover*.

Sabrina Richter, a sophomore, ardently agreed. She told the *Rover*, "Having come from a large public high school, the Catholicism of Notre Dame is especially refreshing and dear to me. … There's so much that's so beautiful about what [Notre Dame] does have."

Both Garnett and Richter expressed a desire to see the role of Catholicism grow in social, academic, and formational circles on campus, alongside their deep appreciation for the prominent role of the faith on campus as it stands. Professor Garnett highlighted the efforts the university is already making to improve in some of the categories the Newman Guide measures, but pointed out that some of the Newman Guide's restrictions are "overly narrow."

"Catholics should be aware that the [Newman] Guide excludes all but one of the Catholic R-1 universities and all of the Catholic institutions ranked in the top 50. … They should not imagine that the Newman Guide provides a full picture of the Catholic higher education landscape."

Garnett explained, "Notre Dame is struggling, currently, when it comes to the percentage of Catholic faculty, and Fr. Dowd and Provost McGreevy have both called attention to this challenge. It is entirely appropriate for Notre Dame to take affirmative measures to identify, recruit, hire, and retain Catholic faculty and, indeed, many of our leading scholars are here precisely because of our Catholic character. It seems excessively narrow, though, to insist on a faculty percentage of 85 percent, especially given that many non-Catholic faculty can and do embrace and contribute to our distinctively Catholic mission."

Richter emphasized the Sacraments and faith on campus. "There are times when I wish the Catholic faith and culture were more emphasized, more central to classes and the social life of the campus. But at the end of the day … I can walk down a few flights of stairs and spend time with the living God in my dorm chapel. I see religious walking the campus in their habits … the same people I casually work with in class are praying near me at one of the twenty-some odd Masses every day."

By the numbers, Notre Dame outperforms many Newman Guide schools in their own categories. The university celebrates 158 Masses a week, more than 13 of the 15 American Newman Guide schools combined. Notre Dame has the number one theology department in the world, between 50 and 56 chapels on campus, a student body that is 80 percent Catholic, and new records for three years running of people received into the faith through OCIA and Confirmation.

In a recent article for *Word on Fire*, Father Gerry Olinger, C.S.C., Vice President for Student Affairs and priest-in-residence in Alumni Hall, shared the numbers behind a recent surge in the faith of Notre Dame students.

"While only 37 percent of seniors graduating from Notre Dame in 2019 reported attending religious services frequently, this number has climbed to 49 percent as of 2025," said Fr. Olinger. "More graduating seniors are reporting that their religious beliefs are central to their life (from 56 percent in 2021 to 62 percent today), more are reporting that prayer is important to them (from 82 percent in 2021 to 94 percent today), and more are reporting that witnessing their faith to others is important (from 68 percent in 2021 to 73 percent today)."

Professor Garnett encouraged parents to look beyond the requirements of the Newman Guide and the headlines when considering Notre Dame. "No institution is perfect and every Catholic institution—including Notre Dame—falls short, from time to time. It is fair for the Newman Society and other critics to point out particular decisions and policies of Notre Dame that do not … reflect well our Catholic character and mission. But the Newman Society's longstanding disdain for Notre Dame suggests an overly narrow understanding of what a Catholic university can be."

"I am the parent of three Notre Dame graduates … I am entirely convinced that Notre Dame is an excellent place for engaged, curious, intelligent Catholic students to grow in their faith, and for such students who are not Catholic to discover the fullness of God's revelation in the Church," Garnett said.

Kolbe Barta is a sophomore economics and theology student from Texas, who takes dating advice from the humor section of the *Rover*. He is still single, and may be reached at kbarta3@nd.edu.

NOVO Like a Champion Today

Spring 2026 course recommendations

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

CORE REQUIREMENTS

Literature University Seminar, Susannah Monta (ENGL 13186)

Social Science University Seminar, Susan Collins (POLS 13181)

Social Science University Seminar, Mary Keys (POLS 13181)

Writing and Rhetoric, Matthew Capdevielle (WR 32034)

Literature University Seminar: The Romans, Luca Grillo (CLAS 13186)

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS

Constitutional Studies

Constitutional Law: Powers and Institutions, Christina Bambrick (CNST 30407)

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates: High Point in American Political Culture, Don Stelluto (CNST 30466)

Faith and Human Flourishing, William Mattison (CNST 30662)

Artificial Intelligence and Human Flourishing, Paul Scherz (CNST 30663)

Homer and Plato, Patrick Deneen (CNST 30671)

God, Man, and the Modern State, Graeden Zorzi (CNST 30673)

Civil Liberties, Vincent Munoz (CNST 40001)

American Political & Constitutional Thought, Tyler Castle (CNST 50002)

Irish Studies

Beginning Irish (Gaelic) I, Tara MacLeod (IRLL 10101)

Economics

Principles of Microeconomics, Kirk Doran (ECON 20010)

Principles of Microeconomics, Forrest Spence (ECON 20010)

Financial Decision Making, Forrest Spence (ECON 30000)

Statistics for Economics, Forrest Spence (ECON 30340)

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

God and the Economy, Kirk Doran (ECON 33151)

Intermediate Economic Theory–Macro, Eric Sims (ECON 30020)

Philosophy

Thought of Aquinas, John O'Callaghan (PHIL 20805)

Cercle d'Etudes, Jean Porter (PHIL 33799)

Democracy & Virtue, David O'Connor (PHIL 43400)

Philosophy of Physics, Nic Teh (PHIL 43723)

History

The Crusades, Deborah Tor (HIST 30375)

World War 2: A Global History, Ian Johnson (HIST 30407)

U.S. Foreign Policy in the Cold War, John Soares (HIST 30805)

Classics

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

Greek Literature Seminar, Aldo Tagliabue (CLAS 40521)

Political Science

[Note: See "Constitutional Studies" for cross-listed classes]

Philanthropy & The Common Good, Jon Hannah (POLS 30142)

Political Theory, Daniel Philpott (POLS 10600)

Political Science (continued)

Senior Seminar: Democracy and its Critics, Patrick Deneen (POLS 53002)

Politics of Reconciliation, Dan Philpott (POLS 60602)

Program of Liberal Studies

The Bible and Its Interpretation, Jenny Martin (PLS 20302)

Fundamental Concepts of Natural Science, Tom Stapleford (PLS 20412)

Metaphysics and Epistemology, Felicitas Munzel (PLS 40302)

Science, Society and the Human Person, Tom Stapleford (PLS 40412)

CSEM

College Seminar: Faith & Reason, Brian Cutter (CSEM 23102)
College Seminar: Glory & Immortality, David Cory (CSEM 23102)

Theology

From Bernard to Bernadette: The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Sr. Ann Astell (MI 20494)

Theology and Ecology, Fr. Terry Ehrman (THEO 20626)

The Catholic Imagination, Leonard DeLorenzo (THEO 20894)

Artificial Intelligence and Human Flourishing, Paul Scherz (THEO 20684)

Jesus Through the Ages, Joel Rasmussen (THEO 20815)

Christian Spirituality, John Betz (THEO 20886)

Augustine's Confessions and Spiritual Autobiography, Fr. Kevin Grove (THEO 30231)

Love and Lust, Abigail Favale (THEO 30234)

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

Theology (continued)

New Testament Introduction, Nathan Eubank (THEO 40148)

The Christian Theological Tradition II, John Betz (THEO 40202)

Sacramental Theology, Fr. Kevin Grove (THEO 40435)

Catholic Social Teaching, David Cloutier (THEO 40613)

Foundations of Theology: Biblical and Historical, Jay Martin (THEO 10002)

Foundations of Theology: Biblical and Historical, Jenny Martin (THEO 10002)

Foundations of Theology: Biblical and Historical, Michon Matthiesen (THEO 10002)

Foundations of Theology: Biblical and Historical, Ulrich Lehner (THEO 13002)

The Christian encounter with Judaism in Early Modern Europe, Abigail Hayton (THEO 40737)

MENDOZA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Data Analytics in Accounting, Jeff Burks (ACCT 30280)

Federal Taxation, Jamie O'Brien (ACCT 40610)

Tax Assistance Program, Jamie O'Brien (ACCT 40660 and 40661)

Tax Assistance Program II, Jamie O'Brien and Patrick Deegan (ACCT 40670)

God and Business? (Honors), John Sikorski (BES 20687)

God and Business?, Mary Hirschfeld (BES 20702)

Business Honors Program Colloquium II, Jim Otteson (BES 23001)

Business Law Concepts, Laura Hollis (BALW 30100)

Why Business? - The Role of Business in a Just and Humane Society, Jim Otteson (BES 30795)

Business (continued)

nternational Business Fellows Colloquium, John Sikorski (BES 33702)

International Business Fellows Colloquium, John Sikorski (BES 33702)

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

Mathematics in Architecture: Mathematical Excursions to the World's Great Buildings, Brian Mulholland (MATH 10270)

Calculus II, Katie Mulholland (MATH 10560)

On Being a (cancer) Doctor, Jose Bufill (SCPP 40699)

Understanding Life through the Sacraments and Science, Jessica Brown (SCGE 20200)

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

AME Laboratory I, Paul Rumbach (AME 20216)

Career Choices Mechanical Engineering, Mike Seelinger (AME 20290)

Design Tools I, Mike Seelinger (AME 21267)

Differential Equations, Vibrations, and Control I, Joseph Powers (AME 30314)

Mechatronics Lab, Paul Rumbach (AME 31358)

Automation and Controls, Paul Rumbach (AME 40453)

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Catholicism and The City: Good Urbanism as Human Flourishing, Env. Stewardship, and Sacramentality, Philip Bess (ARCH 43311)

Issues in Sacred Architecture, Duncan Stroik (ARCH 53311)

What Makes a Holy Cross Priest?

C.S.C. Vocations Director discusses Holy Cross, vocational trends

Luke Fisher
Staff Writer

Taking classes taught by men seen walking across campus in flowing cassocks, students might wonder about the priests staffing the University of Notre Dame and other apostolates across the country. In an interview with the *Rover*, Father Drew Clary, C.S.C., Director of the Office of Vocations for the Congregation of Holy Cross, discussed his journey to the priesthood and the Congregation's vocational discernment process.

"The vocation story I tell now starts with my family … and when my cousin came here," Fr. Clary began. "She passed away from leukemia when she was a junior, and that was my first encounter with Holy Cross: the way the university responded to my family. Father Mark Poorman, C.S.C. flew down for the funeral, and two months later they had members of my family up [on campus] for a memorial Mass. My family and I experienced firsthand the familial nature of Notre Dame, and I think that's an outgrowth of our Holy Cross identity."

This strong sense of family is what brought Fr. Clary to Notre Dame as a student, and after graduation, a teacher through Notre Dame's ACE (Alliance for Catholic Education) program. Yet after completing two years of teaching in Mobile, Alabama and working directly for ACE, Fr. Clary found himself still drawn to the familial aspects of Holy Cross he experienced in years prior.

"Fraternity [and] our common life is a constitutive part of our community," Fr. Clary explained. "I didn't realize that I was missing that community until I visited Moreau [Seminary] and found that I felt at home as part of the community even just from stepping inside the building."

Fr. Clary spent seven years studying in seminary, serving as a middle school social studies teacher during his final two years in formation and first year as a priest. The next year, he moved into Siegfried Hall and joined the vocations office, helping guide young men in discerning religious life.

Speaking about the type of man who enters Holy Cross, Fr. Clary explained that "we're looking for someone who has a solid foundation in human formation. Can he relate to people? Does he have decent self-knowledge? Has the call [to religious life] been persistent?"

Holy Cross men in formation come from varied backgrounds and regions. "One of the things I love about our community is that we can have differences and are still brothers at the table [and] brothers in the chapel," Fr. Clary said. "Because our community can look different ways in different religious' lives, I can't just find cookie cutter images of what a Holy Cross religious is. I think that helps us to minister to anybody that God places in our parish or dorm or wherever we are."

Described as "Educators in the Faith," the Congregation of Holy Cross operates six colleges and universities throughout the United States. At Notre Dame, the Congregation operates an undergraduate seminary program known as Old College, where young men receive formation while pursuing a Notre Dame or Holy Cross College degree.

"There are plenty of other places that vocations come from, but Notre Dame is a big one. The Vocations Director before me also revamped SSIP [the Summer Seminary Immersion Program], and other guys will hear us calling through Old College," Fr. Clary noted.

Discussing the obstacles to young men's discernment, Fr. Clary said, "I think a lot of things that challenge discernment are things that challenge freedom. I would ask, 'To what extent have I felt God's unconditional love in my life?' as well as asking about whether or not they have freedom from sin. [Also], about silence, it's really hard but that's necessary to build prayer into their lives."

Fr. Clary continued, "I [also] see this one a lot with college students: 'Can I be freed from [how] I see my life story … free from my own narrative of my path?'"

Another obstacle Fr. Clary often sees is young men over-analyzing discernment and becoming paralyzed by choice. "I think we live in a culture that forms us to go through life maximizing the number of doors we keep open," he explained. "But then you don't actually walk through any doors, and [you] infantilize yourself. I always say 'just try something.' There's nothing you're going to try that is going to result imminently tomorrow in a perpetual obligation."

Despite these frequent difficulties in discernment, Fr. Clary believes the vocational trend is beginning to reverse. He expressed disagreement with the hypothesis of an ongoing study on young men and vocations from the Catholic University of America. It proposes that, "despite anecdotal interest in religion among young men, vocational commitment, whether to the priesthood, religious life, or family life is still being delayed entirely."

"I think that was very true for the past 20 or 30 years," he reflected, "but that [early discernment has] been coming back over the past 10 years. It's a lot more common now … for people to [discern] young. Every school I visit [as Vocations Director] has a discernment program … and so many young men that want to discern and find themselves talking to us. There are a lot of signs of hope."

Luke Fisher is a sophomore from Detroit living in Siegfried Hall. He is majoring in theology and trying to prove Plato wrong in the Program of Liberal Studies. If he's not coming up with another grand project or admiring his yellow pickup truck, you can usually reach him by discussing new foods to have after dorm Masses. To suggest any (or chat), reach out at lfisher8@nd.edu.

Discernment and the Sisters of The Holy Cross

Holy Cross Sisters postulant director discusses the call to religious life

Lilian Lewen
Staff Writer

Sister Mary Veronique Wiedower, the chief operating officer and United States postulant director for the Sisters of the Holy Cross, explained her view of vocational discernment with the Sisters of the Holy Cross in an interview with the *Rover*.

Prior to assuming her current role, Sr. Wiedower served as the Sisters' worldwide president for ten years. She was also involved in many different facets of the formation of women religious. She entered the community in 1965 and professed her perpetual vows in 1973.

The charism of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Sr. Wiedower told the *Rover*, is to "read the signs of the times, discern needs, and respond as they can." The Sisters do this in a variety of ways, serving as teachers, nurses, lawyers, and advocates.

As a result of this flexibility, Sr. Wiedower said, "Women can see us and say, 'No matter what my passion is, I can find a home in Holy Cross.'" As an international apostolic community, the Sisters have convents and missions in nine different countries including Bangladesh, Peru, Ghana, and Uganda, in addition to the United States.

Sr. Wiedower noted that women are attracted to the Sisters of the Holy Cross for a myriad of reasons. "For one woman it was being friends with a sister and hearing about their stories, saying, 'You know, that one person made a difference. And if I had this community to support me, maybe I could do that too.'"

Other women, Sr. Wiedower said, appreciate that the order includes people of various personalities and persuasions. "I think that Catholicism is that big, wide tent. And I think the Sisters of the Holy Cross encourage that big wide tent, so I think that that helps draw people who see themselves as part of a bigger whole," she explained.

Even with the order's flexibility, Sr. Wiedower told the *Rover* that discerning religious life has become "so countercultural in American culture." As families have become smaller, a sense of community has become less common and people have become more individualistic, so most young women are not looking for a life of poverty and celibacy. According to Sr. Wiedower, the hardest part for women discerning religious life is "the idea of making a permanent commitment." She continued, "This society is not one that holds that up as an ideal."

Despite the negative effects of modern American culture on women's vocational discernment, in the years since Sr. Wiedower joined the community, young women have tended to enter into discernment with "a better understanding of themselves" and "enough life experience to know that there would be sacrifice in any decision they make, and that they can be happy and be a good Christian woman in any vocation."

Sr. Wiedower told the *Rover* that this makes vocational discernment easier, to a certain extent, because young women are able to discern with the community in greater freedom. She added, "We want our women to be independent, but we want them to also be able to be interdependent, that they can work within a community setting and use their gifts for the common good."

Sr. Wiedower provided an overview of the discernment process with the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Typically, a woman begins with the question of how she may be called to follow Jesus. If she believes the answer may be religious life, then she asks what she would look for from a religious community.

"Some women are looking more for a cloistered kind of community, where prayer is the most important part. For us, prayer and action are always balanced," Sr. Wiedower explained. "Some people are looking for religious communities that have habits, and we don't have a uniform habit. … If they begin to narrow it down to us, then we usually do some come-and-see opportunities for them to be with the Sisters."

If she and the Sisters feel she is so called, the woman may then become a postulant in the community for anywhere between six months and two years. After that, the woman may spend two years in the novitiate in Indiana. She would next return to her home country, work in an appropriate ministry, and profess her initial vows for three years, then renew them two years later. Finally, she would profess her perpetual vows.

Sr. Wiedower told the *Rover* that there is a natural rhythm to vocational discernment: the greater the problems or turbulence in society, the more willing people are to reflect and ask the important questions. "People want to be part of something else that's bigger, and I think that the present generation has that perspective. I think there will be a kind of resurgence. I've seen that every two or three generations."

She encouraged young people to give religious life a chance, remarking that, "They are a gift to the community and the community is a gift to them as they continue to deepen their own life in Christ."

Lilian Lewen is a senior history and philosophy major from Indianapolis. If you would like to help her get Notre Dame's leprechaun an Irish Terrier, email her at llewen01@saintmarys.edu.

Notre Dame Hosts First Diocesan Synod in a Century

Religious, laity discuss pastoral strategies

MADELINE PAGE
Staff Writer

For the first time in a century, Bishop Kevin Rhoades convened a synod for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The synod focused on improving catechesis, vocations, and evangelization within the local Catholic community. The synod sessions for South Bend were held from October 31 to November 1, with a concluding Mass celebrated at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

Originating from the Greek *synhodos*, meaning "walking together," a synod in the Catholic Church is an advisory meeting of clergy, religious, and laypeople. Through prayer, reflection, and conversation, a synod gathers to address pastoral concerns and provide assistance to the bishop or pope who convened it.

According to the official website, the Fort Wayne-South Bend synod is "an opportunity for every Catholic in our diocese to listen to the Holy Spirit, reflect on the mission of Christ, and discern how we are called to live that mission today." In accordance with the synod theme, "Spreading the Fire of God's Love," Bp. Rhoades identified five primary focuses for the synod: evangelization, catechesis, spiritual and liturgical life, vocations, and outreach.

Bp. Rhoades officially convoked this historic synod on September 14 of last year, calling upon parishes within the diocese to participate in preparatory prayer, reflection, and dialogue. Special consultative meetings with those outside regular parish structures, such as college students, took place in the winter and spring of this year before synodal delegates were chosen and trained.

Although some synodal participants, such as the bishop and vicar general, are canonically mandated to participate, other delegates are directly appointed by the bishop in an effort to provide diverse perspectives on the issues at hand. One such delegate is Notre Dame professor Jennifer Newsome Martin, Director of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture.

Last year, Martin opened her mailbox to find a letter from the bishop. Enclosed was an invitation to serve as the synodal delegate for the University of Notre Dame, alongside delegates from Saint Mary's College, Holy Cross College, and the University of Saint Francis.

"Synodal delegates … do not function like political representatives," Martin explained in an interview with the *Rover*, "but, through prayerful reflection, offer their own experiences and thoughts on the matters under consideration, having been formed and shaped by the communities from which they have come."

Along with the other chosen synodal delegates, Martin participated in shared meals and liturgies, including Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as rounds of conversation addressing the five central synodal themes.

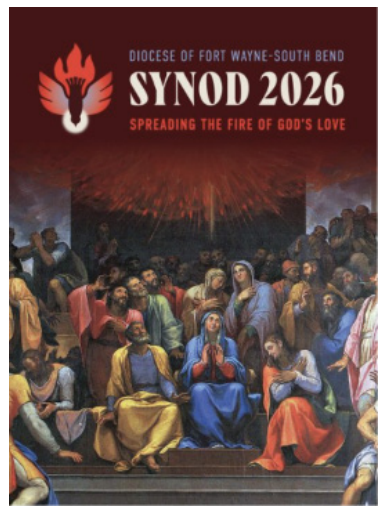


Image by Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend via Linkedin

For each session, the 158 synodal delegates were divided into small groups of seven to eight members. Martin noted that "each session is fairly similar structurally, with one round of three minutes each for communicating concrete recommendations, experiences, insights, and approaches to each topic under consideration, then five minutes of silent reflection and prayer, then a second round of identifying something another person said that particularly resonated."

Table moderators shared the synopses of each session with the group at the conclusion of each session. Members of the synod secretariat will then prepare full reports from the sessions. Notre Dame theology faculty member Stacey Noem is leading the Fort Wayne-South Bend secretariat. Asked to perform this role in the fall of 2024, Noem began working on the synod in the early summer of 2025, and she served as moderator for the weekend discussions.

"I was struck this weekend by the theological depth and richness of the synod framing, the sense of camaraderie across difference, and the kindness both in how people spoke and listened attentively to one another," Martin told the *Rover*.

She continued, "The other thing that made an impression on me was how many delegates communicated a desire for the wide recovery of ancient spiritual practices which would cultivate a stronger sense of interiority and encounter with the mystery of the reality of Jesus Christ in the liturgy. … I came away from the first meeting of the synod with a deep sense of gratitude for all the rich gifts of our diocese, as well as a sense of responsibility for and investment in both the local and the universal Church."

Ryan Norden, a senior at Notre Dame, was also invited to participate in the synod. Originally from Avilla, a small town near Fort Wayne, Norden participated in the special consultation for college students and served as a delegate.

"Synods can receive bad media, have negative connotations, or be misconstrued by those inside and outside," Norden said in an interview with the *Rover*. "This synod, in my experience, can only be viewed positively. It successfully gathered diverse voices from across the diocese to explicitly discuss how we can all be better disciples of Christ and steward our influence in helpful ways."

Norden continued, "[The synod] promoted parish dialogue for many of our parishes. Hundreds voluntarily gathered with the goal of renewing their Church. … I think that this event could be beneficial for many dioceses to take up, and Fort Wayne-South Bend is a model for what successful synodality looks like."

The second meeting of the 2026 Fort Wayne-South Bend synod will be held in Fort Wayne from November 20-21, followed by a concluding Mass celebrated at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. In this session, delegates will vote on recommendations penned by Bp. Rhoades. He will then take the responses of the delegates into consideration while writing his final synthesis document and plan following the synod.

Updates and information regarding the synod can be found on the official website.

Madeline Page is a junior studying biology. She is a firm believer that Christmas festivities should not begin until after Thanksgiving, and will unapologetically side-eye anyone playing Christmas music until that time. Send your favorite Advent and Christmas songs (for listening to after Thanksgiving) to mpage4@nd.edu.

Interview with Mikhail

continued from front

food, wanted to make any calls, and they gave me so much time to make my phone calls."

However, Mikhail described conditions at the facility as miserable. "I was held in a fairly small prison cell with two other people. They gave us a very tiny mattress to sleep on, and then an emergency blanket, and the bathrooms were exposed." Mikhail added, "At the first facility, I did not have anything with me … not even my bracelet or cross necklace or anything like that."

"Through all of this, I knew that I was suffering with Christ and for Christ. There's a passage that me and my friends have talked about before. It's in 1 Peter 2:18-25. St. Peter's telling us that it's commendable for us to suffer unjustly because Christ himself suffered unjustly. And so that passage was in my heart throughout the whole ordeal, and it comforted me a lot."

According to Mikhail, the kind treatment he received upon his arrival at the Los Angeles detention facility changed Saturday morning when the first group of officers changed shifts. In a statement shared with the *Rover*, Mikhail wrote that he was handcuffed and placed in chains around his waist and legs to be transported to a second immigration detention facility in Adelanto, California.

"It was just one huge room, like imagine a high school gym. Imagine 88 beds. Some are bunk beds, some are normal beds, and just people in bathrooms in the back, a microwave at the front, and two TVs and a library." Like in the first facility, Mikhail had none of his personal belongings. He obtained a Bible from the library.

Mikhail described meeting multiple people at the Adelanto facility. "I met a person who graduated from UCLA, and he works a very high esteemed job at Amazon. … I met a person who graduated from UC Santa Barbara who came into the U.S. [when he was] a few months old. I met an old man who was 80 years old, and then another Coptic person who was able to give me a lot of strength and a lot of hope." Mikhail requested prayers for these people.

On Monday night, Mikhail called his friends at Notre Dame. They were busy writing a letter to university president Father Robert Dowd, C.S.C. about his arrest. "I didn't know that they were writing a letter for me. It was very wonderful just to talk to them, but honestly, those phone calls, with my parents and family and friends really made this experience so different. It would have been so hard for me without contact with them."

When he first arrived at the Adelanto facility, Mikhail's intake process was not completed. He was unable to make phone calls with his own PIN code until Tuesday. He instead used other detainee's PIN codes to make phone calls during this time. Consequently, Mikhail could not contact his lawyer until Monday, three days after his arrest.

The following day, on Tuesday, October 27, Mikhail was released from detention.

Mikhail first asked himself, "How am I being released? My lawyer hasn't submitted any papers or any application or anything. I don't know how."

"The ICE officers and the security guard of the prison did not know how, they don't know why, and to this day, my lawyer doesn't know how, I don't know why, and nobody knows why. So it is by all means a miracle."

Mikhail described the outpouring of support he has received since his release. "There were hundreds of people that texted me. … There were people that cried for me and people that couldn't sleep for me. Just seeing that much love proves that there's so much Christ-likeness out there."

"The people that I know are so beautiful, and I don't deserve any of them and the love that they have in their hearts. And this is just a glimpse of heaven and a glimpse of the fellowship of the saints."

In a statement shared with the *Rover*, Mikhail wrote, "I ask anybody who hears about my story not to participate in hate speech or any form of disrespectful speech towards ICE as an agency or any workers of ICE. I forgive ICE and any ICE officer or prison guards; I love them, and I want to serve at their feet. This is the most important principle of my faith that I came to fully and freely practice here."

Mikhail returned to Notre Dame's campus on Friday, October 30. He must wear a GPS monitor on his leg and is unsure of when it will be removed.

Gabe Hockstra is a sophomore from northern Virginia studying economics and history. He can be reached at ghockstr@nd.edu.

Building the Muscle of Generosity

Giving in little ways now can make a big difference later

Sophia Martinson
Editor-in-chief Emerita



Image by Sebastiano Ricci / CC0 1.0

I remember my freshman year RA once saying to me with a smile, "Freshmen are all kind of selfish."

It wasn't an insult. She was a smiley, sweet, caring girl from Hawaii who loved baby seals and giving compliments. Criticism was not a natural feature of hers. In that moment, her words to me were actually reassuring. I was feeling stuck, and I got the impression that others in my class felt the same. College is a strange bubble of freedom, where you can curate your life according to personal preference. Whatever classes, sleep schedule, menu choice, and social circle you want, it's yours!

The problem is that, when handed so much power to pick and choose, new college students tend to close in on themselves. They can easily forget the concerns and needs of the people around them. It can be an incredibly difficult time to build friendship. At times, it can feel downright lonely.

This was my RA's point, but it ended with a hopeful note: it gets better. As people move through college, they have more experiences that remind them to look outside themselves. So, college can also become a time of deep friendships that last a lifetime. It can even be the place where the foundation of a future is laid: for some, the discovery of a celibate vocation, and for others—myself included—the meeting of a future spouse.

I met my husband ten years ago on the lawn of Geddes Hall. We didn't know it then, but before we graduated, we understood that we would embark on the journey of marriage together. It was a thrilling discovery—but also, in a sense, a call to arms. We knew that marriage, if it was to be a happy, lasting one, would require much of us. Life could not march to the beat of "my way or the highway," because "my way" would now be joining hands with another to follow "our way."

But the truth is, it never was "my way."

At least, it never should be, if I want a happy life. I could modify my RA's statement to say that *all* humans are kind of selfish. Given our fallen nature, giving of ourselves is often difficult. Combine that with a mainstream culture of comfort, and it's all too easy to tailor decisions to what's best for *me*—my goals, my career path, my future. Even on the natural plane, this kind of thinking yields the same problem as that of the typical freshman: loneliness. On the supernatural plane, it robs us of the vision of a far better way: that of God our Father, who has the best in mind for us, both now and for eternity.

That is why the Church has always spoken about vocation in general, and marriage in particular, in terms of generosity and gift. We often hear of marriage described as "a total gift of self." That phrase can sound idyllic, abstract, or even unrealistic. It's the phrase of a wedding day, filled with affectionate promises and dreamy hopes of tomorrow. But if it isn't grounded in something real, a deep understanding and true commitment, it will fizzle away quickly and leave us feeling empty.

On my wedding day, I embraced those words and spoke my vows with joy, knowing what they would demand of me. Seven years and four children later, I still do. I can attest to the fact that my vocation continues to shape, challenge, and fulfill me, because it remains an invitation to generosity.

Looking back on my time at Notre Dame, I see that the invitation to generosity began long before marriage. What brought me out of the lonely moments of freshman year was not just time and experience but also mentors, friends, prayer, and renewed efforts to grow and respond: to prepare myself for the vocation where God was leading me.

With this in mind, I want to encourage my fellow Fighting Irish still living at home under the Dome: don't wait to be generous.

If you want a thriving marriage, or just a happy life regardless of your vocational path, it's worth it to build this virtue now. We live in a world that neither celebrates nor teaches it. At the same time, the world craves and needs it. People are lonely. They are thirsting for companionship both human and divine. Someone has to swim against the tide, to break out of the cycle of selfishness, and give it to them.

How do we do this? As with many things, it starts with the little things. Wake up on time and make your bed to set a tone of availability and care for the day. Close the laptop and really listen when a friend needs to talk. Fill a conversation with more questions than stories about self. Offer to help, even (and perhaps especially) when it's inconvenient. Spend a weekend morning (ideally with some regularity) visiting someone in need rather than sleeping in. Ask for advice, assistance, and forgiveness with humility. Above all, be generous with God. Make time for Him every day, in quiet conversation, knowing that as a loving Father, He will guide and urge you in the direction that is best.

It is these moments, which perhaps no one else but God will see, that expand our hearts and make us ready to give in greater circumstances as well—for a married couple, to be generously open to life; for a priest, to be generously available after Mass or in the confessional; for a religious sister, to be generous in service to her community; for all, to respond generously whenever God asks for more. The more we give, freely and lovingly, the more giving becomes not a chore but a source of joy.

My husband often says that his favorite part of marriage and fatherhood is the built-in responsibility. You don't have to go looking for ways to wake up on time (the kids are a backup alarm clock!), make time for others (there's always someone eager for a listening ear!), or offer and ask for help (the opportunities are endless!).

It isn't automatic, and every day involves a new effort, many apologies, and fresh starts. Still, when embraced with love (and a good sense of humor), marriage and family life is a great school of virtue for everyone involved, spouses and children alike. This is the case for any vocation, because each vocation is a path to heaven—that is, a way of life with the capacity to shape those who trod it into saints.

But why wait until that specific vocational path becomes clear? The more we give of ourselves *today*, the happier we will be, and the more fruitful our vocations will be. Building the muscle of generosity when no one else demands or even expects it will make the heavy lifting of marriage (or the priesthood, or religious life, etc.) less of a shock and more of a natural next step.

God wants us to be holy (that is, *happy*) here and now, not after the five-year plan. At the Second Vatican Council, the Magisterium of the Church solemnly proclaimed this beautiful and timeless truth, that "all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity." We are all called to be saints, in and through our circumstances. It can feel daunting, and saying "no" to my preferences can pinch, but it's well worth the happiness that follows.

In the words of an old love song, "I have no use for divided hearts; I give in whole and not in parts." True love is satisfied with nothing less, because only generosity brings joy.

In a place like Notre Dame, teeming with talent and enthusiasm, it's especially clear that we all have so much to give. But how will we give, and where, and to whom? The choice is ours. But the tried and true path of the happiest people on earth—also known as the saints—is to look out, first at the tabernacle and then at our neighbor, and to say with a heart that is open and free, "Thy will be done."

Sophia Martinson, former editor-in-chief of the *Rover*, graduated from Notre Dame in 2018 in the Program of Liberal Studies. She currently spends her days reading countless literary wonders (mostly picture books) to her four children, working on her debut novel, and chatting with her husband or a friend over a strong cup of coffee.

Are Notre Dame Grads Creating or Just Consulting?

Mendoza grads flock to finance, consulting, and tech

Abigail Smith
Staff Writer

Harvard's class of 2026 is heading to the same three industries, again. Among seniors entering the workforce, nearly a fifth are going into finance, 17 percent into consulting, and 15 percent into technology, according to a senior survey from the *Harvard Crimson*.

Money appears to be the draw. More than half of Harvard's respondents entering consulting or finance said "salary or prestige" drove their plans, compared with 13 percent of other graduates. Among Harvard seniors entering technology, nearly 58 percent expect to earn more than $130,000 and roughly 92 percent of those entering finance expect to make over $90,000.

Harvard is not alone. At Yale, 22.5 percent of employed members of the class of 2025 work in finance, insurance, or real estate, 11.9 percent in technology, and 9.6 percent in consulting, totaling 44 percent of graduates, according to the school's First Destination Report. Among Yale graduates who started at $110,000 or more, 51.1 percent work in financial services and 25.5 percent work in technology.

Notre Dame's undergraduate career office also tracks student first destinations. The *Observer* reported in May that Meruelo Family Center for Career Development expects two-thirds of graduates to be employed, 20 percent to pursue further education, 3 percent to enter service, and 2 percent to join the military.

Of Mendoza College of Business graduates in the class of 2023, 83 percent pursued jobs. Among them, 44 percent entered financial services, and 35 percent entered professional services, a category that includes firms such as PwC, Deloitte, and KPMG, which the college lists among its top employers. Just 4 percent enter technology sectors. The median reported salary was $87,000.

Anna Goncalves, a senior accounting major, is one of those graduates. She will start at Deloitte in Chicago after an eight-week internship there this summer. "My starting salary is $84,000 a year," she told the *Rover*, "however, we do have an incentive bonus … if we complete our CPS in the first year of working there, we will receive a $10,000 bonus."

However, Goncalves does not plan to stay at Deloitte forever. She wants to become an international tax lawyer, and sees Deloitte as a way to help prepare her for her dream: "A company as prestigious as Deloitte works with so many Fortune 500 companies which will allow me to make connections and learn very complex structures that will help me be a better lawyer in the future." A two-or-three year stint at accounting and consulting firms like Deloitte is a common career entry.

Antonella Arana, a senior finance major headed to Microsoft, described a different route into technology. "My siblings are finance too," she said. "I like tech and wanted to start there as the majority of finance majors use finance as a way to get into the tech business." She also said that the finance path is "very common within Mendoza."

The job market Notre Dame graduates are entering into is tough. By the Economic Policy Institute's calculations, young graduates' unemployment has climbed from a low of 4.0 percent in July 2023 to 5.3 percent in March 2026, about a full point above the overall rate of 4.3 percent. Moreover, according to The Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 42 percent of college graduates ages 22 to 27 are underemployed, meaning they work jobs that typically don't require a degree.

The *Harvard Crimson*'s senior survey found that 57 percent of the respondents viewed the job market as bleak and found the timing to be bad, mostly due to the rise of artificial intelligence. AI development has led graduates to change career paths for the sake of job security.

Economists who have studied the data are less sure AI is the cause. A June New York Federal Reserve Bank study attributes 64 percent of the rise in young graduates' unemployment since the pandemic to remote work, which makes employers less willing to hire inexperienced workers they would have to train from a distance.

According to The Associated Press' account of the study, the trend predates ChatGPT, and occupations' exposure to AI had little effect on youth unemployment. The Economic Policy Institute adds that nearly all of the increase in graduate unemployment since 2024 comes from more young people entering the labor force and looking for work, not from fewer of them holding jobs. What the data does show is a slow market for new hires: the same analysis notes that the overall hiring rate has fallen to levels last seen in 2013 and 2014.

When entry-leveling hiring is thin, finance and consulting offer a path. Senior finance major Ethan Droski, who is set to work at investment bank William Blair, explained that one of the factors that drew him to Notre Dame's finance program was its "ability to secure competitive jobs early in college."

Not all Notre Dame graduates who enter these corporate fields remain in them. For example, Alex Jones, a 2015 Notre Dame graduate, and two classmates left lucrative jobs in Chicago to found Hallow, the popular Catholic prayer app.

More recently, Notre Dame graduates Joshua Haskell, Brendan McMahon, and Simon Pels turned down typical careers in finance and consulting to found Ethos National.

Ryan Willerton, former Associate Vice President for Career and Professional Development for the Meruelo Center, said to the *Observer* that a first destination "rarely defines an entire career trajectory." That is true, and it is also what many 22-year-olds tell themselves on the way into a job they plan to leave.

Abigail Smith is a Program of Liberal Studies, Theology, and Latin major. She is still trying to figure out what it means to "be anything." Contact her with ideas at asmith78@nd.edu.

Life after Death: The Rebirth of a Tradition

Día de los Muertos at Notre Dame

Rebecca Gebhart
Staff Writer

Observed by over 100 million people in Mexico alone and popularized by films such as *Coco* and *The Book of Life*, Día de los Muertos has become an international phenomenon. Today, while maintaining its cultural roots in Aztec, Mayan, and other Mesoamerican cultures, Day of the Dead is celebrated in many Catholic communities across the Americas, including at Notre Dame.

Día de los Muertos is celebrated after Halloween from November 1-2, not as an after-party or continuation, but rather as the main event to which the previous celebration was only a precursor.

The word "Halloween" comes from the phrase "All Hallows' Eve," referring to the night of October 31 before All Saints' Day. From the first few centuries of the Catholic Church, martyrs have been honored with altars built atop their graves and prayers on the anniversaries of their death. However, it wasn't until the eighth century that All Saints' Day became a memorial for all the saints, not only martyrs.

For those participating in Día de los Muertos, November 1 is known as Día de los Angelitos. All Saints' Day is dedicated to every person in heaven—known, or unknown—but Día de los Angelitos is only for deceased infants and children. The name originated from a widely held belief that children were pure enough to become angels upon death. November 2, Día de los Difuntos, is dedicated to all the deceased.

Families build *ofrendas*, which are altars decorated with photographs, personal belongings, and the favorite foods of the deceased. *Ofrendas* often display candles and bright marigolds to guide spirits back home. Incense, water, *calaveras* (sugar skulls), *papel picado* (tissue paper banners), *pan de muerto* (celebratory bread), and salt may be added based on local traditions. Many of these items are intended to call back the soul of the loved one and provide sustenance or comfort. Many families also add Rosaries, images of saints, or crosses.

These traditions have evolved over three thousand years from ancient Aztec practices. At that time, human skulls were placed on temples and used to honor the dead. The purpose of the month-long festival was to honor Mictecacihuatl, the Lady of the Dead, and her husband Mictlantecuhtli, who were said to rule over the ninth level of the underworld.

Families continued to interact with their dead in this way until the sixteenth century, when Catholicism was introduced to the Indigenous peoples by conquistadors and missionary priests. Día de los Muertos was moved from August to November. The image of the afterlife was drastically altered, but most of the practices remained unchanged, including the belief that souls cross over from the land of the dead into that of the living.

The modern day celebration of the holiday has retained elements of its pagan Aztec origins, so Catholics cannot participate in all parts of the holiday. While some practices, such as the calling back of the souls of deceased relatives, are expressly condemned by the Church, some Catholics view the holiday as a reminder to pray for the dead.

Father Brian Ching, C.S.C, the rector of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, told the *Rover*, "Día de los Muertos is an opportunity for us as Christians in general, but for the Hispanic community specifically, to honor their deceased relatives as part of a global, universal, Catholic mission of All Souls' Day and the month of November. … The goal is both to remember our deceased ones and then to pray for their eternal repose."

The message of Día de los Muertos, he said, is "remembering that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves. We're part of not only the family we know but the entire lineage of ancestry. … We're reminding ourselves that we have a connection to all of those people. The life of faith unites all of us, even across time. It's also a healthy reminder that our time in this world is not forever. … In celebrating and honoring our deceased loved ones, it's a pretty important reminder to us too that our goal should be heaven, that this world isn't our final home."

Día de los Muertos is celebrated annually at Notre Dame. This year, Adelante ND and ND Dining partnered on Friday, October 30, to provide a special menu. Festivities included face painting, crafting, and a Ballet Folklorico performance by the students of Folklorico Azul y Oro. An *ofrenda* was also created. Past *ofrendas* have featured photos of deceased relatives, flowers, and *papel picado*, and candles.

"I submitted a picture of my grandma," said first-year Rodrigo Vargas Soliz, who participated in the celebration, "In Bolivia, we call it 'Todos Santos,' but it's the same idea. … Día de los Muertos is to remember and honor those [who have] passed away. They come to visit us November 1, and they stay with us for 24 hours until the next day."

Rebecca Gebhart is a freshman studying biochemistry and theology. She's allergic to caffeine and grass—two necessary components of a Notre Dame education. If you hated this article, contact her at rgebhart@nd.edu to invite her to a scenic coffee chat on the lawn.

Airport Magic

An Example of God's Ordinary Providence

Santiago Legarre
Staff Writer



Image by Jacopo Pontormo / Public Domain

One of the great joys of my 30 years of teaching at universities and law schools across three continents—in Argentina (home sweet home), in Kenya, and in various places in the United States—has been forming bonds with my students. I enjoy hearing from them as they move on into the "real" world, and I try to keep them updated about my life too. To that end, I have developed an email list to which I circulate brief notes touching on topics ranging from my teaching, upcoming travel plans, visits with family and friends, movie and book reviews, and recent essays or articles I have published. Roughly 800 former students have joined the list.

In September, I alerted the list about my upcoming fall tour in the United States. I explained that I would start by seeing family in Miami, move on to present two lectures at Notre Dame—including one during the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture's annual Fall Conference—and conclude with several days in New York and at Yale Law School. A former student of mine at Notre Dame Law School, Tim, replied to wish me luck with my lectures and explain that he and his family had their own upcoming trip to South Bend but would miss overlapping with me by just a few days. The next evening, while en-route from Miami to Charlotte Douglas Airport to make my connection to South Bend, I responded and asked if we could catch up soon via phone instead.

As I landed in Charlotte—after 15 years of connecting there on my way to attend the Fall Conference at Notre Dame—I wondered whether I would ever meet a friend or acquaintance in such a big airport. As anyone who has traveled through the Charlotte airport can attest, it is huge and almost always congested and buzzing with travelers rushing to and fro. A major hub for American Airlines, the airport contains five different concourses and routinely ranks as one of the busiest in America. It can take almost half an hour to walk from some gates to others. In short, it is not the type of place in which one is likely to have an unexpected encounter with a friend … especially if you are from a faraway country in South America.

But, as I stood on a long moving walkway heading down an interminable hallway toward my gate, Tim himself called out to me from the walkway heading in the opposite direction! I could scarcely believe it. In the seconds before we passed by each other as the walkways carried us in opposite directions, we agreed to double back and meet up. My past student, now friend, was on his way home to Missouri from a work trip in South Carolina and had a few minutes to spare during his long traipse across the airport to reach his own connecting gate. It had been a long time since we had last met, and it was a pleasure to sit down together and catch up. We even memorialized the meeting with a selfie.

What lesson—if any—can we learn from this encounter? One could, of course, chalk it up to mere chance or coincidence. After all, what are the odds? I was on my way from Miami to South Bend; Tim was on his way from South Carolina to Missouri. And although we had just exchanged emails about catching up soon, neither of us knew the other was traveling that day. The odds that we would not only cross paths but also notice each other amongst the sea of travelers in Charlotte-Douglas that evening were slim indeed. But this story lends itself to another, richer insight.

Pope Saint John Paul II once said that "in the designs of Providence, there are no mere coincidences." God's hand is always at work in the affairs of this world, even in the seemingly small matter of a brief meeting of old friends in a busy airport. Rather than chalking our meeting up to mere chance, then, I know that Tim and I were, from a higher point of view, meant to meet that night in Charlotte. And that, as Tolkien once wrote, "may be an encouraging thought."

Santiago Legarre is a professor of law at Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina and longtime friend of the *Rover*.

The Divine Judgement

By: St. Thérèse of Lisieux

I answer from on high, thy voice with plaint appealing,
I break the cruel bond that would thy heart enchain;
O fly to Me, My dove, each wound My love is healing,
Come—winter now is past; come unto Heaven and reign!

Joan, thy angel calls thy name,
And I, thy Judge, will now proclaim
That in thy soul hath burned the flame
Enkindled by the ceaseless fire of love.

O come, beloved, be thou crowned;
Thy tears I dry that joy abound.
Day dawns and fades the night profound.
Come now, receive My raptured kiss above.

Come, with comrades blest,
O'er far mountain crest.
The Lamb is thy rest.
Come with Virgin throng!

Beloved of My Heart,
I call thee apart;
Transformèd thou art.
Come, sing the new song!

Thee, angels surround,
From white phalanx crowned.
Thy praises resound,
Th' Eternal anear!

O shepherdess frail,
Brave warrior, hail!
Thy light shall not pale,
Immortal thou'lt shine!
O shepherdess frail,
Brave warrior, hail!
Behold Heaven is thine!

Visit us online at
irishrover.net
for archived articles.

Smickville Girls: A Problem We Don't Mind

Tricampus students see rise in tricampus relationships

Zander Johnson
Staff Writer

Recent studies have found that the number of Saint Mary's and Notre Dame relationships has more than doubled. Smickville is a commonly used term to describe the origin institution of "Saint Mary's chicks." The time of awkward mixers and bitter rivalries is now over. This statistic demonstrates improvements in the relations between the two schools, which had previously been considered declining. But what has caused this sudden surge in companionship? Some Notre Dame students have led the charge in investigating this trend.

One Notre Dame student said, "I used to make fun of the school; now, when I do, my girlfriend kicks me." He looked afraid when he mentioned his girlfriend; he requested that he remain anonymous. Another student, when asked what he thought of Saint Mary's students, said, "You wouldn't catch me dead around one." Yet, after we finished the interview, he asked me and my team if we knew any who were single. He was found dead the following morning. A concerned bystander at Saint Mary's had this to say: "I just scheduled my eighth date for this week. It's starting to become a hassle given that that's more dates than days." After the interview, I made it nine.



Image by Conlan Houston / CC BY-SA 4.0

My team has been tirelessly studying the behavior of Saint Mary's students, figuring out whether we can learn more about this rising dynamic. My name is Tedward "June" Teeny, and I am an up-and-coming engineer and rocket scientist, which makes me almost qualified for this study, a deficiency that I make up for in tenacity. I will be conducting a research study, individually interviewing Saint Mary's students at Cafe J, where I will ask each subject a series of questions, which may include "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the average Notre Dame man's conversational skills?" and, "How about giving me your number for real?"

The cause of this recent surge is still under heavy debate. There are many competing theories among students, a notable one being the "Homecoming Hypothesis," as students looking to acquire a date for various SYRs find that Saint Mary's provides an array of options. Another rival theory follows the recent "Cold Approach Hypothesis," in which Notre Dame men approach Saint Mary's students and proceed to drop to their knees and beg the Smick in question to go out with them. Theologian and scholar Jonas Flairbank provided an alternative theory. He asserted that rising relations between Saint Mary's and Notre Dame stem from a deep longing for companionship and the desire to serve someone outside oneself. My team and several other scholars laughed him out of the room.

Although this rising statistic has strengthened ties between Notre Dame and Saint Mary's, it has had the opposite effect on Holy Cross College. As relationships between Notre Dame and Saint Mary's grow, there are not enough resources to support both Notre Dame and Holy Cross, which has seen a significant decline in its relations with Saint Mary's. A student at Holy Cross, when presented with the data, had this to say: "No one cares." Yet, later, he pulled our reporter to the side and whispered, "Save some for us." If this were a purely scientific article, it would be suggested that a resolution be found for both schools; however, it is not. Notre Dame students can take the initiative to further outcompete Holy Cross by first getting to know their neighboring Saint Mary's students. Maybe over coffee or lunch if you have already established a friendly connection.

And remember:

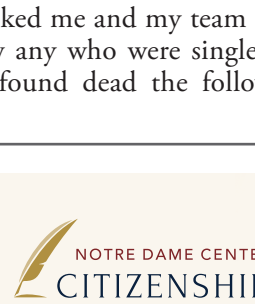
Vita, Dulcedo, Puellae Smickvillenses (Life, Sweetness, Smickville Girls)

Zander Johnson is a student at the University of Notre Dame. If you are a Saint Mary's student who wishes to voice your concerns, Zander can be reached by carrier pigeon. He is 6'5" and single.

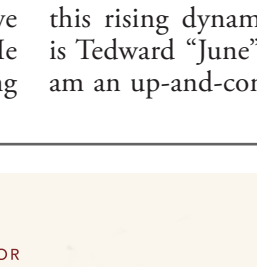
NOTRE DAME CENTER FOR
CITIZENSHIP & CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATISM AFTER TRUMP

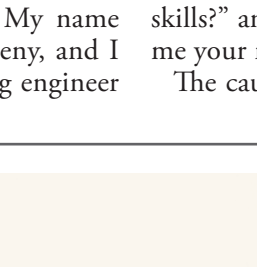
Friday, November 6, 2026 | 2:00–3:30 p.m. ET
Jenkins Nanovic Halls Forum



Ryan T. Anderson, Ph.D.
President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center



Kimberley Strassel
Member of the editorial board for *The Wall Street Journal*



Michael Anton
Jack Roth Senior Fellow at the Claremont Institute & 33rd Director of the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME | CENTER FOR CITIZENSHIP & CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT
constudies.nd.edu



November 1-7, 2026

National Vocations Awareness Week

Discerning your vocation?

1 **Prepare your heart.** Seek the Sacraments, pray, grow in virtue — any vocation sprouts from a life trending towards God and holiness.

2 **Ask the question.** Ask God for clarity in where you are called to love more deeply and serve sacrificially. Ask Him for courage to respond.

3 **Listen.** God may speak in the quiet of your heart or through reflection on times that you feel most alive and on fire with zeal, with more to give of yourself than you knew you had.

4 **Address fears and questions.** Fears, doubts, and lingering questions are natural. Seek advice from a trusted priest, mentor, or friend. Our Vocations Office can also help with these conversations!