

Student group distributes condoms at Main Circle

EVAN HOLGUIN
Executive Editor

New student group promotes "reproductive justice"

Student groups condoms On a Thursday night at Notre Dame, one can expect to see Ubers, LYFTs, and taxis crowding main circle, shepherding students to and from weekend activities in South Bend. On Thursday, February 15, however, the crowds and cars were joined by an additional, unexpected sight: free condoms.

Irish 4 Reproductive Health, a new group unaffiliated with Notre Dame, distributed over 1,000 condoms, according to a press release. Accompanying the condoms were definitions of consent, such as "The absence of a 'no' is not a 'yes'" and "If it's not clear, it's not consent."

The distribution was announced via the group's Twitter page: "#coNDoms on main circle #SafetyFirst," and was planned to coincide



Photo by Matt Cashore

with National Condom Week.

In a press release regarding the distribution, I4RH stated that, "Our condoms and

consent distribution was received with enthusiasm. Dozens of students thanked us for our efforts, echoing our

view that Notre Dame students need improved access to sexual health information and resources, especially condoms."

The enthusiasm was not unanimous, and many students have shared negative opinions about the distribution.

Junior Jared Diesslin recalled his experience interacting with I4RH when he arrived at main circle after a date with his fiancée, junior Kaelyn Fox: "The girl said she was part of a new club on campus promoting sexual health and offered us a condom. She wasn't pushy but pretty forward, she definitely approached us right when we got out of the car at main circle."

Fox added, "It was disappointing. Unlike other forms of contraceptives that could serve other (sometimes legitimate) purposes rather than simply preventing pregnancy, a condom is nothing but a means by which one gains pleasure without claiming full responsibility. Honestly, it was sad to see such a radical response to the discussion taking place on campus right now; there are definitely other less controversial means by which to further the discussion."

Both Diesslin and Fox expressed disappointment that the event took place at

continued on page 9

Embracing the Love of the Cross

JAMES RAHNER
Religion & Ethics Editor

Annual Edith Stein Conference on sacrificial love

The Identity Project of Notre Dame hosted its annual Edith Stein Conference February 16-17, with the theme "Even Unto Death: Embracing the Love of the Cross." Hosted at the McKenna Conference Center, the conference drew many speakers and participants from inside and

outside Notre Dame.

Friday's presentations included talks by Notre Dame faculty members such as Sister Ann Astell, who spoke on Mary's role as "Woman at the Foot of the Cross"; and Father Kevin Grove, CSC, who spoke on the theology of Holy Cross, his own order, and its focus on the Cross as a source of hope. Speaking of the way that Christ's suffering lifts up our suffering, he noted that "in that moment of exchange, the cross became hope, and He has spoken hope in us."

The keynote speaker Friday evening was Sam Guzman, the founder and editor of popular website *The Catholic Gentleman*. His talk, entitled "The Cross: the Revelation of God's Glory" continued some of the themes found in Grove's talk: how the Cross ultimately is the place where God's greatest gifts to us are granted, referencing St. Maximilian Kolbe's description of the Cross as

"the school of practical love."

Stressing the urgency of paying attention to the Cross in today's world, Guzman noted that the Cross reveals that God is "self-emptying humility"—and thus it is in our humility that we follow the way of the Cross and thus the way of love. He concluded poetically, stating that "God's love is like water—it always rushes to the lowest place."

Saturday's talks included presentations by the *Rover's* own Bea Cuasay and Stephanie Reuter on Carmelite spirituality and the concept of beauty in the works of writers such as Flannery O'Connor and Joseph Ratzinger, respectively. On the experience of presenting, Cuasay noted, "It was my first rodeo, [but] presenting a paper about Saint Teresa of Ávila was a fun time."

In addition, Father Terry Ehrman, CSC, a *Rover* faculty advisor, delivered a talk based upon a recently published book, *Man of God*,

that details advice for young men regarding love, sin, and one's relationship with God.

Professor of Theology Timothy O'Malley gave a talk later on Saturday on "The Cruciform Nature of Love." Beginning with an outline of the goods—and the excesses—of natural loves (in marriage, friendship, and so on), O'Malley detailed the way that the Cross transforms and perfects the natural loves: "the problem with natural love is that [it] is not enough to avoid ... egoism." But in light of the Cross and the Incarnation, love becomes related to a person "who I perceive ultimately, in [his or her] destiny, as united to Christ"—in the Sacrament of Marriage, in day-to-day interactions with our neighbors, in love for our children, and so on.

In keeping with the Catholic nature of the conference, after a keynote address by Dr. Nathaniel

continued on page 8

Sit-down with Gates & Corey

CLAIRE MARIE KUHN
Staff Writer

Juniors Gates McGavick and Corey Gayheart win election

After an election season riddled with allegations of election misconduct, judicial council sanctions, and closed senate meetings, the Notre Dame community has officially cast their ballots and chosen their student body president and vice president for the next school year. After judicial council election sanctions were applied to both tickets, Gates McGavick and Corey Gayheart received 52.08% of the votes, beating Alex Kruszewski and Julia Dunbar's 36.73%. Voter turnout for the election totaled 47% of the undergraduate student

body, which is down 11% from last year's election.

These "improvements" weigh heavily on Corey and Gates' minds as they reflect on the past election and what they hope for Notre Dame's student government moving forward. President elect Gates McGavick, stated:

"At the end of the day, we are happy with how this election went, but 22% of voters had their voices taken away, and that's really frustrating... because a lot of people don't even know what led to that happening... Wherever we can promote transparency we are looking to do that and give people an insight into the process. And in general, trying to return to a tone of civility while respecting the fact that it is okay to criticize and critique your elected officials without it being a personal attack."

continued on page 9

INSIDE

3

Interview with
Profesor Morel
Faculty



6

Catholicism and
gender ideology
Campus



11

Stories of
discernment series
Religion and Ethics



THE *IRISH ROVER*

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

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, Sarah Ortiz, 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.

“We shall always place education side by side with instruction; the mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart. While we prepare useful citizens for society, we shall likewise do our utmost to prepare citizens for heaven.”

- Bl. Basil Moreau

Citizens for heaven

EVAN HOLGUIN
Executive Editor

The need for greater moral formation at Notre Dame

Two weeks ago, our Editor-in-Chief, Sarah Ortiz, wrote her editorial about how the university's recent decision to provide contraception in its insurance policy infringed upon its stated goal of seeking out and defending truth. This issue, I would like to dive into the purpose behind such a goal and offer a reminder of the noble end of a liberal arts education.

I think it is a fairly uncontroversial claim that the purpose of the university is to seek to understand and teach "truth" to its students. However, what an institution means by truth varies between schools, departments, and even professors. There are scientific truths, the empirical facts through which we can understand how physical phenomena occur and manipulate them for our own health and benefit. There are pragmatic truths, the understanding of how to live, work, and operate in our economic society. There are interpersonal truths, uncovering the methods by which societal ills are promulgated and how they can be healed. And then, of course, there are the liberal truths.

I use liberal here not in its political connotation, but in its academic one. The liberal arts are a section of human inquiry dedicated to the cultivation of human knowledge, freedom,

and culture in its philosophic sense. What is truth? Beauty? Liberty? The answers to these questions constitute "truth" in a different sense than the other pursuits; it is less a compilation of facts and more a grasping of first principles, the foundation by which we answer the question "Why?" instead of "How?"

In light of this fundamentally different perspective between the sciences and the liberal arts, many universities, Notre Dame included, find it necessary that all students receive, at the very least, a basic liberal education in literature, philosophy, history, theology, etc.

But why should all students receive a liberal education? There are many potential answers: some believe that it forms better citizens; others, that it preserves culture; others, that philosophical knowledge is the highest form of knowledge (I'm looking at you, Platonists and Aristoteleans!). Each of these potential answers are interesting, and could be (and are) the focus of any number of editorials. However, I am not going to address any of them today.

Why not? Because, while these answers might inform us about the purpose of liberal arts universities in general, they fail to inform us about Notre Dame in particular. This is for the simple reason that Notre Dame prides itself not on being a liberal arts institution, but a specifically *Catholic* liberal arts institution.

Blessed John Cardinal Newman, a man who quite literally wrote the book on liberal education, wrote that, "Knowledge is one thing, virtue is another ... Liberal

Education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman."

In other words, a liberal arts education is not, of itself, enough to constitute a Catholic education. Rather, a Catholic education requires of itself an additional duty separate from mere liberal education.

The late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia articulates the character of this additional duty in his acceptance speech for the Catholic University of America's James Cardinal Gibbons Medal in 1994. "Part of the task of the Catholic university," Scalia states, "... must be precisely moral formation."

According to Scalia, this task of moral formation places two strains on the Catholic university: on the one hand, if the university upholds this duty, they will undoubtedly lose faculty members and prospective students. On the other hand, if the university shirks this responsibility, they "betray the expectations of tuition-paying Catholic parents."

Further, Scalia held that the duty of a Catholic university to form the morality of her students was so vital to the Catholic identity of the university that to shirk such a duty meant losing its Catholic identity.

Such a high importance placed on moral formation in Catholic education makes little sense unless one understands the end. To understand this end, we turn to a story recounted by Scalia during a 1999 commencement address, again at Catholic University of America:

"A friend of mine once told me of his experience in returning to a boys' boarding school in England ... Most of his teachers were gone, but one elderly brother was still there, the headmaster of the place ... he asked the brother how the school was fairing today. 'Oh, I think we are preparing our boys quite well,' he said. 'And what are you preparing them for?' my friend asked ... he was surprised by a question that had such an obvious answer. 'Why,' he said, 'for death.'"

This conception of Catholic education as preparation for death is not merely a notion shared by Scalia, his friend, and this particular headmaster. It is, in fact, a notion deeply embedded in the foundational thought of Notre Dame.

Blessed Basil Moreau, founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross which created and oversees Notre Dame, wrote, "We shall always place education side by side with instruction; the mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart. While we prepare useful citizens for society, we shall likewise do our utmost to prepare citizens for heaven."

Perhaps this notion, the preparation of citizens for heaven, is more palatable language than preparation for death. Nevertheless, the two ideas are the same, and both point to the same conclusion: the moral formation of a Catholic institution is vital because it is connected with the salvation of souls. Therefore, to shirk the responsibility of moral formation is tantamount to ignoring the Church's ministry to protect the souls of her flock.

I would like to end with

one final thought regarding the importance of moral formation in Catholic education, one which relies on a word used all too frequently and often incorrectly: conscience.

In his February 7 letter, Fr. Jenkins referenced that "among the values in our Catholic tradition is a respect for other religious traditions and the conscientious decisions of members of our community."

This is true; in fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states that, "Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. 'He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters.'"

However, the Catechism also states that, "Conscience must be informed and moral judgment enlightened ... The education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences and tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings."

In other words, though the Catholic Church affirms one's freedom to make decisions contrary to Catholic moral tradition, she also affirms the need to inform and enlighten individual consciences—moral formation. Notre Dame must not continue to ignore or shirk this responsibility; to do so is to abrogate her dedication to her students and to neglect our preparation as citizens of heaven once so central to her heart and mission.

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A person's a person, no matter how small



SANTIAGO LEGARRE
Faculty Contributor

The need for protection of the natural right to life

As Aristotle explains in Book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, some things are just and fair by virtue of “nature” (by which he means reason) and others by virtue of “convention” (by which he means *deliberately adopted social arrangements* such as contracts and human laws). The duty I have to return what I stole from you is an example of the former; that I ought to pay income tax at 33 percent is an example of the latter. While the former flows from what is reasonable regardless of convention, the latter is reasonable precisely by virtue of convention—reasonable, that

is, granted that that convention is in itself reasonable per se.

Later in history the term “right” (as in “I have the right to X”; “I have rights over Y”; “I have rights in relation to Z”) came to be used to describe the above (and other) situations of justice and fairness. Some say the terminological development was a product of Roman law, others attribute it to Ockham in the Middle Ages, and others think it was a creation of Modernity. Regardless, the *concept* of rights, carefully articulated by Aristotle and even more clearly by Aquinas deploying Roman law thoughts, was always there—even if and when the noun was not.

Back to my examples. Using a terminology popularized by Aquinas and clearer than Aristotle’s talk of convention, we can speak respectively of a natural right (your natural right to get back from me what I took from you, in my first situation) and a positive right (the right of the state to get that 33 percent of tax, in the second one). The former is a moral right; the latter a legal right (usually bringing with it a moral right of the same content).

Some rights have a mixed nature. They stem from reason (one could say they have a natural source or title deed)

but they are measured and determined by convention, that is by legally valid positing (by legislation, contract and suchlike). Or, in other words, it is just in itself (that is by virtue of reason) that someone has a certain right but the precise dimension of that right is only the result of a determination by contract or law. This is actually the case with all natural rights in real life: they only exist in social reality as mixed rights. And this is also the case with the right to life.

So let us take the case of the “natural right to life.” Some countries recognize life as a right by stipulating legally (and sometimes constitutionally: the constitution is part of the legal system and is positive law) a “positive, constitutional right to life.” The Constitution of my country, e.g., provides for such a solution and declares that “every person has the right to have his life respected ... in general, from the moment of conception” (article 75, section 22 of the Argentine Constitution, which redirects us to article 4 of the American Convention on Human Rights).

What about the U.S. Constitution? There is no such language there when it comes to “life,” but then there isn’t much rights language at

all in the U.S. Constitution. Nevertheless it could be argued that, for example, when the First Amendment protects freedom of speech from state abridgment, it is recognizing the natural right to freedom of expression and transforming it too into a positive, constitutional right. This seems to be a reasonable interpretation of the First Amendment, and it is certainly the prevailing one (at least with respect to reading rights talk into the language of the amendment). The same is true about the language of other amendments.

Case in point: the Fourteenth Amendment. When it prescribes that no state shall “deprive any person of life ... without due process of law” it recognizes the preexisting moral, natural right to life and gives it certain (quite scant) legal contours. The word “any” in the amendment implies that *all* (persons) are covered by its protection. Absent further clarification, absent a clear indication to the contrary by the amendment’s drafters, and given the reasonable presumption that, whatever the original intentions of the founders were, the Constitution is there to serve and protect everyone, “any person” ought to be interpreted—as elementary syntax unambiguously

requires—to include every person: persons of Chinese descent, whites, people with a homosexual orientation, unborn persons, and so on: the state will not take their lives without due process of law—a legally binding promise emphasized by the equal protection clause of the same Amendment that prescribes that no state shall “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

What does this conclusion—that the U.S. Constitution protects the unborn from state action depriving them of their lives without due process of law—tell us about abortion? In the first place it tells us that the Supreme Court was right and wrong when it held in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) that it did not need to resolve “the difficult question of when life begins.” The Court was right insofar as it was and is for science to resolve the question; the Court was wrong because, based on that premise (and on an “originalist” interpretation of the Constitution) the Court concluded “that the word ‘person,’ as used in the Fourteenth Amendment, does not include the unborn.”

Today hardly anyone considers the question the Court left unanswered a

difficult one: it is scientifically undisputed that life begins with conception. Some argue that personhood starts later but, as Tim Bradley, a former editor-in-chief of this newspaper, wrote for the Charlotte Lozier Institute, “there are no human beings who are not persons, and all persons are entitled to equal protection under the law.”

It is true that from this reading of the Fourteenth Amendment in the light of natural law the exact requirements in justice of the constitutional protection owed to unborn persons by the several states do not follow. Still, a crucial starting point for the political and legal steps that need to be undertaken in the argument about abortion—and about whether and how *Roe* (and its substantial reaffirmations such as *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992)) should be overruled—is the simple acceptance that a person is a person, no matter how small; acceptance, in other words, that justice requires in reason that the constitutional protection of the right to life should extend to the unborn.

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Black History Month lecture examines ethical leadership

KEENAN WHITE
Politics & Economics Editor

Lucas Morel on leadership through diction

In celebration of Black History Month, the Constitutional Studies Program hosted Lucas Morel, Professor of Politics and Head of the Politics Department at Washington and Lee University. An expert on Lincoln and black American politics, Morel gave a lecture entitled, “Words Fitly Spoken: Lincoln and Ellison as Writers of Social Responsibility,” in which he explored the ethical leadership of Abraham Lincoln and Ralph Ellison, especially through their diction. *The Rover* had the opportunity to interview Morel, further exploring the themes of his lecture and their relevance during this Black History Month.

You spoke of Lincoln and Ellison as masters of the English language—a great mark of their power and influence. At present our country is suffering from an apparent absence of great political orators and rhetoricians. Have our political and social leaders

lost the knack for powerful oration?

Ellison once said, “Writers write from other writers.” Name a great orator (e.g., Churchill) and he invariably is well read. The key question is, are folks with political ambitions reading much, let alone reading great writers?

One habit Lincoln had was to write notes to himself when he wanted to clarify an idea or some political problem. Writing is thinking.

Lincoln also had a habit of reading out loud, which led him to write for the ear, not the eye, as it were. Poetry, therefore, would seem to be part of the remedy. Lincoln’s favorite, far and away, was Shakespeare, then Robert Burns.

There is a certain irony to the term “ethical leadership,” which you use to describe the work of both Lincoln and Ellison. What is it that has precipitated the erosion of leadership in our nation to the point that it must be qualified?

One reason we speak of “ethical leadership” is because we somehow came to believe that one could be a good or even great leader of politics or business or technology (or fill in the blank) but personally possess

horrible qualities, even vices. We thought that as long as some laudable goal was achieved through the ideas and work and motivation of a particular person, then perhaps a decent character was not necessary and therefore required.

There is much debate over the proper role of the Constitution in contemporary American life. Many criticize our founding documents for being out of date and failing to address issues of modern life. Both Ellison and Lincoln point to the Constitution as a timeless document containing enduring ideals. As a scholar of both Lincoln and Ellison, what do you consider to be the proper role of the Constitution today?

The is no Constitution per se if it is not understood by the citizenry as something that is fixed in its aims and operation. That is why it was designed to be so difficult to amend, requiring super majorities of both the bicameral Congress (2/3) and the state legislatures or conventions thereof (3/4). Whereas ordinary legislation requires only a majority of both houses of Congress, the political structure intended

to guide and superintend that process of governance (i.e., legislation, as well as its execution and court judgment over disputes) needs a stronger consensus of the American people to operate differently via amendments. Over time, citizens can avail themselves of the experience and greater wisdom gained as they govern themselves, and therefore can amend their constitution to secure the rights and the common good more faithfully and prudently than their forebears.

But until an amendment is ratified, the Constitution should operate in a fixed and generally understood manner. Otherwise, the protection of one’s rights becomes unsettled and precarious—precisely the sort of thing a constitution is devised to protect against from the self-interested majorities that Madison called “factions” and that he warned against in *Federalist* No. 10.

How safe are the rights of a numerical minority if their protection is left to the interpretive whim of a mere 5-4 majority of a Supreme Court that did not consider the meaning of the Constitution as

fundamentally fixed?

You mentioned Ellison’s belief that black Americans had the unique duty of reminding white Americans of our highest ideals by demanding a closer relationship between our assertions and our actions as a society. Is this duty still relevant today? If so, how?

In Ellison’s day, his remark reflected the historical role that blacks played in keeping American principles at the forefront of the nation’s consciousness in the struggle for social and political progress. They were not alone in doing so, but had every reason to attend to this civic duty insofar as they had not yet received the full or equal protection of the law. As Frederick Douglass once declared, “He who would be free must strike the first blow!” If *blacks* did not fight for their rights, one would be hard pressed to expect *anyone else* to make this an urgent priority.

If Ellison were alive today, I wonder if he would think that black Americans, either individually or collectively (e.g., the leadership of the NAACP), continued to play this role in the 21st century. It would all depend on whether they continued to respect the Declaration



of Independence and Constitution as containing, to borrow from Bill Clinton’s First Inaugural Address, all that was *right* in order to cure or fix what was *wrong* with America. To the extent that blacks or anyone else believed that the founders’ ideals or political structures were deficient, e.g., simply beholden to perpetuating the claims of slaveholders, then it’s unlikely they would champion an adherence to the Constitution or the principles found in the Declaration to promote progress in the struggle for equal rights.

To take just one recent example, #blacklivesmatter seeks some laudable goals (like the elimination of police brutality, especially against black youth), but at times does so in a

continued on page 9



Speeding towards eternity

RICK MAGGI
Alum Contributor

A reflection on mortality and hope

When we were in our youth, death seemed to be a distant event. Yes, we vaguely knew that death could come from an accident or from contracting a deadly disease or illness, but we viewed it as something remote. Life was such that we were always looking to the next moment and perhaps the next day.

As we grew older, our vision began to expand a little more into the future. There was high school and soon we were planning for college. As college was ending, we thought about what profession we would want to enter.

If we didn't choose the ministry or consecrated life, we also started looking for the person with whom we could share our lives in marriage. Marriage naturally led to starting a family which included educating the children and finding a house or houses. There were efforts to advance in a company or move to a better job. Along the way, we might have planned financially for retirement. As our mid-60's approached, we tried to ascertain what we should do in our retirement.

In retirement or semi-retirement, some might be lucky enough to have the time and health to engage in activities a

previously full schedule of commitments to marriage, a demanding job, and family precluded. There is time to literally smell the roses, appreciate chirping birds, and ruminate over the beauty of trees; to write, ponder, pray, volunteer in community or church activities, spend more quality time with one's spouse, and be available to assist, as needed, with the grandchildren. With such an experience of life, one can be tempted to believe he or she has reached nirvana and that it would be fine if it were to last forever.

However, lurking is the realization that one's death is coming ever nearer, that the years behind us are much greater than the years we have ahead. Yes, we know it is not unusual for one to live into one's 80's or 90's, but we also know that plenty of persons die in their 60's, and 70's, from sickness or natural causes. While we still dream of future goals or plans, we know they are now more tenuous. We apprehend that we may not be here to see the grandchildren's college graduations or marriages, or even to see all of them be born. We are unlikely to see our great-grandchildren. We definitely will not see the mid-century.

But there is something more striking than knowing we will someday not be here. It is the other side of the coin. Within a very short time—perhaps tomorrow, next



week, within 10 years, within 20 years, but most likely not beyond thirty years—we will have already definitely stepped into and begun living in another heretofore unknown reality which will last forever. That is a sobering, perhaps scary, thought.

It may prompt a review of our lives which may elicit memories of failures to prioritize God, spouse, children, and declining parents, errors of judgment, selfishness, wasting of valuable time, laziness, and other reasons for regret. If we believe in a God who provides us a heavenly afterlife, we may suffer uncertainty as to whether we have lived the life the Lord wanted us to live. We may wonder if the good we have accomplished is enough

to offset such failings. We may be concerned whether we have been generous enough to the poor and homeless. We may ponder whether whatever good we have done been has been performed out of love for the Lord or to make us look or feel good. We may consider if we are being too hard on ourselves or, rather, expecting easy forgiveness.

Such thoughts can spur a change of heart, a conversion, enabling us to kneel before the Lord to ask for His forgiveness, especially in Confession, and to seek His wisdom and strength to ascertain and do His will through regular personal prayer and reception of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. We can thereby find comfort

and peace in our present reality.

For we as Christians should not be afraid but hopeful, maybe even yearning for that new reality of being with the Lord for all eternity. After all, Christ has said "would I have called you unless I had prepared a place for you," and assured us that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Perhaps this prayer suggested by the wonderful spiritual writer, Father Jacques Philippe, can help us begin again our ever accelerating journey:

"Thank you, my God, for all my past. I firmly believe that you can draw good out of everything I have lived through. I want to have no regrets, and I resolve today to begin from zero, with exactly the same trust as

if all my past history were made up of nothing but faithfulness and holiness. Amen."

Richard P. Maggi, Esq., graduated from ND in '73 and has been a litigation attorney for the past 40 years. He is also a commentator on religion and politics having been published in Homiletic & Pastoral Review, First Things (web edition), Crisis Magazine, the Washington Examiner, Human Life Review, and Notre Dame Magazine. He recently retired from the board of the Legal Center for the Defense of Life, is a Past Grand Knight of Summit Council 783, and an active member of Our Lady of Peace Parish in New Providence, New Jersey.





Discernment and the contraception decision

Ellie Gardey
Staff Writer

There appears to be a relationship between Father Jenkins' decision to provide artificial contraceptives through the university's insurance and Pope Francis' teachings that emphasize discernment of particular circumstances over objective morality.

In his February 7 letter addressing the situation, Fr. Jenkins brings to the forefront Pope Francis' teachings on discernment. He says, "The situation is one that demands discernment—something to which Pope Francis has called the Church in his various writings and addresses."

Fr. Jenkins continues, "Discernment, which has a long history in the Catholic spiritual tradition, is, of course, a process of weighing thoughtfully considerations for and against various courses of action. Yet it also demands prayerful attention to God's guidance through the prompting of the Holy Spirit."

As Fr. Jenkins noted, Pope Francis often pushes for discernment in his writings and addresses. For example, Francis spoke on the topic during his recent visit to Chile, saying, "I think that one of the things that the Church most needs today is discernment. This is put very clearly in the pastoral perspectives and objectives of *Amoris Laetitia*."

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Francis opens the door to granting reception of the Eucharist to Catholics living in sexually active relationships with individuals other than their original spouse. This is considered objectively wrong in the Church because Catholics are barred from receiving the Eucharist while in a state of mortal sin.

Pope Francis explains in *Amoris Laetitia* that discernment can enable individuals to continue living *more uxorio* (as husband and wife) with someone who is not their spouse in certain situations, even though this is not the "objective ideal":

"It [Conscience] can also recognize with sincerity and honesty what for now is the most generous response which can be given to God, and come to see with a certain moral security that it is what God himself is asking amid the concrete complexity of one's limits, while yet not fully the objective ideal. In any event, let us recall that this discernment is dynamic" (*Amoris Laetitia* 303).

Francis also addressed discernment while speaking to Jesuit priests in Rome in November. Francis said on the topic: "We run the risk of getting used to 'white or black,' to that which is legal. One thing is clear: today, in a certain number of seminaries, a rigidity that is far from a discernment of situations has been introduced. And that is dangerous, because it can lead us to a conception of morality that has a casuistic [resolving decisions by religious doctrine or ethical rules] sense."

In this way, Francis' view of discernment teaches the idea that circumstances of complex situations can permit individuals to make conscientious decisions contrary to the "objective ideal."

Therefore, it makes sense that Fr. Jenkins cited Francis' teaching on discernment as his inspiration for his decision in his letter.

Just as Francis teaches that things "not fully the objective ideal" are permitted in some cases

due to extenuating circumstances, Fr. Jenkins provides contraceptives he acknowledges are objectively wrong due to the circumstances of a university with individuals from different religious groups. In other words, he believes the circumstances of Notre Dame permit a departure from a black and white objective morality.

Fr. Jenkins has shown support for this particular mode of thinking on discernment in the past. When asked to respond to Archbishop Charles Chaput's criticism that Joe Biden and Tim Kaine are Catholic only in name due to their position on abortion, Fr. Jenkins responded in an interview with *Commonweal Magazine*:

"Though the archbishop may rightly argue that they are objectively wrong in their positions, I don't understand how he can presume to know the consciences of Vice President Biden and Senator Kaine sufficiently to question the genuineness of their faith and condemn them personally. As Pope Francis says in *Amoris Laetitia*, pastors must 'make room for the consciences of the faithful, who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations. We have been called to form consciences, not replace them.' (no. 37)."

This desire to "make room for the consciences of the faithful, who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations," is echoed in Fr. Jenkins' apparent respect for the right of the faithful to discern the use of artificial birth control. This is demonstrated in Fr. Jenkins' letter when he says, "many conscientiously disagree with this particular teaching."

As Fr. Jenkins himself attributes his decision on contraceptives to being inspired by Francis' teachings ("The situation is one that demands discernment—something to which Pope Francis has called the Church in his various writings and addresses"), the decision to provide contraceptives at Notre Dame appears to reflect Pope Francis' teaching on discernment.

While it may be troubling that there is a link between Pope Francis' teachings and Fr. Jenkins' decision to provide artificial contraceptives, this does not necessarily mean Pope Francis' teaching is erroneous. It simply means that the Pope's teaching has caused confusion.

An opponent of Pope Francis' teaching on discernment, Cardinal Raymond Burke, questioned Francis' interpretation of discernment, saying, "Discernment does not decide what is right or wrong but leads the person to inform himself as fully as possible so that he can make a right judgment in a particular matter, that is, so that he can act in accord with the truth which God has written upon his heart or conscience."

The situation at Notre Dame calls for Pope Francis to clarify his teaching on discernment so that no additional morally questionable decisions result from confusion surrounding it.

Ellie Gardey is a freshman living in Lewis Hall studying political science, philosophy, and theology. She has a love for sushi and country music. Contact Ellie at egardey@nd.edu.

The quest for votive candles

Steve Larkin
Staff Writer

Too many essays are being written nowadays on all the things wrong with the modern world. It may or may not be the case that there is no new thing under the sun, but it is certainly the case that none of the horde of essay-writers frantically pounding their keyboards are typing anything new under the sun. Let us then leave that dying genre behind. Here I proclaim my freedom from it. I will recount what is wrong with the modern world, but I will do it with the first and best of all human inventions: the story. And I will do it with the first and best of all human stories: the quest narrative.

Once upon a time, a friend of mine gave me some advice on my prayer life. He, a devotee of Our Lady, said to me: "Stevie, to develop some real hardcore Marian piety, you should set up a shrine in your room and say your morning and evening prayers before it." He then informed me that, in order to set up a half-decent shrine, I would need votive candles, which, he said, could be found on the bottom shelf of the Mexican aisle in any supermarket in this country.

I was skeptical. I worked in a supermarket as a cashier, but no one had ever come through my register with votive candles in their cart. The sociological factors were also aligned against me. I am from Maine, which is, if I recall correctly, the whitest state in the nation. It is also, if I recall correctly, the most irreligious state in the nation. The state in which Father Sebastian Rale, saint and martyr, was struck down for teaching the Abenaki the Gospel and protecting them from the ravages of the English is now considered "mission territory."

In the current sad, but touching, state of affairs the Church in Maine finds itself in, we now rely on the Church in Africa to send us priests so that we can keep our parishes running. Reverse-colonialism has never been so good or so holy. And the Catholics that do call Maine home are mostly of Irish, French-Canadian, or Italian stock, with some recent African immigrants having joined their number. I was not sure any of these groups were the sort to buy up votive candles in such

numbers as to ensure that they could be found in any supermarket.

I pondered all these things as I drove to a supermarket. By the time I arrived in the parking lot, I was fully conscious that the forces of godless secularism which rule the great state of Maine frowned upon my quest. Disregarding the dangers and the difficulties, I boldly strode through the sliding doors, which parted as the Red Sea before Moses. After entering the wilderness of the produce section, I began to wander around, since I had not been in that supermarket for some time. My desultory path took me past many displays. I passed the fruits and vegetables, the bread and other baked goods, the deli, an alcohol section—an extremely large alcohol section—and the seafood counter before I had in my sights the promised land: the Mexican section. Once there, I looked around to take it all in. Then I began searching for the votive candles. I looked up and saw tortillas. I looked to my right and saw taco seasoning packets. I looked to my left and saw those disgraceful abominations known as "hard-shell tacos." And then I looked down, where I found nothing but more tortillas. Dejected, I prayed for the imminent success of the Reconquista and left the store without a word.

As I drove home with my eyes watering up a bit, it came to me that the whole thing had something of the quality of a rather didactic short story which you'd expect Flannery O'Connor to write, albeit with less violence than she'd put in it. All the necessary elements were there: the young man seeking something, the allure and the shabbiness of a world devoid of the things of God, a traumatic face-to-face encounter with nothingness, with evil—and who would deny that hard-shell tacos are evil in material form?—and a vague sense that, by the end of the story, our hero had learned something about all these things.

Steve Larkin is a freshman living in Stanford Hall. He has been known at various times as a "superstitious papist" and "that guy from Maine." He can be reached at slarkin@nd.edu.



Tolkien and the importance of art

NICK HOLMES
Staff Writer

Professor discusses art and religious experience in the Lord of the Rings

The Center for Ethics and Culture hosted a lecture entitled “The Book That Changed My Life: *The Lord of the Rings*” on February 22. Given by Professor of Philosophy and Classics David O’Connor, the lecture focused on how J.R.R. Tolkien’s bestselling work impacted his view on the relationship between religion and art.

To explain the power of *The Lord of the Rings* in his life, O’Connor began with a short art history lesson. He first discussed “Mariana” by the 19th century British artist John Everett Millais, which features the blue-dad character from Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*. Millais was a leading member of the Pre-Raphaelites Brotherhood, an artistic movement that attempted to “go back to authentic medieval art,” O’Connor explained. To accomplish this, he elaborated, they “painted the figures in a way that didn’t idealize them in the way people were used to in Christian art,” while still celebrating beauty as in “Mariana.”

The Pre-Raphaelites used the same lack of traditional idealization in their religious works as well, choosing to “take common people and make them more beautiful,” but so that “you could still tell they were common people,” O’Connor said. He related how Charles Dickens looked at the Blessed Virgin Mary’s depiction in Millais’s first painting and observed that “you could find better women in any gin-shop in London.”

“A lot of people thought it was blasphemous,” O’Connor continued, because Pre-Raphaelites did not idealize their religious subjects as previous generations had. Thus, they had created a controversy about art’s role in promoting religious experience, one that Tolkien, who attended the same primary school as Millais, helps us resolve.

The Pre-Raphaelites “wanted to intensify the real through the use of beauty and in doing that, they thought they could intensify religious experience,” O’Connor said. Many, however, “were worried that you might start to enjoy the religious art merely for its sensuous beauty and not for anything religious in it,” he continued. The problem for art was that “when it works right, it intensifies our religious experience, but when it works wrong, it substitutes for it,” he concluded.

The latter alternative, O’Connor explained, was exemplified by Edward Burne-Jones, whose paintings “tried to move away from those directly religious roots, but keep all emotional intensity and cultural relevance that religious movement had.” These works were the “greatest statement I had ever seen,” he elaborated, “of the slogan ‘I am spiritual but not religious ... because I won’t give up the intensification and elevation that religious commitment gives, but I won’t accept the discipline that religious commitment gives.’” And this is where Tolkien comes into play.

“Tolkien’s accomplish is located in between John Everett Millais and Edward Burne-Jones ... because he wanted to show a relationship between beauty and transcendence,” O’Connor said. Tolkien accomplished this by presenting his religious themes in a non-overtly religious manner. “Tolkien understood himself very much as a Catholic author, but



Photo by Nick Holmes

he didn’t want to be read as a book of catechism or, a word he was allergic to, allegory, as if he just had an encoding of Catholic religious belief,” O’Connor noted.

To demonstrate the transcendence that he desired, then, Tolkien relied upon elves of *The Lord of the Rings*. “Some complex relationship between the humans and the elves is a part of the way that Tolkien tries to capture what Edward Burne-Jones captured,” O’Connor described.

However, for Tolkien, this was not a substitution for religious experience as it was for Burne-Jones. According to O’Connor, a painting by Burne-Jones “sees itself as having completed the journey to grace, because you don’t need grace anymore.” Instead, Tolkien writes “at a completely natural level,” O’Connor explained, “in a way that doesn’t require grace to make sense of the story but invites us into the experience of grace to complete the story.”

This message’s impact extends far beyond merely art, however. “There is a reason people want to be spiritual but not religious and one of the reasons is that they want a kind of sexual freedom that religious discipline does not provide for them,” O’Connor explained.

While many reviewers criticized *The Lord of the Rings* and relegated it to the status of a children’s book because of its lack of sexuality, O’Connor maintains that they miss that it occurs throughout, “because when Tolkien thinks about sexuality, he thinks about marriage, because he was a normal man.”

O’Connor illustrated how marriage can be seen in Tolkien’s epic through the story of Samwise Gamgee. “I think you can see in the early chapters that Sam wants to marry Rosie, so for him there is something really at stake in going on this journey where he doesn’t know what the end will be.” Because Sam knows the future he has awaiting him when he returns, “that story is something that holds the whole book together,” O’Connor argued.

For O’Connor, then, Tolkien “wasn’t a modern man, he wasn’t a Pre-Raphaelite man, he wasn’t spiritual, but not religious—he was religious, and he was spiritual.”

Nicholas Gadola Holmes is a first-year political science and history major living in Keough Hall. He likes to eat pineapple at NDH when he’s taking a break from ‘make your own pizza’ at South. Contact him at nholmes1@nd.edu.

Catholicism and gender ideology

SOPHIA BUONO
Editor-in-Chief Emeritus

"Speak the truth with conviction but with kindness"

The Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) at Notre Dame and St. Mary’s College recently put a spotlight on two topics that are often held in tension: gender ideology and Catholicism. Mary Rice Hasson, Director of the Catholic Women’s Forum, presented the lecture “Redeeming the Gender Revolution: A Catholic Perspective,” on February 19 in St. Mary’s Stapleton Lounge.

Clare McKinney, Chairwoman for YAF’s Notre Dame chapter, told the *Rover* why she organized the talk. “It seems as if the automatic [response] these days is to call someone a bigot ... if they don’t support gender ideology, but we wanted to show that there are real merits behind why the practice of transitioning, especially in children, poses risks and concerns.”

Hasson, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., opened her talk by describing Pope Francis’ response to gender ideology. Quoting the pope, she stated, “We need to accompany those who identify as LGBTQ ... We need to accompany them as Jesus would. We need to never abandon them.”

At the same time, Hasson continued, the pope has emphatically spoken out against the mainstream gender ideology by calling it “the enemy of marriage” and a “global war on the family.”

Hasson noted how the mainstream ideology has permeated public school curriculums, beginning in preschool. One picture book about gender identity, Hasson recounted, delivers the message “that when you are born, your parents and the doctors look and they guess whether you’re a boy or girl, but only you know for sure—as if your body doesn’t matter.”

Of particular concern, Hasson noted, is that gender transition procedures have very little research to back them up. “Realize this is experimental, all these stages,” she said. “People are writing about it and talking about it like [this is] best [practice], but there is very, very little research on ... what [the] repercussions are.” The rapid expansion of these medical procedures, she argued, demonstrates gender ideology’s failure to seek the root cause of gender confusion.

“The idea of figuring out

what’s behind gender identity conflicts and gender dysphoria and a high rate of other current mental health issues ... has been put on a shelf,” said Hasson. To highlight the symptoms of this neglect, she indicated a long-term study of people who have gone through gender-reassignment surgery and still show high rates of suicide. “That means we’re not serving people who are suffering,” she said.

According to Hasson, gender identity conflicts are indeed a genuine struggle and should not be ignored. “From the Church’s perspective, someone who is going through a gender identity struggle is struggling,” said Hasson. “No one’s saying it’s not real. No one’s saying someone doesn’t experience that and doesn’t need help.”

The compassionate response, she continued, must go hand-in-hand with truth. “What the Church is saying is that there’s a truth about your body, and let’s figure out what the right solution is,” said Hasson.

That solution, she concluded, is not discriminatory but rather the best kindness Catholics can offer.

“There’s no excuse for bullying,” said Hasson, “but that’s not the same as saying, ‘Okay, if you feel like a male but you’re born a female ... [then] we’re going to affirm you in that.’ Because it’s not true.” She concluded, “We have to have the courage to speak the truth with conviction but with kindness.”

McKinney has received mixed reactions about the lecture. “I had numerous students ... [say] that they appreciated hearing a perspective that affirmed the dignity of all persons but also wasn’t afraid to question gender ideology. But I also ... was personally approached by a member of SAGA [Straight and Gay Alliance] and [was] told that I caused deep emotional harm to the LGBTQ community on campus.”

McKinney stressed that the talk was not meant to alienate anyone. “My aim was that all members of our community could broaden their perspectives and see that questioning [and] researching the process of transitioning and its effects on children isn’t hateful but necessary if we want to truly help those struggling with their identity.”

Sophia Buono is a senior majoring in the Program of Liberal Studies and minoring in Education, Schooling, and Society. She recently visited the South Bend Chocolate Company, where she received a Golden Ticket. To verify this fact and share in her delight, contact her at sbuono@nd.edu.

I4RH continued from front

main circle, which is often the “first clear view of the Dome that visitors get,” and could “leave potential students and visiting parents in an awkward situation.”

The condom distribution was held the same weekend as Junior Parents Weekend, increasing the possibility that a visiting parents might have interacted with the event while visiting their children.

Freshman Madeline Foley also criticized the event, stating that “distributing condoms infringes on Notre Dame’s Catholic identity as well as the Catholicism of her students—the religious heritage of a large majority of the students demands a high standard of ethical behavior than the casual enabling of premarital sex.”

According to their Mission Statement, I4RH is “not seeking institutional affiliation or funding from the University of Notre Dame in order to preserve

our philosophical autonomy.” They are, however, affiliated with Planned Parenthood, Catholics for Choice, and other, unnamed, South Bend groups.

In a statement to the *Rover*, I4RH explained that the condoms were provided by Planned Parenthood. According to the same statement, I4RH is affiliated with Planned Parenthood through its “Generation Action” project, which “empowers students to act autonomously on their campuses.” Although Planned Parenthood provided the condoms, I4RH denies that they have provided any additional funding.

I4RH describes themselves as “an independent, non-hierarchical group of individuals advocating for reproductive justice at the University of Notre Dame and in our surrounding community,” and states that their “feminism is intersectional, sex-positive, gender-affirming, LGBTQIA+ affirming, and anti-racist.”

In their press release, I4RH stated that they do not have any

immediate plans for additional condom distribution, but that they “do plan to hold events that provide education and resources to promote our community’s reproductive and sexual health.”

Earlier the same day as their condom distribution, I4SH published a Letter to the Editor in the *Observer*, calling on the university’s administration to, “make condoms accessible and available to the University community.”

This call came in response to the university’s recent decision to provide “simple contraception” in its health plan. The signatories of the letter stated that said decision acknowledges the “conscientious choice of using prescription contraception; [and that] funding access to condoms on campus would allow men on campus, as well as women who do not use prescription contraception, to make the same choice for their sexual and reproductive health.”

One of the signatories, senior Emily Garrett, had previously commented that Feminist

ND, an officially recognized club, had avoided promoting contraceptives on campus so as not to breach Student Activity Office rules which restrict clubs from, “encourag[ing] or participat[ing] in any activity that contravenes the mission of the University or the moral teachings of the Catholic Church.”

According to the university’s Standards of Conduct regarding sexual activity, the moral teachings of the Catholic Church includes the “teaching that a genuine and complete expression of love through sex requires a commitment to a total living and sharing together of two persons in marriage.”

In 2013, multiple Catholic universities, including Notre Dame, threatened to pursue disciplinary action against student groups that distributed condoms, according to the Boston Globe.

Evan Holguin is a senior in the Program of Liberal Studies. Please send questions or responses to eholguin@nd.edu.



JUS VITAE

NDLS **RIGHT TO LIFE**

PRESENTS

A PERSON'S A PERSON, NO MATTER HOW SMALL: NATURAL LAW AND CONSTITUTIONAL PERSONHOOD



Professor Santiago Legarre

Universidad Católica Argentina

A discussion on different theories
of interpretation of the
Fourteenth Amendment in the
context of the abortion debate.

THURSDAY MARCH 1

12:30PM, ROOM 3140

LUNCH WILL BE SERVED

Co-sponsored by Notre Dame Right to Life,
Students for Child-Oriented Policy, and the Irish Rover



**Students for Child
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Be careful how you listen

BRIAN WILLIAMS, CSC
Guest Contributor

Stories of discernment series

Many Holy Cross religious have a particular line (or many for that matter) from our Constitutions—the document that guides the life of each Holy Cross priest or brother—that speaks to them about some aspect of their life. When I reflect on my path of discernment, one of those lines comes from the first constitution: “God’s Call.” It says, “It was a call that came to us from without, but also one that arose up within us, as from His Spirit.” God’s call has at times been explicit, yet at others it has been more interior, with God drawing me along.

Growing up in Houston, I attended St. Thomas More Grade School where our pastor, Fr. Bill Young, would regularly preach about vocations at the weekly all-school Mass. By the seventh grade, I had begun to ask myself this question: “God, are you calling me to be your priest?” I listened for an answer almost like I was listening for God’s marching orders. After hearing the vocation story of a Jesuit novice who visited my high school and watching the *Fishers of Men* video, which encourages men to consider a vocation to the priesthood, I finally decided that I would stop straddling the fence. I searched for a place where I could discern further a vocation to the religious life and priesthood, and God led me to the Old College program here on campus.

During this time, I learned to listen to this call to the priesthood more deeply. Old College gave me the tools of a structured

formation program: common prayer, common life, spiritual direction, formation conferences, house obediences (similar to chores), and explicit time for pastoral ministry. I learned more about how to pray, and I met other men who had similar questions about discernment. These tools were slowly training me to listen well to how God was calling me.

During our novitiate in Colorado, our novice master, Fr. Ken Molinaro, CSC, often preached very spiritually enlightening homilies, frequently retelling stories from the desert fathers. One day, while preaching to us on Luke 8:18, he said a line that has stayed with me ever since: “Be careful how you listen.” A spiritual man, he was inviting us to sit quietly and listen to the movements of the Spirit. How was God drawing us toward Him? How do we discern the voice of God from the other voices that we hear? We can often want to impress others, or become successful, or fulfill the dreams that our parents or society may have for us. However, we also want to place our gifts and talents in the hands of God, and we can only love through being the person God has created us to be. The hours that we spent together each day in the chapel in silent prayer, despite the many distractions of our life, were essential for me in hearing God’s call. Daily, silent prayer is a habit I strive to maintain in my life as a means to continue listening for God.

These past few years in temporary vows have shown me that discerning a vocation takes effort and time, just as dating would. Learning to listen to others and to God can feel different as they become more familiar. At



this point, discernment has evolved from discerning a life to discerning how to live this life well. It has meant reflecting on experiences of prayer, ministry, or community that have gone well or not well and asking myself, “What happened?” The daily prayer and frequent discussions with others will lead me to shape my life in a way that will make me more disposed to respond to God’s call when I rise each morning. Discernment, I expect, will never end because it is learning to listen to how God is drawing me toward him.

What advice would I give to those considering a vocation? We all feel drawn toward God because he calls each one of us closer to Himself. The “How?” is where we often become stuck. Talking about a vocation with close friends, a rector, or a priest is a helpful step forward because it forces us to listen to ourselves and because others see gifts or traits in us that we do not necessarily

see ourselves (or, for folks looking at or preparing for marriage, talking with trusted married couples is important). Also, learning to sit quietly in prayer, either in a chapel, before the Blessed Sacrament, or walking in a quiet place on campus can give us the space to listen to God and hear the quiet whisper of God about which the Prophet Elijah speaks. We need to listen both to people outside of ourselves and to God moving within us. As the first Constitution of the Congregation of Holy Cross says, “It was a call that came to us from without, but also one that arose up within us, as from His Spirit.”

Bryan Williams, CSC, is a fourth year temporarily professed seminarian with the Congregation of Holy Cross. He is currently serving as the Assistant Rector of Old College Undergraduate Seminary. For questions regarding vocational discernment, you can reach him at Bryan.A.Williams.458@nd.edu.

Notre Dame's sisters and their stories

BEA CUASAY
Staff Writer

Sisters chat about their experience of the religious life

In an event co-sponsored by the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism and Campus Ministry, seven religious sisters from Notre Dame’s campus gathered for an evening to share their stories of vocation discernment and their expression of the religious life.

The event was introduced by Tami Schmitz, associate director of Pastoral Care, who, at the beginning of this school year, was given the task of helping young women in the Notre Dame community who are discerning a vocation to the religious life.

Kathleen Sprows Cummings, director for the Cushwa Center, spoke about a 2015 study the Conrad-Hilton foundation conducted on how women religious were perceived in America. The study concluded that, “Sisters, though highly respected, remain a mystery.”

Many views of sisters are largely shaped by media representations of sisters. “Many think that sisters wear habits, when the majority of sisters’ dress is simple, modest clothing,” said Cummings.

Those present at the night were: Sr. Mary Catherine Hilkert, O.P., Sr. Ann Astell, Sr. Cathleen Cannon, O.P., Sr. Susan Sisko, O.S.B.M., Sr. Mary Donnelly, O.P., Sr. M.J. Hahner, C.S.F.M., and Sr. Mary Lynch, S.S.J.

Each sister shared her vocation story. They felt the call at various ages and entered either straight out of high school, or were “late vocations” in their early 30’s. God was persistent in letting these women know they were called. Sister Susan said, “There was this mosquito—and you know, it’s God!” When walking into the motherhouse of their communities, they felt right at home, experiencing the peace of being where God meant them to be.

The sisters then spoke

about their education. Some sisters took 12 years to finish their undergraduate degrees, as they could only take weekend and evening classes concurrently with their order’s apostolate.

Later, the floor was open to all to ask questions. Carolina Robledo, a sophomore in Breens-Phillips Hall asked, “Do you have to cut your hair short?” One sister chuckled and explained it was more of an age thing; long hair at an old age gives one a haggard look.

A former student of Sister Cathleen was present, and he asked about prayer and their relationship with God. Sister Hahner said she thinks of God as a relationship. Sister Mary Lynch added, “We live in a culture so full of noise.” Sister Susan then commented, “Young people tell me there’s no time to pray. It almost seems like we have to set the stage before we can be present to God and for him to be present to us.”

One student taking the Faith and Feminism class asked, “How do you fit in a church that doesn’t allow for women to be ordained?”

Sister Mary Lynch answered, “It’s been a struggle, I’ll tell you. One time I worked at this college, and I got to function as a deacon and got my turn to preach. Some priests were happy to see the back of my head driving downtime highway. At UNC some students asked me, ‘Why don’t you leave and join the Episcopal church?’ No. I’m Catholic from head to toe. I saw that I could change the Church from the inside. It’s not easy.”

Sister Mary Donnelly added, “Once I was asked to preach for an O Antiphon. I’ve learned to see being a preacher as more than just from the pulpit. It’s frustrating. I sometimes do have to ‘play the game’ by being with the priest.”

Bea Cuasay is a freshman studying philosophy, theology, and music. As an avid supporter of women religious vocations, especially of the Dominican order, she advises that you visit cmswr.org or sistersofmary.org for more information.

Conference

continued from front

Peters, the weekend ended with Mass at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, followed by a banquet for the attendees of the conference. Speaking on the conference as the whole, Bea Cuasay added to her thoughts that “it was great to gather for a weekend and hear about the salvific nature of suffering to be reminded of Christ’s great love for us—even unto death on the wood of the Cross.”

James Rahner is a junior living in Keenan Hall. He is in love with this Spring weather. Contact him at jrahner@nd.edu.



Photo by James Rahner



Election *continued from front*

McGavick and Gayheart stressed the whirlwind nature of their transition but expressed excitement at the idea of very soon having a team in place and being able to make immediate change. The two have been in contact with the current student government administration, and are planning on a smooth handover of power.

Some of the immediate changes McGavick and Gayheart are looking forward to working on are dorm maintenance improvements, blue-light safety evaluation, and GreenDot expansion to South Bend bars and bartenders. Furthermore, McGavick expressed interest in looking "at the existing structure of student government and see[ing] where it can be streamlined or improved to more effectively serve the student body." Gayheart noted that they are soon "sitting down with the newly elected St. Mary's President and Vice President to collaborate with the tri-campus community on both the blue-light safety evaluation and GreenDot expansion."

When asked about their legacy and broadstroke goals for their time as Notre Dame's student body's President and Vice

President, McGavick and Gayheart mentioned focusing on accessibility and approachability. McGavick said the "best legacy we can have is getting as many people involved in student government as possible. We want to make student government more accessible so that students have a clear idea of not only what student government is doing but also how to approach student government if they have a problem". For Gates and Corey, the ideal student government that they will leave behind "should feel like a group of kids as opposed to the government of a country."

Gayheart stressed his appreciation towards the student body and their support for he and Gates, stating: "Thank you all so much for coming out and voting. It means the world to Gates and I that we got so much support ... We ran on the promise of amplifying student voices and changing student government and we cannot wait to get started and work hard to do just that."

On April 1st, the two will "get started" and take official office as student body president and vice president.

Claire Marie Kuhn is a junior studying political science and peace studies. You can email her at ckuhn1@nd.edu.



Photo courtesy of McGavick-Gayheart Campaign

Morel *continued from page 3*

manner that undermines the very rule of law they claim to seek on behalf of black lives. To disrupt the ordinary lives of everyday citizens by loudly marching through university libraries, physically barricading busy highways and downtown intersections, or rudely interrupting visiting college speakers (aka "the heckler's veto") undermines the orderly processes that typically lend themselves to a rational discussion of the best measures to pursue progress.

Moreover, when a group

like the BYP100 proclaims they are "unapologetically black," they imply a racially-minded means to secure ends that are inconsistent with principles that inhere not in the race of individuals but their humanity. In short, they appear to make race a more fundamental part of their identity than their humanity, i.e., what they share in common with all other individuals. This likens to the Black Power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which rejected the principles of the American founding. Both Ellison and Douglass thought this way of thinking was the method of their

Opinion: The theology behind immigration

GWEN MCCAIN
Guest Contributor

Dream SB presents a Catholic case for immigration

How are we called upon to treat the migrant? Christ, a migrant from the inn at Bethlehem to His forty days in the desert, compels us to seek out the least among us. But a cruel alternative has developed: legislation and global indifference that close our communities and borders to the most vulnerable. In doing so, we reject our Catholic obligation.

Fr. Dan Groody, CSC, Associate Professor of theology and Global Affairs and Director of the Global Leadership Program at Notre Dame's Kellogg Institute, suggests that we would "deport our own souls" with legislation that denies human dignity to immigrants. He explained: "Migration is not just a political issue, but a spiritual one. To address the core problems, one has to go to the imagination and connect both our hearts and our heads. They are us. If we don't have the heart to see something of us in them, then we have deported our souls."

Globalization has increased human migration. Today, according to the United Nations there are 258 million people who have emigrated and according to the UN Refugee Agency there are 65.6 million forcibly displaced people. In America, the debate ricochets from DACA to refugees, and approaching consensus seems more difficult with each passing day. However, I would argue that our duty is as clear as ever. Catholics and all people

of good will are called to see Christ in the immigrant and reflect His love towards them through inclusive action. More people must leave their homes to seek a safe and prosperous life, and the most vulnerable people exist on the margins of our society as a symptom of social indifference. This is when Christ is most present.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Justice for Immigrants campaign advocates for immigration reform that aligns with Catholic Social Teaching. In its plea to Congress, the USCCB endorses legislation with humane and proportionate border security, sanctuary for unaccompanied children, and protections that ultimately lead to citizenship for America's 1.8 million DREAMers. The bishops emphasize the importance of family as our social foundation and therefore support legislation pursued with integrity that does not bargain one piece of legislation for another or children for their parents.

Fr. Groody explains that a theology of migration seeks "to see God Himself as a migrant in Jesus ... who calls us to be in solidarity with everyone else on that journey, especially those who are migrating today." According to Fr. Groody, since Jesus migrated to our broken, human world in poverty, He now calls us to pilgrimage with Him in our pursuit of salvation. Since Catholicism's core message is achieving communion with God and migrating towards the kingdom of God, it is of utmost importance that we provide special care for vulnerable travelers who embody the image of Christ.

Despite this moral vision, many people still feel torn between obligations to



Photo by Gwen McCain

sovereignty and their faith. Aquinas, in his conception of the common good and laws, provides precedent. According to Aquinas, all laws must promote the common good and, should two laws contradict one another, the one that does not promote the common good is invalid and should be rejected.

The USCCB's position demonstrates that our current immigration laws and proposals do not promote the common good. We are called to reject such cruelty and to act within the parameters of civil engagement and the Church's charity. As Christ tells us: "What you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Pope Francis called for action in response to the refugee crisis in Europe, saying, "The globalization of indifference has taken from us the ability to weep!" He likens our dispassion to that of the priest and Levite who ignored the bleeding traveler in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Instead, he calls us to be like the Samaritan who violated his cultural norms to care for the vulnerable. We must look beyond borders and see

the human suffering caused by our indifference to the conditions our brothers and sisters are forced to live in. Once injustice is clear, action can spring forth and we can protect our neighbors, both at our doors and across the world. Through civic action and the Church, we can promote a culture of love and dignity.

On March 2, Dream SB, a group of students from Notre Dame, Saint Mary's, and Holy Cross, will march from Holy Cross' campus to Sen. Donnelly's office. We will ask for his commitment, along with that of Representative Walorski (R) and Senator Young (R), to defend human dignity in upcoming DACA negotiations and future measures on comprehensive immigration reform. If your faith compels you to act, contribute to our campaign by calling your legislators with the USCCB's guidelines, signing this petition, and joining us in our walk in solidarity with our DREAMer brothers and sisters.

Gwen McCain is a sophomore living in Lewis hall. This piece was written with the help of other members in Dream SB. She can be reached at gmccain@nd.edu.

white supremacist enemies (i.e., color prejudice), and therefore a non-starter in terms of promoting progress in a country founded on the self-evident truth "that all men are created equal."

You briefly brought up Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream..." speech in which he famously remarks, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." In our age of increased sensitivity to identity are we moving closer to this ideal or further from it?

As counter-intuitive as it may sound, King's own rhetorical neglect of this aspect of his dream may have inadvertently led to the promotion of what today is termed "identity politics." Prof. William B. Allen (now emeritus dean of Michigan State University and Villanova University) has pointed out that in the later phase of King's public career, he emphasized not the character of black Americans but their status as victims of white oppression as the lens through which to understand the prospects for progress. It was as if King forgot the key to

his own success as a black man in America.

This emphasis upon black victimization not only reinforces the myth of white supremacy but also leads to the conclusion that such a profound disability among blacks in general can only be overcome by the radical and systematic restructuring of the economic and political systems in the U.S. I would add, borrowing from Ralph Ellison, that is also leads people to privilege race over other aspects of one's identity.

Race is but one element of each person's identity,

and one that as far as we know contributes nothing to one's ability to maximize one's potential as a human being. Has race been an impediment to the prosperity of some Americans, given the historic color line of America? To be sure. However, to eliminate the color line from our political practice requires that we employ principles devoid of color prejudice, whether for or against.

Lucas Morel is a professor of politics and head of the political science department at Washington and Lee University.

The gift of fear protecting us from violence

MARY SOREN HANSEN
Staff Writer

Gavin de Becker's book provides fresh take on women and protection

Every woman should read this book. The copy I read, on loan from a female friend, has now been read by me, my roommates, and even a visiting prospective student who happened across it on my bookshelf.

Chapter by chapter, Gavin de Becker explores the world of our worst fear. Citing cases from his long career of violence prevention—he's worked with the Supreme Court, the D.O.J., Hollywood stars, the Chicago and Los Angeles School Districts, and Oprah, just to name a few—de Becker reveals to his readers exactly how prevalent violence is in our lives, yet concludes with an surprisingly empowering message.

Though not for the faint of heart—*The Gift of Fear* features true stories of rape, murder, stalking, etc.—de Becker's central thesis ought to leave women feeling powerful, not powerless, in the face danger. When it comes to threats, "We think conscious thought is somehow better," he writes, "when in fact, intuition is soaring flight compared to

the plodding of logic." In other words, we ought to listen to our gut, not our brain, when we feel fear. Fear is a gift to avoid danger.

Our intuition works on a super-rational level, a level beyond our conscious flow of thoughts, to evaluate threats in our environment. When a man walking toward you on the street causes you to think twice, your intuition could be recalling the news piece you saw on crimes in the area, registering that the man has his arm tucked under his jacket (which could mean a concealed weapon), or even subconsciously remembering that he has been watching you from a distance for the past ten minutes. Your logical brain will ask you to push all these factors aside to avoid appearing rude or judgemental. But ignoring your intuition can be a very dangerous mistake, de Becker claims; "You have the gift of a brilliant internal guardian that stands ready to warn you of hazards and guide you through risky situations."

Though this book can be useful for everyone, women are more likely to be threatened or in danger. De Becker himself defends this claim with a simple experiment; ask your friends when was the last time they felt threatened or in danger. Men will often reply with a time or two in the past year, maybe last month. For women, it's more likely you'll

hear "last night," "a few days ago," or "last week." While I hope that this is not true on our campus, it is very true in the real world.

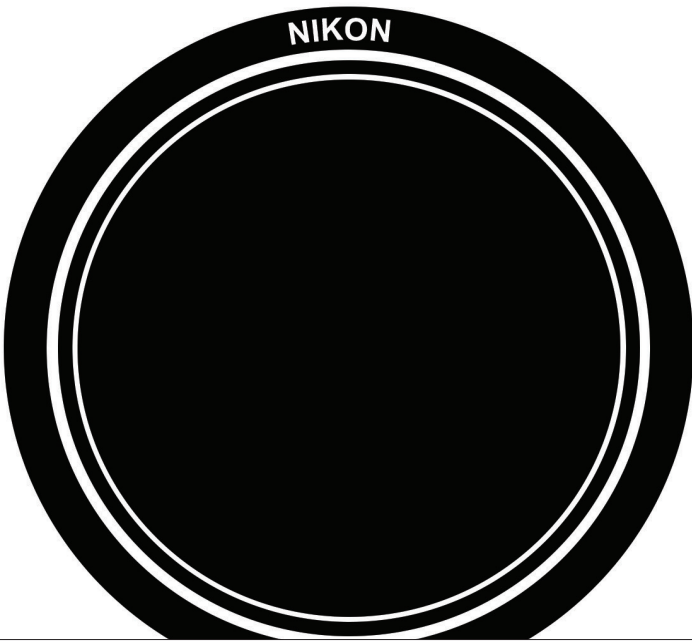
One of the most powerful moments in the whole book is when de Becker explains this biological difference: "It is understandable that the perspectives of men and women on safety are so different ... The fact is that men, at core, are afraid that women will laugh at them. And women, at core, are afraid that men will kill them."

I maintain that this book is one all women should read in case they ever encounter a situation of violence, stalking, assault, or worse. In the end, *The Gift of Fear* is in itself a gift—one I plan to pass on to as many of my female friends as I can—because it shows that fear is the innate tool given to us to help us avoid danger.

In de Becker's words, "The inner voice is wise, and part of my purpose in writing this book is to give people permission to listen to it."

Mary Soren Hansen is a junior PLS major living in Lewis Hall. When not playing goalie for the women's club soccer team or the upright bass in the Notre Dame symphony, she leads Res Publica, a political discussion group on campus that holds an ever-growing following. Ask her about joining at Mary.S.Hansen.77@nd.edu.

If you are interested in joining the Irish Rover photography staff, please contact
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STATEMENT OF BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES REGARDING NOTRE DAME DECISION ON CONTRACEPTIVE COVERAGE

I strongly support the decision of the University of Notre Dame to stop the government-funded provision, through its third party administrator, of abortion-inducing drugs and sterilization procedures. I am also happy that the University will provide natural family planning services in its insurance plans. At the same time, I strongly disagree with Notre Dame's decision to provide funding for contraception in its health insurance plans which involves it even more directly in contributing to immoral activity. The Catholic Church clearly teaches that contraception is an immoral action that contradicts the truth of marital love.

As Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the local Church of which Notre Dame is a part, I wish to remind all the faithful of the diocese, including the faithful who are part of the Notre Dame community, of the Church's definitive teaching that "every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible is intrinsically evil" (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2370). I encourage all who struggle with this teaching to study prayerfully this teaching of the Church, and I especially recommend the study of the encyclical of Blessed Pope Paul VI, "Humanae Vitae," during this 50th anniversary year of the encyclical, as well as the rich teaching of Pope Saint

John Paul II in his catecheses on the "theology of the body." Many Catholics have come to a greater understanding and appreciation of the Church's teaching through such study and prayer.

I understand Notre Dame's desire to respect other religious traditions and the conscientious decisions of members of the Notre Dame community on this issue. Members of the community who decide to use contraceptives, however, should not expect the university to act contrary to its Catholic beliefs by funding these contraceptives. Notre Dame bears prophetic witness to the truths of the Catholic faith in its words and actions on many issues of importance for the good of our society. Not providing funding for contraception would not be popular with some, but it would truly be a prophetic witness to the truth about human sexuality and its meaning and purpose. I hope and pray that the University will reconsider its decision.

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend



Seraphic Fire's *Selva morale* by Monteverdi

EVAN HOLGUIN
Executive Editor

Notre Dame alum conducts an emotional performance

Claudio Monteverdi is a famous Italian composer; his *Selva morale e spirituale*, however, is not a famous piece. Thus, it fit perfectly into the mission of Seraphic Fire, an ensemble of singers and instrumentalists. This ensemble, conducted by 2000 graduate Patrick Dupré Quigley, holds as their mission “to present high-quality performances of under-performed music with cultural significance.” With such a mission, the conductor returned to his *alma mater* on February 24 to present a rendition of Monteverdi’s *Selva morale*.

The ensemble was relatively few in number, counting only fourteen—eight singers, five instrumentalists, and Quigley himself. The small size, however, injured in no way the performance or range which the ensemble. Though it is true that the sound was noticeably thinner than that from a full orchestra or choir, clear and distinct sounds still filled the concert hall for the duration of the performance. Moreover, the modest numbers lent the ensemble ample space on the stage to augment their music with movement.

The first is the highlight of the lute, played by John Lenti. This instrument is central to Monteverdi’s *Selva Morale*; Lenti performed more than any other member of the ensemble, and the thin instrumental accompaniment allowed for the distinctive twang of the lute to be prominent throughout the entire performance. Lenti met this call for endurance with exceptional skill, securing that his lute was one of the highlights of the night.

Additionally, the minimal choir granted each of the singers ample space to utilize the stage, adding their body language to their voice to create a truly captivating experience. The most riveting piece of the night was *Chi voi che m’innamori*, an Italian song of three stanzas. Each stanza ended with opposing joy and sorrow. The first stanza ended, “Oggi si ride [today we laugh] ... e poi, domani, si piange [and then tomorrow we weep],” and the trio of alto Doug Dodson, tenor Patrick Muehleise, and bass Steven Eddy moved which such joy as they sang of laughter, and stalled to such sorrow when they sang of weeping, that the audience could not help but to

be drawn into these emotions.

This excellent use of space and movement undoubtedly had its birth from Quigley himself. His conducting style was so vibrant and fluid that the only word to describe it is childlike. The way which Quigley swayed back-and-forth, noticeably shifting his weight as if he were dancing while he queued each of his performers, was so vivacious that it was like watching a young and joyful soul at play.

Depth of emotion was added not only through this propensity of movement, but also through the extraordinary skill of the instruments. The organ, played by Justin Blackwell, was played in such a way that it was unobtrusive yet vastly important; it was the field on which the rest of the music was played. The cello, Guy Fishman, performed a similar role of background accompaniment as the organ, but in a more perceivable way.

The violins, Sarah Darling and Laura Rubinstein-Salzedo, were frequently used to add depth by mirroring the pitch of the singers: when the singers were sad, they deepened the despair; when happy, they heightened the joy. That being said, they were most memorable after the aforementioned *Chi voi ch’innamori*, which ends “e poi domani si muore! [then tomorrow we die!].” Following this declaration of death, the violins play slow and somber, unaccompanied by voice, enveloping the audience with the sounds and emotions of death.

Perhaps the most profound moment of the entire performance occurred in the closing seconds. The closing song, *Dixit Dominus Secundo*, concludes with a traditional doxology, sung clearly by the sopranos Margot Rood and Meredith Ruduski. Yet, when the song arrives to the “et semper et in saecula saeculorum [and always and forever],” the entirety of the choir joins in a layered and complex conclusion, highlighting the volume and gravity of the words being sung.

Seraphic Fire’s performance was a part of the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center’s Presenting Series, and was co-sponsored by Notre Dame’s program in Sacred Music.

Evan Holguin is a senior in the Program of Liberal Studies. He recently received a signed copy of Audrey Assad’s newest album, Evergreen. You can ask him about it, or Seraphic Fire’s performance, at eholguin@nd.edu.

Notre Dame jazz concert is a smashing success

ALEXANDER ARROYO
Staff Writer

The Rover reviews Collegiate Jazz Festival

This past weekend, Notre Dame hosted the 60th Annual Collegiate Jazz Festival, featuring ten bands from eight different colleges. Over the course of two days, each band played for about half an hour. Professional jazz artists Greg Tardy, Alex Norris, Bruce Barth, Sean Conly, and Jaimeo Brown judged the schools on their performances. The professionals themselves also performed during the traditional “judges’ jam” on Friday night.

The first band to play was Alma College’s Percussion Ensemble. The group brought with them a piano, guitar, several xylophones, and a legion of steel drums. This created a clear sound quite different from the sloppy half beat famous on Bourbon Street. They used

the large gallon steel drums in rear of the stage to emit low brasslike sounds usually accomplished by a trumpet. Likewise, light repeated tapping on three xylophones emitted a string-like sound. The Alma students played Louis Armstrong’s famous “What a Wonderful World” with their unique set of instruments instead of the usual vocals, violins, and suppressed horn.

Next, the Columbia College Fusion Ensemble played a wide range of original compositions that ranged from progressive jazz to R&B. The vocalist sang little to no lyrics, and instead belted out a string of “ooooh’s” and “woooooah’s. Their drummer was especially excellent, but the other instrumentals were just mediocre. The music created by this group had the vibe of background music from an episode of *Mad Men*.

The University of Illinois at Chicago Funk Combo played third. This band, also known as the “Flames

of Funk,” knew exactly who they were. Their first number was an instrumental piece that combined brass and guitar work. For the remainder of their performance, the band was accompanied by an amazing vocalist. When this young performer sang, her voice filled the entire hall. The band’s selection crescendoed with their rendition of Sly & The Family Stone’s “Thank You.” The fancy guitar work, tight band, and powerful vocals had the whole theater stomping along to the 70s hit.

The last performance of the night was Notre Dame’s own New Orleans Brass Band. It’s very difficult to be the last act of a show that goes on for four hours. But the New Orleans Brass Band made it worth staying. Bear in mind I’ve been going to New Orleans jazz clubs since I was about ten years old, so I was ready to hate a “New Orleans Band” from South Bend, Indiana. Modern New Orleans jazz bands can take the whole “sloppy

French quarter beat” too far. But I must admit, they were excellent. I was at a New Orleans jazz concert over Christmas break where the trumpeter left the theater in the middle of a song to get two fingers of bourbon from the bar across the street. He stumbled back into the theater, downed the drink, and then proceeded to slaughter the rest of “When the Saints Go Marching In.” Unlike that band, the Notre Dame New Orleans Jazz band maintained that loose French Quarter style without overdoing it (no one was taking bar breaks).

Overall, the 60th annual collegiate jazz festival was a success, and showcased some of the best college groups in the nation.

Alexander Arroyo is a freshman Political Science major in Stanford Hall. He hails from New Orleans, LA, where he learned to appreciate authentic jazz music, as well as seafood. He can be reached at rarroyo@nd.edu.

Rover recommends: Marvel's *Black Panther*

JACK FERGUSON
C&T Editor

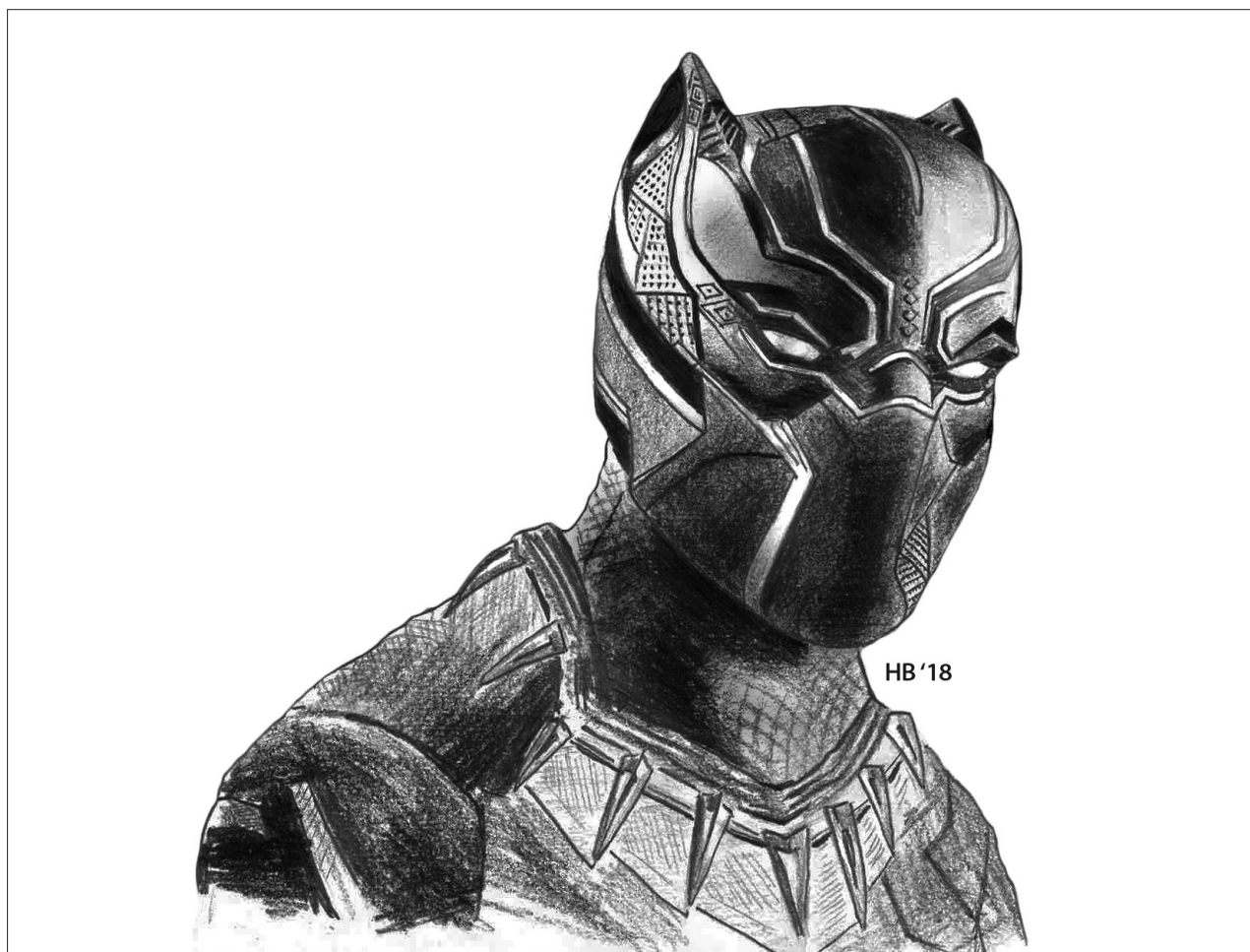
Better than your average Marvel movie

Black Panther has exploded onto the entertainment scene as the biggest movie of 2018 thus far. While a huge financial success and a great action movie that fulfills the typical Marvel formula, *Black Panther* is

also somewhat deeper and more of a work of art than other, more superficial films in its Cinematic Universe. Raising questions highly relevant to our own times, it tackles the difficult issues of race, family, nationalism, and imperialism in a manner that is blunt and head-on without being a trumpet for whatever current strain of progressive ideology happens to be flowing through Hollywood. But make no mistake; *Black Panther* has a message to send

and a statement to make. It is an unabashedly African and African-American glory stage, but one that comes across as timely and with substance beyond the gorgeous African scenery and culture portrayed in the film. It is all about black power, but with a methodology that celebrates its own culture rather than create unnecessary violent divides. The social commentary from the movie certainly gets a little political, but other filmmakers would

do well to take a lesson from the way in which director Ryan Coogler frames a tone that is temperate, moderated, and respectful while at the same time being powerful, unapologetic, and direct. All of this is on top of *Black Panther* having some of the best action, storyline, and characters Marvel has come up with to date. If you’re looking for something as thought-provoking as it is entertaining, this is Marvel’s best work yet.



HB '18

Art by Hap Burke



"COME, WE
WILL TAKE
CARE OF
YOU. WE
WILL GET A
HOME FOR
YOUR
CHILD."



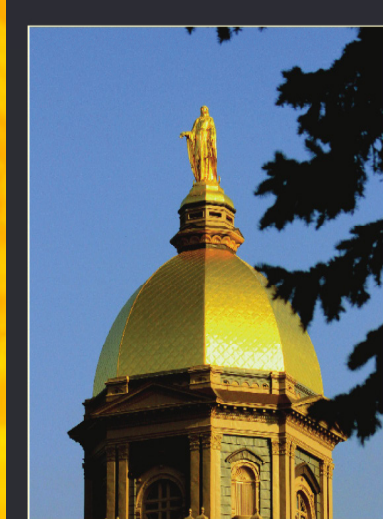
"BY
ADOPTING
A CHILD,
THESE
COUPLES
RECEIVE
JESUS."



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*O Blessed Virgin Mary,
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I beseech thee to intercede
with thy Son Jesus
to grant me the grace
to defend all human life,
with all my strength,
and for all my days.
Amen.*

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Five obstacles between you and spring break

LACEY SILVESTRI
Humor Editor

Well, folks, you did it. You made it through a majority of the first half of the semester. That is a pretty significant feat, so before I say anything else, let me say, "Well done." Now, as you who have survived these first several weeks will know, spring break rapidly approaches. Visions of sandy beaches, excessive amounts of sunshine, piña coladas, and sweet, sweet freedom have probably already filled your calculus-saturated mind. You don't know much, but you do know that sitting with your best friends on a beach with a drink in your hand is a much more appealing prospect than sitting with your group project partners in Hes with half of a cold cup of coffee in your hand.

Alas, spring break isn't upon us just yet. We still have several days left until then, and chances are, these days will be filled with all sorts of mid-semester academic chaos. You probably still have quite a lot to slog through before you hop on that plane to wherever you're going. If you can just get through these five obstacles standing between you and your spring break, it'll be smooth sailing.

Nice weather: More than



Cherry Beach, photo by James Rabner

anything else, this brief reprieve from the barren South Bend tundra will deal the most devastating blow to your ability to buckle down and get things done before spring break. The warmth, the sunshine, and the small taste of spring will do its very best to distract you from all you need to accomplish before break. If you can withstand this foretaste of vacation, you can withstand anything.

Sickness: Are you one of the proud, the few, the strong who avoided the flu this season? Did you already get the flu and now think that you can't possibly get it twice? Don't get cocky—none of you are out of the woods yet. Take it from someone who managed to contract this super fun illness twice this flu season—you still have

plenty of time. I'm not saying you're going to get it, but I *am* telling you to wash your hands.

Senioritis: You may think that this only applies to seniors, but we all know that's not true. We've all been feeling it (and if we're being honest with ourselves, we've probably been feeling it since that fateful senior year of high school). Whatever year you are, hang in there. Unless you're a senior, in which case—there are only two more months, my dudes, so who really cares.

Lenten promise: Your Lenten promise of giving up Starbucks, sweets, junk food, or [insert that thing you love but cut out of your life because of Lent] ... that was a good and holy thought on Ash Wednesday. During midterms week, however,

you know you're going to be tempted to go back on that promise. Stay strong for Jesus and for the times you're probably going to cheat over spring break.

School things: This probably goes without saying, but your dreams of sipping margaritas on the beach are going to be absolutely slaughtered at the altar of mid-semester exams, papers, group projects, presentations, etc. Honestly, no advice here except to power through. Punta Cana awaits.

Lacey Silvestri is a senior English and history major who will fail to overcome any of the aforementioned obstacles. To fund her spring break, Venmo her @laceysilvestri, and to tell her to stop soliciting strangers for money, email her at lsilvest@nd.edu.

Dear Brenston...

Rover welcomes
new regular advice
columnist

Dear Brenston,
Seven weeks into the semester, I am left with only \$120 in FlexPoints. However, I am completely addicted to ABP hazelnut coffee and Subway spicy italian subs. What do I do?
--Desperate from Morrissey

Dear Desperate,
Switch to Starbucks? I don't know, I'm just a dog.
--Brenston

Dear Brenston,
My roommate seems to only shower every other week and hasn't done her laundry yet this semester. She's even taken to wearing stained clothing to avoid doing laundry. I love her, and I've tried to talk to her, but she just won't listen. Have any advice?
--Disgusted from McGlinn

Dear Disgusted,
Wash her yourself? I don't know, I'm just a dog.
--Brenston
Dear Brenston,
I have a professor who

wears the exact same blue plaid shirt to every class. He's only 25 years old. Is this a sign that he's crazy? Should I drop the class?
--Scared from Lewis

Dear Scared,
Don't worry. Being 25 is not a sign of being crazy--it's a normal part of every human's life--though, of course, I wouldn't know. I'm just a dog.
--Brenston
Dear Brenston,

My friends all say I'm too nice, and that I'll never be able to negotiate a seven-figure salary. How can I find my inner assertiveness?
--Timid from Flaherty

Dear Timid,
Actually, I think that one can live quite comfortably on a just few dollars a month. But I don't know that much about finances. I'm just a dog.

--Brenston

Have any questions for Brenston?? Send 'em to ndirishrover@gmail.com.