



SYCAMORE TRUST

The Church and Notre Dame

JUNE 2
2018

Alumni & Friends Protecting Notre Dame's Catholic Identity

SYCAMORE TRUST ANNUAL BREAKFAST 2018

A BRIEF HISTORY

Our first panel discussion was held in the spring of 2007 with presentations focused on Father Jenkins’s approval of The Vagina Monologues. The event that year drew an audience that filled a large lecture hall. So did our 2008 and 2009 events – especially the latter, which dealt with Father Jenkins’s decision to honor President Obama, a decision that was harshly criticized by 83 cardinals, archbishops, and bishops.



To accommodate increasingly larger audiences, in 2011 we moved to a Morris Inn meeting room and added a breakfast to the format.

As it turned out, we underestimated the program’s draw. Although alumni attending Reunion Weekend were not told of it through the official calendar of events, word got out and the room was filled beyond capacity. So we moved the following year to the Conference Center and, with the exception of 2013, when we met in the Hilton Inn because the Morris Inn was closed for renovations, we have been there ever since. We began streaming the program speakers on the Internet in 2013 and now reach hundreds of alumni with informed discussions of issues that bear importantly on the Catholic identity of Notre Dame.

2018 PROGRAM AGENDA

7:15 AM EDT	COMPLIMENTARY BREAKFAST
8:00 AM EDT	PROGRAM
Welcome	Bill Dempsey
Invocation	Rev. Wilson Miscamble, C.S.C.
Introduction	Bill Dempsey
The Church and Notre Dame	Rev. Wilson Miscamble, C.S.C.
Student Awards	Sarah Drumm and Kevin Angell for Sarah Ortiz
Questions & Answers	Bill Dempsey
9:30 AM EDT	CLOSING PRAYER



2018 SPEAKERS

THE CHURCH AND NOTRE DAME

Rev. Wilson Miscamble, C.S.C., Sarah Drumm ('18), Kevin Angell ('20), and Bill Dempsey ('52), discuss challenges to Notre Dame's Catholic identity and ways to meet them.

Rev. Wilson Miscamble, C.S.C.



A member of the permanent faculty at the University of Notre Dame since 1988, Father Miscamble was educated at the University of Queensland, where he received his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees, and the University of Notre Dame, where he received a second Master's and his Doctoral Degrees. He was ordained as a Catholic priest with the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1988. At Notre Dame, he has served as the Chair of the History Department and Rector and Superior of Moreau Seminary.

An award-winning historian, Father Miscamble's primary research interests are American foreign policy since World War II and the role of Catholics in 20th century U.S. foreign relations. He has been engaged for decades in discussions about Notre Dame's Catholic identity and has recounted the history of these debates in his book "For Notre Dame: Battling For the Heart and Soul of a Catholic University." He is also the organizer and past President of the Notre Dame Chapter of Faculty for Life.

More about Father Miscamble can be found at: <https://history.nd.edu/faculty>

William Dempsey ('52)



Bill Dempsey is the founding President of Sycamore Trust. He graduated from Notre Dame in 1952 as class valedictorian; received his law degree from Yale University; served as chief law clerk to Chief Justice Earl Warren; and practiced law in Washington when not serving as President of the Association of American Railroads and Chairman of the National Railway Labor Conference.

Sarah Drumm ('18)



A Computer Science major from Cincinnati, Ohio, Sarah is the past president of both ND Right to Life and Engineers Without Borders. In addition to being a member of the Running Club, she served as Dorm Commissioner for the Center for Social Concerns, Student Minister for the Anchor Leadership Program, and Stage Manager for the Not-So-Royal Shakespeare

Sarah Ortiz ('19)



A Program of Liberal Studies and Classics major and honors scholar from Gaithersburg, Maryland, Sarah is the Editor-in-Chief emeritus of the Irish Rover and member of Res Publica, a political discussion group. She will be involved with the Intercollegiate Studies Institute next year and the Alliance for Catholic Education following graduation.

Kevin Angell ('20)



An Economics, Political Science, and Theology major from Naperville, Illinois, Kevin is a Sorin Fellow with the Center for Ethics and Culture, the Deputy Grand Knight for Knights of Columbus Council 1477, and past Managing Editor for the Irish Rover.

Sarah Ortiz and Sarah Drumm are co-recipient of this year's Sycamore Trust Student Award for their outstanding contribution to activities promoting Notre Dame's Catholic identity.



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EXTRACTS FROM NOTRE DAME'S MISSION STATEMENT

1

The University of Notre Dame is a Catholic academic community of higher learning...

As a Catholic university, one of its distinctive goals is to provide 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.... The Catholic identity of the University depends upon, and is nurtured by, the continuing presence of a predominant number of Catholic intellectuals....The University encourages a way of living consonant with a Christian community and manifest in prayer, liturgy and service. Residential life endeavors to develop that sense of community and of responsibility that prepares students for subsequent leadership in building a society that is at once more human and more divine.

2

Notre Dame's character as a Catholic academic community presupposes that no genuine search for the truth in the human or the cosmic order is alien to the life of faith.

The University welcomes all areas of scholarly activity as consonant with its mission, subject to appropriate critical refinement. There is, however, a special obligation and opportunity, specifically as a Catholic university, to pursue the religious dimensions of all human learning. Only thus can Catholic intellectual life in all disciplines be animated and fostered and a proper community of scholarly religious discourse be established.

3

In all dimensions of the University, Notre Dame pursues its objectives through the formation of an authentic human community graced by the Spirit of Christ.



OUR ORIGIN AND HISTORY



Sycamore Trust is a model of calm and reasonable yet unrelenting friendly questioning of recent events on the South Bend campus.

Ralph McInerney
1929-2010

Sycamore Trust was established in 2005 to provide a source of information, a means of communication, and a collective voice to Notre Dame alumni and others in the Notre Dame family concerned about preserving the Catholic identity of the University.

The flashpoint for the founders of Sycamore was Father Jenkins's authorization of the student on-campus performance of *The Vagina Monologues* and the continuation of *The Queer Film Festival*, albeit under a less revealing name. We soon discovered, however, that the problem was not simply a few errant administration decisions but something much more fundamental: the radical deterioration of the Catholic identity of the faculty over the past several decades.

So said a number of concerned faculty members, and our examination of many studies of the secularization of religious schools confirmed that it always results from the loss by the faculty of its anchor in the founding faith. The episodes that clashed with Catholic identity during Father Jenkins's tenure — including the 2009 honoring of President Obama, the Church's most formidable adversary on abortion — have been symptoms of this phenomenon.

Those symptoms have certainly been pronounced enough to alert observers that something about the university has changed. We have described them in many bulletins over the years. Besides the *Vagina Monologues*, the *Queer Film Festival*, and the honoring of President Obama, they have included the award of the Laetare Medal to Vice President Biden, a pro-choice advocate of same-sex marriage, and to Father Gregory Boyle, another same-sex marriage proponent; the recognition of same-sex marriages for spousal benefits; and most recently the decision to provide students and employees abortion-inducing contraceptives through University health insurance programs.

In the course of these episodes, the University has four times publicly rejected the strong objections of its bishop, been rebuked by 84 cardinals, archbishops and bishops (in the Obama affair), and

repudiated the representations it made to the federal courts that it could not in conscience as a Catholic university provide contraceptives to its students and employees.

As to the faculty, Catholic representation has plunged so far that the school no longer meets its own test of Catholic identity. The Mission Statement declares, "The University's Catholic identity depends upon the continuing presence of a predominant number of Catholics." The author, then-President Rev. Edward Malloy, C.S.C., said this "means more than a mere majority," and Rev. John Jenkins, C.S.C., the current President, speaks of "Catholic faculty" as "those who have been spiritually formed in that tradition and who embrace it." Provost Thomas Burish declared that the Mission Statement requires "a majority of faculty who are Catholic, who understand the nature of the religion, who can be role models."

Notre Dame does not come close. The proportion of those who check the "Catholic box" on a form has plummeted from 85% in the 1970's to about 54% today. This indisputably includes a large, if indeterminate, number of merely nominal and dissenting Catholics. Plainly, there is no longer close to a majority of committed Catholics. Best estimate: 20-30%.

Professor Emeritus Dr. Walter J. Nicgorski, one of Notre Dame's most respected and longest serving professors, took note of this phenomenon and its consequences during one of our panel discussions:

Along with the steady and steep decline of the percentage of faculty who are Catholics to about 50 per cent, there is the widely shared recognition that a large number of those who list themselves as Catholics are not inclined to be involved in any concerns about the religious character of this university....So it is increasingly



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19,222 bulletin subscribers

the case today that a young person going through the critical and questioning formative years of an education at Notre Dame might not encounter a practicing Catholic informed and engaged by the Catholic intellectual tradition, that curricular decisions and other decisions, including counseling decisions, will not be notably impacted by a Catholic perspective. One might say that beneath the large symbols of the University as a Catholic institution, there is reason for concern that the day-to-day struggles for learning and intellectual and professional development are not notably impacted by the Catholic tradition.

The attitude of the dominant forces on the faculty toward the loss of Catholic identity was plainly displayed in a resolution of the Faculty Senate several years ago based on a survey of the faculty:

The University should not compromise its academic aspirations in its efforts to maintain its Catholic identity.

At a school in which Catholic scholars predominated, this statement would, of course, be exactly reversed.

The insidious aspect of this transformation of the faculty and accordingly of what is taught — the heart of the university — is that it takes hold gradually and out of sight. The outward signs of Catholicism remain much the same, and accordingly alumni and others believe the university is just as Catholic as it has always been. And most, probably, do not really want to think otherwise.

Professor Emeritus Dr. Alfred J. Freddoso, a long-time distinguished philosophy professor, captured these dual characteristics of the University in his illuminating introduction to the late Dr. Charles E. Rice's book "What Happened to Notre Dame." Memorably describing Notre Dame as "something like a public school in a Catholic neighborhood," Dr. Freddoso continued:

This might sound appalling to some, but it is, I submit, what the vast majority of present-

day administrators, faculty members, students and alumni mean when they sincerely, though mistakenly, claim that Notre Dame is a Catholic university. For they assume without much thought that the Catholic character of the university is borne almost entirely by the 'neighborhood,' i.e., by the university's sacramental life and associated activities such as retreats, bible study groups, sacramental preparation courses, etc; by various good works and service projects on and off campus; by a set of faith-inspired rules governing campus life;... and by the sheer number of 'outdoor' and 'indoor' manifestations of Catholicism such as the statue of Our Lady atop the Golden Dome, Sacred Heart Basilica, the Grotto, and scores of statutes found all over the 'neighborhood.' It is here that virtually all of a student's moral and spiritual formation, if any, will take place...The classroom or laboratory, by contrast, is a wholly different venue...This is where 'reason' resides on campus and where 'the mind is educated'; and it has little or nothing to do with Catholicism.

In these circumstances, while Notre Dame is, we believe, the most Catholic of the major Catholic universities except for Catholic University, and while a committed and discriminating student can still obtain a splendid Catholic education, the situation is not so happy for the vast run of the students; and worse, the future looks bleak absent a major reversal of the hiring pattern of the last several decades. That is the heart of the problem.

The good news is that, after Sycamore Trust began publishing the incriminating faculty composition data and the administration took some remedial steps, the downward spiral was checked. But the bad news is that the administration has adopted a hiring policy that will permit the worsening of an already bleak situation. The new policy is the hiring of 50% "check the box" Catholics annually.

That is a reduction from 60% in the crucial College of Arts and Letters. If the faculty does no better than that, a truly Catholic Notre Dame will become but a memory.



OUR ORIGIN AND HISTORY

86,162 website visitors last year

Still, hope remains because of an outstanding and still substantial corps of Catholic scholars, a number of supportive non-Catholics, an 82% Catholic student body, the continuing, if diminished, presence of priests on the campus, and the “Catholic neighborhood” described by Dr. Freddoso.

We believe that Sycamore Trust can play a role in the realization of that hope. Sycamore can look to significant results over the last decade that can reasonably be attributed in some substantial measure to its efforts. Here is what has happened on some of the issues upon which we have focused:

1. Most importantly, the decline in Catholic faculty has been arrested for the moment. Ten years ago, it seemed likely that by now Catholics would have slipped into even an arithmetical minority. Until Sycamore put the spotlight on this crucial problem, few outside the university knew anything about it and no effective action had been taken by those within the University.
2. A board member who was a major contributor to a pro-abortion organization resigned.
3. Another board member who is an important promoter of embryonic stem cell research did not stand for re-election.
4. The Vagina Monologues quietly disappeared.
5. So, too, did the Queer Film Festival.
6. Father Jenkins left his position on the board of a prominent organization, Millennium Promise, that promotes abortion and contraception. (So, too, did a major Notre Dame donor.)
7. Our disclosure of the falsity of the University’s asserted justification for the trespass prosecution of the pro-life demonstrators who protested the honoring of President Obama almost certainly played a role in the University’s finally dismissing the charges. Father Jenkins had explained the University’s policy was to have all trespassing demonstrators prosecuted. Wrong. On his watch the policy was “catch and release” for pro-gay and anti-military trespassers.
8. We marshaled substantial financial support for student organizations that are crucially important to Catholic identity. For example: NDRResponse,

the federation of student organizations opposed to the honoring of President Obama; The Irish Rover, the independent voice of Catholicism on campus; the annual Edith Stein Conference, the student Catholic voice on issues of gender, sexuality, and morality; Notre Dame Right to Life; Millitia of the Immaculata; and SCOP, dedicated to questions implicating Catholic teaching on marriage and family.

9. A contraceptive ad on The Observer Internet site was taken down immediately upon our complaint.
10. So, too, was a link to a porn site of uncertain provenance on a web site of a student organization.
11. The University eliminated its website recommendation of an unofficial women’s faculty organization that promotes pro-abortion organizations.
12. Most recently, within 24 hours of Sycamore Trust’s disclosure that the University planned to make abortions eligible for cost savings in its Flexible Savings Plan for employees, the University cancelled its plan.
13. The University has also announced its intention to end the provision of abortifacients to students and employees by its insurers and in its Flexible Savings Plan.

Thus, there is good reason both to keep hope alive and to support our conviction that, with the help of alumni and others with a deep interest in Notre Dame and Catholic higher education, Sycamore Trust can play a significant role in the effort to restore the Catholic identity that is the defining heritage of this precious institution.



Alumni at other Catholic schools didn’t realize that their schools were losing their Catholic hearts and minds until it was too late to stop it. That shouldn’t happen at Notre Dame.

William H. Dempsey, '52
Sycamore Trust
Founding President



Alumni & Friends Protecting Notre Dame's Catholic Identity

Like the ancient Sycamore tree standing watch over the Grotto, Sycamore Trust, with its broad base of supporters within the Notre Dame Family, seeks to protect the school's formative heritage — its Catholic identity and its sustaining relationship to the Church.

Established in 2005 as an alumni-only membership, Sycamore Trust has expanded steadily and now includes a broad representation of the Notre Dame family and a growing number of committed Christians troubled by the secularization of higher education in general. Our fight is against the forces of secularization that will continue to press on the University. To join us in this fight, please get in touch with us.



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