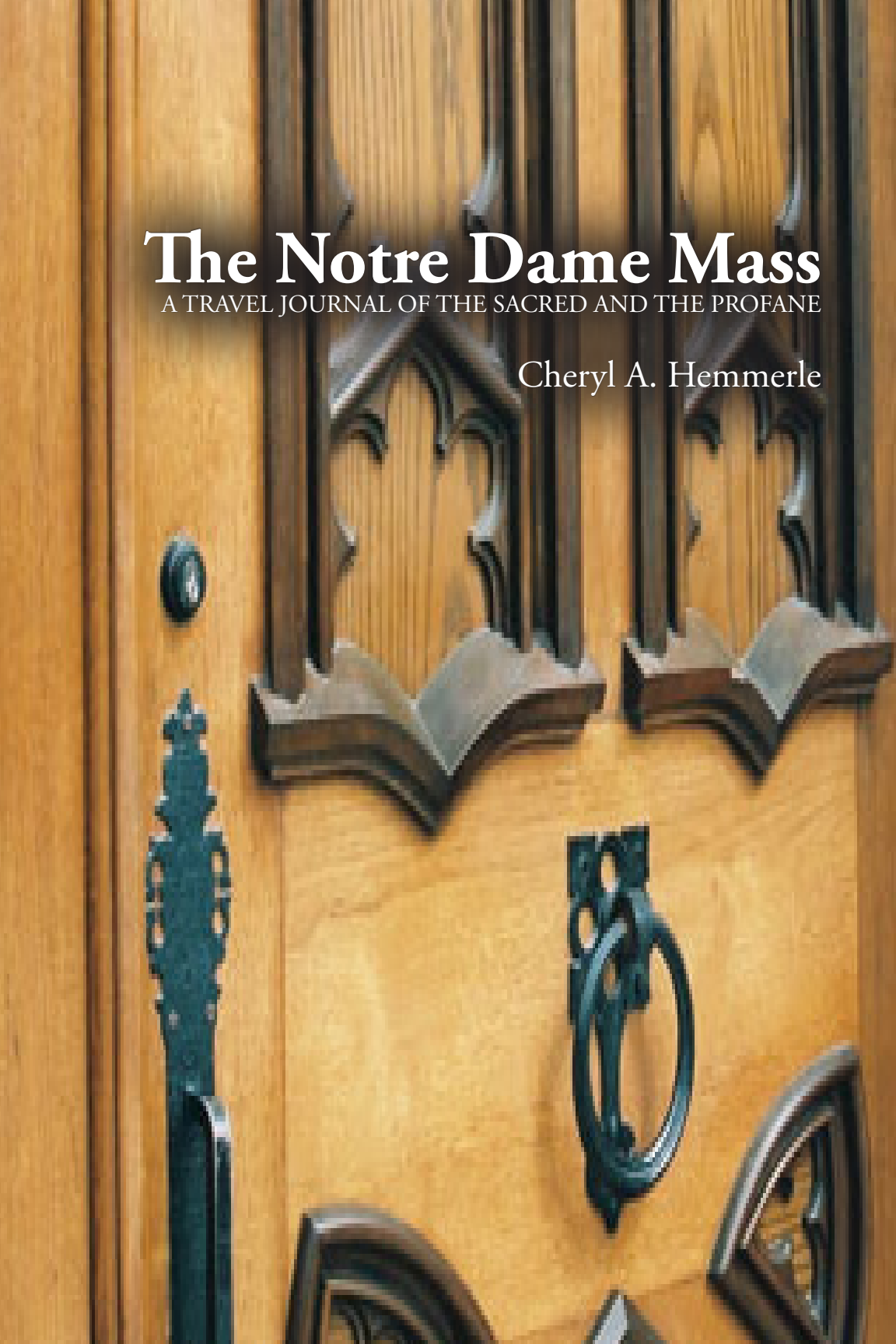


The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of a wooden door. The door features several Gothic-style carvings, including pointed arches and tracery. A dark metal handle with a circular ring is visible on the right side. The wood has a warm, light brown tone.

The Notre Dame Mass

A TRAVEL JOURNAL OF THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

Cheryl A. Hemmerle

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FOR MARSHA
my ideal reader, travel companion
and spouse

Order of the Mass

THE SEASON OF LENT, MARCH 2009

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Introduction

GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS

The Mass is a celebration of the Eucharist, which is the remembrance of Christ's life, death and resurrection. Basically, it is a liturgy or prescribed ritual for religious services. The Mass provides a frame, format, flow for worshipping God and entering into sacred time and space.

I was not raised Catholic, but Lutheran, and am now a quasi-Methodist pagan. I have had a variety of religious experiences beyond these, including Southern Baptist, Pentecostal, Jewish and Wiccan. And while I have a master's of divinity degree, I'm not an expert on these things. Rather, I have a broad frame of reference for religious experience and expression, and it is from this frame of reference that I approach this travel journal of the sacred and the profane. By using the Catholic Mass as my outline (with some artistic license), I have created a series of linked journal entries based on the journey I and my partner, Marsha, took in March 2009 to the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana.

And so, the traditional Mass in the Catholic tradition begins with these words,

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.¹

¹Exact words spoken at the beginning of the Mass we attended in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, March 22, 2009.

sa·cred (sā'krīd) adj. 1. Consecrated to or belonging to a god or deity : holy. 2. Of or connected with religion or religious rites. 3. Regarded with the same respect and reverence accorded holy things : venerated, hallowed. 4. Set apart for, and dedicated to, some person, place, purpose, sentiment, etc. 5. Secured as by a religious feeling or sense of justice against any defamation, violation, or intrusion : inviolate.

—syn. holy, blessed, consecrated, hallowed, sanctified, angelic, godly, saintly, cherished, sacrosanct, inviolate, esteemed, worshiped, defended, guarded, protected, shielded, immune, untouchable, numinous, spiritual, divine, religious.

pro·fane (prō-fān') adj. 1. Not connected with religion or religious matters : secular. 2. Not initiated into the inner mysteries or esoteric knowledge of something. 3. Not hallowed or consecrated. 4. Showing disrespect or contempt for sacred things : irreverent.

—syn. lay, secular, temporal, unsacred, heathen, ethnic, gentile, infidel, pagan, earthly, mundane, terrestrial, worldly, ungodly, irreverent, obscene, dirty, sacrilegious, blasphemous, nasty, raunchy, smutty, vulgar, defiled, polluted, unclean.

Definitions taken from *Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary*. Synonymms taken from *Roget's II The New Thesaurus*.

Prelude

A CALL TO THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

What is sacred? What is profane?

Are they two roads running parallel
in opposite directions
divergent from a fixed point:
upward to heaven
downward to hell

Are they eternally fixed on a path
never waivering from the ruts cut to guide them:
blessed, blasphemed
protected, polluted
venerated, violated

Can they be the same road
viewed through different lenses, perspectives
what is sacred to one
is profane to another:
holy, shit
mother, fucker
god, damnit

What is sacred? What is profane?

Are they merely words, figures of speech
defined by the sounds our voices make
our minds and hearts believe
our hands fashion to use, abuse

Does the time we spend
 around the dinner table
 at the basketball game
 in bed making love
constitute as much sacredness,
 space and time
as worshipping a god
 at a set time each week
 for one hour

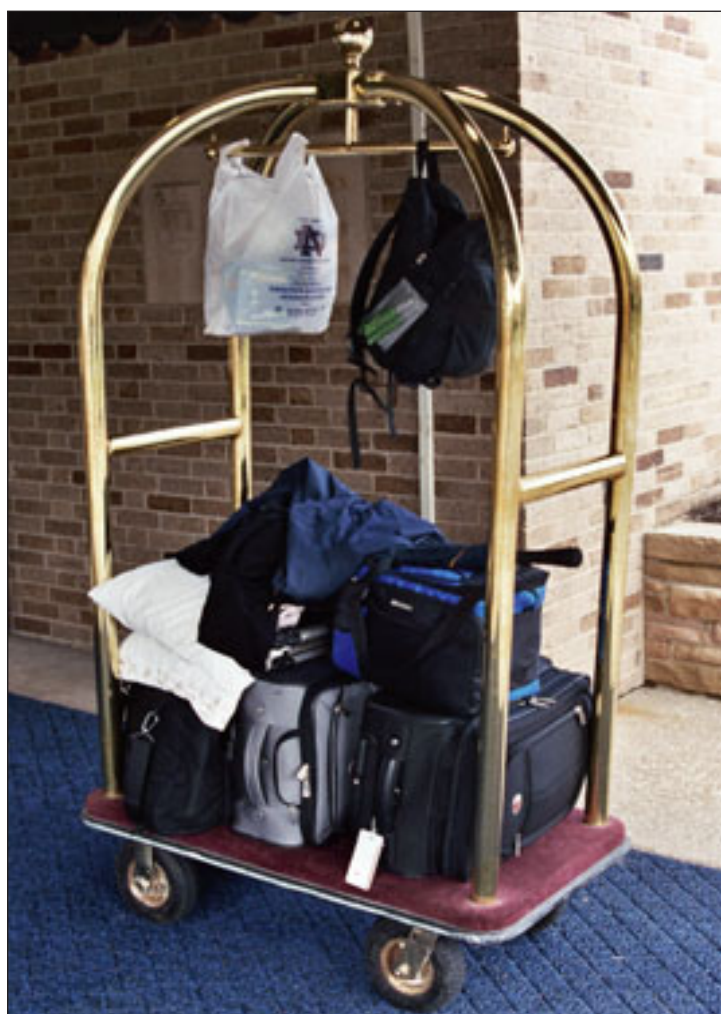
If it, whatever *it* is,
 is hallowed, set apart
 honored, defended,
 guarded, cherished
it is sacred.

If not,
 it is profane.

What I know of the sacred is housed in a church building, recited according to the prescribed liturgy and lived one hour a week during a time reserved for only one thing: God. Of course, I use the word sacred in other ways, to refer to cows for example. But the truly sacred in my lexicon can mean only that one thing, which is a really big thing in fact. What I know of the profane is housed in my body, reacting according to the human condition and lived every hour of every week throughout a lifetime destined for only one thing: death. Of course, I use profane words all the time, to refer to bodily functions for example. But the truly profane in my lexicon can mean only that one thing, which is a really big thing in fact.

In this moment, I stand at the intersection, the crossroads, of the sacred and the profane—a moving toward and a moving away from, an embracing and an avoiding, a rushing in and a running out. I wonder,

Does the sacred swirl around the profane or does the profane encrust the sacred? Is each a separate stream flowing at cross currents? Or do they share the same loom, weaving a pattern that interlaces, causing each to touch a part of the other?



Gathering

PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

Between considering the sacred and the profane and making the pilgrimage to South Bend, Indiana, there is a chasm. I try to fill it with research, reading, writing, making lists of things to do, things to pack:

black journal, three small black notebooks for recording photos, lined sheets of notebook paper on a clipboard, 100 3-by-5 cards, post-it notes, one dozen ballpoint pens, two mechanical pencils with replacement lead and erasers, three yellow highlighters, 24 fine tipped markers, 12 oil pastels, 48 charcoal sticks, 36 colored pencils, two pencil sharpeners, tablet of tracing paper, tablet of clear vellum, tablet of textured ivory cardstock, digital recorder, Flip video camera, Epson digital camera, Minolta 35 mm SLR camera, Canon 35 mm SLR camera, 15 rolls of color and black and white film in 200, 400 and 800 speeds, tripod, basketball tickets, Holiday Inn Express reservation, Morris Inn reservation, 3" three-ring binder with all my research notes and webpage printouts, Bible, dictionary, thesaurus, Book of Christian Prayer, Cousineau's *The Art of Pilgrimage*, Sellner's *Pilgrimage*, Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane*, *The Way of the Pilgrim*, Hesse's *Siddhartha*, Nouwen's *The Way of the Heart*, Singh's *The Path of Buddha*, assorted power cords, USB cables, battery charger, AA and AAA batteries, Dell laptop, mouse, mouse pad, power pack, reading glasses

It takes a lot of stuff to create a travel journal. Somewhere in all of this, I'll need to find room for a change of underwear and a toothbrush. I wander from my office to the bedroom and back packing and repacking my bags, three in all plus a suitcase. Marsha has laid out a short stack of clothing and two books, and now she's busy getting food ready for

the dog, the cat and our road trip. I start moving everything from the upstairs to the garage. Because she knows from years of traveling with me, it's best to let me pack the car.

I'm always amazed that our car is just the right size for everything we need to take with us on our road trips, and everything has a perfectly crafted space—fitting together like a jigsaw puzzle. The only room left to fill is our seats, so we jump in and fasten our seat belts. As we pull out of the driveway, I'm running through the checklist in my head for the nth time. Marsha knows what I'm doing, and she says,

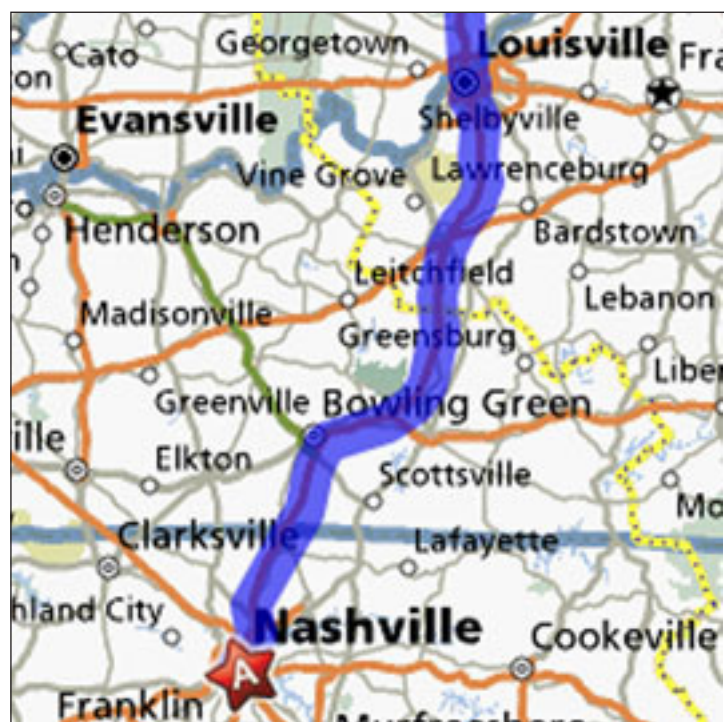
“If there's anything we've forgotten, I'm sure we'll be able to buy it if you need it that badly. Let's go.”

TOURNAMENT PACKAGE



**2009 NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP FIRST/SECOND ROUNDS
JOYCE CENTER
NOTRE DAME, INDIANA
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, HOST**

Please safeguard your tickets in a secure place.
Make certain that you bring the proper
ticket for the session you are attending.



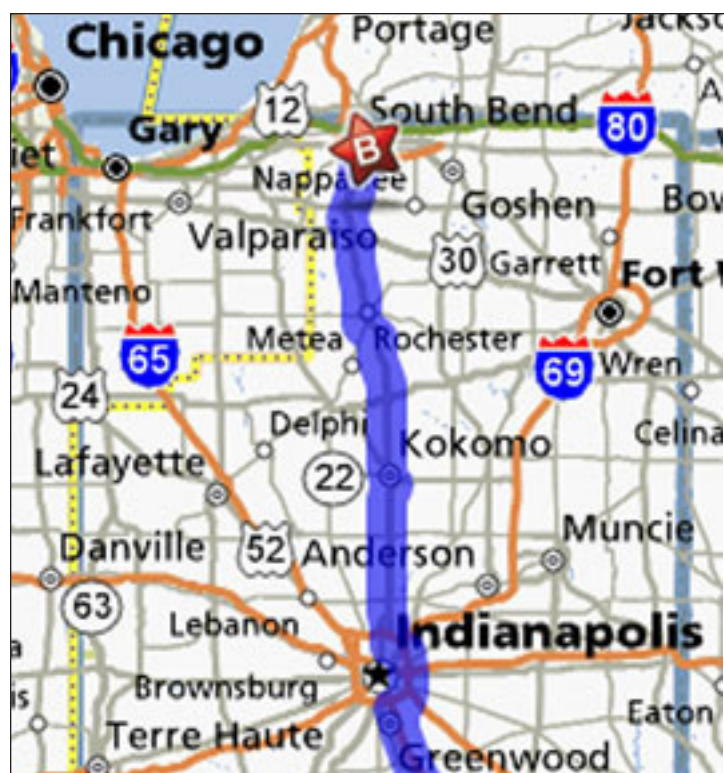
Entrance

THE PILGRIMAGE TO SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

Saturday, March 21, 2009: **7:25 a.m.** Depart from home, I drive. **7:35 a.m.** Stop at Starbucks on Old Hickory Boulevard for coffee and breakfast. **7:56 a.m.** Drop the dog off at My Second Home Pet Resort. **8:12 a.m.** On our way, I-65N. **9:46 a.m.** Rest stop on I-65N in Kentucky at mile marker 60. **9:56 a.m.** Put Alison Krause into the CD player, Marsha takes over the driving so I can write, take pictures and video. **11:54 a.m.** We cross into Indiana and eastern daylight time. **12:22 p.m.** Put Melissa Etheridge into the CD player. **1:03 p.m.** Take a potty, gas and lunch break at the Arby's/Mapco on I-65N in Indiana at mile marker 76. Gas stops pumping exactly at the \$25 mark. I think I should buy a lottery ticket, but I don't. **1:15 p.m.** Back on the road with Marsha continuing to drive. **1:41 p.m.** Turn onto I-465E. **2:01 p.m.** Turn onto 31N. **4:36 p.m.** Arrive at the Holiday Inn Express in Mishawaka, Indiana, for one night. **5:15 p.m.** Depart the hotel to meet Marsha's sister, brother-in-law and niece for dinner at the Texas Roadhouse in Elkhart off the Indiana Toll Road exit 92. Stop at Wal-Mart first to drop off three rolls of film. **7:52 p.m.** Pick up pictures at Wal-Mart then return to the hotel and sort pictures. Marsha watches basketball on ESPN. I upload photos and video then write my blog post.

On November 16, 1842, Father Sorin and seven brothers left St. Peter's [near Washington, Indiana]. Early that morning they had put together what they would need for the journey, loaded the ox-drawn cart, and the antique stage coach ... and set out. They had more than two hundred and fifty miles ahead of them. The weather was bitterly cold every step of the way. They took turns at riding and walking. After a few days of travel, however, Father Sorin decided that he and four of the Brothers should go on ahead, while the other three should follow at a slower pace with the oxen and the laden cart. On November 26, ten days after leaving St. Peter's, Father Sorin and the first four brothers reach South Bend.²

²Hope, Arthur J. Notre Dame: One Hundred Years, chapter III, page 2 (retrieved from <http://archives.nd.edu/hope/hope03.htm>).





Greeting

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN

Marsha is driving as we weave our way through the streets of South Bend toward the campus. We approach from the south on Angela; and before we turn onto Notre Dame Avenue, I see Mary atop the Golden Dome. I'm as excited as a 12-year-old driving through the gates of Disney World. Strains of *Salve Regina* from Sister Act bounce in my head. This is what I've been waiting for, planning for all these months: finding the sacred among the profane on the campus of Notre Dame.

*Hail, Holy Queen enthroned above, O Maria!
Hail, Mother of mercy and of love, O Maria!
Triumph all ye cherubim!
Sing with us ye seraphim!
Heaven and earth resound the hymn!
Salve, salve, salve, Regina.³*

Even though I've been here many times before, this time is different. I, we, have come with a purpose, a mission of sorts—to watch the first two rounds of the NCAA Division I women's college basketball tournament and to experience this place for its sacredness in spite of our mundane, worldly lives.

*Our life, our sweetness here below, O Maria!
Our hope in sorrow and in woe, O Maria!
Triumph all ye cherubim!
Sing with us ye seraphim!
Heaven and earth resound the hymn!
Salve, salve, salve, Regina.⁴*

I can understand why Father Sorin wrote these words after he stepped onto this place long before Mary towered over the campus,

A few hours after (our arrival in South Bend), we came to Notre Dame, where I write you these lines. Everything was frozen, yet it all appeared so beautiful. The lake particularly, with its mantle of snow, resplendently white, was to us a symbol of the stainless purity of Our Lady ... We hurried about looking at the various sites ... Like little children, in spite of the cold, we ran from one end to the other perfectly enchanted by the beauty of our new home.⁵

It's March, but it's still cold, and it's drizzling as we park the car and walk to Mass at the Basilica, heading toward the woman who beckons us from atop the Golden Dome.

³The Salve Regina (Latin for "Hail, Holy Queen") is one of four Marian antiphons sung at different seasons within the Christian liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church to celebrate Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Sorin to Moreau, Dec. 5, 1842. This first letter written by Sorin from Notre Dame has been frequently published (lettres circulaires du Supérieur Général de la Congregation de Sainte-Croix, I, 1860, 58-64. Circular Letters of Father Sorin, pp. 259-et ss.). Retrieved from <http://archives.nd.edu/hope/hope03.htm>.



Welcome

TO ALL WHO ENTER THIS BASILICA

Bear in mind it is the House of God

Silence is Requested

Visitors are requested to conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with the sacred character of this place

To preserve an atmosphere of Reverence:

- ◆ Men cannot wear hats or caps
- ◆ Shirts and shoes must be worn
- ◆ Smoking, food and beverage prohibited



Intercession

BY HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED

As Marsha and I enter the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, I dip my finger into the warm water of the baptismal font and make the sign of the cross on my forehead.

“Remember your baptism, and be thankful,” I silently say to myself as if on cue and by rote.

I feel hypocritical but want to feel something spiritual. Then I step into the expanse of the Basilica and marvel at what millions of dollars and tons of gold can do. Father Sorin was promised an altar flowing with gold. I think he got much more than an altar’s worth. Looks to me like 23-karat gold leaf outweighs paint in this place.

We slip into a back row and forego the kneeling in preparation for Mass. It’s quiet, except for the creaking of wooden pews. Neither of us has attended a worship service of any kind in more than a year. I scan the bulletin for something familiar, perhaps a hymn or scripture passage. My eye catches these words, which cause my heart to sink to my stomach,

*Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. And by his stripes we are healed.*⁶

They are the words of the communion anthem for this fourth Sunday in Lent, and they are from the scripture passage that summarizes my own descent into hell when I ripped my arms open to feel the physical pain of the psychological torment I was enduring years ago.

Sitting here, in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame on March 22, 2009, ushers in a flood of memories and trudges up old feelings. I want to run from that place. I want to rest in this place. I don't want the profanity of my past to spoil the sacredness of this moment.

Before I can descend further, I am shaken from my reverie by the sound of the massive pipe organ as it fills the space—interceding to raise me up. The regal procession files by—altar boys, liturgists, priests—incense wafting like Pigpen's aura, and I fumble for my Treo to capture the sound and sight of this holy parade.

I think to myself,

*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence; and take not your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation; and sustain in me a willing spirit.*⁷

⁶Isaiah 53:4-5.

⁷Psalms 51:10-12.



SURELY, SURELY,
HE HATH BORNE,
HATH BORNE OUR GRIEFS
AND CARRIED,
HE CARRIED OUR
SORROWS.

HE WAS WOUNDED,
FOR OUR
TRANSGRESSIONS.
HE WAS
BRUISED,
FOR OUR
INQUIETIES.

AND WITH
HIS STRIPES,
WE ARE
HEALED.



Hymn

IN PRAISE OF HER

Her full, registered name is the University of Notre Dame du Lac, Our Lady of the Lake. She is Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the Mother of God and Blessed Virgin. I look up at her through the budding trees against the blue sky, her gold glinting in the sun, as we leave the Basilica after Mass. She is Notre Dame, the canopy of heaven her backdrop.

I'm not used to thinking of Mary so high and lofty. Having been raised Protestant, Mary does not rise above Jesus in my faith narrative. She's the mother, doing the things mothers do—cooking, cleaning, sewing—supporting the men in her life. I don't hold her in any higher regard than my own mother, which is to say, "Not very high."

For Father Sorin—who must have had a better mother than me—Mary is the supreme mother, and his devotion to her is relentless. Even after the great fire of 1879 destroyed the main building and the first statue of Mary that stood atop it, he proclaimed,

I came here as a young man and dreamed of building a great university in honor of Our Lady. But I built it too small, and she had to burn it to the ground to make the point. So, tomorrow, as soon as the bricks cool, we will rebuild it bigger and better than ever ... we will put a gold dome on top with a golden statue of the Mother of God so that everyone who comes this way will know to whom we owe whatever great future this place has ... let no one ever again say that we dreamed too small.⁸

With so much devotion to Mary and the patriarchy of the Catholic Church on Father Sorin's side, Our Lady of the Lake is the only woman on campus for the first 130 years, except for a few nuns who do the

cooking, cleaning and sewing. It is these same Sisters of St. Mary's College that raise the money to purchase the replacement statute that still stands.

Today, students—male and female—look up to Mary atop the Golden Dome gilded with eight ounces of 23-karat gold that is only three millionths of a meter thick. They, like Father Sorin, sing her praises. She has become their Alma Mater.

*Notre Dame, our Mother
Tender, strong, and true
Proudly in the heavens,
Gleams thy gold and blue.
Glory's mantle cloaks thee
Golden is thy fame,
And our hearts forever,
Praise thee Notre Dame,
And our hearts forever,
Love thee Notre Dame.⁹*

⁸Words attributed to Father Edward F. Sorin, CSC, excerpt from Notre Dame: One Hundred Years by Arthur J. Hope, chapter XIII (retrieved from <http://archives.nd.edu/hope/hope13.htm>).

⁹"Notre Dame, Our Mother" is the alma mater of the University of Notre Dame. Joseph Casasanta, a 1923 Notre Dame graduate, composed the song for the Oct. 11, 1930, dedication of Notre Dame Stadium. Rev. Charles O'Donnell, C.S.C., president of the university at the time of composition, wrote the song's lyrics in honor of the university's patroness, Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Besides the usual role an alma mater plays for the school, it is part of the postgame show of the Band of the Fighting Irish and is the traditional conclusion to Notre Dame pep rallies, football games, and all sporting events.





Reading

A LETTER TO FATHER SORIN, CSC

Dear Father Sorin,

On Sunday, March 22, 2009, my partner and I arrived at your University of Notre Dame du Lac. You would not recognize the place after almost 167 years of growth and prosperity. We are staying at the Morris Inn, named for a Presbyterian and his wife who gave a \$1 million gift in appreciation for Mr. Morris' law degree earned in the early 1900s from the University. You will appreciate this gift even more when you learn that Mr. Morris was an orphan in his youth and appealed to the University president, Rev. John W. Cavanaugh, for acceptance. While the Inn bears the name of its benefactors, you will be pleased to know that you are honored by a restaurant, Sorin's, at which we will dine for breakfast during our stay.

Even though more than a century separates us, I feel we have a lot in common. Like you, I had an aptitude for the religious life—desiring to become a nun in my youth—however, not being Catholic, this aspiration fizzled. Instead, I pursued a vocation as a director of Christian education with children and youth, following a similar path to yours.

Like you, I enjoyed reciting the liturgies of the church, albeit Lutheran, by heart and learning how to attend to the duties of acolyte. I often wandered into the woods behind my childhood home to ponder God and erect altars in His honor. And, on Sundays when our family could not attend worship services at church, we held our own in the living room. I would play the organ to accompany our singing.

Like you, I was called to the ministry and attended a seminary in my young adult years. Upon completing my seminary education; however, I abandoned thoughts of ordination because of my self-avowed, practicing homosexual orientation, which is still forbidden in most mainline denominations. I am sure you are surprised, though, by the fact that women are now ordained in most protestant denominations; but not in your beloved Catholic church.

I'm what is known as a subway alumnus, which is someone who never attended the University as a student but is an avid fan of the school's sports teams. In fact, that's why I traveled to Notre Dame this week—to watch the NCAA Division I women's college basketball tournament. Yes, that's right Father, there are female students on the campus these days. They have been admitted since 1972, and they even compete in sports just like the men.

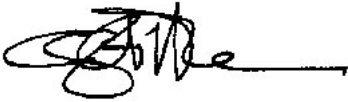
In preparation for my visit to your campus, I read the Story of Notre Dame. You made a profound statement, almost a prophecy, in your letter to Father Basil Moreau dated December 5, 1842, who was your mentor and elder in France. You wrote,

You cannot help see that this new branch of your family is destined to grow under the protection of Our Lady of the Lake ... At least, this is my deep conviction. Time will tell if I am wrong.¹⁰

I wanted you to know, in case no one has ever told you, you were not wrong. The University of Notre Dame du Lac that you founded in

1842 is the largest, most respected and well-known Catholic institution of higher education in America. In fact, it is world-famous for its academic, athletic, and religious excellence. Congratulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHeryl A. Hemmerle', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Cheryl A. Hemmerle
Nashville, Tennessee

¹⁰Sorin to Moreau, Dec. 5, 1842. This first letter written by Sorin from Notre Dame has been frequently published (*lettres circulaires du Supérieur Général de la Congregation de Sainte-Croix*, I, 1860, 58-64. *Circular Letters of Father Sorin*, pp. 259-et ss.). Retrieved from <http://archives.nd.edu/hope/hope03.htm>.



Affirmation

THIS IS NOTRE DAME

You were nothing more than 524 acres of Indiana farmland with a crude log cabin and one overworked Catholic priest serving as a missionary to the Potawatomi Indians. The line of priests and Indians trailed away over the years, and you were abandoned until the winter of 1842. With just \$541.12 ½, you were rescued from obscurity. Bricks made from the banks of your lakes built the first buildings to house and educate young boys. But you were poor, simple, and small, often ridiculed for being useless and unnecessary. Your first students paid their \$13 per quarter for tuition with manual labor and bartering, swapping potatoes for Latin and cattle for grammar lessons. You valued academic and religious studies over recreation and did not have the means to support non-academic programs, like music. More than once you were burnt to the ground by careless use of candles and poor electrical wiring.

You have more than 130 buildings on 1,250 acres. Your faculty and students come from all over the world, and the line of alumni trails 167 years. You have \$7 billion in endowments from well-known and famous people as well as loyal alumni and friends. You are building a new parking lot for the Morris Inn, a new and expanded Eck School of Law, the Ryan Hall for housing undergraduate women, a new Stinson-Remick Hall for the School of Engineering, a new combination Center for Social Concerns/Institute for Church Life building, and the \$215 million Eddy Street Commons. You are rich, multi-faceted, and large, often praised for being innovative and essential to the academic world and the Catholic faith. Your 11,600 students pay their tuition with loans, grants, scholarships and their parents' hard-earned cash to the tune of \$36,000 per year in exchange for bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. You have more Heisman Trophy winners than any other college football team, and you have the oldest marching band. You have your own fire department.

Your growth will be in cyberspace rather than continuing to erect bricks and mortar buildings. Your faculty and students will connect online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year from every country and continent. Your endowment will grow so large that all students will receive sufficient grants, financial aid and scholarships to fund their education. You will build vibrant, virtual communities of learning on the Internet. Your richness, multiplicity and size will be the gifts you nurture in each student to touch the world for good. You will have hundreds of thousands of students enrolled for the sheer joy of learning in a spiritual community of faith and practice. You will play Fantasy Football and Garage Band. You will have a secured firewall.





Homily

HERE COME THE IRISH OF NOTRE DAME

There's an excitement that swirls in the air as we walk across campus to the Joyce Center for the first round of the NCAA Division I women's college basketball tournament. Busloads of out-of-town fans for the opposing team—the Minnesota Golden Gophers—crowd the entrance.

Our first stop after getting through the security checkpoint is the restroom. Two middle-aged women do not pass up an opportunity to go to the bathroom. Next, we travel through the tunnel and onto the edge of the basketball court, walking in front of the Gopher Pep Band to our seats in section 10. We have center court seats in the Notre Dame gold section. Sweet!

We show our ticket stubs to the usher, and he escorts us up to our seats in row 9. I ask him where I can get a program.

“The NCAA didn't give us any,” he says. But I'm looking all around, and everyone has a program. So I ask the nice looking African American man a few rows in front of me where he got his program.

“At the table by the door where they're selling t-shirts,” he points in the direction of the Gopher Pep Band and the tunnel. I look at Marsha, grin, and bounce down the concrete steps to the floor.

The Pep Band is blasting some tune I've heard before but can't name. I duck under trombone slides and dodge the Gopher mascot who's pimping for a photo-op. When I get to the souvenir stand, I don't see any programs, but I get in line anyway. As I near the table, I eye a small stack in front of the cash register. Everyone else is busy selecting one of

twenty different NCAA women's college basketball shirts ranging from \$25-100. All I want is an \$8 program.

A seam opens in the queue, and I fill it.

"Who's next," the lady says.

"I am," I yell, handing her \$20 for a program. She's wearing one of the special edition t-shirts for the tournament along with several buttons and a baseball cap with the Notre Dame logo in the front. It takes here several minutes to return with my program. She hands it to me, and I look at her.

"Oh," she says, "I owe you change. You gave me a ten, right?"

"No," I remind her, "it was a twenty."

She counts out twelve one-dollar bills and hands them to me. I stuff the change into my pocket and push my way out of the queue back toward the tunnel. The smell of popcorn, hotdogs, nacho cheese floods my olfactory senses.

"I'll take a diet coke, a bottle of water, two soft pretzels with salt and yellow mustard, and a pack of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups," I order.

"That'll be \$15," the concession stand attendant says. I give her ten ones and a five. It's always better to give exact change. Even so, she has to count it three times before she gives me my food.

**2009 NCAA® DIVISION I
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
FIRST/SECOND ROUNDS**
MARCH 22 AND 24
JOYCE CENTER
HOSTED BY UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME



I hear the horn blow from inside the arena. Warm-ups are over, and the game is about to begin. I rush back through the tunnel, across the floor, behind the basketball goal, and under the trombones. The Gopher makes a pass for my Reese's Peanut Butter cups but I step between him and a photographer just in time. He gets his photo-op, and I save the candy for later. I jog up the concrete stairs to our seats.

"I found the programs," I confess.

"I see that," she says.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please rise for the playing of the National Anthem by the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers Pep Band," the announcer quakes.

I look around for the American Flag. It's hanging high up in the rafters of the arena. I decide to focus on the players as they stand in parallel lines facing center court. Some put their hands over their left breasts, others stand at attention, hands clasped behind their backs. Some sing along, or at least move their lips, some seem entranced. I'm humming something completely different in my head:

*O! say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
And there's a magic in the sound of their name*

*O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave
Here come the Irish of Notre Dame¹¹*

The fans erupt in cheers and applause while the Pep Band blurts out the final notes.

As I turn to sit down, I notice for the first time how dirty the seats are, and the floor, and the chipped paint on the railing. This place is a dump, a far cry from the opulence of the Basilica. But as I'm browsing the program during the announcing of the teams, coaches and starting line-ups, I see that the Joyce Center arena is scheduled for a face-lift this summer. It will be completed in time for next year's tournament. Good. The women deserve a nicer place to play basketball, with a JumboTron I hope.

The players take the court for the tip-off. Minnesota gains possession and scores early and often. I watch the back and forth for a few minutes then scan the crowd. The place is more than half empty. Across the railing in the second half of the gold section, there is a group of 60s-something women all sporting lime green Notre Dame t-shirts and short, spiked haircuts. Most of them are overweight and graying.

I nudge Marsha in their direction and proclaim, "That will be us in another twenty years."

She smiles and turns back to the game. I let my thoughts dance toward retirement and our plans of buying an RV to trek around the country following women's sports.

The game doesn't get exciting until late in the second half when Notre Dame pulls within two points of the Gophers. They've been trailing most of the game and playing without one of their key guards, Lindsay Schrader, who's sidelined with a back injury. But what really hurts Notre Dame is the Gopher's proficiency at making the 3-point shot. Even so, we keep hoping that the luck of the Irish will win out. It doesn't.

In the post-game interview, Notre Dame's coach of 22 years, Muffet McGraw, apologies to the fans for losing to the Minnesota Golden Gophers.

"It was a fantastic crowd out there today," she says, "and we didn't give them their money's worth."

I wouldn't go that far, Muffet. It was definitely worth the \$13.50 a piece to watch the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame play basketball in person and live on ESPN. Hell, it cost us a whole lot more than the price of the ticket to get here, and I still think it was worth it.

As we leave the Joyce Center arena, we walk through the mini-museum for Notre Dame sports memorabilia. Above the display cases and encircling the room are the names of every monogram winner of every varsity sport since 1898. I search for a few recognizable names among the more than 6,500 engraved: Ruth Riley and Megan Duffy (basketball), Mariel Zagunis (fencing).¹²

It's hard to pick out the women surrounded by so many men. Yet, these few have definitely left their mark in the past 37 years since Title IX and paved the way for future Fighting Irish women of Notre Dame.

¹¹Regular italicized words from *The Star Spangled Banner* by Francis Scott Key. Bold italicized words from *Here Come the Irish* by Jim Tullio and John Scully.

¹²University of Notre Dame Official Athletics Department website (retrieved from <http://und.com>).





Contemplation

IT'S OK TO JUMP

*Áve María, grátia pléna, Dóminus técum. Benedícta tu in muliéribus, et benedíctus frúctus véntris tui, Iésus. Sáncta María, Máter Déi, óra pro nóbis peccatóribus, nunc et in hóra mórtis nóstrae. Amen.*¹³

Here I stand, day after day, atop this Golden Dome, looking out over a university named in my honor. They venerate, adore, bless, pray to me ... all because I was chosen among women to bring the Son of God into the world.

Why do they think I am so special, so blessed? I certainly don't feel that way. I'm 19 feet tall and weigh 4,400 pounds. Any woman will tell you these are not feminine qualities that get you noticed for the right reasons. To make matters worse, they've put this electric crown on my head that glows in the dark.

The students, faculty, alumni and visitors that pass by look up at me and pray to me all day long, every day. They think I have super powers because Pope Pius IX decreed in 1854 that I was the Immaculate Conception. He thought that somehow because I was the mother of Jesus, I must be without sin. Don't ask me to explain. I don't think anyone really understands what he was trying to say, but the Catholic Church made me a saint anyway.

I've been standing here since 1883. I'm tired; I'd like to sit down and rest for a while. But I'm welded to this Golden Dome. On windy days, though, I'm glad my dress is molded to my body. Otherwise, people could see right up my skirt. That would not be very dignified, but

neither is being a perch for birds. I guess no one thought about that when they hoisted me 225 feet in the air.

If I were able to move, I think I'd take Jesus up on his offer. He's been standing down below with his arms outstretched, begging me to jump for years. I know he'd catch me even though he's been reduced to a statue, too.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*¹⁴

¹³The Ave Maria (Latin for "Hail, Mary") is a traditional Catholic and Eastern Orthodox prayer calling for the intercession of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. In Latin.

¹⁴Ibid. In English.





Offering

LIGHT A CANDLE FOR HOPE

It's so quiet here in the Grotto. For a campus of over 11,000 students, it's like another world down here by the lake, sheltered inside this cave-like retreat, a refuge from the chaos of adolescent academia. While I'm standing, listening, taking pictures on the perimeter of the grotto, students appear, light candles and dash off to class. A woman kneels at the railing and gazes at the lighted candles then bows her head. Tears are falling from her eyes.

I walk inside the hollowed out cave. It's at least ten degrees warmer from the heat of so many lighted candles. I look at the different sections of the candle tiers: Alumni, faculty, students, friends, family members, priests and nuns, military personnel. There's a whole section of lit candles for someone named Ashley who's been in a bad car accident.

Off to the side, dozens of wooden sticks stand in a box of sand next to another box of white two-inch pillar candles in clear plastic holders. I grab a candle and a stick then walk over to the rack of lit candles in the alumni section of the Grotto. I light my stick from the green candle representing students from the 2000s. That's the decade in which Marsha earned her master's from Notre Dame, and we began our journey together as partners.

From the flame on the wooden stick, I light my candle and place it in the rack. I pause for a few minutes to remember ... two weeks we spent here during the final semester of Marsha's coursework ... every day bringing her dinner just to spend a few minutes together between classes, assignments and studying ... now our roles are reversed ... it's been over six months since Marsha lost her job ... I hope she finds something soon ... I hope we both realize our dreams for meaningful work.

Later, I find this prayer card and think of the candle I lit at the Grotto. I pray it for Marsha, for me, for us:

*God, our Father, I turn to you seeking your divine help as I search for life-giving employment. I need your wisdom to guide my footsteps along the right path, and to lead me to find the proper things to say and do in this quest. I want to use the gifts and talents you have given me. Give me confidence, patience and trust that you, too, want the very best for me.*¹⁵

Lighting a candle at the Grotto is different than throwing a coin in a fountain. With spare change and bubbling water, I think, “I have nothing to lose by taking a chance on luck.” At the Grotto, it’s not about luck or chance or a wish. Sparking a flame here is about hope—both to give and to receive.

Walking from the Grotto toward the lake, we spot some purple crocuses blooming amid dried leaves. The first signs of spring are shaking off the death of winter. That means it’s resurrection time—the season of hope. I’m grateful for the offering I make, and the one I receive.

¹⁵Prayer card from the Pray.nd.edu website (retrieved from http://pray.nd.edu/assets/9551/prayer_card_3.pdf).





Confession

THE SINS OF OMISSION

forgive me father for I have sinned

i didn't walk the campus
 with a soundtrack of my favorite music
 salve regina from sister act
 the songs of women
 indigo girls k.d. lang melissa etheridge
 alison krause

kyrie eleison

i failed to spend time
 at sorin's grave
 writing listening
 at the grotto praying

christe eleison

i approached this journey
 like a tourist at arm's length
 afraid of it
 not wanting to get too close
 to god to myself to marsha
 so objective
 intellectual analytical
 precise scripted

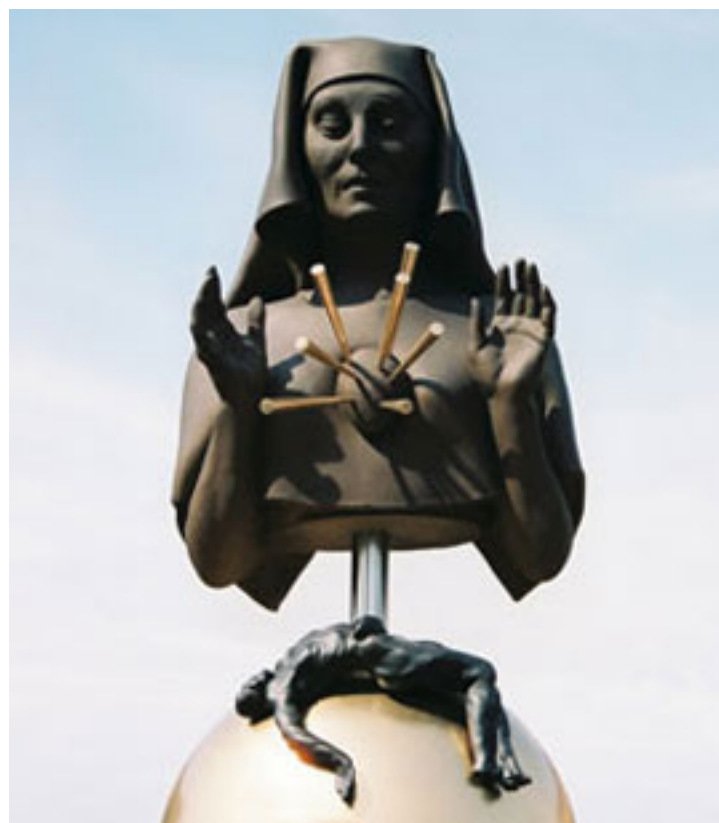
kyrie eleison

i've been so tightly wound
 staying on task
 everything has to be
 right correct
 at least in most areas of my life
 i'm still a fat lazy slob
 don't seem too disciplined
 about that
 must be my vice

lord, hear my prayer

*May our Lord Jesus Christ absolve you; and by His authority I absolve you from every bond of excommunication and interdict, so far as my power allows and your needs require. Thereupon, I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.*¹⁶

¹⁶Traditional offering of absolution (forgiveness) following the confession of sins to a Catholic priest.





Eucharist

A FOUNT FLOWING WITH CHOCOLATE

There is nothing more decadent or heavenly than chocolate, and South Bend has its own chocolate factory complete with a University collection of Notre Dame candies:

There's the Domer—a chocolate truffle whipped until it is silky smooth, covered in pure milk chocolate, named in honor of Notre Dame's students and alumni. The Rockne—a mound of premium American chocolate blended with coconut, almonds and a cherry flavoring named for legendary football coach Knute Rockne. Irish Almonds—fresh roasted and covered in chocolate with a hint of mint. Nuts for ND—a selection of premium Brazil nuts, cashews, almonds, pecans and filberts coated in milk chocolate. The Notre Dame Bar—3 ounces of milk chocolate stamped with the school's logo and wrapped in gold foil then nestled into a Madonna blue sleeve.

The factory sits on the outskirts of town. Except for the bright blue and gold sign outside, it looks like so many of the abandoned warehouses in South Bend. As soon as we're inside, I spot the first of many photo-ops. There's a large plywood cut-out of Lucy and Ethel working the conveyor belt filled with chocolate candies. Between them is the candy factory supervisor, sans her face, which is where mine goes as Marsha snaps the photo.

We walk into the store, and I take a deep breath. The rich, rustic smell of chocolate is intoxicating. I stand still for a moment to steady myself from the sugar rush while Marsha asks one of the store clerks when the next tour will start.

“Do you want the free tour or the Inside Scoop?” the clerk replies.

“What’s the difference?” I ask, and she explains that for \$4 each we get the free tour plus the opportunity to make our own chocolate spoon, taste a sample right off the conveyor belt, watch the short video of the history of chocolate, and receive a goody bag with a special selection of chocolates. We decide it’s worth the \$4 a piece just to get the chocolate spoon, so we sign up for the next tour, which doesn’t start for another forty-five minutes.

To kill time, we wonder through the little candy museum with its handmade signs and dusty old boxes of candies for every occasion dating back to the early 1900s. It only takes fifteen minutes, so we walk back to the store and order two café mochas. They come with chocolate spoons, and they are awesome. I can’t sip; I have to gulp, but it’s hot and I burn my lip. I eat the whipped cream with my chocolate spoon while the mocha cools. Marsha skims the day’s news in the South Bend Tribune while I read ingredients of the Notre Dame Bar.

Soon it’s time for the tour, and we assemble back in the entryway with the tour guide, an older woman and her daughter and three grandchildren. Of course, everyone has to wear hairnets because we’re actually going into the factory where they are making chocolate candy right now. The older woman puts the hairnet on like a yarmulka, leaving most of her puffy, yellow-dyed hair uncovered. I do not like it when people do not follow the rules. The tour guide doesn’t correct her and starts into her speech about how the cocoa beans are harvested.

From the entryway we walk into the first of several connected rooms where chocolate candy is conceived and birthed. The first room is where they make fudge, but they are not making any fudge today. What?

While the tour guide explains why they are not making fudge today, I look ahead into the next room where I can see conveyor belts. The chocolate's in there.

Since I'm older than the children, chronologically speaking, I let them go first as we move into the next room. We are in the main chocolate candy-making room. The holy of holies where not every visitor to the chocolate factory gets to go, unless they are on a tour. I see white chocolate-covered pretzels tumbling into large cardboard boxes. At the other end of the line is an Asian woman loading plain pretzels onto the belt where they pass through a shower of white chocolate and then head for the long cooling tunnel. It takes fifteen minutes for them to travel the length of the tunnel and tumble into the cardboard box.

White chocolate covered pretzels are all they are making today in the factory, but the tour guide has a secret stash of irregular chocolate candies to offer us. What makes them irregular is some lack of full immersion in chocolate or a happy melding of two candies together, like Siamese twins, or an unfortunate breakage or misshapen piece—all accidents and mishaps must be eaten like secret evidence. From these sacrificial offerings, I choose a malformed Domer. Marsha takes a turtle filled with caramel and pecans.

Next, we move to the packing and shipping department then look at oddly shaped candy molds for giant dinosaur teeth and Studebaker cars. Finally, it's time to make our own chocolate spoons. After letting the children make their spoons, it's my turn. I take my time carefully lowering the golden spoon into the vat of swirling milk chocolate. When it has been fully immersed to the proper depth, as instructed by

the tour guide, I slowly raise it and apply a quick flick of the wrist to create the perfect curl on the tip of the spoon. Now it must set for a few minutes to harden.

Our last stop on the tour is the History of Chocolate movie narrated by Koko Beans. He's an overgrown mechanical puppet standing next to the projector screen who speaks with a Spanish accent. The movie is simply a time-filler while our chocolate spoons dry. But just when I'm losing interest, Koko proclaims to the strains of the Hallelujah Chorus:

"In the beginning was the word, and the word was chocolate!"

I'm not sure anyone else except Marsha could understand the sacrilegious irony and my full-bodied laughter. We say goodbye to Koko, return to the store to buy a few small bags of chocolate covered peanuts, pretzels, and malted milk balls and pick up our chocolate spoons. As we walk to the car, I notice that my clothes, my hair, even my skin smells like chocolate. I think to myself, "I have become chocolate."

Inside Scoop Tour

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Thanksgiving

THE SUM IS GREATER THAN ITS PARTS

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help.¹⁷

It's a good idea to travel with a companion because there are so many things one person can miss while looking in the other direction. Throughout my journey to, on and from the campus of the University of Notre Dame and South Bend, Indiana, my travel companion has been my spouse, Marsha R. Base. And it is here love and support that make this journal possible. South Bend was her home for more than 30 years, which makes her a townie. But, she's also a domer—having earned her master's degree from the Mendoza School of Business at the University of Notre Dame. Marsha spent hours reading and re-reading my drafts, making helpful comments, sharing her own insights and perspectives, and feeding me delicious meals as I worked long hours writing and creating this journal. I dedicate this Mass to her.

Likewise, I am grateful to the Naropa University MFA in creating writing low-residency community, especially my colleagues in the Travel Journal course under the instruction of Lisa Birman. Thank you for your guidance and input through thirteen weeks of reading, writing and feedback. Each of you is a part of this project, and your contributions make it a better piece than I could have done on my own.

Finally, I am indebted to the University of Notre Dame, especially its wealth of online resources (nd.edu), which provided substantive research opportunities and helped me to prepare for the physical journey to the campus.

The Story of Notre Dame, including:

- *Notre Dame: 100 Years* by Arthur J. Hope, CSC
- *Chronicles of Notre Dame du Lac* by Edward F. Sorin, CSC

A Cave of Candles by Dorothy V. Corson

Basilica of the Sacred Heart

Notre Dame: The Official Campus Guide

Notre Dame Athletics Department, Women's Basketball

Additional resources for preparation and research include:

- *Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours* by Catholic Book Publishing Company
- *Pilgrimage: Exploring a Great Spiritual Practice* by Edward C. Sellner
- *The Art of Pilgrimage: The Seeker's Guide to Making Travel Sacred* by Phil Cousineau
- *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* by Mircea Eliade
- *On this Rock* by Ralph McInerney
- *Nice Girls Finish First* by Mark Bradford

Some pieces in this journal project are excerpts or adaptations of the blog I kept during the actual journey. The complete blog can be accessed at The Notre Dame Project.

Thank you.

¹⁷Ecclesiastes 4:9-10.





Benediction

AN IRISH BLESSING

There he is, comprised of over 5,000 individual pieces of stone from 16 countries. He's known as Touchdown Jesus because his outstretched arms, measuring 42 feet from thumb-to-thumb, look like a referee's signal for a touchdown, especially when viewed through the goal post from the Notre Dame stadium. But the real name of the mural that decorates the south wall of the Hesburgh Library is the Word of Life.

This is the last stop along our walking tour of the campus. We're cold and tired from crisscrossing the many paths worn by the millions who've walked this way before us. I sit on the concrete walk and look up at the mural. Notre Dame must really be devoted to its faith, its belief in God, Mary, Jesus. This mural is just a bunch of stones in a pattern—shades of yellow, brown, white, gray, rust, black. Still, I feel something, someone breathing down on me, cutting through the bite in the air.

Silently, I take Marsha by the hand, and we walk back to the Morris Inn. Somewhere over my shoulder, the larger-than-life Jesus with his arms raised blesses the world, blesses us.

*May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.*¹⁸

¹⁸Traditional Irish Blessing.



Postlude

RETURN TO THE PROFANELY SACRED

*We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we stand and know the place for the first time.*¹⁹

We start the return trip home after our morning ritual: Starbucks. I'm ambivalent about going home. But, we have to get back tonight so we can pick up the dog in the morning from the pet resort. She'll be fresh-smelling and shiny new after a bath and grooming. And, she'll have plenty of wet kisses for her moms. Thinking of her, our Cavalier King Charles Spaniel—Happy—makes me smile. I love that little dog with the domed head.

But happy thoughts fade as I consider the weight of this journey nearly ended and the daunting task of making sense enough of it all to share with others. As Joseph Campbell reminded me in my preparation for this trip, it is the final step in any journey, any pilgrimage, any experience of the Mass: to bring something back to the community. In the returning to everyday life, some new meaning or purpose gained on the journey transforms how we approach the profane with a renewed understanding of the sacred. However, the true pilgrim must acquire wisdom from her journey before she can impart anything to others.²⁰

As I look back over the past three days filled with the smell of hops from the ethanol plant in nearby South Bend; the gritty, dusty feel of Notre Dame's many construction projects; the smooth, rich taste of chocolate; the sound of church bells and cheering fans; and the gold and blue with hints of green in every sightline, what does it all mean as the campus fades in the rearview mirror?

Sitting in rush hour traffic on the north side of Nashville, we listen to NPR and learn Obama has been invited to give the commencement address at the University of Notre Dame. Already there have been cries of outrage and predictions that this will be more destructive than the fire of 1879 that nearly wiped the campus off the face of the map forever.²¹

I suspect Father Sorin is rolling over in his grave, not because Obama holds some views that are contrary to the Catholic Church's teachings, but because people continue to confuse the sacred and the profane. What is sacred to one can be profane to another, and what is profane to one can be sacred to another. The determining factor is how much power we place in each and how much that power lifts up or tears down ourselves and one another.

At the end of the road, at the end of the day, we return to our home in Nashville, Tennessee, with dirty clothes, empty Coke Zero cans, melted South Bend Chocolates, pages of MapQuest directions now crumbled and torn, weary bodies and minds—tired and stiff from eight hours in the car. We return with more than we took. I have a new Notre Dame t-shirt, and ... a new appreciation for the sacred and the profane.

¹⁹"Little Gidding," in *Four Quartets* by T.S. Eliot.

²⁰Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. Princeton University Press, 1973).

²¹Thunder, James. As printed on the website of Spero News, March 24, 2009 (retrieved from <http://www.speroforum.com/a/18563/Notre-Dame-selfdestructs-over-Obama>).

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