

THE BELLES OF ST. MARY'S

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Jane,

It has come to my attention that many students are disturbed about compulsory chapel attendance and are risking two week campuses instead of attending chapel. There have been complaints about the traditional service and the irrelevancy of the services. Our vestry and our chaplain are open to new ideas for the improvements of the services. They will gladly put our talents to work to make student participation a great part of worship. We must have the initiative to improve our services. If they are not up to our expectations, it is not the sole responsibility of the chaplain. So lets put our brains to constructive work instead of letting them lie dormant while we sleep during Sunday chapel. It's easy to complain.

Suzanne Ishee

President's Letter To Student Body

Within the past couple of months St. Mary's has lost three people who in very different ways made great contribution to this community. The contributions were varied. The length of service to St. Mary's ranged from more than a half century to a short year.

I write you, who are St. Mary's, about these three people, not to be sentimental or maudlin, but to share with you my feelings (that run very deep), and to give you an appreciation of people most of you knew but slightly, and perhaps a deeper appreciation of St. Mary's.

John Hill, by the world's standards, did a menial job. He carried the suitcases of the girls for more than fifty years. He swept floors. He did odd jobs. I'm not sure how much formal education John Hill had. Certainly he did not have very much. What did he give St. Mary's? Everything he had to give. His love, his devotion, almost all of his life. He began working here as a very young man. He gave St. Mary's his faithfulness in little things. He told me twice, once at the reception we had for him at the time of his retirement and again in the hospital a few days before he died, how much he loved this place. He said how good we had been to him. I was left wondering if he had not been still better to us. John Hill's contribution was faithfulness, steadfastness, and great, wonderfully great, dignity.

The Rev. Thomas J. C. Smyth gave St. Mary's a vision, a new sense of purpose. Minister of God, educator, pastor, his contribution certainly included mind and heart. As a trustee of this school in days gone by, and as the first Chairman when the trustees re-organized a few years ago, this man kept pointing toward what St. Mary's could be. He kept pointing to what it needed to become. Not only did he point, but he worked tirelessly to lead others to this insight. The direction he charted for the school seems a right one. His enthusiasm was contagious. We will always be in his debt. The heights we may one day reach as a school and community fit into the vision he saw, and shared.

Dorothy Dodge was with us for only a little while. Just over one year. But in that short time she discovered her depths of talents, and gave of them unstintingly to this place. She loved all of you, coveted her contact with the students, as little as that was. In her business management she

EDITORIAL

What is a "cop out"? A "cop out" is ignoring your responsibility to a cause or ideal; hiding from something or just quitting; going against what you believe.

Socrates once said something that has stuck in the mind of society ever since. He said "Know thyself." Do we really know ourselves? If we do, do we pay any attention to ourselves? How about jumping on bandwagons? Surely everyone of us has done that at one time or another. We have clapped our hands and joined the chorus before we found out what the verses really meant; said yes before we read the petition; cheered the candidate before we knew his platform.

Today we as youths are called upon to know and express our opinions. We are being propositioned by the Black Panthers, Young Americans for Freedom, the Establishment, Teddy Kennedy, Spiro Agnew, social welfare, liquor-by-the-drink, Angela Davis, clean air, even cleaner clothes . . . a myriad of contradicting opinions. And we are being called upon to make a decision NOW! Do we know what we believe? Or do we join the most impressive show? Do we really know our true selves? *Are we really honest with ourselves?* Isn't that really the major "cop out"?

J. L. D.

set out to strengthen the foundation. She did! Just before she died she remarked to me that she was really beginning to feel like a St. Mary's girl. She said this with a little laugh, thinking I might find her statement sentimental or silly. It was neither. It was the highest compliment she could pay St. Mary's. Measured in terms of quality her contribution was enormous. Only a few of us know how wonderfully she straightened out the business affairs of this school.

These were three people, three very different people. Yet they had at least one thing in common. They had a strong and positive effect on the life of St. Mary's. The spirit of this lives on. It always will.

Faithfully yours,
Frank W. Pisani

ASSEMBLIES BECOME A PROBLEM

Assembly is increasingly becoming a major problem. There have been many complaints from both students and faculty concerning this. The majority of complaints are about the types of programs that have been presented. It is felt that many of the films would have served a better use if they had been presented to the group for which they were designed. Moreover there is no reason to have assembly just for the sake of having it. Wouldn't one relevant and interesting assembly every week or every two weeks be more beneficial than what we have now? Certainly the announcements could be posted elsewhere, and the students could use their time to better advantage.

There is another side of the problem; however, and that is the conduct of the student body during assembly. Whether or not we like the program, we should have respect for the other students and for the assembly chairman. In this age of freedom, we should keep in mind that our freedom ends where another's begins. When students create uncalled-for distractions, they are violating the freedoms of every student and faculty member. Even during interesting programs, the conduct leaves a lot to be desired. There is a low hum of noise throughout the program. Several interesting speakers have been cancelled because the people who have asked them to come don't want them to be subjected to the rudeness shown past speakers. Let's take a look at our own role before we criticize the efforts of others.

THE BELLE TOWER

The foremost purpose of St. Mary's is, to quote from the handbook, "to develop character through Christian influence." Religion is an integral part of St. Mary's life; we are a church-centered school.

What kind of "Christian influence" is St. Mary's presenting to its students? Is it accomplishing its stated purpose of developing our characters through the church? Do the church actually reach us and affect our lives?

The answer, to many of us, is no. We feel that religion here consists solely of a meaningless, stifling ritual that does not reach or affect us at all. We go to church; we function as required; we stand, we sing, we kneel, all in unison as one big happy family. But our minds are turned off by the pomposity, self-piousness, and unreality in our services.

Look at the actual facts concerning these chapel services: The Establishment is upset that chapel attendance is down — way down. Sixteen through twenty year old girls risk a fourteen day campus rather than go to chapel. Many girls that do attend, do so only because they are threatened with being campused. Many enter the chapel, not with the hope of getting something out of the service, but with the hope of merely existing through the next half hour. Look around the next time you're in chapel: are those girls slumping over being devout or are they asleep?

Why is this going on? It is not because we are opposed to God and religion, it is because chapel is simply not meaningful to us. At this crucial time of our lives when we are questioning every possible aspect of our existence, we are having organized religion forced down our throats. Organized religion that makes no allowance for young, idealistic, inquiring minds which are searching desperately for their own concepts of God and life. Too many of us are turning away from the chapel in disgust.

We realize that there are many, many girls who really dig the services and get something out of them. But there are also entirely too many of us who don't, and we are pleading for something to be done. We are not knocking religion, we are knocking the way it is presented to us.

Church doesn't have to be like this; it can be made relevant and meaningful. We don't pretend to have the answers to this problem, but we feel that the first step to its solution is a statement of our feelings. We hate to admit it, but the way things are now, we are so full up to the brim with church and its close-mindedness, that when we finally do graduate, we will gladly leave the "grove of stately oak trees" and "the little chapel" forever.

Submitted by:

Gail Perry
Barbara Olschner

