In your haste to get off for the Holidays, you may have overlooked the announcement of a $500 million grant by the Ford Foundation to American private colleges and hospitals. It was more than a comforting gesture to the happily bewildered band of administrators who annually scrape together enough to keep their non-tax-supported schools and hospitals running. You at Notre Dame, who contribute about 73% of what it costs to educate you, may have been asked many questions during the vacation period regarding this windfall. Here's the truth and the breakdown:

How is this sum to be distributed? $210 millions go to 615 private liberal arts colleges to raise faculty salaries. $200 millions go to the nation's 3500 privately supported hospitals for expansion and research. And $90 millions go to 42 privately supported medical schools to help strengthen instruction there.

Of the sum ticketed for education, some $37 millions will accrue to approximately 150 Catholic colleges and universities, in sums varying from Notre Dame's $2,630,000 to $59,000 for St. Mary's-of-the-Watsatch. Sixteen Catholic colleges received amounts in excess of $500,000. In the over-a-million class with Notre Dame are three other Catholic schools: Fordham ($1,646,500); Saint Louis ($1,512,700); and Marquette ($1,166,300).

The total received by each institution represents the approximate 1954-55 payroll for instruction in the liberal arts and sciences. The grant is in the form of a 10-year endowment. Only the interest during this period may be used to help increase teacher salaries. At the end of the ten-year period the principal may be used in any way the school chooses.

In addition to its share in the present sum of $210 millions, 126 (including 15 Catholic) colleges will share in a $50 million "bonus." This will be roughly one-half of the total of last year's faculty salaries, and may be used for current expenses. This is given as a reward for "those institutions who have led the way in their regions in improving the status and compensation of American college teachers."

You will not find it difficult to agree that the Ford grant is a most profoundly significant event. In a way it is a trail-blazer -- this effort to assist the private college in one of its most pressing responsibilities. From this sort of thing comes the hope that other foundations, as well as corporations and private individuals will be stimulated to extend a like assistance -- so that the college professor may soon attain "an economic position somewhat proportionate to his value and responsibility to society."

That's the story of the $500 million grant by the Ford Foundation. You should know that no college is able to operate on income from tuition alone. That is why you will be asked later, as Alumni, to make some small contribution according to your means each year to help the University meet current expenses, and to increase its endowment fund. Right now, a healthy respect for University property will help keep maintenance costs at a reasonable level. That could very well be your contribution for the present.

"May I have a word with you?" said a Lowell to a Cabot,
Who replied: "Well, if you do, don't let it become a habit."

And here's the word -- EXAMS! Tomorrow, we begin the Novena that asks God to bless our efforts. We're not looking for miracles, mind you, but we know that prayer helps. The Mass will always be your best prayer of petition. Begin tomorrow.