



REFLECTIONS FOR GRADUATION LITURGIES



A FUTURE NOT OUR OWN

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise
that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete,
which is another way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No programme accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

That is what we are about.

We plant a seed that will one day grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results;
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

This prayer was composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, drafted for a homily by Cardinal John Dearden in Nov. 1979 for a celebration of departed priests. As a reflection on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Bishop Romero, Bishop Untener included in a reflection book a passage titled "The mystery of the Romero Prayer." The mystery is that the words of the prayer are attributed to Oscar Romero, but they were never spoken by him.

Dare to Dream

Let nothing hold you back from exploring your wildest fantasies,
wishes and aspirations. Don't be afraid to dream big and to follow your
dreams wherever they may lead you.

Open your eyes to their beauty;
open your mind to their magic;
open your heart to their possibilities.

Dare to dream.

Whether they are in colour or in black and white,
whether they are big or small,
easily attainable or almost impossible I look to you dream,
And make them become reality.

Wishes and hopes are nothing until you take the first step
toward making them something!

Dare to dream,

Because only by dreaming will you ever discover
who you are, what you want, and what you can do.

Don't be afraid to take risks to become involved
to make a commitment Do whatever it takes to make
your dreams come true.

Always believe in miracles, and always believe in you!

Dream Big

If there were ever a time to dare, To make a difference, To embark on something worth doing, It is now. Not for any grand cause, necessarily – But for something that tugs at your heart, Something that is worth your aspiration, Something that is your dream.

You owe it to yourself, To make your days count. Have fun. Dig deep. Stretch. Dream Big. Know though that things worth doing seldom come easy. There will be times when you want to Turn around Pack it up and call it quits. Those times tell you that you are pushing yourself And that you are not afraid to learn by trying. Persist. Because with an idea, determination and the right tools, You can do great things. Let your instincts, your intellect and let your heart guide you. Trust. Believe in the incredible power of the human mind. Of doing something that makes a difference. Of working hard of laughing and hoping of lasting friends of all the things that will cross your path.

Next year, The start of something new, brings the hope of something great. Anything is possible. There is only one you and you will pass this way but once. Do it right.

Author Unknown

A Piece of Wood

Every possibility is sleeping in such a piece of wood. It depends on you how you look at it what you see in it – some useless obstacles in your way, fuel to light your fire, material to build a fence around your isolation, to build a house – a door – a table.

Or a challenge, waiting just for you, to be set free, to be called to life.

The woodcarver, the artist, sees it like that. He takes it in his hands, and sees the hidden life, and makes it speak, of growth and death, joy and pain, and all the mysteries of life. All this is contained in a piece of wood.

Our whole life, the world around us, is like such a piece of wood. It depends on us, how we look at it, what we see in it. Shouldn't we all be artists?

Henry Rohr

The Labyrinth

“Your life is a sacred journey. And it is about change, growth, discovery, movement, transformation, continuously expanding your vision of what is possible, stretching your soul, learning to see clearly and deeply, listening to your intuition, taking courageous challenges at every step along the way. You are on the path ... exactly where you meant to be right now ... And from here, you can only go forward, shaping your life story into a magnificent tale of triumph, of healing, of courage, of beauty, of wisdom, of power, of dignity and of love.”

We are all on the path ... exactly where we need to be. The labyrinth is a model of that path. The labyrinth is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. The labyrinth represents a journey to our own centre and back again out into the world.

At its most basic level the labyrinth is a metaphor for the journey to the centre of your deepest self and back out into the world with a broadened understanding of who you are.

Caroline Joy Adams

Journey Ends Journey Begins

For each of us life is a journey.

Birth is the beginning of this journey,

And death is not the end - but the destination.

It is a journey that takes us from youth to age;

From innocence to awareness; From ignorance to knowledge;

From foolishness to wisdom; From weakness to strength

And often back again

From offence to forgiveness; From loneliness to friendship;

From pain to compassion; From fear to faith;

From defeat to victory; And from victory to defeat;

Until looking backward or ahead

We see that victory does not lie

At some high point along the way

But in having made the journey

Stage by stage.

(Adapted from an old Hebrew prayer)

Climb 'Til Your Dream Comes True

Often your tasks will be many,
And more than you think you can do.
Often the road will be rugged
And the hills insurmountable, too.

But always remember, the hills ahead
Are never as steep as they seem,
And with Faith in your heart start upward
And climb 'Til you reach your dream.

For nothing in life that is worthy
Is never too hard to achieve
If you have the courage to try it
And you have the Faith to believe.

For Faith is a force that is greater
Than knowledge or power or skill
And many defeats turn to triumph
If you trust in God's wisdom and will.

For Faith is a mover of mountains.
There's nothing that God cannot do,
So start out today with Faith in your heart
And "Climb 'Til Your Dream Comes True" !

Helen Steiner Rice (1900 - 1981)

The Spirit of God and the Spirit of the World

“What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.” 1 cor 2:12

Two readers are needed: one reads the Spirit of God and the other the spirit of the world. In each case the spirit of the world comes first, followed within a couple of seconds by the Spirit of God; then a 10 – 15 second pause before moving on. Ideally the two readers should stand at lecterns at opposite ends of the relevant space.

1. The spirit of the world says that externals are all important – looks, property, possessions. You are what you have.
2. The spirit of God says that your looks and appearance can be very deceptive. You must look into the heart, into the depth of life to see who we really are.
1. The spirit of the world says that life is a test and success if everything. It abhors failure and disappointment.
2. The spirit of God says that failure can be more important than success. We can learn even from the sad and more difficult times.
1. The spirit of the world says that the great problems – unemployment, ecology, violence – have nothing to do with me. I’ve just got to mind my own patch.
2. The spirit of God says that I am responsible for everyone, everywhere, at all times.
1. The spirit of the world says that love is about things going well, in accord with my plans.
2. The spirit of God says that love is about giving of myself even when I feel that I cannot.
1. The spirit of the world says that there is no such thing as forgiveness because there is no such thing as sin.

2. The spirit of God says that forgiveness is the greatest reality that we know. We sin, we fail, yet we can be freed to go on.
1. The spirit of the world says that honesty and commitment are impossible and don't really exist.
2. The spirit of God says that honesty and commitment are the only things that matter in the end.
1. The spirit of the world says that the sick and the disabled are not really alive. Sickness and disability are disastrous.
2. The spirit of God says that the sick and the disabled are often those who are most alive for they know their dependence; they know that life is not in their control.
1. The spirit of the world says that death is the end of life and proves that life is futile.
2. The spirit of God says that death is not the end of life as the great spirit present in us is not extinguished but transformed.

"A Sacramental People" M. Drumm and T. Gunning

A Creed To Live By.

Nancy Sims

Don't undermine your worth by comparing yourself with others.

It is because we are different that each of us are special. Don't set your goals by what other people deem important. Only do what is best for you.

Don't take for granted the things closest to your heart. Cling to them as you would your life, for without them life is meaningless.

Don't let life slip through your fingers by living in the past or in the future. By living one day at a time you live all days of your life.

Don't give up when you still have something to give. Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying.

Don't be afraid to admit that you are less than perfect. It is the fragile thread that binds us to each other.

Don't be afraid to encounter risks. It is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave.

Don't shut love out of your life by saying it is impossible. The fastest way to lose love is to hold to it tightly, and the best way to keep love is to give it wings.

Don't dismiss your dreams. To be without dreams is to be without hope, to be without hope is to be without purpose.

Don't run through life so fast that you forget not only where you have been, but also where you are going. Life is not a race, but a journey to be savoured each step of the way.

Traditional Navajo Prayer

How do you see the world?
Is it full of ugliness or is it of beauty?
A stunningly beautiful sunset was pointed out to a troubled young man some years ago,
And his response was,
'If you've seen one sunset, you've seen 'em all.'
It was a remarkable statement,
Not just in its utter falseness,
But in that it revealed how cut off from the outer world this young person was.
He was incapable of walking in beauty.
It surrounded him, but he could not see it.

How like that young man are we though?
How well do we experience the beauty around us?
As we rush from one obligation to another,
Do we attend to the beauty of our world?
What would it be like to walk in beauty all the time?
What would be required of us?

When we walk in beauty we are connected.
The universe walks with us.
We are in our place and we are unaware of the beauty around us.
Our eye may be caught by the colourful flower,
But we must direct our attention to it to recognise its beauty.
So there is an exchange between the beautiful and the witness to the beauty.
It is said, 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.'
We must be awake to recognise beauty.
We must have our eyes open to the world to see its beauty.

Recognition of beauty is an act of love.
When our hearts are open to love, the world is more beautiful.
When we are overcome by hate, all we see is ugliness.
When the world looks beautiful to us,
It is a sign that we are in a harmonious situation with the universe.
Let us then prepare ourselves to walk in beauty.

Where there is disharmony, let us create harmony.
Where there is falsehood, let us bear truth.
Where there is imperfection, let us bring wholeness.
Where there is cluttered complexity, let us draw out simplicity.
Where there is dishonesty, let us act with integrity.
Let us cultivate beauty in our surroundings.
Let us bring forth beauty in our minds.
May we open to the beauty in our hearts

May we perceive the beauty in our souls.

In preparing students for the Mass,/ Graduation service you could speak with them about their hopes and ambitions for the future. These could be put together in the form of a creed, an example of which follows:

We believe in God, our Protector and guide.

We put our trust in God for the future.

We believe in friends and everlasting friendship.

We believe in Jesus Christ, who came to encourage and heal us.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who will guide us through life.

We believe that loving ourselves gives us confidence to believe in ourselves and to achieve our goals.

We hope to be happy and successful in the future.

We hope through God's protection to be safe.

We hope that we will live to see peace in the world.

We hope that our class of 200? will be successful in our exams.

We love our parents, guardians and friends, living and departed,

Who have helped us through many difficult situations.

They were there to support us when we needed a shoulder to cry on or someone to talk to.

We love and treasure all the wonderful memories we have been given by our families, friends and teachers.

We love God and with God by our side,

We believe we can achieve anything.

Amen

Our Deepest Fear

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you *not* to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Marianne Williamson

Graduation Reflection

I believe...

That our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.

That no matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.

That just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to doesn't mean that they don't love you with all they have.

That true friendship continues to grow even over the longest distance, same goes for true love.

That it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.

That you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.

That you can keep going long after you think you can't.

That we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.

That either you control your attitude or it controls you.

That heroes are the people who do what has to be done, when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.

That money is a lousy way of keeping score.

That my best friend and I can do anything or nothing and still have the best time.

That sometimes the people you expect to kick you when you are down will be the ones to help you get back up.

That sometimes when I'm angry I have the right to be angry but that doesn't give me the right to be cruel.

That maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from them and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.

That it isn't always enough to be forgiven by others. Sometimes you have to learn to forgive yourself.

That no matter how bad your heart is broken the world doesn't stop for your grief.

That just because two people argue it doesn't mean they don't love each other and just because they don't doesn't mean they do.

That you shouldn't be so eager to find out a secret, it may change your life forever.

That two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different.
That your life can be changed in a matter of hours by people who don't even know you.
That even when you think you have no more to give, when a friend cries out to you, you will find the strength to help.
That credentials on the wall do not make you a decent human being.
That the people you care about in life are taken from you much too soon.
That life is more precious than money ever will be.

Blessing

I wish you ...
Happiness ... Deep down within
Serenity... With each sunrise
Success In each facet of your life
Close and caring friends
Love... That never ends
Knowledge of the grace and love of God
Special memories... Of all the yesterdays
A bright today...with much to be thankful for
A path... That leads to beautiful tomorrows
Dreams... That do their best to come true
And... appreciation... Of all the wonderful things
About you!

Blessing

May the beauty of *God* always surprise you.

May the freedom of *God* keep you centred and whole.

May the truthfulness of *God* bring peace to your heart.

May *God's* gift of *Christ* saturate you with love.

May the wisdom of *God's* dream always invite you deeper.

And may the blessing of *God*, in the company of *Christ* and the life-giving *Spirit* guide you now and every minute of your life.