

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CLASS OF 1960 FIFTIETH REUNION MEMORIAL SERVICE

Princeton University Chapel
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey USA
9:30 a.m., Friday, 28 May, 2010

Welcome

Good morning and welcome. As the Princeton Class of 1960 we were 760 young men who entered Princeton University in September, 1956. We gather together this morning to remember the 128 deceased members of our class. This is a solemn moment. This is a graced time of remembrance, thanksgiving and even celebration. We have received carnations with the names of our deceased classmates. We will hear their names read one by one. We will mourn their loss. We will honor their memories. We will also celebrate their lives. We believe that they are now on a journey to eternal life. We recall the words of the Indian poet Tagore: "Death is not extinguishing the light. It is putting out the lamp because the dawn has come." For us this is a moment of communion and solidarity. As another expression of solidarity we invite you for a brief dedication ceremony of our Class Plaque, with ivy, at Nassau Hall at 11:40 a.m. today.

Reflections

During the preparations of this Memorial Service there were many moving messages and tributes to our deceased classmates. We remember them, even cherish them, not just as classmates but: As close friends. As confidants. As roommates. As teammates on the playing field. As fellow students in the classroom. As co-workers in many activities. As husbands and fathers. As active alumni. As partners in business. As reunions comrades. As fellow searchers. As companions on the journey. We participate in Almighty God's plan in our lives. The mysterious hand of God has accompanied us during the past 50 years.

During the past 50 years I have spent almost 40 years as a missionary in East Africa. When I return to the United States people often ask me: "What African values best speak to the American people and to the American experience." I always begin with the African value of great respect, even reverence, for people who have died. Deceased people don't just go away or disappear. In some special way they remain part of our living community. The dead live on in our hearts and in our memories. They are now our ancestors whose lives are a shining example for the generations that follow. The deceased are still part of us. I find this is always very

consoling and meaningful to a person who has just lost a loved one. After death the deceased live on among us.

Now let us remember our deceased classmates – especially those special friends who have passed away-- as we listen to the poem *The Dead Are Never Dead* by the African writer Birago Diop that portrays the enduring relationship between the dead and our world:

Those who are dead have never gone away.
 They are in the shadows darkening around,
 They are in the shadows fading into day,
 The dead are not under the ground.
 They are in the trees that quiver,
 They are in the woods that weep,
 They are in the waters of the rivers,
 They are in the waters that sleep.
 They are in the crowds, they are in the homestead.
 The dead are never dead.

An important theme that runs through this Memorial Service is our deceased classmates' journey to their eternal home with God. Psalm 23 says that "we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." The Beatitudes highlight our entry into the kingdom of heaven. The Kaddish sings: "Let God's great name be blessed forever and to all eternity."

I close with the poem *A Parable of Immortality* by Henry Van Dyke, Princeton Class of 1873. *A Parable of Immortality*:

I am standing upon the seashore.
 A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze
 and starts for the blue ocean.

She is an object of beauty and strength,
 and I stand and watch until at last she hangs
 like a speck of white cloud
 just where the sea and sky come down to mingle with each other.
 Then someone at my side says,
 "There she goes! "

Gone where?

Gone from my sight . . . that is all.

She is just as large in mast and hull and spar
 as she was when she left my side
 and just as able to bear her load of living freight
 to the place of destination.

Her diminished size is in me, not in her.

And just at the moment
when someone at my side says,
"There she goes!"
there are other eyes watching her coming . . .
and other voices ready to take up the glad shout . . .

"Here she comes!"

Rev. Joseph G. Healey, M.M.
Maryknoll Society
P.O. Box 43058
00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel. 020-4442864
JGHealey@aol.com