

OUR COMMON QUEST

From this platform, the most striking aspect of this assembly is how alike we classmates look. Except for the tassels, we are the same. In just a few minutes we will shed our caps and gowns and become different again -- 791 individuals with their own unique hopes and concerns. But now, right at this moment, we share a similarity which is unavoidable.

This sameness is symbolic. We do have some things in common. We are skeptics, products of an era of dishonor and mistrust. Despite this smug skepticism, we are all engaged on the same search: trying to attain fulfillment.

In the days of crusades, castles and chivalry, worthy knights left everything they had to go on a quest - a quest for the Holy Grail, the legendary chalice which Christ used at the Last Supper. To search the countryside for a cup, tell me that's not optimism, or recklessness of the highest order. Our quest for fulfillment could be considered just as hopeless, especially if we strive for materialistic goals to make our lives meaningful, goals such as wealth, status, fame or power.

It's painfully obvious that these goals are dead-end avenues. They offer no satisfaction. Look at the rich, famous and powerful, the Beautiful People, whom we ogle at. They aren't beautiful at all ... they're pitiful, and for the most part, unhappy! Believe that!!!

So where is fulfillment? Where can I get meaning and love? I can find it with GOD. With that Higher Being - call it whatever you will, by any name; it is no dead-end avenue.

Look at the person next to you. What could have created that creature? Imagine a park or forest. Sense the magnificence. Nature exists for the greater glory of its creator. Can we take that as our mission in life? Are we temples of the Lord? Can we rise above the paganism of our society? Or will we succumb to its pressures and coaxings?

Fellow classmates, rise in celebration. The end of our 13 year haul is seconds away. Rejoice not only in our completion, rejoice not only because it's all over, but rejoice at the promise of a fresh start.

Good-bye, classmates. You may not realize how much I've grown to love you.

LIVE LONG AND PROSPER.