

Reflection and pledge for the outgoing class of 2009

reflection:

We are in the middle of a ritual. right here, right now, we are present to each other in a significant moment. We are witnessing and we are commissioning, we are calling out and saying goodbye. we are saying, "it is time to grow some more now." It is time to take the next step.

guard your idealism my friends. For it is not idealism but seeds of hope that God has given to you, ideas of a future world that was imagined at the beginning. another way to say this is, "continue to lose your faith in the small gods you have learned to spurn." Leaving this community will almost certainly mean a re-confrontation with those small gods. when this happens, they will try to reconvert you to their ways, their values, their plan for the world. But Jesus has a different plan for your life and indeed for this world.

I hear and have seen many people move, after school, into a season (or a life) where idealism is looked down upon. There is the feeling that in the "real world," you have to be "realistic." In this "reality," there are apparently things like "real jobs," "starting a family," "providing for your family," and "being a beneficial part of society." Its interesting how related all these things are to habits of consumerism. In this reality, you are discouraged from engaging in dangerous things like "poverty," "looking out for others without seeing to yourself first," "neighbors," and so on. Might I suggest to you that you do not want the "reality" that is being foisted upon our world today. For it is a "reality" which protects you from reality. It is only this idealism, which i have properly called the holy gift of hope, which will bring you in over your head and into reality.

As you already know, the world is wide and full of beauty and agony. There are many places in our world and culture where we can see and find God and His kingdom and so we must be open and excited to find those. But there are, as I have said, forces and systems which will seek the destruction of your hope, or rather the gift of hope that God has given and is giving you. These forces will also seek the destruction of the latent hope of the world. In war, in globalization, in dictators, in insane and unlimited consumption, in the complete disintegration of the unity of body and soul. These forces will peacefully allow "faith" as long as it remains disembodied and "spiritual." But Jesus has a different plan for your life.

so continue, as you have been taught here, to lose faith in the god of violence, the god of human arrogance against the earth, lose faith completely in the small god of pluralism, of democracy, of the myth of "the individual." As that faith is lost, then the true life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will have increasing reign in your lives and in the lives of all who you meet.

Be passionate caretakers of the aspects of your faith that have been birthed in this place. Guard the connection between God and the environment, stand watch over issues of justice locally and globally, continue to speak truthfully and intelligently about other religions, write melodies of praise and protest, of lament and celebration, do not lose the call to creative non-violent action centered in Christ, continue to slowly build a life in which you eat mindfully, nurture the gift of the past for the gift of the future, never stop expressing the love of God in vulnerability, keep on developing your art so it is good enough that you might die well, never stop opening your doors and tables to strangers and friends, do one of the most politically radical actions you can: join a church you can walk to. don't build a community like this one, build the community that has been put in your heart through this community, don't let your tears dry up or your anger go out, but pray and act that they may be righteous and humble, seek to know yourself and, more and more, to be at home there.

Pledge:

So in light of all this,

will you go forward in the mystery, confusion, and joy of your individual and communal callings?

**though we stumble and fall,
though the way is often hidden from our eyes,
we will go forward.
with the help of friends and enemies, we will go forward.
with the help of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we will go forward.**

I now welcome you into the fellowship of those adults who have walked and been dragged through this community's process of hopefully holistic education. When you are too comfortable, may God always afflict you; when you are afflicted, may God always comfort you. Amen.