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COMMENCEMENT

ADDRESS

BY

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AT

GRADUATION EXERCISES

FOR

THE CLASS OF 1984

LORAS COLLEGE

DUBUQUE, IOWA

MAY 20, 1984

ARCHBISHOP KUCERA

ARCHBISHOP BYRNE

PRESIDENT DI PASQUALE

MEMBERS OF THE LORAS BOARD OF REGENTS, FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

PARENTS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE CLASS OF 1984

AND MOST OF ALL YOU GRADUATES

IT IS AN ENORMOUS HONOR FOR ME TO BE ASKED TO COME BACK TO LORAS AND TO BE WITH YOU TODAY. DURING MY CAREER I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE RECEIVED HONORS AND AWARDS AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT, THE STATE CAPITOL AND THE WHITE HOUSE. BUT I CAN TELL YOU THAT NONE OF THEM MEANS MORE TO ME THAN THE HONOR YOU HAVE BESTOWED ON ME TODAY. FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART AND WITH TRUE HUMILITY, I THANK YOU. I AM SORRY THAT MY WIFE LE SON AND OUR CHILDREN, COULD NOT BE WITH ME TODAY, BUT I KNOW THEY JOIN ME IN CONVEYING OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE.

I AM SURE MOST OF YOU ARE VERY THANKFUL THAT YOU'VE MADE IT THROUGH LORAS AND HAVE YOUR DIPLOMAS. YET YOU NOW FACE THE QUESTION THAT HAS PLAGUED EVERY SENIOR AS HE OR SHE NEARED THE END OF THAT LAST YEAR OF COLLEGE! WHERE WILL I GO NEXT? WHAT PATH SHOULD MY LIFE FOLLOW? WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES THAT AWAIT ME? HOW CAN I GIVE MEANING TO MY LIFE?

IN TRYING TO THINK WHAT ADVICE I MIGHT PASS ON YOU, I THOUGHT BACK TO MY OWN GRADUATION FOR HINTS ABOUT WHAT TO SAY OR WHAT TO TALK ABOUT, BUT ALL I COULD RECALL WAS THAT I HAD BEEN OUT SO LATE THE NIGHT BEFORE, I COULDN'T REMEMBER WHO THE SPEAKER WAS MUCH LESS WHAT HE SAID. SO I THOUGHT I REALLY HAVE TO DO SOMETHING OR SAY SOMETHING UNUSUAL THAT YOU GRADUATES WOULD REMEMBER. AND I PONDERED, WHAT IS THE ONE THING THEY THINK THEY ARE FREE OF -AND WOULD LEAST EXPECT. THEN IT OCCURED TO ME -I KNOW, I'LL START MY ADDRESS WITH A TEST. DON'T WORRY, IT WON'T BE GRADED AND IT WON'T REQUIRE ANYONE TO HAND BACK THEIR DIPLOMAS - THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS. IN FACT YOU CAN TAKE THE TEST AT HOME -ALTHOUGH YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO LOOK UP THE ANSWERS. RATHER THE TEST IS AIMED AT HELPING YOU FIND THE DIRECTION IN YOUR LIFE AND ONLY YOU WILL KNOW WHETHER YOU'VE GIVEN HONEST ANSWERS OR NOT. THE TEST HAS TWO PARTS:

FIRST THINK WHAT ARE THE THREE GOALS YOU HAVE FOR YOURSELF FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS OF YOUR LIFE. PERHAPS YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN YOURSELF THAT ORGANIZED TO THINK ABOUT THE NEXT FIVE WEEKS, MUCH LESS THE NEXT FIVE YEARS -BUT SOMETIME THINK ABOUT IT AND TRY TO ANSWER. IF YOU DO IT AT HOME, GIVE YOURSELF ONE MINUTE TO WRITE DOWN YOUR ANSWERS. THEN TAKE ANOTHER MINUTE IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE ANYTHING, BUT HERE I'M ONLY GIVING YOU A FEW SECONDS. THE SECOND PART OF THE TEST IS LIKE THE FIRST. IMAGINE, FOR A SECOND I'M A PHYSICIAN AND I'VE TOLD YOU THAT YOU THAT YOU HAVE JUST SIX MONTHS TO LIVE -THEN ASK YOURSELF WHAT THESE THREE GOALS WOULD BE. AND IF THEY ARE FAR DIFFERENT FROM THOSE YOU IDENTIFIED THE FIRST TIME - THEN PERHAPS YOU NEED TO RECONSIDER YOUR PRIORITIES. BUT THE BEST PART OF THE TEST IS THAT THE ANSWERS CAN BE CHANGED AND YOU CAN EVEN GO BACK AND START OVER. BUT YOU CAN'T CHEAT, BECAUSE IF YOU DO, YOU ONLY CHEAT YOURSELF. BUT HOPEFULLY THIS TEST WILL HELP YOU NOW AND DURING YOUR LIFE TO IDENTIFY WHAT IS TRULY IMPORTANT TO YOU. IT WOULD BE FUN TO TRY TO GUESS SOME OF THE IDEAS THAT MIGHT BE RUNNING THROUGH YOUR MINDS RIGHT NOW: GETTING AN ADVANCED DEGREE; TRAVEL; MAKING YOUR FIRST MILLION DOLLARS; FIGURING OUT HOW YOU CAN

KEEP LIVING AT HOME EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE GOT YOUR B.A. DEGREE. BUT ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT YOU HAVEN'T DECIDED EXACTLY WHAT YOUR GOALS ARE, LET ME SUGGEST A COUPLE OF IDEAS YOU MIGHT CONSIDER. THEY'RE NECESSARILY GENERAL, SO THEY CAN APPLY TO ANY OF YOU -BUT THEY ARE WHAT I THINK I WOULD SAY TO MY ELDEST SON IF HE WERE GRADUATING TODAY.

THE FIRST IS HAVE AN ADVENTURE. TAKE SOME TIME IN YOUR LIFE - BE IT THREE MONTHS OR THREE YEARS - TO DO SOMETHING NEW, DIFFERENT, EXCITING. SOMETHING THAT WILL STAY WITH YOU FOREVER - AND WHICH YOU WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER. IT COULD BE IN A RELIGIOUS MISSION, ABROAD OR INNER CITY WORK AT HOME. IT COULD BE IN POLITICS ON CAPITOL HILL OR IN OUR STATE CAPITOL. IT COULD BE STUDY IN EUROPE OR VOLUNTEER WORK IN AFRICA. IT COULD BE IN THE MILITARY SERVICE OR IN VOLUNTEER SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY. IT COULD COME BEFORE GRADUATE WORK OR AFTER. BUT WHATEVER OR WHENEVER OR WHEREVER, FIND SOMETHING, THAT WILL TAKE YOU IN A NEW AND EVEN UNCHARTED DIRECTION. LIFE SHOULDN'T ALWAYS BE PREDICTABLE AND ORDERLY. WHILE YOU ARE YOUNG AND FREE AND FLEXIBLE - HAVE AN ADVENTURE.

THE SECOND GUIDELINE I WOULD SUGGEST MAY SEEM ANTITHETICAL TO THE FIRST AND IN A WAY IT IS. MY SECOND BIT OF ADVICE IS TO GET A SKILL OR SPECIALTY TO CARRY WITH YOU THROUGH LIFE THAT YOU CAN ALWAYS FALL BACK ON. SOME OF YOU MAY ALREADY HAVE IT FROM YOUR FOUR YEARS HERE AT LORAS AND OTHERS MAY NOT. IT MAY BE A LAW DEGREE, A TEACHING CERTIFICATE, NURSING CREDENTIALS OR COMPUTER SKILLS. BUT HAVE SOME MARKETABLE SKILL, SO THAT IF LATER IN LIFE YOU WANT TO CHANGE THE WHOLE DIRECTION OF YOUR EXISTENCE, YOU WILL HAVE THE FREEDOM TO WALK AWAY FROM WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND NOT FEEL TRAPPED.

MY THIRD GUIDELINE IS, AND THE MAIN THEME OF WHAT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU, THAT IN WHATEVER YOU DO, "MAKE A DIFFERENCE". IT IS UNFORTUNATELY ALL TOO EASY TO MERELY GET THROUGH LIFE. SUCCESS IN OUR SOCIETY SEEMS TO BE MORE AND MORE OFTEN DEFINED AS MERELY THE ABSENCE OF FAILURE. BUT NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, THERE WILL BE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO MORE, TO REALLY CHANGE THE COURSE OF EVENTS - PERHAPS IN THE POLICIES FOLLOWED BY YOUR LOCAL, STATE OR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT; PERHAPS IN THE DIRECTION YOUR CHURCH, SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY IS HEADED; OR PERHAPS IN THE COURSE OF ANOTHER PERSON'S LIFE.

IT HAS BEEN MY PRIVILEGE TO BE INVOLVED WHEN IMPORTANT DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN FOREIGN POLICY AND AT OUR STATE CAPITOL IN DES MOINES. I RECALL THE DISCUSSIONS LEADING UP TO OUR NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH CHINA, THE EFFORTS TO GET THE INDOCHINA REFUGEE PROGRAM STARTED AND THE LONG HOURS OF THE MAYAGUEZ CRISIS AT THE WHITE HOUSE. THESE WERE TREMENDOUSLY INTERESTING EXPERIENCES. BUT WHEN I LOOK BACK IN MY OWN LIFE AND TRY TO THINK OF THE TIMES I MAY HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE, IT IS NOT THESE HISTORICAL EVENTS THAT SPRING TO MIND. RATHER, IT IS THE INDIVIDUALS WHOSE LIVES I HAVE AFFECTED IN SOME WAY. IT IS A DOCTOR WHO WROTE TO GOVERNOR RAY PLEADING FOR RELEASE FROM THE BOWELS OF A REFUGEE CAMP ON THE CAMBODIAN BORDER WHERE HE WAS TRAPPED AND HELP IN FINDING A NEW HOME AND A FRESH START IN LIFE. A FEW MONTHS LATER HE STOOD IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AFTER WE IN IOWA HAD EXTRACTED HIM FROM THAT SITUATION BECAUSE I HAD FOLLOWED UP ON HIS LETTER INSTEAD OF PUTTING IT ASIDE. I THINK OF CHRISTMAS CARDS FROM THE FAMILY OF A FOREIGN SERVICE COLLEAGUE, WHO WERE LIVING IN FLORIDA INSTEAD OF UNDER COMMUNIST RULE BECAUSE I MADE ONE MORE PHONE CALL TO GET THEM ON AN

EVACUATION FLIGHT OUT OF SAIGON AS THAT CITY WAS FALLING TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY.

AND I THINK OF DYING REFUGEES LYING IN MUD AND FILTH IN THAILAND, THEIR LIFE DRAINING OUT OF THEIR BODIES, WHO WERE GIVEN A CHANCE TO LIVE - A TOUCH OF LIFE - BY THE IOWA SHARES RELIEF CAMPAIGN LED BY FORMER GOVERNOR RAY IN WHICH I WAS PRIVILEGED TO SERVE.

IT IS THESE FACES I SEE AND THESE PEOPLE WHOM I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER. THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF HUMAN BEINGS IN NEED OF HELP - TO WHOM YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE JUST AS THERE HAVE BEEN PERSONS WHO HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE AND MY LIFE.

I HAVE BEEN SURPRISED HOW AT SPECIAL, OFTEN CRITICAL TIMES IN MY LIFE CERTAIN TEACHERS I HAD AT LORAS HAVE MEANT THE DIFFERENCE TO ME IN THE OUTCOME OF AN EVENT.

I RECALL MY ORAL INTERVIEW TO ENTER THE FOREIGN SERVICE. THIS IS PART OF THE SCREENING PROCESS TO WINNOW DOWN THE 12,000 APPLICANTS TO ABOUT 200 ENTRANTS. IT WAS A TWO HOUR NO HOLDS BARRED INTERVIEW BY THREE VETERAN DIPLOMATS ON ANY SUBJECT THEY CHOSE. I

WAS PETRIFIED. I WAS DOING ALRIGHT UNTIL THEY ASKED ME TO GIVE A SUMMARY OF THE "MUCKRAKERS" ROLE IN 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN SOCIAL-POLITICAL HISTORY. I THOUGHT I WOULD PASS OUT. BUT THEN SOMEHOW, I RECALLED THE LECTURES I HAD FROM THE LATE DR. RICHARD BALFE AND FROM SOME PLACE IN MY SUBCONSCIOUS THE OUTLINE OF THE NOTES HE GAVE EMERGED AND I WAS ABLE TO GIVE A DECENT ANSWER. IT WAS THE DIFFERENCE I BELIEVE BETWEEN PASSING OR NOT PASSING THE TEST. WITHOUT HIS COURSE, I WOULDN'T BE HERE INFRONT OF YOU TODAY. DR. BALFE MADE A DIFFERENCE IN MY LIFE.

ON ANOTHER OCCASION, I WAS THE CHIEF WITNESS IN AN ESPIONAGE TRIAL. I WOULD HASTEN TO ADD -ON THE GOVERNMENT'S SIDE- NOT THAT OF THE SPIES. I WAS NERVOUS AGAIN -IN FACT IT SEEMS THAT WHENEVER I AM VERY SCARED I THINK OF LORAS. THE DEFENSE LAWYER KEPT TRYING TO TRIP ME UP AND POSE HIS QUESTIONS IN SUCH A WAY THAT I WOULD END UP CONTRADICTING MYSELF. THEN, AS I SAT THERE IN THE COURT HOUSE IN ALEXANDIA, VIRGINIA I SOMEHOW FLASHED BACK TO FATHER STAN GORSKI'S SOPHOMORE LOGIC CLASS AND THEN REALIZED THE DEFENSE ATTORNEY WAS TRYING TO USE SIMPLE SYLOGISTIC CONSTRUCTS TO TRAP ME. AFTER THAT,

WHILE ALWAYS ADHEREING TO THE TRUTH, I WAS ABLE TO SIDE STEP THE TRAPS HE WAS LAYING FOR ME. FATHER GORSKI MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR ME.

I REMEMBER OTHER THINGS DONE BY FACULTY MEMBERS THAT HAVE SHAPED MY LIFE: THE PHONE CALL PROF. JOHN DORWEILER MADE TO GET ME A SCHOLARSHIP TO GRADUATE SCHOOL; THE HELP FATHER JOE O'HARA PROVIDED WITH MY COACHING JOB AT ST. COLUMBKILLE'S AFTER SCHOOL; THE EXTRA WORK AL SCHRAMM GAVE ME IN THE INTRAMURAL PROGRAM SO I COULD PAY MY TUITION. I AM SURE THERE ARE LORAS FACULTY MEMBERS WHO HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR SOME OF YOU, TOO.

SOMETIMES, HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT A SPECIFIC PERSON BUT THE GENERAL ORIENTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION I HAD RECEIVED THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR ME. IT WAS HERE THAT THE MORAL VALUES INCULCATED BY MY FAMILY AND BY 16 YEARS OF CATHOLIC TEACHING CAME INTO PLAY. ONE OF THE CENTRAL MOMENTS OF MY LIFE CAME IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN VIET NAM ON A MISTY NIGHT IN 1969. A YOUNG BOY WHO HAD JOINED THE VIET CONG WAS SNEAKING HOME TO VISIT HIS FAMILY. TRAVELING AT NIGHT IN FORBIDDEN AREAS, HE WAS SHOT BY A GOVERNMENT PATROL AND CRITICALLY WOUNDED. HE WAS BROUGHT TO THE VILLAGE CENTER

AND LAY IN HIS MOTHER'S ARMS WHILE SHE PLEADED FOR HELP. THE MEDICS DID WHAT THEY COULD, BUT HE NEEDED A DOCTOR. THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS REFUSED TO DRIVE HIM DOWN THE ROAD TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL, BECAUSE THE ROAD WAS OFTEN AMBUSHED BY THE ENEMY AT NIGHT. MEDICAL EVACUATION HELICOPTERS DID NOT COME, BECAUSE HE WAS THE ENEMY - THE LOWEST PRIORITY AND THEY HAD OTHER WOUNDED PERSONS TO ASSIST.. I WAS TOLD OF THE SITUATION AND I WALKED TO THE CENTER OF THE VILLAGE AND THERE SAW THIS WOMAN, HOLDING HER SON WHOSE LIFE WAS SLOWLY OOZING FROM HIS BODY, IMPLORING SOMEONE TO HELP. LIKE ALL THE OTHERS, I TOO STARTED TO TURN AWAY, BUT THEN SOME FEELING, SOME SENSE OF OBLIGATION TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THAT HAD BEEN INSTILLED OVER THE YEARS AT ST. COLUMBKILLES, AT WAHLERT HIGH SCHOOL AND HERE AT LORAS COLLEGE, STOPPED ME. I REALIZED THAT I HAD TO CHOOSE -TO EITHER TURN MY BACK AND WALK AWAY- OR TO DO WHAT I COULD TO TRY TO HELP- TO TRY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. I VOLUNTEERED TO DRIVE THE BOY TO THE HOSPITAL AND SOON WAS INUNDATED WITH OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE FROM OTHERS. I WISH THE STORY HAD A HAPPY ENDING -IT DOES NOT- THE BOY DIED BEFORE HE COULD BE HELPED. BUT THE LESSON WAS THERE. THE

CHOICE WAS MINE -AS IT WOULD BE IN THE FUTURE- TO EITHER ACCEPT EVENTS AS THEY ARE OR TO TRY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

IN THE FUTURE YOU WILL FACE SIMILAR SITUATIONS WHERE YOU WILL HAVE TO CHOOSE EITHER TO TURN AWAY OR TO BECOME INVOLVED. YOU WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. IT MAY NOT BE A LIFE AND DEATH SITUATION AND YOU MAY NOT SEE THE RESULTS OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT FOR YEARS. AND YOU MAY NOT EVEN SUCCEED. BUT THE POINT OF AN EDUCATION AT LORAS IS THAT YOU HAVE A BASIS FOR MAKING A CHOICE. YOUR EDUCATION HERE WAS NOT JUST TRAINING YOUR BRAIN TO PERFORM SOME FUNCTION LATER IN LIFE. IT ALSO INVOLVED TRAINING YOUR CONSCIENCE TO DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGES YOU WILL FACE IN THE DECADES AHEAD.

THE CHALLENGE FACING EACH OF YOU TODAY IS THE CHALLENGE TO REACH OUT TO BE A PART OF YOUR WORLD, TO TAKE YOUR EXPERIENCE AT LORAS COLLEGE AND SHARE IT -- SHARE IT WITH YOUR FAMILY, YOUR FRINED, YOUR CHURCH AND YOUR COMMUNITY. TO MAKE YOURSELF WHAT GOD INTENDED YOU TO BE -- YOUR VERY BEST.

IT IS NOT EASY TO BE INVOLVED IN THE WORLD TODAY. THE PROBLEMS SEEM AS INTRACTABLE AS THEY ARE IMPORTANT: PREVENTING THE OUTBREAK OF WAR; DEALING WITH THE THREAT OF TERRORISM; FEEDING THE WORLD'S BURGEONING POPULATION; WORKING TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE; PRESERVING THE EXCELLENCE OF OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM; ARE JUST SOME OF THE ISSUES YOUR GENERATION MUST DEAL WITH. THE FOREMOST CHALLENGE IS TO PREVENT THE OUTBREAK OF WAR - ESPECIALLY NUCLEAR WAR.

WE IOWANS HAVE A SPECIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS PROCESS. WE HAVE A RICH HERITAGE OF RESPONDING TO OUR NATION'S CALL WHEN WAR THREATENS OUR FREEDOM AND SECURITY. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE A SPECIAL OBLIGATION BECAUSE WE COME FROM A STATE IN WHICH A WAR HAS NEVER BEEN FOUGHT. THIS IS TRULY HALLOWED GROUND UPON WHICH WE STAND TODAY. ITS WHOLE PURPOSE IN RECORDED HISTORY HAS BEEN TO FEED MAN AND SUSTAIN LIFE. AS GRADUATES OF AN IOWA COLLEGE, ALL OF US HAVE A SPECIAL OBLIGATION TO ENSURE THAT IT ALWAYS REMAINS THAT WAY.

ANOTHER FORMIDABLE CHALLENGE DEALS WITH FEEDING THE WORLD'S BURGEONING POPULATION. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 600 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO ENOUGH FOOD TO MEET THEIR

NUTRITIONAL NEEDS. WITH THE WORLD'S POPULATION PROJECTED TO GROW AT A RATE ADDING ANOTHER BILLION PEOPLE EVERY 12 YEARS, OUR PLANET'S ABILITY TO FEED ITS GROWING MEMBERS WILL ONLY BECOME MORE DIFFICULT. THINK OF IT. THAT IS THE EQUIVALENT OF ADDING A NEW CHINA TO THE WORLD EVERY 12 YEARS, BUT WITHOUT ANY NEW LAND. NOWHERE DO THESE PROBLEMS SEEM TO BE MORE PROMINENT THAN IN AFRICA. THERE, FOOD PRODUCTION IS SLOWLY DECLINING WHILE POPULATION IS GROWING AT A MORE RAPID RATE THAN ANY OTHER CONTINENT, WITH DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES. SENATOR JOHN DANFORTH FROM OUR NEIGHBORING STATE OF MISSOURI - DESCRIBED THE SYMPTOMS OF STARVATION THAT HE SAW AMONG REFUGEES THERE: - "... EMACIATED BODIES, DISTENDED BELLIES, DISCOLORED HAIR AND HAUNTING EYES". TODAY WITH OUR OWN ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AT HOME, IT MIGHT BE EASY TO SAY THAT WE CANNOT BE CONCERNED WITH TROUBLES IN SUCH A FAR AWAY PLACE. BUT AS AMERICANS, AS IOWANS AND AS GRADUATES OF A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, WE DON'T HAVE THIS LUXURY. I RECALL STANDING IN AN IOWA FARM FIELD ON A CLEAR OCTOBER DAY IN 1979 AND HEARING POPE JOHN PAUL II TELL US THAT "WE ARE THE STEWARDS OF THE SOIL, WITH AN OBLIGATION TO FEED ALL

MANKIND". HE WAS TELLING US THAT WE HAD A CHOICE TO MAKE AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

THESE THEN ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU WILL FACE. YOU MAY NOT THINK THEM FAIR, BUT EACH GENERATION IS BORN TO A SET OF PROBLEMS WHICH ARE NOT OF ITS MAKING, BUT WHICH ULTIMATELY ARE ITS RESPONSIBILITY. INEVITABLY, SACRIFICES ARE MADE NOT BY THOSE WHO CREATE THE PROBLEM, BUT BY THOSE TO WHOM THE BURDEN FALLS TO SOLVE THEM.

PERHAPS THESE CHALLENGES WERE BEST SUMMONED UP BY ERIC BLAIR AN ENGLISH NOVELIST WHO WROTE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY. BLAIR DESCRIBED THE ENSCRIPTION ON THE FRONT OF A MYTHICAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING IN LONDON WHICH HAS PARTICULAR RELEVANCE FOR THIS GRADUATION CLASS. THE ENSCRIPTION READ:

WAR IS PEACE.

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY.

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.

THAT BUILDING WAS THE MINISTRY OF TRUTH. BLAIR IS BETTER KNOWN AS GEORGE ORWELL. AND, THE BOOK, OF COURSE WAS "1984".

GIVEN THE PROBLEMS FACING THE WORLD TODAY, PERHAPS ORWELL CAN STILL BE PROPERLY READ AS A WARNING AND A CHALLENGE. YOU MUST ENSURE THAT PEACE NEVER DOES BECOME WAR; THAT FREEDOM NEVER DOES BECOME SLAVERY; AND THAT IGNORANCE NEVER DOES BECOME THE BASIS OF STRENGTH.

YOU CAN DO THIS BY MAKING A DIFFERENCE. AS YOU LEAVE LORAS, YOU HAVE THREE LEGACIES TO GUIDE YOU - THAT AS AN AMERICAN, AS AN IOWAN AND AS A GRADUATE OF A CATHOLIC INSTITUTION. WHETHER YOU ARE IN VIENNA AUSTRIA OR NEW VIENNA, IOWA, YOU WILL HAVE CHOICES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO AFFECT PEOPLE AS WELL AS POLICIES. I HOPE AND PRAY THAT WHEN YOU MEET THESE SITUATIONS - THAT YOU WON'T TURN YOUR BACKS - BUT RATHER THAT YOU WILL CHOOSE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.