

STAY WITH US

Augsburg College
Baccalaureate Service
May 2, 2014

But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them.

(Luke 24: 29)

Grace and peace to you from our Creator God,
from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
and from the Holy Spirit that enlivens and sustains our lives together. Amen.

It is a wonderful privilege to be with all of you this evening – our graduates, your families and friends; our faculty, staff and Regents; and other members of the Augsburg community. This is a splendid weekend for all of us as we mark your great achievements and celebrate the mission-based work of Augsburg College. You, our graduates, are our epistles to the world, and we look forward with great anticipation to all of the ways in which your work, commitments, relationships and faith will make God's world an even more fair, just and compassionate place for all God's creatures.

Let me digress for a moment with some behind-the-scenes insight from the world of those who have the privilege to preach on occasions such as these. The print deadlines for fine programs like you have before you this are often 4-6 weeks before the actual event, meaning that the choice of sermon titles can be speculative at times. My own pattern when given a far-away deadline for a title is to take a quick look at the assigned scripture for the day to see if I can find some catchy phrase that will help me organize my thoughts when I actually get around to preparing my sermon. Today's readings, the assigned lectionary for Sunday, the third Sunday in Easter, gave me pause. Let me point out that you could have heard a sermon this morning on such provocative lines as this from the Acts of the Apostles, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation!" But instead I invite you to join me in exploring what it means to ask someone to "stay with us," the act of hospitality that has much to do with the sort of education you have received in this college, as it has for generations of those who have gone before us as God's faithful people in this place we call Augsburg.

In these hours and days after Easter, we join Jesus in Luke's story as he appears alongside the two disciples – one of whom we learn is named Cleopas, the other remains anonymous – on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. It is a familiar and well-loved gospel story. The disciples do not recognize Jesus, we're told, and there ensues this remarkable conversation in which the two disciples share with this stranger their account of what has happened in Jerusalem in the previous few days. "The things about Jesus of Nazareth," they

exclaim, this mighty prophet handed over to authorities, condemned, crucified like a common criminal, and then reported by the faithful women to have disappeared from the tomb, alive even according to the report of angels.

And then there is the rebuke from Jesus, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!" Was it not prophesied that the Messiah would suffer so that he might enter into glory? "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures," Luke recounts. And then, as with any good and engaging conversation, the time passes quickly and the three near the village. Jesus walks ahead, only to be invited – urged strongly we learn – to "stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." Stay with us, stay with us – and Jesus does, later blessing and breaking the bread at table, the moment when the eyes of the disciples are opened to his true identity. The Lord has risen indeed.

This is a delightful Word for a baccalaureate service – especially as we gather here together as God's faithful people before you are sent into the world as graduates of this college.

Three simple messages emerge for us from this story.

Vocare

The first is about Augsburg and your call – OK, OK, you knew I would get this in one last time before you depart!

Joining a college is a wondrous thing. The great American poet, Robert Frost, captured my sentiment in his 1936 poem, "Build Soil," where he wrote:

Steal away and stay away.
Don't join too many gangs. Join few if any.
Join the United States and join the family.
But not much in between unless a college.

No matter how you may be feeling today – sad to leave friends, excited about what's ahead, anxious for that job or grad school application, glad it's over, or probably some combination of these and other emotions – I can assure you that joining this college and the community it represents will have a lifelong impact on you in so many ways. And there is something tremendously meaningful about how you will invite the values and character and people of this college to stay with you as you move forward in your lives.

Not a day passes for me that I don't remember the ways in which my college experience has shaped my life. It was the reason for my first ever airplane ride and my first ever international experience. It was the place where I grew up and realized that I could not live my dad's life and become a pastor (though here I am!) It was the community in which challenging

and loving teachers made me think, made me stronger, taught me how much more I had to learn. It was the sanctuary where I learned to sing from my heart and soul, and not simply from my diaphragm. It was the college that helped me discern a life's journey, a calling to faithful leadership and service in education.

How about you? What will you remember about how your Augsburg experience shaped your journey, your call to the life you will lead, your sense of what is important and what is not?

Stay with us, we plead, for we feel and know how much this college and its community have meant to who we are and aspire to be. Stay with us, so that our eyes might be opened and our hearts set to burning. Stay with us.

Educare

There is in this story on the road to Emmaus also a compelling metaphor for the ways in which education is at the heart of a good and significant life together. I love the image of these strangers deep in conversation along this road. And there is Jesus walking alongside, responding to their confusion over what had happened just now in Jerusalem with his wise interpretation of the scriptures. Here is Jesus, our teacher, helping us to make sense of our lives in the world. Isn't that what good teachers always do for us? Isn't that what we are called to do for each other as we commence our lives as college graduates?

Some of you likely studied Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* in your confirmation classes or perhaps in a religion course here. I am convinced that if we are to be truly faithful to our Lutheran roots, we would put the simple question "What does this mean?" above the door to every classroom on this campus. Here at Augsburg, we embrace the faith and values of the Lutheran church that allow us to affirm that we are indeed called to ask questions of the world and our experiences in it – scientific questions, artistic questions, political questions, historical questions, questions of all sorts. "What does this mean?" becomes the abiding question of a liberal arts education and a liberal arts life.

The Roman Catholic priest and political philosopher, John Courtney Murray, has taught me a great deal about how genuine education is at the heart of a healthy and good society. Murray writes that *"Barbarism...is the lack of reasonable conversation according to reasonable laws. Here the word 'conversation' has its twofold Latin sense. It means living together and talking together. Barbarism threatens when men cease to live together according to reason, embodied in law and custom, and incorporated in a web of institutions that sufficiently reveal rational influences.... Barbarism likewise strikes when men cease to talk together... when dialogue gives way to a series of monologues; when parties to the conversation cease to listen to one another..."* Murray's challenge is clear: How shall we recover our capacity for conversation – both genuine living and talking together?

Murray's words, written more than fifty years ago, strike me as most relevant for our own 21st century lives. Scan the newspapers and find example after example of where barbarism is at our doorstep – in nationalistic fervor, political diatribe, social rancor – and this is the world into which we send you now, our educated friends. I'm sorry, but this is why we have taught you to be informed citizens, thoughtful stewards, critical thinkers and responsible leaders – this is why Augsburg College exists. The world needs you, we need you and your many gifts of intellect and creativity and passion.

Stay with us, we urge all of those who have been our teachers and mentors and colleagues here, those who have taught us that education is our most compelling asset in creating genuine conversation, in learning to talk and live together, in doing God's faithful work in the world. Stay with us so that we might never cease in asking "What does this mean?" Stay with us, for the darkness around us is near and deep, and you are our light. Stay with us.

Servare

And finally, there is in this gospel story a moving reminder that when we invite the stranger to stay with us, that when we sit together at table and break bread, that when we overcome our fear and confusion, then our eyes will be opened and we will know that we have been redeemed. We will know that our loving God will not leave us without comfort and hope.

I wonder if you might think about Riverside or Cedar or Franklin avenues as your roads to Emmaus here in the Seward and Cedar-Riverside neighborhoods. What strangers did you meet there or nearby, what did you learn from them, and in what ways has your mutual hospitality become a source of love and grace and comfort and hope in your lives here at Augsburg?

Teacher and spiritual guide for many of us, Parker Palmer (who has an honorary degree from Augsburg), commenting on the road to Emmaus story, says that "the stranger is a bearer of truth which might not otherwise have been received. (The story tells) us that our everyday perceptions and assumptions must be shaken by the intrusion of strangeness if we are to hear God's word."

I remember an Augsburg graduate of a few years ago sharing with me her experience of working with the Campus Kitchen program, first preparing and delivering meals, and then developing relationships with the families who received the meals. She spoke of how her world was changed by a stranger – a Somali mother whose children played at the Brian Coyle Center – who invited her to visit her apartment in the Riverside Plaza, to help tutor her children in English, to enjoy time with the family over meals, and then to learn in return about the Somali language and culture. Her life was changed, she learned more than she could have imagined, her call was made clear in the truth of the stranger breaking into her world.

Where have you met the stranger here and invited her to stay? Where has your world been turned upside down by a stranger, by an alternative truth, by an experience of otherness? Where have your eyes been opened by the truth of new life, breaking in all around? When has your heart burned with the wisdom of the stranger, whose love for us is boundless?

Stay with us, dear stranger, so that we might learn from you. Stay with us so that our eyes might be opened, our hearts set to burning – so that we might break bread together and know in you the Risen Christ. Stay with us.

And so this weekend, these very special days – surrounded by these colleagues and teachers and friends and family who have meant so much to you, as you commence from Augsburg into the world – you are called by this community, by your education, by the stranger – to care for God's creation, to give away your minds and hearts, to live your faith in service to your neighbor. Stay with us, we pray, for wherever you go, whatever you do, we know this remarkable truth that God so loves the world, that God so loves you, that we have been equipped with the gifts of faith and education so that we might join in God's good and faithful work in all the world. Stay with us. Thanks be to God – and God's people say together, Amen.

BACCALAUREATE SERVICE

FRIDAY, THE SECOND OF MAY
PRECEDING THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
TWO THOUSAND AND FOURTEEN

HOVERSTEN CHAPEL
AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA



THE AUGSBURG COLLEGE MISSION

AUGSBURG COLLEGE EDUCATES STUDENTS TO BE INFORMED CITIZENS,
THOUGHTFUL STEWARDS, CRITICAL THINKERS, AND RESPONSIBLE LEADERS.
THE AUGSBURG EXPERIENCE IS SUPPORTED BY AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY THAT
IS COMMITTED TO INTENTIONAL DIVERSITY IN ITS LIFE AND WORK.
AN AUGSBURG EDUCATION IS DEFINED BY EXCELLENCE IN THE LIBERAL ARTS
AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES, GUIDED BY THE FAITH AND VALUES OF THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH, AND SHAPED BY ITS URBAN AND GLOBAL SETTINGS.

To you I will offer my thanks and call upon your name.
You are my promise for all to see,
I love your name, O God! *Refrain*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Friends in Christ: When we can express to God all that burdens our life and keeps us trapped beneath the weight of judgment, then light is shed on the shadows within us. Knowing that we are listened to, understood, and forgiven by God is our source of peace and our hearts begin to find healing. Let us come before God in confession ready to receive forgiveness and healing.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of new life,
before you and before one another, we confess our faults and frailties.
We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed.
We have not trusted in your word
and have placed our hope in money and power.
We have not treated your creation with care
using it to serve our own needs.
We have not tended to the needs of our neighbors suffering in want.
Open us, O Christ, to your resurrection power,
and forgive our slow hearts and inactive hands.
Reveal to us, again, your light and truth
so that we may follow in your way of peace.
Amen.

By forgiving us, God buries our past in the heart of the Christ
and brings relief to the secret wounds of our lives.
Hear God's promise of forgiveness for you:
The light of the risen Christ put to flight all evil deeds,
washes away sin, restores innocence to the fallen,
casts out hatred and greed, and humbles human pride.
In the name of Christ Jesus, you are forgiven!
Be open and know the love of God.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

LESSON

ACTS 2: 14A, 36-41

HOLLY REDDY '14

CAMPUS MINISTRY CO-COMMISSIONER 2013-14

∞ MEAL ∞

THE OFFERING

The offering is designated for students in need of crisis support, with a portion going to Campus Cupboard food shelf. As the congregation sings the hymn at the offering, the gifts will be presented.

HYMN AT THE OFFERING

YOUR BORNING CRY
JOHN YLIVISAKER

I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
To see your life unfold.

In the middle ages of your life,
Not too old, no longer young,
I'll be there to guide you through the night,
Complete what I've begun.

I was there when you were but a child
With a faith to suit you well;
In a blaze of light you wandered off
To find where demons dwell.

When the evening gently closes in
And you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been
With just one more surprise.

When you heard the wonder of the Word
I was there to cheer you on;
You were raised to praise the living Lord,
To whom you now belong.

I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
To see your life unfold.

If you find someone to share your time
And you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme
From dusk till rising sun.

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John Ylivisaker
P.O. Box 321
Waverly, Iowa 50677*

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up our hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ, who walks with us on the road to Emmaus, explaining the words of the prophets and who becomes known in the breaking of the bread. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

All who long to meet Christ in the bread and wine are invited to come to the Lord's Supper. Communion will be at continuous distribution stations in front and back. Communion will be served by intinction, meaning that after you receive the bread, please dip it in one of the cups; the blue cup contains wine (dark color) and the brown one contains grape juice (light color). Gluten-free wafers are available, just tell the server as you receive communion. If you choose not to receive the bread and wine, but would like to come forward for a blessing, please just indicate to the server that you would like a blessing (or fold your hands and we will know you want a blessing).

COMMUNION ANTHEM

SANCTUS, BENEDICTUS & AGNUS DEI FROM
MISSA BREVIS IN HONOREM BEATAE MARIAE VIRGINIS
KRISTINA VASILIAUSKAITE
THE AUGSBURG CHOIR

Sanctus, Benedictus

Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, Lord God of Hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.
Dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God
who taketh away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Grant us peace.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

∞ SENDING ∞

THE BENEDICTION

THE RECESSIONAL HYMN

WE ARE MARCHING IN THE LIGHT OF GOD

1. We are marching in the light of God,
We are marching in the light of God,
We are marching in the light of God,
We are marching in the light of, the light of God.
We are marching, marching, we are marching, marching,
We are marching, in the light of, the light of God.
We are marching, marching, we are marching, marching,
We are marching in the light of God.
2. We are singing...
3. We are praying...
4. We are dancing...
5. We are marching...

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the Revised Common
LECTIONARY

Year A - Easter
Third Sunday of Easter (May 4, 2014)

Acts 2:14a, 36-41 • Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 • 1 Peter 1:17-23 • Luke 24:13-35

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

2:14a: But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them,

2:36 "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

2:37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

2:39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."

2:40 And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

2:41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

Luke 24:13-35

24:13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,

24:14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

24:15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them,

24:16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

24:17 And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.

24:18 Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

24:19 He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

24:20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

24:21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.

24:22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning,

24:23 and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who

said that he was alive.

24:24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him."

24:25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!

24:26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?"

24:27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

24:28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.

24:29 But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them.

24:30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

24:31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

24:32 They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

24:33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

24:34 They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!"

24:35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Acts 2:14a, 36-41 • Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 • 1 Peter 1:17-23 • Luke 24:13-35



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