



From the Office of the President

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REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

**Homily for the Baccalaureate Mass
Third Sunday of Easter (A)
St. John Francis Regis Chapel
Regis University
May 4, 2014**

Readings:

Acts 2:14,22-28

1 Peter 1:17-21

Luke 24:13-35

“We had hoped,” they said. “We had hoped that he was the one”
(Luke 24:21).

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from...

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And to know the place for the first time.

- T.S. Eliot, from “Little Gidding”

Would those graduating from Regis University this weekend please stand for just a moment?

Please join me in acknowledging the accomplishments of these women and men!

Please, be seated.

We call it “commencement” rather than the more usual term, “graduation.” Commencement, a beginning, conveys our deepest hopes as Eliot says. There is a real ending here, and thank God, an ending of tuition payments! But the strong emphasis is on the beginning, a new and different start for your lives.

Challenging but exciting beginnings are nothing new to the People of God. In the



reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Peter the denier becomes Peter the preacher; he has found a new, courageous voice and commences to both challenge and encourage his hearers in the temple courtyard. In the Letter of Peter, the presumption is that we are on a journey and we are enjoined to conduct our sojourn with circumspection, paying attention to what is futile and what gives life and meaning; to explore and not cease from exploring until we find what we most desire.

Finally, Luke invites us to join two people who seem to think everything is over. Indeed, the companions have experienced great loss and they are leaving their home, their Jerusalem as fast as they can. "We had hoped," they say, "that he was the one to set Israel free," to give the People of God a new start, a beginning.

It's good to observe what's going on here. First, the two disciples are frightened for their lives. They flee Jerusalem in fear and disgust that their hopes of Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One, the one to set Israel free, have been dashed.

Second, things have gotten pretty strange: The body of Jesus is missing and the Roman governor and his soldiers, and the leaders of the Jewish community, will punish the small community of disciples; clearly, it's time to get out of town.

Third, unexpectedly, a Stranger appears on their journey and talks with them; he listens carefully, generously. He examines all the scriptures about the Messiah and opens up the meaning for them. Now, as good Jews, they have known these passages from their youth, but the Stranger brings them back to the texts and makes the prophecies live. Their hearts burn with desire as they listen; hope is rekindled.

Finally, in a last gasp of whatever remains of communal hospitality, or perhaps, in memory of recent table fellowship with the community in Jerusalem, they invite the Stranger, the guest, to dine with them. But the Stranger changes roles - he becomes the host, they become the guests; he says the blessing and breaks the bread. It's only then that they recognize Jesus. They have returned; they have come home and see Jesus who is Christ, the Messiah, as if for the first time.

It's important to notice the pattern. The scriptures are opened up and made alive in the hearing; the table fellowship around bread and wine that is broken, poured and shared. Does that sound like the Eucharist we celebrate today? Moreover, their hopes are revived and taken to a new level. They have come home to their dearest most sacred desires.

On this day, in this holy place, may you commence with grace and wisdom and hope. May you recognize your hope and your truth, a hope and a truth we at Regis University have articulated over and over but only finally makes sense in your time and in God's.