

## **COMMENCEMENT REMARKS OF DR. TOM TREBON, PRESIDENT OF CARROLL COLLEGE**

MAY 10, 2008

The clarion call of Carroll College is simple: Be the difference. The difference is helping out a neighbor even when you're busy, recycling instead of tossing an item in the garbage, being kind to a child, being patient with your parents, donating a bag of groceries to Food Share, doing the right thing even when it's inconvenient or uncomfortable for you. Being the difference is what you do every day, right here at home and anywhere you choose to be.

As you leave Carroll College, remember our motto: *Non Scholae, sed Vitae*. Not for school alone have you been here; not for the learning alone. But for life. For the coming experiences of living in and for the world—its passions, its excitement, its beauties, its challenges, its tribulations. Be the difference there.

We all want to change the world in some way; many of us simply don't know how to go about it. In the face of the goodness in the world, and in the face of the world's sadness, I say to you as I've said to graduates before you, every day: Be a sacrament to your community. You graduates have the opportunity to accomplish much in this world with your tremendous talents and gifts, honed through the educational experiences here at Carroll College. You will be professionally successful, you will earn lots of money, you will nurture a fine family. And so go into the world and do well; be the difference. And at the same time, remember also your yearning, the yearning you will meet and feel in the world you will bless, the yearning to do good. The world's deep need meets the

heart's deep gladness—in you. So go into the world as Easter people and transform it.

Commencement today is the attainment of a glorious goal, and it is also a jumping off point. After today, you leap into a new life, a life you might well be uncertain about. In college we made reasonably sure that you would have at least four or five years of your life fairly well planned out, with plenty of rules to live by in this community. Now, you have no member of the faculty, or academic dean, or advisor to haul you in when you've strayed a few credits or grade points or classes off the path of righteousness. Now, you are the chair of your own department, your own advisor, your own personal dean. But you are not alone!

During the visit to the U.S. a few weeks ago, Pope Benedict XVI met with many individuals and large groups of people. I was thrilled to be a part of one session made up of presidents of our nation's Catholic colleges and universities and officials from Catholic schools throughout the country. I was deeply moved by his passionate expression of what makes Catholic education so valuable. The Pope spoke of its role in educating the mind, yes, and also the will and the heart. This sort of education of the whole person affirms the sacredness of each and every human being. Pope Benedict expressed his joy in knowing of so many educated in Catholic schools and colleges who commit time and energy and passion in service to others. In small ways and in large, through volunteering as a Big Brother/Big sister to service in an HIV/AIDS ward in a rural community.

As I listened to Pope Benedict, I wondered, "How does he know so much about Carroll College? About what we do here? About the education of the mind and the heart that is central to our mission? About you?" Now I know we are not

perfect. I'm not. Nor has every class or every assignment or every event held on this campus reached that level. And yet, as a whole, and in specific moments that you know of in your heart and soul, this part of your journey called the Carroll Experience has called you to be different. To make a difference. To respect and love your own human self. And every person around you. And to be a servant, and more, a servant leader to and for others.

Graduates, this is your moment. It is that one-time-only unique snapshot of joy to cherish, a time when you will take a deep breath and then step out. Treasure this moment; tuck it safely and deeply in your soul. Never forget the journey of the head and heart you have taken here at Carroll College. And know, too, that as you continue your journey, you do so in the loving arms of your family and friends, and ours, all who love you and nourish you and care so deeply for you. In this journey at Carroll College, you have been prepared to perform well and for good; and from this day forward, you—all of us--will never be the same.

Graduates of 2007, a charge to you: make, and *remake*, our world--your world--in a holy place. Do well and do good in the world. From us all, may you be blessed, and may you be blessings to all you touch.

There are many things I have forgotten from my undergraduate and graduate years of study. But there is a Kiswahili blessing that has never left me from my African language class. And it is simply this: “Kwahere ya kuonana, rafiki wangu wazuri.” Goodbye our good friends, be blessed until we meet again.

Thank you and congratulations.