

Testament: "If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"

On countless small occasions, each of us is called to open our hearts; each of us is called to lead, to take responsibility, to show the power of faith in action. I have spoken today of our economic future, about free enterprise, personal liberty. But the freedoms we cherish mean nothing unless they're infused with the old virtues, the time-honored values: honor, honesty, thrift, faith, self-discipline, service to others.

I do not pretend to know the shape of the next century. The genius of a free people defies prediction. Certainly Barbara and I, when we loaded up that Studebaker for the trip to Odessa so long ago, could never have imagined the technological marvels that our grandchildren now take for granted, fax machines and VCR's, for example, not to mention the most amazing invention

of 1992, the supermarket scanner. [*Laughter*] But I do know this: the next century will be your century. If you believe in freedom and if you hold fast to your values and if you remain faithful to our role in the world, it is sure to be yet another American century.

Thank you again. May God bless the graduating class at S.M.U., and the United States of America. Thank you very, very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. at Moody Coliseum. In his remarks, he referred to A. Kenneth Pye, president, William M. Finnin, chaplain, and Ray Hunt, chairman of the board of trustees, Southern Methodist University; and honorary degree recipients Herma Hill Kay, dean of the Boalton School of Law, University of California, Berkeley, and Jarsoav Pelikan, Sterling professor of history and religious studies, Yale University.*

## Remarks at the University of Notre Dame Commencement Ceremony in South Bend, Indiana

May 17, 1992

Thank you, Father Malloy. It is really wonderful to be back here at Notre Dame. Whenever I visit the campus or meet a group of Notre Dame alumni, I feel this sense of family, and at Notre Dame that truly means more than just words. I think it's at the very core of what this institution is all about. And with this honorary degree that I am so very proud to have, I am proud to become a Domer. Thank you for the honor. Thank you for the privilege.

I want to salute all of the honorary degree recipients. A pleasure to be among such distinguished educators and public servants. I want to single out again Father Malloy, whose graciousness means a lot to me. A special greeting to the man we all respect so much, Chile's President Aylwin, who has done so much for democracy not just in Chile but in our whole hemisphere. We're grateful to you, sir. And another old friend I'm proud to share this dais with. He

doesn't vote with me much. I don't vote with him much. But we're good friends and have been for a long time, and I respect him, Pat Moynihan. Pat, glad to be with you. May I pay my respects to the outstanding faculty of Notre Dame. They put up with a lot and have done a great job, I'll tell you. To our distinguished provost, don't worry, sir, there's a provost opening in a junior college just outside of Nome, Alaska. And I'm sure you'll qualify. [*Laughter*] But thank you for your warm introduction to me, thank you.

Now to the graduates. For you graduates, these have been 4 long years. But I first want to say, I want to congratulate—I don't know where they are, but the class of 1992. And I want to pay a special tribute to the family, to the parents, the family members, and the friends. At today's ceremony are a group of second generation Domers; 25 percent of the graduating seniors have a

parent who attended Notre Dame. For you graduates, these have been 4 long, tough years. Now comes the hardest part, sitting through the commencement speech. [Laughter] But Billy Graham put it very well when he told, after a speaker had gone on a long time, a man sitting over here where Pat is picked up the gavel, heaved it at the guy that was speaking, missed him, clipped a lady in the front row who said, "Hit me again. I can still hear him." [Laughter]

Let me first say I'm not here in the mode of politics. I'm here to tell you the values that I strongly believe in. Those values can be summarized by the three major legacies that I certainly want to leave behind for my grandchildren, hopefully, for yours: jobs, both for today's workers who are actively seeking work and for graduates entering the work force; strong families, to sustain us as individuals, to nurture and encourage our children, and to preserve our Nation's character and culture; and peace, peace around the world, on our streets, and in our schools as well.

Yesterday I spoke down at Southern Methodist where I focused on the economy and ability to generate jobs. Next week it will be the Naval Academy, when I focus on our hope for a more peaceful world.

Freedom has swept around the world—you heard Chile's President paying homage to that—from the snows of Siberia to the sands of the Gulf. Because we and our allies stood strong and principled, our children and our grandchildren now sleep in a world less threatened by nuclear war. That is dramatic change, and it's something good that we can take great pride in.

Now we must concentrate on change here in America as well, in ways no less dramatic or important. We're taking a fresh look at Government and how we solve national problems. In Lincoln's words, we must think anew, act anew.

Preparing young men and women for lives of leadership, service, and meaning: Each is part of this fantastic Notre Dame tradition, a tradition that has generated a host of inspiring stories. I was particularly moved when I heard about Frank O'Malley's role in saving the bricks of your administration building. Most of you know

the story. The masonry was deteriorating, and some thought the time had come to replace it. Instead, Professor O'Malley reminded all who would listen, "These bricks contain the blood of everyone who helped to build Notre Dame."

Today, that 150-year heritage is fully yours, too. But your preparation began long before you walked in the shadow of the dome. Your parents instilled in you character and a moral bearing. They sacrificed so that you could experience the Notre Dame education, an education that's rooted in timeless faith and in a tradition of excellence, and in the process inculcating into each of you the worth of serving others. I hope each of you has also made a commitment to helping others and attacking some of the major problems facing American society; become a mentor, a community organizer, a Point of Light.

At the heart of the problems facing our country stands an institution under siege. That institution is the American family. Whatever form our most pressing problems may take, ultimately, all are related to the disintegration of the family.

Let us look objectively at a few brief and sad facts. In comparison with other countries, the Census Bureau found that the United States has the highest divorce rate, the highest number of children involved in divorce, the highest teenage pregnancy rates, the highest abortion rates, the highest percentage of children living in a single-parent household, and the highest percentage of violent deaths among our precious young. These are not the kind of records that we want to have as a great country.

In Philadelphia the other day, in the inner city in what they call the Hill area, I talked to a barber there, Mr. Buice, who is one of the leaders of the community there. I said, "Do these kids come from broken families?" He said, "Sir, it's a question of babies having babies," tears coming into his eyes. We've got to do something about this. And unless we successfully reverse the breakdown of the American family, our Nation is going to remain at risk.

Senator Moynihan, way back, way back, early in 1965, you gave us fair warning. You predicted with astonishing accuracy the ter-

rible trends that would result from the breakdown of the family. And today, with respect, sir, you continue to sound the alarm. The Senator and I agree: If America is to solve her social problems, we must, first of all, restore our families.

In addressing the problems associated with family breakdown, nothing is more critical than equipping each succeeding generation with a sound moral compass. As Notre Dame has expanded it has never lost sight of its profound spiritual mission. Indeed, this institution takes seriously its role in building the character of our young people and the strength of our families, for those are the leading indicators of our future as a culture. When we instill faith in our youth, faith in themselves, faith in God, we give them a solid foundation on which to build their future.

As Pope John XXIII said, "The family is the first essential cell of human society." The family is the primary and most critical institution in America's communities.

In January—I'll never forget this meeting—I met with some mayors from America's League of Cities, including Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles. They came together, smalltown Republican mayor from North Carolina, middle-size city mayors, large-city mayors, and they told me of their concerns for their cities, their municipalities. But most of all, the mayors came together on one key point, and they were unanimous: Their major concern about the problems in the cities, in their view, the people on the front line, was the decline in the American family. One result of that meeting is this Commission on America's Urban Families. And I hope it comes up with some good, positive, constructive answers.

It is clear that we all know that putting America's families back on track is essential to putting our country back on track. You may ask how we can proceed when we don't all agree on the causes of the problem or the remedies. I believe that one place to begin is by supporting Pope John Paul II's most recent encyclical calling for a new social climate of moral accountability in which to raise our children. Leadership in that task can and should be led by the Nation's churches; kids need to learn faith to help

them understand the larger family. And we are one Nation under God. We must remember that, and we must teach that.

Starting today, as you go from this fine institution to face the challenges of your adult life, the decisions you make will have one of two effects: Either you will add to the problems of family breakdown, or you will help rebuild the American family. You see, I am absolutely convinced that today's crisis will have to be addressed by millions of Americans at the personal, individual level for governmental programs to be effective. The Federal Government, of course, must do everything it can do, but the point is Government alone is simply not enough.

In my view, Government can, and we must, provide parental choice of the best schools for our children, whether public, private, or religious. The GI bill says here's some money; go to the college of your choice. Choice should apply to all levels of education. Parents must read to their children and instill a love of learning. Government can, and we must, fight crime. But fathers and mothers must teach discipline and instill those values in their children. Government can, and we must, foster American competitiveness. But parents must teach their children the dignity of work and instill a work ethic in the kids.

And to paraphrase that fantastic philosopher, Barbara Bush—[laughter]—what you teach at your house is more important than what happens at the White House. And she is absolutely correct on that.

All of us realize that merely knowing what's right is not enough. We must then do what's right. Today I'm asking you to carefully consider the personal decisions that you'll make about marriage and about how you will raise your children. Ultimately, your decisions about right and wrong, about loyalty and integrity, and yes, even self-sacrifice, will determine the quality of all the other decisions that you'll make. And as you think about these decisions, remember: It is in families that children learn the keys to personal economic success and self-discipline and personal responsibility. It is in families that children learn that moral

restraint gives us true freedom. It is from their families that they learn honesty and self-respect and compassion and self-confidence.

And you would do well to consider the simple but profound words of Notre Dame's own Father Hesburgh when he said, "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother." Think how this vitally important commitment from fathers to mothers would radically transform for the better both the lives of thousands of our Nation's hurting children and their struggling mothers as well.

In many respects, I feel here at Notre Dame that I'm preaching to the choir because here at Notre Dame, you have benefited from the legions of great men and women of conviction and faith. Here, there is a tradition of passion for addressing the staggering needs of the day. Notre Dame's Alumni Association is the prototype for other universities in sponsoring service projects and working toward the restoration of faith and the family in America.

In fact, at this very moment, the Notre Dame alumni group out there in Los Angeles is in the midst of a massive food and distribution project to assist residents affected by the violence in south central L.A. When that food is distributed and the riot-torn areas are rebuilt, I hope that the alumni group and thousands of others who are helping will stay involved in this and other urban areas. Government alone cannot do what needs to be done by itself. People who care must help.

And since becoming President I have had an opportunity to see a groundswell of Americans who are working, and working hard, to restore our Nation's faith and heal the wounds that have undermined our Nation's families. These Americans are devoted to rebuilding, restoring America from the ground up, family by family, home by home, community by community.

I was impressed to learn that more than two-thirds of Notre Dame's students participate in community service, two-thirds, ranging from working with the handicapped children at Logan Center to assisting former prisoners at Dismas House. Fully 10 percent of your graduates plan to go into social service careers. And to paraphrase Pope

John Paul II, the ultimate test of your greatness is the way you treat every human being, but especially the weakest and the most defenseless ones.

Let me challenge all of you to find a place to serve in some capacity, definitely as models but also as mentors. Remember each of us has a contribution that only we can make. And let me remind you as you assume the mantles of tomorrow's leadership that children tend to shape their dreams in the images that they have seen. Show how a good education prepares one for a full, productive life. Show what it means to be a person of strong principle and integrity. Demonstrate how concerned individuals, by working in partnership, can transform our communities and Nation.

Lastly, in a society that can sometimes be cold and impersonal, bring warmth and welcome. In a fragmented society, be a force for healing. In a society cut off from moral and spiritual roots, cultivate grace and truth. In the face of the uncertainties of the future, affirm your purpose and realize your promise. Together, we can lift our Nation's spirit. Together we can give our material, political, and economic accomplishments a larger, more noble purpose, to build God's kingdom here on Earth.

There is no surer way to build our Nation's future than with the mortar and the bricks of moral values and strong families. If you will add your blood to the bricks, the future will echo, then as now, "Never bet against Notre Dame or against the United States of America."

Thank you all, and good luck to this class of 1992 and to the entire Notre Dame family. And may God Bless our great country. Thank you very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m. in the Joyce Athletic and Convocation Center. In his remarks, he referred to University of Notre Dame officials Edward A. Malloy, president; Timothy O'Meara, provost; Theodore M. Hesburgh, former president; and Frank O'Malley, former professor of English. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.*