

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, May 6th 2013

It's graduation season – a bittersweet time for parents and teachers, especially at a place like Creighton where every year we say good-bye to students with whom we have shared deep experiences and come to love.

We're a little like Lydia in the first reading. Four years ago, we reached out to people we had never before met but quickly connected with because of our common faith values.

For four precious years, we have shared a campus “home” and nourished each other. While we were busy inculcating academic knowledge, something more important was taking place. We were attempting to give these students a value-centered education for life.

In an era of selfishness, we've stressed becoming “men and women for others.” We've exposed them to heroes like Jon Cortina S.J., a member of the Jesuit community of El Salvador whose members were infamously murdered. He escaped the slaughter only because he was absent. We've tried to model “cura personalis” – care of the person – and often are touched by the caring we received from students. Every year, we celebrate our graduates who opt to spend a year or two doing volunteer service.

The hugs and even tears we share as we say farewell are deeply felt on both sides. It is deeply gratifying to be a “Lydia.”

Then I meditate on the ominous passage from John in the context of these graduates. Have we nurtured their values sufficiently that they will stand up to the tests of faith that Jesus says they will encounter?

They'll be called on to “bear witness” in many ways in many forums. Some will take courageous and unpopular stands against opponents who believe they are serving God. Some will perform great acts of charity. Some will change careers or make financial sacrifices because of the ethics they absorbed from their families and strengthened here.

In a few cases, we may read about all this in the headlines. In most cases only the graduates, those closest to them – and God – will know. We have confidence that they'll be helped to meet the test "when their hour comes."

A personal note to parents of Creighton graduates: Thank you for sharing your sons and daughters with us. They have been such a gift. Like you, we're happy and sad, hopeful and scared for them. Like you, we turn them over to the Lord to take their gift of "cura personalis" to a world which needs it so badly. God bless you all.

Eileen Wirth