

Lasallian Commencement Address

January 1997

Presented by: Maureen Carroll

Welcome Members of the Board of Trustees, Honored Guests, President Brother James, Members of the Faculty, Parents, Family, Friends and my fellow Graduates. It has been a long journey to reach Graduation today. The time and effort it has taken for us to reach this moment in our lives has been filled with many obstacles. There were mountains and oceans we had to go over and travel across. It has been a journey that we have shared together.

The idea of life's journey which was first presented to me at a Lewis Mazavo II retreat weekend, reminds me of a section from the book, The Little Prince by Antoine De Saint-Exupery.

In the story the pilot is stranded in the desert. He meets a visitor from another planet whos sees things from a different perspective. In their search for watter the Little Prince remarked that water may be also good for the HEART. The lesson that the pilot learned was THE EYES ARE BLIND. ONE MUST LOOK WITH THE HEART.

In looking with OUR HEARTS what can we see of our time here at Lewis? Just like the water held more than a mere drink so do the DEGREES we receive today. Our journey here at Lewis University, has given us more than just a piece of paper with our names, degrees, and the star or symbol "signum Fidei", which means sign of faith. IF WE LOOK WITH OUR HEARTS WE SEE WE HAVE LEARNED THE VALUE OF ASSOCIATION.

The HEART, one of the most important organs in the body works in association with other organs of the body to help keep us alive. I have taken care of many patients in my clinical experience who had problems with their heart physically as well as emotionally But, nursing is not always a one way street of me helping a patient. It has taken me on

many journeys in which I have received as much as I have given.

I can think back to one occasion when I took care of a five year-old little girl with asthma. As I pulled back the white curtain I saw the little girl's mother sitting by her on one side and the respiratory therapist on the other. Like the therapist, I also was wearing a white lab coat. After my instructor introduced me as the nurse for the morning, the little girl burst into tears, clung to her mother, and sobbed. "I DON'T WANT ANOTHER WHITE COAT TO HURT ME!" No one had actually hurt the little girl. But right before the therapist and I entered, another white coat person had taken blood from her. She had associated pain of having her blood drawn with anyone wearing a white coat.

After talking with my instructor and composing myself I entered into the day's journey of trying to care for this scared little girl. I showed her the thermometer and let her take her mom's temperature before I recorded hers. I allowed her to first hear her mom's heart beating as well as her own before I would listen. From that moment on she stopped crying and I was able to do my nursing responsibilities for the day.

When it was time for me to leave I went to her room again. I said goodbye and turned to walk away. But, before I could take a step she burst into a huge smile, jumped up to her feet saying, "Mommy, can't I give her a hug before she goes." I stood there motionless staring at this small girl with her arms stretched open wide and a smile all her face as bright as the sun. I walked directly into her arms and received the biggest HUG this tiny girl could give. I left that room with a smile so bright that my cheeks hurt. This feeling of warmth filled my body so that I thought my heart would burst from the joy and satisfaction that I felt many of you IN YOUR OWN JOURNEYS have had similar experiences that you can associate this feeling with.

A line from *The Wizard of Oz*, "A heart is not judged by how much you love but

how much you are loved by others.” That cannot be more true for us, the graduation class. We can associate our success today with all the LOVE and SUPPORT we have received from our family, friends, loved ones, and mentors. On behalf of the graduating class, I send a sincere and most heartfelt THANKS first to our PARENTS, FAMILY, and FRIENDS! MOM and DAD, We did it! I want you to know that I LOVE YOU WITH ALL MY HEART and ASSOCIATE to all the love, support, and guidance you have given me over the years to being able to cross this stage today.

I also want to say THANK YOU FOR ALL THE GRADUATES to our teachers, instructors, professors, and mentors. Teachers help create tomorrow's future. All the long hours of lesson plans, lecturing, grading papers and tests, and answering our questions have been rewarded by our success today. Lewis is ASSOCIATED with some of the most creative, exciting, and knowledgeable faculty and staff.

TO THE GRADUATING CLASS REMEMBER What is essential is invisible to the eye and can only be seen with the heart. The future is in our hands and it contains many more journeys filled with difficulty and success. NEVER STOP BELIEVING IN THE POWER WE HAVE- TO MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE—FOR OUR FAMILY AND LOVED ONES. THERE IS MORE TO THE DEGREE WE RECEIVE TODAY THAN WHAT IS WRITTEN ON THE DIPLOMA. IT SYMBOLIZES THE HARD WORK, FRIENDSHIPS, AND UNFORESEEN SUCCESS OF OUR FUTURE WORK. I would like to end with an Irish blessing for your future journey.

“MAY THE ROAD RISE UP TO MEET YOU, MAY THE WIND BE ALWAYS AT YOUR BACK MAY THE SUN SHINE WARMLY UPON YOUR FACE, AND THE RAIN FALL SOFTLY ON YOUR FIELDS. AND UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN, MAY GOD HOLD YOU IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND.”