



Honored and faithful faculty and board of this oasis on the way to Canaan Land, beloved students, parents, families, and friends of Caritas: The Holy Ghost says, ALL THINGS ARE YOURS: ... THINGS NOW PRESENT AND THINGS WHICH ARE TO COME, ALL THINGS ARE YOURS, AND YOU ARE CHRIST'S!

And *I* say, “Thanks for inviting me to speak. Finally. After all these years. But I don’t suppose you meant anything by the delay and anyway, I’m having a *lovely* time now and I sincerely hope that every one of you may also have a time of loveliness, someday. Yes.

I was first drawn to Caritas because I heard that it offered classy Christian education, and then I found out it was “classical”, not “classy” – my bad – though they’re not mutually *exclusive*. I mean, any

school that performs the Importance of Being Earnest – *in the original language* – that’s *classy* education. But *classical* education is different. It’s also *very* different from the sort of education that’s being committed by the eager and the credulous all around us.

“To educate,” they tell me, is from the Latin, “educare” – “to draw out” or “lead out”, which is, unhappily, by far too many these days, taken to mean “to lead out of a student what’s already inside him,” so that each student’s *self* may come forth and express *itself*, while the teacher says, “Well, look at *you!*” thus encouraging the ineradicable advice of Polonius: “To thine own *SELF* be true!” while forgetting that, in the play, Polonius is a ninny.

As it happens, to be educated *is* to be led out, but to be led *out* of your self *to* what’s out there. Classical educators do *not* say, “Come out and let us *see* you!” Classical educators say, “Come out and see what’s *outside* you! Even in a fallen world, God is faithful: So much beauty, so much that’s true, so many good things! Come out and see them, know them, name them, claim them. You’re the children of Adam and Eve. The universe was *made* for them, and you are their *heirs*. As the Holy Spirit says, ALL THINGS ARE YOURS! Take your inheritance!

In leaf and stone and lightning up to the cosmic heights, and even in fallen humanity: in arts and trades and sciences, all around us – as the Holy Ghost *commands* us, WHATEVER’S NOBLE, WHATEVER’S RIGHT, WHATEVER’S PURE, WHATEVER’S LOVELY, WHATEVER’S ADMIRABLE - IF *ANYTHING* IS EXCELLENT OR PRAISEWORTHY – *Think* about it!”

Why does He have to *command* us? Why don’t we automatically run out to all this swell stuff? Why do we need to be “led out,” *pulled* out, *dragged* out, ed-u-cat-ed *out* of ourselves?

Pastor Michael Hintze, Caritas Academy 2009 Graduation, Senior Address

Well, nobody likes to leave the place that he loves best. And for each of us, in our sinful nature, the place that I love best is "me." And every one of us would, left to himself, *like* to be left to himself, coiled up inside me, with all the others - even the Lord - chiefly out *there* to keep me safe and snug in *here*.

This, kids, explains what's going on, when you've been *sort of* studying Geometry or History or whatever it was that was draining away your life-force – Oh. "*Sort of* studying" means reading and writhing, with unfocussed, stony eyes – anyway, while you've been doing that, maybe you noticed that sixty per cent of what you called being *bored*, was actually you being *angry*. Maybe you realized that if only you made the choice to come out and *give* yourself to the Punic Wars, or whatever, you could have done well enough. In fact, unless there was some physical problem, "I can't *get* it!" means, "I don't *want* it! And why can't they leave me?"

Where's that come from? I'll tell you. In the beginning, Adam walked in the Garden in the cool of the day with Goodness, Truth, and Beauty Himself, with God, the Fountainhead of All Things. And all the universe shimmered gorgeous, and it was very good. And Adam heard the same sweet thing we've heard: ALL THINGS ARE YOURS, Adam!

And Adam answered, "You can *keep* all things. Only let *me* be *mine*!" We're Adam's heirs in *that* way, too. Hey, want to learn some Greek? *Idios*. Say it. *Idios*. It means, "one's own." From it, we get a word that describes someone who is entirely his own. Can you guess the word? _____ Someone who's entirely self-absorbed. Someone who's all locked up in himself. Which is sad enough as a mental condition. As a *spiritual* condition, it's damnation.

And thank Christ for Baptism, because we're all born little ego-maniacs, coiled in on *ourselves*. And as we grow, we all long to be *self*-satisfied - satisfied with *ourselves*, if it kills us, like the snake who found his own tail so delicious that he went on swallowing until at last, in one moment of ultimate self-esteem, he disappeared completely. Though the damned in hell never do stop trying to swallow.

But didn't we all love to learn when we were little? Of course. We loved to learn whatever we wanted, until we didn't want to anymore. When you graduates were young, you *all* loved to do *what* you loved to do *when* you loved to do it. Then you met Caritas, and heard, "Come!"

This "getting us out of ourselves to what's outside" – that's the business of a classical education. At Caritas, to get you out of yourself, you have been educated *classically*: that is, via the models of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric. And you hardly noticed. You may say, "I noticed the *Grammar*!" Well, probably, you only noticed the grammar of language. Which is not to dismiss English Grammar; not so, but far otherwise! You, who are still in Caritas, *learn* your Grammar! In a culture which is dreamily sinking into a swamp of unintelligibility, you – if you are very good and learn your Grammar meekly – you will inherit the earth ahead of schedule, because you'll be the last people in America that still speak any actual language.

But *all* subjects have their grammar, their *basic facts*, facts, facts, and they are not to be despised. Dates, places, names, numbers! You realize that the simplest facts of here or there, many or few, red or blue, one or two: they're all *ideas* from the mind of God. They are the Grammar of reality.

And then, armed with fact, you met Logic: "Look at how facts fit together, or don't! Watch them mesh and clash and wheel! Numbers divide and *multiply* "to infinity and *not* beyond!" Colors make paintings! Notes make songs! Letters make words; words make sentences, and sentences make *sense* - if you learned your grammar - and virtuous men do virtuous deeds! Find the principles! Learn the steps of the dance! And when you see that it is good, that means that you've been ed-u-cat-ed farther out, not only to *see* what's there, but to *think* about it!

And so, on to Rhetoric! To take your *part* in the things out there! Because Out There has begun to be *your* territory, too! At last, to have *conversation* and not just mutual *narration*! At last, to ask *sensible* questions, and not just, "Will it be on the test?" At last, to draw rational *conclusions*! Not only to know the seven chief causes of the Civil War, but to consider whether it might have been avoided, and to propose from what you know about men and war, the grounds on which a man might die, or even kill. In five pages. Be neat. And how *sad* it is, really, that here at Caritas, as soon as you actually have something worth saying ... you *graduate*.

And go on to be ed-u-ca-ted farther and wider! *ALL THINGS ARE YOURS!* *God is calling* in everything beautiful, in everything good and true God is calling, "Come out!" Above all in His shining Word, but all true teachers are His servants, too; earth and all stars are His servants! Paintings and choirs and quantum mechanics: They all call "COME out!" Until at last you shall be Outside all the way, in the High Places, where all things roar out from the Fountainhead; Outside, where we'll finally learn what Goodness, Truth and Beauty are, when we see them Triune and Alive on the throne.

If your leashes reach that far. I mean that our coiled self-absorption can be stretched so far, and then it pulls us back into our warm and luscious *selves*. And we begin to feel we have been stretched too much. Why, with all this education going on, we can hardly call our lives our *own* anymore.

And then, *ALL THINGS MAY BE OURS*, but let them go, and *let me be!* And instead of *Beauty*, aah, "pretty" will do. No hard Music, no Art that pulls me past what I'm used to. Whatever is comfortable, whatever is soothing, whatever is easy - let me think on *these* things.

And instead of *Truth*, aah, "close enough" will do. Nothing re-examined; just a pack of platitudes, a stack of reflex attitudes.

And what about *Goodness*? What about that high, clear call to reckless love, wild as wind that breaks our hearts with longing? Aah, "good enough" will do. So easily, we come to terms with ourselves, and clothe our self-absorption in Rules for Successful Christian Living, decent habits - outerwear.

Pastor Michael Hintze, Caritas Academy 2009 Graduation, Senior Address

It doesn't have to have to happen, not to you. Press on! Pursue WHATEVER'S NOBLE, RIGHT, PURE, LOVELY, ADMIRABLE - IF ANYTHING'S EXCELLENT OR PRAISEWORTHY, reach for it. But sooner or later, every honest sinner learns something very sad and I'm so sorry. You'll learn how little you want anything but yourself.

The old pagans talked about how Man seeks Goodness, Truth, and Beauty on wings of thought and high desire. They couldn't face the truth. But Christians have to. ALL THINGS ARE OURS – and we hardly want them. And sometimes even have to be reminded to want *Paradise*? And *me* and *mine* is plenty for my small desires, my shrunken thoughts. And “How tiny must my poor soul be – if it can get lost in *me*?” And, O God, who would want so little a life? And, O God, who would spend his life on something this small?

God says, “*I would. I have.*” God says, “I would want such a small thing. *I have* spent My life on it.” Here's the Huge Word: Not that ALL THINGS ARE YOURS, but that, thank God, YOU ARE CHRIST'S! Not that we soared up to God, but that God dived down for us! Not that we went after Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, but that Beauty, Truth, and Goodness in Person came after us! NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD BUT THAT HE LOVED US. He should have been our high desire; so, what *is* this – that *He'd* desire *us*? That GOD would COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE and then BEAR US HOME ON HIS SHOULDERS, *REJOICING!?!* “I see nothing in myself that would make that believable.” *But when I come out of myself, then I see Calvary.*

I see Truth Himself smeared with lies. I see Beauty Himself SO DISFIGURED THAT HE HARDLY LOOKED HUMAN. I see Goodness Himself pleading guilty to my sins, sweating naked on a cross. I see the Fountainhead of ALL THINGS, hanging from the nails in agony and out of His wounds, as it were, flaring and falling - the patterns of the atoms, the orbits of the turning stars. And running out of Him - the chords of music, first principles, reason, the laws of light! The High Love of Paradise, running down into the dirt in His human blood - why? To buy you, beloved. To bring you, beloved. Because He *insists* that whatever you are, and whatever it costs Him: YOU ARE CHRIST'S, and He will *have* you.

At my best I make confession, “O Jesus, but I hardly *want* You.” And He says, “I know. But you will!” ALL THINGS *SHALL* BE YOURS. THINGS NOW PRESENT - your sins are forgiven - AND THINGS TO COME - your sin will soon be gone! Your leash will snap and YOU SHALL GO OUT LEAPING, LIKE CALVES TURNED LOOSE FROM THE STALL and ALL THINGS shall BE YOURS!

Though we've stared at ALL THINGS with unfocussed, stony eyes, though we've been deaf to who's calling through them all, ALL THINGS ARE still *YOURS!* FOR YOU ARE CHRIST'S! Come out and take them: Apostles and supernovas and Sacraments and symphonies, and poems and paintings and parabolae, and THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE, WHAT IS NOW, AND WHAT IS COMING, all for you! Thus says the Savior, “Child, child, you barely know the grammar of My ways, but I will ed-u-cate you all the way out into ...”

Pastor Michael Hintze, Caritas Academy 2009 Graduation, Senior Address

Well, unless He comes for us all right now ? Or you go to Him first – He'll educate you into what's next – a trade, perhaps; there's a terrific precedent for carpenters, or mothers – or electricians, or electrical engineering or astrophysics or *European Drama of the 20th Century!* Whatever's True, whatever's Good, whatever's Beautiful: GOD is drawing you. GOD is holding you. GOD is calling you – we shall be free – GOD is leading you - out, out, out of yourself out farther, wider, higher, until we come to see the dazzling Face of God, the Fountainhead, when at last we'll *begin* to understand how *much* He meant when He told us: YOU ARE CHRIST'S. And **ALL** THINGS ARE YOURS.

Now may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be and remain with you now, and into everlasting life. Amen.