

PLTS Great Thanksgiving November 4, 2011

I come here with a grateful heart, President Phyllis & Herb, Joel, all who share their talents within this seminary, and all who embrace it from afar. I am honored to be here with you, certainly with Mark & Susan, and those from St. Luke Lutheran Church.

Why me? We know the first task of discernment is to ask the right question. I've decided I've been asking the wrong question because I believe this is about the road of our calling; this is all about God's way with each of us. The ultimate question then for tonight is, "Why PLTS?"

As an educator, I served with pastors and staffs in parish schools, children and young people, to build community with their families & our neighbors. I had the privilege of standing beside art students in the act of centering their clay, which precedes all other attempts on the potter's wheel. I remember this here, because it remains a strong symbol for me. In the smallest of our daily acts, we have opportunity to expand our understanding of an enormous cosmic unity, where the concept of all the saints in community stretches the imagination as we center in our Lord Christ.

This seminary, especially located in this geography and sociology, is providing leadership for the church and with their sense of community, centers on tasks for divine vocation, allowing future pastors to enter into a deep solidarity with the anguish underlying all the glitter of success, to bring the light of Jesus there. When they choose, in the manner of God's will, the choice will always be for those who hurt, who are hungry, who are ill, disenfranchised, or in prison. This is where Jesus promises He will be. I'm quite sure, you and I are here this evening because of a route that maps or signals God's call to be further engaged with this task.

Daniel Burnham a 19th Century architect wrote, "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir humanity's blood and probably will not themselves be realized." Perhaps, he was thinking of Ephesians 3 where Paul reminds us, "God, who by the power at work within us, is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine."¹ These words are our guide as we continue to make decisions about gifts from God.....our time, our talent, our money accounts, our trusts, our wills, and our bequests.

I would like to quote from an address last spring to "Remember the Future Society" when I spoke of myself as a migrant."

For those of us who migrate into this place, or from this place, we always have the reminder that we carry the spiritual power God promised us in our baptism. If we can remember our baptism, it helps us so as not to confuse our power with our money. Let us, in community, and as individuals, consider God's call to generosity, for the sake of the Gospel. God promises to turn our gifts into acts that are transformed into the vast and long view of the resurrection.

This is, indeed, a call to the Great & Eternal Thanksgiving!...and it is the answer to "Why Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary?" Thank you.

Mary Wiese Gundelach
November 4, 2011

1. L. Gregory Jones, "Faith Matters", p29, *Christian Century*, Aug 23, 2005,