

(Benediction given by the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame, at Brandeis University Dinner, Hotel Pierre, New York City, October 23, 1969)

(Hebrew Text (Gen. I,1) In the beginning, the Lord God created the heavens and the earth. We have these opening words of the Bible across a great span of time, and recently we heard them again across a great span of space from astronauts circling our moon. With the message this time, we had a beautiful picture of the good planet earth. We must confess that it looked better from afar than it looks up close these days, but that, Lord, is our fault and not Yours for we have often been unresponsive to Your vision and Your grace. There is another line in the first chapter of Genesis that can guide us to a fitting prayer at the conclusion of this brilliant, but sober evening. (Hebrew Text (Gen.I, 3) --- and God said, let there be light, and there was light. Might we pray this evening that Brandeis, and all its sister universities, here and around the world, might be increasingly a source of light in the gathering darkness of our times, darkness that confuses our intelligence, fetters our freedoms, and disfigures the dignity with which You endowed us, Lord, when you made us in Your image, a little less than the angels.

One final prayer, a single word for a blessing that is also a greeting -- a greeting to Brandeis on this occasion, and a blessing on each one of us, in the depths of our hearts, on all our universities as sources of light, a blessing so often voiced tonight for our country and all our fellow passengers on the good planet earth -- Shalom.