

[May 25, 1980]

## THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN THE MODERN CONTEXT

If this subject were being discussed in the 13th Century, we could dispense with the adjective Catholic in the title, since to speak of universities in the first century or two of their existence in the Western world would be to speak of them as Catholic, since there were no others.

Today, of course, the situation is quite the opposite. Catholic universities are the exception, rather than the rule, in the world of universities.

In Europe, where universities began and multiplied, as Catholic, there remains today just one of those great originals, Louvain. I say one, although it has recently separated by language, the French-speaking one becoming Louvain-la-Neuve.

There are five Instituts Catholiques, French Catholic universities in the country of the university's origin. Italy, the country that saw the first student founded and student administered university in Bologna -- the Italians will also say it is the oldest of all -- now has one true Catholic university, Sacro Cuore in Milan. I studied at the reasonably ancient - mid 16th Century - Gregorian University in Rome, but it and its ancient sister universities there have only ecclesiastical faculties -- theology, philosophy, Canon Law, etc. -- and would not be considered universities in the secular sense.

be and do what every great university is and does. Beyond being a house of the intellect, the Catholic university must also be the intellect searching for faith and values and deeper meaning, faith searching for greater understanding and grace, closed to none, open to all, seated in time, yearning for eternity, a pilgrim institution with a pilgrim's faith and hope and love.

This is the kind of education we celebrate in the present and future lives of those who graduate today from the University of San Diego. May the institute and its graduates flourish in the years ahead, for your corporate mission is worthy of our best efforts, not unrelated to that ultimate transcendent goal which is the coming among us of the Kingdom of God.

The Twenty-Seventh Commencement

at the

University of San Diego



May 25, 1980



**ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM**

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CITATION

In the time honored tradition of the great universities of the world the University of San Diego today takes note of the contributions of an individual who in his life has accomplished so much for both the social advancement of humankind and the continued inward focus upon what is truly worthwhile. Indeed the life and labors of Theodore M. Hesburgh are blended together in living testimony of achievements in education, public service and religious dedication.

Ordained a priest for the Order of the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1943, Father Hesburgh pursued his formal education at four distinguished institutions: the University of Notre Dame, the Gregorian University, Holy Cross College (Washington), and the Catholic University of America. He has served the University of Notre Dame as a chaplain, professor, executive vice president and as its president since 1952. This educational experience and service represents a total of forty-six years and gives a clear indication of his life-long pursuit of the life of the mind.

Public and civic responsibilities have been an intricate part of his priestly vocation and his career as an educator of national and international stature. The roll call of this service is almost without end, and we single out his deep and abiding concern for social justice as indicative and representative of his fusing of human and civil rights with Christian philosophy and theology, ever mindful of humanity's need for inner spiritual development "as beings made in the likeness of God." Such a position, fearlessly maintained, has been the hallmark of all of Father Hesburgh's efforts in such service as a Member and Chairman of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, Chairman with the rank of Ambassador to the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, Chairman of the Select Commission of Immigration and Refugee Policy, Member of the State Department's Policy Planning Council, the Board of Directors of the American Council on Education, and the United Negro College Fund.

In addition to a busy life as priest, educator, and public servant, Father Hesburgh has devoted a portion of his energies to a vigorous career as an author. His endeavors in this direction are marked by the success of his series of volumes under the general title of "Thoughts For Our Times."

Father Hesburgh's achievements have not gone unnoticed and he is the recipient of many awards, honors, and distinctions. He has received, among others, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award and has been selected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has been friend and advisor to six Presidents of the United States.

It is, therefore, with a distinct sense of privilege, that the University of San Diego, joining with other prestigious universities in recognizing the signal contributions of Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C. and thanking Divine Providence, now as a particularly fitting part of these solemn commencement ceremonies confers upon him the degree of DOCTOR OF LAWS, *honoris causa*.

Chairman, Board of Trustees

President

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