

(Homily delivered by the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame, at the Funeral Mass for Bernard J. Voll, Sacred Heart Church, Notre Dame, Indiana, September 23, 1981)

Most priests love weddings and baptisms, but find funerals painful, as do those who attend them. Today, somehow, there is a sense of peace and fulfillment in what we do: saying goodbye in a prayerful way to one of the oldest friends of this University here in Sacred Heart Church which Bernard Voll loved as a centerpiece of Notre Dame, a compendium of all that Notre Dame means.

As we read in Ecclesiastes, there is a time for birth and a time for dying. What is more important is what happens in between: the building, the loving, the laughter and tears, the healing, the dancing, the embracing and mourning, the war and the peace. All were a part of the 86 years of Bernard Voll's life, but the heart of it all revolved around his family and this University.

He had hardly graduated when it was time for war, which he experienced as an officer in the Army, not without wounds on the Western Front. Then it was school again with a law degree from Harvard in 1922. Then marriage and three wonderful children, Bill, Meece, and Georgiana, and grandchildren, too, in abundance. All of them knew he loved them, and we know from their words here this morning that they loved him, too. He was thrice blessed with good wives, Helen, Lucille, and Ina, mourned two of them and is mourned now by Ina. Laughter and tears, mourning and dancing -- a time for each.

For almost forty years, he was President of his company and Chairman for twenty more. Other key businesses here claimed his wisdom too -- and it was fully given. No good cause in this area was alien to him; no good organization without the help of his talent and his largesse. Christians and Jews held him their good friend, and awarded him their many honors over the years.

He was the oldest and most beloved of the Trustees of this University -- two years short of forty years of service as regular and emeritus Trustee and Fellow, Vice Chairman of the Board, and Chairman of the Investment Committee for twenty years.

On his retirement from this task, a labor of love, the Board gratefully acknowledged his stewardship:

"Resolved, that this Board pay special tribute to the efforts of its member, Mr. Bernard J. Voll, for his more than twenty years of service as Chairman of the Investment Committee. It is a monument to his ingenuity, resourcefulness, and business judgment that the University's endowment has increased tenfold during the period of his stewardship."

He also found time to serve on our Law Advisory Council for sixteen years, on our South Bend President's Committee, and as President of the Alumni Association, whose highest Sorin Award he received in 1966. In the early fifties, he became an honorary Doctor of Laws of Notre Dame and three years later the same at Saint Mary's.

As mentioned earlier, it was all a labor of love, that greatest of all virtues, love that is always ready to trust, to hope, and to endure. His was a life of loving and caring. His favorite expression of trust and hope for Notre Dame was that this place, thanks to Our Lady, has a rendezvous with destiny.

How often he discussed that destiny with my predecessor, Father John Cavanaugh. They were each other's best friends and closest confidants. How happy they will be together in heaven plotting new surprises for this place that they loved and served so well, together, for so many years.

All great institutions need loving, caring, serving people like Bernard and Father John. They are the foundation rocks that make the rendezvous with destiny come true. Their hoping and trusting survived the winds of change, and kept the course ever upward and onward. Their homecoming is our homecoming. Their shining lives our beacons as we seek the goal they ever kept in sight: "After I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me, so that where I am, you too may be."

Jesus said that to His followers and I think that, in a way, Bernard and Father John say that to us, too. If only we can all love and care for each other, and this University of Our Lady, as they did, we too will join them in that blessed eternal Kingdom, where the beauty and joy and peace that we sense here,

especially strongly today, will be fulfilled in a way that we cannot yet imagine, but that they now enjoy face to face.

May Bernard rest in peace eternal. It is indeed a time for that, and we say farewell in gratitude for his many years of faithful service, for the warmth of his friendship, for his faith and hope and, especially, his love for each of us and this place, for all the good companionship he radiated so that this day we may share his joy in the Lord. May he rest in peace.