



2020 BACCALAUREATE SERVICE

Sunday, May 17, 2020



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

2020

ORDER OF SERVICE

OPENING WORDS

Jewelnel Davis

University Chaplain and Associate Provost

INTRODUCTION TO THE BACCALAUREATE SPEAKERS

Ian Rottenberg

Dean of Religious Life

FIRST READING

Elektra Artemis Williams
Columbia College, 2020
Greek Orthodox

As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope your road is a long one.
May there be many summer mornings when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

Konstantínos Kaváfis, "Ithaka"

SECOND READING

Yona N. Benjamin

School of General Studies and Jewish Theological Seminary, 2020
Jewish

The sages taught in the language of the Mishnah. Blessed be He who chose them and their teaching. Rabbi Meir said: Whoever occupies himself with the Torah for its own sake merits many things; not only that but he is worth the whole world. He is called beloved friend; one that loves God; one that loves humankind; one that gladdens God; one that gladdens humankind. And the Torah clothes him in humility and reverence, and equips him to be righteous, pious, upright and trustworthy; it keeps him far from sin, and brings him near to merit. And people benefit from his counsel, sound knowledge, understanding and strength, as it is said, "Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, strength is mine" (Proverbs 8:14). And it bestows upon him royalty, dominion and acuteness in judgment. To him are revealed the secrets of the Torah, and he is made as an ever-flowing spring, and like a stream that never ceases. And he becomes modest, long-suffering and forgiving of insult. And it magnifies him and exalts him over everything.

Mishnah Avot 6:1

THIRD READING

Tasneem Ebrahim
Barnard College, 2020
Muslim

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ١

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ٢

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٣ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ٤

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ٥ أَهْدِنَا

الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ٦ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ

عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ٧

إِتِّفَاقًا

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتَلَفَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَآيَاتٍ

لِلأُولَى الْأَلْبَابِ ١٩٠ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا

وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ١٩١

In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. [All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds – The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. It is You we worship and You we ask for help. Guide us to the straight path – The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding. Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], “Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.”

Quran 1:1–7 and 3:190–191 (Sahih International Translation)

FOURTH READING

Prateek Sahni

Columbia College, 2020

Hindu

Original Sanskrit:

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः
तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Transliteration:

om bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ
tat savitur vareṇyam
bhargo devasya dhīmahi
dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt

Translation:

Let me soak in the Divine, and let the Divine destroy all my sins. The Divine light that burns all sin, let me adore and soak in that Divine light. And let the Divinity inspire my intellect.

Rig Veda (Mandala 3.62.10)

FIFTH READING

Chenjie Zhao
Columbia College, 2020
Christian

Why do we marry, why take friends and lovers, why give ourselves to music, painting, chemistry, or cooking? Out of simple delight in the resident goodness of creation, of course, but out of more than that, too. Half of earth's gorgeousness lies hidden in the glimpsed city it longs to become. For all its rooted loveliness, the world has no continuing city here; it is an outlandish place, a foreign home, a session in via to a better version of itself—and it is our glory to see it so and thirst until Jerusalem comes home at last. We were given appetites, not to consume the world and forget it, but to taste its goodness and hunger to make it great.

Robert Farrar Capon, *The Supper of the Lamb*

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Tara Anand
Barnard College, 2020
Baha'i and Sikh

INTERLUDE

Bridge Over Troubled Water/Gesher Tzar Me'od Paul Simon
Text: Paul Simon/Rebbe Nachman of Breslov
Arranged by Michael Kirschner

Pizmon

Aliza Amsellem, *Barnard College 2020*
Dan Cohen, *School of General Studies and Jewish Theological Seminary, 2023*
Ezra Felder, *School of General Studies 2020*
Emily Herman, *Barnard College 2021*
Jonathan Kapilian, *School of Engineering and Applied Science 2020*
Michael Kirschner, *School of Engineering and Applied Science 2020*
Gil Levitan, *School of General Studies and Jewish Theological Seminary, 2021*
Yaffa Muhlbaum, *School of General Studies and Jewish Theological Seminary, 2021*
Lexi Orlinsky, *School of Engineering and Applied Science 2021*
Ilana Schwartz, *School of General Studies and Jewish Theological Seminary, 2021*
Raphael Simonson, *Columbia College 2023*
Hadassah Turk Tolub, *School of General Studies and Jewish Theological Seminary, 2022*
Margeaux Wolberg, *School of General Studies and Jewish Theological Seminary, 2022*

FAMILY TRIBUTE

Nahla Ogeil
School of General Studies, 2020
Muslim

SENIOR REFLECTION

Jas Singh
Columbia College, 2020
Sikh

SENIOR REFLECTION

John Quinn-Isidore Russell
Columbia College, 2020
Catholic

SENIOR REFLECTION

Kai Tinsley
School of Engineering and Applied Science, 2020
Christian

SENIOR REFLECTION

Shoshana Williams
Barnard College, 2020
Jewish

CLOSING WORDS

Chaplain Jewelnel Davis

ALMA MATER

“Stand, Columbia!”
Austria

Gilbert Oakley Ward, Columbia College, 1902
Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Mother, stayed on rock eternal,
Crowned and set upon a height,
Glorified by Light supernal—
In thy radiance, we see light.
Torch, thy children’s lamps to kindle,
Beacon-star to cheer and guide
Stand, Columbia! Alma Mater—
Through the storms of Time abide!

Mighty patriots, warriors, sages
Thou hast borne, a shining band;
Teach thy kin in future ages
Still to love their native land.
Thron’d upon the hill where heroes
Fought for liberty, and died,
Stand, Columbia! Alma Mater—
Through the storms of Time abide!

Honor, love, and veneration
Crown forevermore thy brow!
Many a grateful generation
Hail thee as we hail thee now!
Till the lordly Hudson seaward
Cease to roll his heaving tide,
Stand, Columbia! Alma Mater—
Through the storms of Time abide!

THE BACCALAUREATE

The Baccalaureate service is believed to have originated in a statute of 1432 at Oxford University requiring each bachelor to deliver a sermon in Latin as part of his academic exercise. Since the earliest universities in this country were founded primarily to educate ministers, the British practice of a Baccalaureate service was continued.

The tradition of the Baccalaureate service at Columbia University began after the move to the Morningside Heights campus in 1897. The Baccalaureate service is a multifaith service celebrating the completion of the undergraduate academic career.

This service is prepared and coordinated by the Commencement Office and the Office of Religious Life.