During the past few weeks, the Cathedral has hosted a number of graduation ceremonies; University, High School and soon Frances Xavier Warde Grammar School. Throughout our parish community, young people are making the transition from one phase of life to the next. Today, as I salute all graduates I’d like to address a few comments especially to them:

Remember who you are and as you move into a new stage of your life, remember the heritage that you share. Remember Vincent de Paul, Martin de Porres, Louise de Marillac, Dorothy Day and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Perhaps they’re just names that don’t mean much to you. But as you move to a new stage of your life, remember that you, like them, are called upon to recognize the dignity of the human person. You enter into a society in which abortion and racial prejudice and violence are an accepted way of life. And you will be called to stand as a sign of contradiction. The question is: Will you be true to your heritage?

Part of your heritage are the people who are willing to pay the price to their commitment to Jesus. Thomas More – who was beheaded rather than act contrary to his conscience, Joan of Arc – who despite opposition and persecution reclaimed the territories of France, Maximilian Kolbe – who gave his life that another might live. People will say to you “just go along to get along”... “Everybody’s doing it, why should you be different?” You’re moving into a society in which your attitudes and your ethical norms will be challenged. If you don’t think they will be, you’re kidding yourself. The question is: “In the face of that challenge, will you be willing to pay the price of your beliefs? Will you continue to be true to your heritage?”

In an address that he gave at Northwestern University many years ago, Governor Adlai Stevenson said to the graduates: “Your days are short here; this is the last of your springs. And now in the serenity and quiet of this lovely place, touch the depths of truth, feel the hem of heaven. You will go away with old, good friends. And don’t forget when you leave, why you came.” Congratulations and God Bless.

Your Brother in Christ,
Fr. Bob McLaughlin
It was about 5:30 a.m. on March 22, 1979. It was a chilly misty morning. My wife, Trish, and I found ourselves holding hands and standing on the steps of Children’s Memorial Hospital. Our four month old beautiful daughter had just gone back to God at 3:10 a.m. Colleen was born with a few medical issues including a hole in her heart. She put up a great fight but God saw that she was getting tired so He put His arms around her and took her home. As we stood on the steps, I said to Trish, “the next few days and weeks are going to be very hard. We must be convinced that we did everything humanly possible to help Colleen in her fight but God had other plans.” We hugged and headed home to tell our other three daughters about our new Angel. Sometimes that morning seems like a long time ago and sometimes it seems like yesterday.

Many people have asked, “Do you ever get over it?” I’m not sure how to answer that. A better question might be, “Do you ever get past it and if so how?” Our family has borrowed the shamrock from Saint Patrick. Picture the shamrock. The head or top part is your faith and the wings or sides are your family and friends. Without faith you can spend the rest of your life searching for answers to some unanswerable questions and you will never find peace. Blest with a strong faith which was given to us by our parents, teachers, mentors and with the love, support and prayers of family and friends, we found peace.

Many of us have been blessed with a great gift of faith and with that gift comes a responsibility to pass it on. We must ensure that there are leaders to teach and spread that faith. “What’s that Angel doing over there?” Those were the last words of Father Bob McLaughlin. What a beautiful picture to contemplate. Our faith teaches us that there are Angels among us all the time and yet sometimes we don’t see or recognize them.

During the past fourteen years of the Faith Foundation you have been an angel to countless young people. 233 grants totalling over $950,000 has been a good investment in the future. With your help the Faith Foundation is spreading a lot of Hope.

Hope is a powerful force in life. It is like going into the kitchen, turning on the faucet, and being surprised by the water pressure. You almost jump back, giddy that there is so much energy pouring out. Hope is present in everyone, especially our young people, and wants to burst out the same way. We need to turn on the faucet of their faith and then feel the surge of hope that springs forth. Helen Keller once said, “Nothing can be done without hope or confidence.”

We must help young people to see the face of God in their lives. Your gifts in the form of grants are vehicles which can open the hearts and minds of young people to the possibility of what they can be. An individual must have an opportunity to know what their opportunities are. You and I can be an Angel for someone! Join us in person or in spirit this year as we continue to give life and spiritual wings to the next generation.

Remember none of this great work and blessings are possible without your thoughtfulness and support.

Thank you and Keep Smiling!

Jack Lynch
Rev. Robert E. McLaughlin Faith Foundation Award - June 17, 2019

In keeping with the vision and spirit of Father Bob, the Board of the Faith Foundation voted to establish the Rev. Robert E. McLaughlin Faith Foundation Award. This award has been given annually to an individual or individuals who have made a significant contribution to the lives of young people, the next generation. We all know that there are angels working among us and this year we honor two special ones, Monsignor Ken Velo and Mr. Tim Bopp.

MONSIGNOR KEN VELO

Monsignor Velo, a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, serves as Senior Executive of Catholic Collaboration for DePaul University and as Co-Chairman of the Big Shoulders Fund.

Monsignor Velo was ordained in May 1973. From 1973-1980 he served in two parishes as associate pastor. From 1981 until 1994, he served in various capacities at the Archdiocese of Chicago, including Vice Chancellor of the Archdiocese and Executive Assistant to Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

In November 1993, Monsignor Velo was named President of the Catholic Church Extension Society. The Catholic Extension Society raises money for the poor dioceses of the United States. During his eight-year tenure as President, Catholic Extension experienced tremendous growth and nationwide awareness. It supports seventy-five mission dioceses around the country.

In 2001, Monsignor Velo began his responsibilities at DePaul University. At DePaul, Monsignor helps to extend the resources of the university to the Catholic Community and other entities.

The Big Shoulders Fund, of which he has served as President, and now as Co-Chairman, supports inner-city Catholic Schools in Chicago. This organization raises funds to serve inner-city Catholic schools. Seventy-six schools are given operating capital and scholarship grants in a school system with more than 20,000 students.

Monsignor Velo enjoys serving in pastoral ministry at Old Saint Patrick’s Church. At any given time he is a man who is always wearing many different hats and he wears them all well.

TIMOTHY M. BOPP

Tim serves as president of Holy Trinity High School in Chicago. Tim was born in Chicago and grew up in the northwestern suburbs, where he attended St. Paul of the Cross elementary school and Maine South High School. He attended Knox College, studying political science, and attended Chicago-Kent IIT College of Law. Tim started his career as an attorney, but after coaching the Holy Trinity boys’ basketball team in 1993, he discovered a passion for Catholic education. He became the school’s first director of development and has served as president since 2007.

Under Tim’s leadership, Holy Trinity has undergone over $6 million in capital improvements, established hundreds of new scholarships that make a quality Catholic education available to all deserving youth, and graduated over 1,500 young people as men and women instilled with Holy Cross values. In 2018, Tim was surprised live on WGN 9 with their inaugural “Award for Being Awesome” for his service to the community through his work at Holy Trinity High School.

Outside of his responsibilities at Holy Trinity, Tim has been involved in the St. Raymond Branches youth group program since 2004. He has served on the St. Helen Catholic Elementary School Board since 2009 and the Dominican Regina High School Board of Trustees since 2014.

Join us on Monday, June 17th as we honor these two selfless servants who have dedicated their lives toward the education and mentoring of young people, the next generation.
JOIN US THIS YEAR FOR THE FUN!
The 15th Annual Robert E. McLaughlin Faith Foundation Golf Outing & Dinner -
Monday, June 17, 2019 • Park Ridge Country Club – Invitations to follow.

HAVING FUN AT THE GOLF AND DINNER OUTING – JUNE, 2018