

Media contact:

Lesley Sims, Holy Names University, 510-436-1405 or sims@hnu.edu

Holy Names University President Hynes Leads Rite of Passage Ceremony

OAKLAND, California; August 23, 2010 - In his first public appearance as President of Holy Names University (HNU), Dr. Bill Hynes led incoming students through “The Rite of Passage” ceremony on Saturday, August 21. The Rite of Passage is a part of the orientation activities for students and celebrates and symbolizes the beginning of their educational journey by climbing from the bottom of the campus to the top.

The 106 stairs at the center of the campus are at the heart of this traditional climb, and marks the beginning of the entering student’s college experience. Prior to this celebration, an upper class ritual of inscribing each student’s name in pastel chalk on the steps leading to the top of the campus occurs the day before the ceremony. When the official “Rite of Passage” climb begins, the parents, family and friends of the incoming students, along with faculty and staff of HNU, gather on both sides of the stairs. Students begin at the bottom of the stairs and with each step on their journey to the top, they see their names written on the steps and are welcomed to HNU with the encouragement of cheers and applause by family, friends and staff.

Before the official welcome from President Hynes, Michael Miller, Vice President for Student Affairs, greeted the students, family, friends, staff and faculty in the 400-seat Regents Theatre located in the Valley Center for the Performing Arts. In his welcoming remarks, Miller encouraged students to use their college education to make the world a better place, to think about who they are now, to use their education at HNU to be the best person they can possibly be in life. He urged students to approach their education with openness to new ideas and experiences. He concluded by reminding students that they have the ability to succeed and that they would do great things.

Following Michael Miller’s opening remarks, the President of the Associated Students of Holy Names University, Anitra McCain, welcomed the new students and expressed her excitement about the new influx of students and Dr. Hynes’ plans for HNU. She further encouraged students to soak up the essence of the Holy Names community and then introduced HNU’s new President, Dr. Bill Hynes.

In his presentation Hynes pointed out that students of HNU will experience “radical hospitality.” By this he meant that students are welcomed as family, as brothers and sisters of one another. He explained that in HNU’s eyes each student is the most important person in the world. This perspective comes from the rich Catholic tradition and the founding spirit of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Hynes pointed out that there is a divine spark in each person and that HNU welcomes each student’s spark to grow.

Hynes explained that the liberal arts tradition embraces one of the oldest ways of thinking and feeling. He stated that a liberal arts education promotes liberal thinking and provides a stimulus for helping to improve the world for others. He encouraged students to put their education to work in areas of social justice and to learn how to overcome structures and ideas that hold people

back. Hynes challenged students, after they graduate, to help others set their sites beyond a narrow horizon. He encouraged students to dream big, discover their passion and to stay in touch with their families. He pointed out the importance of asking questions in the pursuit of knowledge and gave advice to students who may be embarrassed to ask questions to say, "I have the President's permission."

Hynes told the students, "When you need help, ask and receive help. Welcome to the liberating arts." In his closing remarks, Hynes said, "You are being empowered to make it a better and more just world."

Hynes assumed the top leadership position of this private liberal arts university on August 1, 2010.

#####