

Commissioning 2015

- June 13, 2015
- Stephen V. Sundborg, S.J.

I take as my focus for my remarks at your commissioning this morning the topic of trust. Isn't that what this is about: the trust that your family has in you; the trust that has grown in you in ROTC as you have developed your competencies, skills, and leadership; the trust you have begun to learn you can count on from other comrades and superiors; and the trust that in swearing your oath and being commissioned, you can have that the U.S. Army will support you as it continues to form you as leaders? This is a day about trust. I believe you all know that and depend on it.

Recently a friend who runs a large organization was telling me that he is puzzled and worried that there is not more trust between people in his organization. His previous career had been in the military and there, he says, he immediately experienced and could count on trust from every person, not only of his own branch of the military but from people of all branches. For him the most important quality that made military service so successful and rewarding was trust. He said that it is of the very nature of military service that you just have to be able to trust, to rely on, to count on, to depend on one another for mission, for confronting threat, for service, for life. He knows that trust is in the very DNA of military service and is both the critically most important thing and the personally most rewarding reality.

You have begun to learn this trust, this special kind of trust in your military formation and service, a trust in a cohort, a battalion, with superiors, among comrades. It is trust that has brought you to this day and takes you forward. Of course, you have fears—I hope you do—for fears are part of the same coin as is trust, the other side of it. You wouldn't need trust if you didn't have fear. Trust does not remove fear; trust is deepened, made more critical, becomes more owned because of fear. I believe that more than all other graduating students from Seattle University this weekend—all of whom face an uncertain and somewhat scary future—you graduate with greater trust, both the need for it and the reality of it.

I would be remiss as president of Seattle University, but also as a priest, if I did not add from both my own long experience of facing my fears with trust and from my fullest hope for each of you, that for each of us, because of how fragile our life ultimately is, we must trust in God, however we believe in God, trust in the source, the foundation, and the ultimate home of our life. When the buck stops with us, written on it are the words "In God we trust". Please know my pride in each one of you, my gratitude for being our students and for serving our country, and my prayers for each of you today and each day.