

## Mapping the World's Challenges

- *Graduate Commencement*

- *June 12, 2011*

- *Stephen V. Sundborg, S.J.*

It is great to be able to come to the graduate commencement ceremony—after the more youthful effervescence of the undergraduate ceremony here this morning—because your maturity and professional accomplishments allow a different kind of dialogue and celebration. All of you are already well on your way and experienced in leadership and in service to society. Jesuit universities—good ones like Seattle University—are marked by strong, engaged, professional educational programs of the highest quality and reputation. These are the programs from which you are graduating. Congratulations and thank you for all you've given to your school, to this university, to your professors, and to your student-colleagues.

For just a moment enter with me into an exercise of mapping the world, mapping its greatest challenges, and laying over this map of the world the degrees you receive today.

An entire continent on the map of the challenges of the world today is education: who gets it, what quality it has, how it is supported and measured, how adequate that education is for our emerging global, complex world. It's not at a distance on the map of the world, but our greatest challenge here at home. Lay on top of that all that the College of Education does, what leadership degrees do, how most every graduate degree touches education and you see how relevant to the actual map of the world you are.

Then map the immense challenges today of the economy, of emerging economies, global economies, jobs, banking, finance, and you see how important it is that we educate and grant graduate degrees to so many students of business and finance, accounting, international business and executive leadership. This is a problem more acute for all of us now than it has been for decades. How needed is how you serve with your degrees.

Education and economy are two of the largest regions in mapping the most pressing challenges of the world. So also is our very humanity, our human relations, our care for one another and for the earth itself. When we say our mission is “empowering leaders for a just and humane world”, “humane” is as important as “just”. They must go together. Your graduate professional degrees in psychology, in nursing, in theology and ministry, in fine arts, and hopefully, in all degrees seek and know how to make our world more humane.

The mapping of the challenges of the world and laying your degrees upon that map shows the need that this complex world actually work, that it functions. Degrees in software engineering, in criminal justice, in public administration and not-for-profit leadership, in organizational design and renewal, in sports administration, and again in business, law, education, nursing, ministry are professional degrees and practical degrees which enable you to actually get something done and to make our complex world work.

Of course the mapping of the greatest challenges of the world shows needs which no single degree monopolizes but which all must serve: sustainability, spirituality, faith, and interreligious dialogue, care for all and a preferential care for the poor, healthy families, peace, and ultimately, love of one another. Your degrees—through the kind of persons you are—overlay the map of these challenges with multiple layers from all of your professions. In the end it is the kind of persons you are in using your competencies which is the most important response to the world's challenges today.

Thanks for choosing, for learning from, and for giving so much to your professional Jesuit education at Seattle University. We are a great Jesuit university on our graduate level. Apply your degrees to a world which needs you. Congratulations and thank you.

Now it is my honor to introduce and your honor to meet a person—a Nobel Peace Prize winner—who has done and continues to do so much to address a great problem and challenge our world today.