

A PUBLICATION OF HILLSDALE COLLEGE

Imprimis

OVER 4,700,000 READERS MONTHLY

November 2019 · Volume 48, Number 11

Special 175th Anniversary Issue



“Faith and reason are mutually reinforcing”

CLARENCE THOMAS

Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the United States

Hillsdale College held a dedication ceremony for its new Christ Chapel on October 3, 2019, during a two-day gala to celebrate the College’s 175th anniversary. The following are excerpts from the dedication address. A video of the dedication ceremony may be viewed online at fourpillars.hillsdale.edu.

This is a very special occasion—the 175th anniversary of Hillsdale and the dedication of Christ Chapel. This beautiful Chapel is a culmination of years of generosity, planning, and hard work. And the end result is at once stunning and glorious.

The Chapel’s enduring beauty highlights the transcendence, the sovereignty, and the grace of God. It truly illustrates how architectural design can reflect the character of God and evoke a sense of reverence for His majesty.

Everyone involved in the financing, planning, and construction of this Chapel should rightly be proud. It is a magnificent accomplishment. But we’ve gathered here today not just to admire this beautiful Chapel—we have gathered here to dedicate it.

HILLSDALE.EDU

The word *dedicate* in this context means “to set apart and consecrate to a deity or to a sacred purpose.” To dedicate this Chapel appropriately, then, it is worthwhile to reflect on the purposes for which we are setting apart this sacred place on a college campus.

The primary purpose of a chapel is to provide a place where man can enter the presence of God. It provides a sanctuary in which man can withdraw from the chaos of our world and seek a sacred stillness. For as Elijah learned on Mount Horeb, God so often comes to us not in the storms, not in the earthquakes or fires of life, but in stillness—in a “gentle whisper.”

Accordingly, men and women have long sought respite from the noise and commotion of daily life, where they can “be still, and know that [He is] God,” where they can seek an inner calm and a transcendent peace. Beautiful chapels, such as this one, provide that sacred space for stillness, a place for an encounter with the Divine. As the architect of this Chapel has written, “When you enter a church, it is as if you are entering through a gateway from the profane toward the sacred.”

It is difficult to overstate the significance of the role that this Chapel will play in the life of Hillsdale College.

Although a chapel is a place for many activities, it also serves as a statement about the importance of those activities. The construction of a *college* chapel, in particular, is a public declaration that faith and reason are mutually

reinforcing. And in 2019, the construction of a chapel is a bold act of leadership at a crucial time in our nation’s history. So I would like to underscore briefly the broader significance of the decision that Hillsdale College has made in building Christ Chapel.

Beginning in the early 1900s, many elite private colleges and universities began to face questions about the continuing relevance of religious instruction on campus. These questions would have surprised the founders of those schools, many of which were created in part for the express purpose of providing religious instruction. But as time went on and as schools moved away from their religious roots, the relevance of religion to higher education was increasingly questioned, and campus chapels, in particular, came to be viewed as relics of a bygone era.

With the completion of Christ Chapel, Hillsdale College has staked out its position in this debate, and its decision serves as an example for all of us. The construction of so grand a chapel

in 2019 does not happen by accident or as an afterthought. Christ Chapel reflects the College’s conviction that a vibrant intellectual environment and a strong democratic society are fostered, not hindered, by a recognition of the Divine. Hillsdale College affirms, with the writer of Proverbs, that, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.”

By constructing this Chapel, the College upholds the continued importance of its Christian roots, even as it respects the rights of each person to

Imprimis (im-pri-mis),
[Latin]: in the first place

EDITOR

Douglas A. Jeffrey

DEPUTY EDITORS

Matthew D. Bell
Timothy W. Caspar
Samantha Strayer

ART DIRECTOR

Shanna Cote

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Lucinda Grimm

STAFF ASSISTANTS

Robin Curtis
Kim Ellsworth
Mary Jo Von Ewegen

Copyright © 2019 Hillsdale College

The opinions expressed in *Imprimis* are not necessarily the views of Hillsdale College.

Permission to reprint in whole or in part is hereby granted, provided the following credit line is used: “Reprinted by permission from *Imprimis*, a publication of Hillsdale College.”

SUBSCRIPTION FREE UPON REQUEST.

ISSN 0277-8432

Imprimis trademark registered in U.S.
Patent and Trademark Office #1563325.



HILLSDALE COLLEGE
PURSUING TRUTH · DEFENDING LIBERTY SINCE 1844

worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. Our country was founded on the view that a correct understanding of the nature of God and the human person is critical to preserving the liberty that we so enjoy.

John Adams wrote, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

He recognized that the preservation of liberty is not guaranteed. Without the guardrails supplied by religious conviction, popular sovereignty can devolve into mob rule, unmoored from any conception of objective truth.

As I think about our political culture today, I am reminded of Ronald Reagan’s warning that, “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. The only way they can inherit the freedom we have known is if we fight for it, protect it, defend it, and then hand it on to them . . . [to] do the same.”

Each generation is responsible both to itself and to succeeding generations for preserving and promoting the blessings of liberty. Faith in God, more than anything else, fuels the strength of character and self-discipline needed to discharge ably that responsibility. That is why I am so encouraged by the construction of Christ Chapel.

Hillsdale College’s Articles of Association affirm that “inestimable blessings” flow from “the prevalence of civil and religious liberty and intelligent piety in the land.” The College was founded on the belief that “the diffusion of sound learning is essential to the perpetuity of these blessings.” Thus Hillsdale College was founded on the understanding that the battle to preserve and promote freedom in our country will be waged in the hearts and minds of the people.

Rather than shrinking from the battle, Hillsdale is rising to the occasion by investing in the intellectual and spiritual development of its students, so they can provide God-honoring leadership in our country. Let it be said of them what was said of David, that he “served the counsel of God in his own generation.”

By constructing this Chapel, the College upholds the importance of its Christian roots, even as it respects the rights of each person to worship God according to his own conscience. Our country was founded on the view that a correct understanding of the nature of God and the human person is critical to preserving liberty.

Students, faculty, administrators, and friends of Hillsdale, let this Chapel be more than just an impressive building. Let it be a place where people enter the presence of a majestic God. Let it be a house of worship, of prayer, of meditation, and of celebration before God. Let it be a haven of rest for the weary, a place of healing for the wounded, a place of comfort for the grieving, and a source of hope for the despairing and forgotten.

Let it point to a day when “the dwelling of God” will be “with men,” when God himself will “wipe away every tear” and mend every wound. Let it be a place where tomorrow’s leaders discern their callings and grow firm in their convictions. Let it stand as a bold declaration to a watching world that faith and learning are rightly understood as complements, and that both are essential to the preservation of the blessings of liberty.

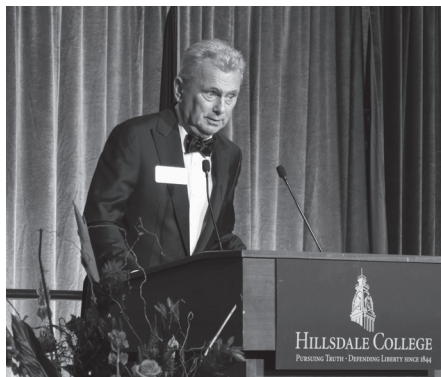
Let this Chapel equip and inspire us to honor God in whatever He calls us to do. For as Saint Paul wrote in his Letter to the Romans, “From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

May God bless each of you. May God bless Hillsdale. And may God bless this wonderful country. ■

HILLSDALE COLLEGE 175TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

On October 2–3, 2019, over 800 guests attended a gala celebration on Hillsdale’s campus to mark the College’s 175th year, dedicate Christ Chapel, and launch the College’s Four Pillars Campaign. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas spoke at the Christ Chapel dedication. Other guest speakers during the gala included historian Victor Davis Hanson, journalist Mollie Hemingway, and author Mark Steyn.

The Four Pillars Campaign takes its name from the four purposes that define the College’s mission—learning, character, faith, and freedom—and will run through 2024. Campaign funding goals include student scholarships, capital projects, and educational programs. Hillsdale Board of Trustees Chairman Pat Sajak and Vice-Chairman Steven Van Andel ’78 are serving as Campaign co-chairs.



“American citizenship is eroding”

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Wayne and Marcia Buske Distinguished Fellow in History, Hillsdale College

The following is an abridged version of a talk delivered at Hillsdale College on October 2, 2019, during the College’s 175th anniversary gala. Videos of this and other speeches delivered during the gala are available at fourpillars.hillsdale.edu.



Today many condemn the idea of nationalism by connecting it to race hatred (e.g., white nationalism). But historically, the modern nation-state has proven uniquely suitable to preserving individual rights. The American nation in particular was successful in uniting individuals of different races, ethnic backgrounds, and creeds into one people based on shared principles, a unique physical space, and a common national story. Our nation is the best example in human history of positive nationalism.

The key to this benign nationalism is American citizenship, based on an understanding of American exceptionalism and formed by the American melting pot. But today, our citizenship is eroding and, along with it, American nationalism in the positive sense is disappearing.

American citizenship is eroding in three ways.

First, we are blurring the line between mere residents and citizens. We have between 45-50 million non-native-born residents in the U.S. today—the largest absolute number we’ve ever had. There’s no legal problem with the 30 million of them who have green cards or have acquired citizenship—although even 30 million is a challenge for the American melting pot to assimilate and integrate.

But we also have, according to a recent Yale and MIT study, about 20 million people who are here illegally. In regard to them, the classical ingredients of American citizenship—the right to leave or enter the country as one pleases, for example, or to vote in elections, or to reside here as long as one pleases—are being blurred.

Where I live, in California, if you’re here illegally, you can *de facto* go back and forth across the border as you wish. In San Francisco, you can vote in some school board elections (the same is under consideration in some places in New England). And as we see with the DACA program, illegal residents can *de facto* live in the U.S. indefinitely.

Some policies even discriminate against citizens. An illegal resident in California who is charged with a crime is not subject to federal immigration law to the full extent, whereas a citizen who flies into Los Angeles from overseas without a passport will be detained. If you are in California as an illegal resident, you can obtain a driver’s license as citizens have in the past; whereas for citizens, starting next year, there will be an extra burden: to travel by commercial air, they will have to provide at least three sources of proof of citizenship to

obtain a valid ID—given the apparent devaluation of the driver’s license.

People who come to the U.S. illegally and in great numbers usually do not have the degree of investment citizens do in our constitutional documents and are often unacquainted with our national story. Candidates from south of the border today fly into California’s Central Valley to campaign. Illegal residents vote in their home countries’ elections—and yet are unacquainted with political issues and candidates here in the U.S.

To avoid a fragmentation of society based on racial and ethnic chauvinism takes an extra effort to keep the melting pot working. We’re no longer making that effort. Indeed, we’re doing the opposite, encouraging diversity rather than unity.

Second, we’re becoming a country of tribes. The idea of multi-racialism—the notion that we’re of different races but we share a common culture—is eroding.

At many colleges and universities today, you can choose in advance the racial background of your roommate. Campuses have “safe spaces” that are reserved for people of particular races. There are dorms where students segregate according to race. Ethnic studies departments thrive by emphasizing racial exceptionalism.

Do we wonder why Elizabeth Warren chose to be a Native American, which, according to her own logic—the power of white privilege and systemic racism—would put her at a disadvantage? The answer is that she sought a careerist advantage. And Harvard was happy to comply: the law school bragged that she was its first “woman of color” faculty member.

I went to a grammar school that was about 90 percent Mexican-American. Some people who I went to first grade with later changed their names from Juan to John and dropped the accent

on their last names. Now in their 60s, they’re changing back to Juan and adding back the accents. Why? Because there is now a disadvantage in identifying as an un-hyphenated American, and an advantage to belonging to a tribe. And the danger is that this logic of tribalism leads to the kind of social breakup and civil discord that we saw in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and Iraq.

Third, the middle class, which had been encouraged and celebrated since the time of the American Founding, is now under sustained attack.

Ancient authors from Plato to Tacitus have suggested that affluence combined with leisure creates a laxity that leads to the kind of societal and institutional disintegration we are currently seeing. Another major ingredient is the failure of our education system to offer disinterested instruction, following from the post-1960s takeover by the Left of our colleges and universities.

A solid, property-owning middle class anchors the nation. Traditionally, its members show the sobriety and judgment to achieve autonomy. They don’t look to government for help. They stand as a barrier against both property redistribution and crony capitalism.

Today, America’s middle class is threatened. Homeownership is down to about 62 percent from 71 percent just over ten years ago. The percentage of a family budget that goes to housing has risen from 20-30 percent in the 1950s to 30-40 percent today, especially in coastal corridors. Middle class wages, until an annual increase of three percent under President Trump, had been frozen for ten years. And we have an aggregate \$1.6 trillion in student debt.

If the middle class continues to erode, we will become a nation of peasants and oligarchs. In California, more than one out of five people live below the poverty line—despite the fact that California has one of the highest number of zip codes of America’s most affluent people and the

highest number of billionaires. If you drive through Palo Alto, you'll see people living in RVs because they can't afford to buy or rent a home—and these are people working for Google, Facebook, Yahoo, Oracle, and Apple, with a total market capitalization of nearly \$4 trillion.

Additionally, we are seeing a formal assault on the Constitution by our elites.

Consider the nullification of federal law through the creation of sanctuary cities, in direct defiance of the immigration statutes. (Of course, such nullification seems to go only one way: otherwise, imagine how our elites would respond if the people of Provo, Utah, decided within their municipal jurisdiction to nullify federal handgun registration or the Endangered Species Act.)

Almost every single Democratic candidate for president is in favor of abolishing the Electoral College, which is in the Constitution to ensure equal representation to people living outside big cities, and to prevent the splintering of the electorate into several small parties.

There is also a growing academic attack on the mode of electing the U.S. Senate—“Why should North Dakota or Wyoming have the same number of U.S. Senators as New York?” progressives ask, in their eagerness to make U.S. Senators proportionally elected in the manner of House members.

This insidious assault on the Constitution results from the fact that popular elections haven't been going the Left's way, and the Left believes that its superior moral agenda justifies using any means necessary.

Ancient authors from Plato and Aristotle to Petronius and Tacitus have suggested that affluence combined with leisure paradoxically creates a laxity that leads to the kind of societal and institutional disintegration we are currently seeing. Another major ingredient of our current crisis is the failure of our education system to offer disinterested instruction, following from the post-1960s takeover by the Left of our colleges and universities.

In response, we need to support colleges that continue to teach the principles and practices of liberty. We must support policies that recognize the distinction between citizens and non-citizens and that bolster the middle class. And we need to defend the Constitution, our last great hope to ensure American continuity and security. ■

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
HILLSDALE COLLEGE

HAS YOUR ADDRESS CHANGED?

- Correct and return the enclosed postage-paid envelope
- Email — imprimis@hillsdale.edu
- Or call — (800) 437-2268

EA1119PO2

