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University of San Diego--University Convocation: Address by Sister Nancy Morris, RSCJ, President of the USD College for Women, September 8, 1969

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UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO--UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION

Address by Sister Nancy Morris, RSCJ, President of the USD College
for Women, September 8, 1969

TEXT:

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Faculty and Administration of the College for Women, to welcome you to the University of San Diego and to a new academic year. For many reasons 1969 will always be an important year. First, it marks the historic flight and first touchdown of man on the moon. The names Aldrin, Collins, and Armstrong are fixed in the annals of history's most courageous pioneers. Coincidentally perhaps, but significantly, just as Apollo 11 was beginning its momentous journey into space, a solemn procession was forming in San Diego's Old Town. The act of founding the first California mission on July 16, 1769 by Fr. Junipero Serra in the presence of Don Gaspar de Portola was re-enacted this summer and the festivities surrounding this event will continue throughout the year. However, 1969 is important for another reason to us here at Alcalá Park. Just 20 years ago, the Charter of the University was drawn up, which eventuated in the San Diego College for Women, College for Men, and the School of Law. Due to rapid changes and exciting experimentation over the past three years, the University colleges have undergone significant, even radical transformation, so much so that our names are really anachronistic. If you are acquainted with anyone who would like his or her name attached to a building or college, please let us know! The changes wrought here at the University we know reflect in large part the changes going on elsewhere in higher education, but also in the world in general. The 60's have been a memorable, but not altogether admirable decade for Americans, be it in political life or the educational

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world. The assassination of a President, of a Senator, of a civil rights leader--these tragedies have been matched by like atrocities in cities and college campuses across our nation. We may well ask ourselves what is happening to a society which claims to be one of the most sophisticated, well educated, and efficient of all times. The United States is among the most literate nations in the world; it has developed a system of almost universal education; it is the wealthiest country in the world. And still, the crime rate rises and the eruptions in our cities and colleges continue. What is the problem? Please do not think that I have the answer to this question. I don't. I would hope that together we, students, faculty administrators, might together reflect and dialogue about this and related questions for it is my confirmed belief that if we work together in what is truly a shared responsibility we shall achieve what both society and education seek: a reasonable and enlightened solution to our mutual problems. Because we are all responsible for the welfare of all. As Philip Monypenny of the University of Illinois said last year:

"In recognizing that the acceptance of a student as a student creates a mutual obligation, the courts have placed explicit or implicit stress on the value to the individual and to society of the opportunity to gain an education."

There is, then, a mutual obligation, a shared responsibility in the educational enterprise. Here at the University of San Diego we have kept the colleges small in order to ease the burden of this responsibility as much as possible. There are approximately 11 students to one professor; we have our top-ranking professors, and not teaching assistants, in the lower division classes. And although research is valued highly, it does not alter the priority place we give to teaching. Moreover, it would seem that the chances for sitting down with administrators are better here than at

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most universities--we have two Deans and two Presidents for your convenience! Seriously, however, we are here to work with you in a common enterprise; we are a single community made up of diverse parts laboring together to achieve one goal. Just as the success of the Serra-Portola expedition was a shared achievement for the old world, and just as the moon flight and touchdown was a common victory for all mankind, so also will our efforts be crowned with success for the future of our world if we work together in mutual respect and fraternal solidarity.

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