**A Liturgy for Celebrating the Completion of a Semester, with a Blessing of Graduates**

Plain text means the listed speaker reads.

**Bold means all read together.**

*Italics indicate instructions or commentary*.

Gathering Music and Conversation

Opening Hymn

Officiant We give you thanks, O God, we give you thanks, calling upon your Name and declaring all your wonderful deeds. *Psalm 75:1[[1]](#endnote-1)*

The Invitatory

*In Easter*

Officiant Alleluia! ☩ Christ is risen!

**People Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia![[2]](#endnote-2)**

*or*

*At other times*

Officiant Hear God’s teaching, O my people.

**People Let us incline our ears to God’s word.[[3]](#endnote-3)**

*Together*

**Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.[[4]](#endnote-4)**

Invocation

*Words of welcome may be offered, and the reason for the gathering should be stated.*

*One or more of the following collects is said.*

Officiant You will understand righteousness and justice

**People and equity, and every good path;**

Officiant for wisdom will come into your heart,

**People and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.[[5]](#endnote-5)**

*Proverbs 2:9-10*

Officiant Let us pray.

God of knowledge and understanding, you gave to the student Elisha a double portion of his teacher’s spirit: grant that all whose graduations we celebrate today may embody the best of their teachers’ heart, mind, and body, building on their knowledge and understanding, and putting to right and compassionate use all that they have gained from their time in school; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Teacher. **Amen***.*[[6]](#endnote-6)

O Eternal God, bless all schools, colleges, and universities [and especially \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_], that they may be lively centers for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach and those who learn may find you to be the source of all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen***.[[7]](#endnote-7)*

Readings[[8]](#endnote-8)

Psalm

*One or more of the suggested psalms may be used*.

Psalm 78:1-7 (Hear my teaching, O my people)

Psalm 36:5-7, 9, 10 (In your light, we see light)

Psalm 119:105-112 (Your word is a lantern to my feet)

Psalm 150 (Hallelujah!)

Readings

*One or more of the suggested readings may be used.*

Deuteronomy 6:4-9,20-25 (Keep these words)  
Micah 6:1-8 (What does the Lord require?)

Matthew 11:25-30 (You have hidden these things from the wise)

Matthew 23:8-12 (You are all students)

Philippians 4:4-9 (Think about these things)

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 (Continue in what you have leaned)

Suggested Canticle following the reading(s)

Canticle A: A Song of Wisdom[[9]](#endnote-9)

*Wisdom 10:15-19,20b-21*

Wisdom freed from a nation of oppressors \*

a holy people and a blameless race.

She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord, \*

withstood dread rulers with wonders and signs.

To the saints she gave the reward of their labors, \*

and led them by a marvelous way;

She was their shelter by day \*

and a blaze of stars by night.

She brought them across the Red Sea, \*

she led them through mighty waters;

But their enemies she swallowed in the waves \*

and spewed them out from the depths of the abyss.

And then, Lord, the righteous sang hymns to your Name, \*

and praised with one voice your protecting hand;

For Wisdom opened the mouths of the mute, \*

and gave speech to the tongues of a new-born people.

Sermon

Hymn

The Prayers[[10]](#endnote-10)

Officiant The Lord be with you.

**People And also with you**

Officiant Let us pray.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

A Litany of Thanksgiving at Graduation[[11]](#endnote-11)

Leader We pray to you, Christ, the pattern and perfecter of our faith, as this semester draws to a close.

Leader Jesus, you were brought up by your loving family and supported by your brother and sister disciples. We give you thanks for the loving families, friends, and supporters who have made our education possible. We give special thanks for all of those individuals that we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts. *(Names be offered.*) Teach us, our God and King,

**People To see you in all things.**

Leader Jesus, you were taught by John the Baptizer, learned through debates with colleagues, and found insight in the faith of people. We give thanks for our mentors, friends, and classmates who have sharpened our minds and expanded our hearts. We give special thanks for all of those individuals that we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts. *(Names be offered.*) Teach us, our God and King,

**People To see you in all things.**

Leader Jesus, you sought further clarity and vision in the hungry wilderness. We give thanks for the hard times, and for those disappointments and failures that have led us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone. We give special thanks—or, at least we try!—for the challenges of our education, and especially for … (*Names and occasions may be offered.)* Teach us, our God and King,

**People To see you in all things.**

Leader Jesus, you left your fasting in the wilderness only to be feasted by angels, celebrating your formation and inaugurating the time of your ministry. We give you thanks for graduation, for this moment that marks accomplishment, and welcomes new vocation and ministry. We especially give thanks for our graduates. (*Names and occasions may be offered.)* Teach us, our God and King,

**People To see you in all things.**

Leader Jesus, you became a teacher. Not many are called to teach, but none of us could be where we are today without the love and attention of our teachers, professors, aides, tutors, and mentors. We ask for a double portion of their spirit, that in our turn, we may share all that is good with this world. We give you special thanks for all who have formed us. (*Names may be offered.)* Teach us, our God and King,

**People To see you in all things.**

Leader Jesus, Joseph your father could not stand with you at your earthly triumph, and surely his absence weighed on your heart. We, too, have lost those we loved during this semester and during our education. We pray for all those who have died. *(Names may be offered.*) Teach us, our God and King,

**People To see you in all things.**

Leader Jesus, you went forth to change the world. We, too, are beginning new vocations as one semester ends and a new time begins. Inspire us to go forth to all nations, preaching and teaching and doing science and healing and building and writing and doing all of the many ministries of your body. Empower us with your ongoing presence. Teach us, our God and King,

**People To see you in all things.**

Leader Jesus, you rejoice in the fellowship of all the saints. With that diverse and numerous cloud of witnesses, we commend our lives to you, celebrating the victories of this day, and confident in the promises of your eternal home. Teach us, our God and King,

**People To see you in all things.**

Commissioning[[12]](#endnote-12)

Leader Today, as we mark the end of the semester and celebrate our graduates, we also commit ourselves once more to a lifetime of learning; to the sharing of the abundant gifts that God has given us; and to the callings of this community.

**People May the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen us, that in this, and in all things, we may do God's will in the service of the kingdom of his Christ. Amen*.***

Leader Let us pray.

Almighty God, look with favor upon *these graduates, and this community* who *have* now reaffirmed *their* commitment to follow Christ and to serve in God’s name. Give *them* courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world, and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen***.*

Blessing[[13]](#endnote-13)

**The Blessing of Grace**  
*by The Rev. William Sloane Coffin*  
May God give you the grace never to sell yourself short;  
Grace to risk something big for something good; and  
Grace to remember the world is now  
too dangerous for anything but the truth and  
too small for anything but love.

**A Franciscan Blessing**

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships so that you may live deep within your heart.  
May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may wish for justice, freedom and peace.  
May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done. **Amen**.

Dismissal[[14]](#endnote-14)

Leader Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia! Alleluia!

**People Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Music

Liturgy adapted from *The Book of Common Prayer* and *Enriching Our Worship 1*; Litany of Thanksgiving at Graduation and miscellaneous prayers by the Rev. Ryan Kuratko, PhD.

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1. From *Enriching Our Worship* *1* (EOW 1), p. 19, Occasions for Thanksgiving [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. From BCP Daily Office, Easter Acclamation (p. 77) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Formatted by Ryan Kuratko (RK), BCP 694, Psalm 78 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. EOW 1, p. 20. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Formatted by RK; from Proverbs as listed, NRSV. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Written by RK; covered by Creative Commons (CC) license above. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. BCP Collect for Schools and Colleges, p. 824 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Suggested readings from Various Occasions in BCP, “For Education” 931; some suggested by Shannon Kelly; some by RK. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. From EOW 1, p. 30. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. BCP, Daily Office, p. 97 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Written by RK; covered by Creative Commons (CC) license above. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Adapted from BCP “A Form of Commitment to Christian Service,” p. 420 [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. From blessings for graduates, <https://lessonplansthatwork.org/celebrating-graduation/prayers-and-blessings/> [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. From BCP, Daily Office, p. 102 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)