

# Installation of President Marylou Nancy Yam, Ph.D.

President Yam, my brother priests, Father Braden and Father Kennedy, dear School Sisters of Notre Dame, members of the Board, the faculty, and the staff, dear benefactors and students, and all dear friends in Christ,

## Introduction

How fitting it is in this joyous season of Easter to celebrate another joyous occasion, as we offer Mass in honor of the Inauguration of Dr. Marylou Yam as the fourteenth President of this venerable institution, Notre Dame of Maryland University.

120 years ago, in 1895, after already establishing themselves years before as educators of girls and young women in Baltimore, the School Sisters of Notre Dame opened this beautiful campus as the first Catholic college for women in the United States. Today we are the beneficiaries of the legacy of Catholic education left to us by these pioneering, intrepid, and deeply faithful women.

## We Pursue Truth

Yes, we remember tonight with gratitude those holy and courageous women to whom we are indebted for founding this university that, to this day, embraces the motto: *Veritatem Prosequimur* (We Pursue Truth).

But on a deeper level, what we do this evening points back two millennia to the empty tomb. The Easter joy that fills us during this Paschal season is the joy born of faith in the One who is Truth itself. Jesus, who by His self-offering, has revealed to us a love that is stronger than sin, and more powerful than death.

So in the course of the daily life and work of this university, whether we immerse ourselves in the business of literature, or physics, or calculus, or pharmacology, or linguistics, or philosophy, or nursing, all of it takes place in the context of the truth that Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again. Indeed, any authentic pursuit of the truth is a pursuit of the living God, the Author of truth, and ultimate Truth itself.

## **President Yam**

President Yam, on the inauguration of your presidency, we are grateful for the impressive array of talents and accomplishments you bring with you: being the first woman in the history of Saint Peter's University in Jersey City to serve as Dean of its College of Arts and Sciences and School of Business Administration; being a nationally recognized researcher on domestic violence; and as author of numerous articles and book chapters on domestic violence, nursing research, and case management. All of this you now put at the service of Notre Dame of Maryland University. We are grateful also to your husband David and to your son Michael, for sharing you with this university community, and for all the ways they will support you in your work.

Two years ago, on the day when Pope Francis celebrated his own inaugural Mass, he offered some words that, I believe, apply to what we do here today. On that occasion, Pope Francis said: "I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political, and social life, and all men and women of good will: let us be 'protectors' of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another..." He continued, " But to be 'protectors,' we also have to keep watch over ourselves! Let us not forget that hatred, envy, and pride defile our lives! Being protectors, then, also means keeping watch over our emotions, over our hearts, because they are the seat of good and evil intentions: intentions that build up and tear down! We must not be afraid of goodness or even tenderness!" And, he added, "Only those who serve with love are able to protect!"

## **Conclusion**

President Yam, in the months you have already served as President of ND, you have shown yourself to be a leader who protects and fosters these precious gifts of nature and grace. As you continue to serve, lead, protect, and foster this university, may the love of the risen Christ inspire, guide, and enlighten you in all of the decisions you will make in the service of truth. Please know that you enjoy the benefits of our prayers as you continue the pursuit of academic excellence and authentic Catholic identity that the School Sisters of Notre Dame began here 120 years ago.

May the risen Christ bless you, the faculty and staff, and all the students and alumnae of Notre Dame of Maryland University. May He bless you with the fire of

love and the light of truth, so that, together, we may arrive at that love and truth, which alone will satisfy us for eternity.

May God bless us and keep us always in His love!