

THE CLAES NOBEL ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship Presentation Address by:

Claes Nobel
Honorary Chairman, NSHSS

“CARPE DIEM” A MESSAGE OF PEACE AND HOPE

Dear Sister Celeste, distinguished faculty members of Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy, diligent students, honored guests, ladies, and gentlemen and most of all, **My Dear Laurel Angelica**.

This Scholarship Award Ceremony is about honoring excellence. For well over 100 years my family name “Nobel” has been recognized as being a kind of hallmark for peace and excellence. And, yes, we are old hands at presenting awards and recognitions. There is no doubt about that.

Therefore, it is a happy and significant moment for me to have the opportunity to continue my good family tradition here at your beautiful Academy in La Canada Flintridge, California. In seeing your campus with all the trees and all the flowers and of course in meeting all the outstanding teachers and students, I can only say: “How I wish I could go to high school again!”

Well, at this time, maybe a bit of personal confession is appropriate. You see, in my life and in my work for finding workable solutions to the world’s most critical problems I have had the good fortune of meeting many holy men and women, such as H.H. the Dalai Lama of Tibet; the Holy Mother of India; Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi; the Tzu Chi founder Chen Yeng, a Buddhist, female monk of Taiwan, where I and my wife stayed for four days; the Brahma Kumari Sisters of Mount Abu in India; Sister Jenna in Washington D.C.; Sister Ruth Hollenbach of Mount Mary College in Milwaukee, who kindly bestowed upon me an Honorary Doctor degree in Letters of Law; and Mother Teresa. And, my confession is simply this: “I love nuns.”

Needless to say, I am much influenced by the ideal that created the world-renown legacy of Dr. Alfred Nobel. The seminal ideal of his creative mind, the very ideal that created The Nobel Prize ... was for him to significantly contribute to establish Peace and World Betterment. And that ideal ... and any ideal or vision ...can only be materialized ... by seizing the moment of your time, your station and your place in the world ... and then to apply the right tools for achieving your goals and dreams, however lofty they may be. “Carpe diem”!

Today, “Carpe diem” is the principal reason why I am at this podium as the Honorary Chairman of The National Society for High School Scholars and doing what I am doing right now. Yes, I have a vision and I have an ideal ... here it is.

Today, the youth of the world represent 50% of the world population and they represent 100% of our future. My esteemed colleagues of NSHSS and I, we are delighted to be in close contact with the young men and women of the world, who soon will be the new leaders and society members of a world presently in severe distress. In you we see a powerful catalyst for change. We call this power: **The Power of Youth**.

We have a very important scholarship presentation ahead of us. Not only, is it a significant event in the life of Laurel, ... but, likewise it is an important step towards new horizons of extended youth activity for our Honor Society. And, hopefully our time together here at Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy will signify a landmark moment for the world at large.

I say so, because, during these very turbulent times of year 2003, when political, economic and religious forces are in a state of constant conflict, and when as a result hereof, there is today a gaping hole in the soul of the world, and as these problems are creating unprecedented fears and hardship for humanity at large, I strongly feel, that the Dear Lord at the same time, is giving us the opportunity to be of further **Service to Humanity and the Earth**. And, maybe, today, as I speak, we are being authorized and invited by these Divine Powers to be part of creating history ... as it relates to world security and world betterment? Wouldn't that be nice? Would you all like to be part of that?

My scholarship presentation address, which is called **Carpe Diem: A Message of Peace and Hope**, deals with a subject that is very close to the hopes and aspirations of NSHSS. It is about a new service and a great challenge soon to be offered to our members. It is about creating a potentially significant tool for global transformation, where you, the youth of the world will make your voices, your concerns, and your hopes not only known to the world ... but also listed on the world agenda for implementation. Consequently, we want to have direct contact with the brightest students of many nations, even of original thinkers, i.e. the ones who dare to think outside of the box. Based on **The Power of Youth**, NSHSS will seek to develop and implement a new, world betterment program of global scope.

I say to all you good people in this assembly hall, it is my most heartfelt hope that today, as we honor the academic and personal achievements of the 12th grade student Laurel Angelica of Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy, that we are initiating such a new, worldwide youth program. A youth program full of **GOOD NEWS, GOOD WILL, AND GOOD HOPE**. A program that is solidly based upon: common action and common sense for our common future. It is a pragmatic program ... and a grand vision ... that holds the hope of creating a better, safer and saner world than the one we presently have. NSHSS calls this program: **"The Global Youth Action Alliance for World Betterment."**

Laurel Angelica, you are about to receive the Claes Nobel Academic Scholarship, which is established by The National Society of High School Scholars, to assist gifted students in their academic pursuits. Now, let me give the audience a description of your personal profile and remarkable accomplishments.

Laurel has received awards and commendations for outstanding achievement from: President George W. Bush; Governor of California Gray Davis; California Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein; U.S. Congressman from California Adam Schiff; California Senator Jack Scott; California Assemblywoman Carol Lui; Los Angeles County Mayor Michael Antonovich; La Canada Flintridge Mayor Anthony Portantino; and La Canada Unified School Board.

As a 10 year Girl Scout, she has received a Silver Leadership Award, a Silver Award, a Cadette Community Service Award, two Senior Girl Scout Service Awards, a Gold Leadership Award, and, most recently, her Gold Award. To earn her Gold Award, Laurel in her own words, "wanted to find a project that made a truly significant difference, **and there is nothing more important than life itself.**"

She read a newspaper article about a 5-year old child suffering from leukemia. He desperately needed a bone marrow transplant. Through further communication with the American Red Cross, Laurel single-handedly organized and successfully completed a community-wide blood and bone marrow drive.

The Red Cross assisted with staffing but Laurel contacted local newspapers, spoke at church services, spoke at her local elementary school, ran public awareness announcements in church bulletins, and sent out 200 personal letters of appeal. The results were truly impressive: 70 pints of blood were collected out of 100 people who made appointments and, equally impressive, 77 people registered with

the national bone marrow registry to be potential marrow donors. The date for this year's drive has already been selected, and she has made appointments to enlarge the community nature of the drive by arranging to speak at churches in Pasadena, California.

Well, Laurel, I say that is really a very impressive list of recognized accomplishments for a young lady of your age. Remarkable! Quite remarkable! I have only one concern ... and that is that ... when you are my age, then from shoulder to knee you will be decorated with hundred of medals on your dress, and you might then look like a strutting general, parading in the army of North Korea.

Time does not allow me to state the many equally impressive academic and personal interest achievements you have in your life. Some of your passions such as dance and the love and respect for your mother and father touched me deeply when I read your personal profile. And when you really touched my heart and soul was when I read what you said about your mother. You said: "She has been such an inspiration and role model in life. I would be nowhere without her today. She has given me life, love, happiness, but most importantly, she has given undying support and enlightening wisdom". And, when the Assistant Principal of your school states: "Laurel is a winner, a determined, compassionate individual who is determined to make a difference in the world." Well, then I envision clearly the solid cornerstones upon which a new, sustainable society can be built.

I will close my remarks by telling you a story. In June 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Conference On The Human Environment I delivered, in Flamengo Park, a keynote address to thousands of representatives of the Non Governmental Organizations of the world. Then, immediately after the speech, I met a wise, holy man from India. The white robed, bearded sage was an Acharya. I said to him: "Your Holiness, kindly tell me is there hope for the world?" The Acharya said: "Mr. Nobel, sit down here on the bench next to me and let me share some of these grapes with you."

The holy man then handed me two huge, purple plums, the best plums I have ever had. I still can recollect their sweetness and texture. Then, without rush and with great patience, as the beehive activity of thousands of environmentalists and NGO people from all corners of the world were buzzing around us, he said: "Mr. Nobel, your question I will answer by telling you a fable from India."

This is what the Acharya said:

"When God had finished creating the Earth, he was very proud and he was very happy ... because, Earth, floating like a blue pearl in space, was His finest creation in the Universe. And, planet Earth harbored **The Miracle of Life**. God decided to give a party. It would be a big party, where only the best of food and the finest of wine would be served. Nectar and ambrosia should flow freely from the horn of cornucopia. He invited all the angels and all the devils to come to his celestial celebration.

As the festivity started God said: "I am glad you all are here. I want each and every one of you to have a good time. You may eat and drink as much as you want. But, there is one rule I give ... and that rule you may not break." "My rule is: During this banquet you may never bend your elbow."

In hearing that ... the devils stood up and shouted: "That is outrageous ... with that stupid rule how can we eat and drink ... we don't want to be here." And, all the devils left ... and then ... the party started. Then the angels were drinking, the angels were eating and laughing ... they had a jolly good time. And our dear God ... He was smiling ... He was very happy. But how could this be? Were the angels breaking the Law of God? No, no, no, ... the moral of the fable is, ... the angels were sharing the food ... they were feeding each other.

Finally, I will close my remarks by telling you about a remarkable meeting that my NSHSS colleagues and I had last night in Los Angeles. We met with Douglas Ivanovich, one of the foremost

original thinkers of our times. He read a brief essay of his, called: “*You Can Change The World.*” It goes like this:

“I write this note to my six billion friends ... I thought of you all this morning. What is it you are doing today? Can some of you spare a little time? How about if you drop whatever you’re doing and go out and ... transform the world. I know you think you can’t ... but I know that you can. What if Buddha or Jesus or Mohammed thought that way ... or Beethoven, Einstein, or Pasteur? What you need is a dose of inspiration ... your hands and feet will do the rest.

You see in your heart of hearts, there’s a secret source of power that’s just waiting to transform the world. Today throw off notions of limitation ... throw off your invisible chains. Let the spirit lead today. You might start a peaceful revolution ... for the awakening of six billion souls. You might start teaching by example and not by wars and warring words.

Try sitting in heavenly silence ... and your breath might just transform the world. Try walking around in a state of pure love ... your presence will do the rest. You might plant a few seeds in the most fertile ground ... in the minds and hearts of our children and youth. What are you waiting for? Don’t sit around just listening to me. Do something today in your own special way. Fire up imagination ... you know what it’s for. Transforming a world ... is most sacred among deeds ... it begins as a tiny idea.

Imagine it ... then act on it ... again and again and again. Who’s to say what you can or can’t do? Even great achievements come from modest beginnings ... and besides ... our universe can’t resist a virtuous dream. Find a quiet moment, and set your intention ... and already you’ve changed the world.”

And now, with both the “Angel Fable” and Mr. Ivanovich’s eloquent essay fresh in mind I would like to ask Sister Celeste and Laurel Angelica to come up here to the podium for the presentation of the Claes Nobel Academic Scholarship.

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NSHSS, C.N. Scholarship # 1. Amount: \$5,000
 Student: Miss Laurel Angelica. Grade: 12th. Age: 18
 Date: Monday, February 24, 2003.
 Time: 11:50 am to 12:40 pm
 School: Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy
 Address: 440 St. Katherine Drive, La Canada Flintridge, CA 910011
 Tel: 626-685-8333
 Contacts: Sister Celeste Marie Botello, Principal
 Mrs. Katy Sadler, Assistant Principal