



My friends, I am delighted to join you tonight. I was surprised and humbled by the invitation to speak with you tonight—but in many ways my experience this year with the basketball team has been a humbling surprise for me. Being with them, getting to know them, and sharing the “team” experience has been a privilege and in this Easter Season I have no hesitation naming this experience a grace.

Like all good things there is some confusion regarding whose idea it was that I consider greater involvement in athletics. Sandee Hill claims the idea was mine. My memory is that the suggestion came from her. We may never know!

I would like to take a moment tonight and share with you some of my experiences and reflections after this year with the basketball team. I think you might find the reflections of administrator—nearly a novice when it comes to athletics. My reflections might help you to better understand your faculty and other members of the University community whose experience often resembles mine more than yours.

Do not fear that I will go on endlessly. I often tell people that I do not share one Jesuit trait—the ability, or at least willingness, to talk at length regarding subjects of which they have no knowledge. And then, preparing for tonight, my boss, Doctor Jim Wisner, ever encouraging, reminded me that there is no such thing as a bad, short talk.

One of the things I discovered this year is that many of you, like me, were tracked early in our lives. I learned that many of you were well on your way toward developing your considerable athletic skills by grade school.

My high school experience, in an all boys Jesuit high school of just over 400, concentrated on a college prep academic program. As at most Jesuit schools of that day—football, basketball and baseball were the sports on center stage.

After high school, my Jesuit experience included mandatory, poorly played, team sports though some of my classmates had played high school sports like Father Lo Schiavo.

By the way Father Lo mentioned to me that he would rather have been here tonight than at the dinner at Loyola House honoring him for his 60 years as a Jesuit.

In my early Jesuit training, balance and a commitment to educating the whole person was not much of a focus. During studies, we jokingly called our life style the “life of the mind”.

When I came back to my Jesuit high school to teach, five years after I graduated, the school was beginning its 3<sup>rd</sup> year as a coeducational institution—combining with two girls schools. It was still in the same place, a location and buildings with which I found

very familiar, but the school was now so much larger and complex. It was a better school in every way. I remember a reference to over 70 teams and activities.

This was my first experience of women's athletics. One of the many new girls' sports was basketball and one of the members of the freshman girl's basketball team was a student in my algebra class. I went to some of their games to show support for her and the team. That player, Laura, her husband Bill, and their son James are here with us tonight.

This somewhat long-winded setup is to help place in context some of my reflections. I wanted to share these reflections with you because I believe that my experience might suggest for you the experiences and attitudes of your faculty, as I suspect most faculty are more likely to have experiences similar to mine and as I discovered this year, might in some ways be quite different from yours.

Tonight I would like to reflect on three aspects of your experience as athletes as I learned about them this year. First, I'd like to comment on your schedules; second, I'll share some of the things that surprised me this year; and third, I'd like to talk for a bit about your role in the University.

Your schedule is hectic. You are all busy people. I now have a new appreciation of how hard it is for you to get everything done. Some of your time commitments I had generally known. I certainly knew that practice and games took a great deal of time. I did underestimate the demands of learning a multiplicity of plays — defenses, strategies and even more the complexities of learning the other team's plays, defenses and strategies. Practice and learning the playbook, I thought I understood.

The time you spend conditioning, watching game tapes, in treatment and taping, learning new approaches, practicing together and developing your individual skills is much more significant than I expected.

From the experience of traveling with you, I now appreciate how little time there is for anything else when traveling and especially on game day. Since I often joined you for meals and for shoot-around, I was shocked at how few hours I had available for my USF work — endless e-mail and voice mail. I now appreciate in a new way how little time you have for anything else.

As if all of these activities were not enough, I know that you also have class work. After being with you, I now appreciate the level of discipline required of you — for athletics and for academic work. Clearly with all of this, during the season there is little time left for life.

Faculty, too, know that it is hard to get everything done. When I was teaching freshman algebra, every Friday each class had a quiz or longer exam. I taught about 70 students in 3 sections. It is not an accident that teachers have exams on Fridays. I soon discovered that if I spent about 20 minutes correcting each student's exam, my weekend was filled

with 23 hours correcting student work. Most of us spent 2-3 hours preparing for 1 hour of class time so most evenings were full as well. And many of us, still being greedy, wanted a few hours off on the weekend too.

As you have worked for many years, at great sacrifice, to develop your athletic skills, faculty have sacrificed much to prepare themselves for their roles. And in addition to teaching, the University has research and service expectations for faculty.

As an aside, this year I discovered the demands on coaches and assistants. Much of the work and time commitment, I had expected, I had not anticipated the time required for game strategy, scouting, recruiting, travel and meal planning — not to mention laundry services.

The second part of tonight's reflection is the surprises. Actually, the biggest surprise for me was that I had something to bring to us as a team. I found myself reflecting on and sharing my experience and reflections on the importance of: **Faith, Trust, Teamwork and Confidence.**

The challenges of faith, trust, teamwork and confidence are certainly part of life and not exactly unknown issues to faculty, administrators or Jesuits. I just did not expect that I would be able to bring my experience and those values into this context and that it would help us develop as a team.

The other shock after the season was over was that one of the women said to me—you always say the right thing. I reflected that I did not show how terrified I was that I would say the wrong thing in the midst of this year's challenges and adversity. I learned from Mary, early on, that you do not say — that we played well, hard, or tough after a loss.

Every athlete is different; everyone grieves in her own way. I never knew what to say after a loss-- and after a win it hardly matters what you say. I did learn, from being with you, how to try to encourage you, (each woman uniqueness requiring a different approach), how to be with you in adversity. As I noted earlier, it's quite easy to be with you when we are winning.

Finally, we move on to my third point. This discovery is not news to you. More than any of the rest of us, you represent USF to a very wide public. It's obvious to you that you represent the University in competition. When we traveled, I was reminded by watching others watch you, that you always represent USF to everyone you encounter. This is a huge responsibility. People you encounter have an impression of USF based upon their experience of you. This is why your coaches pay such close attention to how you dress when you travel.

Faculty and administrators, too, represent USF and we, too, have to confront public expectations. We know that not all of the expectations are fair or reasonable. As representatives of the University, we are all called to behave in ways that will reflect well

on USF. This responsibility requires that we remember who we are and what we value. Our ideals encourage us to make choices consistent with our values.

Let me conclude tonight with this note of thanks. Thank you for all you do for USF. Thank you for helping us build community; thank you for representing us so well. Please remember that while it is more fun to win — you represent USF in all you do. Please continue to represent our values well.

And celebrate your accomplishments! You have made great sacrifices and accomplished a great deal, individually and as teams. And know that you, too, have a critically important role in USF's mission to educate "minds and hearts to change the world." Thank you for helping USF to do that better.