

Citation for Sarah Moores Campbell York
Degree of Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa
Commencement Ceremony, June 4, 2006

The following words, specifically appropriate for our graduates today, were written by the Rev. Sarah York, candidate for the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

In the tomb of the soul, we carry secret yearnings, pains, frustrations,
loneliness, fears, regrets, worries.

In the tomb of the soul, we take refuge from the world and its heaviness.

In the tomb of the soul, we wrap ourselves in the security of darkness.

Sometimes this is a comfort. Sometimes it is an escape.

Sometimes it prepares us for experience. Sometimes it insulates us from life.

Sometimes this tomb-life gives us time to feel the pain of the world and
reach out to heal others. Sometimes it numbs us and locks us up with
our own concerns.

In this season where light and dark balance the day, we seek balance for
ourselves.

Grateful for the darkness that has nourished us, we push away the stone and
invite the light to awaken us to the possibilities within us and among us –
possibilities for new life in ourselves and in our world.

If these words seem familiar, it is because they are printed as part of the wealth of poetry in our hymnal, “Singing the Living Tradition.” It is indeed appropriate to be reminded by these words of “possibilities for new life” as you, graduates, take a bold step into your future. It is indeed an honor to be reminded of these possibilities by a Unitarian Universalist minister of such distinction and achievement as Sarah York.

As a professional pastor, the Rev. Dr. York has served the cause of liberal religion for over twenty years in calls as diverse as California and Massachusetts, Florida and New York, Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina here in the States, and in London in Great Britain. In the larger world of Unitarian Universalism she has delivered the sermon at the Service of the Living Tradition at

General Assembly and was elected Vice President of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association. She has won the respect and admiration of her colleagues around the world as an exemplary preacher and workshop designer and presenter.

As an author and cultural contributor, Ms. York has a fine, aesthetic ability to bring humor, compassion and conviction to topics as ponderous as death, grief and xenophobia. She speaks with an engaged style and empathetic presence. Drawing from the poignancy of real life, the subjects of her publications are impressive:

- *Into the Wildness and Remembering Well: Rituals for Celebrating Life and Mourning Death*, in 2000
- *Pilgrim Heart: The Inner Journey Home*, in 2001
- *The Holy Intimacy of Strangers*, in 2002.

She has also published numerous articles in journals, books, newspapers and magazines, focusing on topics of social controversy, ethical concerns and spiritual meaning. This year the Rev. Dr. York is serving as interim senior minister in our Eno River congregation in Durham, North Carolina, and keeps her regular hearth warm in a mountain home near Asheville, North Carolina.