BACCALAUREATE PRAYER

May 31, 1974
The Rev. H. Paul Santmire

Let us pray.

0 most merciful God, fountain of all goodness and freedom, we raise our voice before you now in frail petition, seeking anew your blessing and your liberation, as we remember our past and hope toward our future.

Bless us, 0 God, as we see today the goodness you have poured down upon us, here and there, in many ways, these past four years. We thank you for the friend we discovered late at night when we knocked on her door to turn down her Hi-Fi. We thank you for that memorable, scintillating paper in which we suddenly discovered the deep excitements of learning, grade or no grade. We praise you for those teachers who went out of their way to befriend us as persons. We laud you, 0 for the mystical aroma of that one Spring evening when we paused, as for the first time, to look at the stars and to dream dreams for our own future. Bless us, 0 God, as we seek anew this day the goodness you have poured over us, here and there, in many ways, all the days of our life.

Liberate us anew, 0 God, as we see the challenges you now place before us. Help us to celebrate the vitalities of our bodies everyday, in a time when social forces threaten to reduce us to things. Help us constantly to renew our minds, in a time when profound reason is sacrificed daily at the altar of expediency and political gain. Show us how to free ourselves, now and in the days to come, from those destructive mind-sets which we have consciously rejected, but which somehow return to haunt us: dissipate any unconscious scorn for persons with different skin colors; overcome any subtle tendencies to comply with oppressive sex roles; transform any unthinking habits of indifference to politics and social justice. Especially, Lord we petition you to liberate those of us who are liberals; remind us ever and again that you require deeds as well as words, new patterns of behavior as well as continued expressions of principle. Liberate us all, 0 God, as we seek anew this day the freedom you have given us, here and there, in many ways, all the days of our life.

Bless us, 0 God, -- liberate us. Today, and every day, — as we go forth from this place celebrating your goodness and rejoicing in your freedom, — not by any merit or worthiness in us, but solely for your mercy's sake. Amen.