

Cheyenne Boon:

Good morning.

Congregation.:

Good morning.

Cheyenne Boon:

And welcome to morning prayers. Today's service will begin with a responsive reading from the black Appleton psalter book, Psalm number 90, found on page 45. Please rise in body or spirits to read responsively by whole verse.

Cheyenne Boon:

Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another.

Congregation:

Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born, from age to age you are God.

Cheyenne Boon:

You turn us back to the dust and say, "Go back O child of earth."

Congregation:

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday. When it is passed and like a watch in the night.

Cheyenne Boon:

You sweep us away like a dream; we fade away suddenly like the grass.

Congregation:

In the morning it is green and flourishing; in the evening it is dried up and withered.

Cheyenne Boon:

When you are angry, all our days are gone. We bring our years to an end like a sigh.

Congregation:

The span of our life is 70 years, perhaps in strength, even 80; yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and we are gone.

Cheyenne Boon:

Who regards the power of your wrath? Who rightly fears your indignation?

Congregation:

So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Choir:

(singing)

Hector Arroyo De La Paz:

Hello everyone. My name is Hector Arroyo De La Paz, I'm a proud first generation student at Harvard Divinity School, studying religion, politics, and education. I'm honored to speak on Memorial Church, and share this beautiful morning with you all. I want to start by reciting some words from Philippians, Chapter two, verse three and four. "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, count others more significant than yourself. Let each of you look not only to this own interest, but also to the interest of others."

Growing up, one of my favorite pastimes was day dreaming, particularly, about the future. Whether I was on my walk to school, sitting in class, or laying in bed, I would imagine different scenarios in my head of what I would be doing in 20 years. These visions often change. Sometimes I would be a doctor, sometimes a race car driver, and at others, an engineer. I was never quite sure of what I wanted to be, but one thing that I was certain, was my desire to go to college. My parents always stressed the importance of an education, seeing it as a powerful tool for consciousness raising, liberation, and outward mobility. I agreed. I also knew that they, themselves, did not have the opportunity to pursue a college education, nor complete secondary school. I knew I wanted to go to college, not only for myself, but for my parents, whose courage and hard work inspired and strengthened me.

It was my dream, albeit one, that at times, felt out of reach, due to my undocumented status. Today, I am a first generation college graduate, and a second year graduate student at Harvard. I am so far from what I hope to achieve and the change I wish to make, but where I am now, would be incomprehensible to 10 year old me. People like me often say, we are our ancestors' wildest dreams. I agree. But also, I think I am living my own wildest dream. With that said, however, I reflect on my presence at this institution. To some, my presence is groundbreaking and a symbol of representation, adding to the diversity of this campus, and demonstrating that people like me, the first generation, the low income, and the undocumented, are capable of being here. However, what is representation without intent? Is my presence truly groundbreaking, when there have been others like me who have walked on this campus before? And is it truly groundbreaking, if I simply arrive, earn my degree and go?

The answer is that my presence is powerful and it can be groundbreaking, but only if I choose to make it so. If I choose to use the education and exposure given to me for good, to empower, support, and give back to the communities that have raised me, to work to dismantle inequitable institutional structures, and develop greater resources and accessibility, so others too, get to live their own wildest dreams, and for these dreams to, one day, not even be considered wild. This is the representation I wish to provide, and what I believe to be my calling from God.

I may not have become a doctor, a race car driver, nor an engineer, but I became an educator; an educator that is devoted to his community, and dreams of change and progress. May this inspire you to reflect on your own journey, passions, calling, and intent. May we achieve our goals, but also work together to uplift those around us, leave them up the ladder from which we climb, and share seat and feast at the same table. Thank you.

Cheyenne Boon:

If you would please rise in body or spirits. And let us pray. Ever living God who calls us to live in right relationship with all of our neighbors, help us to see your face in everyone we meet, in the land, and the sky, and the wind, and the water. Grant us thy peace. Grant us thy peace. Grant us thy peace. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Cheyenne Boon/Congregation:

And together, let us recite the prayer that Jesus taught us. Saying, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Cheyenne Boon:

Let us sing, All My Hope on God is Founded, number 277 in your crimson Harvard hymnal.

Chongregation:

(singing)

Cheyenne Boon:

As we go into this day, let us bless and keep one another. Let us make peace. Let us be at peace. May it be so, and may the church say, amen.

Congregation:

Amen.