Prayers for the graduating class of 2020
Composed and read by Brian Frelix

God of heaven and earth,
We come before your throne of grace with an attitude of gratitude and a spirit of praise.
Today, we ask your blessings as we become new members of the Schola Prophetarum.
As the first chapter of our vocation begins, we ask to be endowed with the gift of agency against the landscape of a global pandemic.
We pray that this agency brings: Hope, during challenging times. Courage, to stay the course in times of fear. Strength, in the presence of the shadow of doubt. And wisdom, to remain in the spirit of the bond of love and compassion.
We are grateful for both the journey and the time we spent at Vanderbilt Divinity School. We record these glorious days in the journals of our hearts, as a celebration of achievement, and as a milestone of your steadfast love for us. We pray that this day be filled with times of laughter, times of joyful tears, times of reflection, and times of cheer.
It is therefore that we are ever reminded of the eternal words of the great philosopher Soren Kierkagaard when he stated “Life can only be understood backwards, but must be lived forwards.” So God, grant us the understanding to look back on this day, and by doing so, be encouraged to move forward with determination and zeal. Honoring with all gravity, the education we most gladly received from this great institution.
And Now, as we go beyond these walls, Let us be brave. Let us be strong. Let us hold justice as a beacon of light to shine forevermore. And as our prophetic vision illuminates the earth we pray that even the darkness which hides within ourselves be a testament of change in the world. God, we pray your blessings upon the class of 2020. Amen.

A Prayer for the graduates
Composed and read by Elizabeth Welliver

Holy Mystery, God of Wonder,
We give thanks for the gift of our theological education, and for those who have accompanied us on this journey.
We give you thanks for the gifts of creation, and the web of life in which we are all connected and sustained.
We give you thanks for our ancestors who have planted the seeds of our being and vision for our lives.
We give you thanks for our loved ones, our relatives and our chosen families, who have held us and reminded us that we are called.
We give you thanks for our spiritual mentors and movement elders who have nurtured our sense of calling and shaped our posture toward the world.
We give you thanks for our professors and teaching assistants, for teaching us to love the questions that we hold and to pursue knowledge with curiosity and courage.
We give you thanks for our deans and staff members, for their hospitality, commitment, and advocacy on our behalf.
We thank you for Dean Townes, for her ethical leadership and guidance to work for liberation with all of our being.
We thank you for our alumni who have shone the light on the path before us. We thank you for our colleagues who have walked the path beside us.
We thank you for our donors and supporters, and pray to steward their gifts faithfully with our lives.
We pray for your blessing upon the University and its mission of service to the community and society. We pray for the incoming Chancellor and his wisdom in the course of these times.
We pray for the health and safety of all essential workers, for our maintenance, dining, and ground team members, and for medical personnel who have kept our campus safe. Finally we pray for your blessing upon the Divinity School and its mission to prepare us for our vocation in ministry, in all its many forms.
Give us the humility and courage to honor the particularity of each tradition that constitutes the fabric of our community.
Send your Spirit upon all who are congreagted here, that we may be a sign of your grace to the world. Fashion our lives according to your love in the heart of all creation. I pray out of the silence, and the beauty that is your name. Amen.