

**Commencement 2021**  
**Iliff School of Theology**  
**June 3, 2021**

**Rev. Dr. Thomas V. Wolfe**  
**President and CEO**  
**Iliff School of Theology**

### **Welcome**

Thank you for that wonderful opening. We are a circle...

Welcome to the 116<sup>th</sup> Annual Commencement of the Iliff School of Theology. Let me begin by telling you how beautiful you all look. You are wonderful. And welcome to your families and all who have gathered for this celebration. I congratulate each of you who have done the work, completed your degree, and will, in a few moments, have it conferred upon you. We celebrate with you this wonderful accomplishment. I also congratulate the faculty, staff, and trustees of our beloved school. In their own distinct ways, they pour out their gifts into our student's lives. Our institutional aspirations are summed up on this day. It is what every person related to this school works toward. Our graduates are our most significant gift to the world.

I bring a special welcome to the families, partners, and friends who have been traveling along with your loved one through this academic journey. Marilyn and I know what that means to support each other in this journey. So we feel it with you. We are grateful for your presence today and your support throughout.

Again, this year, we gather virtually, out of an abundance of caution. We celebrate that Iliff will be able to open its building in the fall. I am grateful for the willingness and wisdom of the Iliff community to

embrace safety first and, at the same time, perform the functions of the school to fully complete the year so we can have things like this, a commencement ceremony.

While our nation is seeing the signs of coming through the pandemic, we must remember that this is not true everywhere and for everyone. Access to vaccines is not equally distributed across our globe. Nationalism, border disputes, discrimination toward communities, inequity of economics interrupt the recovery of the global human family from this virus. May this reality sensitize our awareness that our neighbor is not just next door, but everywhere there is life. No one is safe, unless we are all safe.

May this commencement, like all of our work at this school, dare to place the pain of the world at its center. And may any accomplishment that we celebrate, be offered up as confirmation of our deepest vocations. May we all be fully alive to the meaning and rich potential that this day represents. So again, to all of you, graduates, friends of graduates, family of graduates, partners of graduates, welcome.

Blessings to each of you.