

Ana F. '21

Ring Speech, Mercy Day/Ring Day 2020

You are the royal heir to the throne. You have prepared and studied for years about how to become the perfect queen, and now, this is your moment. You walk into the grand, ornately decorated chamber, all eyes falling upon you as you gracefully stride down the long aisle. You think: *What* is my purpose? You arrive and turn facing your people, whose unspoken hopes and expectations become more a clear reality. Everyone smiles proudly and applauds, but there is nothing but one persisting thought in mind: What is *my* purpose? You slowly stretch out your hand, which is then crowned by a tiny halo of gold and scarlet, the seeming pinnacle of your youth. And yet, this initiation does not answer the question: What is my *purpose*?

As queens, that halo of gold and scarlet for us is our Mercy ring, our crown. Have we not prepared and studied semester after semester to fully earn what we have received today? I wish the correct answer would be, “I feel as if this ring represents eternal unity between us Mercy sisters, and that my ring is now an irreplaceable part of me.” No. Rings have not united us, love did. God did. Each ring, rather, represents an *individual* journey, unique to the story of she who wears it. I look down at my ring and am pulled into a deeper reality. With the regal gold I now carry on my finger a burden is carried along with it. We often admire the beauty that comes with a monarch’s elegant crown, but the physical weight inflicted on their head is a symbol of responsibility. I look down at my ring with almost an intimidation because it reflects an almost bittersweet calling. “Well, what are you going to do with yourself now that you have me?”, my ring asks. That is precisely where the idea of purpose comes in.

After three full years at Mercy, I have learned that I may not be aware of my life's purpose at the moment, and that's ok. I am struggling unsuccessfully to understand what God has in store for me, and that's ok. What I do know is that purpose is there for me—no—it's *here*. Recounting the moments of failures and frustration in class, I realize my little halo of gold and scarlet was there with me the whole time. Its grooves and edges prove that. On this day in which undoubtedly all seniors feel like royalty, I am reminded that while queens and kings will inevitably lose a few battles, what matters is that they stand back up and grow from those tribulations.

There is purpose to the tribulations cast upon our world this year. On Ring Day 2020, my ring shines a message to transform every trial into an experience, every stumbling block into a steppingstone. This calls us to never simply take the easy way out, whatever that may signify. Chadwick Bozeman, a man that lived a short but “king-like” life in his own example of filmmaking, once said that “if you are willing to take the harder way, the more complicated one, the one with more failures at first than successes, the one that has ultimately proven to have more meaning, more victory, more glory, *then you will not regret it.*” Deep inside, those exact words, along with my little crown, beam together in harmony. Yes, each individual ring symbolizes a mission that has only begun, echoing, “you are here for a reason and you matter”. That familiar voice is calling me to not only cherish every moment of my time as a high school student, but also to never forget to look at the bigger picture.

Bozeman also asserted: “When God has something for you, it doesn't matter who stands against it”. He silently endured what seemed to be unbearable pain, but he regally lived his life regally with the goal of seeking profound purpose. Knowing this, my own ring has metamorphosized into a *hopeful* message of purpose that radiates

pricelessness just like a queen's royal crown. As I look down at my senior ring, I am flooded by the idea of a bigger picture that I cannot quite put my finger on yet. That can be scary, but I then remember that it isn't the heir to the throne that crowns *herself*. Therefore, that "royal burden" is made light. My ring, my halo of gold and scarlet, taught me that it is not I that have to know exactly my life's purpose, but God, in Whose hands lie all things.