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# A Preface

"Alas! The fleeting years slip by." Thus the classical Roman poet, Horace, reminds us of the swift and unrecalable passage of time. But the memories and impressions of passing years, especially those very formative ones which are spent in college—these must linger with us for the rest of our lives. Now we are faced with the task of cramming these memories into one brief moment of reflection.

At our birth that autumn, we cried out with the psalmist, "How long, O Lord? How long?" And our answer came back—"Four years long." And we faced it with the pessimism with which nature faced the long barren winter ahead. During these four years we would witness and mourn the death of ideas within which we were once so warm.

Safe in your presence you hide them  
far from the wiles of men;  
inside your tent you shelter them  
far from the war of tongues!

(Psalm 31)

We would have our resurrection. Our lives would blossom full with the growth within our minds and hearts of the Spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. His was not a philosophy corruptable and ephemeral as others. His was a genuine "spirit" built on the inevitability of nature and people and the myriad character of their ways. What better way to train for the experiences of the world, experiences of people, than to foster this great "spirit" in a strong personalist atmosphere? What more maturing philosophy is worthy to fill the gaping crevasses of the forsaken ideals of youth?

Along with this growth of spirit we have seen another kind of growth; the physical growth of Saint Francis College. The "Design for Greatness" immediately seems to threaten the humility of our new "spirit." But soon we understand. And although we will not see this flower in full bloom, ours will have been the experience of its growth, the sounds of the hard steel and concrete of construction remaining so ever-present to us.

Now we are at the end of the spring. At our commencement, our feelings are feeble for those who will begin their autumn facing the bronze doors to which we, not unaffected by the experience, now turn our backs. St. Francis, his hands still bleeding love, stoops to gently cut the new flowers of his spirit, now in their last stages. He will bring them to adorn the great marketplace.

This has been our moment of reflection—and anticipation. We will probably find cause to do it again in different circumstances and for different reasons as the stages of our lives unfold. But we will never remember as we now remember. This is our first remembering—a fresh remembering, mingled with the hope that, as Milton said, "Time will run back, and fetch the Age of Gold."

