

HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership's 2024 Class

Thomas G. Walsh
May 25, 2024



On Saturday, May 25, 2024, HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership (HJI) held its 48th Commencement in New York City to celebrate the class of 2024.

Special remarks were offered by Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Member of the Board of Trustees and Chair, World Christian Leadership Conference (WCLC), followed by Rev. Demian Dunkley, Member of the Board of Trustees, and Chairman and President, Family Federation USA.

In recognition for his international diplomacy and advocacy for peace, the Doctor of Humane Letters was awarded to Ambassador Joseph DeTrani, former Special Envoy to the Six Party Talks with North Korea. Ambassador DeTrani also delivered the Commencement Address.

Ambassador DeTrani addressed various global challenges and stated:



"...with your education and training, coupled with your determination to help bring peace and stability to so many people affected by some of these critical issues, it requires a POSITIVE attitude that progress can be achieved; that you can make a difference; that you should never give up on HOPE - hope that many of these seemingly intractable issues can and will be resolved[.]



"North Korea is just one example of the many issues that all of you - all of us - must work diligently on to ensure that we start to move the world in a different direction. A direction toward more diplomacy, more negotiations for peace, more cooperation on pandemics, climate change, narcotics trafficking, international organized crime, nuclear proliferations, food insecurity, - the list goes on and on.



"Stop the wars in Ukraine and Gaza and the myriad of other conflicts throughout the world and move the world in another direction. That is what leadership is all about - bringing the world together for the betterment of all people."

Ambassador DeTrani concluded, "You will join the ranks of the ambassadors for peace. Much will depend on all of you to move us in this direction, for the common good. Leaving a better world for future generations."

The class of 2024 was represented by 23 graduates. In his congratulatory remarks, Dr. Thomas Walsh, President, shared that in a recent speech given by HJI Co-Founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon in Munich Germany on May 19, she discussed that we are living in a Golden Age. "[Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon]

explained we live in a time where it is possible to overcome all the obstacles to peace[.] It is the best of times to overcome and solve the worst of times[.] So if you want to change the world you are here at HJI at the right time and at the right place.

"You graduate today not only as holders of a prestigious graduate degree but also as persons of spiritual insight and wisdom needed to discern and navigate successfully through the competing social-cultural-spiritual currents of today's world."



Dr. Walsh continued by sharing a quote from Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's memoir, *The Mother of Peace*, "The purpose of all these schools [including HJI], is to ensure increasing numbers of talented young people who know God's heart have access to education to support their commitment to creating a peaceful world." He concluded "Onward and upward, let's work together to fulfill the hope of all the ages - a world of lasting peace, one family under God, our Heavenly parent."

The class of 2024 graduate responses were delivered by Ms. Bruna Allen, representing students in the MA in Religious Studies and Mr. John Koester on behalf of students in the MA in Peace Studies. Doctor of Ministry recipients were represented by Ms. Silvana Colmenares.

Following the conferring of degrees and the graduate responses, six students were inducted into Theta Alpha Kappa, the national honor society for the field of religious studies, by Dr. Thomas Ward, Provost.

Mr. John Koester was presented with the Distinguished Service Award. The Public Leadership Award was presented to Mr. Man Ho Woo.

Congratulations to the class of 2024!

