

**Chicago Theological Seminary  
New Building Dedication Ceremony  
October 21, 2011**

**A charge by:  
*Esther Baruja* (M.Div. '13)**

As a student in the CTS Master of Divinity program, I speak today on behalf of all students and all graduates of Chicago Theological Seminary. As I do so I also speak from my distinctive social location—as a person from the global south and the country of Paraguay; as a lesbian who has suffered rejection at the hands of a conservative denomination for which I was serving as a missionary and who has found life and love and joy in a marriage now recognized through weddings in Argentina and Chicago. I speak as one who will carry on the mission and vision of our school for many years and across borders of all kinds—national, denominational, cultural, sexual and on and on.

So, CTS, I charge you to remain true to the mission, vision and statement of commitments that brought me and so many others to your doors. Remain the kind of place to which those with a passion for justice and holy impatience with the-way-things-are will come to study, to learn and to teach, to serve and to lead.

Further, I charge you to honor the efforts of students—the experience we bring, the sacrifices we make to pursue our studies, the wisdom we offer as we research and write, as we preach and teach, as we comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. We are grateful for what we learn but also have much to teach. We seek to partner with faculty, staff and administration in shaping the CTS of the future—but to do that we need to be at the tables where decisions are made.

And finally, I charge you to remain accountable to graduates. We depend on what you do in the present to validate our degrees. We do not want to come from a place that once was great. We do not want to come from a place that has lost its way—or its soul. We will not abandon you. Do not abandon us. Be true, be vulnerable, be the CTS with which we have fallen in love—and, even, become yet more than that!

Thank you.