

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Archbishop, distinguished guests, staff, fellow graduands, family and friends.

A PhD gave me the chance to wrestle deeply with significant questions: “given that the church confesses that Jesus is fully human and fully divine, why did Jesus worship?” And what does that mean for how we understand worship itself? Is it merely a human activity towards the divine, or is something much bigger going on?

To explore that, I turned to the world of drama. With that framework in mind, I saw Jesus, the worshipper, as an actor revealing his divine and human character on the stage of the world through performance. In his worship, I argued, we see God worshipping—Father, Son, and Mother Spirit giving and receiving glory one to another. Remarkably, God makes an offer for us to join in this eternal glorification.

I use the term “offer” in a dramatic sense. When improvising, actors make “offers” to one another and the key to keeping the story going is to respond with a “yes, and.” To respond with a “no”, or even a “yes, but”, halts creative engagement with the story that has come before. So, the best response to the offer of joining in God’s eternal glorification is “yes, and”—not just receiving the offer but acting on it, becoming engaged performers in God’s theo-drama. For me, this changed worship completely, and that’s what good theological education should do: transform you, reshape you, and redefine how you act in the world.

You’ve just received a piece of paper that symbolizes hard work and achievement—something of which you can be proud. But I suggest it can be so much more: an “offer” to improvise an, as yet, unscripted future. You could say “no” to that offer, file that paper away, and move on with your life. You could say “yes, but”; hang it on your wall, but who you are and how you act remains unchanged. Or you could say “yes, and,” recognizing that this achievement has transformed you, reshaped you, and redefined how you act in the world. Embrace this transformation, step onto the stage of the world as a different performer and seize every opportunity that comes your way. The kingdom of God is waiting for you to perform your part.

Congratulations to all of you.

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**Dr Adam Nicholas Couchman, PhD 2025**

