



**Admiral James M. Loy**

“The Constant Quest for Integrity”  
U. S. Coast Guard Academy

**January 17, 2002**

Amenities:

Thank you, Sarah [Salazar, Regimental Commander]. It’s good to be home. This is about the first day off I’ve had for a long while, and there’s no place I’d rather spend it. Fly in mid-morning...3 sets of tennis...Z-Burgers for lunch...carouse in the Superintendent’s office for a while...and now this! If this is a typical day here, I might just trade jobs with Rear Admiral Olsen for my last four-and-a-half months!

How many of you know who Bill Watterson is? How many have read the comic strip, “Calvin and Hobbes?” Bill Watterson is the cartoonist. There was a great story in yesterday’s *Investor Business Daily* about Mr. Watterson. Let me read a couple of paragraphs to you.

“Bill Watterson and his bosses at Universal Press Syndicate were at each other’s throats. Watterson’s ‘Calvin and Hobbes’ comic strip had grown into one of the most popular cartoons in decades. When the two sides came together to negotiate contract terms, the conversation quickly turned to money.

“This wasn’t surprising. Other cartoonists before him had gotten tough with their employers. They demanded more exposure, more fame, more money.

“But Watterson held his ground. He insisted Universal abide by his wishes. He’d quit if necessary. His wishes were clear: He wouldn’t license “Calvin and Hobbes” for commercial use, no matter what. More exposure, more fame, more money; he wanted none of it, thanks.

“In a profession where newspapers, syndicates, fans and critics can tug you in every direction, Watterson has clung tightly to his principles. One of his most vital tenets: Preserve the integrity of his characters at all costs. If that means clashing with the whole world at times and giving up millions of dollars, so be it.”

He preserved the integrity of his work at all costs.

That’s what I want to talk to all of you about on this my last scheduled opportunity to speak to you about leadership.

Introduction:

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First, a bit of history.

“A few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports, might at a small expense be made useful sentinels of the laws.”

—Publius  
The Federalist Papers (No. 12)  
The New York Packet  
November 27, 1787

That’s the date we were conceived. Three years later, we were born as a service on August 4, 1790. That was the day this notion of Alexander Hamilton’s came alive.

A few armed vessels—sentinels of the laws.

Never in our history as a nation has the circle of time been more complete. As I stand here before you, our sentinels are judiciously stationed at the entrances to our ports...another chapter being written of the ever-changing challenges we face as a Coast Guard in service to our nation.

Nimbleness, agility, adaptability...the attributes of a multi-missioned organization that is proving once again its value to America. Such an organization requires leaders with the same traits. This auditorium is filled with them...yesterday’s, today’s, and tomorrow’s.

What an incredible adventure to be part of. We are truly blessed!

My good friend General Jim Jones, Commandant of that other small, armed service, told us this yarn about the adventures of the USS *Constitution* at the CG Ball in Washington last fall.

On 23 August, 1779, the USS *Constitution* set sail from Boston, loaded with 475 officers and men; 48,600 gallons of water; 74,000 cannon shot; 11,500 pounds of black powder...and 79,400 gallons of rum.

Her mission: to harass and destroy English shipping.

On 6 October, she made Jamaica, took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,300 gallons of rum. Three weeks later, the *Constitution* reached the Azores, where she provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 6,300 gallons of Portuguese wine.

On 18 November, she set sail for England where her crew captured and scuttled 12 English merchant vessels and took aboard...their rum.

By this time, the ship had run out of shot. Nevertheless, she made her way unarmed up the Firth of Clyde for a night raid. Here, her landing party captured a whiskey distillery, and transferred 40,000 gallons aboard and headed for home.

On 20 February, 1780, the *Constitution* arrived home in Boston with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, no rum, and no whiskey. She did, however, still carry her crew of 475 officers and men and 48,600 gallons of water.

The math is quite enlightening...Length of cruise: 181 days...Booze consumption: 2.26 gallons per man per day—this does not include the unknown quantity of rum captured from 12 English merchant vessels.

Historians guesstimate the re-enlistment rate from this cruise at 100%!

It also marks the last time the Navy was awarded the EPA Gold Certificate for water conservation.

I'm further reminded of the story of a luckless ship's captain who unfortunately found himself in the water after his ship sank in a storm. (If the ship sank, this must be another Navy story!) As it so happens, the captain was clinging fiercely to a piece of flotsam along with the chief boatswain's mate.

After assessing the situation for a few minutes together in silence, the captain glanced over and said, "Chief, I hope the men don't see me like this...I can't really swim." The chief raised an eyebrow and said, "Well, Sir...I sure hope they don't see me, either. I can't really walk on water!"

Captains and Chiefs, long deployments, and in-extremis situations...useful sentinels of the laws. What holds it all together?

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The Question of Integrity:

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Last month, two prominent men in the world of sports lost very visible positions of leadership as highly esteemed coaches. Both of these men were by all accounts effective leaders.

Just five days after the tremendous fanfare that surrounded his hiring as the head coach of the Fighting Irish, George O'Leary resigned his position, amidst some very public revelations that he had lied about his private educational and athletic background many years before. When he announced O'Leary's resignation, Notre Dame's athletic director Kevin White said, "I understand these inaccuracies represent a human failing; nonetheless, they constitute a breach of trust that makes it impossible for us to go forward with our relationship."

Understand carefully...a personal breach...an organizational standard unmet.

Dan Issel was an all-time leading scorer for the Denver Nuggets, and one of just four players to have his number retired by the team. He recently ended his 25-year relationship with the team when he resigned his position as head coach and team president of the Nuggets. He stepped down two weeks after shouting an insensitive racial remark at a fan, who heckled him as he headed to the locker room after a game. A local

television crew happened to record the slur. It was aired publicly on the local and national sports programs. An angry public then demanded his resignation.

A personal breach...a public standard violated.

My purpose in relating these two unfortunate incidents to you is not to heap scorn on these men. They have suffered enough.

Instead, I would like us to learn something from their individual failings, which might appear to be quite different on the surface. One man perpetuated a lie to keep a secret over a period of years. The other said what was really on his mind in the heat of the moment.

On closer examination, I suggest to you that the failings of these men actually were very similar. They lacked something in common that no leader can afford to be without.

General Dwight Eisenhower once said, "The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office."

#### Defining Integrity:

When I say these men lacked integrity, I do not mean that they couldn't tell the truth. And I don't mean to say that they were underhanded, or that they had some inherent moral flaw that the rest of us good folk are immune to. Indeed, we all suffer from a lack of integrity to some degree—if we are truly honest about our human condition.

What I do mean by integrity is a more comprehensive understanding of the word, rather than simple honesty, as most people think it's defined.

I want you to understand that organizational integrity produced the standard that Notre Dame demanded be met. I want you to understand that organizational integrity can be more than the sum of the integrity levels of the individual members of an organization. I want you to understand that once an organization reaches such a level, its integrity actually becomes a sustained standard that its members must stretch to reach. Such momentum is invaluable.

Most importantly, I want you to understand that the Coast Guard is one of these organizations.

What, then, is this broader concept of integrity?

When we talk of ships, we speak of their watertight integrity. When we talk of aircraft or buildings, we speak of their structural integrity. When we talk of engineering or architecture, we speak of the integrity of design.

What do we mean? We are not referring to the honesty of these things.

The word integrity comes from the Latin word for wholeness or completion. It shares the same root as the word *integrate*, which means to combine, unite, or incorporate parts into a complete and undivided whole.

Integrity is a soundness, wholeness, or completeness of being that tends to impart a unity of purpose. As applied to a person's character, integrity is an ancient virtue that seems to have lost its value—broadly speaking—in our modern society. It is time to restore its importance.

As applied to an organization, it's a high calling...a standard of excellence.

A ship is designed to float. When its watertight integrity is damaged, it sinks. An airplane is designed to fly. When its structural integrity is compromised, it crashes. We've all seen what happens to a tall building when its structural integrity is impaired.

As it is with boats and airplanes and buildings, so it is with people and organizations. Everything necessary is there; nothing is there that shouldn't be; and behavior agrees with appearance.

It is from that kind of integrity that true honesty grows, like a strong, healthy tree from solid ground that is fertile, having all the necessary nutrients.

It's kind of what we mean when we say we want to develop "well-rounded leaders." And it's what we mean when we talk about organizational integrity. That's what we should be striving for each day as leaders.

#### The Importance of Integrity to Leadership:

- My guess is none of us will disagree with the general notion that integrity is really important to an organization. And I'm sure we all generally concede to its importance to leadership.

What has become common in recent years, however, is the lack of will to do anything about seeking it until the problem becomes public, as a private crisis erupts. That's the situation that caused George O'Leary and Dan Issel to lose their jobs.

It is in the continual striving for integrity that we build and strengthen the character of our organization and ourselves.

#### Practicing Organizational Integrity:

Let's talk a little more about organizational integrity, and how that virtue applies to the Coast Guard. First, it allows us to continue operating in an unimpaired condition.

It begins with a vision. Every organization should have a vision document and leaders who ensure that it adheres to its vision—to maintain the integrity of the vision. The Coast Guard does:

“The World’s Best Coast Guard...Ready Today...Preparing for Tomorrow.”

The articulated vision of our service comes from a carefully prepared strategic planning document, called *Coast Guard 2020*, that describes the operating environment we expect to face in the year 2020 and specifies the mission profile America will need us to perform.

It anticipated the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, the day the future arrived unannounced. Perhaps nobody could have predicted the timing or severity of that attack, but we knew it was coming, because we had taken the time to look the future square in the face. We said so, boldly and publicly.

From that vision document extends an integrated Family of Plans, which outlines how we intend to close the gap between current and future capabilities—and thereby maintain the integrity of our organization.

Those of you who aspire to senior leadership must become familiar with these documents. All of you should read *Coast Guard 2020*. If you haven’t already, I urge you to do so to understand your role as future leaders in the Coast Guard.

Several years ago, a rigorous analysis of the demands of the future operating environment and our current status quickly revealed a real and growing gap between our capabilities and our mission requirements, and made it absolutely clear to us that we must act immediately in order to ensure that we can continue to operate through 2020 in an unimpaired condition.

Two years ago, I outlined an honest assessment of the lack of readiness in the Coast Guard, which had been revealed by our careful analysis. Some of you may recall that I compared our service to a knife dulled by complacency and over-use. We had begun to confuse willingness with readiness.

Last year, I emphasized the need to continue the transformation of the Coast Guard to ensure its success in meeting the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a transformation through modernization of our assets, our workforce, and our thinking.

The future arrived unannounced on September 11<sup>th</sup> of last year. The transformation that I talked about has occurred since that day sooner, faster, and with greater force than we might have anticipated...but it is still in line with our vision.

I maintain that we must continue that transformation by restoring our readiness and shaping our future, the two pillars of my direction for the past several years. You can’t do one without the other. They are integrated goals. And they are the strength of our integrity as a service.

Our future readiness as a service depends in part on the success of two projects. Equipment will come from the Integrated Deepwater System project. You've heard a lot about Deepwater, and I'm delighted to report that it is on track.

The people will come from Future Force-21. You'll be hearing a lot about FF-21 in coming years. Pay attention! I believe it will revolutionize the way we manage our workforce to match the rapidly changing technology and innovation that we must take advantage of.

By necessity, it will change the degree of specialization in both the officer corps and enlisted ranks. And it will also change somewhat the traditional roles of officers and enlisted members to match what they will actually be required to do.

Talk of change is as unsettling as it is exciting. Ladies and gentlemen, satisfaction with the status quo will never allow us to achieve or maintain the dynamic integrity we want in our service.

We must continually seek integrity by honestly assessing what result we are aiming for, and where we may be falling short of that vision—and then striving to change or fill the gap.

Adhering to a code of core values:

- Honest assessment leads us to think about a second aspect of integrity: it requires that we adhere to a code of core values or principles.

You all know very well what those core values are: Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty. You should be living them by now! They have come to represent the essence of our aspirations as a service.

Rather than dwell on the importance of each of those core values, which I am sure you know already, let me relate them as a whole to restoring readiness—and in doing so, show you how they are part of the integrity of our organization.

Today we find ourselves in the midst of a national emergency, which has stretched our already thin inventory of resources nearly to the breaking point.

If you're already doing all you can do, there's nothing left when emergencies arise and demand extra effort. Your only choice is to hold your breath, sail the ship, and continue to work tirelessly for your country.

In an emergency, you do it. But over time, it's not the right thing to do. It is not the right thing to do because it violates our core value of respect with regard to our people, while depending on their honor and devotion to duty to get the job done.

Violating one of our core values is tantamount to violating all three. It's like willingly breaking one of the Ten Commandments. You might as well break them all, because the result is the same. They too, you see, ... are integrated.

Thus, my most immediate pressing concern, which is even more critical now than it was at the beginning of my tenure as commandant, is restoring our readiness and thereby affirming respect to our people—making sure that we will be confident in our devotion to duty every time there's a hurricane, or a major oil spill, or a mass migration, or a surge in drug shipments...or a direct attack on our homeland. In that way, we will continue to uphold the honor of our service.

What have we done about it?

Last year I directed our senior operational commanders to adjust their non-emergency cutter and aircraft deployment schedules to make sure they did not exceed the levels that can be sustained by the training, maintenance and other support systems that we have in place.

This direction may sound like a fairly simple common-sense change—and maybe we should have started making management decisions like it a long time ago. But it marked an important cultural shift in the Coast Guard—a new willingness to admit there are limits on what we can accomplish, and a new awareness that the short-term pride in doing more with less comes at a price we shouldn't always be willing to pay. It sometimes comes at the price of our integrity.

Despite our current emergency, the course made good in the past few years has advanced us well along the trackline toward restoring our readiness. However, it is clear that with all the advances we have made, we will not remain on course or reach our intended destination without a sustained effort to do two basic things: retain the depth and breadth of our workforce, and ensure its strength through diversity.

Excessive first-term attrition rates continue to prevent full restoration of our workforce. The high turnover rate places a tremendous strain on our men and women, reduces their quality of life, and diminishes our operational readiness.

The cost of recruiting, training, transferring, and paying replacements drains funds from other critical priorities. The members who leave early don't even have the opportunity to use the tools that we have devised to encourage re-enlistment. Again, such a condition violates the respect shown to our service members and serves to diminish their devotion to duty.

We maintain the highest recruiting standards of the military services. Many of our new recruits, who represent much of the spectrum of our society, would compete well against the most elite forces of our national defense. But many are leaving too soon.

Some have shown a lack of personal responsibility due to youthful indiscretion—what we might refer to as a lack of personal integrity. That is as much an opportunity for strong leadership and direction as it is an issue of military justice.

These are clearly leadership challenges, relating to our integrity as a service. We can solve them by listening more carefully to the concerns of the troops and showing them how their jobs are related to the whole mission. I can't overstate the importance of good communication throughout the chain of command in maintaining our integrity.

Some people leave because they believe that the organization does not want them, or does not welcome their presence among our ranks. This is the most troubling reason of all, and the one most deserving of our attention and commitment to change. We must reaffirm and demonstrate at every level of leadership that we are dedicated to broadening the diversity within our ranks.

And I think we must ask whether those members who choose to leave have perceived somewhere a lack of respect and honor towards them personally.

We have committed to making the Coast Guard a more diverse organization, but we have fallen short of our goals.

The demographics of our country continue to change rapidly. We cannot afford complacency if we are to attract and retain in service the best and brightest talent that our nation has to offer from every race, color, creed, and religion.

But managing the diversity of our workforce is less about demographics and smart business practices than it is about leadership. One of the qualities of leadership is knowing the value of the potential of people. As leaders, we must not leave any talent untapped because it appears “different” to us. Otherwise, we will not allow the full potential of our organization to be realized.

I implore every leader in the Coast Guard—every CPO, JO, CO and OinC...listen to your sailors' concerns; find out what their dreams are...help them reach those dreams.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is about embracing change...satisfaction with the status quo will never allow us to maintain the full measure of organizational integrity. We must embrace this change in order to uphold our core values.

#### Ensuring that our mission remains complete and undivided:

- The third and last aspect of the constant practice of integrity is that it causes us to ensure that our mission remains complete and undivided, now and in the future.

Through the years, the Coast Guard's mission growth has always paralleled the growth of our nation and its maritime interests. Our service history is the story of a growing nation confronting one emergent maritime need after another.

In the early part of the twentieth century, the Revenue Cutter Service and the U.S. Lifesaving Service merged to become the modern day Coast Guard. Captain Commandant Ellsworth P. Bertholf oversaw that merger as our first Commandant. The amazing thing is, he accomplished the merger just as many people in Congress and the executive branch were seeking to abolish the Revenue Cutter Service to save money.

Bertholf wisely resisted a movement to incorporate the Revenue Cutter Service into the Navy, a move that was widely supported—even among some officers of the Cutter Service.

Furthermore, he argued relentlessly that the real value of combining the missions of maritime security and safety was that both could be done better together—but only by a service whose mission remained more humanitarian than martial.

He held steadfast in his convictions. And he won. So, he integrated the Lifesaving and Revenue Cutter services. As he did so, he proved the value of the integration in an unparalleled protection of world shipping by firmly establishing the effectiveness of the ice patrol in 1914 and 1915, following the tragedy of the *Titanic*. The integration was completed 87 years ago this month.

The twenty-first century promises even more difficult challenges. The global economy is expected to double if not triple in the next twenty years. Our inter-connection to the rest of the world will magnify the importance of an efficient and safe marine transportation system, security from terrorist attack and criminal enterprises, protection of living marine resources and the marine environment, and the continued preservation of our national liberties.

We are now in the process of adjusting our operations to the “new normalcy” of life in America, following the terrorist attacks on our nation. As we work to rebalance our missions and resources in order to maintain our organizational integrity, I urge you not to think of maritime security as a new task suddenly added to a growing constellation of tasks. Rather, we must see it as our north star.

Wait a minute! What about Search and Rescue? Isn't SAR our core mission? Isn't that our North Star?

Good questions. Stand by for a short astronomy lesson. Humor me.

Even many experienced sailors are not aware that the North Star is not a star at all. It is actually a cluster of stars.

This cluster includes a system known as a spectroscopic binary, which is a term used to describe two stars that revolve around a common center of gravity and are so close together that they cannot be distinguished by a common telescope.

Together, the cluster of stars comprises the major navigational star of the second magnitude we call Polaris. Even with the most powerful telescope, they look like one star. Only very careful spectral observations allow us to tell that there is more than one star at that point in the sky.

As it is with Polaris, so it is with maritime security and maritime safety.

Security and safety are inseparable. They are integral. We can't really have one without the other. If viewed from a distance, they are one and the same thing.

To extend the analogy just a bit further, Polaris is part of a larger constellation of stars, which we commonly call the Little Dipper. The entire constellation of stars appears to move together through the night sky as an integral whole, with the individual stars changing their positions in relation to each other around Polaris as time goes by.

But the positions of the stars in the sky do not really change. And it only appears that the Dipper turns upside down and back again. It is really the world that is turning.

So it is with our whole mission set.

It must be, if we are to maintain our organizational integrity. We must operate as a whole, without internal division or strife or argument about which mission is higher, or brighter, or more important. Embrace change, but then support the notion that every mission is vital to our identity. Everything belongs; nothing is missing; and behavior must agree with appearance.

That's how it has been from the days of those first sentinels of the laws to the present sophistication of the helicopters in our HITRON fleet. It's who and what we are.

Along that line of thought, I am pleased to present today the long-awaited debut of Coast Guard *Publication One*. This document is designed to afford everyone who asks an integrated view of the Coast Guard and its missions, starting from our very beginnings. It is a seminal document that every Coast Guard member should read and know in detail. Each of you will receive a copy as you leave tonight.

This booklet is a public statement of who we are, what we do, and why we do it. In its title, it bears the mathematical symbol of integrity: One.

Two men in the audience tonight had a great deal to do with the creation of *Pub One*. RADM Tim Riker and CAPT Bruce Stubbs are both retired now. For years, they have seen the need for an integrated view of our service. The three of us have worked this project since the late 80's. They know the value of integrity and inspired many others to produce this important book.

I'd like them to stand for a moment.

Ladies and gentlemen, *Pub One* is the legacy of these gentlemen to you. The past is here to meet the future tonight. And the two are one.

Please join with me in recognizing two exceptional sailors and leaders.

Practicing Integrity in Leadership:

**We've talked about the importance of integrity to our organization. Let's complete the circle to Publius and talk about the importance of integrity to individual leadership. Let me tell you a brief story of those who go down to the sea in ships.**

In 1914-15, the British explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, had a burning vision: to be the first to cross the continent of Antarctica.

Just one day's sail short of the continent, Shackleton's ship, the *Endurance*, became trapped in sea ice. Frozen fast for ten months, the ship was finally crushed, its watertight integrity gradually destroyed by ice pressure, and the crew was forced to abandon ship before it sank beneath the ice pack. The journals of the crew recorded the death of the ship, and described its last agonizing days, groaning and lurching like a living creature in the clutches of the ice.

After camping with his men for half a year, first on the ice and later on Elephant Island, Shackleton made an open boat journey—a treacherous 800-mile ocean crossing to South Georgia Island—now considered one of the most daring boat journeys in history.

During that dangerous two-week voyage in a 22 foot whaleboat with 5 other men and provisions to last barely a month, he and his small crew suffered from nearly constant gales, below freezing temperatures, and blinding snow squalls.

Upon reaching land at the island of South Georgia, they trekked across the mountains, reached the island's remote whaling station on the other side, organized a rescue team...and eventually saved every single man they had left behind.

Though he failed in his original mission, Shackleton's resolve—the same resolve that urged him to undertake one of the most daring missions imaginable—brought his whole crew to safety from an almost certain death.

It occurs to me that Shackleton's men must have had absolute faith in his integrity when he assured them that he would return, in order for them to have the will to wait behind and survive the wait. They were right!

Shackleton acted on the urgency of his concern for his crew's safety, after he and his small party finally reached the island of South Georgia. He was battered, nearly frozen, and weak from hunger and thirst.

He faced the dilemma of crossing the icy mountains of the island on foot, which nobody had ever attempted before, or waiting until the following spring to finish the sea voyage to the other side of the island to find help, because the leaky boat would not make it any further in the severe weather of winter.

He records this thought in his book, simply titled South:

“We were still 150 miles away from Stromness whaling station by sea. The alternative was to attempt the crossing of the island. If we could not get over, then we must try to secure enough food and fuel to keep us alive through the winter, but this possibility was scarcely thinkable. Over on Elephant Island twenty-two men were waiting for the relief that we alone could secure for them.”

On South Georgia island, as he puts it, “We had reached the naked soul of man.”

How easy it would have been for him to let thoughts of self-preservation and fears for his own safety divide him from his purpose. He was nearly dead himself. How easy it would have been for many men to delay the already impaired journey, to ignore their core values, and to forget the singleness of the mission. How do such men find the strength to do the right thing? It's about personal and organizational integrity!

It seems to me that Ernest Shackleton would have made a fine Coast Guard leader.

### Conclusion:

This is the 125<sup>th</sup> year of the Coast Guard Academy. It was established in 1876 to transform young people into future officers for the nation's oldest seagoing service. Today, it also houses Officer Candidate School, the Chief Petty Officers' Academy and the Leadership Development Center. It is now a place to shape the future of the entirety of Coast Guard leadership.

I am a member of the Class of '64. Today, I must admit in honesty that there are some qualities of leadership that I am still working on. It is a daily task for us all—and one that reminds us to be humble.

I am still transforming myself into a better Coast Guard leader—and by better, I mean a Coast Guard leader with integrity. It is a noble thing to be.

I will continue doing so even after I leave active duty. And that is what I encourage you to do, as well—whether today you are a swab, an officer candidate, a recruit, a chief, or an admiral, and whether you are a member on active duty, in the reserves, the civil service, or the auxiliary.

Putting on a uniform does not make you a leader. Putting on new shoulder boards or a set of anchors does not make you a better leader. The quest is ever before you.

That work is up to you to transform yourself to become what you are not yet, and to be on the inside what you appear to be on the outside—the leader that you will need to be in the future and that the Coast Guard requires.

Nobody can do that for you.

Take advantage of your time here. Gather the skills you will need to operate unimpaired as a leader. Integrate the Coast Guard's core values into your life and make them your own.

You may need at times to rely on the strength of others. You may even find that you must rely on the strength of God. But with His enduring help, and the willing aid of those around you, you can and you must continue the quest for integrity.

I have one last story to tell you. Last Sunday, my pastor focused in his sermon on the sacrament of baptism.

He told us of a young father, whose wife had just given birth to a premature daughter. He was with the baby in the ICU section of the nursery. The baby was not expected to survive.

The father was feeling very helpless. A nurse suggested he baptize the baby. He told her he couldn't...he was not a priest, and so had no authority. He was torn as to the integrity of the idea.

The nurse brought him a glass of water. He dipped his thumb and made a cross on the baby's tiny forehead. He told his daughter, "I love you. Your mother loves you. Jesus loves you, and God loves you."

He then blessed her in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. I ask you...was this a legitimate baptism? Did this father have integrity? Was the institutional integrity of the sacrament upheld?

I'm confident God had his hand on that father's shoulder. His personal integrity was sound and the higher standard was met.

The U. S. Coast Guard Academy...the Corps of Cadets...the Leadership Development Center. I love this hallowed place. These buildings, these playing fields...memories of individuals who cared about me...took the time to express interest in my success as a student, an athlete, a young officer, a fledgling teacher.

This marvelous place is my tabernacle, my library of ideas and challenges. It is the archive of our integrity as an organization.

"Who lives HERE reveres honor, honors duty."

“We graduate young people with stout hearts and alert minds, with a liking for the sea and its lore.” We graduate leaders of integrity to join a service that accepts nothing less.

America depends on “a few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports” to be “useful sentinels of the laws.”

We are those sentinels. God bless us, everyone!

Semper Paratus!

