

**Lorcan Barnes' graduation speech**  
**May 26, 2017**  
(961 words = 6 minutes, 30 seconds)

(((INTRO)))

An old Cherokee Indian was teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside of me," he said. It is a terrible fight between two wolves. One wolf is evil – he is anger, envy, regret, greed, and arrogance. The grandfather continued. The other wolf is good – he is joy, peace, love, humility, kindness, generosity, empathy, compassion, and faith. "The same fight is going on inside of you ... and inside every other person, too." // The boy thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, (((SLOW))) "Which wolf will win?" The grandfather replied, "**The one you choose to feed.**"

Tonight, I'd like to talk about CHOICES ... and feeding the right wolf.

(((BODY)))

When you were children, the choices you made were small ... should I watch Power Rangers or Lilo & Stitch? As life went on, the choices became consequential.

Four years ago, your family made an important decision ... to enroll at Christian Brothers. The proud feeling you enjoy tonight is a consequence of that good choice. You've made lifelong friends, discovered new talents, and developed your God-given gifts.

In high school, you began to make choices on your own. Still, some of these choices were inconsequential. Should I eat lunch w/ my friends ... or should I play spike ball? Snapchat filter ... no Snapchat filter?

But in the past few months, you made a consequential choice ... where to attend college. Unfortunately, the factors that lead to happiness and success in college ... are *unknown* when you have to make the decision. There's no way of knowing that you are going to meet a professor that will turn you on to a field that will become your career. There's no way of knowing who you're going to meet when you join a campus group. Still, you made a decision.

Your happiness and success in life are going to be the results of a series of choices. Tonight, I'd like to provide three pieces of advice to help you as you face a lifetime of choices.

**My first piece of advice ... be the ARCHITECT of your choices.**

The environment in which you place yourself will impact the consequences of your decision. Healthy environment ... rewarding consequences. Unhealthy environment ... regret. Be the architect of your choices by surrounding yourself with people you admire ... people of integrity and strong moral character. Surround yourself with people who are smarter than you. Engage in activities that stretch your mind and inspire your heart.

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Four years ago, your family put you in a school that nurtured your best self. At CB you have been surrounded by dedicated, loving teachers who are architects of compassion and kindness. The CB environment encouraged you to work hard and make a difference in the world. For the rest of your life, seek to join and build communities like this ... school, church, work, neighborhoods, etc.

**So that's my first piece of advice. Be your own CHOICE ARCHITECT by always putting yourself in an ENVIRONMENT that will lead you to make good decisions.**

**My second piece of advice ... EMBRACE your decisions.**

When faced with difficult choices, of course, you should become informed and consider all options. But in the end, listen to your heart. Listen to the whisper of God ... and make your decision. Then ... embrace it, own it, commit to it!

Think back to your freshman year. Some of you jumped right in to the CB experience and made new friends or tried out for a sport you had never played before. Some of you waited until Kairos your senior year to really embrace all that CB has to offer. Whatever the case ... we can all agree **the experience is better when we embrace our decisions.**

This fall, try not to worry about whether you'd be happier at another college. Embrace *your* college. Proudly don your school colors. Make new friends. Challenge yourself academically. **It's up to YOU, not the college, to make YOUR experience great.**

That approach will serve you well throughout life. At some point, you'll choose how you want to make a living. Doctor, teacher, banker, computer programmer ... all great choices. Whatever your path ... embrace all that's great about that field ... don't dwell on what might have been.

**People who DON'T embrace their decisions can become drifters. Life happens to them. People who EMBRACE their decisions (((SLOW))) become AUTHORS OF THEIR OWN LIFE.**

(((Slow ... transition to advice #3)))

These two pieces of advice are impossible without the third. You can be your own CHOICE ARCHITECT. And you can fully EMBRACE your decisions. **But you need GOD to give meaning to your life and guide you to make the right choices.**

**So my third and final piece of advice is the most important message you can take from your time at Christian Brothers. TRUST GOD.**

Maintaining a healthy relationship with God will serve you well in times of doubt ... and when you're faced with difficult choices. But God's love FOR YOU is NOT YOUR choice. God's love for you is HIS choice.

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**So during those times in your life when you make the wrong choice ... hit reset, pray, and begin again.**

(((CONCLUSION)))

Class of 2017, your CB journey has come to an end.

We hope that we have etched on your heart a set of core values that will lead you to (((SLOW)))  
**feed the good wolf inside of you.**

**Our world needs people like you to be CHOICE ARCHITECTS who ARE COMMITTED to building Christ's kingdom here on earth.**

Class of 2017, go forth ... to SPREAD THE LOVE.

St. John Baptist de La Salle ... PRAY FOR US  
Live Jesus in our Hearts ... FOREVER!

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