

Graduation Speech 2019

((929 words // 6 mins, 30 secs ... does not include the pre-intro)))

((PRE-INTRO)))

Before I share w/ you some final words, I'd like to take a moment to recognize Mr. Tom English. ((SLOW)) He is NOT retiring ... but he is stepping down as graduation coordinator. For 28 years, he has worked hard to ensure that our graduates and their families enjoy proud and memorable ceremonies. Thank you.

((INTRO)))

Class of 2019, you are now ALUMNI of a school with a proud, storied history. Over the past four years, you have made a *great* school ... even better. Thank you for being YOU and making a great US.

((CB's PURPOSE ... MACRO ... EDUCATION)))

The CB experience is not accidental.

Two thousand years ago Jesus Christ gave his life for you. He was FOCUSED on your salvation.

Three hundred years ago, St. John Baptist de La Salle established schools with a FOCUS on providing an outstanding education to deserving students regardless of their socio-economic circumstances.

And 143 years ago, the De La Salle Christian Brothers opened THIS school in Sacramento with a clear FOCUS on producing graduates who are spiritually rich, morally courageous, and intellectually distinguished.

((TRANSITION)))

My message for you tonight is to choose the right FOCUS.

((BODY)))

I recently heard a story about a dog in an Italian village. The dog spent all of his days sleeping in the warm sun of the village square. One day, out of the corner of his half-opened eye, he spied a rabbit. The dog took off immediately in hot pursuit of the rabbit. He ran up and down the streets and all over the countryside ... relentlessly keeping up the chase day and night. Eventually other dogs saw him and joined in the chase. But, one by one, the other dogs grew tired and stopped running. ((PAUSE)) Why did the other dogs stop? Because they lacked FOCUS. The *other* dogs were running only because they had seen *the first dog* running. ((SLOW)) They never saw the rabbit. They never knew *why* they were running in the first place.

Class of 2019, throughout your life, it will be important that you FOCUS ON YOUR OWN RABBIT. Don't pursue what others are chasing. Your families and your teachers have shown you examples of qualities that lead to a rich, meaningful life. They have shown you kindness, excellence, love, and faith. Let THESE qualities be your rabbit.

Focus on KINDNESS.

- Your class is particularly kind. You have contributed countless hours of service to the marginalized in our community. In doing so, you gave dignity to others and you developed

important habits of the heart.

- I witnessed an example of kindness on Kairos 74. Emma Talley was in my small group. Emma is a highly accomplished Stanford-bound senior. I asked her back in January if she might be in the running for valedictorian. Emma's response ... "No, but I'm fine with that because my friend Alanna will probably be valedictorian. She deserves it." Emma's response is indicative of the kindness of the class of 2019.

In addition to kindness, focus on EXCELLENCE.

- God has blessed you with unbelievable talent. You've produced beautiful art, professional level podcasts ... and a world-class lip dub. You've won championships, and many of you will continue to compete in sports at the college level. This class earned great accomplishments in Mock Trial, Academic Decathlon, Science Olympiad, Model UN, Robotics, and more.
- Focus on excellence in college and throughout life.

In addition to kindness and excellence, focus on LOVE.

- When we think of love, we often jump to *romantic* love. Of course, I pray that comes your way. We also think of the *friends* we love ... and you have likely already experienced *that* love in abundance.
- But when I speak of pursuing love, I'm talking about an overflowing, selfless love.
- You have seen examples of this love in your teachers, who approach your formation as a sacred vocation. Your teachers LOVE you.
- And, of course, there's NO love that compares with the love your families feel for you. When YOU become parents, you'll experience a LOVE that's impossible to put in words.

And, finally, in addition to kindness, excellence, and love ... focus on FAITH.

- You have had the good fortune of attending a *Catholic* school, where your spiritual and moral growth have been our highest priorities.
- The class of 2019 is the first class to have had four years of God Squad. Members of this class *put themselves out there* as retreat leaders for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.
- And members of this class have been willing to stand in front of *their own classmates* on Kairos retreats ... and talk about their relationship with God. On Kairos, you experienced a glimpse of Christ's kingdom as you felt God's presence through vulnerability, trust, and openness.
- As you leave this *Catholic* school, you're about to enter an increasingly *secular* world. I pray that you will bring the JOY of a faith-filled life with you wherever you go.
- You will face difficult times. But don't try to go it alone. Throughout your life, remember that little Lasallian prayer you said thousands of times over the past four years ... (((motion to invite response))) LET US REMEMBER ... (((response))) WE ARE IN THE HOLY PRESENCE OF GOD.

(((CONCLUSION)))

Notice, that I do NOT recommend you focus on HAPPINESS. Here's why ... it's another *animal* metaphor.

Happiness is like a cat. If you coax a cat, he will avoid you. But if you pay no attention to the cat ... and (((SLOW))) FOCUS on *other* things, you will find him jumping into your lap.

Class of 2019, as you leave CB to build a better world for all of us ... stay FOCUSED on the important things in life ... kindness, excellence, love, and faith ... and surely HAPPINESS will jump right into your lap.

St. John Baptist de La Salle ... PRAY FOR US