

“Celebrate Our Seniors” Virtual event speech
To be filmed 5-22-20 // To be shown 5-29-20
(((935 words = 130 intro + 709 speech + 114 prayer ... Less than 7 minutes)))

(((INTRO)))

Good evening. Before I speak to the graduates, there are two important groups I’d like to thank.

First, Christian Brothers faculty and staff. From the moment we determined that Digital Learning was our new reality, your deepest Lasallian instincts took over. You focused on our students’ academic preparation ... and their mental and spiritual health. Our Founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle, can be proud of your fidelity to the mission of Catholic education. Thank you.

Second, parents and guardians. Four years ago, we entered into a sacred partnership. You entrusted us with your most precious gift from God. We promised to care for your children and educate them. It has been our HONOR. Thank you especially for your confidence these past ten weeks since YOUR living room became our satellite campus.

(((SPEECH)))

Now, to tonight’s guests of honor ... the 271 members of the class of 2020.

(((PAUSE))) We’re sorry that you didn’t get to experience traditional rites of passage. We’re sorry that you didn’t get to enjoy EACH OTHER on campus the last quarter.

This year ... in high school graduation speeches all over the country and all over the world ... graduates will be challenged to APPLY your painful lessons of GRIT and RESILIENCE to build a better world. The class of 2020 will be reminded that you were born in the WAKE of 9/11 ... as you GRADUATE amidst a global pandemic. You and your peers will be told ...you’re SPECIAL. The class of 2020 will be told that your difficult experience makes you STRONGER because you’ve been “forged in steel.” The class of 2020 will be told that you MUST be DESTINED FOR GREATNESS.

(((SLOW))) I believe all of this to be true.

But tonight I want to remind you that you have been shaped by MORE than our current crisis.

I’d like to share with you a story from centuries ago about a MONK and a TRAVELER.

A monk in his travels found a precious jewel and he kept it. One day, the monk met a traveler. When the monk opened his bag to share provisions with the traveler, the traveler saw the precious jewel ... and he asked the monk to give it to him. The monk readily handed the precious jewel over to the traveler.

The traveler departed, overjoyed with the unexpected gift ... a gift that was valuable enough to give the traveler (((SLOW))) wealth and security for the rest of his life.

A few days later, the traveler came back in search of the monk. He found the monk, returned the precious jewel ... and the traveler implored ... "Now give me something much more precious than the stone, valuable as it is. (((SLOW))) Please give me (((SLOW))) THAT WHICH ENABLED YOU TO GIVE THE JEWEL TO ME."

The moral of the story is that gifts of the HEART are greater than material possessions and earthly comforts.

In this story, YOU ... the class of 2020 ... are the traveler. You've been given something precious ... a Christian Brothers education.

Consider the modern day monks ... CB faculty and staff who spent time with you on Kairos. What a precious jewel it is to have TIME to think about your relationship with God as you enter adulthood.

Consider the modern day monks ... who inspired works of art on stage, in song, on canvas, and out of clay.

Consider the modern day monks ... who coached you to victory over Jesuit in the Holy Bowl and victory over St. Francis in Holy Court.

Consider the modern day monks ... CB's maintenance team who take such pride in giving you a beautiful, safe campus. Sitting on a green lawn eating lunch with your friends. These moments are jewels. The class of 2020 ... more than any other class in CB's history ... has learned what a jewel it is to simply BE IN THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS.

Consider the modern day monks ... who chaperoned your VENAVER service trips. What a jewel it is to serve others.

Consider the modern day monks ... who taught you academic subjects. Some of these modern day monks have inspired you with concepts and subjects that may become your career. But even more importantly, these modern day monks taught you to THINK. Your education is a JEWEL no one can take away from you.

Consider the modern day monks ... your counselors who reminded you that YOUR LIFE is more precious than any jewel when stress and anxiety seemed overpowering.

You've carried these jewels for four years. But the jewels are not yours to keep.

(((PAUSE)))

Remember what the traveler asked of the monk. (((SLOW))) "Please give me what ENABLED you to give the jewel to me." That DIVINE INGREDIENT that enabled the monk to give away the jewel is the same DIVINE INGREDIENT that has enabled CB teachers, coaches, and staff to give generously of themselves for 144 years. That divine ingredient is FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

You've held the jewel. Now it's your turn to BE THE MONK.

((CLOSE WITH PRAYER))

We will close tonight's Celebration of Seniors with a prayer from our Founder.

Let us Remember ... THAT WE ARE IN THE HOLY PRESENCE OF GOD

Do not have any anxiety about the future,
But leave everything in God's hands,
For God will take care of you.
Be satisfied with what you can do,
Since God is satisfied with it,
But do not spare yourself in what you can do with GRACE;

And believe that, provided you want it,
You can do more with the grace of God than you think.

[-Saint John Baptist de La Salle]

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