

Salutatorian Class of 2020

Brian Taylor

Hello there. Thanks everyone for coming together today, it means a lot. It's been a wild four years, and we've finally made it to the end, although definitely not the end we expected. If you had asked any of us last year how we thought Senior Year would go, I guarantee that none of us would have forecast a societal shutdown. And it is definitely unfortunate to have missed prom and an in-person graduation, or a true final day of school. It's tragic to not be able to see each other everyday, and to have to stay inside so much. But let's never forget the moments we shared; let's never forget what it was like to dance in the sun while it was shining brighter than ever.

We've experienced some epic moments together. It was amazing to dance alongside you guys at homecomings, it was amazing to cheer with you at Holy Bowl, as Luke Jones jumped over a Marauder to score a touchdown, and it was amazing to storm the field with you after we beat them for the first time in 10 years. But perhaps most importantly, it was amazing to see you, my friends. The opportunity to meet you, to interact with you and pass you in the hallways, to see what you are all like, what this school is like, has made the last four years unforgettable. I'm so incredibly grateful for the experience, and have many memories that I'd like to share to illustrate why the last four years have been so special. But in light of the fact that nobody wants to listen to me prattle on for hours, I'll limit my reminiscing a little.

Christian Brothers has taught me what support is like from the moment I stepped on campus as a shy freshman. I did not know how to best interact with others, how to best make new friends. I had joined the football team, but never quite fit in. In spite of that though, they showed me amazing kindness and support. At Lock-In, we played this game, Hunter-Ninja-Bear,

which is basically rock-paper-scissors, where as you won each round, you gained an increasingly larger entourage of people to cheer you on. As I played this game though, the students from the football team began to lose to me on purpose. They rigged each round, one by one, so that I could gain a larger and larger crowd. They wanted to cheer me on, because they wanted me to feel like a member of the family. It is one of the kindest things that a group of people has ever done for me, and they did it, not in spite of, but because I was socially inept. Their actions taught me that I didn't need to fit in to be a valued part of the community here at Christian Brothers. And I don't think my experience was unique. Every student here, every one of you, has shown amazing love and care for everyone around you. This is a magical place, and I'm glad to have experienced my little fraction of our school's potential.

This past September, I went to Kairos, and experienced what it was truly like to know people. To expose one's deepest self, and to be accepted by others. To be accepted by you, my fellow classmates. But there's one moment that is really profound when I think of the retreat. You see, I've always been interested in space, how our vast universe interacts with so many things. I've always been entranced by the many neutron stars, black holes, and planetary bodies that exist throughout the cosmos. Anyway, I'd never really talked to many people about the subject, outside of my friend Luke Powers. But one night, I lay under the stars, in a circle with my Kairos group, in a collective waking dream. We talked about what could be out there in the universe, about what an alien civilization might be like and why we haven't seen one. It may sound small, but this moment made me feel less alone. It allowed me to see the stars that existed within my classmates. Discussing one of my core interests made me feel what it was like to be understood by a group of people, and to understand them. That is the core of who we are at CB, it is what makes us great. We try so hard to understand each other. And out of that

understanding, we gain the deepest kind of love that there is. We experience what it is like to reach out and touch another human heart, not just at Kairos, but every day. Every day that we stay up late texting friends, every day that we gather with people to watch the super bowl or hang out, or scrape together a Spanish video that's due in 48 hours. We're just learning about people, learning what makes them tick, the idiosyncrasies and quirks that make us all who we are. I don't know if I would have this understanding without CB and all that the community here has shown me. So thank you; thank you for showing me the beauty that existed on Earth; for showing me the wonder and intricacy and love that was all around me, all along.

In many ways, Christian Brothers is more than just a high school. It's more than just a community. It's a set of ideals that we have sought to realize over the past four years. And I think we've done a pretty good job. Take the principle of quality education, for example. CB is filled with talented faculty and staff who seek to make every class period interesting, and sometimes even do so without setting off the fire alarm. But I'd like to hone in on one person, who once expressed a desire to be mentioned in a graduation speech. Mr. Leporini tries so hard to make government interesting, by telling an endless stream of jokes or having us do artistic exercises. He generally succeeds too, or at least, makes government as interesting as it can be. The great thing about CB, though, is that Lep isn't an anomaly. Every teacher here tries so hard to make learning interesting, whether that means setting off occasional explosions or putting students' names into word problems or sharing pictures and stories of their worldly travels. They do their best to breathe life into old books and old equations, to try to make us excited to go to school every day. It's a great thing to experience, to live with and benefit from for four years, and I'd like to thank each and every teacher, for all of the tireless work that you've done for us, and for always caring about us.

Quality education, though, isn't the only ideal we have sought to realize. It might not even be the most important one. We are taught to leave to serve, to Live the Fourth, and to foster an inclusive and accepting community. These tasks, though, are perhaps more similar than they initially appear. CB has the greatest community that I've ever seen. As we move past high school, let's make it the greatest community that the world has ever seen.

The great thing about ideals is that unlike a school, you can carry them with you as long as you want. So as you leave here, remembering the times that we danced under the brightest of stars, I implore you to also remember the things that made those times worthwhile. Remember what it was like to see the stars within your classmates, and to understand what those stars meant. Remember the kindness that your brothers and sisters have shown you, and the kindness that you have shown them. Let's spread it to the world. Help our fellow humans. Show everyone what it means to love. It may sound simple, but there can be no greater service, no more important task than our calling, which is to love our neighbors more than ourselves. (Pause)

Thanks for everything CB.