

# President's Welcome

## Dr. Crystal LeRoy

GOOD MORNING families, friends, and **most** importantly... **members of the Class of 2021!** Welcome to the 145th commencement celebration of Christian Brothers High School. My name is Dr. Crystal LeRoy and I am **honored** to serve as President of this **incredible** school.

While I am still somewhat new to this community, I fell in love with CB within my first few steps on campus...

It was combination of the intrinsic beauty, the extrinsic laughter, and that incredible feeling of faith that enveloped me as I passed through the gate.

*You see...*when I was interviewing for the position of President of Christian Brothers High School, I had the pleasure of having lunch with some of **you AS juniors**...passionate, bright, fiery...advocates for your classmates. Your pride and devotion to your school community still resonate with me.

**Class of 2021**, I have had the *privilege* of watching you **lead by example** ...every day, in the classroom, in the theatre, on the field, and especially when you don't know that someone is watching.

In the words of our founder, St. John Baptist De la Salle:

"Example makes a much greater impression than words."

And you have shown yourselves to be incredible examples of what it means to live as members of a Lasallian community. You have lovingly shared your faith as members of God Squad, in religious studies courses, in daily prayers, at retreats... and during our recent

Dr. Crystal Reed  
President's Welcome

Kairos experience. You have distinguished yourselves as scholars in the classroom, **and** on the screen. You have demonstrated concern for the **poor and social justice** in creative and loving ways as community **volunteers and advocates**, peer tutors, Lasallian Student Ambassadors, members of Wellspring Club, and even through some *incredibly* creative and greatly needed monthly collection drives this year. You have taken to the field, court, pool, pitch, course, and track to participate in the sports you love. You have shared your gifts as artists, performers, journalists, and musicians. And, at a time when our country is plagued by deep and bitter divisions, you have **shown the beauty that is possible** WHEN communities are inclusive... and there is respect for all persons.

**Yes, example makes a much greater impression than words.** And, the impression you leave behind is indelible and unmatched. Each of you is forever a part of the history and tradition of this incredible school. And, **our loss** is *certainly* the **world's gain** as you head off to colleges and universities in 27 states, the District of Columbia, and Switzerland! One of you is embarking on a two-year mission, and one you will be serving our country in the United States Army. **All of you,... in your own way,... is leaving to serve.**

Whether you are staying close to home, or you are off to places unknown, I am so eager to see you pre-sent your BESTSELVES to the world. As you do, I pray that you will always remember that you are in the holy presence of God, and that you will, in the words of author Robert Greene... *"Be relentless in your pursuit for expansion!*

Class of 2021, the world is waiting for you...

Ms. Annemarie Bacich  
Principal's Address

Good morning Dr. LeRoy, distinguished Board members, faculty, staff, parents, and friends and most of all, good morning, and congratulations to our graduates of the class of 2021. This treasured rite of passage takes place to honor your years of intense work, study, growth, and play, and to mark your transition into adulthood. You have come of age in a time of great crisis in our world, having witnessed deep political divisions, social unrest, and the plague of a deadly and life altering pandemic. Yet in the face of all these challenges, your class motto, ***From Dusk to Dawn***, attests to the fortitude and boundless energy with which you stand ready to embrace the future.

You and your generation will rebuild our world and I am excited to be able to witness it. Remember the Lasallian Catholic pillars that have formed the foundation of your education here Christian Brothers, first and foremost, an active Faith in the Presence of God, and then, a deep Respect for all Persons, a sincere Concern for those most in need, a desire to welcome all people you encounter, and attention to learning from every single experience you go through. If you remain rooted in these pillars, then I promise you, your life will be a great adventure.

I want to leave you with some advice that comes from Pope Francis's latest encyclical, entitled Fratelli Tutti, or are all brothers and sisters, which is about

Ms. Ann Marie Barchi

Principal's Address

the task that faces us as a global society of rebuilding our world after the pandemic. He says:

*Let us seek out others and embrace the world as it is, without fear of pain or a sense of inadequacy, because there we will discover all the goodness that God has planted in human hearts. Difficulties that seem overwhelming are opportunities for growth, not excuses for a glum resignation that can lead only to acquiescence. Yet let us not do this alone, as individuals, but as one human family, recognizing we are sisters and brothers of the same lifegiving, loving Father.*

Graduates, I encourage you to take your own motto to heart and embrace the challenge Pope Francis lays before us. Lead us in the charge of rebuilding our world by never giving up and never giving to cynicism, division, or despair. Hold on to the urgings of your young hearts that say it is worthwhile to live fully, work intensively, and love unceasingly from Dusk to Dawn as we watch you build the bridges that will unite us as a society and bring us into a future filled with hope. Class of 2021, good luck, and Godspeed I can't wait to see the future you will build.

Live Jesus in our Hearts! ...

# Valedictorian

Maria Murinova

Good Morning, Christian Brothers Board of Trustees, Faculty, Family and Friends, Thank you for all that you have done to bring us to this day, and Congratulations, Class of 2021! I am honored to stand before you, but also very humbled, and a little terrified at the impossibility of addressing four years' worth of your accomplishments, a class that went from a glorious Holy Bowl victory...to a national lockdown and global pandemic, graduates brimming with joy...but also perhaps walking forward with apprehension. I thought long and hard about what message I might offer to carry you forward into the next chapter with hope. And just like that, it hit me. Chapters in a story. The best teachers, with most memorable lessons, tell stories. Please bear with me as I share some with you, today.

Do you know the story of a rich nobleman in France in the 1600s? He became a priest, and then chaplain, for an order of Sisters who served poor children, at a time when they had little chance of living in dignity or freedom. Knowing the infinite value of every human life, the priest dedicated his own talents and fortune to them. He began to train teachers and establish schools in which the central focus was the worth of the human person, and the instruction oriented not only to success, but also to service. St. John Baptist de La Salle's work has influenced education for 300 years, and in 2021, his order boasts over 1,100 schools in 80 countries with more than 90,000 teachers and a million students, including each and every one of us.

My fellow graduates, although our world has seen advancement the likes of which our patron could not have imagined, I believe we, like those children, need to discover anew the truth about ourselves. The modern world presents us with such a contradiction. We are told to love and believe in ourselves, that we can do anything we set our minds to, but also that we are mere cosmic accidents, and that one day, we and all our achievements will come to nothing.

At Christian Brothers, however, we learn that God created the universe, gave bounds to the ocean and the stars their course, so that he could one day put you in it. And after the Fall, He entered space and time to die for us, for He could not imagine living eternity without us. Have you ever stopped to consider that out of the hundred million possibilities that might have come from your parents, God chose you? Each of you is precious, unrepeatable, irreplaceable. He knows what He is about, and knows everything about you; all your secret desires and fears, gifts and complexities, triumphs and tragedies. He does not make mistakes; He has deliberately bestowed upon you, unique attributes that reflect something of His beauty and goodness. His love for you is greater than you will ever know; there is nothing you need do to deserve it, and

## ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ

nothing you could ever do to destroy it. His one desire is to share with you His life of infinite love and everlasting happiness.

Along the way, He asks you to join in His saving work, by spreading His love to those who may never encounter it otherwise. At this point, if you are anything like me, an army of excuses rises up in protest. But to each objection, He has a response. To those who profess themselves incapable, Christ says, "I will be with you always," and "with Me, nothing is impossible." To those who consider themselves insignificant, who deem their image and influence lacking, He reminds us that with His help, David defeats Goliath, and that in His hands, our meager loaves can feed thousands. To those who feel broken, bound and defined by past mistakes, who fear they will find in the heavens only condemnation, Christ assures us that God is always on the lookout, ready to meet the prodigal at the first sign of his return, and that He can make all things new.

And to the many who maintain, "I know nothing of this God, this life of love," to those who feel alone, rejected, that they must work to earn love and prove their worth, who find that their efforts are never enough, Christ says, "Come, let me show you my Father, Who sent me to show you His love. And let me give you my Mother for your own. They are always here for you, never too busy or distracted. They are good providers, never burdened by your needs, desires and questions. With us, you have a home and a family, in the Church, people who love you, a place where you are accepted, no matter your race, class, or creed."

Or perhaps, we find ourselves indifferent. After all, in a few moments, each of us will stand on this stage, on top of the world, in triumph. Why concern ourselves with problems beyond these gates? Because, one day, dear friends, we will be asked to account for what has been given us, and in that final race, we will be judged on love. No accolades will matter; the measuring tape will not be put around our honors or accomplishments; it will be wrapped around our hearts. Christ will look at what we have done, and say "You Did It To Me." Mother Teresa called this the Gospel on our hand.

In closing, I would like to share with you a story from her life. In Washington DC, her Sisters found a young woman, dying in the streets. They brought her to their infirmary, but she proceeded to spew profanities, to hit and spit upon them, to the point that all of the other patients begged them to expel her. But the Sisters refused, and after some time, the woman looked at them and asked, "Why are you so kind to me?" They responded, without hesitation, "Because you are a child of God. Jesus loves you and has asked us to show you His love." The woman asked about this Jesus, and after

## St. John Baptist de la Salle

hearing the Gospel, requested Baptism and Communion. Upon receiving the Holy Eucharist, the young woman began to cry, and shared her story. As a child, her mother, a heroine addict, began to sell her on the streets for drug money, and she had been abused countless times. Then she said, "When Jesus came into my heart, it was the first time a man had come to give me something, instead of to take away. I have been treated like an animal, but now, I am dying as an angel."

My friends, THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD that souls need to see in you, to receive from you. You are being sent out into a broken world, ravaged by darkness and division. You will encounter souls that are lost, that are looking for that love, light, and healing. St. John Baptist de la Salle's and St. Mother Teresa's time is over. Now, Christ commissions you to bring His love to other towns and peoples. I cannot travel your path, any more than you can travel mine. We each have a part to play, NO ONE ELSE can supply for the love in your heart. You were made for this moment in history and the world needs you! With the lessons that we have learned at Christian Brothers, let us not be afraid! Good things are worth living and dying for, and their reward is a hundredfold.

And while you did not draft the beginning of your story, you firmly grip the pen now. From this day forward, by your actions, for better or worse, you will write its end. With earnestness, then, let us ask, every step of the way: "How am I being called to love?" And let us commit ourselves to that task with the time, strength and talents that are given us. At another ceremony, on that final day, I look forward to reading each of your stories, and seeing the ways that you made, not just CB, but the whole world, a truly more beautiful "place to be." God bless you all!

# Salutatorian

Clayton Ketcher

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Thank you John [Bonini], and thank you to the Christian Brothers administration for coordinating this event.

"Enter to learn, leave to serve." These words adorn the side of our school, proudly on display to Martin Luther King Jr Blvd and Oak Park. Most of us see these words every day on our way to school, walking to A set, and yet many of us don't take the time to think about what they truly mean.

Myself included.

I'm sure many of us remember the days in Mr. Havey, Mr. Guro, and Ms. Spinelli's freshman religion classes, being taught about St. John Baptist de la Salle and the five core principles, and our school's motto along with it.

But what does "Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve" really *mean*?

In August 2017 we saw these words for the first time as we walked through the gates of our school. Greeted by seniors with fidget spinners, we navigated our way through lock-in to be initiated as Falcons. Through awkward discussions while trying to get to know our classmates, we slowly began to build bonds that would last throughout these last four years.

Getting used to seven classes a day and our infamous rotating semi-block schedule took months for many of us. However confusing and confuddled the schedule was, though, we used it to our advantage. Getting Ms.

Shackel to explain, define, and reexplain the block schedule to prospective *students on shadow days became a tradition in order to avoid the long lectures and discussions about Shakespeare, Sophocles, and Homer. Field trips to the food bank introduced us to an attitude and an expectation of service and commitment to our Oak Park community. While the service*



## Classroom Reflections

hours required by some teachers initially seemed like a drag, they further planted the attitude and expectation for many of us to sow later in our high school careers.

Our sophomore year brought us familiarity as we settled back into high school life. Discussions with the wonderful John Riley-Portal began to occur more often, as we had to start figuring out what we wanted to do with our lives, and how the classes we took would impact these paths. Some of us were introduced to the- *lovely* world of College Board in AP World and Art History, and for those of us in those classes we unfortunately came to terms with the fact that timed essays and multiple choice exams would be a staple in our lives for the next couple years.

Our second Summer as high schoolers came and went and We arrived at the dreaded Junior Year, where we would be tested to our limits. Many of us stacked up on courses, enrolling in as many challenging and rigorous courses as possible in order to look good for colleges. But, amidst all of our stresses and challenges with school, we still found a way to let loose outside of the classroom, particularly through the efforts of our football team.

30-27. Christian Brothers's first Holy Bowl win in over a decade was a sight to behold. Elated students rushed the field at Hughes Stadium, laughing and screaming and celebrating with one another that we had finally won the constant uphill battle that is Holy Bowl. Some of us had the privilege to experience VENAVER in Los Angeles and Tuscon, Arizona.

However, none of us expected how much we would develop as people. From our Holy Bowl Victory to our Women's Basketball Section Championship, our STN honors to our countless Elly awards, neverending history lectures by Mr. English to exciting KBFT classes with Mr. Hogan, we have developed not only as students, but also as leaders, athletes, friends, servant leaders, and members of our dynamic and diverse community. For all of this and so much more, I'm humbled, honored, and above all grateful for the opportunity to call you all, the Class of 2021, my peers- my brothers. You have made CB the place to be. Congratulations and good luck in your future.