

Baccalaureate Chapel Talk
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Good morning! You made it! Or, almost... in an hour or so, you'll be graduating, and completing the journey you began three or four years ago.

I know there is a lot on all of your minds today, and most people don't remember their Baccalaureate speaker as a result, so I figure I'm pretty safe. There are a few things that I would like to share this morning, however:

There are mixed feelings in this room. Commencement is both a closing of a chapter; an ending, and a beginning. Some of you can't wait to start that new chapter, and for others, you're still wondering how the time flew, and how you will manage to leave this place, that you have learned to call home, behind.

As we are now assembled in the literal foundation of St. Andrew's School this morning, know that it is not a coincidence that this experience, this School, will become a foundation in your lives. We will head upstairs, into the bright sunshine, you will graduate, and then you are off into the wide world. What you have accomplished here, who you've become and what you have contributed to the life of this school can never be erased, or taken for granted. And as you hear alumni talk often of this place, it is special, and will never be totally gone from your lives. You will always have the knowledge you gained here, the friendships and the relationships you formed.

But this place would not have meant so much without the people. You have much to be proud of. Today we celebrate you. As a class you have accomplished so much during your time at St. Andrew's. You have: won two girls' lax state championships, won boys' tennis States, won a boys' lax championship, broke school records in swimming, including a 200 free relay that has won States 3 years in a row, competed on a girls' volleyball team that earned the best record in School history, won the Cannon back this fall, sung at the White House, made DE state orchestra, worked on the first Habitat build

in Middletown, worked toward greater sustainability on campus as a whole, put on an amazing production of *Annie Get your Gun*, with an amazing Annie, made real headway in making St. Andrew's a thoughtful, open and accepting place w/great GSA leadership, and that is just the tip of the iceberg! You handled the college process with grace and resilience...not to mention all of the incredible talents, and humor and wit you shared with us during the Retrospective, and all the little things you did every day to make us smile, make us proud of you, and make us believe in the goodness of humanity. We've learned a lot from you and alongside you. While we'd like to take some credit for all of your greatness, we've been here to guide you on *your* journey, to support and nurture you as you learned who you are, and who you want to be.

The world is an overwhelming and uneasy place. Change is a scary thing, but it can also be empowering. In your short lives you've already dealt with too much tragedy. So often I have worried about the world we have left you to deal with, clean up and make right. What have we done to raise you in a loving world? In a peaceful world? With a secure future? But then, I'll come in in the morning, and one of you will tell me about an idea, I'll hear your questions to Paul Farmer, I'll sit in on a class and be wowed with your intellectual fervor, I'll see you rallying each other and giving your all no matter what the score on the board, I'll see you playing with Teddy Doyle, I'll read one of your college essays, or we'll have a great conversation on the way to town, and I'll think, "Oh thank goodness! We're not all doomed!" As Mr. Roach reminds us, true fulfillment is there for the taking if you are willing to choose the path less traveled at your age—the path of true engagement, a love of learning, and an understanding of what is right. College is just another stop along your journey—not the final destination. Take what you have learned here and pass it on. That will keep this place, this experience, alive. That will allow you to embrace change, to enter all that is new with confidence and conquer it—it will allow you to understand what is truly important in this world. After all, you do have this strong foundation underneath you that you have built to always keep you standing tall. Your gift to us will be when you leave your part of the world a better place.

This morning your journey really begins. You have a light, an optimism, a drive and a spirit that is so precious, and so distinct. I pray you not lose that. I pray that you find your voices, find your confidence and find your passions. I pray that you find fulfillment in your lives and work. I pray that you leave this place, safe in the knowledge that no matter how far you go, what life you choose, or how you choose to live it, we will always be here to support you. Learning is never done. It is lifelong if you embrace it. You are always welcome here; and beyond this place, these people that surround you, that love you—your friends, your family, will always be there for you. On this day, both a beginning and an end, I pray that you may know strength, love, and peace. Amen.