

Good afternoon Bishop Sullivan, Ms. Boyle, Father Perry, visiting priests and deacons, Ms. Dennen, Administration, Faculty, Members of the Board of Trustees, Parents, Family, Friends, and the class of 2019.

When we first walked through the doors of Holy Spirit our freshman year, none of us believed graduation was a day that would ever come. Now we sit here wondering what happened to all the time between us trying to bang open our first lockers to us trying to figure out if our tassels are supposed to go on the left or right side of our caps.

Looking out at my fellow graduates, something distinct comes to mind with every face I come across. Each face I see brings to mind a name. Each face brings to mind a story. More than that, each face I see elicits some sort of emotion because I recognize all of you from some part of my life. There are many schools where I would be giving this speech to classmates whose faces I wouldn't even recognize, let alone be able to attach a name. I cherish the fact that I am familiar with every person in my graduating class, even if I am not necessarily close with them. This is partly due to the relatively small size of our class. Yet there is still something to be said about the tight-knit family we have built among ourselves over the past four years.

At this point, many of you are probably beginning to daydream. I'm sure some of you are sitting there thinking about the past. Maybe you are missing the simplicity of your daily routines. Maybe you are regretting doing or not doing something a few years back. Now is not the time to dwell on the past. It is a time to reflect on the past and use your experiences to prepare for the future. We made our mistakes yesterday so we could go on with our lives today.

Although we do not want our parents to know we are aware of it, we still have plenty of learning to do. It can seem like a daunting task to have to restart our lives in new places with new people. But the thing is, the old isn't going anywhere. In the age of technology, we still have each other's words of advice and encouragement at our fingertips. Sure we will miss being with each other every day, but in no time at all we'll be meeting up at the Thanksgiving Day football game after not having seen each other for several months. We will get to share all our new experiences with one another and of course reminisce about the past. It is our time apart that will let us appreciate our time together.

As we move on to the next stage of our lives, we will begin to gain more independence. Many of us, including myself, are ecstatic about not having to worry about parents questioning everything we do or teachers making us wear our sweaters on that rare 60 degree February day. However, we all need to recognize that with this newfound independence comes a new level of responsibility for ourselves. For years the seemingly overbearing adults in our lives have been preparing us to make the right decisions and to take pride in the way we present ourselves. Now, it is our turn. It is our turn to hold that responsibility. It is our turn to make sure when we find ourselves in new situations, that our character doesn't waver and we continue to carry ourselves as the strong-willed Spartans we have become.

None of us can be sure of what our futures hold. No matter what our plans may be now, life has a way of stepping in the way and making our paths a little less straight forward than we had anticipated. Just remember, adversity is normal. Instead of giving in, we need to overcome the adversities we face, if only to prove to ourselves we can. Holy Spirit has taught us that it is okay to have a strong support system to help us through difficult times. More importantly, it has taught us to BE that support system for others when they are facing challenges of their own.

Like several others in this class, I am part of a Holy Spirit family. Since the day I was born, I was on a path to become a Spartan. Some of you may have chosen this path in eighth grade. Others halfway through high school. Regardless of when we decided to commit ourselves to this school, today signifies our perpetual membership in the Holy Spirit community. By the end of this ceremony, we will have a new role in the Holy Spirit Tradition as we join those who came before us as alumni of Holy Spirit High School.

The most important lesson we have learned in our Catholic education is to have faith in God. No matter where your life leads you, remember your faith. People often turn to God when times get tough but do not forget to thank Him when you are at your happiest as well.

On behalf of the class of 2019 I would like to thank our families, friends, coaches, teachers, and most especially our parents for helping us make it to today. All our accomplishments would not have been possible without support from those around us.

To my fellow graduates, I wish you the best in all your future endeavors. Never forget where you came from or the people who have helped you along the way. Thank you.