

2014 Salutatorian Address

By

Bryan David Livaudais

Welcome Father Matthew, Brother Ray, faculty, distinguished guests, parents, family, friends, and fellow graduates. It is my special honor and privilege to welcome all of you to the one hundred and third commencement exercise for the graduating class of 2014. On behalf of the entire senior class, I would like to gratefully thank everyone in this congregation. For without the unwavering support provided by each and every one of you here, our past five years at Saint Paul's could not have happened. Whether it be our teachers and their remarkable patience in dealing with hundreds of hormone-driven adolescents, our families and their perpetual impact on shaping our moral character, or our parents and the innumerable sacrifices that they have made to send us to such a great school, you have all had an **invaluable** influence on our lives, and we thank you for all that you have done.

It is undeniable that five years ago we thought this day would never come. Sitting on stage in front of a thousand plus people preparing to receive a high school diploma, signaling the end of the days that we will walk this campus as students. It is hard to believe. But it is not right for us to think of the past as something that will never return. Rather, our experience at Saint Paul's is an undying entity which will live with us forever and guide us fiercely into the future.

Today may mark a new chapter in our lives, but the first several pages have already been filled... with times of joy, success, and brotherhood which have been engraved into our memories... with the Lasallian message of morality, faith, and

service deep at our core... and with a five-star education that will provide us with a firm foundation for whatever may lie on the path ahead.

We are preparing to explore uncharted territory. No longer are our lives dictated by others. The state of our laundry hampers is now left completely to our own discretion. Yes, our wallets may soon be emaciated from hunger, and our beds suffering from sloppiness, but the lessons and skills which we have learned will lead us unscathed into tomorrow, and the world will soon meet 166 young men ready to tackle its hardships and to seize all that it has to offer.

Our lives start today, and with this new mystery comes unmatched opportunity. Instead of chance being the force that fashions our destiny, we now have the ability to make our own chances. We must take our skills and talents, finely polished by our Lasallian education, and put them to good use. Greater success lies just around the corner, ready to be found. And with the strength of the pack stamped into our blood, we are ready to find it.

2014 Valedictorian Address

By

Grant Michael Landwehr

Michael Joseph Burke

Peter James Yager

Zachary Lee Albright

Grant:

As I stand here before you with my 165 brothers, it is hard for me to believe that the past five years of our life culminate this morning with a single, albeit special and well done - thank you Brother Ray - ceremony. Over the years we have spent a little over 1000 days of our life in high school and have acquired a vast variety of knowledge. Learning how to do math in Mrs. Cullen's class, how to woo a girl with poetry in Mr. Morlas's class, and how to play a guitar in Mr. Lipps's class, of course, will assist us in whatever path we choose. These daily experiences we have garnered are the things that we remember, but not what we take away as a whole - they are pieces to a puzzle we have only just begun to put together. What we have been taught is how to study, how to learn, how to pray, and how to love each other, and no matter what endeavor we select next, we will always have been blessed with a place to grow up and mature both physically and spiritually, so today, what does this school represent to us? I'm sure it has come to mean a myriad of different things for everyone here. Personally, it has come to represent both emotion and excitement. Here at Saint Paul's excitement is ever present: tailgating for football games, watching the final goal at the state championship soccer game,

dressing up to look our best for prom, and especially Brother Ray's vocabulary words at honor roll breakfast. There truly never is a dull moment here.

On the emotional side: singing the fight song at assembly, the bonding experiences of senior retreat, and 875 male voices singing Rise Up, Oh Men of God at a mass celebrating the 100th anniversary of the school, create an emotional atmosphere unmatched by any other school around. My fellow valedictorians believe that to explain the true impact that Saint Paul's has on our lives, the concept of this amazing place needs to be divided into three parts of speech and they will each describe Saint Paul's as a noun, verb, and adjective.

Michael:

In our freshman year, Brother Ray told his English class that the OED, or the Oxford English Dictionary, contained every word in the English language. I guess I took this too literally when I went online, paid the thirty dollar monthly fee with my parents' credit card, and looked up the word "Saint Paul's." Unfortunately to our dismay, the OED let us down. However, I looked in the Burke English Dictionary and found this: Saint Paul's, a noun, which is a group of men that welcomes all and draws its strength from each of its members to accomplish something great. The cross country team portrayed this definition when it used the talents of freshmen, sophomore and senior runners to win a state title. Furthermore, our class seamlessly assimilated new brothers into our community, and, to put in lightly, we would not be the same without them.

The Burke English Dictionary continues and describes Saint Paul's as a collection of young Winston Churchills that never gives in. After losing two years in a row to the School Who Must Not Be Named, Coach Moser and the soccer team did not quit. They trained harder and finished 10th in the nation.

And the last definition entry is a direct quotation from Mr. Victor Morlas's class. When he was not speaking about nature, he shared with his students the phrase, "Carpe Diem," seize the day. Saint Paul's is a home where its residents, our graduating class, take nothing for granted. We understood the wonderful gift of friendship, brotherhood, and dashing good looks that our school's name has privileged onto us. We have shared with each other, our teachers, and our families this time we call high school and have not spoiled the opportunity.

Peter:

After five years of walking the hallowed grounds of St. Paul's, I have come to fully appreciate the numerous actions that make St. Paul's the unique school that it is. When I picture the greater concept of this school, I think of it in terms of several verbs. As a result, I have come up with a definition of St. Paul's in order to try to condense my views into one tangible concept. St. Paul's (verb) - to excel at any task whether academic or athletic, to care for others, to overcome adversity. The three verbs I have chosen, excel, care, and overcome, fit the school and especially the class of 2014 very well. We have excelled in the classroom through decisive back to back mu alpha theta state championships and being distinguished with the Golden Achievement Award from LSU for our performance in Spring testing. We have dominated in athletics and matched any other previous class's accomplishments as seen through countless district, regional, and state championships. We even intertwined athletics and academics and produced an impressive 34 students named to all-state academic teams. As Brother Ray would say, "After the pencils shavings ran out, and the turf on the field settled, we acquitted ourselves in an exemplary manner." In particular, our class has made caring for others a priority. Not only do we genuinely care for each other or a

struggling pre-freshman, we even showed concern for Gutter, a stray cat that roamed the campus, by providing him food and eventually a permanent home. St Paul's, though, is also about overcoming adversity, something we all proved could make us stronger and more united following the death of our brother, Justin. Justin excelled at photography, cared for the environment, and overcame engineering problems in his work with wolves on wheels. By attending St. Paul's, these verbs have become ingrained in us, just as they were present in Justin, and will be valuable as we move onto the next phases of our lives. We have been well prepared throughout high school, and it will be up to us whether or not we want to excel and make use of the tools St. Paul's has given us. We must continue to show care for others and ourselves and live out the Lasallian mission that has been placed before us. Finally, we must show fortitude to overcome adversity because nothing worthwhile will come easily as we move into the next phase of our lives.

Zachary:

Saint Paul's the adjective: "to be Saint Paul's," if you will. Well, what does it mean "to be Saint Paul's?" I guess it depends upon whom you ask. If you asked Brother Ray, he'd more than likely say a Saint Paul's student is "exemplary." I need not explain to you how we are exemplary; our numerous academic, athletic, and spiritual achievements certainly speak volumes for themselves.

Now, travel back in time with me to our eighth grade graduation. Picture our pre-pubescent selves harmoniously squealing the same songs that we have sung for you today. Hard to believe it has been four years. In the time since then, we have physically grown into the men who now stand before you today. But our physical maturation is merely a visual representation of the far deeper psychological and spiritual growth which has taken place.

So now I want you all to ask yourselves, where else could one get 166 18-year-old young men to sit perfectly upright and passionately sing songs proclaiming their love of Christ.... without protest, may I add. Ladies and gentlemen, if you responded with "nowhere," then you would be correct. We certainly have been blessed to attend an institution that encourages us to grow in such a manner, but only through our interaction with our fellow classmates have we truly become exemplary. Just as iron sharpens iron, friends sharpen the minds of one another. In my time here, I have been in the presence of so many brilliant individuals that it is simply impossible to remain average. Brother Ray, you are right. We are exemplary.

Our greatest task in this next chapter of our lives is to surround ourselves with people like the class of 2014. We must find Saint Paul's in the world around us. We need to continue to be and, more importantly, encourage others to be exemplary.

And when Brother Ken's nimble fingers have ceased to perform George Frederic Handel's water music, and our caps have found their place in the majestic blue sky, we will have left Saint Paul's better people than we had arrived. And there is nothing of greater value than this. The Class of 2014 will Rise Up as men of God.