

Salutatorian Address

Kyle Edward Cleveland

John Michael Dubreuil, Jr.

And

Burke Stephen Irwin

Jack: Father Matthew, Father Joseph, Brother Ray, Faculty, Family, and Friends, The Class of 2015 would like to formally welcome all of you to the 104th Commencement Ceremony of Saint Paul's School. The 179 men on this stage are proud to join you this afternoon in God's presence to celebrate an important transition, to turn the page and formally conclude this chapter of our lives.

And what a truly incredible chapter it has been.

Burke, Kyle and I have been allotted a grand total of six minutes to deliver this address, to cover the contents of that entire chapter while affirming and ushering in the next. It was not easy for us to keep it so brief. Our class's illustrious past, our incredible present, and our imminent future are nearly impossible to sum up in so few words – although, thanks to Brother Ray's vocabulary lessons, we're probably better equipped than most.

There are six words that sum up our past few years on campus fairly well, and none of them are Latin phrases or 12-letter Shakespearian concoctions. (Sorry, Brother.) They're actually printed across that wall over there: *Rise Up, O Men of God*.

Whether or not we were always fully aware of it, that phrase has guided us constantly throughout our five years here. Saint Paul's has established in us a tenacious drive to Rise Up in everything we do – we Rise Up as students, as athletes, as friends, and as worshippers. We've Risen Up during Unity Day

testimonials in the theater, during spontaneous class-wide karate dojos on the lawn, and at the end of every President/Principal's Assembly when Tabor stands up and screams "SEENIORSSS" and nobody hesitates to join in unison. You can see our class's unity in the soccer fatheads that emerge in our bleachers, you can hear it in the inside jokes we share, and you can feel it in our undying school spirit. I'm truly proud to count myself among these 179 guys.

Before I pass the baton, I'd like to personally thank all of you who helped us to meet our fullest potentials during our time here. It's been slightly surreal for me, Rising Up through the years alongside brothers and mentors to become the Men of God we are. Saint Paul's really is a good place to grow up.

Burke: As you just heard Jack talk about the past, I will talk about the present. At present, seated before you are 179 young men with 179 different paths that lay ahead of them. Each path is daunting in its own way. Each path requires a special set of skills that only one of these young men possesses. Each path is as unique as the man who will travel it. St. Paul's School has prepared us to make this journey. At present, sitting before you are 9 students recognized by the national merit corporation, 2 perfect ACT scores, a presidential scholar, gifted artists, a stand up comedian, state recognized musicians, talented bands, dedicated actors, and champion athletes, namely the best high school soccer team in the nation and the Louisiana Gatorade player of the year. Each of us strives to be great in our own way, not only for ourselves, but also for you, our friends and family. We are here, we made it, because of your support, your advice, your love. To the moms who stayed up late helping us with our science fair projects, thank you. To the dads who are our undying role models, we are here by following your lead. To the siblings, whether you look up to us, or we look up to you, all of this, our success, our triumphs, we did it because of the love we have for you. At present, seated before you are 179 uncertain men who do not know their paths yet. Not all of us know what we want to do with our lives; not all of us know what we are passionate about. All we do know is that we are here now and that we are grateful for the love and support we have received. As we look to the future, we know that the lessons and experiences we have learned at St. Paul's will help us to navigate our chosen paths.

Kyle:

Everyone here has the sense that right now is one of those moments where we are influencing the future. The future, the land of uncertainty and the place that we dare to venture. We submit to that dare because we have been equipped with the tools to surpass uncertainty and to build something new, something great. We are the basis of resolute success, and through our desired fields and paths, we will better the future. This is not easy, but who wants easy? St. Paul's does not promote success through the easy way. Rather, we succeed through hard work, determination, and faith. We must strive for the distant desires and no matter what, don't settle. As Steve Jobs states, "Older people sit down and ask, 'What is it?' but the boy asks, 'What can I do with it?'"

This question is only the beginning. It should linger behind each one of us to act as a lasting reminder to push harder and do more. Therefore, I give a solemn promise that my actions will strive to surpass the chorus of words and prove that these words are the beginning of something better and the product of actions already achieved. I challenge you to make the same promise and to always ask, "What can I do with it?", and then do more. Just as St. Paul's has challenged us time and time again to make courageous choices and to do ordinary things extraordinarily well. I leave you with this. We may want to become lawyers, doctors, teachers, or members of the armed forces. Regardless of the path that our lives may take... don't settle. Because settling is cowering away from the impossible. But, rather stand strong because we are possible. Possible to do amazing things, possible to break down the barrier. For we are the building blocks of the future. The future is in our hands and although we may fail, we must get back up, and keep fighting, we must rise up as we have done before as brothers. And most of all, stay hungry, stay humble, and live exemplary because we will rise up as the 104th graduating class of St. Paul's and as men of God, and go forward into our future, the unknown, with spirit and faith and insurmountable courage.

Valedictory Address

Matthew David Baldone

George James Cazenavette V

Maxwell Jefferson Gold

Ryan Joshua Keller

Connor Young Lu

Connor:

Reflecting on the entire Saint. Paul's experience in a short window of time seems like an almost impossible task; so much can happen in any given five years, and these five years are those in which the most changes take place. We found that a practical way to put this time period into perspective was to treat it as a collective story. It can be thought of as a play or a novel or an Adam Sandler movie, but regardless, Brother Ray taught us that all stories follow a planned cause to effect sequence of events providing the framework for the resolution of opposing forces. We're all no doubt familiar with Freytag's pyramid, the diagram of the action of a story, so I have been tasked with explaining the first section of that period, the exposition, or eighth grade.

The eighth grade is a vital part of St. Paul's, even though it's not really part of the "pyramidal" structure of the plot and nobody cares about the flat land in front of the Pyramids of Giza, but we'll ignore that. The entire point of an exposition is to create a setting for the actual plot to take place. Eighth grade here at St. Paul's is exciting because we get to literally set the scene for the story ahead of us, and there are so many scenes to set that it almost becomes overwhelming. It appeared at that time that we really could just do anything; I remember on get involved day, I signed this circulating sheet of paper to join the pirate club. Though my career as a pirate never took off, eighth grade really was what set the stage for

our next four years. That's when I started playing lacrosse and meeting all of the people here that I have come to know so well, and it's when I started becoming the person I am today.

I reflect on this part of the story, the exposition, because this foundation we laid for ourselves in eighth grade had a profound impact on how we built ourselves up. In the words of Matt Smith, The Eleventh Doctor, "We are all different people all through our lives and that's okay, that's good you've got to keep moving so long as you remember all the people that you used to be."

Matthew:

In the visual representation of plot structure known as Freytag's pyramid, the inciting incident lays the foundation at the base of the pyramid to allow the rising action to develop. The story truly begins with the inciting incident, as everything prior to it is merely back story. Freshman year at Saint Paul's symbolically represents the inciting incident for the story of the Class of 2015.

Not to detract anything from the other wonderful teachers I had during my time at Saint Paul's, but I would say that some of my most memorable classroom experiences came from my teachers as a freshman. We received a wealth of information and enjoyed listening to many stories that we will cherish for long after we leave this campus. Our teachers left a lasting impression as they delivered the Lasallian mission of our school to center on students and be attentive to their needs in every single class: quite fitting considering Saint Paul's celebrated its 100th birthday during September of that same year. As the inciting incident for the celebration of that momentous occasion, the entire student body and faculty came together to form a fifty-yard wide star designed by our geometry class on the turf in Hunter Stadium. The star was perfectly proportioned thanks to the assiduous work of our class and Mr. Pichon, of course. The iconic image that resulted now rests in La Salle Hall in a hallway frequented by hundreds of students every week.

Freshman year again acts as the inciting incident because it is then that we began to become solidified in the brotherhood of Saint Paul's School. New friendships continued to grow every day as we congregated outside at lunch. While we still had not completely unified, the class began to meld. With the end of ninth grade came the cue for the rising action of sophomore year to gracefully unfold.

Max:

Saint Paul's traditionally refers to itself as "a good place to grow up." When I stepped on campus for my first day in eighth grade, I was scared. I hadn't grown yet. I had braces. I didn't even bring my phone to school in fear that I might get in trouble. I came to Saint Paul's with kids from my grade school, but I knew very few boys from other schools. Over the course of the year, things changed. I changed. I grew. We all grew up at Saint Paul's, literally. As we spent more time with our classmates, as we interacted more with our teachers, as we sat through principal's assemblies, Saint Paul's started to define us. I may not share a religious background with the Lasallian tradition, but it has affected all of us greatly. As our high school careers continued, we found ourselves a part of the inclusive community that Saint Paul's boasts. That is not to say that Saint Paul's is a great fit for everyone, but I can say that we would not be who we are today without Saint Paul's. I am here because I did well in my classes. I cannot take all the credit though. Obviously, credit goes to my parents, but I cannot help but attribute my success to the challenges issued by the teachers in each and every class as well as the competitive, constructive drive to out-do my classmate, George.

The Class of 2015 has a student attending a military academy, it has students aspiring to be musicians, it has students who have earned athletic scholarships. We all are thankful for our time here. We have grown. I am sure we are all excited to move on to bigger things, but I will never deny that I will miss Saint Paul's. I could not be more thankful for the time I have spent here, for the endless patience of my teachers despite my tendency to talk in class, for the careful attention of Brother Ray, Mr. Watkins, and all of the administration in ensuring every student feels at home here, and for the time I have been afforded to grow into someone that can make my family and Saint Paul's proud.

Ryan

Junior year became the time of real searching and discovery; searching for who we were as individuals and as an entire class, trying to find our true places in a sea of 179 other colleagues in the same situation. I myself had a very personal experience in this process of searching by trying to discover who I really was in

my own times of hardships. Moving from Miami to a whole new place, or a whole new country as some may call it, I was struck with an unknown future before me and no map or instruction manual I could use to traverse it. So lost was I, that it took the wills of both my parents and my now closest friends to guide me down my own path of discovery in the form of a push to attend one of this school's incredible football games. At first, I'll admit, I was a bit stubborn and unwilling to follow the motion, but, persistence finally forced my hand and I experienced something that I had never seen in my seventeen years. The energy, the life, the sense of community, all combined into one blissful atmosphere. That fateful night opened my eyes to the realization of what this place truly is.

Merriam-Webster defines the climax of a story as "the point of highest dramatic tension or a major turning point in the action." Here in time, we took a giant leap in our transformation from a crowd of individuals and collection of cliques into one, big, collective, functioning family. We celebrated monumental state championships in soccer, cross country, and math competition, multiple district championships, and our usual places on the podium of the literary rally. We also took our defining PSAT test, and embarked on a trip to maximum security internment at Angola. If interacting with 6300 inmates in the largest maximum security prison in the U.S. didn't set us on a better track in life, I don't know what will.

Junior year is when we had another gulp from the chalice of everlasting brotherhood; the bond bound not by space and time but by the spiritual connection that we all share with each other. Even though we all had our specific niches in the school whether it be the football team, soccer team, or even those of us that stayed for Mrs. Jan Gardner's study sessions for exam week, we all realized that we are part of one body and we must be there for each other in good times and bad. Sometimes I refer to what we all stand for as a giant jigsaw puzzle. The image that these puzzles create is only complete if every little piece is in the exact place where it is meant to be. Only together, with the strength of our brothers to depend on, can we create something beautiful in life.

George:

And now we come to the end of our narrative: senior year, the speech that is better than Max's, the falling action and the denouement. By August of 2015, we had made it through four years of high school, and then only our senior year, the grand finale, remained. Now, all of our coursework is in the past; we survived the final six or seven classes we needed to pass. We made our own march through the arch and received our class rings. We are ready to graduate.

Here we are. Graduation day. Five years of Saint Paul's have led up to this moment. At this point, most of our plans include college, the military, or career training. As we all sit here on stage, I cannot help but think about how this group of young men will never be together in whole again after today. As we all leave Saint Paul's, we are leaving behind a tight-knit community of brotherhood. This is truly something special that we have here at Saint Paul's. Since this is the last time all of us will be together, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for being brothers.

As we leave this assembly center today, we will be stepping into a whole new world of reality, free to do whatever we want with our lives. We will all begin an entirely new chapter to which the past 18 years were just the exposition. As one story ends, another begins. Freytag's pyramid repeats itself.

I leave you with a quote from one of my favorite Tolkien characters. "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us." As we move on to the next chapter of our lives, we have the freedom to do what we wish. Yet, our time on this Earth is limited, so I urge all of you to choose wisely what you do with your time. Go out into the world. Carry on the mission of Saint Paul's. Rise up, oh men of God.