

I have prayed to find the perfect words to say to you guys this morning to hopefully touch your hearts, guide your steps and to leave you with words of advice as memorable and extraordinary as your presence has left here at St. Anne. So, as your principal here are some things I want you to remember:

- This will always be your home. Return to it when you feel lost, anxious or overwhelmed by high school
- We will always be your family. We still want to celebrate your successes and guide and comfort you through your disappointments. Keep in touch. You are a celebrity in these halls. Don't forget your adoring fans.
- You leave here with a strong faith. Lean on it, let it guide your steps as you move into the next chapter in your life. Talk to God daily, ask Him for what you need, He will answer you. Be still and listen to Him, but also remember to thank Him daily for your many blessings.
- Cherish and keep these friendships. These are your brothers and sisters. They share the same morals and values as you do. Stay close to each other, hold each other accountable for good choices, and keep each other on the right track through the temptations and pressures that will present themselves in the new few years.
- Be the leaders I know you to be. You're going into a new environment full of changes and challenges. Don't be afraid to stand out in the crowd and step forward and lead. I've watched you guys lead 500 students every day all year. They look up to you and listen to you because your character, actions and behaviors are worthy of being followed. Continue to be a person others want to follow and should follow.
- Don't lose the tradition of beginning each of your days in prayer as we do together each morning. Thank God first, then ask Him for His guidance in your day. Pray with your friends, for your friends and ask for their prayers for you.
- You will experience a great deal more freedom and independence in the next few years than you've had at St. Anne. With this freedom comes responsibility. These years here have served to prepare you to recognize what's right and wrong, to build your moral compass. Always remember, your true character is determined by what you do, the choices you make, and how you behave when no one is watching. Always make your choices as though everyone is!

Now, as a Mom and someone who loves you like you are my own, I want you to remember these things that I tell my girls:

- You are the reason your parents know unconditional love. Your birthday is the happiest day of their lives. The moment you were born, they understood their purpose in life. You make them proud in a way they will never be able to put into words. Don't ever take this love for granted, don't ever allow anyone to make you feel that you are not special in the way you are to them.
- Your parents truly don't think they know everything. However, they have already been through all you are about to experience, have already made the mistakes, faced the heartaches. Because of this they do have pretty good advice to offer you. Take it to heart, it comes from theirs.
- If a situation doesn't feel quite right, it's not, get out of it quickly, and trust your intuition, your quiet inner voice. That is God speaking to you quietly trying to redirect you.
- Don't chase anyone. People that belong in your life will want to be in it and won't require you to beg them to do so. You are truly extraordinary young men and women. Extraordinary...never allow anyone to treat you as though you are less than the most special and important person they have ever encountered.
- These next few years are a time of growth for you. A time to reach beyond yourself to begin to see where you fit into the bigger picture, into the world around you and to ask yourself what you can contribute to that world and to the people around you. It's a time of great opportunity to rise or to fall and there are great lessons in each.
- Boys look at me...if you wouldn't say it to your mom, don't text it to a girl
- Girls, if you wouldn't show the picture to your dad, don't send it to a boy.
- You guys can't take back anything you put in print or in a picture, no matter what the app says, once it's out there it's forever.
- No One expects you to be perfect. None of us are. Your best effort is always good enough-in sports, in grades, in choices. You may not always receive recognition for your efforts and your successes. As important as that is to all of us, now is a good time in your lives to learn

that happiness and success come from within. Don't give anyone the power over your life to control those things except God and you. Never stop doing your best just because someone doesn't give you credit.

- You will make mistakes, I do every day. Have the patience and the open heart to listen to the advice of those sitting behind you, who love you, whose only goal is to spare you even the smallest heartbreak, listen closely to them so that your mistakes become what they are meant to be, lessons to make you better, make you stronger., to build your character,
- Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.
- What comes easy won't last long. What lasts long won't come easy. It's your choice to decide which you want.
- Don't spend so much time looking down at what everyone else is doing on social media that you miss out on the people and the life going on in front of you.
- Situations, mistakes and problems you face in the next few years will seem like the end of your world at times. I promise you they aren't! Some are harder to solve than others, some carry heavier consequences than others, some bring bigger heartaches than other, but there is always a solution, always an answer, always another day. Talk to your parents when you feel hopeless. Your choices may disappoint them at times or even make them angry, however those feelings are temporary and will fade, their love for you will not. Don't ever be afraid to ask them for help no matter what situation, they will never tell you no, they will never let you down, they will never fail you. Fall seven times guys, stand up 8.

It is a rare and precious gift for someone other than your parents to have the opportunity to watch you guys grow up in the way that we have been able to watch you guys grow physically, academically, emotionally and spiritually . thank you for the blessing of spending the past three years with you. You have truly left footprints on our hearts and on this school. These halls will definitely be a little less exciting and a lot less entertaining without you in them each day. I can't wait to see the footprints you will each leave on this world.

I love you and I'm so proud of you!

