

Karsten Brown, Outstanding Graduate of the CHS Class of 2019
Commencement Address
May 18, 2019

Good afternoon Class of 2019, faculty, family, and friends. It is my pleasure to share with you a reflection on my time at Catholic High and how it has shaped me into the person I am today. As I think about the past four years, I think about the relationships I have made, the things I have learned, and how they have given me the desire to remain determined to chase my dreams and achieve them. Out of this desire, three pillars come to mind.

The first pillar is **faith**. As a student at Catholic High, I was consistently placed in an environment that allowed me to explore and grow in my walk with God. This has proven to be extremely valuable because sometimes life presents circumstances that will test your faith. The positive environment at Catholic High as well as the Spirit of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and their teachings, have challenged me to deepen my faith and allowed me to become more aware of the importance of building a legacy of faith.

The second pillar is **brotherhood**. One thing that Catholic High has taught me is to always be there for my brothers, because we are our brothers' keeper. I can recall many times during the past four years, where I was struggling with something and one of my brothers was able to help me, and you are a huge part of why I am here. Thank you for supporting me and pushing me to work harder in order to achieve what I thought was impossible. It is because of you, that I have developed a higher sense of determination and willingness to do what is right.

The third pillar is **service**. A huge part of what Catholic High has taught me is how to live a life of leadership that is centered around service. We have been taught how to become

servant leaders. Serving agencies such as St. Vincent de Paul, Mission Amatonagas and Habitat for Humanity have challenged us to become men and use our gifts and talents to help others. I believe that this is the most important thing that will set us apart as alumni of this great institution because it will allow us to go into the world with the understanding that if you want to lead, you must first serve others and learn to follow.

The pillars of **faith**, **brotherhood** and **service** have allowed me to establish a firm foundation and have helped to shape me as a man. They have shown me how to evolve and extend a helping hand towards my peers, as well as my country, while strengthening my character, leadership abilities and most importantly my love for God.

In closing, I want to challenge you all, especially my brothers in the Class of 2019, to set goals and do whatever it takes to achieve them. Write them down, put them on your door so you see them every time you walk past. No dream is too big, no idea is too small. Set a goal that is so crazy, you can't sleep at night. One that captivates your attention so much, it makes you want to jump out of bed in the morning and do everything you can to achieve it. If you can't stop thinking about it, then you will never stop working towards it. And in the words of Henry Ford, "when everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it." So spread your wings and fly, achieve the unachievable, accomplish the unbelievable and remember that although you cannot go back and make a brand new start, you can start today and work towards a brand new ending (Carl Bard).