

Kyle Becnel, CHS Class of 2019
Valedictory Address
May 18, 2019

Class of 2019: we have made it. After countless hours of studying, testing, practicing, and rehearsing, we have finally reached one of the most defining and memorable moments of our lives. As we officially become alumni today, our school calls us to remember that it is more than four; it is a lifetime. Now, this statement is something that we have all heard before, and it is something that many of us tend to dismiss or even poke fun at. It could not be more true, however, because Catholic High has given each and every one of us things that we will hold dearly for the rest of our lives.

We leave a school that has provided for us an exemplary education. Every year, our teachers spent countless hours devoting themselves to developing a curriculum that would teach us useful material that may apply to our scholastic futures. Nine of our classmates were recognized as National Merit Finalists, and six even scored the coveted 36 on the ACT. While not everyone reached such lofty accomplishments, all of us were given the opportunity to take part in an education that would shape not only our academic futures, but also our lives.

Regardless of what classes each of us took or at what level each of us was, our teachers helped us to learn essential life skills and lessons. We learned how to study, to take notes, to listen, to balance our time, and to prioritize. But even more so, Catholic taught us how to be thinking, rational, considerate men. Whether it was through evaluating a source for an English paper, interpreting a diagram for Science class, or debating a topic in Religion, we were taught to be independent, free-thinkers. Through our religion classes, the integration of the faith

throughout the school day and year, and the examples of our teachers, we were taught how to be loving, feeling, compassionate Christians.

Perhaps most importantly, however, Catholic has given us friendships that will last a lifetime. Whether it was through a sport, a club, or a class, we have forged strong, dependable friendships with our classmates. For me, being in the band and working for six hours every week in the fall after school to prepare our half-time show created what I know will be lifelong bonds with my peers. Being in sports and working together to win city, district, and state championships, year after year, brought others together. Still others came together in clubs and in classes, working both in and out of school to make a difference. We have all worked together, studied together, and grown together throughout our tenure at CHS, and in doing so, we have established lifelong memories and experienced unforgettable moments that will bond us forever.

And so, as we leave our school, I call on all of us to remember what our school has done for us. Catholic has given us a bright future ready for achievement, friendship, and brotherhood. It has given us unforgettable memories. It has given us a strong education. Most importantly, it has given us a bond, a brotherhood, that will unite us together forever.

Therefore, as we move forward in life and think back fondly to some memory from high school, whether it be winning a sports match, going to a club's convention, studying for and acing that one really difficult Patout test, showcasing our artistic abilities, or just hanging out with our friends, my hope is that we remember that it was our school that enabled us to have all these things. After all, with all that Catholic High has given to us, CHS is not really just four years, but rather something that will stay with us for the rest of our lives. Thank you, and go Bears.