



Commencement Greetings

Your Excellency, Bishop McManus, Commencement honorees Very Reverend Fr. Benoit Griere, Superior General of the Augustinians of the Assumption, Frances Hogan, Paul Carpentier, Janice and Mark Fuller, and members of the Board of Trustees, family and friends of the graduates, and members of the class of 2014, on behalf of the faculty, staff, and administration of Assumption College, I welcome you to this morning's commencement exercises.

My dear graduates, today you close a chapter in your journey of life as you prepare to leave Assumption College. I ask the graduates to please stand and turn around to face all those who have joined us here this morning. These are the people who have walked with you on this journey and have brought you to this happy day – your parents, who have sacrificed so much to

provide you with a quality education, your family and friends, spouses, and the faculty, staff, and administration of the College. Please show them your appreciation for all that they have done throughout your years at Assumption College.

During your freshman orientation in June 2010 I said to you and your parents that you were about to embark on a journey that would change you in ways that you could not imagine at that moment. The person you were four years ago, is not the same person you have become. There have been obvious transformations – you have changed physically (just compare your freshman ID photo and your senior yearbook photo); you have changed intellectually as you have gained knowledge and skills through your studies and academic experiences; you have changed socially through your participation in various clubs, activities, or athletics. These changes, however, would have happened at any institution of higher education. In the course of the last four years, a deeper and more profound transformation has taken place, a spiritual transformation – one that can best be summed up in the motto of this College, “until Christ be formed in you,” the motto that Fr. Emmanuel ‘Alzon, founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption, proposed as the sole aim of education. On your very first day of class in August 2010, this aim of education, was presented to you symbolically when you received the Assumptionist cross, which was engraved with the College’s motto. That cross was to serve as a symbol of the values that would inform the Assumptionist education you were beginning and today, on your last day as students at the College, we again give you the Assumptionist cross which you found on your seat to serve as a reminder in the years ahead of the values that animated your education and transformed your very being. Fr. d’Alzon likened education to “an ongoing Pentecost” whereby the being of students was refashioned “by communicating the power of life through the Father, intelligence through the Son, and love through the Holy Spirit.” Fr. d’Alzon believed that education, specifically the revival of Catholic education rooted in the Gospel would be of service to society and the Church, providing an alternative to the secular education that had come to dominate his society, not unlike what has happened in our society today. He gave education its stamp of excellence by integrating into education its civic, moral, philosophical, and religious references from the Christian faith.

We send you forth today from this beautiful campus not only with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead successful lives, but with a moral framework and a deeper faith that will allow you to lead a good life. Your education stands in contrast to the conventional views that dominate our society. Many believe that there is no such thing as absolute truth and that everyone has a right to determine his or her own destiny regardless of the means. Many today have been affected by the secularism, materialism, and relativism that is strangling our world. Many today believe that every point of view is equally valid. Many today espouse a self referencing individualism that evaluates everything in terms of what is best for the self rather than what is best for the common good. You, however, are the products of an educational philosophy that acknowledges universal and objective truth because in the process of learning during the last four years, you have come to appreciate the way in which God works within knowledge and reveals Himself. The Catholic college is called, as Pope Francis recently

reminded us, “to offer the Christian proposal, namely Jesus Christ as the meaning of life, of the cosmos, and of history.”

As graduates of Assumption College, it is your responsibility to bring into the world those values illumined by the eternal Word that you have encountered during your years at the College. As Saint John Paul II once stated, “The world you are inheriting is a world which desperately needs a new sense of brotherhood and human solidarity. It is a world which needs to be touched and healed by the beauty and richness of God’s love.” Because of the transformation that you have experienced as a student at Assumption, you are the instruments of God’s love that can heal this broken world by faithfully living out the vocation to which you have been called by God and which you have discovered during your time here.

Today is a day of celebration, but also one of responsibility. As you prepare to go forth from Assumption where your education has fostered a nobility of character, a mind open to infinite beauty, and a heart that banishes selfishness, along with the faculty, staff, and administration I congratulate you on all that you have accomplished and I challenge you to take what you have learned to lead a life beyond the self by contributing your time and talent in service to the community so as to create a better world for future generations.

At some point during your journey of these past four years, within each of you, a spark ignited a flame. A flame of duty, a flame of knowledge and a flame of passion for your chosen field. Allow that flame to be the light that others follow, for others to emulate. Be the light in the darkness of the world.

Congratulations and God bless you.