

Salutatorian Address - Juliette Cathleen Orr

When I was little, I was given this book called “The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh.” While it is a children’s story, I find myself still in love with it years later. In a way, I have found that when things in life become too complicated, I can turn to stories to simplify them and help me understand. One of the things it has helped me understand is how important good, healthy friendships are. On one of their many rambles through the Hundred Acre Wood, Winnie the Pooh said to Piglet, “If we didn’t stick together, we would be very lost indeed.” I know that I would be lost without the love and support of my friends and the community here at Seton. Friends are our anchors, our guides, and our strongholds. They comfort us in our sorrows, laugh with us in our joys, and stand strong with us amidst confusion. Everyone in this graduating class of 2020 has become a family. Ever since 7th grade, we have supported each other and encouraged each other along the path of holiness. We work, pray, and sacrifice together, and when one of us suffers, the whole community rallies around them, showering them with love and prayers. We have been given an exceptional education and are blessed to have been so well-instructed in the Faith. But now, we are leaving Seton. We will no longer be surrounded by everything that is good. Some of us will be studying or working in places that are hostile to our values; all of us live in a fallen world. Everything that we have been taught will be put to the test. We need to be ready for that. Especially in all of the chaos and lies of the world today, it is absolutely crucial to have friends that we can trust, friends that we would trust with our lives, and who will help us to continue to grow in our Faith. Our friends shape us into who we are; should we not take great care in choosing who has that power? We know from Mrs. Carroll’s amazing religion class that, as human persons made in the Image and Likeness of God, we were made for relationships with each other. We were not meant to fight this fight or run this race alone! In Genesis chapter 2 God even says, “It is not good for man to be alone.” It is so important, wherever we all choose to go in life after graduation, that we find a good community of people who will lift us up and support us in our journeys through life. Life is beautiful and good, but it can also be incredibly difficult at times. Personally, I quite often can be overwhelmed by the chaos and the twists and turns that life throws at me. Fear of the future can be paralyzing. But once again, “The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh” has the solution. Piglet is a character who is scared of the dark, the wind, and Heffalumps and Woozles. He is afraid of his own shadow! Yet, when he is with his friend Pooh, he can face anything! In his friend, he finds strength that he never knew he had. Even in the face of his worst fears, Piglet stands his ground, because he knows his friend is at his side. A good friend will also stand with his friend and help him to face any challenges that come their way. A worthwhile friend encourages and inspires one to become the best version of oneself possible. You can face anything, even heffalumps, when you have a faithful friend by your side.

The friendships I have made at Seton have made me a better person. Because of you all, I have grown to love my faith, and in you, I have found the courage to face my fears and challenges head on. Through your friendship, I have accomplished things I never thought were possible and you have inspired me to become so much greater than I ever thought I could be. I am truly blessed to have been a part of your family here at Seton. In the words of Winnie the Pooh, “how lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.” They say all good things must come to an end. Well, I don’t believe that. Graduation does not have to be the end of the friendships made at Seton. We can take with us everything we have learned and even continue to cultivate those friendships that have impacted us most. Good friendships are priceless, so cherish the ones that you already have and take great care in cultivating your friendships in the future. Now, I will leave you with one last thing I want you all to always remember: “you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.” Do not settle for mediocrity; strive for greatness. Surround yourself with people who will love you for who you are right now and who will inspire you to become the person God wants you to become.