

Dear Parents, Faculty and Staff of Seton School, Family and Friends, and possibly other parishioners who have wandered into the church simply looking to make a visit,

Thank you for coming to celebrate the Graduation of the Seton School's Class of 2022!

Parents, we would not be here without you. Thank you for being the primary educators of the young men and women here today. Thank you for encouraging, supporting, and instructing us. Thank you for the countless sacrifices that you have made every single day without question or complaint for each and every one of us.

Beloved Faculty, thank you for being the secondary educators of all of us graduates. Over the past six years, you have taught us Religion, Math, English, Science, History, and many other important subjects, and we simply can't thank you enough for all the time and effort you have spent in teaching all of us seniors.

And Class of '22, congratulations, we have finally made it! The journey has been long and hard, but here we are at last. When I was looking back on the past 6 years to think of all the things that could describe our class, the first word that came to mind was spirited.

Even in 7th grade, we finished 3rd in spirit week, which at the time was basically 1st because the juniors and seniors always came 1st and 2nd. We were so spirited that

after our 7th grade year, the incoming sevies weren't even allowed to design their own class t-shirts because ours were so good. I mean, what's not to love about neon orange? It may have made us look like traffic cones or imprisoned convicts, but I thought we looked pretty good, that may have been because I was the class rep that year that chose the color, but that's just me.

In 8th grade we took a break from the spirit week leaderboard, just to give the other classes a chance at success naturally. We're also generous and thoughtful.

Being in high school must've done something to us, maybe it was chanting with Mr Westoff in Religion 9 and doing toasts with grape juice, or inventing a very physical type of lunchtime basketball known as Battle Royale. Who's to say? I know some would say we might've had a little too much spirit, at least that's the only reason that I can think of why we were deducted 40 spirit week points for not joining the junior or senior mosh pit and starting our own at the final spirit week assembly in 9th grade.

And for some reason sophomore year is a little hazy, it was the year 2020 I believe. I vaguely remember masks and a quarantine, but I can't make rhyme or reason of it. A lot of it still doesn't make sense to me.

That aside, our last 2 years together have been pretty spirited. From inviting a whole police unit during a global pandemic (oh maybe that's what it was) to take a non socially distanced class photo with us, to climbing on top of Mrs. Carroll's house with

numerous helium balloons for the same purpose, our class in my opinion is definitely up there for being one of the most spirited classes at Seton. Some would say borderline crazy, but I would say we're just crazy spirited.

We also showed that this spirit could be channeled for truly noble purposes. We organized and led holy hours, and countless weekend trips to pray in front of abortion clinics. We also brought back the D.C. trip to visit the homeless. Class of '22, together we have given an example of a strong spirit for this school and for God, but my question for all of us is, how strong is that spirit really?

Not too long ago, an extremely powerful windstorm blew over a large maple tree at my grandparents' house. Thankfully it didn't cause much damage, but I asked myself, "How did this giant maple tree fall so easily?" The tree was about 50 feet tall, and the base was about 3 feet in diameter. After walking over and examining the area near the base of the tree, I found my answer. The roots of the tree were shallow and small and had easily snapped under the tremendous force of the wind pushing on the tree. The maple still lies where it fell, and its leaves are now withered and dead.

Class of '22, we're about to face the storms of life after high school, the likes of which we have never before experienced. We are all about to be tested in some way shape or form. We have been at Seton for six long years, but for what purpose? In the past, I have heard many students question why they go to this school, and so I ask all of you, why did you stay at this school? The road here definitely hasn't been easy, just

given the fact that the last week of 3rd quarter every year without fail was always filled with papers, projects, tests and quizzes, and a tiny bit of homework on top...with not much sleeping I might add, it would've been very easy to quit at any step of the way, yet here we are.

Six years ago, I remember our first monday mass as Seton students right here at All Saints. Fr. Juan was the celebrant, and he always was so joyful when he saw us at his church. But in his homily, he told us how, the older we got, year after year as students, the closer we would come to the Tabernacle and to Our Lord. That was the purpose of our Seton education, which culminates right here at graduation, to bring us closer to Our Lord and to prepare us for life away from Seton.

Seton has given us strong roots. We have spent a third of our lives at this school, and for some of us, this really was our home away from home, especially those of us who missed our parents in the carpool line and had to stick around for a while. Seton has given us the tools to go out and correctly make decisions for ourselves. It's our choice now to use those tools or not.

Fellow classmates, I am proud to have gone through Seton with each and every one of you. I can't tell you how much I'm going to miss being in high school with you guys. I'll miss going to sporting events with you all, I'll miss the Seton Surge fan base, I'll miss doing the spring musical with many of you, and I'll miss seeing you guys in class and in the hallways. You are an exceptionally talented group of individuals, and

I'm sure you all have bright futures ahead of you. It has been a great privilege getting to know all of you over the years.

So class of '22, this last time that we are all gathered together, my advice to you is, in the words of King Mufasa, "Remember who you are." Remember your roots here at Seton. Remember the memories that we have shared together over the years. Keep your spirit strong wherever you go, and make your faith your own. I wish you all the best of luck, and be assured of my prayers for all of you. Class of '22, and all here present, farewell, thank you, God bless.