

Friday, July 27th, 2012

Gustavo A. Grau

Colegio Jefferson

Class of 2012: XXII

## **Commencement: Anointing Our Saviors**

- *Salutations* -

Mrs. Silvia de Saiden

Mrs. Silvia Saiden de Navarro

All Faculty Members, Professors,

The Parent-Teacher Association Members

Friends and Family

and last but most importantly the Graduating Class of 2012

- *Jocose Introduction* -

Welcome! Please keep in mind that the emergency exits are located in the back and to the sides of the auditorium. If by any cause my speech crashes, please remember you cannot use your seats as a flotation device...They're rented. (Hmmm) Yeah, I know ... "this is supposed to be the serious speech!" But am I truly supposed to recite a few lines of verse and complicated metaphors about the meaning of life, faith, and future... No! I am supposed to inspire you by reciting few lines of verse about the meaning of life, faith and the future!

- *Solemn Body* -

I must say, that I am profoundly humbled being both part and in the presence of such a whetted, visionary, and humanely well-hearted group of young adults, and I hope that you can

endure the following minutes of discourse and accept them as a gift, considering you all have given me so very much throughout these years.

This is the end, isn't it? Then, I ask, why is it called a "Commencement Speech". While truthfully this cues the finale of our High School career, and for some an exciting and frightful leave from our native country, it is also true that we "commence" a new epoch of wondrous discoveries and adventures. Thus, we have gathered this morning, in fact, to anoint the saviors of our and future generations to come! A Great Generation! The Best of the Best!..and why? All because you have become the fruit from one of the best schools nationwide and soon you will be attending prime colleges...heh, no pressure!

Most of us would quiver at the sole idea of facing that cold, rough, noisy steel frame of the "real world", and we should! During the past four years we have witnessed the incessant downfall of the economy, the constant political filibuster around it, war, corruption, famine, and a behemoth of imminent disasters ours to inherit. Some of our loved ones have lost their jobs, and others have forsaken hope, but what frightens me the most is that we have merely stood and witnessed. The world has always been noisy and messy, contentious and complicated; we should expect to get roughed up. However, along the odyssey we will not only behold but also begin to partake in the solution, and gradually we shall cease to be the more thinly skinned or fainter of heart!

All this grand quagmire... ours to clean! But my friends, you have survived Ms. Mireya. I'm pretty sure we can work this one out! And we begin by assuming *Responsibility*. To me, it

englobes more than the ability to face the consequences of one's actions. It also relates to the wisdom necessary to accept the things you can't change and to the courage and strength to change those you can. It is more than a noun; it is a verb that envelops acting nobly whilst facing wretchedness and from time to time sharing other's workload along the way. Ladies and gentlemen, you have an incredible responsibility with yourselves, your families, and those whom you can help, and it is my candid hope that we will finally, wisely, and non-reluctantly take charge of this moral responsibility. But how? How can WE, face THAT!?

Thomas Jefferson notably insisted that "honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom" and I concur, in an odd manner. Honesty may be such an inconvenient virtue that it is difficult for us to assimilate rigorously. Even more so, Faith! *Faith*. And I reckon some of you already sigh in disbelief, but I'm alluding not to a cryptic or esoterically religious faith, but to the adamant, liberating, liable faith... Faith in oneself! It is imperative we understand that hereon forth most things will NOT be handed to us, as a matter of fact, most will attempt to TAKE something from us, and we will require that inner strength to face whatever insurmountably humongous, fire-breathing leviathan of an obstacle is put forth! Have faith in yourself, for the only individual you can tell the entire truth is yourself, thus beginning wisdom's first chapter. Have faith in your abilities and trust your gut for it is often a better diagnostic than reason. Have faith.

Now, it would be reckless not to award due merit to the engineers of our success: staff, administrators, and above all teachers! and yes teachers above bankers or engineers or lawyers. as Taylor Mali would agree: "Teachers who love what they do can make us work harder than we ever dreamed, they can make us write, write, write and then read. They can make a C+ feel like a

Congressional Medal of Honor, and an A- feel like a slap across the face. They can make parents tremble in fear, when they call around dinner time or they can make their parents see their children for what they are and what they can be. You want to know what teachers make? Teachers make a difference! Now what about you?"

My mother sporadically asks me "Do you know all you have accomplished?", and I am always flabbergasted by that question because she has escorted me during every single second of every hour of every day, and I think I can speak on behalf of the whole class when I say that we couldn't have accomplished any of those things if it were not for the unconditional love and support of our parents. Whether they have joined us here today or they are watching over us from heaven, I ask my fellow classmates, please, to give our heroes a well deserved round of applause! They are the stars behind the stage, the couriers of a beacon without whom the light would be a little dimmer and our hopes a little fainter. To you, my highest respect and gratitude!

And now, as the curtain closes we remember *Love*. Love is a verb, fully understood by everybody in this room. Whether you're a lady or a gentleman, your sons will become lovers who in turn evolve into mothers and fathers. and in the words of James Baldwin "Love does not begin and end the way we seem to think it does. Love is a battle, love is a war; love is a growing up. So Live Life Loving!"

Congratulations!

And may you have a fortunate future,

Gustavo A. Grau