

Speech to be delivered by Hon. John E. Fogarty, MC at Commencement Exercises of DeLaSalle Academy, Newport, R.I. Sunday June 3, 1945.

It is indeed a privilege and a singular honor to be invited to come to De LaSalle on what is, perhaps, the proudest day of your lives. I am very happy to be able to join with you in celebrating your graduation from this great school and I sincerely wish every one of you the best life has to offer.

In the years you have enjoyed here at De LaSalle the world has seen many earth-shaking changes. Violence has been the general condition. Mighty armies have clashed in titanic battles - Mighty fleets have roamed the seas and the skies - and through it all you young men have pursued your studies, here.

Just four short years ago you came to the Brothers as boys. Today the Brothers present you to the world as men - fortified with the strength of character that can come only through a Christian Education - a work to which these noble men have dedicated their lives.

That character which the Brothers of the Christian Schools have worked to develop in you is the most valuable possession in your armory as you go forth to take up the battle of life.

It will fortify you in depression. It will protect you in prosperity.

Around that character erect your best fortifications, for let it be destroyed by the temptations which the world will place in your path and all the learning you might later acquire - all the fortune you might be able to amass - will mean nothing to you. You will have failed in the work of building a better world - the task which today you are setting out to accomplish.

The world eagerly awaits your coming, and though this mortal sphere is now a sorry spectacle to look upon - it offers you limitless opportunities



for the development of whatever talent you possess.

The rebuilding of our world - its re-creation as a place where man can live in peace with his brother - is your work. Members of the generation which today plays its appointed role in the drama of life are laboring diligently to chart the course toward a peaceful ordering of the society of men. It will be impossible for them to do more than lay out the course. Your generation must see to it that men do not forget the lessons which we have learned at so bitter a price. You young men must contribute your share to the task of establishing and maintaining a better world for all the peoples of this earth.

In all walks of life you are offered unlimited opportunities.

Science has only just begun to contemplate the possibilities that exist in such discoveries as radio. Mankind looks forward to a new day in which distance will be unimportant; when physical obstacles will be virtually non-existent, as this great science of radio renders to mankind all the service of which it is capable. Aero-dynamics is an infant which you can develop as you will - like fire to be your faithful servant, or your cruel master.

In chemistry, physics, metallurgy, engineering and all the fields related to the industrial life of the Nation and the world, there are opportunities without number. The gigantic task of setting the world once more on the highway of peaceful development calls for the greatest of skill in all these fields. We can never mark time. We can never rely entirely on the discoveries and developments of the past. To exhaust our capabilities - to get the most out of all this great country offers, we need all the technological ability that can possibly be developed.

The arts and the professions have all been neglected or else they have been concentrated on the business of death - and we await with feverish anticipation the contribution such men as you can make to the business of living.



In the field of education there is a most intriguing opportunity. The truths which you young men hold sacred are challenged aggressively and you will find yourselves in a position to cause those truths to live with renewed vigor and force - or you can permit them to wither through disrespect and disuse - and with their withering to experience your own death as Catholic men.

In the field of government there is, perhaps, the greatest opportunity of all. The common understanding of "Politics" confuses man and discourages more. But hear me, please - if you feel in your heart the birth of an interest in government; if you believe you possess capabilities for this field of endeavor, then don't neglect that talent - cultivate it, for your services are needed, for God and Country, and your contribution to the age in which you live can be as great as is that of the brave men who fight beneath the Stars and Stripes on the battlefields of the world.

It is in the field of politics that one sees the emergence of political theories which seek to destroy the respect for the Divine Plan which is so deep seated in any man who is the product of Christian Education. Here it is that we find the concentration of the efforts of those who would destroy, if possible, the fundamental concept of government as we know it - that the government of the state is the servant of its citizens.

In politics the attacks on the American way of life reach their fruition and it is in the field of politics that they must be finally crushed - if we are to preserve our great republic as we know it - as we want it.

For success in public life the most essential quality is, I believe, an understanding of human nature, and the education which you young men have received from the Brothers of the Christian Schools has given you the best possible foundation upon which to build such an understanding.

You have been guided in your education at De LaSalle by the age old



truth that man was made to the image and likeness of God. In your fellow man, therefore, you see an object of respect. You see in every man the handiwork of your Creator and you are able to look upon him as one who can contribute something to the life of his Country. You are able to look upon him as one who has certain rights which must be respected and as one who must share certain responsibilities.

Side by side with that traditional fact you have been taught respect for the immortal documents which were responsible for the birth of the great republic in which we live - where it is written that "all men are created equal and are endowed by their Maker with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

Because of the Character which the Brothers have helped you to build you are able properly to evaluate the meaning of those undying words. You can see in them the expression by great statesmen of the truths which you began to learn in your catechism, and in the prayers which you learned at your Mother's knee.

When first you learned to say "Give us this day our daily bread" you had learned the vital importance of God in our every day life - even then you were beginning to lay the foundation for the knowledge which you have acquired here in the hallowed halls of De LaSalle. Because you were blessed with a Catholic home - and privileged to listen to the teachings of the Brothers - you know that the life which attempts to shut out God and Religion is worthless and without meaning.

As you journey through life you will need to remember the importance of God's place in life. If you will be steadfast you will find in that knowledge the strength to face whatever the odds, and to overcome whatever the obstacles which a fickle fortune might erect across your path.

Your reliance on this truth - your pride in the faith you have learned to love - will be a tower of strength, for it will permit you to enjoy always



the confidence and assurance that only the honest man can know. It will fortify you and encourage you in the principles which you hold dear. There is no human more miserable than one who has no certain convictions of his own.

Don't be afraid of life. Believe that life IS worth living and your belief will help create the fact.

Whether you decide to go on with your studies, or to take your place now in business or industry, immediately after you leave these sheltering walls you will have need to apply all the Brothers have taught you.

You are the latest handiwork of this great order. You are the most recent product of the accumulated store of a hundred years of learning. Thousands of God's chosen instruments have spent countless hours in the worship of God and in the study of man's knowledge in order that you might graduate today from De LaSalle. In you the Brothers have the hope that you will always be respectfully referred to as "A Brothers Boy".

As you grow older your love for the Brothers will increase with the passing years. You will find the Brothers proud of your every success, taking joy in whatever brings you happiness.

And in the midst of whatever sorrow God may see fit to send your way you will always find at your side a Brother to bring you that consolation that can come only from one of God's noblemen.

You are today their monument. Keep the faith. Stand fast by what you have learned at their feet. Make your life a tribute to these great men of God and your complete success is assured.

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