

Address delivered by Honorable John E. Fogarty, MC at the Graduating Exercises of the Class of 1947 of LaSalle Academy, Providence, held at Loews State Theatre on Friday, June 13.

In every possible meaning of the phrase - this is indeed your day, attended as it is with the thrilling sensation of a goal achieved - and accompanied by all the traditional pomp and circumstance which your memories will capture and zealously store up for pleasant recollection in the years which are ahead.

As it is yours today - so it was mine just 17 years ago. It was in June of 1930 that I sat like you - exulting over my good fortune and praying that the speakers of the day would be men of much understanding and few words.

Whatever indulgence my flights of fancy may have taken then, none could penetrate the future and reveal the privilege and the great pleasure which was to be mine - sharing in your exercises today. For this singular honor I am deeply grateful.

I am anxious to take advantage of this opportunity publicly to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the good Brothers of the Christian Schools. The good Lord knows how many heartaches I caused them in my years at LaSalle. But, if it had not been for their guiding hand and helpful advice - before and since my graduation - I could never have known the measure of success which I have been privileged to enjoy.

And to my Bishop - without whose able leadership this great institution would have been struggling against considerable difficulties - I wish to extend my sincere thanks. I trust he will believe me when I say that I am deeply grateful - as are all LaSalle graduates - for all he has done for our Alma Mater.

We were concerned then - as you undoubtedly are concerned now - with a problem very close to the realities of time and circumstances. What were we going to do to earn a living?

What occupations were open to us?

On what avenues of endeavor should we set our feet?

Were we ready for the quest of fame and fortune - or should we seek further education before taking a place in the economic arena?

These are vital and important questions. In fact it is your duty to consider them seriously.

But - as necessary as earning a living is by itself - it will not satisfy all of man's needs. Bread alone - will not bring you contentment and peace of mind. The happiness we all seek - the only real and permanent happiness which can satisfy man's soul - can be realized only through the fulfillment of our duties to God - our neighbor, and ourselves. To us, then, life involves not only the duty of earning a living, but, of far greater importance by far - the duty of learning to live.

This duty is important to you now, and as you meet the challenging competition in professional fields, in industry, and in the market place - as time rolls on - you, like us, will reap your share of weal or woe as you live - or fail to live - according to those sound, unchanging moral principles and values which have been stressed so often during your years at LaSalle.

Too often today our thinking, and therefore our behavior - is determined by material rather than moral values.

At no previous time in human history were the efforts of science, business and industry so efficiently co-ordinated to provide man with all his material needs.

In all areas of our daily life we are surrounded with machines and gadgets which are designed to take the labor, the effort and the drudgery out of living. All sorts of materials and processes are devised to cater to our comfort and pamper our slightest whim and fancy.

We have figuratively "knocked our heads against the stars" in supplying ourselves with material satisfaction. We boast of our material greatness and use it as a standard of value in measuring our national progress. So persistent and so dominant has been the emphasis on material comfort that the thinking of our people has become distorted and warped.

We find material values replacing moral values. We judge a man by the money he spends, the home he owns, the car he drives. It matters not whether he is unscrupulous or corrupt. We witness a driving urge to get more and better things - even if the getting involves deceit, fraud, misrepresentation. No Rule of conduct is of value save as it enables one to get more money, more goods, more pleasures.

In short, we have become obsessed with the idea of how to earn a living, at the sacrifice of those moral principles and values which alone bring stability in our thinking - and security in body and soul.

I fully appreciate that the will to get all those material comforts which contribute to the satisfaction of our physical, mental and spiritual faculties, is wholly legitimate and proper. They are the means which enable us to attain the end for which God created us - the knowledge, love and service of God in this life and eternal happiness with Him in the next.

But since they are the means God intended us to use - it is common sense to expect that as we get more and more of the good things of this

world there should be, at least, a corresponding increase in the knowledge and acceptance of those moral principles which God intended to govern relations among men - for the promotion of peace and happiness on earth.

But is there any evidence that our society knows and will accept the principles and teachings of Christ?

We were all taught - and we can still rattle off the words - that God made man to His image and likeness - to know Him - to love Him - and to serve Him. Scarcely has the echo of the words died - than we recall with bitter regret the curses and condemnations that are the lot of many of those less fortunate children of the Creator.

We were thrilled as children to learn the Golden Rule - which is but a paraphrasing of the Commandment - love thy neighbor as thyself.

Yet while we confess no sin against this commandment - we willingly close our mind's eye to the plight of millions who wallow in the slough of despondency.

Throughout the world - bruised and bleeding because of the most recent crime against mankind - millions despair, ground under the heel of tyranny - yes tyranny - just as vicious as any ever experienced.

They cry to us for comfort and encouragement, and we spend days, weeks, months in debate. Because we can't convince ourselves that we can afford the time and the energy to interest ourselves in those we cannot see. In reality we should question whether we can afford NOT to interest ourselves in their present predicament.

Hundreds of thousands of children die - or live - on the scavengings from garbage cans. We express pious regret - but scream in rebellion that another bag of wheat is diverted from our tables.

Appeals for active, positive aid NOW - come from every sympathetic person and group. And we go home comfortably to our Sunday paper - proud that we've donated some worn-out articles of second-hand clothing.

Men die deep in the earth - because compliance with safety regulations would eat another nickel out of operators' profits - and that would be interference with the sanctity of the laws of economics.

They leave widows and children - objects of sympathy today - Charity tomorrow - and complete disregard before the flowers on the graves of the dead have withered.

The great cry is Private Enterprise - Freedom and Initiative - but if free men who wear overalls demonstrate any initiative and reach out for a share of the wealth they help to create - then they are accused of a wrong against society - a wrong which must be avenged, no matter what the cost to our sense of decency and justice.

So pervasive are these materialistic principles of conduct, that there is hardly an area of our political, economic or social life free from their perverse influence.

We are told the people are confused. Why shouldn't they be?

There can be no stability of thinking - no consistency of action, in the shifting concepts of material values. What is right today - is wrong tomorrow, depending on whether we stand to gain or lose.

We are aware of a restlessness, an uneasiness among people. Why shouldn't there be?

What security can a materialistic system of selfishness offer to anyone?

How safe can one feel when the cardinal rule of the system is "Get mine at any price".

Yes, our concern with the material aspects of life - and the principles of action based on material values - have availed us little. And there are few today who would not trade some of life's comforts for that peace of mind which the world cannot give.

The world longs for that peace of mind. Mankind seeks security in body - but, more important, it needs security of soul. We all need a stronger, richer faith and confidence and charity - in God and fellow man.

You can provide the inspiration for that faith. And you have the ability to promote confidence and charity.

You men of LaSalle will base your judgment on the sound moral values which spring from the teachings of Christ.

You will, please God, think and live by the moral principles which find specific expression in the ten commandments.

Living by these principles we recognize each person as a child of God; with duties to his God - his neighbor - and himself - and with the right to the means to discharge these duties.

Fortified by a sound sense of values we impose on ourselves a spiritual discipline - the obligation to control our selfish impulses out of respect for the rights of others.

Then we find we are placing moral values above material values.

It is the disregard of these - the only sound principles of life - or their wilful violation which produces the Godless State - the Godless society - the Totalitarianism which is the enemy of everything we Americans believe in.

I have heard it said often. Nevertheless it is a positive truth.

The world today, more than at any other time in history, needs to return to Christ and his teachings. And each of us must do his share to make that return possible.

It isn't enough to avoid violations of God's law. It is vitally important that we prove that law to be a positive, dynamic force for good.

You, the graduates of LaSalle, have this responsibility - and you are, fortunately, well prepared to assume it.

Four years with the Brothers, men whose ideals and example of un-
stinting and untiring service to others, should be a powerful force in keep-
ing alive and strong the will to give, to serve others.

These rules of conduct which you studied and discussed daily in the
classrooms at LaSalle - they were not meant only for school and for Church;
they were meant for every hour of every day you live.

They are your weapons and they are your armor. They are your guarantee
of happiness and peace.

You'll find them assailed. You'll find yourselves the butt of taunt
and ridicule when you display your trust in them.

It has become popular in many quarters to accuse the pious of being
naive - and the righteous of being dull.

But as you consider the responsibilities which are yours - and your
chances for success - think on what you have to offer the world and what the
world has to offer in return.

Balance the good you can bring into the world - against the conflict

and confusion which the world can create in your life.

The world of today is sorely in need of men like you and the ideals which you cherish. You will be better off if you never learn many of the ideas which the world of today holds close to its bosom.

When the competition of life gets keen and tough - don't waiver.

Stand by these principles which alone are reliable. Be an example to others - be faithful to yourself - and be a credit to this great institution whose stamp of approval is placed upon you - this great day.

You'll find as the years roll by - that real success in life is measured not by what you can get - but by what you can give.

For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul.

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