

Lasallian Commencement Address

May 1999

Presented by: Michael Michau

Thank you and welcome to the Board of Trustees, distinguished guests, the Christian Brothers, President Brother James Gaffney, Faculty, Staff, University graduates, family, and friends.

I ask that you try to visualize an awkward 18 year old high school graduate, his right leg scarred from a go-cart accident three weeks prior to starting college. He is an intelligent student, but he is scared and confused. It is the Fall of 1995, and he is a commuter student at a new school, and he is afraid of all the unknowns in his life.

Take a look at that scared 18 year old commuter, four years later. I am proud and quite surprised to be speaking to you today as the Lasallian Student Speaker. In my time here at Lewis University, I have seen significant personal and spiritual changes take place within myself. I hope that these changes have been experienced by all graduates, resident and commuter, traditional age and returning adult, Romeoville, and off-campus students.

Lewis University, guided by its Catholic and Lasallian Mission, is based on the values and enriched by the heritage of the founder of the Christian Brothers, St. John Baptist De La Salle. Lewis and the Christian Brothers are guided by the values of Knowledge, Wisdom, Justice, Association, and Fidelity. These values were important to De La Salle more than three hundred years ago, and are important to us today. I will speak today about the value that De La Salle emphasized most strongly- Fidelity. It has helped shape the changes that have occurred within me over the past eight semesters. The portion of the University Mission Statement on Fidelity reads:

"Fidelity is the spirit which recognizes God as the ultimate reality, unifying the diverse forms of knowledge in the pursuit of fullness of truth, while recognizing the diversity of the human experience." More simply, Fidelity means how we discover our relationship with our God, and how this relationship manifests itself in our daily

The "pursuit of fullness of truth" has always been the main objective in my life, but it took a university education to help me realize that was my objective. In many ways, prior to coming to Lewis, I was a closet intellectual. The fullness of my intellect was locked away. My life here has unlocked the door. My primary undergraduate major of Philosophy really opened my eyes to the idea that the search for truth is a development, a progression. This notion is implied in the value of Fidelity, the search for ultimate reality.

Throughout our studies and experiences at Lewis, we have learned much about life through the educational process, challenging and exploring first our ways of conventional ways of thinking and acting. I have always believed in challenging and exploring, but my education has given me the tools to do this at a higher level.

Lewis has empowered me to be proud of myself and proud of my actions, starting with an education that values social service. Through my

The English novelist E.M. Forster wrote, "It is private life that holds out the

Let us all recognize that there is a quality about us that cannot be calculated, analyzed or categorized-- our spirit. As people of many faiths, we seek to know God. Through selfless service, authentic behavior, and inward reflection, I deeply feel and strongly believe that we as humans can take part in the infinite. We can touch God.

Graduates, think of your Lewis University education not as a means to an end, but as a beginning, and never let your loving and learning end. Amen.