

2017 Graduation Speech – Dr. David Peters, Ed.D.

I want to thank you all for being here today, saying congratulations to our graduates, wishing them well on their next journey of life. A big thanks also to all of the parents and family members here today. This graduation would not be possible without your love, care, concern, support and prayers. Thank you, thank you, and thank you.

I just want to spend a few minutes on a simple concept, but one that I feel is extremely important. It is what kind of impression do we leave on people? After you spend time with people you leave them with some sort of impression. This can take place after a few minutes or it can take place after many years.

Here at Mount Michael we focus on our five Benedictine values: Community, hospitality, integrity, moderation, and service. I believe most of the young men up here on the stage can recite them and also what they mean. However, I wonder what kind of impression these values make on others. It is rare that the value itself leaves its own impression. For example, if one of our gentlemen lives a life of integrity does that mean they leave the impression of integrity? Maybe. But I believe the result

is an impression of trust. I think that a person of integrity leaves an impression of trustworthiness-they are a person of their word. That they can be trusted! Let's look at another one: Hospitality. If one exhibits hospitality it may not result in an impression of hospitality. I think it results in people liking you and your actions towards them. It results in friendship. People want to be around you because you welcome them. If you were inhospitable no one would want to be with you.

Moderation means holding back. When I live with limits I do not overindulge. I have self-imposed limits. I believe that it means I gain discipline. The impression left may not be that person is moderate, but it might be that that person has self-discipline. They look like they live life within limits and boundaries. Boy that person is disciplined!

So far: integrity results in trust-you leave the impression that people trust you.

Hospitality results in friendships. You are friendly and welcoming and people want to be your friend.

Moderation results in self-discipline. You set limits and live within them.

Let's look at our last two:

Service means directly helping others or agencies, organizations, etc. Service is an action. On many occasions the service is needed. If you have ever seen people responding to those in need if you have ever helped those truly in need it results in hope. The impression you leave when you serve those in need is hope.

If I live with the value of Community it results in bonds of love, of friendship, of brotherhood. Living alone does not foster community and produce brotherhood. Living with others and supporting them does. The impression left by community is one of brotherhood.

To recap:

Integrity results in trust

Hospitality results in friendships

Moderation results in self-discipline

Service results in hope

Community results in brotherhood.

And isn't brotherhood what we are all about?

Graduates; now think of yourselves as individuals but also as a class, the Mount Michael Benedictine Class of 2017! What kind of impression are you leaving? What kind of impression do you leave with the people you

know now? As Head of School I have to tell you I am concerned about the impression you will leave as you go on in life. It is incredibly important. I feel confident that you will go forth and leave the most incredible of impressions on others.

My final point is this, and then I will stop: while first impressions are important so are last ones. Many times we feel there is always some way to make it better next time we see, live or interact with others. But, what if there are no next times? What if that last conversation, action or experience that I had with you was the last one? What if the impression I left was a negative one? What if I find myself with regrets, I end up regretting something I did or said, and there was no way for me to make that up?

Try to live life one day at a time. Live it like there were no tomorrows. You do not know what each day will bring. Handle each day as the God given gift it was meant to be. If you do that, coupled with the conviction of living our five Benedictine values you will be hard pressed to ever regret anything.

I am so proud of all of you. Please join me in recognizing our graduates. Thank you.