

Archbishop Lori's Homily: Feast of the Visitation, Maryvale Baccalaureate Mass

Feast of the Visitation

Maryvale Baccalaureate Mass

May 31, 2018

My warmest congratulations to the Maryvale Preparatory School, class of 2018!

I'm delighted to celebrate this, your Baccalaureate Mass, as you give thanks to God for the blessings of your years at Maryvale and as you look towards a future full of hope.

We are proud of you and we have high hopes for you. You are 67 talented and dedicated young women.

Every one of you is headed to college and next year you'll be matriculating in many fine colleges and universities. Doing a little more homework on the class of 2018, I discovered that three of you, our graduates, scooped up the ACE awards, that is, the Architecture, Construction and Engineering Awards - surpassing coed schools with much larger enrollments.

In addition to up-and-coming architects, builders and engineers, your class also includes some fine actors who have earned statewide recognition for productions such as the drama, *Radium Girls*, and the musical, *Annie*.

I mention these accomplishments simply as indicators of the many blessings *all of you* have experienced here at Maryvale over these past four years and I join you in giving thanks first and foremost to God who is the source of every blessing in our lives.

With you, I thank your parents who provided you with such a fine education and I know you are grateful to your teachers and mentors who not only taught you but

helped you along the road to becoming the persons God meant you to be from all eternity.

By all accounts you are well-equipped for college and also for the many challenges and opportunities that will be yours as you enter upon your adult lives.

You might say that your life here at Maryvale has been a journey – a journey of growth in so many facets of your lives.

That is why at the Baccalaureate Mass of a school that has the word “Mary” in its title, it’s appropriate that, on this Feast of the Visitation, we join the Blessed Virgin Mary on her journey of mercy as she hastens through the hill country to visit her cousin Elizabeth.

Mary had just learned the stupendous news that she was called by God to be the Mother of Jesus, our Savior.

At the same time, Mary also learned that her cousin, Elizabeth, had conceived a child in her advancing years.

As tonight’s Gospel from St. Luke opens, we find Mary, carrying the Child Jesus in her womb, on her way to the meet Elizabeth, the mother of the prophet, John the Baptist.

As you join Mary on this journey and arrive with her at Elizabeth’s house what can you learn as you prepare for *your* journey from Maryvale into a new and challenging future? What experiences can you bring from Maryvale into your changing lives as you head to college and contemplate what it is God is asking of you?

Allow me to suggest three lessons.

Bring Jesus into the world.

First, let’s recall that Mary did not journey alone to Elizabeth’s house. As Mary made the difficult trek through the hill country of Judea, she carried in her blessed womb the Savior of the World, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus was close to her heart; already she loved him beyond all telling. But in loving

Jesus, Mary did not keep Jesus just for herself. Even before he was born, Mary brought Jesus to Elizabeth.

Maryvale is a school founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and continues to be a school in the tradition of those pioneering sisters. It is a school rooted in the Catholic faith, a place where you have had many opportunities to come to know the Lord Jesus and to grow in your relationship with the Lord and with the Church.

Many of you, for example, took part in the Theology Senior elective class, 1804, the year when the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur were founded. In this elective you were taught how to share the Lord's love with others, much as Mary shared Jesus' love with her cousin Elizabeth. You did this by developing your leadership skills as well as by leading retreats and planning liturgies.

Many of you also continued to serve in your local parishes on the weekends and some of you served as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

As you look toward the future, be sure to stay close to Jesus. Open your hearts to the Lord daily and stay close to the Lord through Sunday Mass, daily prayer, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and more. In these and other ways you will be equipped to bring Jesus to others just as Mary brought Jesus to her cousin.

The Church's word for bringing Jesus to others is - evangelization - It's all about bringing the joy of the Gospel to others just as Mary and Elizabeth rejoiced in the presence of the long-awaited Savior.

Go out of your way for others.

There's a second lesson we can learn as we walk with Mary, and it's this: Continue to be those young women who go out of your way for others. That is what Mary did. When she learned that her cousin needed her, Mary didn't stay at home and say to herself, "I need to look after my own needs."

Instead, as Pope Francis likes to say, she left her comfort zone and made a difficult journey out of love for her cousin.

A lot of people tell us, don't they, to think first and foremost about ourselves - to

concentrate on money, power, prestige and 'the good life.'

The Blessed Virgin Mary turns that approach on its head just as her Son Jesus would do when he taught us that it is better to give than receive.

And that is something you certainly learned to do here at Maryvale as you spent time serving at Sarah's Hope in West Baltimore, Happy Helpers for the Homeless, Camp St. Vincent's and Horizon Day Camp.

All in all, your class completed some 11,500 service hours - that's about 172 hours per student, and some of you exceeded the average.

Be like Mary - continue to be those persons who go out of your way for others, who find your joy in serving those who cannot pay you back 'measure for measure.' Continue to be those young people who find opportunities not only to serve the poor and vulnerable but to know, love and respect them.

Those journeys will take you far from your comfort zone but bring you close to God.

Rejoice in the Lord

Finally, the Visitation is all about joy. In all of human history, it's hard to beat the joy that Mary and Elizabeth experienced as Mary arrived at Elizabeth's doorstep and the baby in her womb leapt for joy. Through the ages, Mary's words echo, "My soul rejoices in the Lord!"

Joy doesn't mean that life is without hardship.

Mary who rejoiced with her cousin Elizabeth also stood beneath the Cross.

Yet, Mary's whole life was one of joyful faith and thanksgiving.

So my parting words to you are - don't lose your joy, no matter what. Let no nothing and no one rob you of your joy but instead replenish your joy from the same fountain that Mary replenished hers - the God who not only loves us but the God who is love! Then, what you have learned here at Maryvale will come to its true fulfillment!

May God bless you and keep you always in his love!

