

# SGA President

## Excerpts from Baccalaureate

### Mass Speech

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I would first like to thank everyone for showing their love and support by attending and participating in this Baccalaureate Mass.

I would especially like to thank our parents and family members for supporting us through the rigors of our undergraduate education...And to my fellow graduates, I would like to thank and congratulate all of you on your hard work and dedication to professional pursuits that will now enable us to progress towards even larger roles as contributors to society at large.

This past year, we lost a dear friend and mentor in Brother George Larkin. He was indeed the embodiment of Franciscan Spirit at 180 Remsen Street, and who could forget how he used to welcome us each year at the start of a new semester. While his loss has been a great sadness to us all, we must always keep in mind that it is only when men are forgotten that they are truly dead. It is in this light, that we must always remember to keep the spirit and memories of Brother George alive and well with our friends, family, alumni, and future Terriers.

Even though we are graduating from Saint Francis College, we must never forget that our education as young men and women will still continue for the rest of our lives. While doing so, let us not forget to chisel both our intellectual and ethical souls...Equally as important, let us not forget the pursuit of friendship. In ancient Greek philosophical tradition, friendship is the strongest of all loves in the world because it is a mutual love between two people. It is in this spirit of friendship that we as graduates of SFC must perpetuate a legacy of service, right thinking, and good faith.

#### Final Words

Since our youth we have always been faced with a variety of choices. Some easy and some hard. As we all begin to embark on a new chapter in our lives, I can say that SFC has demonstrated to me that we always have a choice or hand in our futures. As we learn to grasp this principle, we will be better able to chisel the stone that is our character. We will be able to develop ourselves in such a way that we can always express the best qualities of man. That is, we will work hard, listen to our hearts, and pursue right in the face of difficult times. Much like St. Francis, we can then embrace the old motto that, "It is in the act of giving in which we receive."

Best Wishes to the Class of 2010!



Jason Gaither  
SGA President, '09-'10



# Highlights From The Valedictorian's Address

Members of the Board of Trustees, President Dugan, members of the faculty, honored guests, fellow graduates, family and friends, good afternoon. This day the Franciscans continue to give the gift of education to all peoples around the country and the world.

In an age where money triumphs ethics, the brothers at St. Francis are truly unique. Unfortunately, one truly unique person, Brother George Larkin, passed away in 2009. May his spirit of good will and giving be passed on to all those who are present here today. I want to thank the Franciscan brothers who continue to serve their community and the students at St. Francis College.

Thank you to the entire psychology department for making these past four years an enlightening experience. I also want to thank my family for instilling the power of education in me. I thank you all for your love and support. I think I am speaking for my entire graduating class by saying that most of us would not be sitting here today without the love and support from our families. Appreciate your families and what they mean to you because in this unstable time, they are your safe haven.

It is up to us (fellow graduates) to utilize the tools that the college has given us in order to work through these dark times. Some of you in this room will make a difference in this country, but all of us have to try. It is our moral obligation to do the best we can for others, our family, and our country. Never forget that we are Americans. And as Americans and those who hold our similar beliefs, we have faced the worst that the world has to offer.

2010 is a critical year, not only in our lives, but for others all around the world. Our country, and other countries are struggling economically. War, greed, and poverty are rampant. Everyone has been affected by this great recession, and we do not know when it will end. So it is up to us to end it. It is up to the future economists, lawyers, doctors, psychologists, teachers, politicians, and people in every walk of life to come up with the tools to bring our country back to being the greatest on this planet.

We have defeated imperialism, fascism, communism, and we will defeat greed. We must not succumb to the "me" culture, or appease those who seek to destroy this nation for their personal monetary gain. To quote Winston Churchill, "an appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last." We must learn from our past experiences and realize this is not a country of "me" but of "we."

We must learn to help one another rather than ourselves. We should follow the ideals that St. Francis of Assisi had laid out before us. It is up to our generation to bring justice for those wronged in this recession, those whose homes were foreclosed, and lost their livelihood.

Margaret Thatcher once said "Europe will never be like America. Europe is a product of history. America is a product of philosophy."

I hope that the Franciscan philosophy we learned will help us right the wrongs of our past. Even though times are difficult I hope that you do not lose your sense of achievement or optimism, and that no matter what you do after college you hold onto your Franciscan values.

Thank you and good luck to all of the graduates.



-Jonathon Palumbo  
Valedictorian, Class of 2010