

Good Morning, everyone! I was given this great honor to speak in front of all of you today as this year's May Queen. With the coming of spring, we are all greeted with the chirps of the morning birds along with the blooming of the prettiest flowers. As students in English class, we are told that spring represents a rebirth and as our world begins to blossom, our spiritual life does the same. As Marian students, we learn early on that faith plays a big part in how we live our lives and how valuable having a good community can be.

Being able to attend Marian is one of the greatest gifts a student can have. Not only do we have access to a prestigious college preparatory education, but also to the many great traditions that bring out our school spirit such as surprise day and, most importantly, field day! It truly is a place that one can be proud to attend with a tremendous loyalty where we wish nothing but success for each other. Not only do we excel in our extra curricular activities such as journalism, soccer, speech, and swimming, but we do so while holding onto the 6 core values that we are introduced to early in our Freshman year. These fundamental values, which are (Community, Compassion, Spirituality, empowerment, Service and Marian Identity) that we carry with us long after we have left Marian. We do not have to look very far to see the compassionate community of the Servants of Mary that started it all when they founded this school in 1955. With their inspiration, this Marian legacy of instilling each Marian student with our 6 core values continues. We are called to bring Jesus to the world through these values. It all begins with Marian Identity which encompasses all of the other core values. To have Marian Identity is to demonstrate compassion for others, to grow in spirituality, to have a sense of empowerment, to be an

advocate for yourself and others, to use one's talents in service for others, and to have a welcoming spirit and engage in the community.

Our school exemplifies Marian Identity and all of our core values every day, through every opportunity and every challenge. They are shown not only through the countless service hours, retreats, all school masses, daily prayers, but also when we sit shoulder to shoulder in the hallways and when we hear words of encouragement before an exam. Marian is a place where the quote Mrs. Woodman has up in her room "Be the woman that fixes another woman's crown without telling the world that it is crooked" is lived out. We are blessed to have a community where women are encouraged to achieve the seemingly unattainable and where we are not judged by the size of our dreams. Marian is a place of great love and compassion, where, along with science, math, literature and other academics, Marian students are learning to live Marian Identity.

As I grew in my faith, I came to realize why Mary should be admired to the extent that she is. She goes by many names, some being Seat of Wisdom, Our Lady of Good Counsel, and Mother of Mercy that does some justice to all that she has done. She was given the chance to change humanity for the better and she did so by being true to her faith and trusting God. Faith is by far the most important but also one of the hardest things to hold onto during hard times. It is hard to not know what the future holds, it is hard not to be anxious when one does not know the answers to difficult questions in life. No matter where you are in your faith life you can look to Mary as an example of someone who trusted God and in his will. She did not hesitate when she said "Yes" to conceiving Jesus despite the negative repercussions it could bring her. She did not question if the man she was betrothed to would believe her or if her family would disown her. She had faith that

God would not abandon her or do anything to hurt her. We can learn from this when life gets hard. We can try our hardest to have faith in God that problems in our life will be resolved. Although we do not have all the answers now, we can be certain that we are not alone, God loves us and is always with us. That faith and hard work can take us far.

Mary is the model of perfect Christian Discipleship. She is the woman who always remained by Jesus' side from his conception in her womb until his death on the cross. Now, what does it mean to be a disciple? As Christians, we are encouraged to follow the examples of many disciples in order to become one ourselves. While we are encouraged to look at the wonderful saints and their remarkable acts for these lessons, we can't fail to recognize the everyday saints in our daily lives that make tremendous impacts on us and help to show us how to be disciples. Essentially, those saints were people, people just like you and me. The thing that sets the saints apart is their profound love. Love for God and love for the world. The saints acted out of that great love to make the world a better place. Our everyday saints in our daily lives also show that we all have the ability to love and the opportunity to love. And loving is the foundation of discipleship. Whether that love is shown by helping out a friend who is struggling in a class, giving your mom a hug before you leave for school, or paying for the person behind you in the drive-through, those common everyday expressions of love are acts of a disciple.

Being a disciple does not mean being perfect. It is so easy to get caught up in the idea that the only way that someone can be a good person is if they never mess up or break any rules. In reality, the solution to being a good disciple is simple, it simply means to love one another because if one loves other people then they will serve them, have compassion, help them, and act out of the desire for the wellbeing of all. Not even Jesus, himself, expected

perfection. He left us with the two greatest commandments The first: “Love the lord your God with all your heart, (with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength) and the second: to love your neighbor as yourself.” We can use these commandments to help us be disciples as Mary did, loving God and having great faith. With God by our side and our core values deeply instilled, Marian students are equipped with the tools needed to live as disciples, not striving for perfection, but (having faith) and loving one another in big and small ways each and every day.

As the year progresses with the end of Spring and the coming of Summer, I encourage all of you not to strive for perfection, but to strive to be that everyday saint in any way you can, especially when it comes to the way that you treat one another. The impact you have on other people is what truly matters in the end.

To the Marian girls listening right now, especially my fellow Seniors, I hope we learn that when times get rough and we become fearful of what the future has in store for us, we can have faith and again look to Mary as an example of someone who trusted God enough to let all her plans change in order to follow his will. We can have faith that God will not abandon us but rather will allow us to live our lives to our fullest potential. I encourage you to hold the core values close to your heart and work hard every day to live them out. I believe it is very important to follow Mary’s example because having complete trust in God by setting any fears aside and letting him take control is when one will reap the best rewards in life. I encourage all of you to be strong in your faith and never doubt your potential. And above all love one another, as Mother Teresa said: “Spread love wherever you go. Let no one come to you without leaving happier.” Thank you.