

Valedictory Address

Chidubem Ezike

Good morning, everyone – Father Manzano, Dr. Daly, Faculty members, students, parents and all our guests. In case you didn't know who I am, my name is Chidubem Ezike, and it is my great pleasure to give this farewell speech to you on this promising, cheerful day. First and foremost, I'd like to thank all our teachers for their precious words of wisdom, and I think I speak for the whole eighth grade class when I say that your many teachings over the years, from first grade all the way to eighth grade, are very valuable to us and are to be cherished by us very dearly in our hearts, even as we move on to high school next year. From world history, to religion, art, P.E., Latin, and all the other subjects – everything was important to us in terms of knowledge, although some topics may have been belabored a bit too much. But anyway, the human mind never ceases to gather more and more information, and we are to accept instruction, that we may gain wisdom, as is written on the front doors of our school, from Proverbs 19:20. Our teachers are a big part of this, and that's why I personally owe so much to them, and I'm sure the whole eighth grade class and everyone here does, too.

Secondly, I'd like to thank my parents, my loving – sometimes criticizing – but loving parents. Their constant sacrifices for my sake are worthy of my gratitude. Not only do I think of my dad, who even from across the Atlantic offers the help I need, but also my mom, who in turn has had to physically attend to the greater part of my needs and my siblings' needs by herself. It is truly a great blessing, dearest classmates, that even as we go to high school, they will always be there to help us and nurture us. For it is from them that we learn that you only earn something through many hours of dedication and persistence and some help from not only our parents, but our own friends and classmates as well. And in my opinion, that is truly how you define a student who has had a good year – as a dedicated student, as a persistent student, as an advice-taking student. And our parents have helped us to meet those standards, and to possess these qualities they have urged in us. For this I say thank you, parents.

Finally, I'd like to thank my own fellow classmates and friends, who have made my experience – no, *our* experience – very meaningful and indelible. For it was they that really made the school days much more enjoyable when the workload was cumbersome; for example, activities like playing the tremendous Italian game of scopa, or preparing something nice for a teacher as a token of appreciation, or shaking your head at one of Fernando's puns, or even concocting and singing songs about nimbostratus clouds and different shades of red. Anyway, it will be tough having to leave this school with all these well-formed memories engraved within us. I'm talking

about retreats, house tournaments, chess tournaments, interscholastic tournaments, International Day, Field Day, Mr. George's incessant rants, and various other unforgettable activities done among fellow parents and fellow teachers and fellow classmates and fellow Catholics and fellow human beings. All these experiences are what will make leaving this great school of St. Theresa's difficult after so many years. And I speak not only to my fellow classmates but to the whole student body; not only to the parents, but to the whole teacher body; not only to all the priests here and Cardinal DiNardo, but to the whole church body here today. We earnestly thank you for all your help and support, your prayers and intercessions, your guidance and administration throughout our nine years of school. And so I think I speak for my whole class when I ask that you all pray for us as we proceed in our great life journey into a wider world, encountering new challenges, making even more friends, and directing all our actions *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. So, next stop, HIGH SCHOOL. Thank you.