Ms. Coffey, Mrs. Alvar, Ms. Bdeir, Distinguished Trustees, Faculty, Staff and Administration, and Honored Guests, welcome! On behalf of the Class of 2019, I thank you for your guidance and support during our journey. You have given us nothing short of everything.

Personally, what I was most grateful for during my years at Marymount was my parents funding my love of Starbucks. *(pause for laughter)* No, the thing I’m actually most grateful for is my voice. To break that down a little, Marymount taught me three fundamental lessons, the first of which is to speak loudly and with conviction.

Parents, each of your daughters, at some point or another, has had to stand where I am now and—let me tell you—it’s nerve wracking. You know, the first time I stood here to read aloud the prayer for my First Communion, I couldn’t even see over the podium. But, I pushed past the fear, and suddenly, public speaking wasn’t so daunting anymore.

Since then, Marymount has given me countless opportunities to develop my authentic voice in a safe environment—one where I was certain people would listen. That’s not something you find too often outside of Marymount, especially as a woman.

My second takeaway is if you speak your mind, people will listen. For my sixth-grade Nerdy Derby, everyone else designed four wheeled model race cars. But I asked, “what if I used three?” No one told me it was ridiculous; instead, I received unconditional validation. As it turns out, that three-wheeled car was the fastest one on the track. In the real world, this instinct to vocally challenge the status quo translates to innovation—to social change.

The final and arguably the most important thing Marymount has taught me is that our voices matter. They are a gift, and with this gift comes the responsibility to use them for those without one. When I think about using my voice to lift others up, the annual M-PACT philanthropy project comes to mind. During my sophomore year, Marymount gave me the opportunity to be a part of this advocacy competition that introduced us to the importance of social leadership. My classmates and I, fifteen years old at the time, fought for 65.3 million refugees and won a ten-thousand dollar grant to resettle eighteen families here in New York City. Our voices materialized a positive change for others.

Now, we’re living in a historically unprecedented time. The global rise of populism threatens the balance of the liberal world order and, domestically, the United States has never been more polarized. On the flip side, never before in history have women had the opportunities we do now to have our voices heard—to achieve levels in government, in Corporate America—and make a real impact. Marymount has provided us with the foundation, hope, and inspiration to do just that—to dive in without fear and take risks in pursuit of a world that most can only dream of.

The future of this new world *is* uncertain. But if there is one thing I know to be true, it is that this mighty group of Marymount women I am proud to call my sisters cannot and will not be silent. This is our *time*. This is our *moment*. Our destiny is calling out to us. Use your voice and set the world on fire.