



# St. Joseph School

Learning through Faith, Service, and Community

June 5, 2020

Graduation Salutation from Natalie Lenz-Acuña,

An 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation celebration is a special occasion. It is the culmination of academic, social and emotional growth, self-discovery and hard work. It is the acknowledgement of countless large and small successes achieved. It is a reflection and celebration of the road that all of you have traveled together these last several years. This year, while affected by a worldwide pandemic, uncertainty, and unforeseen challenges, have helped further define who you are.

All the paths you took, all the decisions, all of the challenges and even failures you have made — have all helped you to realize who you are and who you want to be. I hope you have learned not to follow in other's footsteps, but to have the strength and conviction to create our own. You have had the guidance to discover how to stand up for your own beliefs and live without holding back. You didn't let your fears prevent you from showing your true self. I hope that St. Joseph School gave you a chance to learn to love yourself, learn that God was your friend, Jesus your role model, and the Holy Spirit your guide, who helps you walk with confidence.

I know you have experienced exceptional moments, magical moments and spiritual moments that have created significant memories you will remember fondly, and on which you may make major decisions for yourself in the years ahead. It is my hope that these experiences will serve you well as you move into the next phase of discovering who God wants you to be.

So as this chapter ends, I know that you are more than ready to further define who you are, I am so very proud of each of you....your sense of wonder, dedication to your desire to learn, your unwavering perseverance, example of teamwork, friendship, and constant support of one another, both your individual and collective intelligences, your maturity, tenacity, creativity and spiritual development of knowing that you will never walk alone.

I wish for you, that your years ahead continue to be characterized by empathy, compassion, objectivity, and a willingness to take risks. I hope you remember all that you have learned from this community during this time of your life - here at St. Joseph School. May you always lead by example, work hard, be kind, stay in your lane, play it straight, and always be mindful of the teachings of Jesus. May your successes be many and your tribulations few and far between. Remember that you will never be alone...

"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,  
You'd walk with me all the way.  
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,  
there was only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you  
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.

When you saw only one set of footprints,  
It was then that I carried you."

Lord, I ask for all YOU can do to protect and provide for these wonderful young people as they move forward and continue to grow up. Amen....

As members of the Class of 2020, may God bless all of you and keep you..  
Even though I have only had one year with you, I want to thank you for teaching me so much and being such a significant part of my life. I will miss each and every one of you.

Natalie Lenz-Acuña, Principal