



Office of the President

Timothy E. Trainor, Ph.D. | Convocation Address
August 25, 2017

Thank you, Father Nolan. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking our music ministry for this special Mass.

The University Chapel Choir, Mount Chorale, Seminary Schola and the Mount St. Mary's Praise and Worship Group along with their wonderful directors. Thank you all!

Tribute to Faculty, Administration and Staff

Tribute to our faculty

Ladies and gentlemen of the faculty, would you please stand?

Central to any student's experience in higher education is the quality of classroom teaching, the professional expertise of faculty, and the learning shared among students and academic mentors. You provide students with the critical thinking and creative problem solving skills they need to excel. You also set an example of professional and personal excellence for them to emulate.

I ask all those present to join me in a moment of recognition for our faculty's continuing contributions to Mount St. Mary's University.

Tribute to our Staff

Will all the administrators and staff of Mount St. Mary's University please stand?

As we start another academic year, we pause to recognize your essential roles with our university. Mount St. Mary's could not meet its mission to serve students without your dedication to excellence and your commitment to this university. As president and on behalf of our board of trustees and the faculty, I thank you for your many contributions to our academic life.

New Student Welcome



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It is my pleasure to officially welcome our new seminarians and new students to Mount St. Mary's University.

This entire Mount community pledges our support to assist each and every one of you as you move forward with your academic goals. Welcome to Mount St. Mary's!

So, everyone, welcome back! I hope you are all fired up for another great Mount year; I know I am!

I want to thank Gracelyn McDermott and Deacon Pat Goles from our board of trustees for joining us here today. Welcome.

I also want to thank everyone for supporting me being named the 26th president of Mount St. Mary's. At this time last year, I remember telling you that Donna and I were excited to be here because the Mount provides a superb values-based education rooted in the liberal arts with an emphasis on teaching values consistent with the Catholic intellectual tradition. We were also excited by the culture of excellence and legacy of successful graduates who have made and continue to make a significant difference in the communities and organizations they serve.

Well, over the past year my observations have been confirmed. I am truly humbled and honored to be named your president, and Donna and I are delighted to be able to serve you and this great and wonderful university. Thank you.

I would like to take a few moments to tell you all about some recent accolades and achievements for the Mount.

We just enrolled our second largest freshmen class – more than 100 additional students or 25 percent larger than last year's freshmen class. We are also starting the year with 146 seminarians compared with 119 last year. And we have also significantly increased the number of transfer students joining the Mount this year. One of the many positive things I observed about the Mount last year was that everyone is involved in recruiting and retaining students, or R&R, and that we keep students central to everything we do. We have a great thing going at the Mount and we all want to share our goodness more broadly. Thank you to everyone for helping with this achievement.

We recently welcomed the first director of the Palmieri Center for Entrepreneurship, Christine Adamow, and the interdisciplinary major in entrepreneurship was approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission. I believe this could become nationally known as a signature program for the Mount. That's because entrepreneurship is part of our culture. Many of our graduates become entrepreneurs because they see a societal issue that needs to be addressed and then they marshal the passion, advocacy and resources of others to develop and deliver a solution.



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I want to tell you the stories of two such alums who were entrepreneurs in addressing human and societal issues of their time. Father Flanagan attended Mount St. Mary's University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1906 and a Master of Arts degree in 1908. Fr. Flanagan was ordained a priest after studying in both Austria and Italy in 1912. He did not like the reform school model in place at the time and started the first Boys Town just outside of Omaha, Nebraska in 1921 where boys between the ages of 10 and 16 could live and receive an education and learn a trade. The Boys Town tag line of 'He ain't heavy, he's my brother' is still popular today in song and folklore, and I understand it is a favorite line of our men's rugby team!

Another Mount graduate Dr. Bill Magee Jr. from 1966, is a leading plastic and craniofacial surgeon. He founded Operation Smile in 1982 with his wife and nurse Kathleen. Operation Smile is a worldwide medical charity that delivers safe, effective surgical care to children suffering from cleft lip, cleft palate or other facial deformities. Since its founding, the organization has performed more than 250,000 free surgeries. These are just two examples of Mount grads being entrepreneurs and making a significant difference in the world.

For the first time the Mount was selected by Money Magazine as a "Best Colleges for Your Money for 2017." Making this list is not easy. Money evaluated 2,400 colleges and universities on four factors including financial stability and graduation rates, and only one-third of the initial group made the final list. We are Mount Proud to be included in this ranking.

Finally, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education formally voted in June to accept our monitoring report. This officially wraps up the monitoring report process that we were directed to do by our accrediting body in early 2016. We are not required to have any formal external reviews until our next normally scheduled one in 2023.

This "clean bill of health," so to speak, from our primary accreditor is great news and signals how far we have come in a short timeframe. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard on getting the Mount to this point.

I want to recognize a few of our alumni who had recent notable achievements. Dr. David Ginty, class of 1984, and now at Harvard, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences, which is considered one of the highest honors a scientist can achieve. Nancy Abu-Bonsrah, class of 2012, is the first African-American woman to earn a residency in neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. This is an extraordinary accomplishment. Karen Dahut, class of 1985, was named executive vice president of Booz Allen Hamilton. Tamika Tremaglio, class of 1992, now leads Deloitte & Touche



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LLP's Greater Washington Practice. And Charles Haberkorn, class of 1980, was named CEO of Knouse Foods Cooperative, Inc. These are all great accomplishments and a testament to what you can do with a Mount education.

But our most significant alumni recognition has got to be hands down, Fr. Stanley Rother, seminary Class of 1963, being declared a martyr by Pope Francis, and becoming the first U.S.-born martyr. As Fr. Brian mentioned in his homily, Fr. Rother will be beatified in a ceremony on September 23 in his home diocese of Oklahoma City. The TV network EWTN recently completed a documentary about Fr. Rother that stars our own Fr. Connor and Monsignor Baker from the seminary who do a marvelous job telling the story of Fr. Rother's life and times at the Mount, and his incredible story of faithful service to his people in Guatemala until he was murdered by government forces there in 1981. The EWTN documentary will be aired twice, September 18 at 1 p.m. EDT, and September 22 at 8 p.m. EDT.

Last year we evaluated our current state of the Mount including the strength of our educational, athletic, student and spiritual programs, facilities and finances, and put that in the context of a changing higher educational environment. From this I realized it is imperative for the Mount to grow our enrollments, maintain innovative, relevant curricular and co-curricular programs, develop partnerships to bring new resources to the Mount, and to improve many of our facilities. These are essential for us to thrive in the future as the environment of higher education is changing and getting more and more competitive.

We are working now to describe how we will do this in a comprehensive five-year strategic plan; creating our future together. I want to thank everyone for your participation in our strategic planning process thus far, and encourage everyone including our students to remain engaged. We are developing our five-year plan to be aspirational about the excellence we seek to achieve together in the future.

As it should be, the success of our students is our rallying point, and the plan is coming together in the context of the following three strategic priorities: focus our efforts on student success, financial sustainability which includes stewardship of our precious resources of people, time and treasure, and having a faith and values-based campus environment. Our planning process is iterative and we will continue to reach out to everyone over the next month as we finalize the plan to bring to our board of trustees in October. I am really excited by the promise the future holds and the direction our strategic plan is helping chart us toward.

I want to address specifically for a moment the strategic priority regarding our campus environment. We talked a lot last year about having a campus environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and all feel they are trusted and valued members of our team. Unfortunately, as demonstrated by the events in Charlottesville, Virginia



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recently, the evils of racism and bigotry still exist in our nation. We are taught in the Book of Genesis that God created everyone in His own image. He did not discriminate by race or ethnic origin and so it follows that we must treat everyone with dignity and respect. There is no place for the violence of, and hatred spewed by neo-Nazi, white supremacy and similarly minded groups. At the Mount, let's together have the inclusive and respectful environment that serves as a beacon of hope for other communities to emulate.

Also, treating others with dignity and respect includes your personal relationships. Sexual assault is a problem on college campuses nationwide and we all must be part of the solution. No means no! And someone who is incapacitated by alcohol or drugs cannot provide consent! Don't be responsible for hurting someone, and let's take care of each other. I ask for your help in not tolerating environments – whether on campus or off – that promote harassment or disrespectful behavior.

Also, I ask you not to be bystanders when you think something is wrong, and a situation could lead to an assault. Listen to your senses and look for ways to intervene before a situation goes bad. We talked to the freshman about this during orientation and will continue our discussion and education throughout the year.

I am happy to announce that we have a group of students who volunteered to be trained as peer educators in sexual assault awareness and they will be providing educational sessions this year. Thank you for your support and vigilance on this.

As we embark on this year, I know you are also excited. Our seminarians are pursuing their calling to serve the Church and her people by further developing their intellect, pastoral skills, spirituality and inner self. Our seniors can see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel during this last year at the Mount. Our juniors and sophomores are delving deeply into their majors and engaging in high impact educational practices. Our freshman are embarking on an exciting new phase of their lives, studying at the higher educational level away from home. Our coaches and student athletes are also excited to demonstrate their skills on the courts and fields and make us Mount Proud. I am bullish on the Mount's chances again for greatness on and off the fields of friendly strife. And our faculty and staff are excited to help our students prepare to lead lives of significance in service to God and to a changing world by helping them grow intellectually, physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially.

To our students, embrace this exciting opportunity you have to become the best version of yourself by taking ownership of your learning. We have wonderful and caring faculty here who want you to succeed; we have tremendous learning support programs to help you sharpen your skills in certain areas; you have fellow students who can help you broaden



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your perspective and grasp difficult material. But it only happens if you personally take responsibility for your learning and are committed to improving and growing. Please look at downloading the My Mount Hub app, which can help you organize your life here and give you easy access to the many great events and programs available to help you on your path to success!

To our faculty and staff, thank you for the personal attention and caring you show to our students. Last year as I asked students in town halls about the best part of their experience at the Mount, the most frequent response I received was the individual attention and care they felt from faculty and staff members. Please keep this up and seek to be excellent in your role at the Mount, be it faculty member, coach, custodian, grounds worker, administrator or whatever your role here; you are all important to the success of our students and the Mount. Let us all be good teammates; together we are much stronger than as individuals.

The Mount is moving forward and I am excited by the new opportunities and programs we are pursuing this year in academics, athletics, student life, campus ministry, the seminary and at our campus in Frederick. Our National Shrine Grotto of our Lady of Lourdes continues to serve as a beacon of hope on Mary's Mountain and as a source of inspiration for hundreds of thousands who visit each year. We will continue to learn from each other and identify the most promising areas for change consistent with our core values as an institution. We will continue to move forward and adapt to a changing world.

As we start this year, I encourage everyone to take care of yourself. Often we can let the pace of life overwhelm us and we become unbalanced. It is ok and important to think about maintaining your own wellness. Socially we are healthier when we maintain strong positive relationships with others. Physically we are stronger when we exercise, eat right and get proper rest. Emotionally we are stronger when we talk with others and find healthy outlets for our emotions; spiritually we are stronger when we seek to know God better through prayer and feel His loving power through serving others.

We have great resources at the Mount to help us be well as individuals. We have our beautiful chapels and grotto, and wonderful programs through our campus ministry. We have counseling services that provide free and confidential individual counseling to students through our health services office. We have a plethora of really cool activities orchestrated by student life through which you can pursue an individual interest or just knock off some steam and have fun. And of course, you can't beat what campus rec has available here in the ARCC! So, we have it all, ready for you to engage in maintaining a balanced perspective and learning to live well.



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So, I am excited for this year, and I hope you are too. Together we will succeed and advance this institution into the future while respecting the foundation of faith and values upon which we rest.

Thank you, let's have fun this year, and Go Mount!

Senior Pinning Ceremony

And now it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the Class of 2018 – our undergraduate seniors and seminary deacons!

These seminarians and undergraduate students have met the challenge of their faculty during their years here at the Mount. They have persevered and today, they begin their final year with us. We are proud of their many accomplishments. But this year, their senior year, will be one that calls them to reach beyond themselves – to both succeed and set an example of excellence for our new students to follow. Today, we will present our seniors with university pins as a reminder of their special status and responsibility. Seniors, may these pins remind you of the calling to a life of significance lived in service to others and rich in God's blessings. May you look to them as a promise for the future. These pins were blessed earlier by Father Nolan.

Will the members of the Class of 2018 please stand and receive your pins from the faculty?

Closing Remarks

Seniors, it is your responsibility to pass along our traditions to the freshmen, and to guide, support and nurture them. It is your responsibility as you complete your academic program, to serve as examples of the highest ideals of the Mount and to live our mission.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating our senior class.

I now ask Fr. Nolan to conclude the Mass of the Holy Spirit and give us his blessing.