

## Adewale Oshodi - Class of 2000



Good morning, members of the St. Francis College Board of Trustees, president Macchiarola, members of the College faculty and administration, honored guests, family, friends, and well-wishers. And a special good morning to all the members of the St. Francis College graduating class of 2000!

When I received the official notice that I'd be giving the valedictory address, my first reaction was, "What in the world am I going to talk about?" So I asked a couple of you for your thoughts; someone said, just keep it short and simple and try not to be too corny. Someone else said, I should

try not to thank every Tom, Dick and Harry that's helped me since the day I was born. Other people suggested that I should incorporate some of the experiences we've all shared over the years and can easily relate to. You know, things like how more often than not, that 8 a.m. philosophy or finance class was an opportunity to take a power nap before your day really started; or better yet, the nightmarish experience of typing twenty-odd pages of your term paper, only to lose it all with a blink of an eye because of some virus on the school's computer network...

The list goes on and on, but I made no promises. I did however, finally decide that I'd share with you, my thoughts on St. Francis College and the kind of people I had the pleasure of knowing during my stay at the college. What's kept me at St. Francis College over the last four years lies in the fact that at St. Francis College, you are "somebody" by default, and you really can't get lost in the crowd unless you choose to. Most of your professors know you personally and are concerned not only about your success in the classroom, but also outside the classroom. My personal experiences at St. Francis College is summed up by one of my favorite quotes; it's an anonymous quote that says, "I was crying that I had no shoes, until I met someone without feet." You see, as human beings we have a natural tendency to dwell on what we don't have or would like to have, and often forget about the talents we've been blessed with and the importance of sharing them with those around us that might be worse off. However, I've been greatly inspired and influenced by many of the friends and acquaintances I've made at St. Francis College over the years, who contradict that natural human tendency by sharing the little that they do have despite their own hardships. I'm referring to things like taking time out to tutor that struggling classmate, volunteering for community service within and outside the school, organizing charitable causes, being a student leader, or simply just being there when a friend needs a listening ear or some encouragement. Finding myself surrounded

by such giving and hardworking people was defiantly a source of encouragement, especially since I was an international student, a long way away from home, in an environment that required me to grow up very fast.

That quote also reminds me of the importance of being thankful. Whatever our situation is in life, it is essential to give thanks first and foremost to the Lord who put us here on earth, and to the people He has placed in our lives. As such, even though we are gathered here today to celebrate our accomplishments, I give the glory to God, because were it not for His grace and mercies, none of us could have pulled through the last four or five years we spent at the college. And were it not for his grace, none of us could have woken up this morning to witness this beautiful day and occasion.

I also couldn't dare leave here today without thanking some very special people who've played an important role in my life during my stay at St. Francis College:

- Mum & Dad, I love you both very much, and thank the Lord for your lives. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to complete my undergraduate studies here in the U.S.
- Dr. Macchiarola, I can't thank you enough for the fatherly love and kindness you've shown towards me since the day I showed up at your door. God bless you.
- Dr. Ann Amore, you've had nothing short of words of praise and encouragement for me over the years. Thank you for everything.
- I cannot forget the faculty members of the Accounting & Business Law Department, Dr. Castiglione, Dr. Horlick, Professor Yellin, and Professor Breschel, you guys are the best! Keep up the good work.

And finally, there's you, the Class of 2000. I may have been limited by my own individual experiences and culture before coming to St. Francis, but my interactions with many of you over the years have taught me a lot, and I'm thankful for that. My prayer for you all is success in life. It has been said that true success isn't just having wealth, a prosperous career, and a loving family. All of that is just icing on the cake. True success comes from discovering the will of God in your life and actively pursuing it. May that be so for all of you as you start your careers or continue with your studies into graduate school. And when you become PhDs., M.Ds., CPAs, or J.Ds., remember where you come from and give back to the college that got you started.



There is a lot of excitement in this room today, and yet for those of you who are willing to admit like myself, that there is some apprehension about what lies ahead tomorrow, I

can only advise you to take courage like I do, in one of my favorite verses in the Bible, Joshua 1:9, where God said to Joshua

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, Neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with your wherever you go.”

Congratulations to you all. Thank You.