



Good morning Newman School. What a moment it is, for all of you, and all of us, as we enter into this school year at this time, in these times. Convocation is Celebration of the opportunity to be together - to convene - to celebrate, to reflect, a time to look inward, to see yourself in others and others in you, and a time to look forward. We know how challenging the past few years have been, and we are grateful for the simplest of opportunities - to gather.

I extend a warm welcome to all who are here today, and the few who cannot be here with us due to the challenges of the pandemic - a small number of our students who are not able to attend due to restrictions in their home countries.

I want to recognize and thank all of you who are with us today: distinguished faculty, all our students, our student leaders who have put this convocation together with Mr. Pool, and a special recognition to the senior class, the class of 2022. Thank you all for bringing your unique selves to Newman as we celebrate 75 years of education in the city. We are here for you, and we are here for each other, to build relationships to self, to others, to the work at hand, to ideas, and to the world around us, and to learn and grow - both as one, and as one learning community. We come from all over our city and surrounding towns, and from all over the globe - 22 countries - from our first-year students in the seventh grade, to our newest students in all grades, to our returning students who have been with us in year's past. Today, we also welcome faculty, those who have been with Newman for many years, and our newest faculty. Their commitment and their contributions to your learning and growth is unwavering. Together, we create the culture and community expressed and lived through Newman's Motto and our Mission: Cor ad Cor Loquitur, Heart Speaks to Heart.

For a moment, I ask you to think back to the time, in 1946, when Newman School received our first students, veterans returning from World War II, seeking to earn their high school diploma, to now, 75 years later, as we face another global challenge, and new ones ever more visible and pronounced, of our environment, of our sustainability, of equity and opportunity. For our learning to make a difference, it takes sacrifice, and hardwork, it takes understanding and it takes

empathy. Education, your education, in the ways we do education here at Newman, builds trusting relationships as we learn to ask questions through inquiry, use our voice and listen to others, solve problems through collaboration. Knowledge and understanding, friendships, and relationships will carry us forward.

As we have started this year with such energy and engagement, I am confident that we will all do our share, to take care of each other, and live our values, our Mission, and our motto, as “heart speaks to heart.”

This year, the student leaders have set forth a challenge to us in their selection of our theme of the year “Commit To.”

Today, for me, my goal is that we can “Commit To” good citizenship. There is a long standing recognition that schools are here to create “good citizens.” What does it mean to be a good citizen? What does it mean to be a good citizen at Newman, especially in these times? Author Baratunde Thurston makes use of the noun, “Citizen” as a verb, “To Citizen.” He has given us much to think about as we open our school year together about what the verb “to citizen” means - to live in a place, to be in a place, a class, a grade year, a team, a house, a school, a community, a city a country, a world. Barunde says “to citizen” begins with self-governance, where we must first learn to become responsible for ourselves and to others.

For us in this year of transition, at the most basic level, for some, “to citizen” can mean simply to “show up” to be there - to be here - present - for yourself and others. For others, it can mean “to invest.” “To citizen” takes commitment. “To citizen” can mean “to commit to.” To what and perhaps to whom will you “Commit” this year? Your principles and values? Your voice which each of you has here. Your power, which each of you has here, your individuality, your independence, our interdependence?

So here we are, new and old, friends and new acquaintances, classmates and teammates, persons of value, each and every one, and friends. At Newman, everyone can be a friend, and everyone can find a friend. Perhaps we can commit to just that, “to be a friend.” As we begin to know each other, through our commitments, in time, we will get to know ourselves and our world even better.

As we bring in the year, in this Convocation, we celebrate you, we celebrate our school community. Show up. Participate. Engage. Explore. Invest. Listen.

Commit. Care for each other. You have the power of your voice and your commitments to make this year better than before, and better than ever. It is FUN TO TRY, and it is FUN TO COMMIT. In the words of Hillel, if not you, then who? If not now, then when? This year at Newman, Commit “To Citizen” together.