

June 18, 2025

Friends of Cristo Rey,

Two weeks ago, as our largest and tenth graduating class turned their tassels at Graduation, we witnessed another manifestation of our mission coming to fruition. It was exciting, emotional, and inspiring for all! We began the celebration of the Class of 2025 and their accomplishments earlier in the week with our annual Work-Study Sendoff and Baccalaureate Service. The Work-Study Sendoff gave the Class of 2025 the chance to network with current Job Partners and our alumni! Then, the Class of 2025 and their families, along with faculty and staff, made their way to our Essent Gymnasium to culminate four years of hard work with prayer, reflection, and awards at our Baccalaureate Service. We heard from students, Laila Mitchell and Kathryn Contreras about how Cristo Rey Philadelphia has shaped their faith and belief in love. We also celebrated their academic achievements and heard from our Senior Theology Teacher, Jessie Marinucci, who was elected to give the year-end reflection by the Class of 2025. Jessie closed her reflection with the following words, "You are a masterpiece." Just two nights later, that masterpiece was in full display at La Salle University's McCarthy Stadium. The Class of 2025 walked across the graduation stage with tremendous energy and many tears of joy! They did it! If you couldn't join us, the livestream is available [here](#).



While watching the pride and joy on the faces of family members, partners, friends, our team, and our students, I couldn't help but think about one of my favorite quotes and the Cristo Rey Credo. Vince Lombardi once said, "Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." Each family, each Work-Study Partner, each friend, each supporter, each team member, and every single student on that graduation stage make an individual commitment to our mission. It is because of these individual commitments that Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School works. That commitment aligns with the Cristo Rey Credo that calls us to have hope for a brighter future: "A hope so outrageously bold that we are afraid people will laugh at us if they knew what we hoped for!"

I cannot think of a better example of individual commitment to our mission, our success, and our students than Dr. Flannery O'Connor. After 13 years of dedicated service to Cristo Rey Philadelphia that started at John McConnell's kitchen table, Flannery is moving on to spend more time with her family. I am so

grateful for her belief in our mission to provide our students with the educational opportunities they deserve, her unwavering faith in something bigger than herself, and her *Outrageously Bold Hope* that Cristo Rey is a unique movement creating transformational change at every level of our society.



As we head into the summer months, our building will be full of activity! We are excited to welcome our new Principal Liz Blessing to our Cristo Rey community. Additionally, we cannot wait for Monday, when 90 of our youngest neighbors will walk back into 1717 for our fifth summer of Horizons at Cristo Rey programming! And finally, on July 7, the incoming Class of 2029 will join us for two weeks of Summer Bridge. Our community never stops thriving, and this is just what's happening in the building. Today, the Class of 2026 wraps up their Ready, Set, College! program with our College & Career Counseling Team at Gwynedd Mercy University. One hundred and six rising seniors spent the last few days working on their college essays and finalizing their college lists so that they begin next school year ready for the college application process. I look forward to sharing more summer learning experiences and excursions of our community in the coming months.

Happy Summer!

Tom Shoemaker  
President & CEO  
Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School



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