

Inaugural Address

Marie Angelella George, President, Cabrini College

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Your Eminence, Cardinal Rigali; Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; Board Chair Theresa Cavanaugh and members of the college's board of trustees; distinguished representatives of colleges, universities, and learned societies from across the nation; local officials; past presidents of Cabrini college; students and your families; alumni, faculty, and staff; and my family, former colleagues, and friends.

As the seventh president of Cabrini College, I am humbled by the honor you bestow upon me. Cabrini College and its education of the heart certainly have captured my heart. I stand before you today keenly aware of the enormous privilege and opportunity with which I have been entrusted. Inaugural remarks are composed of many words, many thoughts, hopes and dreams. This is a time to look forward and to look back. But of all the words I will say today, let me begin with the two words that matter the most: "Thank you."

My gratitude runs very deep today, to those who came before me, to all of you gathered here today, to the many friends and family whose influence upon me and love for me have made all the difference in my life, especially my best friend and husband of 35 years, Francis George, and my son, Francis, and his wife, Selena. You are the greatest blessing in my life. Most of all, I offer my thanks to the gracious and loving God who has led me to this day, this moment, this incredible opportunity to serve him and to serve this academic community at this time. It is an extraordinary honor.

In the past few days, we witnessed an amazing weeklong series of events coincident with Saint Frances Cabrini's feast day, a wonderful celebration of this wonderful place. To all of the faculty, staff, students, alumni, and trustees who contributed their time, talent and inspiration to these events, please know you have my sincere thanks as well. I offer special recognition to every member of the Inauguration Steering Committee and sub-committees led by Jonnie Guerra and Gene Castellano.

With a half century of service to our students, Cabrini College may seem young when compared to some colleges and universities, but it has been an impressive 50 years, one that has laid the foundation for the next 50 years. Our roots run deep. Our ground is fertile. Our foliage is brilliant. We refer to our magnificent entrance as "a cathedral of trees" because as a Catholic and Cabrinian college, we are nurtured by the Gospels and the legacy of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini. We are faith-filled stewards.

Mother Cabrini's charism is palpable and her philosophy of education explains our accomplishments and our destiny. I am humbled and awestruck by the example of Mother Cabrini. I awoke this morning to think of her, a faith-filled woman who came to this country with little more than a calling, but who left a legacy that extends well beyond the borders of this campus. I pledge to all of you that I will forever remain in awe of that legacy. It will guide me and inspire me just as it has all of you.

It is with both pride in the past and passion about our future, that I am pleased to announce today some bold steps that Cabrini College will take as we begin our 51st year. Our rich heritage and keen sense of our mission have prepared us well to act passionately and decisively in the area of curriculum reform where matters of justice will be central because justice matters.

Curriculum is at the heart of all we do in education. It is the engine that drives us, the foundation that sustains us, and the rock on which we build a new generation of leaders.

To introduce Justice Matters, our revised curriculum, I want to ground it in the legacy of our patroness, Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, and our foundress, Mother Ursula Infante. The legacies of these two inspiring women and those who followed them have prepared us well!

Maria Francesca Severio Cabrini, her name in Italian, was a very young girl when she found herself inspired by the missionary zeal of St. Francis Xavier, S.J., the 16th-century Jesuit who evangelized in the Orient. Francesca desired to follow in the footsteps of her role model, to travel eastward as he had, but God had other plans for the girl from northern Italy who found herself traveling west instead, at the request of Pope Leo XIII and the Scalabrini fathers. Francesca's early destination would be the Americas where she would assist Italian immigrants.

Her institute of missionary sisters was established in 1880, a time of tumultuous cultural, political and economic upheaval, just 17 years after President Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation, a time when immigrants arrived on U.S. soil in droves, in search of dreams, freedom, and a better life, but those dreams did not come easily in the late 19th century. Her work with immigrants exposed her to injustice, oppression, discrimination, and poverty, but her faith and trust in God inspired her, as did Christ's example in the Gospels. Pope Leo XIII, in sending her to America, knew that justice matters. His faith-filled servant, Francesca, knew that justice matters. The members of this academic community that now bears the name of Frances Cabrini are distinguished in many ways, but above all, we are distinguished because we stand on common ground in our belief, that even now—perhaps especially now—we still believe that justice matters.

Frances Cabrini was fearless in extending the outreach of her missionary sisters from Italy to the United States, and then from Europe to Central America. In her 67 years on this earth, she founded 67 missions; impressive for a woman who thought she was eastward bound, even more impressive if we stop to consider that the majority of those missions were established after she was 40 years old.

As noted by her biographer Sr. Mary Louise Sullivan, MSC, who was the fourth president of this college: "Cabrini was a modern woman who possessed that intangible element known as charisma who captured the attention of both the powerful and the lowly of this world. Her interests were extensive. She was an entrepreneur and world traveler, keenly aware of the currents of thought in the world of her time. Cabrini foresaw the twentieth century as one of revolution, tailored her philosophy of education, health care, and social service to accentuate the intrinsic value and dignity of each human being."

Mother Cabrini lived during the same time *Rerum Novarum* was authored by Pope Leo XIII. This foundational ecclesial document defined with unequivocal clarity the doctrines of Catholic social teaching, which continues to guide our understanding of social justice, workers' rights, the preferential option for the poor, and the common good. Mother Cabrini was a living, breathing example of what *Rerum Novarum* was all about, but it is clear that she did not do what she did on this earth simply out of allegiance to the church or even fidelity to papal edicts. She did what she did because it was impossible for her to do otherwise.

Confronted with the social, spiritual, educational, and health care needs of humanity, she wasted no time in providing solutions. This was a woman who did not touch lives just through her charity or her kindness. She considered the implications of the public problems she witnessed. She acted in ways that were intended to advance public understanding. She advocated for justice. In her words and in her deeds, she acted in solidarity with those in need. She knew that justice matters.

Mother Cabrini was described by Segundo Galilea: "... this was the woman whom the Holy Spirit, across surprising paths, had been preparing to establish an institute of missionary sisters. God gifted her, to a high degree, with the qualities of initiative, organization, and administration. He granted her apostolic zeal, an enterprising spirit, and the determination which characterizes genuine missionaries. Finally, he granted her the quality which makes an apostolic religious with organizing skills a foundress: the gift of radiating mysticism, which would be transmitted to a group of young women anxious to consecrate themselves completely to God and to his reign."

The mysticism that Galilea speaks of lives on here at Cabrini College. We celebrate and reflect upon her legacy as part of our everyday conversations, annual rituals, and periodic celebrations. It is not unusual

to hear those often-spoken words, "she guides us still." The charism of Mother Cabrini and the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart have defined our culture, our norms and values, our understanding of who we are and what we are: an academic community with unshakable core values of respect, vision, dedication to excellence, and bonds with one another.

It is fitting indeed that Frances Xavier Cabrini was canonized in 1946, less than three decades following her death, the first naturalized United States citizen to achieve sainthood. It is equally fitting that she serves now as the patron saint of immigrants.

On a July day in 1915 when Mother Ursula Infante, the foundress of Cabrini College entered the Missionary Sisters she met Mother Cabrini for the first time and she remembered fondly the warm smile that awaited her before she donned her first habit and when Mother Foundress straightened her cape. Many of you in the audience knew Mother Ursula, the woman to whom we also owe so much today.

Mother Ursula began her own journey as an educator in New York City's Mother Cabrini High School before coming to Philadelphia and taking what was then a very bold step to found a college, a uniquely Cabrinian college at the Woodcrest Estate. She ventured onward, plowed through some resistance and, in 1957, saw her dream realized as Cabrini College was established, the only post-secondary apostolic mission within an already extensive international reach of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

As Mother Ursula labored on this ground on which we stand today, planting the seeds that would bring us to this day, I was a seven-year-old girl growing up not far from here, the oldest daughter of one of those Italian immigrant families to whom Saint Frances Cabrini had come to minister. Certainly, our lot was easier than that of many who had arrived on these shores empty-handed, but it was far from luxurious. I stand before you today as the very proud daughter of a seamstress and a shoemaker.

In the house where we lived on Custer Street, my mother's talents were evident in every nook and cranny of our home, from the lace curtains on our windows to the clothes on my back. In our home's basement, the smell of leather from shoe soles lingered, the fragrant evidence of a man who worked with his hands until landing a job in the U.S. postal service. Ours was a home where hard work, love, faith, and belief in the future mingled with the scents of Sunday pasta and toasted Italian bread in the morning. I am blessed to be able to recognize my mother, Josephine Angelella, who stood with me then and who stands with me now. If there is even an ounce of sadness in me today, it would be that my father, Charles Angelella, could not live to see this day. He always encouraged me to spread my wings

and soar. His words echo in my brain and in my heart every day. "Marie," he said, "There is one thing that no one can ever take from you, and that is your education."

This Italian-American home was where I first received my education of the heart and is a reason why I so quickly felt at home on this campus. The dedication to justice and the intellectual energy on campus were palpable from the moment I first visited, clearly a legacy of Frances Xavier Cabrini's missionary spirit and zeal, brought to this campus by Mother Ursula Infante. Even today, 51 years later, we continue to discover meaningful ways in which the Cabrini charism flourishes when applied in the context of Catholic higher education. The missionary zeal of Mother Cabrini is firmly rooted here and has been translated to our zeal in providing an education of the heart to those students entrusted to our care. It is noteworthy that we include the words "of the heart."

It's unusual for a college to be concerned with its students' deep and life-long commitments, with their hearts, but we put this statement out there front and center; no apologies. Our goal is no less than for our graduates to be transformed into citizens committed to justice, working in their unique and collective ways for the common good. At Cabrini College, we do things with our minds and with our hearts. We do extraordinary things with the same commitment to human dignity and equality that motivated our founders. In the short time I have been here it is so wonderfully and abundantly clear to me that this is a community in which justice matters!

Mother Cabrini was first and foremost an educator, and she expressed a student-centered, personalized approach to education long before such descriptors were voiced by others. She knew that an education of the heart required both intellectual and moral development and she viewed the two as inextricably linked in a Catholic, Cabrinian education. Her expectation was that a student's learning was ultimately meant to benefit others. In so many ways, she was well ahead of the current trends in higher education in her time, articulating the need for student-centered learning or what we now commonly refer to as outcomes assessment.

Sr. Mary Louise writes: "Mother Cabrini deemed it important that education be directed outward. What was learned was to be used for the benefit of others. In the closing words of a letter to a young woman completing her teacher training in Rome, Mother Cabrini wrote from Denver: 'God bless you now, in your examinations, in your scholastic career, and in your state of life, so that you render it fruitful to the church, country, and society.'"

Mother Ursula Infante articulated in her writings the faculty's role and their requisite qualities; a zeal for learning, deep respect and love for their students, awareness of the external environment and the needs of others, and most importantly a facilitator of a teaching-learning process that fosters a transformational educational experience for the lives of their students. Mother Ursula was determined to hire faculty who would embrace the Catholic, Cabrinian mission "passionately and swiftly."

Over the years, we have boldly and proudly proclaimed that Cabrini College provides an education of the heart, where intellectual competence, social responsibility, and moral development are our aims, and where faculty are deeply engaged in the learning experiences of each of their students.

There are numerous Cabrinian elementary and secondary educational institutions around the globe—from New York to New Orleans, from London to Madrid, from Brazil to Argentina—but there is only one Cabrini College, this one, this magical place that sprouted up from that former estate.

Ours is a unique cape to wear. We must wear it proudly. We must preserve the integrity of its fabric because it is a fabric that is so badly needed within the landscape of higher education, a fabric that has been stitched with care, thread by precious thread, motivated by the heart that sustains our mission of education of the heart.

Cabrini's faculty have, over the years, developed a curriculum that values experiential learning, learning that extends beyond the classroom and that recognizes that the blending of theory with experience is an approach that enhances learning. This is so ingrained here at Cabrini College that we run the risk of forgetting just how unique and important that philosophy is to our core values, to our very identity. When learning is mixed with doing, the results can be and are life-changing. The results are transformational, not only in the lives of our students, but in the lives they go on to impact in a legacy of outcomes that extends far beyond the borders of this campus.

What we are doing here is putting a stake in the ground that says that the acquisition of knowledge is not enough and will never be enough if that knowledge does not get utilized in the betterment of society and in the betterment of our own lives. There are those in the field of higher education who would disagree, adamantly, with that statement, many who would say that knowledge for knowledge sake is enough. We are saying something quite different here at Cabrini College, and we are saying it out loud and with no apologies. We are saying it because justice matters. It is precisely this conviction that distinguishes us. It is a badge of honor. It is the cape that we must wear with conviction. It is the life force that enables faculty and students to be entrepreneurial in their thinking and in their doing.

In the early 1970's, when study abroad programs and experiences were still a rarity on many college and university campuses, two faculty members—Professors Joseph Romano and Suzanne Toton—developed Project Outreach, placing students for a semester or summer in teaching, health care, and social work at mission sites around the globe, sites that had been established by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

Terry Alberici, from the class of 1976, was the first student to engage in social justice work abroad when she traveled to the sister's mission in Swaziland. Recently our students have continued this international focus working with the Missionary Sisters and with Catholic Relief Services in Ethiopia, the Gambia, and Ecuador. Over the years, faculty went on service missions to Mexico, Brazil, Swaziland, and El Salvador consistent with the global vision of Mother Cabrini and the Missionary Sisters.

We all can take pride that Cabrini College was the first college in Pennsylvania to include community engagement as a curricular requirement. It was another bold example of connecting that education of the heart with the curriculum. It was a statement that the community outside our campus borders mattered and that a community-based learning experience integrated with course goals and fostered in both action and reflection mattered as well. That commitment, now three decades strong, has extended itself well beyond fundamental service learning to include the full continuum of experiential-learning opportunities and community-based research which is aligned to a Cabrinian education of the heart.

One example of that commitment today is the Crabby Creek project, an ongoing undergraduate study of pollution and water quality in local streams and the attitudes of the local community impacted by that pollution. This research is directed by Professors David Dunbar, Carrie Nielson, and Melissa Terlecki. In collaboration with Catholic Relief Services, Dr. Dunbar plans to extend his research to work on water issues in El Salvador.

The work of these faculty and students illustrates well the college's commitment to engaged research and teaching in deep cooperation with partners, both at home and in poor nations, to benefit the common good. The work of Dr. Dunbar and so many others goes well beyond the classic scholarship model. Yes, Cabrini faculty are creating new knowledge about important issues, but it is knowledge that also contributes to advancing public understanding and opportunities for dialogue, for advocacy, for action, for change. It is the kind of knowledge that Mother Cabrini so warmly embraced and Mother Ursula knew would set the college she founded apart.

Learning beyond the walls of the classroom is now integral to Cabrini's transformational educational experience where moral and social responsibility is addressed theoretically and experientially, in line

with the social teachings of the Catholic church, in line with Mother Cabrini's heart, in line with a college that makes no apologies for offering an education of the heart, in line with a new curriculum that boldly proclaims that justice matters.

Our concern for social justice education is evident in selected course readings, in faculty's preference for research and most poignantly in the preparation of our students to understand both theoretically and practically what it really means to be oppressed, to be discriminated against, to live without rank or privilege or opportunity or hope.

Experiential learning at Cabrini College is not mere charity. It is not simply doing good for good's sake. We learn in solidarity and in compassion. We place ourselves at the center of the oppression and we cease to be who we were before that time. In so doing, we see the world both as it is and as we would like it to be. Thus what was the preference of some faculty to open the doors and windows of the classroom has now become an imperative for all, one that extends to the staff, administration, and trustees and to the many alumni and friends of this great college.

It was, then, a natural progression that Cabrini's unique expression of an education of the heart is one that now places social justice education at its core. It is precisely that commitment that brought me to Cabrini College, the interconnectedness of the Catholic intellectual and social teachings, a beautiful and profoundly powerful blending of two rich traditions from which students of all faiths can be transformed in order that they may have the chance to do something extraordinary.

During our 50 years as a Catholic, Cabrinian college, we have preserved this philosophy of an education of the heart while simultaneously adapting and changing it to reflect the times. We have kept our core sense of who we are while re-founding ourselves over and over again, taking up the never-ending tasks demanded of us in this changing world.

Let me now share our vision for Cabrini's future. It is a vision of defining the contemporary Cabrinian education through excellence, social justice, and transformational learning. Guided by this vision, aided by the insights of our faculty, we have developed a new model for social justice education. That vision begins today, here, now, at the cusp of Cabrini College's next 50 years.

Beginning in fall 2009, a unique social justice educational experience, Justice Matters, will be provided to all entering students. Justice Matters is a core curriculum that aims to educate students for full participation in the 21st century as citizens capable of understanding the global and the local relationships required to navigate key issues and contribute to systemic change.

This is our pilot year in which we will begin a phased implementation of the new curriculum and over the next four years arrive at a goal in which all students will, during their time at Cabrini, engage in study, research, and advocacy in support of social justice and the creation of a more compassionate and peaceful society.

Teams of students and faculty will research the root causes of injustice and long-term solutions to global issues, working with partners in the United States, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Every academic discipline will be engaged in bringing its expertise and resources to bear on the pressing issues of our times. Those issues will include some of the major challenges facing this generation: health, ecology, food supply, migration, peace, women's rights, globalization.

These are but a few of the issues that will be imbedded into the curriculum here, for every student in every major.

Future business leaders will come to understand that ethics, advocacy, and public compassion are integral to their success. Future teachers will enter classrooms guided by a better understanding of the socioeconomic, cultural, and political factors that contributed to the composition of their classrooms. Future communicators will turn the lens of the media and the attention of the public to see, understand, be moved by, and act effectively on behalf of forgotten or unseen human beings at home and abroad.

Over the four years, Cabrini's Justice Matters curriculum is designed to produce engaged citizens capable of understanding the pressing issues facing our global society and contributing in their lifetime to solutions. In their first three years at Cabrini College, students will develop the skills to understand issues of social justice and then to advocate for systemic change. As students enter their final year here, they will have the opportunity to undertake a capstone experience that combines a broad liberal arts foundation with specialized professional skills. Students will work in multi-disciplinary teams with faculty from various departments. All projects and learning will be undertaken in cooperation with local and international partners who will be key resources and collaborators in the new curriculum. Students will learn and practice the skills of effective organizing and advocacy to work in the public arena for systemic changes that benefit the partners, and society at large.

Key to the new curriculum are partnerships between Cabrini College and local and global agencies that work for the common good. Cabrini College has made a substantial commitment to neighboring communities such as Norristown. Our principal international partners, Catholic Relief Services and the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, work to secure human dignity and empowerment in the lives of the most vulnerable members of the human family in more than 100 countries.

Justice Matters, our new vision of a contemporary Cabrinian education, will inform all that we do. There are so many exciting opportunities that await us and I am certain there are many that have yet to be revealed, but I will mention seven that are already apparent and to which I am fully committed as this college's seventh president.

We will strengthen our Catholic and Cabrinian identity by being explicit and intentional in connecting our Catholic and Cabrinian traditions to everything that we do.

We will work to strengthen our liberal arts core by fostering interdisciplinary study and making full use of our new, state-of-the-art science facilities, which are already attracting fine faculty and enabling faculty/student research to flourish. We will never abandon the study of philosophy and theology, central to a liberal arts education. We will actively explore ways to enhance the presence of the arts, in all that the word art implies, on our campus and in our curriculum. We will promote and embrace opportunities for international study and proficiency in a second or third language.

We will nurture existing partnerships and seek opportunities for others to emerge, as appropriate to our mission. We will look to find ways to strengthen our existing partnerships in light of our vision for the future. One of the most important partnerships we have is with the Missionary Sisters and we will seek new ways and discover new spaces to collaborate and support the goals from the recent Fourteenth General Chapter.

We will promote and whole-heartedly embrace a teacher-scholar model for our faculty and work diligently to secure additional resources to advance support for their research and professional development. We will seek that support, certain that our success is critical to our faculty's ability to have a profound impact not only in their chosen disciplines, but also in their ideals and aspirations for Catholic higher education. We will increase the number of full-time faculty to respond to Mother Ursula's mandate for an engaged faculty and a personalized education for our students.

We will strengthen our relationship with alumni, recognizing that the 10,000 graduates of this college are, as much as our current students and faculty, our ambassadors to the world. They will know that they remain in our hearts even after they complete their education of the heart. They will know that the work we do today, tomorrow and in the future is dedicated to those who came before. As part of that dedication, I will travel throughout the Delaware Valley and across this country in 2009 to meet with alumni, to share the college's vision for the future, to provide assurance that I will preserve and continue to transmit Cabrini College's mission and core values, and perhaps most importantly, to listen to what our alumni and friends think about our current aspirations.

We will discover new ways to complement Justice Matters with an inclusive campus culture that values the dignity of all persons and their contributions to the common good and the mission of Cabrini College. We will recognize that in our own words and deeds, we model for our students the behavior and the mindset we seek to engender both in and out of the classroom and in the ways in which we steward our human and financial resources as well as our campus environment.

We will establish a pivotal role for the Wolfington Center that is in tandem with the development of our new Justice Matters curriculum. The Wolfington Center will become the college's voice for social justice education, a place where alliances will be formed, partnerships achieved, and where faculty and students can turn for advice and support in our efforts to pioneer an even greater leadership role in Catholic higher education.

Our new curriculum places us in a radically different position from that ordinarily taken by colleges and universities. As we engage with community partners, both nearby and abroad, we will learn from and with those communities, especially from the poor and marginalized. We will inspire, and be inspired by, the communities in which we learn. We will bring our specialized skills and energy to those non-traditional classrooms and we will return with new skills. In achieving deeper understanding of the social, political, economic and cultural situations around us, we will transform the lives of others at the same time our own lives are being transformed. We will act and believe that we do what we do, because justice matters and because education is fundamentally about the ability to impact the common good.

Already, in the few months I have been here, I have been moved by the depth of knowledge and passion for justice expressed by students. Professor Jeffrey Gingerich shared with me the words of a student in the Inside-Out course in which Cabrini students learn alongside inmates at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. This young woman said, "I'm learning that ... there are no 'others.' I am connected to the inside students as much as I am the outside students. I can no longer 'otherize' or idealize the people that I want to serve. I am connected to the good, the bad, the ugly, and the beautiful of humanity. My job is to work toward building a world where everyone has an equal chance to be happy ... that's scary and kind of exciting."

I have spoken with communication students who shared their experiences in being trained as advocates for social justice. Jillian Smith, Megan Pellegrino, Kara Schneider, Christine Graf, and Brittany Mitchell shared with me this past summer the expert videos they created to move Americans to urge their legislators to pass funding for HIV/AIDS treatment. In partnership with Catholic Relief Services, those students and others went to Capitol Hill to lobby for long-term food security in Africa. They were transformed in the process and their presence transformed others. They did something extraordinary.

In order to understand what our students and faculty are engaging in as they work with our partners, I am committing myself today to learning alongside them as we implement the new curriculum.

Next week, I will have the privilege of observing Professor Amy Persichetti's class as her students present the results of their research on domestic violence to our community partner, Laurel House. Their research will be instrumental in showing that domestic violence affects everyone, even their fellow students, and this research will be used to educate high school students around the region, and eventually, our legislators, police departments, and our own college freshmen.

As a sign of my own commitment to participate in our college's curriculum, in February I will travel with a team of our students and their faculty, Professors Cathy Yungmann and Jerry Zurek, and Dr. Mary Laver of the Wolfington Center, to a Mayan village in Guatemala. There, our students will investigate the power of partnerships to help communities to achieve the basic human rights of food, security, shelter, healthcare, education, and work. In Guatemala with our students and faculty, I will learn from Catholic Relief Services and the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart how Catholic social teaching is being put into practice to achieve integral human development in the most challenging of situations. I will see how our students are taking their advanced professional skills to create multimedia presentations we can use to explain and exemplify their works of education and advocacy.

Frances Xavier Cabrini recognized that "the poor and marginalized had different faces, different names and different origins." She was right when she said "Today love must not be hidden; it must be active, vibrant and true. Today, more than ever, love must respond with effective action." We should all think of her words, of her sense that love matters. In the context of what we do here, that translates to a love of learning, a love of God, and a love for the human family. Love is indeed the greatest of all virtues.

These are exciting times, I am so very grateful to be a part of all that is happening here at Cabrini College. To the previous presidents of this great College—Sr. Ursula Infante, Sr. Gervase Lapadula, Sr. Regina Casey, Sr. Mary Louise Sullivan, Sr. Eileen Currie and Dr. Antoinette Iadarola—I offer my thanks for all you have done to get us to this day. To our students, faculty, staff, and alumni, I offer my unwavering commitment to doing all that I can to preserve that legacy and to build upon it. Our goal is to educate students who will be, while they are here and long after they leave this campus, engaged with our world, dedicated to addressing the most challenging issues of our times, prepared for action and advocacy and forever inspired by the transformative vision for social justice that lies at the heart of our Catholic and Cabrinian mission.

Beneficium supra seipsum. Service beyond one's self. That is so much more than a motto. Those are the words that will guide our work in the years ahead. Those are the words that live at the heart of our mission.

It is a noble mission and a noteworthy endeavor, as important in 2008 as it was in 1957. I am so thrilled to be a part of this College's unfolding history, to embrace that mission along with all of you. I stand before you today, the now grown-up daughter of that seamstress and shoemaker, a proud wife and mother, a college president who is absolutely certain that her own education is far from over.

Today I ask you all to pray for me in the work ahead, to pray as I will that God will continue to bestow his abundant blessings on Cabrini College and on all who labor with us here in the vineyards of Catholic higher education.

May God bless all of you and may God bless Cabrini College.