

## Lasallian Commencement Address

May 2022

Presented by: Lorelei Summers

Good morning, members of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Livingston, honored guest, faculty, staff, friends, family, and of course, my fellow graduates- we made it. I am more than honored to be here before you and with you today.

To the class of 2022, our journey through college has been a series ups and downs, especially within the last two years through the pandemic. I remember going on the civil rights pilgrimage and standing in front of the Alabama Capitol house during spring break of 2020 while reading an email indicating that school would be shutting down for two weeks. As we all know, that two weeks turned into the rest of the semester and even some of fall 2020. But despite having our lives turned upside down, we did it. We are here in person, graduating together.

As I was writing this speech, I questioned what it meant to be Lasallian? When I think of being a Lasallian, I think of valuing one another and growing in a sense of community. At Lewis University, I discovered a community of people who were just like me, and I eventually met some of my closest friends. Since I was a commuter, I was worried about not making friends and just going through the motions of going to school and then going home, never interacting with others. I am glad to say that I was mistaken; I forced myself to go and talk to others and got involved in ministry. There I learned who Lasalle was and that not all Catholics are scary. The faculty and staff at Lewis really value each and every student by giving students their time and getting to know them personally. Lasalle taught others to respect all persons and that everyone has dignity, worth, and value.

As a biology major and in true biology fashion, I like to picture the Lewis community as the human body and each one of us as a cell. We are each made up of 30 trillion cells, each one is unique and has its own function. Without the function of every cell, our

Just like the cells that make up the human body, each one of us is a unique cell with our own special talents and expertise. Together we make up Lewis University and enable Lewis to function effectively as a Lasallian university. Your body does not look at a functioning cell and

W as we as a community do not look at someone and devalue them. Every person is of value, like Paul said in 1<sup>st</sup> <sup>18</sup> But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>

Within the body that is Lewis, we, as cells, interact and share our experiences with people from other parts of the body, creating this web of togetherness. I have always felt a presence of belonging and respect for all people here at Lewis through the different types of experiences that were opened up to me during my time here.

I was first brought into the realm of the Lasallian network through the International Association of Lasallian Universities. I was nominated to go to France for a conference to meet with other Lasallian students across the world to discuss what we are doing on our campus and about the different injustices in our own communities. Because of this experience, my eyes were opened to the world of Lasalle and what it means to be Lasallian. I was able to meet so many different individuals from around the world and saw that the Lasallian community that exists here at Lewis exists throughout the world. Every college student is going through the same hardships

