Abbott Mark, President Favazza, Benedictines, Trustees, Faculty and Staff, Friends, Families, and my fellow Anselmians, whether you're here with me outside Alumni Hall, or a little too socially distant, we made it! In spite of some... or a lot of... uncertainty, long nights of studying, a global pandemic, the daunting shift to online classes, being told a hundred times that our microphones are stuck on mute, and an extra year of wailing, graduation has arrived... again. Today is the long awaited celebration that we've been dreaming of, and also the fulfillment of something that we all undoubtedly worried about at some point... the idea that ii might take us a fifth year to graduate.

Needless to say, we've grown since those days as wide-eyed freshmen who danced The Wobble on our first day of Orientation... but I'm going to take you back to the year 2016 for just a little bit. It's the last Conversatio lecture of the first semester in the Dana Center. It's 12:30 and we're all plotting our run to get in line for lunch in Davison. But, I wrote a quote from the lecture that day on my copy of the Rule of Saint Benedict from John 4:18 that stuck with me "for I no longer fear God, but I love him. For love casts out fear." Is there anything that rings so true to what our current situation is more than that?

Class of 2020, it's an understatement to say that we've been through a lot this last year. 2020 was a year that got cut short in the worst way, but even though we missed our last games on the sports fields, senior days, and Senior formal to name a few things, the year gave us a chance to grow as people and as Anselmians. Now I'm

going to ask you a question I'm sure that you haven't heard in a few years, "what is your Conversatio?" *Or for our parents and family members playing along at home who were just VERY confused by that,* "what is your life's pilgrimage?" I promise you, no one included a global pandemic in their talk freshman year when we had our public speeches on what our Conversatios were... and if you did... well... you may want to go talk to health services and Maura Marshall. The fact of the matter is that, the world looks different than it did back then, our class looks different, and today's graduation is different, but I promise you, with that difference comes growth and lessons that we'll never forget.

Now, I know we like to talk a lot about what it means to be an Anselmian, and it's true that Anselmian is in holding the door for like... a million people outside of Davison, the Conversatio books which we read (and paid a small fortune for in the bookstore), Christmas feasts, and endless CAB T-shirts that still line my closet, and of course, your yearbooks, which I'm VERY proud of. But more important than all of that, Anselmian values were present even in this last year. Anselmian Values are the values of kindness, determination, and love that shine even in the darkest moments when we fear the most. Anselmian values are there when you watch all of our nurses pull their facemasks up... past their noses... and go to work fighting COVID-19. Anselmian values are present in the optimism of those who maybe should have spent a little more time working on assembling their resume with the CDC, but still apply for jobs in spite of the job market, because maybe this time they'll land that interview. And Anselmian Values are present in every one of us who didn't give up hope that we'd walk this stage because we

knew... that deep down... President Favazza and Dean Cronin DID miss us. Being an Anselmian isn't just about the good times, it means being Anselmian, even when it's not easy to be.

truly moves us forward on our Conversatio.

I offer two challenges to us, Class of 2020. First, thank the people who got you to this point today. To all of the professors, advisors, parents, family members, roommates and friends, thank you. Today's graduation would not be possible without every single one of you being there to encourage us to strive for the ideals of Anselmians on a daily

basis. And from the bottom of my heart, thank you. It has been the honor of a lifetime

Remember, our Conversatios aren't sprints. They're marathons through our whole lives. Who we are and all that we've learned from our time on this campus is something that will shape us in the long haul, and not just in the moments we're in. I'm pretty sure I one of those tee-shirts in my closet says, "Anselmian for Life." Well, so be ii.

Whether we knew it or not, we were formed just as much from those super awkward Graduation Receptions on Zoom as we were when we were here on campus laughing on the weekend with our friends in the pub and draining our meal plans on buffalo chicken calzones and house ranch cups from Terry. Being an Anselmian isn't a way we once lived, it's how we choose to live, and the choice to get up each day and use love to cast out fear in your own life and the lives those around you will be what

getting to serve the Class of 2020 as your Yearbook editor and as Class Secretary these last four years. Second, Class of 2020, keep your head held high and walk proud, especially because as the only class to graduate from Saint Anselm College twice, we're back-to-back graduation champions. Remember, love casts out fear, and no matter where we go in life, or no matter what crazy obstacle the world decides to throw at us next, we're Anselmian always. Good bless you all, and GOD BLESS **THE** CLASS OF 2020.