

Greetings to the Class of 2018
Sr. Patricia O'Brien, SND
Chair, Trinity Board of Trustees

Congratulations to all members of the Trinity Green Class of 2018! I am pleased to bring greetings from the Trinity Board of Trustees on this rainy but still beautiful Commencement day.

Class of 2018, today, you celebrate many wonderful achievements that deserve our praise and celebration. As noted in the program, you have earned awards for academic achievement and service, and you are members of many honor societies. Many of you have earned your degrees with honors, a fact that is all the more remarkable because many of you have also worked and managed families while attending Trinity. Those of you earning baccalaureate degrees have ambitions after college that include beginning or enhancing your careers as well as pursuing graduate education. Those of you earning graduate degrees are now even better equipped to be successful and to make a difference where you work. While you all have dreams, some of you are Dreamers – the first Dreamer scholars to be graduated from Trinity. All of you join a long and distinguished line of Trinity alumnae and alumni who have been lifelong learners.

You follow in the footsteps of thousands of Trinity graduates, some, as we know, who are quite famous and appear often in the news, but most who have lived out their commitment to Trinity's mission in quiet but effective ways. Like you, they have become teachers, professors, researchers, nurses and other health care professionals, policy specialists, writers, journalists, artists, lawyers, and practitioners in a diverse range of professions.

Across the generations, they have shared a profound commitment to live lives of service, to be advocates for improving their communities, and to work for social justice throughout the world.

The achievements of the Class of 2018 pave the way for succeeding generations of Trinity students and graduates, even as our alumnae and alumni across the generations made your success possible today. The Board and Sisters of Notre Dame are very proud of your achievements and the ways in which you live Trinity's values each day.

Your last couple of years at Trinity have been especially eventful, haven't they? National and international events have left our country and the world even more in need of your contributions as a Trinity alum. Class of 2018, your commencement today takes place the day before the Christian feast of Pentecost, which celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus. In the Catholic church, we acknowledge the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, courage, knowledge, reverence, and fear of the Lord (sometimes known as awe and wonder). As you receive your degrees today, I pray that you will be blessed with all these gifts and that, in bearing witness to these gifts in your life, you will, in turn, become a blessing to others.

As you know, Trinity's values and principles reflect those of its founders, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. When the Sisters of Notre Dame established Trinity College so many years ago, they acted in the spirit of Saint Julie Billiard, a woman of wisdom and courage – indeed, with all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit – who lived in times no less tumultuous than ours and who had a deep and

abiding belief in the power of education to transform the lives of individuals and society. How proud Saint Julie would be of each and every one of you – graduates of Trinity Washington University! She would see evidence of the transformational power of education in your achievements to date and in your potential for the future. Saint Julie is often pictured with a student, and she is almost always pictured smiling – in fact, she is referred to as the Smiling Saint. I see her today standing with you, her smile widening as she shares with you the joy of this day and as she reflects on all the good you will do ... in your families, in your neighborhoods, and in society at large.

I congratulate you on behalf of Trinity's founders, the Sisters of Notre Dame, and the Board of Trustees. God bless you all.