



# PROMOTION ADDRESS, 2018

VERITAS PREPARATORY ACADEMY

*Each year a member of the Veritas faculty addresses the rising freshman class at their promotion ceremony. This year, **Mrs. Kristan Youn** gave the following address before the assembled students, parents, and teachers.*

***B**etween the dark and the daylight,  
When the night is beginning to lower,  
Comes a pause in the day's occupations  
That is known as the Children's Hour.*

Good evening boys and girls, and welcome to your 8<sup>th</sup>-grade promotion. This opening stanza of "The Children's Hour" by Longfellow is very fitting for tonight. Not only because many of you learned this poem for project week back in third grade, but because the hour has finally arrived when your time as children has ended, and you prepare for the next stage of your life. It is a time when we, your teachers and parents, come together to celebrate your achievements, recognize your accomplishments, and encourage you onward as you prepare to enter high school in the fall.

When asked to speak to you all tonight, I felt truly honored....and terrified. And now I know how you must feel in class when I call on you to answer a question: honored that is, not terrified.

We have a lot to celebrate here tonight. You are, and have always been, a very talented and accomplished group of individuals. From your days at Archway, with all your poetry recitations, and choir concerts, to the 6th grade science fair and sports championships, we have witnessed your talents both in and out of the classroom on a regular basis. We have set high expectations and we have demanded much of you, especially this year, as 8th graders.

We have asked you to be role models and examples to the younger students. We have demanded diligence and effort on a daily basis. We have made you delve beyond the scope of what is being covered in your classes and exercise your brain until it hurts. And you have risen to the challenge. You have not balked or turned away, but have met those challenges and expectations head on. Over the years you have created beautiful artwork and sung in elite choirs. You have read and discussed great literature, and this year, 31 of you have earned prestigious awards on the national Latin exam. You have learned the importance of scientific exploration, and you have all derived the quadratic formula, on numerous, numerous occasions. I think I can speak for everyone here when I say that we, your parents and teachers, are very proud of the hard work you have dedicated to your education thus far.

But you are not done. All that you have worked for is now preparing you to enter high school. In high school you will be experiencing new joys and new responsibilities. You will have more choices and will be treated more like an adult rather than a child. With more responsibility comes more freedom, and I know you are all looking forward to having more freedom.

Freedom is a wonderful thing. Many, throughout history, have been willing to fight and die so that we can have freedom. In fact, freedom, or liberty, is one of the six pillars of Veritas, along with Justice, Equality, Beauty, Goodness, and Truth.

In Algebra class, we have discussed these last three at length – math is good, math is true, and as you all know, math should also be beautiful. But tonight, I will not talk to you about math, at least not very much, instead I want to talk to you about freedom, and how we can hope to attain it.

There exists external freedom, which is when a person can do what he chooses so long as he does not infringe upon the freedom of others. And then there is internal freedom, which exists when you can freely choose between different actions, rather than simply following your impulses or desires. A person who sets out to do something and then, whose will fails due to giving in to those desires, is not truly free. This, in fact, is the opposite of freedom. You are then a slave to those impulses and desires. Freedom then, comes from self-control, from being able to choose good over evil, virtue over vice.

Freedom is often confused with license, with “doing whatever you want, making your own choices, not having to follow rules.” But according to the philosophers, like Locke, Augustine, and Confucius, freedom and license are not synonymous. Freedom is in fact the ability to act in accordance with the true and the good. True freedom exists when you make the right choices. You are only free when you act virtuously. And that, is what lies ahead of you here at Veritas. Within your classes, from humane letters to calculus, from poetry to economics, from French to drama, your teachers have the goal of helping you to practice virtue while continuing to discover the true, good, and beautiful.

You may remember in your Archway classrooms, the nine virtues plastered all over the walls and

ever since those elementary days, the formation of virtue has been a central part of your education. We hold that a person does not become virtuous simply by thinking or talking about virtue, but by doing virtuous things, by performing virtuous actions, and that is what we

expect of you in high school. Just like you become good at music by practicing music, just like you become good at sports by practicing sports, just like you become good at math by doing the math, you become virtuous only by

doing virtuous deeds. And in that, you can begin to experience true freedom.

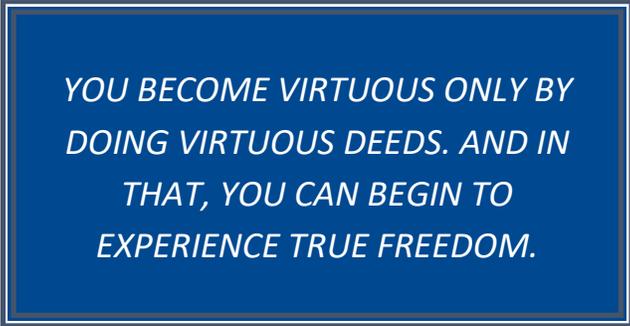
And so my charge to you is this - Remember those virtues that adorned your elementary classroom walls, especially integrity - doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

Do not forget the lessons you have learned here at Veritas. Do not forget the virtues you have practiced, the habits you have formed, and the friendships you have made. Do not let others sway you from the truth, or dampen your depth of inquiry or sense of wonder. Be a light to others and an example of how to be truly free.

To close, in the words of Longfellow, speaking to his own children, I say to you:

And there will I keep you forever,  
Yes, forever and a day,  
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,  
And moulder in dust away!

It has been an honor and a pleasure teaching and learning from you this year. Congratulations to you all.



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DOING VIRTUOUS DEEDS. AND IN  
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EXPERIENCE TRUE FREEDOM.*