

Class of 2019 Convocation
Robert L. Niehoff, S.J., President
John Carroll University
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Welcome Class of 2019.

You have just processed from the Dolan Science Center, walking past Grasselli Library and the Breen Learning Center, entering through the main doors of the Administration Building, led by University leadership, and walking through the lines of the faculty members.

This was a short walk, but a significant symbolic one.

We led you with the sound of the bagpiper: a reminder that listening is fundamental to finding your way.

You followed the University leadership: a symbol of our covenant with you, of the promise begun at this very moment, with this convocation, that when you process across the lawn of the internal quadrangle just behind this building four years from now, you will become another John Carroll graduate with the intellect and character to lead and to serve by engaging the world around you and around the globe.

You passed through the lines of the faculty, your teachers, advisors, and mentors for the next 4 years. They will assist you, but they will also challenge you. They will measure your performance, but they will also encourage you to set your own high aspirations. They will model and expect integrity, critical analysis, clear expression, but they will expect you to form your own high ethical standards and discover how you will contribute new ideas to your field, to society, to learning.

And as you stood in your seats, you watched as banners were carried in behind you and set onstage. These banners represent each of our University outcomes—intellect, character, leadership, and service. We will speak of them today on this your first day. But they will be referred to often in your years with us. Your graduation in 2019 will signal that you have grown to embrace the values they represent.

In 1522, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, walked 340 miles from his home in Loyola, in northwestern Spain, clear across the country to Manresa. This route is called in Spanish, the Camino Ignaciano, the Ignatian Way. The journey marked Ignatius' resolve to be a Companion of Jesus, a man for others, a person of generosity, of vision, and of faith. Though a soldier, he had the soul of a teacher, and the 28 colleges and universities in the United States and the more than 3,700 schools internationally that educate some 2.5 million students, is the legacy of his belief in education as transformative—for individuals, and through their charged hearts, for society.

I welcome you into this 400-year-old tradition, one that proclaims that through education men and women can be both leaders and servants formed in faith and dedicated to justice.