

Good evening Father Collins, parents, teachers, siblings, relatives and most importantly the graduation class of 2020. Around this time two years ago, the respected vice captain James McGowan, the highly esteemed girl's captain John Melia and myself all attended the graduation for the class of 2019. We did so in order to gain an idea of how the event would play out on our own special day. If someone had told me then that a virus would strike the world causing a global pandemic in which social contact was deemed illegal and we couldn't travel outside a certain perimeter of our homes, I probably would have laughed and told them to stop watching so many sci-fi movies. Yet here we are. And despite everything that the past 18 months has thrown in our direction, we have prevailed.

At our finishing up ceremony last May, the word resilient was mentioned in relation to the attitude shown by the graduates here today. The definition of resilience is the ability to recover quickly from difficult situations. I, for one, believe the class of 2020 have shown this trait in abundance. Taking not only sixth year, class tests, mocks, portfolios and CAO deadlines with a pinch of salt but also the added challenges which home schooling and predicted grades inflicted.

Although we can hype ourselves up to no end about the strength instilled within us. Without the support of a few very special and influential people, our resilience may not have been so unwavering. On behalf of the class of 2020, I would like to make a few small acknowledgements for the people who have carried us through our moments of doubt.

Firstly, Ms Sheppard, who inspired us with her leadership and strength. The captain of the boat that is St Conleth's. Thank you for instilling us with the deep seated value of education which we will continue to develop throughout our lifetimes. You have shown us a true sense of corporate leadership and visionary in the education sector and tirelessly work on new initiatives and innovations to grow and develop St Conleth's as a school we will all continue to be immensely proud of.

Mr O'Dulaing, we would like to thank you for the calmness you radiate down through teachers and students alike. You made St Conleth's a safe environment to undertake our learning. Everyone always mentions what a family St Conleth's is, and the sense of home we feel in the school can be attributed to this safe calming energy. In the leafy D4 suburbs that is Clyde Road, it would be easy to forget our roots and culture. Thank you for always injecting the Irish culture back into our school lives whether it be seachtain na nGaeilge, puc fada or Bealtrial preparation, you never let us forget where we were from.

Mr Carvil and Mr Gallagher, first and foremost we are thankful to you for the endless work you have put into organising tonight's event. Had to put up with our moody morning faces throughout most of sixth year. Our go-to teachers in moments of panic, pressure and self-doubt. Both of whom have a keen awareness to the issues facing teenagers and know how best to approach them with sensitivity and support. Thank you for always being there for us and guiding us along our chosen paths.

Ms Hopkin, who showed us with ease that you can be both stern and kind hearted in your dealings with others. Were grateful for the importance you placed, not only on our mathematical academia, but also on our etiquette and dress code. As we move out into the

world, the general upkeep of our appearance becomes increasingly important as an untucked shirt with canvas lace up shoes, just doesn't always cut it.

Ms Killen, as we moved through the school, the junior year feeling of fear that we felt passing the classroom door grew to a feeling of comfort and reliance. No matter what the issue, big or small, Ms Killen was on our side even if that meant opposing our parents! I'll never forget the time I arrived into school soaking wet off the bus and Michael got an ear full at the teacher meeting about how Harry always got a lift to school!! Knowing there is someone out there who will always fight your corner no matter what, is an invaluable feeling and we thank you for that.

Mr Latvis, where do I begin. Firstly, on behalf of the study gang, we know hanging out with us for 2 and a half extra hours after school was the highlight of your days. But from our side, I don't know how we would have made it through those exam years without coffee breaks with hougous crackers and Star Wars debates. You encouraged us to let our quirks shine through and explore the depths of our imaginations, thank you for giving us a space to be ourselves.

I could go on for days as every teacher in this school has giving us traits and gifts to take with us forever and played a major role in the happy memories of our school days. However, I am running against the clock and I know everyone wants to enjoy this beautiful spring evening. There is one group of people who I couldn't let go unmentioned. Our parents. Where would we be without you? I know every graduate here tonight can echoe my praise to you. Thank you for always believing in us, loving us and caring enough about our education to send us to St Conleth's College. On a personal note, I would like to thank my mum, my dad and my brother for always being there for me and just being themselves. I wouldn't be who I am today without their relentless support, encouragement and love.

To my peers, I'm so proud of you guys. Whether you went to college or are working, whether you got the course you wanted or are on your second, third, choice OR if youre a youth diplomat like Oisin. You should be so proud of yourself and who you are. In a year of 50 odd students, we had 50 individuals with their own beliefs, achievements and desires. I'm so grateful to have spent four of the best years with you all and I hope these friendships continue to keep growing for years to come. Thank you.