

## Undergraduate Convocation August 23, 2019

### WELCOME!

Finally, you are here! This is the day we have all been waiting for! This is the day we have been dreaming of and planning for! This is the day that YOU have been SAVING for! And this is the day you are most certainly prepared for. This is the day that the Lord has made! And we rejoice in the fact that you have arrived. Welcome to North Park University!

You are:

- More than 500 students — over 200 from Chicago and over 300 from the region and beyond ...
- From four continents, 22 countries, one U.S. Territory and 27 states.
- Almost 30 percent of you are student athletes.
- 13 are CRUX students so far, up from eight last year.
- 58 are Covenant students, up from 29 last year.
- Some of you live on campus and some of you commute from home — but ALL of you are North Parkers!

North Park Class of 2023, today you are Crossing the Threshold. The word “Threshold,” of course, means any door or entryway — and certainly you have found your way through our gates. But the word also means “the level at which a change takes place.” And, it means the starting point of an experience, or adventure. You are no longer standing at the Threshold of your college career — today you are crossing into it!

I am delighted to offer my deepest congratulations to you on the hard work and accomplishments that have brought you to this important day. Your achievements have earned you a place in this outstanding class. Many months and years of preparation have gone into your college decision-making process, and I want to affirm that you have made an excellent choice.

Today you become a North Parker! We in the campus community stand ready to do everything we can to help you to GROW — in your faith, your friendships, and your academic pursuits. Now, to parents, family members, and supportive friends — this is also a pivotal milestone in your lives. You are making a significant investment, and you are trusting us with that which is most precious to you. We understand that, we respect that, and we thank you for your confidence in us.

And to our dear students ... the exceptional educational experience in which you are about to engage, an experience supported by our outstanding faculty and staff — will be a life-changing

and intellectually motivating experience. The exceptional North Park University faculty, here today to celebrate and consecrate this next significant chapter in your lives, will offer you the encouragement, the challenge, the support, and the inspiration that will help you succeed.

And along with the faculty and staff, you can look forward to making extraordinary lifelong friends at North Park — friends who will be with you throughout the joys and challenges of your life. I invite you to look to your left ... and to your right. These are the friends and classmates with whom you will grow, develop, and succeed. These are the friends and classmates with whom you will cross the commencement stage four years from now to receive your degree. The friends that will be a part of your life from this day forward.

The years that you are about to spend at North Park will be some of the most wonderful and challenging and memorable of your lives. But on this very day, if we are all honest — we are a little excited. Scared. Nervous. That's ok, everyone around you is feeling that, too.

If I can share one small piece of advice on this day, it would simply be this. Say YES!

Say YES to an opportunity to try something new ...

Say YES to joining a club.

Yes, to the prospect of joining the Gospel Choir.

Say YES to running for the Student Government Association.

Or YES to a Global Partnerships Trip.

Say YES to a Catalyst 606 opportunity, or YES to a service project through University Ministries.

Say YES to majoring in business and YES to men's Golf, Jordan Chang.

Say YES to intramurals, or yes to the Engineering Major, or to getting help from the writing center or to a fitness class in Helwig. Say YES to offering your services as a tutor for a class you are strong in, and YES to asking for a tutor if you need some help.

Say YES to a Snap Streak with your Mom.

Say YES to cheering on the Vikings every chance you get and YES every time we offer Lou Malnati's pizza on campus.

Now, having said all of this — you don't have to say yes to everything the first week or even the first year — but say yes to something you have never tried before. This is your campus, and this is your chance. Make it your home.

And remember that we are here to walk alongside you every step of the way. That is our promise and you have our word on it. We promise to pray for you and to support you in every way that we can. And we look forward to the many contributions you will make to this community in the months and years ahead. On behalf of our entire campus family, welcome to North Park University!