

Graduation Speech – Janine Navalta, Class of 2018 Valedictorian

It is an honor to represent the Class of 2018. To start off, words cannot describe the experience I felt during my years at Mission Dolores Academy. Although, I will attempt to describe the emotions and feelings I experienced. In the five years I have attended MDA, I am proud of how much our class has changed and improved. I would have never expected to create so many wonderful memories with people, all of whom I know I will continue having relationships in the future.

So many people have supported our Eighth Grade class and we would not be here without their support.

First, I would like to recognize the teachers and staff who helped us throughout our elementary and middle school years. Thank you for making Mission Dolores Academy such a wonderful place.

Ms. Essalat, we are grateful for your assistance during the high school process and fundraisers for our Yosemite trip. You often motivate us to get through the week, and we are thankful for how you unite students of all grade levels through the family activities. It would be hard to imagine the school the same without you.

Thank you Mr. R. for challenging us in math and encouraging us to solve equations with our own methods. Thank you for assisting us whenever you can, and we appreciate you for advocating for us for high schools.

Thank you Mr. Ward, Mr. Francisco, Ms. Jenny, Ms. Cat, and Ms. Ivana for working behind-the-scenes. You do not get enough recognition for the constant effort you put into the school and the students. We thank you.

Thank you Father Charlie, Sister Ann, and Sister Annette, for strengthening our faith and relationship with God and preaching the word of God. Thank you to our previous teachers, including Ms. Brezina, Ms. Araujo, and Ms. Yang, for guiding our class to success.

Thank you Coach T for motivating us to keep a healthy lifestyle and making the Eighth Grade volleyball team suffer with the two-hour practices, but it was worth it. Thank you for reminding us to be serious, to communicate, and to have sportsmanship, while having fun.

Thank you Ms. Elena for letting us explore our creativity and express ourselves through many mediums. We enjoyed your easy going personality, and I cannot wait to see your future art pieces.

Thank you Ms. Sam for teaching us a completely different language and helping us understand English even more. We appreciate you for using unique and inventive ways to teach us, and we all enjoyed your “salvete discipuli” phrase.

Thank you Ms. Anna for teaching us the many aspects of intersectional feminism and the issues within society. Many of us consider you to be one of our role models because you actively fight the prejudice in the world for young generations.

Thank you Mr. McGovern for teaching us so many subjects during these past two years. You always make sure that we stay on track, focus on our studies and help us whenever we need it. We appreciate you for constantly pushing us to surpass our boundaries and comfort zones. With your guidance, we can grow to our full potential and know what we are capable of. I guess Taylor Swift said, we can always rely on you *Forever & Always*.

And finally, thank you Ms. Escobar. We cannot thank you enough for the perseverance you show everyday. You handle our silliness, teach four classes for two grades, advocate for our first-choice high schools, all while taking care of your family. Thank you for answering our

endless questions about homework, projects, and tests when we ask at any time, even at night, when we should not be bothering you. We appreciate you for reminding us to move forward and continue on. You are one of the many people we can depend on in any situation that gives us difficulty. Again, we thank you for all that you have done.

We all appreciate our families, such important figures in our lives. To our parents and guardians out there, thank you for the endless sacrifices you make in order for us to receive the best education possible. Thank you for supporting our ambitions and goals, whether it is large or small. I hope you know that we are grateful to have you, especially to have you to lean on when we are weak and need support. Thank you for staying strong for us. Thank you Ma and Pa for guiding me in many ways, believing that I can accomplish anything, and sacrificing countless things for my education. Also, shout out to our siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and other relatives who cheer us on throughout this journey. I would like to thank my older sister and brother for the infinite love and kindness. You are the best siblings I could ever have. We cannot show enough gratitude for our family.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my friends, my classmates. You have stuck with me through problems big and small. You are the most loyal people I have known, and you could never let me down. Thank you for the heartwarming memories and inside jokes. I appreciate your endless support and unconditional love for accepting the differences we all have. I would like to especially thank Christian, for being one of the most hard working people I know. Your determination and endeavors help motivate me to get through the struggles and challenges. Thank you for being my partner-in-crime, whether it is in academics or League of Legends. Thank you for everything and I am proud to share this platform with you.

I hope I did not bore you, but before I finish I hope you can take this quote with you in high school and beyond, “I hope you know your limits well. But don’t stay within those limits. Overcome the limits each day.” I want to let you know that your hard work paid off, and you can finally take a breath and relax. I hope a huge weight has been lifted off your shoulders, and please be proud of yourselves. I wish you all good luck in your academic journey, since each of you have a bright and promising future ahead of you. This may be the end of your first, major milestone, but it leads to a new beginning. I know all of you will contribute many wonderful ideas to the world out there.

Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat.

Thank you.