



INTEGRITAS

Wyoming Catholic College

“The Modern Age: Is it Worth Saving?”

By Andrew Russell ('22), Commencement, May 23, 2022

Dr. Reno, Chairman Powers, President Arbery, Board of Directors, Dean Washut, Esteemed Faculty, Staff, friends of the college, visiting families of students, Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and, for the very last time, Seniors.

We are here to celebrate the last four years, the life of our class. Most people will not understand what it means to graduate from a school like this and to leave your classmates, some of them forever. For four years, we have laughed together (sometimes to the detriment of a class discussion); we have helped each other through tragedies; we have had deep, philosophical, personal, whimsical (sometimes downright dumb) conversations, but we have grown up together, like family. None of us would be the people we are today without all of us.



Annually, the graduating class of Wyoming Catholic College chooses a peer to deliver the Senior Address, a formal farewell to the College community. The Class of 2022 chose Andrew Russell of Batavia Illinois as their representative.

Now we are called to live out the lofty principles we inherited from the noble dead of the centuries and practice them in the here-and-now. This is the issue upon which the worth of this education turns. Our diplomas mean nothing until

The President, Faculty, and Friends of Wyoming Catholic College cordially invite you to attend the 2022 Commencement Ceremony

The event will celebrate the academic achievements of the members of the Class of 2022 and feature the Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, Archbishop of Denver, as the Commencement Speaker.

We are extremely proud of this year's graduates, a group of young men and women who have spent four years immersed in the beauty of the natural world, in the primary sources of the classical liberal arts tradition, and in the spiritual heritage of the Catholic Church. The unique formation helps them to see and to cherish the Truth, and we are proud to celebrate their achievements.

Please join us!

Commencement Speaker
Most Reverend
Samuel J. Aquila
Archbishop of Denver

Baccalaureate Mass
May 14, 2022 at 4:00PM
1615 3rd St., Laramie, WY 82030
Archbishop will be the celebrant.

Commencement
May 16, 2022 at 10:00am
Lambert Conference Center
Laramie, WY 82030

Additional information or to RSVP:
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we have used them. We often say that our education is useless, meaning that we study it for its own sake. But we are communal creatures, so there is another telos, another purpose of education which is entirely useful. Our classroom discussions, our mass intentions, our porch conversations late into the night (or all the way through it), our relationships, our breakups, our silences, have formed our minds and our wills so that we can show our neighbor the beauty of the truth.



And so the question is: how do we do that? How do we live after graduation? Can the principles of this integrated curriculum, founded on virtuous friendship, a consciousness of the past, and a faithfulness to the Magisterium, “long endure” the muck and malaise of daily, mundane 9-5 existence? We are met on a great battlefield of that question.

We are entering an entirely new world—the modern world—and one that I believe is worth saving. We must engage with modernity, with modern society, with modern people. As Pope Benedict XVI said, “we cannot simply turn the clock back.” Western civilization has progressed, perhaps not in morality, or philosophy, or at least not as a whole, but we have moved past the Medieval Age, so, no matter how hard we try, we cannot go back to it. The dawning age is, by definition, post-modern, and we must engage with the current problems and respond to them rather than ignore them and go back to a pre-modern era.

The modern age has posed valid questions. What is man’s role in the cosmos if he is only the smallest speck of matter in an unimaginably vast and cold universe? How does democracy, and the individualism it promotes, coexist with our communal nature? If a woman’s vocation was traditionally in the home, how does that change with the advent of the dishwasher, the washing

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machine, and the Roomba? Where is God's creative power and his gracious will when science can explain everything, and Amazon can give us anything? Thomas Aquinas did not answer these questions. We must.



But how? Contemporary society is one of the most anti-historical periods in history. It has turned the tables on tradition and, instead of venerating the authors and ideas that have stood the test of time, it rejects them by default as outdated. True, there are vast stores of archaeological items labeled with coat tags, buried away in dusty rooms at universities, and any toddler with an iPhone can access the History Channel, but I have a suspicion that the father of modern history personally hated history, and that is why he made it so dull, dry, and inhuman. History is reduced to facts, divorced from a story, making it only a pale shadow of its true self. Without a sense of the past,

the present becomes meaningless and the future, terrifying. **The present only has meaning when it is part of a story.** Nowadays, society fights for women's rights, but it has forgotten why, and so it no longer remembers what human rights are. Modern art pushes the boundaries of art, but it forgot that art is meant to beautify the good and redeem the ugly, so it makes ugly things. Modern science can count the stars in the sky and explore the quantum world in our fingertips, but it forgot who wrote that cosmic love letter, so it affirms atheism.

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If you really want to save the world, tell it a story. Tell it about Aristotle, who tried to understand the nature of reality through experimentation and philosophy, and ended up discovering the Creator. Tell it about Scaevolus, who put the good of his city above his

own and willingly burnt off his right hand. Tell it about Thrasymachus, who thought that “might makes right.” Then tell it how Socrates utterly humiliated him. And tell it about Christ, His infinite condescension, His humility, His providence, and His love. This is why the Gospels were written as stories. We all took rhetoric and we gave orations, so we know that it is not enough to speak the truth, you have to speak it beautifully. “The truth must dazzle gradually, else every man be blind.”

I believe that the dawning era of Christendom will be the greatest the world has ever seen. With our modern vantage point we can look back both on Aristotelian-Thomistic political theory and the modern experiments in constitutional democracy and even socialism. This near-cosmic perspective allows us to pierce deeper into Augustine’s principle that the city of God

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can coexist with the city of man. Once the modern political sphere remembers man’s nature and his final end, it will have the greatest means of advancing that end. When capitalism remembers the poor and the marginalized, when social media and mass media are oriented toward the truth, and when modern cosmology shows us the handiwork of God, then we have won back modern society for the truth.

When it comes down to the details, saving mankind seems like no more than a hopeless chore. But it is not the world that is disenchanted; we are. Human curiosity only has so much room for one question, so when we are inundated with scientific and statistical explanations for the wonderful things around us, we forget that there is anything else to them. A rainbow is light refracted through prisms—that is, wavelengths filtered and dispersed so that they hit the eye as the mere phenomenon of separated colors. We have enough of an explanation, so we tend to forget that the rainbow is beautiful. The same thing happens with the rest of God’s creation. The school has a slogan: Wisdom in God’s country. And, after spending weeks in the mountains and riding horses, we can realize that the whole world is God’s country, his gift for us, a way for us to delight in finding his hand. Pierce through the disenchantment and you will only

find more wonders than the ancients could ever dream.

We are entering on a difficult enterprise, tasked with saving the world, so that four years of education feels like a meager amount of time to prepare. But life on this earth is a series of trials and errors which God gives us so that we can never get quite comfortable in our temporary home. We will always be learning from our mistakes. J.R.R. Tolkien said it best, "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us." For us, that means telling stories.

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When we walk out those doors in a few short hours, we will have stories from these last four years to share with the world. Like when, as freshmen, we read The Epic of Gilgamesh out loud in mixed company, and it was a little bit awkward. Or all the drama of hosting a class dance. Or something more personal, like how I've been radically changed by all of you. And of how I will never forget your friendship.

May God bless you.



A Life-Changing Curriculum



Aristophanes	Milton
Aeschylus	Newton
Archimedes	Ovid
Aristophanes	Pieper
Aristotle	Pius XI
Boethius	Plato
Burke	Plutarch
Cervantes	Puritan Writings
Chaucer	Ratzinger
Cicero	Rousseau
Courant	St. Ambrose of Milan
Dante	St. Anselm
Darwin	St. Athanasius
Descartes	St. Augustine
Dostoevsky	St. Bernard
Einstein	St. Gregory
Euripides	St. Ignatius
Eliot	St. John of the Cross
Euclid	St. John Paul II
Faulkner	St. Paul VI
Feynman	St. Pius X
Flaubert	St. Thomas Aquinas
Galileo	St. Theodore
Gilson	St. Vincent of Lerins
Hobbes	Scripture
Homer	Shakespeare
Hume	Shelley
Jefferson	The U.S. Constitution
Jeremiah	Declaration of Independence
Kalkavage	Federalist Papers
Keats	Theodosius
Kierkegaard	Thucydides
Lincoln	Tocqueville
Livy	Tolkien
Locke	Turgenev
Machiavelli	Twain
Marcus Aurelius	Vatican I & II
Mayflower Compact	Wordsworth
Melville	(partial list)

“Deeply Catholic, deeply committed to the unity of faith and reason, we graduate students who bring depth of faith and intellectual perspective and practiced courage into the world. What could be more worthy of support? What could be a better investment in the future of the nation and the Church?”

Dr. Glenn C. Arbery, President

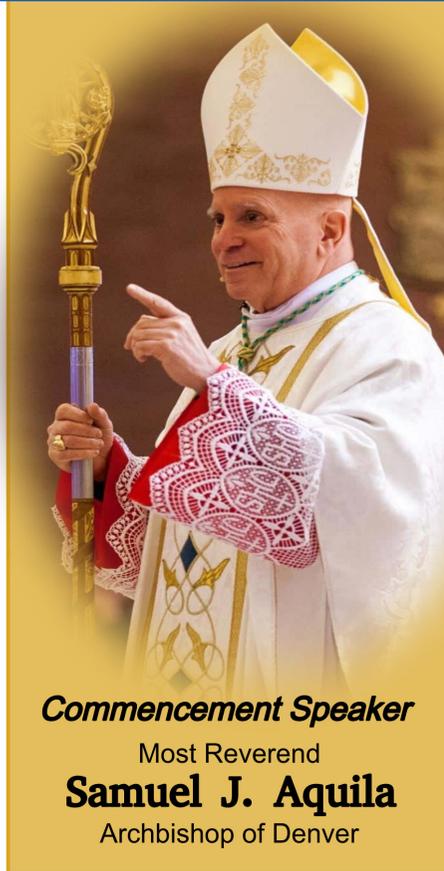
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Holy Rosary Catholic Church
163 Leedy Dr., Lander, WY 82520
Archbishop will be the celebrant

Commencement

May 15, 2023 at 10:30am
Lander Community/Convention Center
950 Buena Vista Dr.
Lander, WY 82520

Additional Information or to RSVP

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