

Convocation 2010

Good afternoon! It is my pleasure as President to officially welcome you to your and to our Class of 2014!

Convocation is an annual tradition and ritual at Bellarmine that symbolizes a mutual welcoming, invitation, and commitment.

The Bellarmine University community – trustees, faculty, staff, students, and alumni – hereby are inviting and welcoming you into our community, and in the process we are committing ourselves to you. Ours is a teaching and learning community that in one sense is sixty years old since we were founded in 1950, and in another sense is over 900 years old – as we carry on the work of a liberal arts based personal and professional education begun at the Catholic University of Bologna in Italy in 1066 – when I was just 15!

And today, therefore, we invite and welcome you to join us in doing the teaching and learning that we and other bright, knowledgeable, and talented women and men have been doing for decades and indeed for centuries.

The invitation, welcome, and commitment-making today, however, is also a two-way street, a mutual phenomenon – because you also are inviting and welcoming us into your lives, into your hearts and minds and souls, and committing yourselves to us. You are saying in effect, here I am – with my gifts, talents, aspirations, needs, and magnificent incompleteness. Come, Bellarmine faculty and staff, into my life, come to know and love me in my uniqueness, individuality, dignity, and mystery, in my potential and possibilities – and work with me, with what you know and how you teach, to help me educate myself so that I can further develop who I am – for my own sake, for my life's work, and so that I might serve others and help make the world a better place.

A Bellarmine university education, therefore, gives life and expression to many of the basic values in the Jesuit educational tradition that formed our Jesuit patron, St. Robert Bellarmine, a great sculpture of whom, created by faculty member Bob Lockhart, will be unveiled on campus in a few weeks.

Two values in that distinguished tradition of particular importance to me are the values described in Latin as “cura personalis” and “hominess pro aliis.” For me, the best translation of cura personalis, the personal attention, engagement, challenge, and carefulness that you will experience here, is that it describes and encourages an education that treats each person as an individual, and each individual as a whole person – mind, body, spirit, heart, and soul. As part of our mutual commitment today, therefore, the Bellarmine faculty, staff, and I commit that “cura personalis” will characterize how we will work with you, and how we will reverence, respect, and work with you and with one another during your time here. In turn, we will ask the same of you, with us, and with one another.

The second value phrase mentioned that influences a Bellarmine education is the spirit and goal – among others of course – of helping you become “*hominess pro aliis*,” women and men for others, educated women and men of great intellect, great spirit, and great heart – who will work diligently to realize your enormous potential, nurture the best within you – your best and truest self – for your benefit for sure. As far as Bellarmine is concerned, however, – while that is a basic and essential goal, it is not a sufficient one, not good enough. Because in our 60 years of educating, built on the 900 years of liberal arts based personal and professional education in our tradition, we also believe that as individuals, we should not be the only beneficiaries of our education, but we believe as well that we have a great moral opportunity and responsibility to use our gifts for the benefit of others – our families, friends, classmates, the other human beings we encounter in our communities, in the nation, and in the world.

Throughout your time at Bellarmine, therefore, with the greatest example being set by current Bellarmine students, faculty, and staff, you will see in action and hear the call of service to others, to help improve the human condition, and to make the world a better place.

Thank you very much for enthusiastically accepting our invitation for you to join us, the teaching and learning community of Bellarmine University. We look forward to getting to know, love, and serve you – and I’m sure that Crossroads was a great beginning in this regard – and we look forward to teaching and learning with you in the spirit of *cura personalis*, and with an eye for all of us to celebrate the gift of service and in the process to become women and men, not only for ourselves, but for one another.

Godspeed.