

“The young people will win” is a mantra that I’m sure many of you have heard if you’ve been attentive to the media recently. It’s a phrase adopted by the prolific Stoneman Douglas teenagers who are advocating for an agenda - our rights to feel secure as humans. We frequently see these individuals behind a computer screen, and therefore we see them as a separate body from us. However, they possess the same capabilities as us graduates. As we enter into the real world, we must remember that we have a voice. Throughout the past four years at Holy Cross, I’ve learned how to utilize my voice to advocate for my beliefs as an ethical individual. I’ve faced opposition in a number of scenarios, but my voice continued to grow in intensity as I faced more adversity. Rather than allowing opposition to silence us, we must utilize it as empowerment. As long as we nurture our minds as youth, we’ll be able to be equally impactful as we encounter the world.

“The young people will win” is a mantra that’s progressive by nature, but it suggests there’s one winner and one loser, two sides pitted against each other in a primitive battle of right and wrong. The inherent flaw in this mantra is that it erases the **truth** that we’re all attempting to perpetuate God’s will by bettering the quality of life for those around us. Mr. Eifert has taught me that we’re all battling for the same ideal - the ideal of happiness. He’s a man who embodied the spirit of the Holy Cross community precisely, someone who was rooted in faith, who always aided others, and who used his booming voice for the good of all people. We must use our voices to do the same. Only then can we say we’re “winning”. Rather than gauging victory by what we accomplish on paper, we must gauge victory by the amount of hearts we can cleanse. Many of us have accomplished this at Holy Cross, but we must not lose the same drive once we graduate. We must keep faith as we continue to grow, and we must continue to “win” as we encounter more and more people.

“The young people **will** win” because we’re finished being complacent. There’s a misguided notion that wisdom is directly proportional to age, but we’re disproving that daily. Sometimes the wisest are the youngest in our lives, the ones who haven’t yet been desensitized to the atrocities of our world. Therefore, we young people must be the educators. The young people must be willing to speak candidly

about issues, and we mustn't tremble in the face of the institutions that try to silence us. We've already accomplished this in our own community. We've been living examples of this mantra whether you all realize it or not.. Just within the last year, many of us have worked tirelessly to defend our ethics. Morgan, you were the strongest voice when the Parkland tragedy happened, and you personally wrote an address to honor those lives lost. Izzy, Juliana, Katherine and I fought to defend our history and relocate the Jefferson Davis memorial in the Kentucky State Capitol building. Many of you went on the March for Life to protect the lives of the unborn, and the list goes on. The most important thing to remember is that youth is not proportional to age, nor is it physical, rather it's a mindset that we must carry with us into the world. The only way we can stop being impactful is if we let go of our youth and stop advocating for our core values. In my experience at Holy Cross I've learned that the best way to attain change is to be a visible example in our world, and we must plan to continue to utilize our voices in order to better the lives of all those we encounter.

Class of 2018, we are dynamic. We are intelligent. We have a voice, and we're capable of using it in all communities. We've learned a multitude of things at Holy Cross, and for that we extend a sincere thanks to our teachers, parents, faculty, and peers. However, it doesn't stop here. We must take what we've learned in this community and apply it to the world we are about to encounter. We are the young people, and we will **continue** to win.