Cameron Maple

Final Speech

Before I begin this morning, there is one order of business I would like to get out of the way. I want to thank Reverend Squire, Dr. Row, Reverend Zug, Mr. Gavin, and Mrs. Aldridge for all of their hard work, as well as their support of the Vestry and the Chapel program this year. Secondly, Vestry, this has been an incredible year with all of you, I have no doubt that you will continue with the great work that we began this year, next year. Thank you for all that you do.

Today, this speech has two functions. One, to commemorate the Easter Holiday, and two, to commemorate the time that I have had with you all here over the past eight years. Essentially, this is my goodbye speech to faculty, administration, this community, and most importantly my peers.

I would like to now begin my final Chapel speech. Now the funny thing is that as I sat down trying to figure out what I would say to begin this speech and how I would say it, I realized that I wanted it to be something good, something that would set the tone for the rest of the speech. I then decided that I would share with you a story about how it all began, how I even ended up at Episcopal. It was somewhere around June of 2003. The songs “In Da Club” by 50 Cent, “Ignition” by R. Kelly, and “Crazy in Love”

by Beyoncé held the top spots on the Billboard Hot 100. According to billsaysthis.com, *Bruce Almighty*, *Finding Nemo,* and *2 Fast 2 Furious* were all popular movies during this momentous year. Finally, three of the gems of the early 2000s, the t.v. shows, *Proud Family*, *Rocket Power*, and *Hey Arnold*, all took over the airways. I just wanted to share with you those few snippets of 2003 culture just to bring you back to the year. This was the year that my family and I would completely uproot from Southlake, a suburb right outside of the Dallas Fort Worth area and relocate to Philadelphia, PA, a place I had only really seen on a map. Just to provide you with a little bit of background on my Texas experience, my family had lived in the great state for only three years before we moved, but I had fallen in love with the place. My family was about as Texan as we could get. We went to Cowboy's games on Thanksgiving day, ate snow cones all summer long, every member of my family owned a pair of pointed toe cowboy boots, we joined close to the entire city every Friday for *Friday Night Lights* worthy night-time football games, and my little sister who was only four at the time, had managed to even pick up a slight Texas drawl. On the day that my father told me that he had a new job, and we were soon moving to Philadelphia, I was unsure what to think exactly and defaulted to the normal human reaction, I became scared out of my mind. This would be my

family's fifth move, so it was not that I was unused to what moving meant, it was the fact that we would be relocating close to a 24 hour drive and 1500 miles from the place that I had come to love that scared me. While I would like to be able to say that our great country is no longer riddled by sectional stereotypes, this is unfortunately not the case. When we informed our friends that we would soon be moving up North, their lack of enthusiasm made me even more uneasy about the move. They informed us that not only were Northeasterners rude, but their food was bland, and the weather downright unbearable. With this now in mind, I nervously awaited the big move. My last few weeks in Texas flew by. Everything from my last school field trip to a going away party thrown by my friends all seemed like a blur. Fast forward a week or two and we had finally arrived in Philly. Fast-forward one more time to the first day of 5th grade. My mom woke me up just like any other day and reminded me that my first day of 5th grade was in less that two hours and we needed to go. So I got ready for school, grabbed my favorite breakfast, an Eggo chocolate chip waffle and was out the door. As I sat in the car anticipating what my new friends and teachers would look like, this nervous feeling began to return. As my mom pulled up the long hill that led up to the Devon Campus with our Texas license plates in full view, I was so nervous that it felt like Mike Tyson had just punched me in

the stomach. After a few unnerving minutes of introducing myself and being pointed out as the newest addition to the class, I was able to finally settle in. For some reason, I felt so comfortable with all of my new classmates that by recess I had no trouble playing soccer in the field with the rest of the fifth graders or joining right in lunch-table conversations. It was just like I had been there forever.

Although this was my very first memory of Episcopal, it is definitely not my most vivid or my last. I could probably continue to rattle off more and more memories of everything from my favorite class trip to Williamsburg, or probably my least favorite trip to a certain North Carolina. I could recount the countless dances, beginning with the ice-skating social in fifth grade, Friday Night Live dances in Middle School, and the Sadie Hawkins, Can, and Snowball dances in High School. Finally, I could recount hundreds of sports practices, good tests and bad tests, great days, and even more unpleasant days, sunny days and rainy days, mistakes, and excellent decisions. What I will truly remember, however, when I depart from this campus on the evening of Thursday Jun 9th, are the connections that I have made with teachers, administrators, and most importantly my

peers. This is the essence of a true memory, the feeling that an experience or an encounter evokes, not necessarily the specific details.

From my time here, I will remember how Episcopal led me to the further discovery of my faith. My eighth grade faith paper with Mr. Zug was one of the first times that I truly evaluated my faith as a major part of my life, and was asked to somehow summarize its effects on my life. I chose to speak about my mother and how her sudden illness in the seventh grade led me to no longer see God as simply someone who I thanked every night before I fell asleep, but someone who was constantly by my side and helping me through all of the tribulations and struggles of my life, no matter how big or small. But more than this I have found the presence of other types of faith: a faith in myself, my family, and my loved ones, and how this ultimately advances my faith in God.

At this point of my speech you are probably wondering how this relates to arguably one of the most important Christian holidays of the year, Easter. I want to take a second to go back to the scripture that was read this morning, 1 Corinthians 15:12-20. : "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13**But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. **15**Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. **16**For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: **17**And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. **18**Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. **19**If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. **20**But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Now the reason that I chose this scripture to be read this morning, aside from its clear connection to Easter, is because it clearly affirms for me, the death, and resurrection of Jesus and how they are ultimately unarguable. But even more than that I think it affirms the importance of faith in our life and how the faith of Jesus, to die for a cause that involved washing away the sins of everyone except he himself should inspire our own faith. A faith not necessarily in what we see, but what we experience. A faith in memories.

What I have found so amazing about Episcopal, is how when tested, we can have faith in each other, ourselves, and the strength of the core of this community. The core of this community comes from each and every one of us and our commitment to each other. This idea of faith can be applied to everyone in this room. Freshman soon to be sophomores, you are

still warming up to your peers and those around you. Do not give up on getting to know the members of your class because they will one day be the ones to support you and you will one day be the ones to support them. Sophomores soon to be Juniors, you probably know your class relatively well by now, but also do not forget the importance of this faith in each other as you soon begin one of your toughest years of High school. Juniors soon to be Seniors, you represent everyone before you and you set the example for everyone after you, remember the importance of this faith in each other. Finally, current seniors, we have been through so many moments together. We must all remember the beauty of our experiences together and allow them to uplift us in the future. When each and every one of us walks out of this Chapel on graduation day, I want us all to remember the faith we had in each other, our community, and God. We will forever be bonded as the class of 2011, and we will forever be bonded by the legacy that we will leave behind here.. We have the chance to do something great in this world. We have the chance to make a difference. It has been a pleasure being a part of this community, calling myself a member of the class of 2011, and serving you all as Senior Warden. Thank You.