

By the way, there's some other practical things we can do. We can promote health savings accounts, which all empower the individual that says, we trust you. Here's a way for you to have health insurance, and we trust you to make the decisions. We can expose prices. I don't know how many of you ever shopped for medical care. I know I haven't. I don't remember asking anybody: "Let me see the lists. How do you price your product relative to the neighbor?" I've never seen a hospital say, "Well, here's my prices compared to my—to the hospital down the road." There needs to be more transparency when it comes to pricing, so consumers can make rational choices.

One thing is for certain: We've got to make sure, if you want health care to be available and affordable, to have good policies that counter this notion of driving good docs out of business. What I'm telling you is there's too many junk lawsuits suing too many doctors, and we need to have medical liability reform in the United States of America.

I hope you get a sense of the philosophy that I think needs to be inherent in good policy. And that is, we trust you, and we trust in the ingenuity of the American people. We believe the future is brighter. We're putting good policy in place to encourage that bright future.

I've got another job, by the way, and it's to make sure one branch of our Government is sound and solid and reflects a philosophy that I campaigned on. And it's this: Judges should strictly interpret the law and not legislate from the bench. And I

will continue to name—[*applause*—]continue to name good, solid judges that adhere to that principle.

You know, people ask me all the time, "Do you enjoy being the President?" And my answer is, absolutely. I love being your President. I like being the Commander in Chief. I enjoy being the educator in chief. I like talking about what we believe in because I firmly believe the philosophy we believe in is best for America. I believe it is the type of philosophy that inspires people. I believe it's a philosophy that inherits the greatness of our economy. I believe that we are the party of the entrepreneur. I believe we're the party of the doer, the dreamer, the people that work. I believe we're the party of low taxes. And I know we're the party of strong national defense to protect the United States of America.

And so I appreciate you coming tonight. Thanks for giving me a chance to share with you some ideas. But more importantly, thank you for contributing of your hard-earned money to make sure that this great Republican Party is ready for the task ahead.

May God bless our country. May God bless you. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:02 p.m. at the D.C. Armory. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Duncan, chairman, Republican National Committee; Elliott Broidy, chairman and chief executive officer, Broidy Capital Management; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

Commencement Address at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania May 11, 2007

Thank you. Go ahead and be seated. Thank you. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you for the

warm welcome. Archabbot Douglas, Your Excellency, Jim and Mary Towey, members of the faculty, members of the clergy,

moms and dads, and most important, the class of 2007: Thanks for inviting me. I am honored to be here.

Laura and I feel like we have a very special connection to St. Vincent College through the Toweys. We have come to know Jim and his family well during his time in Washington—after all, he was the Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. And now he's attained another high office. So today before his family, his friends, and colleagues, I would like to address Jim with two words he probably never thought he would hear from me: Mr. President. [Laughter]

I know he appreciates the importance I place on my speeches. He knows my style well. I want all of you to know I was very moved by a letter he recently sent me that invited me to this commencement. Here is what Mr. President said, "Mr. President, I believe that by hearing you speak, every member of the class of 2007 will leave this campus with a priceless lesson about the importance of the English language." [Laughter] At least he didn't say, "I'm proud to welcome to the podium a man, the first President for whom English was his second language." [Laughter] I did call him. I said what my speech ought to be about. That's what I asked him, what my speech ought to be about, Jim. He said, "About 10 minutes"—so here goes. [Laughter]

It's a proud moment for the class of 2007. You're the largest graduating class in your school's history. You're the first class to take a mandatory course in micro-waving—[laughter]—a requirement that was imposed after you set off a record number of fire alarms while you were trying to make popcorn. [Laughter] You cheered the Bearcats with the Carey Crazies. You walked through the lighted arches of Melvin Platz. Some of you are the first in your family to attend college. In a few moments, you will collect your degrees, the Ave Maria bell will ring, and

you will leave this campus with a lifetime of good memories. You've worked hard, and we're all here to congratulate you on a fabulous achievement.

I also congratulate the many people who helped make this day possible, starting with your parents, who paid your tuition and were patient, even after the phone bills arrived. [Laughter] I thank the people of the—who have worked hard to make sure you leave with a sound and solid college degree, and that's the St. Vincent's faculty. I appreciate very much the monks of the Archabbey, the men whose prayers are surely responsible for some of the degrees being offered today. [Laughter] And so I ask the class of 2007 to continue to make these good people proud; to take what you've learned here into the world, and always live up to the high ideals that this college stands for.

At the heart of these high ideals is the name Benedict. Benedict was the saint who set down a practical guide for community life and helped save Western civilization. Benedict was the inspiration for the man who came to this country to plant these ideals in American soil and founded this college. And Benedict was also the inspiration for the Pope, who took his name in tribute to the Benedictine ideals of charity and community that he believes the world needs now more than ever.

These ideals of charity and community have a special resonance for Americans. From the beginning, America has offered the world a new model for strong community life. In the early 19th century, a Frenchman named Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States. He was impressed by the way Americans came together in voluntary associations to help out a neighbor in need. And in his book, "Democracy in America," he wrote something that captured the spirit of this great country. He said: "When an American asks for the co-operation of his fellow citizens, it is seldom refused. If some great and sudden calamity

befalls a family, the purses of a thousand strangers are at once willingly opened.”

De Tocqueville saw the good heart of America back in the early 19th century. And we continue to see the good heart of America in the early 21st century. We see it in citizens who responded to the worst atrocity on our soil with acts of selflessness and compassion. We see it in the historic new commitments our Nation has made to alleviate poverty and suffering, by feeding the hungry and fighting malaria and working to end the scourge of HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa.

We see it in the volunteers who serve in our faith-based and community organizations, good and decent folks who are living the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. Today, more than 61 million Americans volunteer their time to serve others, more than three-quarters of adults give to charity. The volunteer spirit of America makes us unique: it represents the true strength of our Nation, and it must constantly be reinvigorated and renewed.

And that’s why it’s vital for our country that our young people step forward and serve a cause larger than yourselves. When you serve your fellow citizens, you find benefits you’ll never imagine. You discover that a caring person is sometimes all it takes for someone to turn their lives around. You see for yourself that kindness and respect make an enormous difference in a person’s life. You learn to take the initiative, instead of waiting for a government to step in. You become more aware of others, a better man or woman to your friends and families, a better citizen of your country. You start to put your own difficulties in perspective. And soon you learn a great truth: that you always get more out of service than you give.

Your generation’s willingness to serve will define the character of our Nation, and us older folks have good reason to be confident. Americans now in college are more likely to volunteer or become engaged in civic life than previous generations. Here

at St. Vincent College, you have learned that service outside the classroom is as important as what you learn inside the classroom. The challenge for you is to keep this up as you begin your new careers and your new families and your new lives. So today I ask you to make service more than a line on your resume. Find a need that is not being met, do your part to fill it, make a difference to our country.

I’m pleased to see that the class of 2007 is answering the call. In the graduating class today are five students who have volunteered to wear our Nation’s uniform. You knew the risks of serving in a time of war, and you have volunteered to accept those risks. You have chosen a noble calling. You will take your place as officers in the finest military the world has ever known. At some point, the lives of other men and women will be in your hands, and they will need leaders of character and selflessness. As your Commander in Chief, I salute you for your service, and I ask Almighty God to keep you close as you keep our Nation safe.

There are many ways to serve our Nation. Across this great land of opportunity, we have citizens with great needs. And for every need, there is a path to service.

Some of you have chosen the path of teaching. We all know a teacher who has made a difference in our lives. In my case, I married her. [*Laughter*] The First Lady showed me that teaching is more than a job or profession, it is a vocation. When you make the decision to become a teacher, you know that your reward will be greater than money. It will happen in wonderful moments when you see a student grasp a difficult concept, or come alive during the reading of a poem, or discover how a work of history speaks to our time. To do this for even one child is special. To do this for hundreds of children over a career will bring you satisfaction that few other professions can match.

The beauty of teaching is that its rewards can be found in any classroom. Some of

you know this from your visits to St. Benedict's, an all-boys school in one of the poorest areas of New Jersey. For many of these boys, St. Benedict's is their only safe haven from crime and drugs and hopelessness around them. Each Christmas holiday, several St. Vincent students spend time mentoring these young men.

One of your classmates, Anthony Fiumara, spent two breaks at St. Benedict's. Here's how he describes the experience: "I always knew that I wanted to be a teacher. But my time at Saint Ben's showed me that a teacher could become more than a dispenser of knowledge. When I talked with the students about their dreams of attending college, I realized that as a teacher, I would be the one that would help them achieve their dreams."

Our Nation needs more teachers like Anthony. I'm so pleased that nearly four dozen members of this class have chosen to go into teaching. I thank you. And as you go forth, I ask you to set high standards in your classroom. Challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. Teach your students with respect. And always remember the ideals that attracted you to this noble profession.

Some of you may not yet have decided the best way to serve. It's okay. The Government can't put love in your heart. But what we can do is when you find love and find the drive, we can help put it in action. And that's why I created the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives that Mr. President ran. Through this office, we are helping to ensure that Federal funds for social service go to organizations that get results, even if they happen to have a crucifix or a Star of David on the wall.

We also established the USA Freedom Corps to help mobilize volunteers to bring the comfort and kindness of America to people both at home and abroad. Today, hundreds of thousands of volunteers mentor children; they assist the elderly; they build schools and clinics; they respond to natural disasters. No matter what your in-

terests, no matter what your skills, there is a place for every one of you to serve in our armies—our Nation's armies of compassion.

Even if you can't devote yourself to a career of service, you can make a life of service. We have that on good authority from one of President Towey's great heroes: Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa's whole life was dedicated to doing small things with great love. I'm pleased that Jim is taking a group of you to Calcutta later this month. I hope it helps inspire a new generation to carry on her good works. In almost every documentary about Mother Teresa, you see her going to the side of someone who is suffering terribly, often about to die. She treats them with great gentleness, squeezing their hands and whispering words of comfort. Their look of wonder tells you that these are people who may be feeling loved for the first time in their lives. As they look up at Mother Teresa, their eyes say: Here's someone who cares.

One of your classmates, Kara Shirley, knows what I'm talking about. Just 2 months ago, Kara went on a service project to Brazil where she visited an AIDS clinic. The clinic was called Hope and Life. While there, she and the other students helped clean up after the patients, administer their medicine, and just sit by their bedsides holding their hands. One of these patients was a man who weighed just about 70 pounds. When he was sent to this clinic, he had already been given his death certificate. But that only told the people at the clinic that this man needed even more love.

Here's how Kara puts it: "This man was so weak he could not even speak. But when I held his hand, he turned his head, and you could feel the gratitude. It was one of the most moving experiences of my life, and by the end of my time there, I didn't want to leave." Kara's gesture was a—seemed like a small thing to hold a man's hand. But because it was done with great

love, it helped fill a dying man's final days with dignity and grace.

I've met thousands of volunteers like Kara who serve their fellow citizens in many different ways. They put themselves in some of the harshest places in our country and in the world. Yet instead of telling me how hard they have it, they always tell me how fortunate they are.

You can know this joy in your own lives. All you need is a warm heart and a willing pair of hands. When Mother Teresa accepted her Nobel Prize, she told the story about visiting a nursing home. At first she was impressed by the home because it was attractive and well equipped. But she soon noticed that none of the residents were smiling; all were looking at the door. When she asked why everyone seemed so sad, one of the caretakers explained, "They are hurt because they are forgotten." They stared at the door in the hope that it would

open and someone who loved them would walk through it.

My challenge to you today is this: Be the person who walks through that door. Be the face that brings a smile to the hurt and forgotten. Lead lives of purpose and character, make a difference in someone else's life. And if you do, you will lead richer lives, you will build a more hopeful nation, and you'll never be disappointed.

My congratulations to you all. I ask for the Almighty God's blessings on you and your life. Thanks for letting me come and share my thoughts.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in the Robert S. Carey Student Center. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Douglas R. Nowicki, archabbot and chancellor, and H. James Towey, president, St. Vincent College; Archbishop of Washington Donald W. Wuerl; Mary Towey, wife of H. James Towey; and Pope Benedict XVI.

Remarks on the Observance of Military Spouse Day and Presentation of the President's Volunteer Service Awards

May 11, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. Jeanine, thank you very much for kicking off with an important event here in the White House. Today we honor six outstanding Americans who represent the very best of what volunteering means, and we honor the achievements of military spouses all across the Nation. You cannot be a nation with a volunteer army unless you honor the military families, and that's what we're doing today.

I like to tell people that the strength of this Nation is not our military, although we intend to keep it strong. The strength of the Nation is the fact that we've got compassionate, decent, honorable citizens who hear a call to love a neighbor like

you'd like to be loved yourself. And that's what we're here to honor.

Each of you is part of a legacy of service that harkens back to our country's earliest days. When Martha Washington, the husband of the first George W.—[laughter]—organized sick wards for wounded soldiers and made visits to battlefields to boost the morale of the troops, she volunteered for a cause bigger than herself.

Through many conflicts, America's war fighters have counted on their spouses for love and support. Our communities have depended on your energy and your leadership. Our Nation has benefited from our—the sacrifices of our military families. Today I've asked you to come so I can thank you on behalf of all the military families