

Good morning everyone! As Mrs. Danish said, my name is Lourdes Fitzgerald, and I am currently a junior at The Maret School. I am so honored to be here as the Founder's Day speaker this year at Grace. It's crazy to think that it has been six years since I was sitting in these seats as a fifth grader, preparing the years ahead of me. I was a lifer at Grace, which means that I started as a three year old, and stayed until my graduation.

In those eight years, I learned so much about what it means to be part of a community. Just as you students are taught today, I learned how important it is to care about each other and care about the world we live in. This is an important value that has guided me all throughout high school, and it will definitely follow me into college. Even today, when I'm out and about and I see someone from Grace, whether it's a student, parent, teacher, or even Ms. Danish, I feel at home.

When I started at Maret, I was nervous about how I would do academically and fit in socially. But, I quickly learned that I had nothing to be worried about. I was well prepared for my classes, and I was able to make friends easily. To this day, I can still remember information that I learned as I worked on the many history projects I had to do here at Grace. But, those were always super fun, because they allowed me to express my creativity.

I have so many happy memories from my time here, but i'll spare you all of them and just share a little bit about two. I LOVED recess. With all the playground equipment and places to explore, my imagination would run wild. I remember all the girls in my first grade class formed a band called "The Big Sunshine Girls" and performed daily for whatever audience we could gather. In fact, we performed so much that all the boys formed a competing band called "The Wacky Animals," and of course, we had a battle of the bands. That's one of my memories, but

another is one that I think everyone can relate to. That is Christmas Chapel. The anticipation and preparation for Christmas Chapel is like nothing else, and the night it takes place always seems magical. Honestly, I can't think of the Christmas season without thinking about Christmas Chapel. Just this past Christmas, my older sisters and I were trying to list all the songs we remembered from Christmas Chapel. It got intense.

I don't know who specifically was involved in creating Grace, but I think we should all be very thankful for the founders' for their establishing Grace Episcopal Day School because they truly created a very unique and special place. Again, it has been an honor to be with you all today. Thank you so much, and for all the students here, I hope you have a great year. Have fun, and continue to make lots of wonderful memories.