

There is a great quote from St. Francis of Assisi, the patron of our Franciscan Community:

*“Start by doing what is necessary*

*Then do what is possible;*

*and suddenly you are doing the impossible”*

Where are the juniors and seniors? Have you been studying the theological virtues???

This quote connects the virtues of faith, hope and love with so much of my life!

The faith my immigrant parents had to come to the U.S. with so little, to work hard and provide my sisters and me with a future that would never be what it is today if it were not for their faith and courage to do what is necessary

The faith I have learned though doing the everyday challenges and invitations of life, working, building relationships, studying, praying, teaching, learning, serving correcting papers—doing what is necessary

The faith I have witnessed in the many students I’ve had like Evelyn, the daughter of a single immigrant mom, who in spite of being diagnosed with cancer her sophomore year, going through treatments throughout her junior year managed to maintain her high academic average and become valedictorian of her class with a full ride to Georgetown where she is studying to become a pediatrician. Doing what is necessary

**Then do what is possible—**

Having hope that no matter what things will work out is no easy thing! I learned from my Franciscan Sisters that it is possible to discover God’s will in one’s life! I learned this from the Sisters I have been blessed to know and who have walked with me through our formation when we were younger and to this day; that it is possible to live this life and be happy! That it is possible to become a teacher or a nurse practitioner, or bursar, vocation director or administrator and God will be with you guiding you in ways you never expected.

Having hope is discovering that when one prays it is a lot about waiting to see how Jesus will respond. Having hope is watching my students at our San Miguel Cristo Rey school in Tucson, come to believe that they will be able to achieve their dream of being the first one in their families to graduate from college because they are first generation children of immigrants.

**and suddenly you are doing the impossible**

This is all about the theological virtue of love—any of you juniors or seniors remember the theological definition of love???

An act of the will/a choice

It is in choosing to love that one finds true meaning in one’s life. I experienced love, acceptance and support of my high school friends who are here today! The times we spent together growing up here will always be in my heart, you were with me when my Dad died, you helped me get through what seemed impossible. I see the love of family that my Mom, sisters and friends have with their families, you inspire me by your self-gift and sacrifices for your children and your spouses!

I witness the love my Franciscan Sisters have for each other and so many of God's people in simplicity, kindness and compassion!

When I was in Peru, there was active terrorism going on, Sendero Luminoso (the Shining Path) was systematically striving to destroy the country, there were regular experiences of car bombs and violence. One particular day I was on the ground floor of the convent in Lima, there was a loud explosion followed by gun fire. I was frozen, I knew I should leave where I was and run to a safer place but I was too terrified to move; I started praying asking Jesus to help me, all of a sudden, I starting thinking about all the people who love me; it freed me to run to a safer place. Keep those you love and who love you in your heart always!

Choosing love helps us discover that we are doing what seemed impossible, living in Peru as a missionary, being able to teach in Spanish, connecting with people in remote villages in the Andes mountains all seemed like a dream that became possible because of saying yes to God to become a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. All the many experiences I have been blessed to encounter because of my vocation as a Sister continue to reflect God's never-ending love and presence.

Always choose to love! It is an adventure with God!

Thank you, Deacon Ray, and all of you at Xavier for this honor that was so unexpected and very humbling. Thank especially for bringing together those who are here to celebrate this day with me! My heart is filled with gratitude for all of you for being here! May the Lord continue to fill each of you with His peace and love!