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Congratulations to the graduating class of 2014. It is amazing to me that we are actually in the year 2014. For most of the people here tonight, 2014 sounds like it should be the future, not the present. It doesn't matter though how far into the future we get, some things will always stay the same. Many of the same things I say to you tonight could probably be repeated to the graduates 20 years from now. Many of these things were probably also said to the graduates 20 years in the past. That does not mean that the values we teach you are old and don't need to be learned any more. Instead, it is important to remember that all of those people who have gone before you have paved the way for what you are doing here right now.

To help us see that what is old still matters, let's go all the way back to the year 1003. You might think that no one who lived that long ago has any connection to you. I disagree. In the year 1003, a boy named Edward was born. Edward would grow up to be the King of England, make life in his county and the countries around him better, be called a saint, and eventually have churches and schools named after him. Graduation is a perfect time to realize that those same values that made our patron St. Edward so famous, are part of your life too.

Edward was raised well. His parents were the king and queen of England. They taught Edward and their other children to read and write. They taught him his prayers. They taught him right from wrong. Your parents have done the same. They did those things all by themselves for the first several years of your life. Then when you started school, they asked your teachers to help you learn even more. I don't know a whole lot about St. Edward when he was a boy, but I

imagine there were times that he didn't want to learn and didn't cooperate with what his parents wanted. I know you all a little better, and I am pretty sure there are times when you feel that way too. However, they taught him these things even though he might not have cooperated, because they loved him. They wanted him to do well in the world, and to help others do well too. When it was time for him to leave his parents, these things served him well, and, believe me, the life he faced then was much worse than any test you are going to have in high school.

When Edward was young like you, his dad was killed and his family was removed from power. Edward and his brother were sent away to be killed. Instead, the officer who was supposed to kill them had mercy and sent them into exile. Edward now had to learn how to live a whole different life. We and your parents are here today, hoping that we have prepared you to face a big scary world just like Edward. It will not always be easy. Sometimes you will have people working against you, like the people who sent Edward away. But you will also find people ready to help you, even people you wouldn't expect, like the officer who spared Edward's life.

Once you are out in that world, we have to trust that you will remember the things we taught you. In this big new scary world, Edward did not just sit around and feel sorry for himself. Edward's captors took him to Sweden. He then journeyed to Hungary. He found a place to live and grow and learn some more. He knew that he needed to strengthen himself in every way, if he was going to become the person he needed to be. As you move to high school, there will be difficulties. Some of your classes might be very challenging. You will have to push through it and not give up. Just like Edward found a place in Hungary where he could thrive, it may take you a while to find that place next year. When you do find that place

though, take advantage of the opportunity. Learn as much as you can. Grow in virtue as much as you can. Because some day, you will have to leave your comfort zone once again.

Eventually, it was time for Edward to take his place in the world. Even though when he was last in England they tried to kill him, Edward went back to his people. He knew that all of his growing and learning didn't do anyone any good, unless he tried to make the world a better place. When Edward got back to England an amazing thing happened. The people saw the man he had become, and they proclaimed him as king, even though he had been in exile for so long. As king he kept other invaders from coming in and doing to him what had happened to his father. He helped the good kings in other countries to do the same. He made life better for the poor in England and he built churches and abbeys to make the faith of his people stronger.

Your teachers and parents have given you a wonderful gift in your education at St. Edward. It will be the foundation for all of the great things you will do in high school, college, and in the rest of your life. There is no greater way for you to say thank you to all of them, than to use this gift to make the world better for the people around you, just like Edward did. Even though St. Edward lived 1000 years ago and could not imagine the things you will see in your lives, his example is there for you. Use it. Use what your parents have given you. Use what your teachers have given you. And make us all proud to have been a part of the class of 2014. Thank you and God bless.