

MY GRADUATION STORY

by Connie Kirk

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. 1 Corinthians 16:13

I have been seeing and reading stories about high school and college seniors who cannot have the traditional graduation during this pandemic. It has resurrected long hidden memories of my college graduation. It was May of 1965...our caps and gowns were ordered and paid for, all we had left to do was class reviews and finals to take. We had planned picnics in the park, study sessions with class groups, hanging out at the student union with friends, and plans to meet after graduation. Suddenly we got notice that classes were cancelled, and the school buildings would be closing. Everyone had to move out of the dorms, and we were told to go home. Grades would be posted, and you could either accept your grade or come back at a later scheduled date to take your final. A graduation ceremony would happen at a later scheduled date. You were not required to attend.

It was 1965, the Vietnam war was on. We learned that there was to be a large protest march scheduled on campus. The war was unpopular, and these protest marches often became out of control and violent. The march was stopped by shutting down the school year early.

I remember standing on the tennis courts with a group of classmates and friends talking about what we were going to do. Some of the guys knew that by graduating they would now be drafted. The uncertain future meant major life decisions had to be made quickly. Jobs were hard to come by. It was a tough time.

Times and circumstances are different, but I can relate to that feeling of loss that our graduates are going through. It is important to grieve the losses with your friends but keep looking forward, as you don't know what new opportunities the future may hold for you.

Think about a time in your life when plans abruptly changed. How do you feel revisiting that time? What did you learn? How have you grown?

How did that time influence your subsequent interactions with others?

In what ways can your experience help someone through their current situation?

Be patient with all things, but most of all with yourself. St. Francis de Sales



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