Deacon Daniel N. DeLuca

First of all, my wife and family join me in expressing our heartfelt thanks and grateful appreciation to you President Dr. Mirenda, Chairman Mr. Delaney, the Board of Trustees, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and Faculty and Staff for this most distinguished honor, which I shall always cherish. It truly has been a blessing to have been associated with Neumann University for these many years. Thank you for that privilege.

To the members of the Graduating Class of 2014 of Neumann University, I am most pleased to extend to you my heartiest and warmest congratulations on attaining this coveted plateau of a university degree, as well as the various honors and achievements that you have earned along the way. I pay tribute to your parents, families, spouses and friends who have come to honor and celebrate this joyous occasion with you. I am overjoyed to share this glorious day with you as together we become alumni of this special jewel of Catholic Franciscan Education – Neumann University. I trust that your years here have been ones of experiencing new horizons, exploring new opportunities, meeting new friends encountering gifted teachers and caring staff; all in all, a true joyful learning experience emanating from the mission and values of this university that will help shape your life and live it to the fullest.

At this time of year, graduation speakers all over the country are wishing their graduates success. Certainly, I too, join in that chorus and wish you the best of success with your career.

But I wish you much more. Yes, I want you to have more; but I most especially want you to be more – to blossom into the fullness of your person; therefore, I wish you joy; I wish you happiness.

Might I suggest a prescription for such a full, joyful and happy life? Consider these attributes.
1. Pray – converse with God. God is love and mercy. Put your trust in Him. Make spirituality a part of your life.

2. Laugh – Enjoy the humor of life. Despite the tragedies of life, life can be funny, with many funny moments. Laughter is good medicine.

3. Embrace relationships – We are social beings. Embrace your relationship with God, your family, friends and loved ones. They are meaningful parts of who you are. Be a loving, forgiving person.

4. Reach for Self-Fulfillment – Feel good about yourself. Accomplish something every day regardless of how minimal it may be. Take pride in what you do. Expressing your talent gives you identity.

5. Be Positive – Have a positive attitude. The glass is half-full. Smile! Be upbeat!

6. Serve Others – Use your talents to be of service to others. To serve is to love. When you give of yourself, you become more complete. When you touch the lives of others, you add joy to your own life.

7. Continue to learn – Your education does not stop today. Learning is ongoing. Remember you are always a student. Be open to new knowledge; new developments. Learning and the thirst for knowledge are the foundations of growth.

On your journey of life, periodically, ask yourself two questions ‘Is there joy in my life?’ and ‘Do I bring joy to the lives of others?’ If you can answer ‘yes’ to these two questions, then you are on the right road to a joyful, successful life.

So today begins a new chapter in your life and the mystery of tomorrow and all that it holds. We pray that your degree opens many doors for your career and that it keeps open the windows of your mind and the spirit of your heart. As we know, the world, the economy and the job market are not all you would like them to be. Your challenge is to develop a career for yourself that will contribute your special talents to the well-being of others, even if it just one other person who is better off because of you.
You will find that some tomorrows may be sad and even cruel. Your faith, your upbringing and your education will help you to cope with them. And you will find that some tomorrows will be happy, successful and fulfilling. Embrace them; cherish them. Life is a mixture of tears and laughter, sadness and joy, agonies and ecstasies. May the tears and sadness make you stronger and more compassionate, and the laughter and joy enrich the fullness of your life.

And in the December of your life, may you look back and say:

I laughed and I cried; I succeeded and I failed; I sinned and I was holy; I had a lot and I had nothing; I was right and I was wrong; but above all, I served and I loved. Above all, I loved.

My dear graduates; may you be the light of joy to all you meet; may you be at peace with yourself; and may you always know love.

May God, who is Love, Bless you and be with you always!

Congratulations!

Have a good life!