



From the Office of the President

John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.

REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

**JC:HEM/Regis University
Kakuma Graduation Ceremony
Arrupe Learning Center
Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya
September 22, 2014**

Welcome to the UNHCR Kakuma Team and all of the partner agencies, families and friends of today's graduates.

First and foremost, I offer my congratulations to you graduates and acknowledge and thank your families and friends for their part in supporting you in your accomplishments that we celebrate today.

In addition, I want to express my admiration and appreciation for the faculty and staff here and around the world.

Together, we have accomplished a marvelous thing in your life. And I'd like to take a few minutes to reflect on your achievements.

In a letter to his brothers George and Thomas written in 1817, the English Romantic poet, John Keats, coined the term "negative capability." He wrote:

"Several things dovetailed in my mind, and at once it struck me, what quality went to form a man [we would say, person] of achievement...I mean negative capability, that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, [and] doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason..."

In other words, negative capability, for Keats, was the skill of putting the perceived wisdom and local reason aside in order to be receptive or open to the world. Of course, Keats was referring to letting radical rationality drop away in order to fully experience the world in service of creating better poetry.

But in the Jesuit university context, our students and graduates also possess a kind of negative capability. They don't let the usual way any one culture thinks about things get in the way. They don't let so-called reason or reasonableness become reasons to be discouraged, reasons to look the other way, reasons to accept the status quo. In other words, Jesuit university graduates – and specifically Regis University graduates – don't accept a status quo that keeps them from making a difference in their own lives and the lives of others.

Keats called the geniuses to which he refers "men and women of achievement." At our school, we just call them Regis People.



A Regis person – someone who goes beyond reasonable expectations to help others.

Muzabel Welongo is a great example, a student graduating with you here today. That is a Regis person.

Someone brave enough to chase his dreams, who will use his gifts to serve others. That is a Regis person.

Someone who endures a personal challenge and comes back stronger; who will build on what she has learned to help others. That is a Regis person.

So, why say all this? Why share this story on your day? It's because such stories are really about you. You are Regis people. You have faced adversity. You have followed your heart. You make decisions every day that have the power to change lives – starting with your own. Your decisions change the world for the better.

Getting a diploma, especially a diploma from a Jesuit university, is no easy task. And in the end, that's why we're here today: To celebrate you and the family members and friends who have helped you come so far.

In a few minutes, your name will be called. You will walk across this stage and receive your diploma. It is a momentous achievement and one for which I offer my sincerest congratulations.

It's my hope you will keep your diploma in a special place. But even more importantly, I hope you will remember that a diploma from Regis University is more than a piece of paper that certifies a completion and a commencement. It's better described as a promise – to yourself and to the world. It's a promise that you will use your gifts and skills to make the world a more humane and just place.

So, this is my charge to you, recipients of this JC:HEM and Regis University diploma:

Live a life of moral conviction, one that seizes every opportunity to make a difference in the world.

Follow your heart – it may take you places you never imagined.

Be courageous in the face of changes and challenges and hard work – God most certainly has a plan.



Dream and strive and push beyond all reasonable expectations because that is who you are - Regis people.

Congratulations, graduates!!

Now I need only welcome you to the alumni association of Regis University.