



Dear Father McShane,

It is often remarked that when you meet a truly inspirational person, you may not always remember what he said or did, but you will always remember how he made you feel. Well, from my four years at Lincoln Center, I know this to be true for you, Father. From classroom discussions in Lowenstein to moving freshmen into McKeon Hall dorms, while each person may treasure a different one of your quips or anecdotes, each came away with the same feeling: acceptance. Through your rhetoric, crooked smile, and easy demeanor, you personally made each student, parent, and extended member of the Fordham family feel at home at Fordham and proud to be a Ram.

One of the most common jokes told around the Lincoln Center campus is that our parents forced us to choose Fordham because they found the priest with the mustache funny. Of course this is just an amusing exaggeration – the real reason is because it is conveniently situated between three Starbucks – but it is not too far from the truth. As student body president, I move in families every autumn, and without fail your impact on each student's decision to come to Fordham is apparent. One family from the back of the back of beyond recalled an admitted students day conversation with you where you not only knew of their town but could recite the history of their church and the specials at the adjacent diner. Another family still chuckled as they shared your bit on how behind every successful man is a surprised mother-in-law. As for my family, you earned a new groupie when you connected with my NYPD Inspector dad over your shared respect for the police force – now he looks for every opportunity to attend events you will be speaking at.

The Fordham community always knew your shoes would be hard to fill, but as the close of your tenure draws ever nearer it feels like even Bigfoot would find your kicks a bit roomy. If ever a light was needed in the darkness it was these last two years. And Father President, I speak for every Lincoln Center student when I say that you were ours. Through your regular emails, video messages, and more, you reassured us that though the difficulties of the day seemed insurmountable, the grace of God would carry us over. Like a true Ignatian, you lit the Fordham community on fire, and our cohorts were blessed to have spent even a little time in your blazing glory. From all of us here at Lincoln Center, thank you for teaching us how to be men and women for others, how to strive for magis, and providing us with an arsenal of one-liners sure to kill at all of our future cocktail parties.

Godspeed.

Joseph VanGostein

USG LC President  
Cunniffe Scholar | Global Business Honors Program '22