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You are graduating in the most interdependent age in human history. Interdependent with each other, within your community, your state, your nation and the world. This campus has seen global imagination, and what you have all said today, “light the world on fire,” both have to be defined, because all interdependence means is that here we are, stuck together. We can't get away from each other. Divorce, walls, borders, you name it, we're still stuck with our interdependence.

Whether we like it or not, for the rest of your lives, what happens to you will, in some measure, be determined by what happens to other people, by how you react to it, how they treat you, how you treat them, and what larger forces are at work in the world. The global economy, the internet, mobile technology, the explosion of the social media have unleashed both positive and negative forces. The last few years have seen an amazing explosion of economic, social and political empowerment. They have, also, laid bare the power of persistent inequalities, political and social instability, and identity politics based on the simple proposition that our differences are all that matter.

At the root of it all is a simple profound question: Will you define yourselves and your relationship to others in positive or negative terms? Because if we're bound to share the future, it seems to me that it is clear that all of us have a responsibility, each in our own way, to build up the positive and to reduce the negative forces of our interdependence. This applies to people on the left, the right, somewhere in the middle or somewhere out there. There are so many people who feel that they're losing out in the modern world, because people either don't see they more, they see them only as members of groups that they feel threatened by.

The young people pushing for immigration reform, clinging to DACA and DAPA, hoping to make their way in a country where their future is uncertain, feel that way. The young people in the Black Lives Matter movement feel that way. But so do the coal miners in communities where their present is bleak and they think their future is bleaker, and they think all of us who want to fight climate change don't give a rip about the wreckage of their lives. It's everywhere. When we try to drift apart in an interdependent age, all we do is build up the negative and reduce the positive forces of interdependence.

What does set the world on fire mean anyway? It means you can set the world on fire by the power of your imagination, by the gift of your passion, by the devotion of your heart and your skills to make your

life richer and to lift others; or it means you can set the world on fire. You have to decide, but because the world is interdependent, you can't take a pass.

I think the future begins by accepting the wonderful instruction of our very first Jesuit pope. Pope Francis has fostered a culture of encounter. Where my foundation works in Africa and the hills of central Africa, nobody's got any kind of wheel transportation, so everybody meets each other on foot, and when people pass each other on path and one says, "Good morning. Hello. How are you?" the response translated into English is, "I see you. I encounter you. You are real to me."

Think about all the people today, yesterday and tomorrow, you will pass and not see. Do you really see everybody who works in a restaurant where you'll go after here to have a celebratory meal? Do we see people that we pass on the street, who may have a smile or a frown, or a burden they can barely carry alone? When we passionately advocate for the causes, we believe in, have we anticipated all the unanticipated consequences so that we can take everybody along for a ride to the future we imagine.

When Pope Francis tells us to engage in a culture of encounter, he's thinking about the LMU students in this class who since they were freshman have performed almost 200,000 hours of community service. Thank you. That's a fancy elevated way of saying you saw a need, and you stepped in to solve it, and you did it, not only because it was the morally right thing for other people, but because it made your life more meaningful. That's the way you want to set the world on fire.

The young people that were mentioned in my introduction who have been part of our global initiative community for university students made very specific commitments. They promised to mentor high school girls to help them overcome any preconceived notions of their own limitations. They promised to help the victims of domestic violence and violence against the homeless. They promised to provide more capital to small businesspeople in Haiti through micro-credit loans, something that means a lot to Hillary and me personally, because for more than 40 years since we took a honeymoon trip there, we've cared about them and believed in them. They promised an educational exchange with the National University of Rwanda. We can learn a lot from them, because they lost 10 percent of their people in ninety days to a genocide in 1994, and they came back because they refused to be paralyzed by the past. They joined hands across the land that led to all that bloodshed to create a common future.

That's what's at the heart of your restorative justice program here. Instead of figuring out who to punish, figure out how to repair the harm. Instead of focusing on getting even for the past, focus on how we can share the future. It's at the heart of your efforts here to improve the juvenile justice system. You, without knowing it, have often embodied the future of positive interdependence we hope to build. You can't have shared prosperity and an inclusive community unless we believe our common humanity is even more important than our incredibly interesting differences.

I will say this again. On every continent, think of the struggles in Latin America; think of the political struggles and social and economic struggles in America; think of what's going on in Asia; think of what's going on in Africa; think of how Europe is dealing with this influx from the Middle East of the largest number of refugees since World War II, and all the conflicts within all these countries, and whether they should keep Europe together. Every single one of these is part of an ongoing battle to define the terms of our interdependence.

Will we do it in positive or negative terms? Are we going to expand the definition of us and shrink the definition of them, or shall we just hunker down in the face of uncomfortable realities and just stick with our own crowd? It will be a bleaker future if you do that.

Set the world on fire with your imagination, not with your matches. Set the world on fire by proving that what we have in common is a million times more important than our admittedly utterly fascinating differences.

If every day we all get a little better in seeing everyone we encounter physically or virtually, if we remember that a very short life, the things that we share that are even more than the things about us that are special.

Do well. Do good. Have a good time doing it, and remember, it's the journey that matters. Set the world on fire in the right way. God bless you.

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