

Dear Members of the Class of 2021, Faculty, and Staff,

I write to share exciting news regarding the May 2021 Commencement Exercises. King's will celebrate Commencement with our graduates, their guests, faculty, staff, and administration at the Mohegan Sun Arena on Sunday, May 16th. We will honor our graduates and celebrate their achievements with our traditional in-person ceremony!

While our in-person celebration will be traditional, our commitment to the safety and well-being of all the members of our community and their guests requires some new elements. We will conduct two complete ceremonies. Two ceremonies afford each graduate four tickets for their guests and assures safe distancing for the processions and seating. Each graduate will have easy access to walk across the stage upon hearing their name called to be recognized for their achievement. Our graduates' guests will have comfortable seating in a safe and socially distanced setting.

While other options were considered, and the 2021 Class Officers consulted, a survey of the graduates indicated a 96% preference for two commencement ceremonies over a virtual ceremony. Although each graduate will be limited to four guests, both ceremonies will be livestreamed for other family members and friends to enjoy.

On May 16th there will be two Commencement Ceremonies. The 10 AM ceremony will feature graduates who will be awarded an M.S. or B.S. degree. The 3 PM ceremony will feature the B.A. and B.S.B.A. degree recipients.

The traditional Baccalaureate Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, May 15th at 4 PM in the Scandlon Physical Education Center. Due to COVID restrictions, graduates will be invited to make reservations on a first come, first reserved basis. After the graduates have been accommodated and if there are seats remaining those attending will be offered an opportunity to invite guests. Tickets will be issued through the Office of Campus Ministry.

As it is my last year as president, and I, like our graduates, will be commencing from King's, I am grateful that we will be able to celebrate our graduates' achievements, their family's support and the contributions of our faculty, staff, and administration together. Unfortunately, the safety and well-being of us all requires the cancellation of important celebrations such as Commencement Ball, the Alumni Pre-Commencement Gathering, and the End of the Year Dinner. The changing landscape of the past year suggests that I add a word of caution to our plan. Should the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania issues more restrictive COVID protocols, and we are unable to move forward with our plans for an in-person Commencement on May 16th, the College will host a virtual commencement celebration at a later date.

As we prepare to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates and our common mission, may our sense of gratitude for how and what we will celebrate together in May keep us focused on the work ahead and vigilant in those practices that will assure that we can celebrate Commencement together.

Peace,

Fr. John J. Ryan, C.S.C.
President