



Dr. Mary Drabik Inauguration Address - January 16, 2016

First of all I would like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has counted me faithful by placing me in ministry. And not only me, but all of the staff and faculty of SFBC&TS.

Founder/Chancellor/Chairman and former President Dr. Joe Guadagnino, former Chair Bob Boutwell, Dr. Gary Cohen, Dr. Tony Buchanan, Directors of the College, our faculty and staff, current and former students, friends and family, thank you so very much for this honor and the confidence you have placed in me. Thank you to our staff, who work so diligently to keep the college running smoothly. A special thanks to the members of the Inauguration Committee, who put so many hours into making this event so memorable. Thank you to our faculty members, who work with such devotion to give our students an outstanding education. Everyone has given unselfishly and I am grateful to all those who have helped to make this event a success!

I come now to my most treasured blessings...I would especially like to welcome my two sons Joshua, Daniel and his wife, Gabriela, and my two beautiful granddaughters, London and Lilah, and of course Tommy, my husband, best friend, and confidante. Thank you to my mother Berneice (who is 91)...I love you Mom, I love my brothers, Harry and Bob and Eliska, and my identical twin sister, Margie, and her husband, Stuart. And to my family in love....who came all the way from Virginia – Maria Rosado, Michael and Rebecca Wolfe, and a young man who has stolen my heart and the first one to ever call me MIMI – Mr. Lucas Wolfe . And a very special thank you to Dr. Joe & Bea Guadagnino who without their commitment, faithfulness and sacrifice none of us would be here today. You are both a fine example for all to follow because you follow Jesus Christ. Thank you for your love and support to both my family and me for the past 33 years. Without

you pouring your lives into us, we would not be able to fulfill what God has called us to do at SFBC&TS. Thank you for your unconditional love and for believing in us when no one else did – only eternity will reveal all that was accomplished because of your steadfastness in the things of God!

Inaugurations are about institutions, not individuals. They are about moments in time. This year we are celebrating 30 years of ministry for SFBC&TS. The College is now more than a quarter century old, a more mature institution in a very different time. From its beginning, SFBC has been on the cutting edge of ministry, bringing together students and professors to help men and women fulfill the call of God upon their lives.

I am honored and humbled to begin my service as the 2nd President, and I pledge to give you my best with the help of the Holy Spirit, to build on the foundation and principles established by Dr. Joe Guadagnino and the Board of Directors. So, yes today marks my inauguration, but today is not about me...it is about SFBC&TS, and what God has accomplished! It is about each of us, and our part in this great journey, as God continues to use SFBC&TS to change the world one student at a time.

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

It is always the most crucial time in a relay race when the baton is passed to the next runner; and when it is passed, they must pass it while running at full speed. They enter the race at strategic moments to move the baton further toward the finish line. And what happens in those exchanges is critical. I pledge before you today and in the presence of God Almighty that I will continue on with what God has only just started at SFBC&TS! As we come into this new era for SFBC&TS, our theme will be ***Remember, Rejoice and Renew***. We will *remember* all that God has done for us to bring us this far. We will *rejoice* in what he has allowed us accomplish and we are dedicated to the *renewal* of our commitment to what the Lord has in store for us.

God has used SFBC&TS to work on a global level. We will continue to work globally by working with Brazil, Croatia, Guyana, Cuba, Hispanic communities,

South Africa and Mozambique. We will continue to reach and make our impact on the world with the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

At SFBC&TS, we will continue to be a community resource center that promotes unity in diversity, uniting generations and differing denominations. We will continue to provide affordable education to students, allowing them an opportunity to graduate and enter into ministry - debt free! We will educate students to have a working knowledge of various theological doctrines, facilitating awareness and spiritual maturity. We will also maintain our partnership and enrich our relationship with Faith Farm Ministries, extending the opportunity for their graduates to earn college credit.

In order to assist international students from abroad, this year will mark the beginning of our English for Academic Purposes Program- a resource that will support students, teaching them the skills they need to be effective and successful. We will help, support and empower our Veterans- men and women that have already given so much of themselves. They, too, will be afforded the opportunity to graduate debt free at SFBC.

We will promote and encourage professional development through teaching and ministry to all students in our academic community, because it enhances both personal growth and excellence in learning. We will continue to offer career counseling, support services and assistance with accessing local resources to students. They will be supported by helping them identify life goals, ministry goals, academic careers and accompanying strategies in order to achieve success in timely manner- which helps with graduating on time!

SFBC&TS will foster an atmosphere based on the Christian tenets of the Holy Bible, trust, integrity and respect- a community that welcomes change and reveres/appreciates tradition; a community that represents unity in diversity; a community that is an effective ambassador for Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

We help to prepare students for careers in ministry and for life-long learning by providing a clearly defined program. We will continue to strengthen our role as a provider of graduate education, offering scholarly and professional graduate programs including collaborations with other learning institutes and professionals, culminating in student expertise at professional levels.

This is only the beginning of what God has in store for us and SFBC&TS. Through God's grace and outstanding faithfulness, SFBC continues to exceed all projections for enrollment. The vision that God has for us is more than we can ask or think.

At this time I would like to announce that SFBC&TS will be establishing two Awards for Academic Excellence that will be given to outstanding students – Dr. Joe would you please come up here. In recognition of your service to the Body of Christ and SFBC&TS, this year we will be instituting the “**Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence**” in the name of **Dr. Joseph Guadagnino**. Dr. Joseph Guadagnino is the Founder/Chancellor and Chairman of the Board of South Florida Bible College & Theological Seminary, which he founded in 1985. He holds a Master of Arts in Christian Studies from Whitefield Theological Seminary, a Doctorate of Divinity from North American School of Theology, and a Ph.D. in Theology from Faith Theological Seminary. Having been in the ministry for over 30 years, he brings great insight and knowledge to the College and how to run a successful ministry. The Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence acknowledges students who have received recognition in their field of study. We will recognize students who have integrated academic excellence with leadership, community service, the arts, and career achievement. (give plaque)

Also, beginning at this year’s commencement exercises, SFBC&TS will award each year the “**Dr. Gary Cohen Award for Academic Excellence in the field of Old Testament Studies.**” Dr. Cohen has been a Board member of SFBC&TS and currently serves on our Advisory Board. He is President Emeritus of Cohen Theological Seminary, Torrance, California and Seoul, Korea. He is a renowned author and is one of the translators of the NKJ Bible. Dr. Cohen is a retired Army Reserve Chaplain (COL), and has served as pastor of two churches, and as president of Graham Bible College and Clearwater Christian College. With the help of his family, he built the prototype for the Model of Jerusalem now housed in Orlando, Florida at the Holyland Experience. Dr. Cohen, In recognition of your service to the Body of Christ and SFBC&TS; Dr. Cohen would you please come up to the Podium – (present plaque) The primary consideration for this award will be the student’s overall grade point average in coursework completed and additional consideration will be given to exceptional performance in Old Testament Studies including research, special student projects, and contribution to departmental clubs and honor societies.

For 30 years, SFBC&TS has flourished because it has remained faithful to God's vision: to equip committed men and women for Christian service. Today, we reflect on all that God has already accomplished at SFBC & TS. We can begin to sense the increasing magnitude of God's vision for this College as it expands beyond the surrounding community; an awesome responsibility comes with it. It is humbling that God would entrust us with such a vision.

It is also confirmation that our successes have been found in Jesus Christ- without whom, accomplishments are finite and meaningless. Thank God for His faithfulness; He is what makes all our hard work, all our successes and all our accomplishments at SFBC of infinite value and everlastingly meaningful.

I am convinced that we are entering the most exciting time we have ever experienced — a time filled with challenge and demand — but also a time of great joy and victory as we begin this *new era for SFBC&TS*.

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

I close with these lyrics by Steve Green.

*After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone
And our children sift through all we've left behind
May the clues that they discover and the memories they uncover
Become the light that leads them
to the road we each must find
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful
May the fire of our devotion light their way
May the footprints that we leave
Lead them to believe
And the lives we live
inspire them to obey*

*Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful!
And to God, we give the glory!*