

Speech day of the Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College
21 November 2008 (Friday) 5:00 pm
Speech by Professor Ng Ching-Fai
President & Vice-Chancellor of Hong Kong Baptist University

Rev. Brother Thomas, Rev. Brother Patrick, Mr. Sze, Distinguished Guests, Parents, Teachers and Students,

First of all, let me express my heartfelt congratulations on your graduation. It gives me great pleasure to join you today at this ceremony and share the joy of such an important moment in your life.

Yes, this is an important moment in your life as you have accomplished a milestone in your young adulthood. The year 2008 is also an “important” year in which you head towards a new milestone in your life. And I think such importance should be able to inspire you to think seriously on how you would prepare yourselves for your future endeavours.

Why the year 2008 is “important”? Maybe some of you have guessed the answer already, or at least part of the answer. To name some of the significant events that have taken place this year, they are: the Olympics Torch relay worldwide, the Sichuan earthquake, the Beijing Olympic Games, the accomplishment of the nation’s first space walk, the financial tsunami affecting the whole world. All in all, what have these events told us about life? What have we learned from these?

School days are time for dreams and ideals. Yet, have you ever thought of realizing these dreams and upholding your ideals beyond your school days? Dear students, do hold on to your dreams, and make way to realize them. The world changes rapidly. Life can be hard and always comes with adversity. You may have a brilliant moment catching the attention of the world, yet the downturn may be waiting for you in just a split second. Or the other way around, the turn will show you to sweet success when you think you are at the end of the world, if you persevere enough to make that turn. How then, are we going to make our dreams come true and become worthy individuals capable of serving mankind by contributing our part?

I would suggest you need a giving heart, the will power to persevere in face of adversity, the mindset to excel, and a sound knowledge base for personal advancement.

The years of education at your alma mater should have equipped you with a sound knowledge base. While you proceed to Form 6 or University studies, you should always maintain an interest in a wide spectrum of disciplines, be they language, mathematics, physics, chemistry, music, geography or history. Don't call them "subjects" anymore, but understand them and enjoy them as various aspects of life that you will come across in your future days. An understanding in these areas will help nurture the overall intellectual development as an educated person.

The mindset to excel. To put it simply, you should always want to achieve the best in anything you do. Well, one can't always be the best, nor have I asked you to be number one all the time. What's important is the "mindset", which will push you towards breakthroughs in life. On this, I wish to share with you Helen Keller's famous words: "It is for us to pray not for tasks equal to our powers, but for powers equal to our tasks, to go forward with a great desire forever beating at the door of our hearts as we travel toward our distant goal."

Having the right mindset, we need to persevere in face of adversities in order to realize our dreams. Sure you have witnessed much adversity this year – the devastating aftermath of earthquakes, and the worsening economies worldwide resulting in enterprises and shops closing down, as well as vast number of layoffs. As you turn towards adulthood, such news may have a great impact on your perception of career and life. Yet, if you view these fall backs against the whole background of historical development, this is just another cycle of ups and downs. It is advisable to equip yourselves with an all-rounded development when you have the chance, so that in times of adversities, you can adapt yourselves quickly.

Last but not least, I wish that you all have a giving heart. You sure have come to know the saying that "it is more blessed to give than to receive". In everyday life, a giving heart means you will contribute what you can to serve mankind. This can be small doings, like giving a seat to the elderly, taking up voluntary work. With a giving heart, you are giving your love to others and to the world at large.

Dear students, as you graduate here today, your parents and teachers have given you boundless love and endless support. Your alma mater has nurtured you to become aspiring individuals. So for what your parents and teachers have done for you, please join me in a round of applause as a token of thanks.

To close, I wish every graduate a fruitful life, and to all, ladies and gentlemen, the best of health. Thank you.