

**Address by the President - Rector Magnificus
of Assumption University of Thailand
at the 43rd Commencement Exercises
Queen Sirikit National Convention Center
Sunday, November 22, 2015**

**Chairman of the University Council
Chularatchamontri
President Emeritus
Campus Minister
Members of AU Community
Honored Guests
Families and Friends of the Graduates, and
Dear Graduates, Class XLIII**

Let me recognize some of those who are present here today. We have with us Rev. Bro. Surasit Sukchai, Chairman of the University Council and the Provincial Superior of the Brothers of St. Gabriel, Province of Thailand. Rev. Bro. Prathip Martin Komolmas, President Emeritus, is also with us here to honor you and give you support and encouragement. We have very important guest with us today. He is no other than H.E. Aziz Pitakkhumpol, Chularatchamontri, the leader of the Muslim Community in Thailand.

Today is your day, the graduation day. On behalf of the chairman of the University Council, administrators, faculty and staff, parents, relatives and well-wishers, I would like to say "Congratulations" to each and everyone of you on your success.

Your time at Assumption University was always oriented towards the horizon of this graduation day. Today marks the boundary that separates your student life and your professional life, a life which lives in the domain of imagination, of aspiration, of hopes, and dreams. You may think that you have learned much, as you have developed expertise in at least one field of study. You have proven yourself capable of swimming and fighting the waves in the ocean of life.

Your life after graduation will be much different. After leaving AU, you will have the opportunity to take positions of authority and responsibility. It is a turning point in your life journey – a transition from student life to professional life. At each stage of your education and

career, you must learn to stay focused on your goals. Challenge yourself from within and set your own sight.

At this time, may I invite you to look into the essential elements of your life, not just to be “informative” but be “performative.” The world is experiencing rapid change and you are trying to respond to fresh challenges and opportunities while retaining the best of your legacy values. In the midst of such turmoil and confusion, you long to have a **Happy Worklife**, you want to build a **Happy Family**, with a **Happy Social Life**. If those are your goals in life, let me touch briefly on each.

I. Happy Worklife

Once you graduate, the first thing that comes to your mind is to get a good job. Don't get caught in the trap of comparison. Always keep in mind that comparison is a thief of joy. Start job searching. Your first job might not be related to your major. That's not a problem and should not be made into an issue. Be thankful for the first job you get.

Be humble at work. Show up with questions and willingness to learn. Don't act like you know everything already. Don't chase money at the exclusion of everything else. The amount of cash that will make you perfectly happy is always a little bit more. It's a never-ending chase. The best careers and biggest adventures are determined by our ability to invest in four distinct things: Relationships, Character, Skills and Dynamism.

Just because your formal education might have ended doesn't mean you should stop learning. If you don't keep old skills sharp and continue learning new ones, your brain will get rusty. Every industry is smaller than you think. Do your best to leave as many relationships intact at every job you take. Chances are, you'll work with a lot of the same people again as you build your career.

You may have to start at the bottom and that's fine. Put your ego aside and recognize this as a stepping stone – a starting point. This is not your final job; it's time to get your bearings and gain experience. You've got one foot on the ladder and now you get to climb it. Give yourself time and be patient.

Develop additional skills, whether it's a new language, or any other skill valued in the workplace. It can broaden your job and career options; learning new skills can as well boost your brain and make you happier. Listen as much as you can from the “old hands” and learn from their critics. Give colleagues and clients the opportunity to share their advice, guidance and

tricks of the trade. Be on the lookout for opportunities to grow your skills by taking on new responsibilities, joining new projects, or getting yourself attached to the teams of company visionaries. Undertake some independent study. There are plenty of independent study options available outside. Select what interests you. There is always so much you can learn, as long as you want to, and now you have the freedom to actually explore what interests you the most. You need to set your goals and continue to grow.

When it comes to your career choice, follow your passion. Be ready and prepared to work hard and make sacrifices. It is only natural that we need some sort of tangible reward for our efforts. When you pour countless hours into your work and know as a result of your efforts, you will be able to achieve the respect of your peers, or find a path to your desire lifestyle, you have an even greater incentive to keep working. When you know you've found the right work for yourself, work is inherently rewarding. Ask yourself these questions:

- i. Do I enjoy telling others about my job?
- ii. Would I apply for my current job again, given another opportunity?
- iii. Do I look forward to going to work?

Don't forget to get along with your boss. It won't hurt if you could try to make your boss's life a bit easier.

II. Happy Family Life

Some day, you will build up a new family of your own. A happy family is a family that has a deep sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. Your family should agree on its core values and consistently lives by those standards. The members of the family must define the values together to help bring them together and steer them in times of conflicts. Although the grown-ups in the house should drive the discussion, children can also play a part in framing the family's ideals.

Happy family leans on others. Extended relatives, friends, neighbors, and other networks are crucial to your happiness. Expose children to new ideas and lifestyles and give them a broader view of their roles in their own families, within your extended family, so those values are reinforced even more.

Happy families have the resiliency to face life's challenges and stay strong. Going through difficult time can actually make you feel more connected as a family. Emphasizing the positive can help you find happiness despite any debilitating illness.

Families do better when they have plenty of laid-back time together: whether you're going for a walk, playing music, cooking and eating together, or just a family gathering. The best

way to build happy family connections is simply to enjoy one another spontaneously, setting aside time for unstructured fun. It's not about what you do but just that you're together.

III. Happy Social Life

Friendships are what make life the rich and rewarding experience it is. Every connection you make impacts the person you are and will become, and can have a rippling effect on many of the significant choices you make. Friends can certainly help bring out your originality, and the right ones will always bring out the best in you and accept your shortcomings in turn. Having a solid circle can make for a better quality of life, and can actually benefit your overall health, too. Therefore, it's important to take control of your social life rather than leaving it to others to find you.

Then, how to make the most of your social life?

1. Be generous. Relationships revolve around give and take. As with any other relationship, if you put the time and personal effort into it, the favor will be returned soon without your expectation to get it.
2. Aim at quality and not quantity of friendship. Keep in mind that few quality friends are worth far more than a hundred decent acquaintances. Many people consider acquaintances to equate a greater social life and personality. Communicate with these acquaintances when it calls for it, but don't neglect to focus your time and energy on real and tangible friends.
3. Do not be afraid of rejection. In case, your personality does not match with that of a potential friend, you should not worry about it. Differences are the rich make up of life. Everyone has something to offer someone else.
4. Keep in touch with friends. In this 21st century, advances in technology can make life easier for you to stay connected. It does not mean that you totally avoid traditional way of getting together. Use your judgment but keep friendships strong.

These are just a few points that I propose to you to adopt as guidelines in your life. Strive to make friends and learn to keep them. We all know that friends make life more fun and worth living.

Dear Graduates:

Though the life outside may not be the same as what you experienced within the University, certain core values of campus life can be applied. As AU is an international **Community** of scholars, it always strives to become an educationally **purposeful** community, an **open**

community, a **just** community, a **disciplined** community, a **caring** community, and a **celebrative** community. Each one of you has been treated in a caring way, you are valued as individuals and accepted as members of AU community.

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover” (Brown, 1990).

AU has prepared you to be the **salt of the earth** and the **light of the world**. The quality of your life must constantly be “*a beacon and a support to those who, with us, build the city of men*” (RL.30). Go forth and bear fruits not only for yourself but also for others.

As AU alumni, you are invaluable assets to the University. If you are interested in sharing your experiences and knowledge with our current and future students by providing a profile of a chosen career path or sparing your time to join events such as orientation days and career fairs, we would love to hear from you. Stay in touch.

I wish you all the best that life can offer. May God grant you graces to keep you strong to be able to face challenges in life. May He accompany you and keep you safe.

Congratulations once again. May God bless you always!

Bancha Saenghiran, f.s.g., Ph.D.
President - Rector Magnificus
November 22, 2015