

**Address by the President - Rector Magnificus
Of Assumption University of Thailand
at the 47th Commencement Exercises
Bangkok International Trade and Economic Centre
on Saturday, January 18, 2020**

Chairman of the University Council
President Emeritus
Campus Minister
Administrators and Members of AU Community
Honored Guests
Families, Friends and Acquaintances of the Graduates, and
Dear AU Graduates, Class XLVII

May I take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of those who are present at this graduation ceremony.

1. We have the former chairman of the University Council, Rev. Bro. Surasit Sukchai and Rev. Bro. Dechachai Sripicharn, The Present Provincial Superior cum chairman of the University Council.
2. With us today, Rev. Bro. Pratip Martin Komolmas, The President Emeritus.
3. Other members of AU family, who never fail to come. They are the administrators, faculty, staff and AUSO members including present students.
4. Your senior members, the representatives from the AU Alumni Association, are also here today.
5. Outside the hall, we are aware of the presence of the members of your families, relatives, peers and associates who join us as a part of AU community waiting to congratulate you, to share your joy and happiness, to surprise you with gifts and join you in the celebration.

We are here today to honor you at this momentous occasion, the significant milestone in your life.

On behalf of the University and on your behalf, graduates, may I thank one and all for their good hearts. They have sacrificed their life and time for you in different capacities. With all their smiles and good wishes, they help fill this hall with the warmth of their tender love and care for you. So thank you!

Dear Graduates:

The only one word I can say now is **“Congratulations!”** you have made it. This is the moment of joy and excitement because you have achieved a certain height in academic life. From now on, it is your time to shine.

As you had learned, **life is a journey**. Your graduation is just the end of one cycle in life, at the same time it is the beginning of another cycle. Before, you undertake a journey, you are advised to sit down and plan well for the journey.

Graduation is a time to bid goodbye to the University, to your teachers, to long-time friends, to good times and bad times you have known, a time for **looking on lesson learned**, adventures shared, good memories filled with special meaning.

First, you have to look **behind** you, all your memories. You are not going to rejoice on good things and lament on sad experiences. You look into your past with special meaning. You cannot redo the past but you consider them as your teachers and take them as lessons learned.

Second, you have to look **around** you. The members of your families, your relatives, friends and acquaintances, they are **the world** to you. They support you, they are always with you to encourage you in difficult times, they share with you love, care and laughter. They contribute to your life, they are a part of you. Remain grateful to them and keep them in your heart always.

Remember that **relationship** is one of the most essential things in life. Life itself is a network of relationships with all: Your near and dear ones, friends and associates. Your success in life depends largely on how you redefine your relationships with those who interact with you. You must try to find a model for yourselves – a model that would help you put relationships in perspective. Learn to transform such relationships to your advantage and raise standards.

On the natural plane, there are three levels of relationship, namely one above you, another with your peers, and one with those under you. Do not give importance only to those above you. Relationships with people at the three levels are all important to you. Building up good relationship at any level will make your life better.

Third, you have to look **within** you. There is a saying that goes: “The one person who will never abandon you is **“You.”** You are the key and mainstay of your life. You have your capabilities and potentials with all their strengths and weaknesses. Keep yourself strong and try to develop your potentials so that when everyone abandons you, you can rely on yourself. Learn how to search for **the treasures within**, taking value and sense of worth from inside you. Everything you need is within you.

Fourth, look **before** you. You have to look forward and try to envision your life. Some might say that it is difficult to predict what will happen in the future. Far future, yes it’s difficult to predict. You can look into your immediate future. “A man without vision, will perish,” says the Proverb. You can have your dreams, set measurable goals and make use of the resources you have to work towards the goals you set.

On campus, you had learned **how to think**, to obtain knowledge in a special area to earn your living. You had been exposed to various forms of studies to learn skills necessary to live and survive in the 21st century. In particular, you had been taught directly or indirectly **to form your character**. AU has offered you to master all those knowledge and skills. You were free to embrace them or ignore them depending on your attitudes towards them. College life is meant **to form you as a person** and at the bachelor’s level, you must have a large and strong foundation so that you can go higher later in life depending on the needs of the time and place.

At this point in time, you may find out that you did not put up your best in the past. Something may still be lacking and that is natural with human beings. Do not regret and mourn over it. Instead, just follow the old adage, “Better late than never,” and start setting new goals to meet what you need in life.

To get a degree does not guarantee that you will live a happy life ever after. It will not get you a job or directly increase your earnings simply because you have that degree. In the end, it is about **the attributes** and **skills** you bring to your workplace, and not about the paper you hold. It’s

valuable for the experiences you have, and the accomplishments you achieved while studying. The connection between your educations and your aspirations is essential.

More careers will be automated. People will have to be curious, innovative, and resilient. In today's world, **creativity** is one of the most important leadership skills. Anyhow, "we should not compete with artificial intelligence but instead focus on developing Unique Human Intelligence," Jack Ma said. You were taught to be a learning person equipping yourself with the knowledge that will assist you to cope with changes that affect your life. You must consistently cultivate global competency to meet the challenges of tomorrows. If you continue to do the things as you did yesterday, you'll rob yourself of tomorrow.

My recommendations for you at this time are as follows:

1. Our thoughts.

Our life is what our thoughts make it. A man will find that as he alters his thoughts towards things and other people, things and other people will alter towards him.

I would recommend that you invest a minimum of ten minutes a day to read **positive and inspirational thoughts**. Cancel negative thoughts. Keep away from being gossip mongers, avoid the company of pessimists and surround yourself with positive minded people.

2. Emotional Mastery.

Life without emotions is like food without spices. Therefore, emotion is the flavor of life. Nevertheless, unbridled emotions of a certain kind will lead us to disaster. It is necessary to train oneself daily for emotional mastery.

Mastery means acknowledging the reality of emotions and feelings and giving them the due place they deserve. Ability to stay cool under all circumstances gives enormous power and energy to a person.

3. Self-Reflection.

We generally live to realize the fragility of life that depends on success, popularity and power. They are external factors over which we have only limited control. We are what the world gives us. In this success-oriented world, our lives become more and more dominated by superlatives – highest tower, the fastest runner, the longest bridge, etc.

We are full of our own opinions, ideas, and convictions that we have no space **left to listen to others and learn from others**. We can live creatively when we live it out detached from the results of our work. It is **the awareness of our inner life** without the disturbance from outside that we can discover that **being** is more important than **having**.

My recommendation for you is to get into your inner being and make self-reflection on your life and what you are facing especially in times of crisis.

Dear Graduates:

By this time, you must have learned that AU is celebrating its 50th anniversary (Golden Jubilee) starting from August 15, 2019 – to August 15, 2020.

We are aware of the challenges of the time. As AU is in the quest for **Excellence**, we must review our performance and our plans of action.

This celebration is an opportunity for us to reflect on the past in order to search for AU Future. May I invite all of you, AU alumni, and as part of AU family to participate in this search. Each one of you can help shape AU Future. The point of contact is on AU website.

I repeat once again what I already mentioned earlier. “Do not let the past haunt you and the future fill you with worries.” Even if you do not get any job now, expect for the best and be patient for the mother of expectation is patience.

AU is a Catholic university that bears **Catholic character**. Live on the spirit that AU has tried to instill in you.

Once again, I thank everyone who helps make this ceremony a memorable one for our graduates.

To you, graduates, Congratulations! The future is in your hand. Chart your own destiny and move forward with confidence. May God bless you always!

Bancha Saenghiran, f.s.g., Ph.D.
President – Rector Magnificus
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