

## Principal's Speech on Speech Day 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2015

**Dear Professor Lui Tai Lok, Distinguished Guests, Fathers, Parents, Alumni, Teachers, Friends, Graduates and Students,**

Tonight we are really honoured to have Professor Lui as our Guest of Honour. Graduate of the Class of 1975, he is two years my senior. Both of us got into the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Hong Kong and I can still remember some of the lunches we had together in those good old days. He proved to be the smarter one as he managed to major in what I regard as a very difficult discipline - Sociology - while I just majored in Economics and Political Science. I did take the introductory course on Sociology in Year 1 but had to really struggle through it - being a former Science Student proved more of a hindrance than help. Different disciplines in the Social Sciences do not always get on well with each other but let me share that the Sociology course I took turns out to be one of the most eye-opening one for me, mainly by how it subverts many of our assumptions about life and society, reminding us how much we are fooling ourselves. I am not sure if the movie "Matrix" got its idea from Buddhism or Sociology. Perhaps that explains why what Professor Lui writes and speaks never fail to stimulate and we are therefore very fortunate to have him with us tonight to inspire our graduates with his thoughts!

2014-15 is a memorable and fruitful year for the school. We celebrated our 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary with four major events along with WYK, including the "Walk-with-Wahyanites" Walkathon, the Gratitude Dinner, the first ever Jesuit Education Forum, and the Home-coming Concert at HK Coliseum. Most touching of all is the tribute to Jesuit Fathers who have laid a firm foundation for the school to serve the community through our unique Wah Yan approach to education which is as relevant as ever to the Hong Kong and the world today. May I take this chance to thank our past students, parents, teachers, staff, students and in particular WYOFF for their utmost efforts without which the anniversary events will not be so successful. Through reflecting on and celebrating our legacy, we have gathered strength to go forward with renewed vigor to nurture young men in Hong Kong in the fine tradition and values of Jesuit education so they can contribute to the wider community as **men for and with others....**

...Last year, as we celebrated our history, Hong Kong as a whole was making history, for better or for worse. Yes, 2014-15 was a tumultuous year for Hong Kong and our college was not spared - having had to be suspended for several days. The position of the

school is very clear - we shall do our utmost to protect our mission to be a place of learning based on Jesuit vision, and in keeping with our liberal tradition and our mission, we tried to turn this otherwise unfortunate episode into an opportunity for learning.

I must say that I am proud of how our students conducted themselves during this difficult period despite huge divisions in opinions. I still remember some students (and many of them are from the Class of 2015) came to me respectfully requesting permission to hold a forum. I thought the idea of an open forum was excellent. I said “yes” in principle and we then easily came to compromised arrangements on the details. During the forum, students were courageous to share their views and they were respectful and willing to listen to those holding opposite views. Your conduct is a demonstration of two of our fine Wah Yan traditions - freedom and community.

**Freedom** – because you were bold enough to ponder and express your independent thoughts and also open enough to respect, consider, and even accept opposing viewpoints when they are found to be reasonable.

**Community** – because a strong trust exists among fellow students so that differences in opinion will not jeopardize our bonding based on the underlying assumption that there is something more fundamental, more common among us all. With a strong sense of community, then diversity can actually be a strength, rather than a weakness for the school, for any organization and perhaps for society as a whole.

Recently, a college by the name of "英仁" [from movie 《哪一天我們會飛》 “She Remembers, He Forgets”] has become rather famous not least because it has turned our brother school "co-educational", but also because of its themes and tensions: remembering vs forgetting, leaving vs. staying, pursuing our dreams vs succumbing to reality. I don't think there are easy answers to resolving the many fundamental dilemmas in life. **And perhaps we should not yield to easy answers!** Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living and Sociology as well as Jesuit Fathers have taught me to be reflective. **So keep the dilemmas and the tensions alive through continual reflections – and in so doing keep our learning alive long after we've graduated! It will not be an easy life – no – but I can promise you it will be a deeply meaningful and not a superficial one!**

This year is also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movie “The Sound of Music” and to end my speech, may I share a few lines from one of my favorite songs in this film:

"Climb every mountain  
Search high and low  
Follow every rainbow  
Till you find your dream..."

"...A dream that will need,  
All the love you can give  
Every day of your life  
For as long as you live!.."

Thank you!

By Dr SO Ying-lun  
12 Nov, 2015