

Good evening Mr Ong Chong Tee, our Guest of Honour, Mr Tan Soo Kiang, Chairman of the Board of Governors, Members of the Board of Governors, Mr Mark Lo, Principal, Distinguished guests, Parents, teachers and fellow Saints.

Let me begin by saying that it's good to be back, and although it was 3 months ago that we received our A level results, SAJC never fails to feel like home especially with teachers always willing to make time for us alumni, and friends who are still studying that we can reconnect with.

I am honoured and grateful to have been chosen as Valedictorian.

The theme for this year's College Day is "Great is Thy Faithfulness", and there are many things I feel we can learn from this phrase. To me, it invokes a sense of gratitude, of thanksgiving – of being humble and counting our blessings. It is also about how with this attitude, we can remain steadfast even in the face of adversity.

I still recall the rugby finals last year very vividly. We had just lost the finals against our very good friends in yellow, the team was in tears, all the training and time spent was gone just like that, and our heads hung down - we were heartbroken from the disappointment. But then, we lifted our heads. We heard the sound of singing - at the top of their lungs, with one voice our school was singing for the team, and for each other.

Saints were telling us - "We're proud of you, we're all here for each other". I looked around and saw my brother of 6 years from St.

Andrew's Secondary; he had an ice pack around his knee because of his torn ACL, (and just visualise this with me) - he was "botak" and was crying - eyes were puffy and red, as were his cheeks - he was like a red fish ball. I laughed to myself then and thought "Hey maybe things aren't so bad. I still have the school behind us; we still have a whole village behind us. There's so much more to be thankful for. Now it is time to pick ourselves up, learn from our mistakes, and move on to the next challenge that awaits us. It was a reminder of God's faithfulness, that even in loss, we still have so much to be thankful for.

With this belief that God will still provide, know that we have to keep our heads up in the face of defeat. Even in tough times, there is still hope, there is still a fighting chance - as long as you choose to press on.

For the J2s especially! You have already come thus far, don't give up. For those that did not do as well as you wanted, focus not on the defeat, but on what has gone well. Learn from what might have gone wrong. Learn from the experience. Allow it to motivate you to push on even further.

At the end of the day, you will make it - trust me. You will survive another day, no matter how tough it gets. Believe that in the end, God will carry you through, so keep your spirits up and keep on going.

It is exactly because of this that we cannot rely on our own strength, and that we have been blessed by God's faithfulness.

For the Class of 2015, remember how hectic it was at the start of last year, with orientation, preparation for the SG50 pre-u seminar, and to top it all off, BT1s? It was definitely overwhelming for many of us who were involved in all these activities, especially the Student Council, but at the end of the day, we all pulled through and did well in serving the College.

I believe that we could achieve this because we put the focus away from ourselves and relied not on our own strength, but sought help from those around us to do what had to be done.

I recall having to juggle the rugby season, H3 assignments and examinations - there were assignments, lectures on top of rugby training and school work. It was definitely a very tough period of my JC life. But I had friends who would help me take down notes and set aside time to teach me, I had teachers who would close one eye when my eyes were about to close. Looking back, if I had had to rely solely on my own strength, I definitely would not have survived. I had to trust that God would see me through, and He did so by blessing me with family, teachers and friends who supported me all the way.

To the teachers that have supported us Saints through this journey, thank you! Thank you Mdm Ang for your patience and understanding, Ms Choy for giving advice on scholarships despite not having taught me, Mr Sia for giving us room to question and

learn so much more outside the classroom and challenging us to think for ourselves – this list goes on and on.

All this leads me to believe that at the heart of each Saint is the desire to serve and pull others through adversity; this willingness to be there for each other no matter what. That is what it mean to be part of this “one family unbroken”.

Look to your left and to the right. These are the people that you can depend on in times of need; they are Saints.

But we should use their example, and our gratitude and thanksgiving to inspire us to do even more.

When we go out into the world, we will realise that out there, unfairness and injustices persist. As an individual, we may not be able to change the world, but we can at least try to change the life of one individual, and that is what matters.

We can and we should extend the care and concern our friends and teachers in St. Andrews have shown us to others. We can and must remind ourselves that with all the blessings we have received, it is now time to carry it forward, bringing with us the faith that others have placed upon us, as well as the faithfulness of God; that He will see us through.

“No one is here by chance”. God has honed our talents and blessed us with gifts these past two years for a specific purpose and reason.

This one of the many lessons I have learnt in my time in St. Andrews.

From junior school to junior college, so many talented Saints still come back to serve the school. We have so many devoted teachers willingly setting aside time on weekends for consultation despite their commitments. And even now - as an alumnus - teachers still set aside time to catch up with me. I recall coming back just a only a month ago to firm up the details for today with Ms K. She asked me about my classmates, asked how there were and I could sense the love shown that could only be found in a family. At that point I learnt what one family unbroken meant, this sincerity and genuine care that is just part of this St. Andrews spirit.

My friend in camp asked “Eh Jotham, I want to apply for university next year but I need to ask Mr Stanley Ong (his form teacher and a teacher of mine) for referrals... But I’m very paiseh, scared to ask him again because he already did 3 for me this year”. I told him, don’t worry, I’m sure he will be more than willing to help you”. Really, it is this through spirit of service that younger generations of Saints can be blessed.

It is this spirit of service that has blessed me with the many opportunities to learn and grow. Many, many blessings from junior school to junior college that have made me who I am today.

I am grateful for all that St. Andrews has done for me, and so I share this honour of being the Valedictorian with everyone who is

part of the St. Andrews family.

I'd like to thank ALL the teachers for their dedication in making us who we are today. It is all done due to your hard work and guidance.

Thank you Mrs Lee Bee Yann, for your leadership and compassion. Your legacy as our Principal will be remembered. Thank you to Mr Kevin Pang and Ms Patsy Neo as well, for your service in making the school a better place.

Mr Mark Lo, Mrs Koh Chern Ee and Mr Bernard Chan, thank you for taking on the baton in leading the school. I wish you all the best as you serve St. Andrews Junior College.

I also want to thank our parents for your unwavering support throughout our college life, especially for the food provided during our night study sessions. The non-teaching staff has also been a true blessing to the St. Andrews family, providing a conducive environment for us to excel. Finally, I would like to thank the Board of Governors for their efforts in making all of this possible, for without your support we would not be where we are today.

To the class of 2016, remember these words as you continue to work hard to achieve your goals. Remain steadfast in the face of adversity, drawing strength from those around you who are always willing to carry you through. Count your blessings and stay humble, so that will remain grounded in your values. Keep the St. Andrews spirit close to your heart even after you graduate, allowing it to guide your thoughts and actions in the future.

Never give up, for I believe that each and every one of you here has the capacity to do well, for you have a whole village standing by your side.

Saints, with this, I proudly say, Up and On.