

“Glorify Thy Name”

Good evening Prof Alfred Huan, 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.

It feels good to be back home!

I am deeply humbled and honored to be chosen as Valedictorian, to stand before you today and speak on behalf of the class of 2016.

The theme for this year’s College Day is “Glorify Thy Name”.

Just last year, I recall how unprepared I felt in the hall before my BT2 papers and thinking to myself, “Well... all for the Glory of God I guess!” And...here I am before you now.

So to me to it means that in whatever we do, whatever we achieve, whatever success we experience, it is all for and because of the Glory of God.

In St. Andrew’s, our culture is recognized by many by the ever familiar “Saints’ Spirit”. Even after being in the Saints family for 12 years I still cannot fully comprehend what the Saints Spirit is.

To the class of 2016, remember how unnerving it was when we transited from J1 to J2, having to take up leadership positions in our CCAs, prepare for orientation, re-intensify our training for the sports season as well as have the omnipresent

pressure of examinations? Each of us had this big ball of commitments that definitely took a toll on our academic performance and drained our energy.

But what was encouraging was that despite the falls and falters, we Saints were able to get back on our feet and press on. We found ways to navigate through the darkness and find light at the end of the tunnel. We embodied tenacity – pushing on despite difficult circumstances.

Does this show us what the Saints' Spirit is? No. Because anyone can do that on their own.

I recall last year's rugby season when I started to miss lessons. It was tough, really tough. Late night lecture catch ups online, trying to focus in class the days after matches. As many of us would know, it is never enjoyable to play the 'catch-up game', right? Thankfully, I have selfless friends and teachers who supported through these tough periods in simple ways like setting aside time to teach me and fill in the gaps in my understanding.

Look to the person on your left and right. Trust me, they will be the ones you will look to when you're in need or in trouble. This is what makes us special, we are part of a big and close knit family, able to support and uplift each other.

This is exactly what I believe the Saints' Spirit entails; to stand **firm** in adversity and stand **up** when fallen, to have a heart for your peers, to create a home where we Saints belong.

Remember how I said I didn't comprehend what the Saints' Spirit is? Maybe, it isn't something to be understood,

but rather something that comes with the warmth and love from Saints around you.

Maybe this is what a part of the Saints Spirit is – Glorifying the name of the Lord by doing our best in whatever we do and as we help our peers along the way.

It seems appropriate therefore that I take this opportunity to thank my brothers and sisters in this College. Thank you all for being someone that I or anyone of us could turn to when in need. Thank you for providing warmth and comfort when anyone of us was feeling down. I could not have achieved whatever I have in these 2 years without the faith, belief and support of this beloved bigger family that that we are blessed with.

I remember the first day in class with 15S02, when 24 of us shy and reserved secondary school students quietly took down our civics tutor Ms Chong's contact details. We were all so unsure of what was to come; whether we could cope with the stress and if we would make friends. Thankfully, I was blessed with warm classmates who were not only motivating, but also caring and selfless.

I remember the days on the field with my teammates. "Sweat more in training to bleed less in battle." I am honored to have been able to play alongside champions and shed blood, sweat and tears together. I'm thankful for these brothers I met 2 years ago.

We are indeed One Family Unbroken. And that we are Glorifies the Lord!

To the J1s, I understand it can be a rough change from your secondary school to junior college. However, in the Saints family, I'm sure you will find comfort and reassurance in the simple fact that no matter how tough life can be as a JC student, you all are on this journey together. And that you can count on your fellow Saints and your teachers. No matter what problems you encounter know that you have a family behind you. I am confident that you, like I and your seniors did, will find at SAJC a place you always call home.

To the prize recipients today, congratulations on your outstanding results and commitment to your CCAs. You have reaped what you sown, and I commend you on your effort and hard work, exemplifying the College values, and I am happy for each and everyone of you. However, I hope that you are aware of the pillars that have willingly uplifted and supported you throughout your journey here in St. Andrew's.

I recall the effort my teachers put into preparing for classes, sacrificing their lunch breaks just to help us clear our doubts about any problems we had. I recall how Ms Chong and Mdm Huang would stay behind after school just in case we needed help in anything – even going the extra mile to book classrooms for us to have a conducive environment to study in! (Especially during the deadly haze periods)

I am thankful that Mr Er would take the effort to organize study sessions for us before training so we could catch up on lessons and clear doubts in Mathematics. I am grateful for the teachers including Mr Melvin Lim who came down for our training and matches to provide the admin and moral support, and of course, most importantly, to make sure we got home in one piece.

At times, we may have felt frustrated at their constant nagging and scolding, but at the end of the day, we know that – like parents – they had our best interests at heart. I also remember how our teachers initially, made more effort than we did in arranging consultation sessions! This shows how much love, care and concern our teachers shower upon us and that is why I am eternally grateful for all the teachers we have in this College.

And then there are our unsung heroes: the non-teaching staff. Without them, the floors would not have been as clean; without them, we would not have had clean tables to eat on; without them, we would not have had working printers to print our Project Work assignments. Without them, the College school would not function as well as it does. I am so thankful that they were willing to sacrifice their comfort for us and I'd like to say a big thank you to them.

Also, how could I forget the mentors of our school? They were the ones providing us with Milo and sweets. They were the ones actively engaging with us in PE lessons. They were also the ones who organized the annual Life Concert! They refueled us with the much needed energy we needed to continue this journey in College. Thank you very much for being generous and bursting with the energy to motivate us through trying times.

It goes without saying that I also want to say thank you Mr Mark Lo, Mrs Koh Chern Ee and Mr Bernard Chan, for always working toward the betterment of the College and us Saints.

And to our parents - your unwavering support throughout our College life, especially for the food provided during our night study sessions, has truly been a blessing. You have done so much in 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.

Saints, would you put your hands together so we can show our appreciation to ALL of them!

Alas, 12 years of being in the St Andrew's Family has passed and never once have I regretted being part of it. It may seem like a time for departure, but to me, things are just getting started. My relationship with St Andrew's will last a lifetime, with me using what I've learnt in the past 12 years for the rest of my life.

This then is the Saints' Spirit. To know that our perseverance, our friendships and the support we can count on from each other is what has made us, guided us and will continue to guide us. And that in living this Saints' Spirit we Glorify His Name!

To the J2s, I am aware that stress is building up day by day. I fully understand the uncertainty and fear! But you have a choice – to let anxiety defeat you or use it to propel yourself forward.

Press On. Have faith. Know that you're not in this alone, as your teachers and friends will always be beside you, if not behind you pushing you on. In the end, you will reap the fruits

of your labor and it will be worth the while. But remember to let loose occasionally - treasure your time and enjoy the ride.

To the class of 2016, as we move forward to pursue our different passions and dreams, do not forget the people that stood by you in times of trial and tribulation. Those friendships will be the ones that will last. Whether in university, army or work in the future, it is inevitable that we face hurdles and obstacles that hinder our progress. It is important, then, to be optimistic and press on. Know that we can still seek out the people we met here in St. Andrew's for help.

Why? Follow me on this...

Because of the strong bonds formed.

Because we are One Family Unbroken.

Because we join with one acclaim.

Because we are One Heart

Because we are One Voice Uplifting.

Because we Glorify His Name.

Indeed, Glorify His Name Saints. Whatever we do, and wherever we go, let us continue helping each other, and keep the flame burning brightly ever.

On the behalf of the class of 2016, thank you SAJC for this memorable, enriching and incomparable ride of 2 years.

UP AND ON!