

Congratulatory Address

Congratulations to all our new students on your enrollment. Welcome to Sophia University. I would also like to extend my congratulations to your families and guarantors. Welcome to the Sophia family.

Sophia University was founded by the Catholic Society of Jesus. The Society of Jesus was founded by seven companions, including Ignatius de Loyola and Francis Xavier. These men first met while living and studying as boarding students at the University of Paris, one of the most outstanding universities of the time. When Xavier began his studies at the University of Paris, he enjoyed sports more than academics and tended to focus on his ambitious dreams. The turning point of his life came when he met Ignatius de Loyola, also a Spaniard. Ignatius, a knight from the Basque Country in Spain, had begun his studies at the University of Paris as a mature 38-year-old student after a great religious experience. He was assigned to the same dormitory as Xavier. At first, Francisco was not attracted to Ignatius, but being older, Ignatius continued to patiently encourage and support Xavier, finally breaking his mask of worldly ambitions and self-centered world. Ignatius challenged him with the words of the Bible:

“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?” (Mark 8:36-37).

Although he was ignored at first, it is said that these words eventually influenced Xavier, who had been preoccupied with his own success, to change into “a man who lives not for himself, but for others.” Xavier later left Europe and came to Japan, where he wished to establish a university like the University of Paris in the Japanese capital, so that the Japanese people could continue to challenge themselves in higher education. Sophia University is the fruit of Xavier's dream.

To all of you who will become family members of Sophia University, which is celebrating its 111th anniversary this year, I hope that you will earnestly pursue the academic studies that you have chosen. However, no matter how much of an expert you become in your field of study, what good will it do you if you lack humanity? Sophia University engages in research and education guided by the educational philosophy of "for Others, with Others." Sophia University's educational philosophy is rooted in the beliefs of Ignatius de Loyola. However, this educational philosophy needs to be correctly understood in today's world. The "Others" that Sophia refers to are "Others" in the social context. In other words, when you graduate from higher education as more empowered individuals, you should be especially conscious of "Others" in the world whose human dignity is being deprived, whose human rights are being violated, and those who are being oppressed. You are to be agents of a better world. That is why Sophia University offers educational programs that enrich not only students' professionalism, but also humanity and application skills. In addition to this, by fostering language-focused communication skills and application skills (educated knowledge and liberal arts), one can come closer to the development of true wisdom.

Studying at university is not only for your own career advancement. It is more about having

high aspirations. You can contribute to society's vision of a better future. Higher education will equip you with the knowledge and skills to positively impact society. Through education, you can create change that improves the lives of others, especially the social Other, or the oppressed, be it in research, innovation, or social initiatives.

I invite you to enjoy a rich and productive university life, first by engaging with faculty and staff, then by exposing yourself to our educational philosophy, founding spirit, and anthropology studies, and classes, and by taking advantage of the expertise and variety of opportunities available in each of our faculties and departments. Sophia University offers a remarkable environment. Please keep this in mind as you build yourself.

Amid the turmoil of global society, many citizens have been victimized due to misjudgment by leaders. War, conflict, and social discrimination continue to this day.

Let me ask you again, "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" If you are happy, your life is wonderful indeed; but if other people are happy thanks to you, it is even better.

The world still needs good leaders. I would like to introduce one keyword or spirit cherished by Ignatius and Xavier to all of you who seek higher education at Sophia, so that you can become a part of building a better world. It's a Latin word called *Magis*. *Magis* means "better" in English and "yoriyoi" in Japanese. That means we strive to be better, in learning, and in action and in all our endeavors. To all of you who will be studying in the Sophia University environment, let's aim to become better people and a better society, both as individuals and as a community, with the spirit of *Magis*.

I would like to conclude my congratulatory address by wishing you God's blessings, guidance, and true wisdom in your life and studies.

Congratulations again.

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Sali Augustine

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