

Opening Address

To our new students, congratulations on your enrollment at Sophia University. I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to parents and everyone concerned. It is my great pleasure to see all of you here today to share the joy of entering Sophia University.

Your enrollment at Sophia University and the Sophia University Graduate School can have various meanings. I believe that the most direct reason for your enrollment in Sophia University is motivated by your desire to deepen your expertise in the academic field that you wish to study. I admire your attitude of seeking to further explore the subjects that have interested you in your studies in elementary school, junior high school, and high school. Today, respecting your high motivations, I would like to share with you another perspective of the significance of your entering Sophia University.

The ultimate goal of your studies is not to collect and accumulate knowledge. Universities do not exist only for that purpose. Sophia University provides you with a learning environment from the viewpoint of human growth. On this campus, you will be constantly asked you to think about how individuals accomplish their personal growth, how relationships between individuals and others should be, how you should seek your role in the relationship between individuals and society, and how you perceive the weak and vulnerable members of society and stand by them. When you try to find your personal answers to each of these questions, you will find that it is not a simple task. I myself have not yet been able to define answers that are unique to me. I have come to several general conclusions do not believe that they are unique to me.

When we address these questions, we must think about human existence, learn about the structure of society in terms of economy, politics, welfare, culture, etc., unravel the history of human society, recognize the issues in the society in which we live today, and learn how they should be solved. I am sure that you already understand that it is not possible to find these solutions based solely on one's own interests.

I would like to challenge all of you, who have gained the opportunity to learn freely as undergraduate or graduate students, to see how close you can come to finding the answers to these questions by exerting your individuality as you develop your expertise, pursue deeper knowledge, and hone your communication skills. We call Sophia University's campus environment a Global One Campus. With more than 400 partner universities around the world and international students from over 90 countries, we have a global environment here. Students, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds, including cultures, religions, political systems, and languages, come together here; and therefore, discussions take place in such diversity. Of course, it is important that you choose to

expose yourself to this diversity to be a part of it. Exposure to differences will give you new motivations for growth, new values, and new perspectives on life. I believe it will also provide you with various hints regarding the issues that I mentioned earlier that you will need to address over the course of your lifetime.

“One Campus” in “Global One Campus” refers to our environment where all faculties and graduate schools are located on one campus. This ensures not only diversity in terms of the backgrounds of our members, but also academic diversity. As we seek to develop our expertise, we will encounter situations in which we will need or refer to approaches from other disciplines. You will experience the breadth of academic disciplines described by words such as “cross-disciplinary,” “interdisciplinary,” and “multidisciplinary.” This will not only provide you with clues for solving problems but will also be of great help in empowering you with your own unique wisdom. In this way, our Global One Campus is an exceptional environment. Furthermore, you will have wide access to challenging opportunities such as study abroad, training, classes offered by international organizations and private companies, dialogue with national and international dignitaries, and advanced internship opportunities in Japan and overseas.

We hope that you will take advantage of the environment at Sophia University, exposing yourself to different ways of thinking and enhancing your own experiences in a diversified environment, guided by your own design. Dealing with time turns into an exciting experience when you become a university student. How you spend time will be motivated or driven by decisions made with an overwhelmingly larger degree of freedom. This is because you will be able to explore ways of spending your time that are neither an extension of nor complementary to your daily routine. For example, you can experience exposure to a world that is 180 degrees different from the environment that you are used to. You can also make repeated attempts to break through walls that are slightly out of reach when you extend your hands. The failures that may occur in this process can be tremendously rewarding. These experiences will surely give you the foundation of a unique and rich person.

Earlier, the Director of Catholic Jesuit Center (*) introduced a passage from the Book of Matthew. As represented by the words “like a child,” or “humble yourselves,” we are always called to have intellectual humility. Throughout our lives, we must remember how to face the world's emerging knowledge and be prepared to learn with humility and a humble attitude. Human growth begins with the humble attitude we take on. Please take this opportunity to discover your own style of continued learning.

Sophia University's educational philosophy of "For Others, With Others" is the spiritual foundation that we unwaveringly pursue and respect, even in our ever-changing society. As you continue to learn and grow as individuals, or as you assume roles in society, I hope that you will always remain keenly aware of this spirit. I would like to conclude my remarks by wishing you all the best in the learning environment offered at Sophia University and in your personal growth as Sophians who will walk with Others who are placed in a vulnerable position.

Congratulations on your enrollment at Sophia University.

April 1, 2024

Yoshiaki Terumichi

President, Sophia University

(*Morning Session : the Director of Catholic Jesuit Center

Afternoon Session : Antonius Firmansyah,SJ, Catholic Jesuit Center