

Message of the Chancellor on the Occasion of the Entrance Ceremony
Autumn 2024

My Dear New Sophians, let me convey my sincere congratulations to every one of you, on your successful entrance into Sophia University and its graduate programs. It is with great pride and joy that I welcome you into the Sophia family. Let me also share my joy with your parents, guarantors, and all others who have been supporting you in different ways.

As we embark upon this new academic year, I am reminded of the prolific history and solid foundational principles our University. Sophia University was instituted on the basis of the conviction that higher education can foster an integrated or whole-person growth, which enables us to move ahead as human beings with ever higher academic excellence based on the educational spirit, For Other, With Others.

Permit me now to share with you a story that captures the spirit of Sophia University. Over forty years ago, a faculty member of ours who was a Jesuit priest from Spain, used to take student groups to his native land as well as to other developing nations. The purpose was to offer them exposure to other cultures, as well as to begin a sort of service-learning program that was suitable to those times. He was aware that his students had a thirst for knowledge and a passion for social justice, which were the factors that had originally led them into Sophia University. As part of their service-learning program they made it a point to visit rural villages of the developing nations, so as to acquire a diversity of experiences. There they encountered a range of human issues, including children of great ability who nevertheless lacked education. Such exposures and experiences deeply inspired many of them, to the extent that some students went on to alter their own way of living. What they beheld was the transformative power of education in the lives of the children, who had limited resources, but were yet possessed of boundless potential.

Stirred by this experience they returned to Sophia with a rejuvenated sense of purpose and rallied their fellow students and faculty members to start a scholarship charity fund for underprivileged students in two Asian countries. They declared: “we want to give children who cannot afford primary education due to economic reasons and lacking the opportunity to receive education to expand their future possibilities. As fellow human beings, we want to provide support in a way that will allow us to deliver aid with our own hands until the very end.” Such thoughts were evoked within them. By their mutual efforts they were able to offer educational openings to numerous individuals, who otherwise would have been denied access to higher education. This beacon of hope continued throughout the past 49 years, and it continues to evoke smiles in the faces of many children in those countries.

This story is just one of many, that exemplifies the values that Sophia University holds dear. We believe in the power of education to break barriers and transform lives. We believe in fostering a sense of global citizenship and promoting social justice. We believe in the values of empathy, compassion, and respect for all individuals, regardless of their milieu or circumstances.

To the new students joining us today, I urge you to embrace the spirit of Sophia University, being capable,

competent and compassionate persons “For Others” while being with them. Jesus told his followers according to the Gospel of Luke (6/36), “Be merciful, just as your Father in heaven is merciful.” He asked them, “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Or if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.” But being academically and personally capable “for Others” in our context means a special commitment for those who need your support.

Be curious, be compassionate, and be courageous in pursuing your dreams. Take advantage of the diverse learning opportunities that await you, both within and outside the classroom. Engage in meaningful conversations, challenge conventional wisdom, and dare to think differently. As we commence this new academic year, let us remember that we are not here merely to acquire knowledge, but also to become responsible global citizens who can exert a positive impact on society. Let us strive to uphold the values of Sophia University, and carry forward its noble legacy.

To parents and family members of our new students, I wish to affirm that I am grateful to all of you for entrusting the education and well-being of your loved ones to us. We are honored to have your support, and we will do everything in our power to ensure that your children receive the best possible education and guidance, during their days at Sophia.

I once again extend my warmest felicitations to all new students joining Sophia University. Do embrace this opportunity with open hearts and minds and let us together create a world that is more just, more compassionate, and more all-encompassing.

Thank you once again, and my greetings to all of you.

September 21, 2024
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