

Congratulations on your graduation. I would also like to extend my hearty congratulations to your parents and all concerned. On behalf of Sophia University, I would like to express my sincere respect and congratulations to all of you who have completed your degrees.

As I have just said, each of you has accomplished the degree that you pursued. In a sense, this is an accomplishment, it naturally involved a process. I believe that you have achieved your degrees through a process of following your beliefs, planning, and overcoming challenges. A degree awarded by a university or graduate school is conferred under the responsibility of the respective university, which is approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). We at Sophia University have a social responsibility for the quality of our degrees. It can be said that there is a very close relationship of social responsibility between the university that confers the degree and you, the recipient of the degree.

How has the process of obtaining your degree been for you? I believe that it is by no means a story limited to just the few years since you entered university or graduate school. I believe that there are various factors that lead to this degree, ranging from the knowledge and experience you have acquired in your life to your own humanity, beliefs, and aspirations. What you were endowed with at the time of admission must have provided the strength, energy and fertile soil to enhance your academic expertise at university or graduate school.

This is because there must have been "something" there to enhance your academic expertise. That "something" is nothing other than what you were at that time, that is, when you entered Sophia University.

In this way, when you graduate from a university or graduate school, it means that you are at the entrance of the next stage of your life. This is the moment when you are asked what you are endowed with now. How far have your academic expertise been enhanced by your studies, research, and experiences at Sophia University? Has your engagement with various disciplines and cross-disciplinary approaches given you a multidimensional perspective? Have your days spent on a diversified campus, helped you not only to understand diversity but also to realize the need for it? Has your enrollment in Sophia University, with a founding spirit of "Sophia, Bringing the World Together" helped you in fostering both global and local perspectives? Spending time on the Global One Campus, unique to Sophia University and its Graduate Schools, what beliefs have developed within you? When you think back on your goals and motivations for learning at the time of enrollment, have you been able to fully meet those aspirations? How would you rate yourselves on these questions? I do not expect a perfect score. I do not expect a perfect score, and I do not even think that a perfect score is possible.

What you have achieved and your confidence today, is a testament to our trust in you and our expectations

of you. In human development, the higher the learning experience, the higher the hurdle one unconsciously sets for oneself. Researchers are not satisfied with the contributions their research has made to society. Leaders of international organizations are not satisfied with the current state of society. Leaders of corporations are always eager to improve the value of their company's existence in society. When I look at these examples, I am always reminded that the goals of great leaders are not merely numbers to be achieved, but also a vision of themselves and society based on their principles, and that the vision they pursue constantly evolves into something new and noble.

Earlier, Fr. Firmansyah of the Catholic Jesuit Center introduced a passage from the Book of Mark. It tells us that those who lead should be servants to all. I feel that this can be translated to the leaders I mentioned earlier. As we move closer to our own goals, we are also enhancing our own way of being in service to others. I urge all of you who are highly educated and who will contribute to the future of society as leaders to turn your ears, eyes, and hearts to those who are in a weaker position while you shine in your efforts. I believe that true leaders are people who try to practice this mindset as they update their own goals.

In order for you to fulfill your own lives, or to feel satisfaction when you eventually look back on your lives, please always keep in mind the presence of others, of the socially vulnerable, as you fulfill your respective roles. I sincerely hope that Sophia University's educational spirit, "For Others, With Others," will continue to be the spirit that you pursue as you seek new and noble changes in your lives.

Congratulations on your graduation.

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Yoshiaki Terumichi
President of Sophia University