

2025 graduation message of chancellor, Sali Augustine

Let me extend my warmest congratulations to each graduating student of Sophia University. Today marks a significant milestone in your journey. I would like to share this joy with your parents, guarantors, faculty and staff, and all other benefactors.

Sophia University, true to its founding spirit, has long stood at the crossroads of wisdom and compassion, reason and faith, global citizenship and personal responsibility. As you now go forth from this university, you do so not only with a degree but with the formation of the whole person, and values based on our foundational principles “Sophia bringing the world together”, i.e., a world of peace, justice and solidarity, and our educational spirit “For Others, With Others”.

It is said, “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”. This is a famous quotation from the bible (John 12:24) . This is used as an analogy for contributing to many people through self-sacrifice. These words express the central teaching of Christian Humanism which is the foundation of our spirit for others and with others. Just as a grain of wheat falls to the ground and rots, giving rise to new shoots and ripening ears of wheat, your values and actions may be interpreted as freeing people from their bondages and giving them new life. These words teach us the importance of a spirit of self-sacrifice and living for others. This implies wisdom and compassion. But please remember, first of all one must be capable in order to make self-sacrifice. Education and formation at Sophia University have empowered you to be capable and compassionate people. Now, be confident that as graduates, you are called to be grains that are capable leaders, that bear much fruit.

However, the world you are entering is complex and often divided, marked by uncertainty, yet filled with unprecedented opportunity. An awareness seems to be growing that humanity is living through a profound change of epoch. The consequences of this change sometimes take us by surprise. Uncertainty is gaining ground in personal and social life. Uncertainty then sparks fear, provoking defensive reactions that turn our gaze toward an idealized past that never really existed. Fear tempts us to reject the newness of our time. Therefore, more than ever, our societies need leaders with intellectual clarity, moral courage, and compassionate hearts—you are called to be such leaders.

This year 2025 marks the 80th year of the devastating atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and 80 years since the end of World War II . It also is the 80th year of the establishment of the UN. All of these events are reminders of the fragility of our people and institutions, our despair and at the same time hope that we can overcome, through our commitments. All of us who live today, benefiting from the 80 years of postwar peace, bear a profound responsibility: to ensure that such a terrible war is never repeated.

As graduates of Sophia, it is important to be aware of the crossroads of reason and faith which helps us in the search for Truth. *Reason and Faith*. Please remember the importance of balancing reason and faith. 'Reason' which is the backbone of our academic training, helps us to seek truth, without bias. In this age of bulk information with intended fake news and polarization, critical mind and discernment to find truth are important. 'Faith' is more relevant today in a world of volatile and uncertain society. Look at the suffering people because of war and conflict. When many are overwhelmed by the fear of losing everything, even life itself, or by a cynicism that twists the truth and a polarization that suffocates democracy, your formation calls you to accompany others with wisdom and hope, nurturing vision, resilience, and solidarity. You must be a witness of Hope in today's world. I think, faith in yourself, faith in others, and faith in the transcendental give us unwavering hope.

As you embark on your new stage, please remember that Sophia University is always here to sustain and inspire you. Let me pray for God's blessings on each of you that you may continue to embody the spirit of Jesuit education, making a positive impact on the world and leaving a lasting legacy.

Thank you

September 19, 2025
Augustine Sali, SJ
Chancellor, Sophia School Corporation