Assumption University’s 38th Commencement Exercises at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC), Bangkok

The 38th Commencement Exercises for Assumption University was held at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC), Bangkok, on January 22, 2011 between 08:00 and 12:00 hrs.

The Assumption University’s 38th Graduating Class included 40 Doctoral Graduates, 1034 Master graduates and 2,983 Bachelor Graduates and 1 graduate with a diploma in Teacher Education.

Among the graduates was the current Ambassador from Timor Leste Mr. Joao Freitas de Camara obtaining his Master of Management degree in Organization Development. The Ambassador thus becomes the first graduate from Timor Leste for Assumption University.

Eight graduates from the Assumption University-Ho Chi Minh University of Foreign Languages and Information Technology collaborative MBA program also received their Master degrees in the presence of the HULIT President, Mr. Hyunh The Cuoc attending the Commencement Exercises as a Special Guest of Assumption University.

The Graduation Ceremony was marked with solemnity and grandeur. The highlight of the morning was the Commencement Address by the President, Rev. Bro. Dr. Bancha Saenghiran, f.s.g. The text of the President’s Address is reproduced in this issue of the newsletter for the readers’ interest.

Address by the President of Assumption University of Thailand at the 38th Commencement Exercises, Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC), Saturday, January 22, 2011

Chairman of the University Council, President Emeritus, Campus Minister, Members of AU Community, Honored Guests, Families and Friends of the Graduates, Alumni, and Dear Graduates, Class XXXVIII.

On behalf of the AU administration, it is my honor and privilege to welcome all who are present here continued on page 4...
You should be grateful to the university’s faculty members and supporting staff, who, in many ways, have educated you and have helped you become a new person. Perhaps at times, you might not have liked the way they worked with you. But be assured that what they did was always done with good intentions and with your best interests in mind. A CEO recently defined the role of a leader as someone who asked “people to do what they do not want to do and asking them to do it enthusiastically” (Ghosn, 2010, as cited in Dautrey, 2010, p.1). Clearly, our faculty members have acted so to advance your education and their actions reflect their commitment, care and dedication.

One way to measure the extent of your achievements is to look back on what happened to some of your classmates since you first embarked on your AU journey. Some dropped out, some delayed graduation, taking longer to fulfill their academic requirements, and some just disappeared. But you have made it! Congratulations!

The perseverance, purposefulness, and resilience which you have had to summon at times to reach this point will serve you well in the future, a future filled with opportunities and challenges. In this respect, what is awaiting you is no different from what faced previous graduates. Like them, you will be confronted with obstacles, problems, and crises. And like them, you also undoubtedly will encounter positive circumstances and be blessed with lucky turns of events. What is constantly changing, however, is the nature and magnitude and complexity of the challenges and opportunities ahead of you.

What Are the Challenges Facing You Today?

We have just entered the second decade of the 21st century. The first one brought its share of fateful events, some man-made, some caused by nature. Such defining moments are part of the stark reality facing you and will help shape your future.

Globally, you have witnessed food scarcity, energy depletion, environmental disregard and its climate change and growing natural catastrophes; you have seen excesses result in a near-collapse of the financial system. The financial tremors resulting from the US-induced sub-prime crisis can still be felt in many parts of the world and there are predictions that warn us of the possibility of another slump. The recovery remains fragile and you will thus face uncertainties as you begin careers that may be marked in their early stages by deepening afflictions.

Domestically, internal political conflicts remain a threat to the peace and development of the country. In addition, the rapid appreciation of the baht against the US dollar over the past few months, as well as the flashfloods that wrecked havoc on many parts of the country, particularly in the Northeast, continue to have an impact on the economy and thus on well-being of many of our citizens. And as the ASEAN Economic Community 2015 looms, regional competition is intensifying. Although this may be cold comfort to you, these problems, however, are not specific to Thailand.

Take China. In 2009, 6.1 million students who graduated from China's universities, already faced a formidable challenge as they competed for jobs during an economic downturn. By 2011, state sources predict that the number of Chinese university graduates will reach a staggering 7.6 million each year. Creating the conditions for them to find jobs has become a top priority for the Chinese government. In the USA, about 2.4 million students will graduate with bachelor’s and associate degrees as part of the Class of 2010 (Petrecca, 2010). Given the sluggish recovery there, their attempt to find employment promises to be quite challenging, all the more as the world’s economic epicenter gradually moves eastward.

Such developments will be likely to have an impact on your profession...
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The conference, discussed current issues on education, particularly "The Role of Universities in Fostering Catholic Principles in Public Life". A special part of the conference highlighted the 400th year anniversary of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila.

No matter where you come from you must play your part in the solution to the myriad of problems, even if that part seems small to you. These will vary from country to country. In Thailand, for example, the "6 days, 63 Million Opinions" survey of the country conducted by the National Statistical Institute identified the main issues that must be tackled to alleviate economic hardship, solving political problems, ending corruption and improving the quality of life.

As you will have realized by now, my purpose today is not to share a few hints about how to get a job or become rich, but to deepen your understanding of the world, to serve the cause of wisdom, and to inspire you to respond creatively to the many problems that the world faces. And, this goes well beyond the workplace. So, allow me to briefly reflect on your life outside the office.

Life Outside Work

Even though you will spend much of your days at work, what you bring to the workplace is largely shaped by your attitude outside the office. The following guiding principles in life are recommended:

1. Be ethical: Ethical behavior is fundamental to long-term success in life as well as in business. Be firm, consistent, honest and fair in your dealings! Do not bow to greed! Act out of integrity! Develop a code of conduct that spells out the principles of ethical behavior you expect others to have in their dealings with you and adhere to it.

2. Be disciplined: Self-discipline is one of the keys to personal greatness. With self-discipline, the average person can rise as far as and as fast as his or her talents and intelli-
3. Cultivate friendship: It's challenging to make friends and equally challenging to keep them. Your friends become your second family. There are things in life that can only be shared with your closest friends. Friends are part of your support system.

4. Share and help others: One of the key components of success is our inclination to apply all our talents to the best of our ability and share them with others, at work, in our community, and with friends and neighbors. Develop a belief in giving back to others! See the good in others and learn to give and do it gladly! Learning to share your time and resources with others will help you reach your full potential as a truly caring and considerate human being.

5. Be true to yourself: Being true to your values and beliefs is critical to your happiness and well-being and to facilitating the transformations you will undergo during life. Have confidence in yourself, in your competencies and capabilities and believe that who you are does indeed make a difference!

6. Strive for balance: Keep your work and personal life in balance! You must make time for your family and guard your personal time no matter what. Too many activities will deplete you and weaken your relationships. Understandably, there are times when you have to put the institution ahead of your personal life. A work/life balance, however, does not mean being in perfect balance all the time. What matters is that you recognize when you are out of balance and restore it.

These Principles Are Grounds for Optimism

Although I started this speech on a somewhat pessimistic note, outlining the afflictions of the past decade, there are also clear reasons to remain hopeful; the main one being you and your resolve to be ethical, self-disciplined, true to yourself, generous and considerate. AU has provided you with good moral and intellectual foundations on which to build. Make the most of them. This is where your ability, as an individual, to make the world a better place comes in and this is what I want you to remember from this graduation.

This will also make your life meaningful. The writer Mitch Albom in Tuesdays with Morrie well captures the essence of my message to you:

So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep, even when they are busy doing things they think are important. This is because they are chasing the wrong things. The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning. (Albom, 1997, p.43)

Another reason to remain confident in the future is that while human beings may have a destructive streak to them, they are also capable of altruism, self-abnegation, courage and excellence. Examples abound. The successful conclusion to the operation to retrieve 33 trapped miners from the collapsed San Jose gold and copper mine, in Chile is one; the building of a seven billion euro tunnel the world's largest, from the Italian city of Milan to Zurich is another. Closer to home I can point out, for example to the
57 km. high-speed rail link between the cantons of Bern and Valais, which will open in 2017. Each of these illustrates human greatness as exemplified in our great story of technological breakthroughs that attest to mankind's greatness.

Such conquests, however, often followed long periods of trial and error and failures. Likewise, in the course of your life; there will be times when you will do well, and times when you will fail. But neither your doing well nor your failing are the yardsticks by which success should be measured. If you fail, then start over again. Keep on trying! And be proud of yourself through every step of the way! Who you are does make a difference and I want you to know that.

Recall the quotation inscribed on the wall in the hall of the John Paul II gymnasium at Suvarnabhumi campus: "the purpose of sport is not to win but to participate and educate ...[it] should serve as an inspiration to you to struggle to live on and move ahead in life". That says it all.

Another reason yet for you to look ahead with optimism is the English education you have received at AU. A recent Bangkok Post article, addressing the short supply of qualified candidates in 2011, states in part: "Especially short in supply are candidates with good English-language ability" (Prachyakorn, 2010, p.B2). This is no doubt good news for you! But, this is also a reminder of the need for you to keep developing your knowledge – and improving your linguistic skills – because jobs are becoming more temporary. And even if you keep the same job throughout your career, new circumstances will keep arising, requiring a capacity to "learn to learn". This will require, as already noted, having self-discipline and moral and intellectual integrity.

Dear Graduates:

Two quick points before closing this address! First, you will no longer show up for class. But even though your life will no longer revolve around AU, you will still be part of it. And, as soon-to-be alumni and members of the AU family, your role is to help to chart the future of AU and be part of its transformation as a sustainable institution. Working as a team in an "esprit de corps", establishing participative channels for all of you to share your thoughts and ideas is precisely what last year's celebrations marking AU 40th anniversary were about. As all of us put our ideas together, we will take a leap into the future together certain to achieve a truly extraordinary 5th decade of excellence and beyond.

Second, in addition to being an AU team member, each of you has also now become an AU ambassador to the world. So, please behave accordingly and becomingly and do come back to your alma mater whenever you can!

Congratulations and best wishes to all of you once again! May God bless you and guide you in all your undertakings!

Rev. Bro. Dr. Bancha Saengthiran, f.s.g., Ph.D., President
January 22, 2011

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**The Grand Opening of the Café Saint Martin at the Suvarnabhumi Campus on January 11, 2011**

With a significant number of Assumption University administrators, faculty, staff and students present, Rev. Bro. Dr. Bancha Saengthiran launched the Café Saint Martin at the Suvarnabhumi campus on January 11, 2011.

The President commended the initiative, pointing out the Rev. Bro. Dr. Prathip Martin Komolmas had shared so much with the university community, so that the new Café named after him, in the precincts of the Martin de Tours School of Management and Economics, and with the fore view of the ornate fountain, was yet another creative contribution by Bro. Martin which must be remembered.

Earlier, commenting about the new fountain commemorating the great composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Bro. Martin spoke of how he had so much wanted students to be able to relax in the midst of their studies and to listen to music while chatting over a cup of coffee or snack. Bro. Martin also spoke of the opening in March or April of 2011, the Hallowed Hall of Great Thinkers, which he said was being completed very soon. Bro. Martin intends to place within the Hallowed Hall of great Thinkers...
The Trojans Night Party

The Assumption University Alumni Association also known as ABACA (more recently AUAA) organized "The Trojans Night" an Annual Congratulations Party for all Au Graduates of Class 38 on January 23, 2011 at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center. The event, a dress up formal dinner attracted ore than 1,750 graduates, Au Faculty Deans, lecturers and special invited guests. The gala dinner featured a fashion dress contest through which Mr. Trojan and Miss Trojan were identified and awarded top attractive prizes. Speaking on the occasion the President of Assumption University, Rev. Bro. Dr. Bancha Saenghiran reminded all graduates that responsibilities in the world today involve personal integrity, ethical business practice and care for the environment. The President Emeritus Rev. Bro. Dr. Prathip Martin Komolmas in his message said “AU graduates like the Trojans, have to be tough and they should fight to win over the battles of life”. Further, quoting GK Chesterton, the renowned English essayist, Rev. Bro. Martin said “The fires of Troy burned, but they never consumed the Torjans”. Likewise, Assumption University graduates must show their prowess and resilience in the world at large.

The pictures represent some of the Highlights of the evening with personalities from a broad spectrum of the ABAC Society.

The Apostolic Nuncio to the Kingdom of Thailand on a Visit to Assumption University

H.E. Archbishop Giovanni D’Aniello the Apostolic Nuncio to the Kingdom of Thailand visited Assumption University on February 24, 2011, to familiarize himself with the University and its academic programs. The Apostolic Nuncio was accompanied by Msgr. Marek Zawelecki, Counselor at the Nunciature who was on his last visit to Assumption University before departing to Singapore to take up a post there, in a Nunciature being newly established.

In his prior posting to Bangkok (1989-1992), Archbishop D’Aniello had developed a rather good understanding of the Church and its educative mission in Thailand. He was, however, on the visit to Assumption University overwhelmed by the scope and scale of the university’s development.

The visit by the Apostolic Nuncio was an opportunity for him and Assumption University to reflect on the Catholic nature of the university and the catholicity of its representation among the Faculty and students.

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Assumption University and BLCU Mark 10 Years of Collaboration at a Gala Evening

On March 17, 2011 a congratulatory celebration was organized at the Grand Ballroom of Grand Hyatt Erawan Hotel, marking the 10th Anniversary Commemoration for the collaboration between Beijing Language and Culture University and Assumption University of Thailand. The President of BLCU, Prof. Dr. Cui Xiliang and his delegation attended the event. Mr. Sanan Anakubol, an illustrious ACC Alumnus, having provided the sheet anchor for BLCU and Assumption University to be able to collaborate constructively, played a significant role of bringing the evening together.

Visit by Mrs. Sixakeko Yengame of the High Commission of Lesotho, Malaysia

Mrs. Sixakeko Yengame of the High Commission of Lesotho, Malaysia visited Assumption University on the afternoon of February 24, 2011 to familiarize herself with its Academic programs and facilities. The educational environment in Lesotho needed to be augmented by educational experiences for the youth in other countries such as Thailand and so, Mrs. Yengame was visiting Assumption University to consider it as one possible institution in South East Asia where the Lesotho students could study.

The Lesotho Higher Commissioner expressed her high satisfaction on her visit and anticipated closer working with Assumption University in the future.

Commemoration of the Portuguese-Siamese Treaty

The Night Commemorating the Portuguese-Siamese Treaty of 1820, organized by the Embassy of Portugal in Thailand, at The Siam Society on February 25, 2011 was attended by representatives of Assumption University. Prior to the lecture by two Portuguese experts on the Treaty of 1820, Dr. Ioan Voicu, (extreme left in the photograph) Visiting Professor to Assumption University’s Graduate School of Business and Mr. Glen Chatelier (extreme right) posed for a photograph with Dr. Ninnat Olarnvoravut, the Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (center right) and Mr. Anton Colasco, Ruanrudee International School in Bangkok. Both Dr. Olarnvoravuth and Mr. Colasco are alumni of Gabrielite Schools in Thailand, Mr. Anton Colasco is a descendant of Portuguese settlers in Thailand.
Mr. Wu Yinghui Ph.D. & Prof. Minzu University of China visiting Assumption University. Mr. Glen Chateller, Director Office of International Affairs welcomed the visitors at Suvarnabhumi Campus on February 11, 2011.

MBA Freshman Seminar at Royal Cliff Beach Resort, Pattaya on February 12-13, 2011.

A Group from the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) school from the Philippines, visiting Assumption University. Mr. Glen Chateller, Director Office of International Affairs welcomed the visitors at Suvarnabhumi Campus on February 15, 2011.

Mr. Jungchoon Lee, Deputy Manager of International Cooperation, Yeungnam University, Korea visiting Assumption University at VIP Room, Assumption Hall on February 10, 2011.

A Group of Students from Angar University of Norway visiting Assumption University at A52 Room. Assumption Hall, Hua Mak Campus. Rev. Bro. Dr. Bancha Saenghiran, President, welcomed the visitors on March 9, 2011.

Michelle Willoughby Director from Australia Catholic University, visiting Assumption University. Mr. Glen Chateller, Director Office of International Affairs welcomed the guest at the VIP Room, Assumption Hall on March 11, 2011.
Mr. Mick Petersman visited Assumption University, Mr. Glen Chatelier, Director Office of International Affairs welcomed the visitors at VIP Room, Assumption Hall on March 4, 2011.

Research Institute of Assumption University (RIAU) visited Atma Jaya Catholic University, Indonesia, to attend a meeting on Policies and Practices in the Field of Drugs Use/Abuse

On 17th - 19th March 2011, Dr. Preecha Methavasaraphak, Director of the Research Institute of Assumption University (RIAU) and Dr. Kosum Omphornuwat attended the 2nd Project Meeting at Atma Jaya Catholic University, Jakarta, Indonesia. The research project "Studies on Policies and Practices in the Field of Drugs Use/Abuse: The Catholic University in Dialogue with Political and Social Actors" is funded by the Center for Coordination of Research International Federation of Catholic Universities (CCR - IFCU), France. Participants in the 2nd Project Meeting included delegates from Assumption University (Thailand), Atma Jaya Catholic University (Indonesia), Stella Maris College (India), University of Santo Tomas (Philippines), Universite Saint-Joseph (Lebanon) and Intercambios Asociacion Civil (Argentina).

The meeting aimed at sharing between the teams the research progress at the theoretical and conceptual level. It also allowed the teams to jointly discuss on the methodological options chosen for the fieldwork phase.

Dr. Kosum Omphornuwat
Research Institute of Assumption University (RIAU)
different from the Thai style of learning. Apart from the language class, they also provided culture classes both in the forms of lectures and workshops. For instance, in the “Introduction to Japanese Culture” class, there was a workshop for the Tea Ceremony, wearing traditional costumes and so forth. All the culture classes made me understand Japanese society and people much better. After I understood these, my life in Japan became more enjoyable.

In one year of studying here there was a lot to learn about the Japanese culture and the ways that Japanese people do things. I went to the countryside of Kyoto, for home stay and to learn about rice planting. I did a part time job where I could use language in the workplace and I also experienced how Japanese people work. I think this would be useful in my future career. Moreover, I joined a festival, wearing “Yukata” and went around the city dressed in a Japanese attire. These are experiences I would never have found had I not been an exchange student.

Many things came to my life while I lived in Japan. Some were good, they made me happy and smile. Some were bad which made me weep and quite stressed to cope with these problems. However, everything here taught me about life and widened my vision. Living in Japan was a very valuable moment in the many moments of my life.

I am grateful that I had the chance to participate in this program in which learning Japanese Language and Culture, and representing Thai culture to foreigner friends, was indeed fulfilling. After I returned I made use of knowledge and experience from Japan to shape my future life and bring good impacts for my university and my home country.

Panita Tantaksinanukij, the Department of Business Japanese, Faculty of Arts.
Exchange Study Program at Ryukoku University, Japan

In my opinion every student who is studying a foreign language needs to go to the country of its origin at least once. I for one wanted to go to Japan where Japanese is used so I can improve the language skills that I learned at Assumption University. Finally, my dream came true. I was selected to be an exchange student to Assumption University’s strong partner, Ryukoku University, Japan. It was one year which I will never forget.

I arrived at Ryukoku University one week before the semester started in order to familiarize myself with people and places. I stayed at the foreign students dormitory called “International House Tomoiki”. In Tomoiki, students from all over the world gathered with the same purpose, which is to study the Japanese language and culture. So I realized at that moment, that besides the Japanese Culture this was a good opportunity for me to live and learn in a society with diversity. On the first day of school I had a chance to attend the entrance ceremony at which all Japanese students were also present. It made me feel like I was not only an exchange student, but I was Ryukoku University student too. After the entrance ceremony the classes started, I was in the Japanese Culture and Language Program (JCLP). Everyone in the class was grouped in a particular language skill level. At the beginning of the semester, it was hard for me to adapt myself to the Japanese style class which was quite strict and serious. Moreover, most of my classmates came from China and Korea; they certainly had more advantages because of their mother tongues which are similar to Japanese. So, if I wanted to catch up with the class I had to seriously prepare and review the lessons. Even when I felt tired, and wanted to give up many times, there were some good points which motivated me to study. JCLP has teaching methods which make me understand the content easier. For example, in Kanji Class (a type of written Japanese Character) the teacher gave us techniques to remember the characters. This makes learning Japanese Kanji quite diff...