

### **23<sup>rd</sup> Congregation (FH) – Valedictory Speech by CHOW Chuk Yuk Justin (MAEP)**

Dear Professor Chu, members of the Faculty, fellow graduates and honorable guests. Good afternoon. I am Justin Chow, a graduate of the Master of Arts in English for the Professions this year. It is an immense honor and privilege to be standing here to speak to you on behalf of the graduating class.

Three years ago, I had never dreamed that I would have a chance to give a valedictory speech again. Thank you so much, PolyU. Thank you, my dear classmates, professors, all the staff and my family members for giving me courage and support to walk to this important milestone in my life.

Time passes like a dream, our postgraduate studies have culminated in this graduation ceremony. At this moment, I feel quite overwhelmed by a number of feelings relating to the past few years. I recall times of joy, but also times of challenge and difficulty.

When I was taking the MAEP programme, “Drama for Language Learning” was the most interesting module for me. It not only equipped me with the skills of using drama to learn English, but also gave me a chance to perform on stage. The learning process was really fun. My partner and I were fully devoted to the group project and our drama performance was surprisingly applauded by our teacher and classmates. I could hardly forget this happy memory. Hey Venus, please accept my apology again for having asked you to rehearse outdoors with me in the PolyU when it was drizzling. I did not mean to make you catch a cold that day.

Being part-time students was not easy in anyway. Even though we were already exhausted after day-time work, we had to rush to class with an empty stomach. After class, sometimes we even had to dash to the library to scramble for books. Having returned home late, we still had to burn the midnight oil to read reference materials or write our thousand-word assignments. When time was running short for us to press the “Turn-it-in button” to submit our assignments before the close of play, we were in grave panic. Worse still, we were disheartened when receiving the returned assignment with an unsatisfactory mark. Fatigue, stress and frustration are undoubtedly our unpleasant feelings. However, without these experiences, how could we become tough, strong and wise? Now, we have faith in ourselves and no longer fear to face any difficulties in the future. Today, we fully understand the meaning of “no sweet without sweat” and we are proud of our harvest.

Studying at PolyU in fact is a wonderful journey. It is filled with challenges, excitement, happiness and appreciation. Although the teachers are firm and demanding towards our academic pursuits, they are knowledgeable, devoted and passionate. Whenever we encounter difficulties in our studies, they are generous in giving us guidance and support. Outside the classroom, they are like our mentors, close friends or family members.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to Professor Stephen Evans. He was a learned scholar and a loving teacher. Although he relapsed at the beginning of the year, he insisted on finishing all the lectures. During the lessons, a smile often played across his lips and his passion to teach never declined. We were deeply inspired by his professionalism and devotion to his students. What we learnt from him was not only English language skills, but also his perseverance and positive attitude towards life. Although he has left us, his spirit always lives in our hearts.

Today is a big day for us. We are here to mark the completion of a chapter in our lives; to recognize our many achievements; to acknowledge the support of our teachers, family and friends; to remember and celebrate the journey we have taken to get here; and to express our dreams for our future. Although we shall bid farewell to each other after this ceremony, I do believe that we shall keep in touch, stay connected and continue to support PolyU.

Last but not least, I would like to dedicate a part of my favorite song “Memory” to you and I have changed some lyrics to express my feelings when studying at PolyU.

Here we go:

“Midnight, not a sound from the pavement, everybody was sleeping, and I studied alone.

In the lamplight, I felt so cold and my eyes were so strained, but I believed, I could get through.

Memory, all alone in the moonlight, I can smile at the old days, life was beautiful then. I remember the time I knew what happiness was, ‘cause I could learn, at PolyU.

Every teacher was so kind, and students supported each other. We strived for knowledge, to increase our wisdom, and then we are ever growing.

Daylight, we must for the sunrise, we must go for a new life, and we mustn’t give in. When the dawn comes today will be a memory too. I wish you all, to have the best!”

Congratulations my fellow graduates!

Thank you!