Valediction – Natalie Chan (Speech Day 2005-2006)

Good evening, Prof. Tsui, Bishop Tsui, Mr. Li, Members of the School Council, Ms. Mau, teachers, Ladies & Gentlemen, fellow students.

Those were the days. As I stand here tonight as a F.7 graduate, the years spent in my alma mater are vivid in my mind’s eye, in my feelings. I can remember every single day in St. Mark’s. How can I not? The first day here was a day of excitement, and as a 12-year-old kid filled to the brim with energy, I just couldn’t help but get hyper. I literally could not stop myself from trying and sampling all the new things in my new school. At the end of that very first day, I went home totally exhausted. I remember my mother asking me what had happened.

So, what had happened? A new phase of my life had begun. Since then, it has been 7 solid years of bonding with St. Mark’s. We F.7 graduates have shared 7 years of our lives in this school, overcoming difficulties and hurdles together. It was only a few months ago when the biggest moment came. The whole form was waiting for our AL exam results that morning. The tension was impossibly unbearable, but bearing it together made it possible. Yes, during the 7 years here together, we went through tears and laughter, and many, many memories. We may not remember the number of tests and exams we took, how many trips we made to the library, how many mornings we spent in the Chapel in silent prayer, how many times we yawned in class… Well, we don’t remember, but memories did gradually pile up. It’s like weaving a web of retrospection into one another’s lives, and it is a very extensive web of very wonderful experiences and very sweet memories.

As times goes by, we have come to the end of this chapter, but this web keeps us tightly bonded together. What we have learnt her is not only the Pythagoras Theorem or other equations, or town planning or the situation in Iraq, but also the virtues, morals and beauty of the human race. For all this, please accept our thanks from the bottom of our hearts for the altruistic nurturing of our teachers, who are like parents to us. As St. Markans, we have 2 homes – one where our fathers and mothers are, the other right here, at Aldrich Bay, Shaukeiwan, St. Mark’s School.

We are graduating, but St. Mark’s will remain our home away from our home forever. We are no longer little girls and boys, and the big world out there is beckoning us. There are opportunities. There are challenges. There are temptations. The preparation at St. Mark’s has equipped us for both the good and the bad it has to offer. We will continue to climb, but in case there are bitter pills in the process, we have your refuge, my dear alma mater. Because of St. Mark’s, we’ll have the courage to swallow the bitter pills, and move on.

On we move, but 5 years, 10 years, 30 years or 60 years later, we will still chew the cud of the abundant school life here. The people, the things, the campus – everyone and everything – will stay in our hearts and minds.

Thank you, St. Mark’s. We love you.