**Graduation Ceremony based on the theme of Hope**

*Hope is that thing inside*

*us that insists, despite*

*all the evidence to the*

*contrary, that something*

*better awaits us if we*

*have the courage to*

*reach for it and to work*

*for it and to fight for it.*

Barack Obama

**Opening Hymn**

**Opening Prayer**

God our Father we know only too well that every ending creates space for a new beginning to emerge—a seedbed of potentiality and hope for something other, something better and something full of potential. It gifts us an opportunity to establish new habits, new relationship or maybe just a new start in life. Tonight we are conscious that is also means saying good-bye to what we have known and loved. Be with us God in this transition so that we can achieve our full potential and so be filled with hope.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Presentation of Symbols of Hope**

***Introduction:*** As we have looked back on our time here in …………….. School/Community College we have noticed many moments, many people, and many opportunities that filled us with hope. As we draw towards the end of our time, and as we face into our examinations, we are well aware of how a sense of hope can, and will sustain us. As we look to the future we do so with a touch of anxiety, yet we are filled with hope for what our lives might be.

1. We present a class photo of our class. There is no doubting that we have had our ups and downs along the way. That said, we have found great hope in the friendships we have shared and in the friends we have made. There was great hope and encouragement in knowing that we are care for, and that others were looking out for our good.
2. We present a school jersey. This is to represent all the extra-circular activities we have been involved in during our time in the school. What fun and enjoyment we have had on the sporting fields, in the school yard and in the corridors. How sport, fun and comradery lifted our spirit and regularly filled us with hope.
3. We present a book of examination questions. We are conscious that we are about to commence our final examinations. There is no doubting that this can be a daunting prospect. We know from experience that by supporting each other we can instil a belief that we can do it. Not to talk of the hope we have in knowing that once the examination are completed, a whole new world opens up before us.
4. We present a CAO application and a draft CV. For some of us the next phase will mean going to college, for others the commencement of an apprenticeship and for more of us employment. We hope that whatever path we take in life may we achieve our full potential. May we find fulfilment. May we make a difference by bringing hope and promise to the places and people we encounter.

**Conclusion:** We give thanks for the people who have journeyed with us during our time in this school. We acknowledge this evening those whose belief in us filled us with hope and enthusiasm. We give thanks for our parents and guardians, our families and friends. Tonight we also give thanks for our teachers and the management and staff of our school. Those who created a positive and hope filled school environment for us and who instilled in us a sense of what we could achieve and what was possible in life.

**Liturgy of the Word.**

**A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (12:31-13:8.)**

Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am going to show you a way that is better than any of them. If I have all the eloquence of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever. Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people’s sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. Love does not come to an end.

The Word of the Lord.

**Psalm (Sung)**

**Alleluia (Sung)**

**Gospel:** (Luke 24:13-35)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

**Homily**

**Prayer of the Faithful.**

***Prayer Leader***: In faith and hope we present to God our prayers for the Class of 2023.

1. We pray for our School. Tonight we give thanks for all the opportunities, the encouragement, and the myriad of possibilities we received here. May our experiences in this school community be a source of inspiration to us as we commence the next phase of our life’s journey. Lord hear us.
2. We pray for the Class of 2023. As a class we have overcome so much, not least a pandemic. May our resilience and the way we stuck by each other be a constant reminder of how much is possible when we seek and accept the support of others. Lord hear us.
3. We pray for the teachers, the staff and the students of this school. We hope that our presence among you has been a positive one. As we leave this school we pray that all that is good about this School/Community College will continue to flourish and grow. Lord hear us.
4. We pray for our families. We are so conscious of all that our families do to make so much possible for us. We ask God to bless our families and to reward them for all the love and kindness they show to us. Lord hear us.
5. We pray for those who have been part of our school journey but who are not with us tonight. We remember (students/staff who have passed away). May they rest in the peace of God’s love in heaven.

*Prayer Leader*: We make these and all our prayers with great hope for we believe that you are a God who loves and care for us. Through Christ our Lord.

**Reflection**

**Hope**

"Hope looks for the good in people  
instead of harping on the worst…

Opens doors where despair closes them…

Discovers what can be done  
instead of grumbling about what cannot…

‘Lights a candle’ instead of ‘cursing the darkness’…

Regards problems, small or large, as opportunities…

Cherishes no illusions, nor does it yield to cynicism…

Sets big goals and is not frustrated  
by repeated difficulties or setbacks…

Puts up with modest gains, realizing that  
‘the longest journey starts with one step’…

Accepts misunderstanding as the price  
for serving the greater good of others…

Is a good loser because  
it has the divine assurance of final victory."

**Concluding Prayer:** God our Fatheron this graduation night we give you thanks. As these students prepare to commence the next phase of their life’s journey, may they always have hope in their hearts. Enabled them to always see life’s opportunity. When they are tempted to curse the darkness may you, prompt to see sources of light and love in their lives. Fill them with Christian hope, a hope that never disappoints because it continually assures us that we are loved for who we are no matter what happens in life. We asks this through Christ our Lord.