

Address and interaction with the Students  
Foundation Day Celebrations of  
**St Thomas College, Palai**  
6 September 2012

***“Education empowers you to fly towards the mission”***

***“When you wish upon a star,  
Makes no difference who you are  
Anything your heart desires  
Will come to you”***

I am delighted to participate in the Foundation Day Celebration of St Thomas College, Palai. My greetings to all of you. I am happy that the Diocese of Pala has created number of educational institutions from lower primary to graduation and PhD in this region and has facilitated empowerment of youth of this region with quality education. People of Kottayam are grateful to the gesture of Father George Thomas Kottukapally in providing 50 acres of land for the creation of this college in 1950s. We need such great givers for developing the society. I congratulate the pioneers both present and past who have laid a robust foundation for quality education in St Thomas College. During the last six decades, the college has generated large number of alumni who are occupying important position in public and private sector institution in India and abroad. When I am with you, I would like to share few thoughts on the topic ***“Education empowers you to fly towards the mission”***.

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam  
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Since I am in the midst of students and faculty members of St. Thomas College, I would like to share my experience with teachers in educational institutions.

### **Importance of Perseverance**

I had the privilege of studying in Schwartz High School at Ramanathapuram where the medium of education was Tamil. My teacher Iyadurai Solomon, was an ideal guide for an eager young mind that was yet uncertain of the possibilities and alternatives that lay before it. During my stay at Schwartz High School, Ramanathapuram, my relationship with him grew beyond that of teacher and pupil and I learnt how I could exercise enormous influence over the events of my life. Teacher Iyadurai Solomon used to say, “To succeed in life and achieve results, you must understand and master three mighty forces- desire, belief and expectation.” Iyadurai Solomon, who later became a Reverend, taught me, that before anything I wanted to happen, I should have a desire and work intensely. If one works intensely, it is absolutely certain that the desire will be fulfilled. This is a great message for all the students in that age.

### **Teacher with parental affection**

Later while I was in St Joseph’s College, I was fortunate to be taught Shakespeare by Rev Fr TN Sequiera. People used to say even Shakespeare will be moved if he hears his lecture. It was true. He was also our new Hostel Warden. Every day

Father Sequiera used to make a night visit to the hostels. It was called Father's visit. One day, I recall. my room-mate M Sachithanandam was not well. When Father Sequiera met him he asked him what was the problem. He told him that he was having headache. For immediate relief, Father took aspirin from his long robe and gave him the tablet. With concern, he immediately sent him to the doctor. On the next day, Father TN Sequiera visited my next room-mate Abraham and gave an Inland letter to him, since he was not writing to his parents. This was a beautiful experience and learning for me. I am sure, the students of St Thomas College will also be pursuing their education in such a beautiful environment.

Now let us see few great personalities, who are always remembered and celebrated by humanity for their unique contribution to society.

### **Unique You**

Dear friends, Look up, what do you see, the light, the electric bulbs. Immediately, our thoughts go to the inventor **Thomas Alva Edison**, for his unique contribution towards the invention of electric bulb and his electrical lighting system.

When you hear the sound of aero-plane going over your house, whom do you think of? **Wright Brothers** proved that man could fly, of-course at heavy risk and cost.

Whom does the telephone remind you of? Of course, **Alexander Graham Bell**.

When everybody considered a sea travel as an experience or a voyage, a unique person questioned during his sea travel from United Kingdom to India. He was pondering on why the horizon where the sky and sea meet looks blue? His research resulted in the phenomena of scattering of light. Of course, **Sir CV Raman** was awarded Nobel Prize.

Do you know the scientist who is famous for Chandra Limit which describes the maximum mass (~1.44 solar masses) of a white dwarf star, or equivalently, the minimum mass for which a star will ultimately collapse into a neutron star to black hole following a supernova. Two of his students got the Nobel Prize before him. It is of-course the famous Nobel Laureate **Chandrasekhar Subrmaniam** .

Friends, there was a great scientific lady who is known for discovering Radium. She won not one, but two Nobel Prizes, one for physics and another for chemistry. Who is she? She is **Madam Curie**. Madam Curie discovered radium and she was doing research on the effect of radiation on human system. The same radiation which she discovered, affected her and she sacrificed her life for removing the pain of human life.

Do you know the cosmic rays scientist transform into institution builder of institutions like Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad – Indian Institute of Management

Ahmedabad and Indian Space Research Organisation, of course he is the visionary **Prof Vikram Sarabhai**.

When I described to you young friends, these historical events, you all jumped. The scientist, technologist, warriors and great human being, who created the event, are unique personalities. Young friends, can you join such unique performers of scientific history? Yes, you can. Definitely, you can. Let us study together, how it can be made possible?

Friends, I have, so far, met 13 million youth in a decade's time. I learnt, **“every youth wants to be unique, that is, YOU! But the world all around you, is doing its best, day and night, to make you just “everybody else”**. At home, dear young friends, you are asked by your parents to be like neighbours' children for scoring good marks. When you go to school, your teacher says “why not you become like the first five rankers in the class”. Wherever you go, they are saying “you have to be somebody else or everybody else”.

***The challenge, my young friends, is that you have to fight the hardest battle, which any human being can ever imagine to fight; and never stop fighting until you arrive at your destined place, that is, a UNIQUE YOU!***

### ***How to achieve unique you?***

Dear friends, when I see you all, I am thinking how you can achieve what you envision in your life?

How does achievement come? There are four proven steps; having an aim in life before 20 years of age, acquiring knowledge continuously, hard work towards the aim and perseverance to defeat the problem and succeed. In this connection, let me recall famous ancient verses **“I will fly”** of 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian Sufi poet Jalaluddin Rumi:

### **I will fly**

- *“I am born with potential.*
- *I am born with goodness and trust.*
- *I am born with ideas and dreams.*
  - *I am born with greatness.*
  - *I am born with confidence.*
  - *I am born with wings.*
- *So, I am not meant for crawling,*
  - *I have wings, I will fly*
  - *I will fly and fly”*

My message to you, young friends, is that education gives you wings to fly. Achievement comes out of fire in our sub-conscious mind that “I will win”. So, each one of you assembled here and elsewhere, will have “Wings of Fire”. The Wing of Fire will indeed lead to knowledge which will make you to fly as a Doctor, or an Engineer, or a scientist, or a teacher, or a political leader, or a bureaucrat or a diplomat or you would like to walk on the Moon and Mars or anything you want to be.

### **Happy home profile**

Friends when I see a large number of students, teachers and parents, I thought of sharing few traits that are needed for

a beautiful home. A beautiful home (we have 200 million homes in India) emanates from four dimensions. One comes from spiritual home, second comes from mother's happiness, third comes from transparency of the home and the fourth comes from providing a clean and green environment. This combination of four traits indeed brings out happy home. Let us study, how we can achieve that.

**Spiritual Home:** Friends, let us look at a small family home with father, mother, a son and a daughter, or two sons or two daughters. In this home, both parents earn. I visualize in this little home, a little home library with at least ten great books and in this home parents have to inculcate reading habit among their children by reading books during breakfast or during dinner. The whole family should be together atleast at one meal so that they communicate and discuss freely. When they are all together on the dining table, the mother or the father takes a book from the home library narrates a story of ethical and moral values where the children participate in the discussion and offer their comments. Such a reading habit triggers the child to read the book in detail and collect more information on such stories which put into practice in their day-to-day life. Some children may also go to the school and discuss such instances with other children which can benefit a larger community. This is how the seeding of reading habits can be inculcated among the young minds. In addition, I

visualize a little prayer room where every morning or night the whole family, including children prays and offer their thanks to the Almighty for receiving blessings.

This family get-together becomes a store-house of knowledge with ethical values and systems for the children over a period of time and such children are always engaged in carrying out their responsibilities in a spirit of excellence which comes out of dedication and self-esteem of being the best in whatever they do.

Let us study the second dimension of the family.

**Mother Smile Mission:** Dear young friends, I am going to give you a mission that will lead to a happy home. Will you friends repeat and promise me, you will follow suggestion that I am giving. Let us start, young friends,

From today onwards, I will make my mother happy.

If my mother is happy, my home is happy.

If my home is happy, the society will be happy.

If societies are happy, State will be happy.

If State is happy, the nation will be happy.

How many of you friends, are willing to do the great mission of making the mother happy.



**A transparent home:** Friends as I said, we belong to a society of 200 million families. Every family has four members; father, mother, two daughters or two sons or one son and one daughter. There is a crying need in the nation to develop a transparent society, a corruption free society. Dear young members, I have a mission for the youth of the nation, that is the daughter or son of the family. Friends, every one of you assembled here will know, after all corruption emanates from a few homes. It is estimated, 30% of our Indian homes are corrupt. That means approx 60 million houses may be corrupt. In a corrupt home, imagine, son or daughter can sense it and persuade the father not to become a victim of corruption using their love and affection. My conscience says, compared to any law against corruption, definitely this movement of the youth against corruption, will be extremely effective. How many of you young friends, will offer yourself to be a participant of such a great mission of making the home transparent if it is not.

**Green Home Mission:** friends, today there is a constant climate change in the universe. Deforestation, industrialization and transportation emitted carbon-di-oxide has caused hole in the ozone layer, leading to increased heating of the planet earth. This is the major cause of flood and draught. If the youth of the nation decide, they can definitely change the situation. Every Indian must take an oath that he will plant

and nurture atleast one tree. One fully grown tree absorbs 20 kgs carbon-di-oxide and emits 14 kgs of oxygen. During our life time, if we plant 10 trees and nurture them, we will have over 10 billion trees. These 10 billion trees can definitely contain the climate change problem. Hence, I would suggest, each one of you to plant a tree and keep your home and the neighbourhood clean. Green home means, not only the planting of trees but keeping the house and environment clean. You should not dump any garbage on the streets. You should take an oath that, you will not only the home clean, but also the street.

Dear friends, when I see the youth, I would like to discuss with you, what type of India are you going to inherit in next one decade time. If you understand, then certainly everyone of you has a role to contribute for the developed India vision 2020. I visualize India in the year 2020 to have the following distinctive competitive profile. Now, let me give my visualization of India during the year 2020.

**Distinctive profile of the nation**

1. A Nation where the rural and urban divide has reduced to a thin line.
2. A Nation where there is an equitable distribution and adequate access to energy and quality water.
3. A Nation where agriculture, industry and service sector work together in symphony.

4. A Nation where education with value system is not denied to any meritorious candidates because of societal or economic discrimination.
5. A Nation which is the best destination for the most talented scholars, scientists, and investors.
6. A Nation where the best of health care is available to all.
7. A Nation where the governance is responsive, transparent and corruption free.
8. A Nation where poverty has been totally eradicated, illiteracy removed and crimes against women and children are absent and none in the society feels alienated.
9. A Nation that is prosperous, healthy, secure, devoid of terrorism, peaceful and happy and continues with a sustainable growth path.
10. A Nation that is one of the best places to live in and is proud of its leadership.

### **Integrated Action for developed India**

To achieve the distinctive profile of India, we have the mission of transforming India into a developed nation. We have identified five areas where India has a core competence for integrated action: (1) Agriculture and food processing (2) Education and Healthcare (3) Information and Communication Technology (4) Infrastructure: Reliable and Quality Electric power, Surface transport and Infrastructure

for all parts of the country and (5) Self reliance in critical technologies. These five areas are closely inter-related and progressing in a coordinated way, leading to food, economic and national security.

I am sure, all the empowered students assembled here will become active partners in the realization of our visualization of India in the year 2020. You have to carve-out an area in which you have passion and you would like to contribute.

### **St Thomas PURA**

As you are aware, 750 million citizens of India live in 600,000 villages spread across the country. For inclusive development of India, socio-economic and cultural development of these villages is vital. I have suggested creation of 7000 PURA complexes of various types based on the topography and location. PURA envisages (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas) provision of physical, electronic and knowledge connectivity to the rural clusters with a minimum mass leading to economic connectivity. I would suggest the students and teachers of St Thomas College select the rural complex consisting of nearly 50 villages with a population of around one lakh in the neighbourhood of the college and transform that complex into a dynamic, economically viable, ethically rich PURA complex. This PURA can be named as St Thomas PURA. Taking up of such important socially relevant

project will enable the students to get hands on experience in societal mission.

**Conclusion: what I will be remembered for?**

Finally, I would like to ask you, what would you like to be remembered for? You have to evolve yourself and shape your life. You should write it on a page. That page may be a very important page in the book of human history. And you will be remembered for creating that one page in the history of the nation – whether that page is the page of invention, the page of innovation or the page of discovery or the page of creating societal change or a page of removing the poverty or the page of fighting injustice or planning and executing mission of networking of rivers. I will be happy if you could write this page and mail it to me ([apj@abdulkalam.com](mailto:apj@abdulkalam.com)).

My greetings to all the members of St Thomas College, Palai during the foundation day celebrations. My best wishes to all of you for success in your educational mission.

May God bless you.

Oath for the Students

- 1 I will have a goal and work hard to achieve that goal. I realize that small aim is a crime.
- 2 I will work with integrity and succeed with integrity.
- 3 I will be a good member of my family, a good member of the society, a good member of the nation and a good member of the world.
- 4 I will always try to save or better someone's life, without any discrimination of caste, creed, language

religion or state. Wherever I am, a thought will always come to my mind. That is “What can I give?”

- 5 I will always protect and enhance the dignity of every human life without any bias.
- 6 I will always remember the importance of time. My motto will be “Let not my winged days, be spent in vain”.
- 7 I will always work for clean planet Earth and clean energy.
- 8 As a youth of my nation, I will work and work with courage to achieve success in all my tasks and enjoy the success of others.
- 9 I am as young as my faith and as old as my doubt. Hence, I will light up then, the lamp of faith in my heart.
- 10 My National Flag flies in my heart and I will bring glory to my nation.

