

Commencement speech to the 146th Batch of Junior Members

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July 27, 2026

After fourteen years of school education, you have arrived at St. Stephen's College. Each of you has travelled a different path to reach this hall, but today your journeys converge as the 146th batch of Junior Members of this College.

Your journey has taken fourteen years. The journey of St. Stephen's has taken 145 years. Today, these two journeys meet.

Institutions do not endure for a century and a half simply because they have beautiful buildings or distinguished alumni. They endure because, generation after generation, people choose to preserve their ideals.

Every generation inherits a legacy. Every generation also leaves one behind.

The founders laid the foundations. Successive Principals strengthened them. The senior members sustained an uncompromising commitment to scholarship. Thousands of junior members respected the traditions they inherited while enriching them through their own achievements. Our alumni carried the values of this College into every sphere of public life, academia, science, literature, law, business and public service.

That is how a legacy is built, not in a single generation, but across many generations. Today, that responsibility passes, in part, to you. Until yesterday, you were aspiring to enter St. Stephen's. From today, you are custodians of its legacy. This is both a privilege and a responsibility.

Tomorrow the rhythm of College life truly begins. There will be lectures, tutorials, morning assemblies, societies, sports, cultural activities, assignments and deadlines. Very soon your calendar will seem fuller than you imagined.

My advice is simple. Do not rush to experience everything at once. Give yourself time to understand this place. Observe before you judge. Listen before you conclude. Meet people from backgrounds different from your own. Build meaningful friendships. Discover your strengths. Set your own goals.

Whether you keep a daily planner, a weekly schedule or another system that works for you, learn to manage your time with intention. College life is not about

being busy every moment of the day. It is about learning to choose wisely what deserves your time and attention.

Our academic standards are, and will remain, uncompromising. Excellence has defined this College for one hundred and forty-five years, and it will continue to do so. What has evolved is the way we support our junior members.

You belong to a generation that learns differently, thinks differently and has access to technologies. AI, digital resources and instant access to information have transformed the educational landscape. But while the tools have changed, the purpose of education has not. Education is still about learning to think clearly, reason carefully, question honestly and act responsibly.

At St. Stephen's, we do not expect perfection. We expect sincerity. We expect intellectual curiosity. We expect integrity in your work, generosity in your relationships, and the willingness to grow from every success and every setback. If you bring those qualities with you every day, you will not merely study at St. Stephen's - you will truly become a Stephanian.

As your Principal, I want you to know that my colleagues and I are deeply invested in your journey. We will challenge you because we believe in your potential. We will support you when you need guidance. We will celebrate your achievements and encourage you through your difficulties.

My hope is that when you leave this College a few years from now, you will leave with clarity of thought, strength of character and a deep sense of purpose.

May your years at St. Stephen's College be intellectually enriching, personally transformative and deeply rewarding.

On behalf of the entire College community I welcome the 146th batch of Junior Members.

Thank you.