

## FAREWELL SPEECH FOR THE THIRD-YEAR BROTHERS

Good afternoon, Rev. Fr. Rector, Fr. Stanislaus Chinliankhup, Fr. Robinson Teron, the Director of the Institute, Rectors of different study houses, all the Fathers, and you my dear friends.

Before I begin this address, I request all of you to fasten your seat belts as I am about to fly you to the past three years of Oriens as well as forward.

I am indeed privileged and grateful to propose this farewell address on behalf of Oriens Theological Institute. As Fr. Kuriakose last week reminded us, quoting the Book of Genesis, “Morning came, evening came, and the next day.” So too, another year has passed. But today we gather at a significant moment in our journey i.e. to bid farewell to our 3<sup>rd</sup> year Brothers. Farewell is not merely a goodbye; it is a sacred pause—a moment to look back before moving forward, to gather the memories, lessons, friendships, struggles, victories, and blessings that have shaped us over the years.

Three years ago, many of you arrived at Oriens carrying suitcases filled with books and clothes. Yet hidden within those suitcases were dreams, fears, expectations, insecurities, and hopes that only God could see. I believe this was true with our First year and second year Brothers too. Today, you leave carrying much more than what you brought. These three years were not merely academic years; they were years of life lived together. You shared classrooms, chapels, refectories, playgrounds, ministries, assignments, deadlines, celebrations, and struggles with both the staff and the juniors too. You learned theology, but also the practical theology of community living: patience, understanding, sacrifice, forgiveness, and fraternity. You discovered that holiness sometimes begins with waiting for the Tea & Snacks, or bathroom, or borrowing notes at the last minute, or learning to live joyfully with different personalities.

To our brothers from the study houses, although many of you disappeared immediately after classes like the moon during daylight, your presence was deeply felt. Like salt in a curry, you may not always have been visible, but without you something essential would have been missing. You brought diversity, richness, and different charisms that reminded us that the Church is beautiful precisely because it is diverse. Looking at all of you today; we cannot deny that growth has happened. You have grown vertically & horizontally with mentioning your names. Moreover, intellectually through study, spiritually through prayer, emotionally through relationships, pastorally through ministry, and perhaps physically through the generosity of the Oriens kitchen. More importantly, many of you became bridge-builders and Good Samaritans, carrying one another's burdens and becoming signs of God's compassion.

And what a wonderful institute this has been! Every institute needs a healthy balance of silence, laughter or entertainment, and music, and this batch gave us all three in abundance. We had some soft-spoken as well as loud speakers, some terrific at sports and games, superb in cultural and intellectual activities and some experts in building local, national and international relations. We had some **Soft Speakers as well as loud speakers too**: Abhay, Dilip, Heibormi, Jerry, Tlogi, Vincent, Iophiyos, Pyndapborlang, Pynshngainlang, Fuljence, Reshma, Firstkyson, Eskarius, Zhavirietuo, Bimal, Thomas, Antony, Tapon, Richard, Frankie, Medilut, David, Satyajit, and Jibrus - brothers who proved that not every hero needs a microphone. They were like Wi-Fi: rarely noticed but greatly missed when absent. Their quiet presence, steady friendship, and silent service became the heartbeat of our institute.

Then came the **Remix Group**: Ioannis, Suleman, Patras, Winman, Brandon, Napong, Bala Anvesh, Uday, Ridonal, Bester, Lukas and Henry, who firmly believed that silence is good only when someone else is observing it. They transformed ordinary days into memorable stories, kept the community alive with laughter, and ensured that free time never felt free for too long.

And finally, our **Rockstars**: Sunny, Robestar, Nathaniel, Khrawboklang, Daialammi, Baselius, Ioannis, Phidalis, Eskarius, Tlogi, Jibrus, Prince and many more, who filled Oriens with melody, rhythm, and entertainment. Whether through liturgies, cultural nights, performances, or spontaneous singing sessions, they reminded us that formation is not only about theology and assignments; sometimes it is about learning when to be silent, when to laugh, and when to sing loud enough that even the assignments become bearable.

When I look back on these three years, I see something remarkably similar to the liturgical journey of the Church. There were Advent moments of waiting and expectation, Lenten moments of sacrifice, struggles and growth, and Easter moments of joy, healing, friendship, and new beginnings. Every season had a purpose. Every season formed us.

Dear brothers, as you leave Oriens and step into wider ministries, I am confident that you are equipped not only with AI tools-Artificial Intelligence - but with something even more important: BI tools - Biblical Intelligence. The world has many intelligent people; the Church needs wise people. The world admires efficiency; the Gospel values compassion. The world rewards success; Christ calls us to faithfulness.

Before I conclude, let me borrow two voices from Scripture. Ecclesiastes reminds us that “There is a season for everything.” Your season at Oriens is ending, but your mission is only beginning. And from the Gospel of Luke: “To whom much is given, much will be required.” Much has been given to you here - in formation, friendship, knowledge, correction, opportunities, and grace. Now the Church will ask much from you.

Dear brothers, whenever ministry becomes difficult, whenever loneliness visits you, and whenever responsibilities become overwhelming, remember this place, the staff, the first- and second-year brothers. Remember these hills of Shillong, these classrooms, these corridors, the laughter in the refectory, and the prayers whispered in the chapel. Remember that for three precious years, God gathered a group of imperfect men and slowly taught them how to become brothers. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, may your hearts continue to burn for Christ. As it is said, “A good example of a priest is the best sermon.” May your actions preach good sermons. May your compassion heal the wounded, your humility reflect Christ, and your ministry bring hope wherever God sends you. Looking the 3<sup>rd</sup> year brothers I am reminded of St. Josephs’ college boys Hostel where they had written for their batch, “Where Boys become Men.” Likewise, placing in our context we can say of Oriens, “Where brothers become priest.”

Dear Third -Year Brothers, thank you for your witness, friendship, service, and for allowing us to walk this journey with you. We will miss your presence, but we rejoice in your future. May God, who began this good work in you, bring it to completion, and wherever your mission takes you, may you always carry the light of Oriens in your heart.

Thank you.

**-Br. Sumit Kujur**