

**USJ Congregation 2020 Speech by
Mr. Joaquim Lei, PGDE Graduate**

12th September 2020

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Distinguished guests and students,

My name is Joaquim Lei and I am representing the class of 2020 for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Education, PGDE.

The PGDE program was very intensive, I call this program a “survival package” to get teachers ready to teach at schools. There are some colleagues who have already been working at schools, while some of us are pre-service teachers who are striving to launch our teaching careers within local schools. We are all putting great effort into this and hopefully we will become qualified and professional teachers ready to contribute to the education field in Macau.

For me, I think that having studied this programme it has inspired me to become a lifelong learner, in-line with our USJ Graduate attributes, because for us as educators, we learn to teach, and at the same time when we teach, we also learn. I graduated from the PGDE secondary program in 2019 and I really grew a lot. After this, I enrolled into the PGDE Primary education, so this is my second year at USJ. This year was very different, and I think none of you would disagree. Because of the current pandemic situation, during the second half of the academic year, we focused on online learning. This was a challenging period for all of us, both professors and students, and was also a wakeup call for us who are working in the educational sector. This has opened up a lot of new opportunities for us to explore different teaching and learning approaches through online modes.

In order to be a certified teacher in Macau, it is mandatory to complete an internship. Some of us have already begun our internships in September, while some of us, including me, have to follow special arrangements in accordance to our schools and the School of Education. Although it was not easy, we went through this successfully. All of us have gained valuable experience through daily challenges from different tasks given by our respective schools. For me, it was quite an unforgettable experience because I got to interact with primary students with special needs and learnt to assist inclusive students at my school. I have a better understanding now that inclusive education is about the diverse students and I have learnt that each student requires different levels of support, including love, care, patience and attention. And, as teachers, we need to show more understanding of our students.

For our PDGE program, I also would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Prof. Isabel Tchiang for coordinating this program and for providing assistance with our internships. Additionally, I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Ana Correia for my internship last year and Prof. Karen Tagulao for guiding me throughout my internship this year. Sincerely, without all the faculty members, professors, USJ supervisors and the mentor teachers at the internship schools, it would not be possible, under these pandemic conditions, to be so successful. So please put your hands together for all of them, you all deserve the applause!

Finally, I believe that excellence and perseverance pushes us to move forward and see...we did it! But I know that this is just the beginning.

I wish you all the brightest of careers in the future and I am very sure the best has yet to come.

Congratulations to all graduates once again and thank you very much!!