

Welcoming of New Principal, Mrs Rachel Lee to CHIJ Secondary (Toa Payoh)

Wednesday, 2 January 2019 at 7.30 am

Greetings to Miss Teo Geok Sian, Ms Adeline Phua, Ms Paula Kesavan, Heads of Department, teachers and students.

Welcome back to school! As you may be aware, there has been a change of leadership in CHIJ Secondary.

Members of the IJ Board of Management join me in expressing our deep appreciation of all that Mrs Karen Tay has accomplished for the growth of CHIJ Secondary since her appointment on 15 December 2012. During her tenure over the past 6 years, CHIJ Secondary has forged ahead as a vibrant and thriving school. Academic excellence has gone hand in hand with a rich cultural experience for each student in an environment where the spiritual dimension of each person is respected and nourished.

Mrs Tay's openness to new trends in education and willingness to implement change have ensured that CHIJ students enjoy the best modern educational facilities which are used to their full potential. Opportunities for giving creative expression to talent in all fields have been expanded under her encouragement and guidance. With a focus on developing student leadership, CHIJ Secondary has been remarkably successful in grooming student leaders who integrate in themselves the finest elements of their school's value system and rich traditions.

It gives me great pleasure now to extend a warm welcome to your new Principal, Mrs Rachel Lee today. Mrs Lee was a former Deputy Director, Standards & Research, Academy of Singapore Teachers in MOE. She has been appointed as Vice-Principal of CHIJ Secondary on 24 September 2018 and as Principal with effect from 15 December 2018.

Suitable principals for a school such as CHIJ are hard to find. The Board's extensive search brought us Mrs Lee. We are confident that Mrs Lee will bring to her new appointment valuable experiences and distinct leadership qualities that will build upon the history, traditions and values, which give CHIJ its distinctive strength and character.

Today, a new phase in the history of CHIJ Secondary begins. It offers an invitation to each person in this school community to move into the future with renewed enthusiasm and hope, drawing on the strength of our rich IJ heritage.

I am confident Mrs Lee will, with the full support of her three able Vice-Principals, Heads of Department and teachers, students, parents and alumnae, bring CHIJ Secondary to greater heights. It is my hope that this school will continue to be a place where faith is deepened and nourished, where aspiration is cultivated and where the gifts of all are treasured.

On behalf of the IJ Board, I wish Mrs Lee a fulfilling experience and an enjoyable one. Mrs Lee will, with God's blessings, provide the leadership that CHIJ Secondary will require in the coming years, in fidelity to our motto:

SIMPLE IN VIRTUE, STEADFAST IN DUTY

Before I end, I would like to call your attention to an outstanding former student of our CHIJ school, the late Mrs Elizabeth Choy, 1929 - 1933. In our 150th Anniversary Book, she paid a tribute to what CHIJ had given us:

"I came to Singapore in December 1929 for higher education ... I was very lucky to be able to get into the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus ... And we had very very good grounding in [Christian values] ... to be courageous, to trust in God, and God is almighty, all powerful. Otherwise without all this, I never would have been able to go through the Japanese Occupation period and the torture."

Her IJ experience was for her the source of her resilience, courage and fortitude. In her, we have a role model who captured the essential spirit of IJ.

Dr Esther Chong
Honorary Secretary
IJ Board of Management