

Chancellor's Address at the Official Opening of the First Matriculation Ceremony Tansian University

31st January 2008

Your Excellencies- The Governors and all other dignitaries
Your Graces
My Lord Bishops
Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters
Msgr. Bosco
Members of Tansian University Trustees, Governors, Professors
Deans and Staff
Honourable Chiefs and Community Leaders
Distinguished Teachers and Gentlemen.
Finally Matriculation Students of Tansian University

Some of you might be wondering how I came to be here, the strange circumstances of that brought me here. Of course Msgr. Bosco, but also Blessed Tansi. I am a Canadian living in England for the last seventeen years with my wife, four sons and a guardian son.

The story starts many years ago when a young man from here became a priest, and had the spiritual inspiration to enter monastic life and bring it to this Country. Following this inspiration he went to a Cistercian Abbey in North England, called St Bernard's Abbey. As he was about to come back and start a monastery, he fell ill, passed away and was buried at the Abbey

This man's name was Cyprian Tansi. Cardinal Arinze exhumed his bones and had them brought to the Cathedral Basilica in Onitsha. We remember with

pride the many miracles that happened when people came in contact with his bones. Particularly the lady who was paralysed and was fully healed.

We also remember with pride March 1998, when Pope John Paul II came here to beatify Blessed Tansi. I was here for that.

These two men, John Paul II and Blessed Tansi both played a major part in my life.

In 1992 I met Msgr. Bosco. In 1995 I had the spiritual inspiration to go to St. Bernard's Abbey. I didn't know of Tansi. They have a guest house there, so I went for a retreat. While I was there, one of the brothers told me about Tansi's story, and showed me the grave where his bones were exhumed. Also, while I was there I picked up a book by Karol Wojtyla, who became Pope John Paul II, called "A Sign of Contradiction". This book was named after the scene in the Scriptures where Mary and Joseph present Jesus at the Synagogue. The old man says to Mary that her son will be a sign of contradiction to the world. Someone yesterday said Tansi was their hero, and he was my hero too.

So in a certain sense Tansi brought me here to talk about "the sign of contradiction" that Christ was, and that you students are now called to be.

You students, the first graduates have a great responsibility, but so do we.

What is the vision and hope?

The vision is that you will attend classes and study hard; you will learn the subject and receive fine grades and your diploma.

These will be fine achievements for any university. But, if this is all we achieve, we will have failed.

Blessed Tansi is calling you today to a vision and hope that is more than that. A vision that, your generation, by God's Grace, can reject the follies of our own world - corruption in all its forms - moral as well as financial. These things exist everywhere.

The vision is a big vision. Blessed Tansi is calling this University and you, the first students, to grow, mentally, physically and spiritually. Your hearts will be

transformed as Mother Theresa says. From the University you will go out, and with the help of the HOLY SPIRIT, you will renew the face of this land.

As the movement grows you will help renew the face of this Continent, and participate with young people everywhere in the world, like my sons, who are yearning for this renewal- to renew the face of the world. A world where every person will have the opportunity that you Tansian's students now have today.

Pope John Paul II asked "What are the possibilities of man, and of which man are we talking of, of the man who is in bondage to lust and greed, or of the man who is redeemed by Christ. And if man is not freed, it is not because the redemptive act is weak, but because man refuses to avail himself of the power and grace that flows from that act."

You Tansian students, we pray and hope, will avail yourselves of the power and grace that flows from Christ's redemptive act – by doing so you will be the signs of contradiction that will renew the world.

You Tansian students will make better leaders and businessmen, better professors, better professional people, better religious. You should be a better father or mother, a better husband or wife because of what you have learned here. This is our prayer and hope.

This can be done. - let us begin here today this journey and vision. Gratia International, our British Charity, will help raise funds to build and assist in this journey.

I close with Plato's prayer.

"Grant that I may grow beautiful in the inner man, that whatever I have without me may grow in harmony with the inner life. May I deem the wise alone rich, and may my store of gold be such as only the good may bear.

May God Bless you all,

Dan Hill