

**Commencement Speech by H.E. President Valdas Adamkus  
at the Graduation Ceremony at LCC International University  
Klaipėda, 1 May 2010**

Dear University Graduates, Undergraduates and Parents,  
Distinguished Professors and Lecturers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to see such a wonderful group of young people entering the mainstream of life in Lithuania. It is not only that new university graduates will be joining us in work and public life, but also that a generation of well-educated young men and women are coming on the scene with the promise of a new Lithuania, a new today, and a new tomorrow. It is a great pleasure and privilege to say hello to young, enterprising and intelligent professionals embarking on the path of independent thought and action.

I know that you have gained a strong foundation of knowledge and skills at your Alma Mater. You have received valuable lessons in professional and personal communication, slightly different from those taught in other Lithuanian institutions of higher education. I have in mind here the Christian academic context of your university and its important mission to spread and instill Christian values. I honestly look at you with great hope because I strongly feel a lack of Christian and other human values in the public domain. You are grown up, intelligent people and you see yourselves that interests have permeated our society: group interests, party interests and personal interests. I presume that many of you wonder about the same question that I have been asking myself: Who will stand up for the common interests of the nation and the state, for the interests of Lithuania?

It seems that today's politicians and public figures are having trouble doing it. I therefore call on you the young: Whatever your future pathway, do not withdraw into yourself and do not get locked into narrow professional or other interests. Be pro-active and participate in public life, give it meaning, a sense of responsibility, and a dimension of values. Enhance Lithuania's chances to become a truly European state not only by virtue of its geographical position, but also because of its values, attitudes and high standards.

Your university is only a year younger than Lithuania's restored independence. In these two decades a lot of people grew up and matured, graduated schools and universities. But I will be honest with you: I miss their open minded, positive and free spirit and their more active engagement in our life. Young vitality, courage of thought and deed, and the legacy of knowledge from older generations are a source of great strength and inspiration. If in those twenty years, at least some of this force had been directed to serve and make Lithuania better, I am deeply convinced that today we would be living a different life with different economic conditions, different policies and different emigration statistics. As I have always said, and will continue to say, please do not spare yourself for Lithuania. Lithuania will have as much freedom and prosperity as you – today's graduates – will give it. The entire nation is looking at you in the hope that you will challenge those aspects of today that I believe are not an appropriate topic to discuss at this celebration.

Your Alma Mater is a school with a strong tradition of openness to the world and its diversity. It is very important that you learn and understand as much as possible about this world and that you pursue and implement its most valuable ideas in Lithuania. You have gained a great deal of knowledge and wisdom from your professors and lecturers who gave their utmost to bring out the best in each of you. The store of knowledge that you have now is your debt of honor that I have no doubt you will repay to Lithuania and its people, to your fellow citizens, and eventually to your children and grandchildren. Expand and deepen the knowledge that you have received here in the academic environment of liberal arts. May the ideals of freedom and liberty guide you in life and in work. May you be free in your mind and heart, open in your thoughts and receptive to other approaches. And finally, be open to the truth because it is the truth that sets people free. There is no other way to freedom. Follow the path of freedom, expand your professional knowledge and build your life creatively on the values and ideals you have received from your Alma Mater. As you progress, you will have many opportunities to do so.

With this hope and confidence in my heart, I once again extend my cordial congratulations as you open a new leaf in the book of your life. I wish you the best of everything in the journey ahead.