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“Ia Gagana Pea le Fau o Nofoga i Ala Uma Tatou te Uia”

Governor Lemanu delivers special remarks at the Fagaitua High School Graduation



The Honorable Lemanu P. S. Mauga, Governor of American Samoa delivered his special remarks at the Fifty-fifth Fagaitua High School Commencement Ceremony on Monday, June 12, 2023 at the school’s gymnasium:

“Your theme today, ‘Gagana pea le fau o nofoga i ala uma tatou te uia,’ made me reflect upon the significant story of which this samoan proverb came about.

The story goes that a man named Laifaleava journeyed with his daughter Leaauta to seek Taemanutava'e; Leaauta wanted to marry Taemanutava'e who refused to be seen, and lived hidden into the mountains by the river. As they stopped to rest on a rock under a Fau tree, the tree began to talk to them, and gave them directions on where to find Taemanutava'e, and how to bind him.

I want to mention only two out of many proverbs that came from this story. First, 'Ua gagana le fau,' the Fau has spoken. In this manner, the Samoan culture personifies the Fau as a storyteller, a guide, and someone whom we acquire knowledge from. The second proverb is, 'E valuvalusia a'a o le fau,' which speaks of the roots of the Fau being a source of good judgment, compassion and mercy.

I correlate this story to the gift Jesus bestowed upon the disciples and all those who believe in Him. Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be with you." Like the story of the Talking Fau for Leaauta, the Holy Spirit is the guiding light of the path of your life.

First, the Holy Spirit is your constant reminder. As you step into the next phase of your lives, the Holy Spirit will remind you of the values and principles that have shaped you. The world you are about to step into has a way of making you forget who you are and where you come from. Remember your upbringing and your values in the way you speak and in the way you act.

Secondly, the Holy Spirit will be your guide in making decisions. The road ahead will be confusing or overwhelming, many have been led astray. Seek the Holy Spirit with its infinite wisdom. He will serve as a compass and will illuminate the path that aligns with your true calling and purpose, and caution you against choices that fulfill only the desires of the flesh, and lead to destruction.

Lastly, the Holy Spirit will lead you on a path of truth. In a world often clouded by deception and misinformation, rely on the Holy Spirit to be your counselor and to help you discern between right and wrong. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you to a deeper understanding of the world around you, so that you may be a warrior of what is just and fair.

Graduates, as you venture into the unknown world of possibilities, remember that you are not alone. Wherever your journey leads you, the Holy Spirit is ever-present, ready to remind you of your worth, and like the Fau Gagana, He is ready to counsel you. Go forth with courage, determination, and the assurance that you carry within you a divine being that can change the world.

Congratulations Graduates!”

Governor Lemanu offered heartfelt congratulations and touched upon the collective efforts of the parents, faculty and staff, church leaders and community leaders, upon the students. During the ceremony, six graduates were awarded Valedictorians: Dorrin Tuisamatatele, Elisha Akeli, Lonetona Fanene Taralina Simanu, Toamalama Toelupe, and Lahaina Mulitalo. The Salutatorian award was given to Marisa Galuta Talo.

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