

Admissions Ceremony
Thursday 14 December 2000

Chief Justice Paul de Jersey

Ladies and Gentlemen

May I begin by wishing you and your families a happy Christmas. I hesitate to wish you, as well, a "prosperous" new year: some people over-emphasise the material rewards of legal practice. I will instead wish you a fulfilling new year.

You will begin it with a great sense of personal satisfaction that you have achieved so highly especially, if I may say, the honours graduates. But I hope many of you will be more inspired by the opportunity now available to do something of particular value for other people, especially those without your privileges.

There are a number of avenues for worthy pro bono work by lawyers, for example, especially young lawyers, and I hope you will rise to that particular challenge. I suggest your ultimate challenge, as people who happen now also to be lawyers, will be to remain at peace with your consciences: your overwhelming professional ethical duty to the court and the administration of the law is surpassed only by that higher duty. That duty to yourself will be fulfilled only if you strive to perform as best you can, with a keen eye on the public service which characterises your new profession, and the determination to unravel especially those more subtle moral twists which will challenge you, challenge you much more than the more obvious ethical concerns which regrettably fall for consideration sometimes by this court in disciplinary proceedings: the category of more subtle moral issue which arose in JB Priestley's "An Inspector Calls".

Many of you will enter into legal practice: strive to maintain the true nobility of your new profession. But whatever your professional destination, cherish and uphold the standards which underpin these significant new qualifications. On behalf of the Judges, I warmly congratulate you, I acknowledge the undoubtedly substantial support of your families and friends, and wish you well for your professional futures.