



Year 12 Graduation Speech 2020

Good Evening Year 12, Families, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Marist theme for 2020 across Australia was drawn from the closing line of Mary Oliver's poem, 'The Summer Day':

'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one, wild and precious life?'

At its heart, it is a question that invites us to look at who we are, the lives we are living, and our place in the world. Our response to this question can take us on a journey in search of understanding of what brings greater freedom and wholeness in our lives. It invites us at a deeper level to consider what it means to be truly human; the brevity, beauty and mystery of life.

This year commenced with an avid anticipation for Year 12 in the hopes and aspiration of what lay ahead. **One Wild and Precious Life** took on a meaning beyond our comprehension with the advent of COVID 19.

The immediate response for our Year 12 cohort let alone our wider community was...

How would this pandemic, this disruption to our life, impact on our final year of study?
Moreover, what would be different, what would be required of us to navigate this unknown time.

As the year has transpired there have many learnings that can be drawn from challenges that have emerged for our students, for our community, let alone the world... none more so than the power of resilience to overcome the adversity that has confronted us.

To that end, how will we live and navigate the **one wild and precious life that lies ahead?**

As an avid reader, I have come across many forms of literature that have inspired and given me purpose and meaning.

One such example is the book, "**Legacy: 15 Lessons in Leadership by James Kerr – What the All Blacks Can Teach Us About the Business of Life**".

For note ...The All Blacks is the NZ National Rugby team that has arguably been the most successful sporting team in the world over the last quarter of a century exemplified by an 80% winning record. The All Blacks' success is not just in their performance as a rugby team but in the culture that has been developed and the legacy that has been created.

Legacy is not a story about sport, it is a story about culture; not a narrative about performance, but a story about the cultivation of relationships that promotes dignity, character, integrity and accountability. It imbues a belief that we can all overcome adversity and have the ability to make a difference in our world both in our individual pursuits and collectively as a member of a community.

To the graduating class of 2020, I would like to briefly share with you the key messages from this story that might give you reason to ponder and consider how they may assist your development and growth and ultimately how you contribute to the world you want to live in

1. **Character** — Character begins with humility and discipline. Even after a major win, the All Blacks finished their celebrations by sweeping the changerooms — *because no one looks after the All Blacks — the All Blacks look after themselves.*”

*The message ...***Don't be too big to do the small things.** Your failures are the biggest opportunity to learn.

2. **Adapt** — Make a case for providing a compelling picture of the future, sustain the capability to change and create a credible plan to execute. Culture is subject to learning, growth, and decline.
3. **Responsibility** — Be a leader, not a follower — pass the ball. Create a structure of meaning, a sense of purpose, belonging and teamwork. **Leaders create leaders** by sharing responsibility, creating ownership, accountability, and trust.
4. **Learn** — Create a learning environment. Leaders are teachers. “human beings are motivated by purpose, autonomy and a drive towards mastery,”
5. **Expectations** — Embrace Expectations — aim for the highest cloud. It forces you to prepare as hard as possible. **Successful people have high internal benchmarks, they set their expectations high**, and try to exceed them.
6. **Preparation** — **Practice with intensity** to develop the mindset to succeed. Get out of your comfort zone. If you are not growing anywhere, you are not going anywhere.
7. **Sacrifice** — Do the above and beyond for a cause, activity or mission you believe in. **Champions do Extra.** Push yourself outside of your comfort zone.
8. **Authenticity** — Know thyself, keep it real. Be genuine, stay true to yourself and be honest with your environment.
9. **Legacy** — Write your Legacy. **This is your time.** Be purposeful. Add to the ethos, make your mark.

As you leave Newman College be aware that you have been in a community that has valued you, supported you and sought to grow you in faith, your learning and in the person God intends you to be. It has provided you with a foundation to build your character, your identity and support the development of your legacy.

St John Henry Newman, our College namesake, was canonized a saint in 2019 and we recently celebrated his feast day on 9 October.

Saint John Henry Newman's legacy and now invitation to us is to live our life to be one of humble service and affection to each other. If this can underpin our intent and be the foundation for lives, our future, no matter what challenges we face, will be assured.

To that end, we celebrate today your time here at this remarkable PK-12 College of 1900 students. At Newman College our culture is strengthened and supported by our characteristics of **presence, love of work, simplicity, in the way of Mary and family spirit.**

They drive the cultural elements that shape who we are, what we represent and what we are going to become..... and ultimately the legacy that will define who we are.

The fundamental beliefs and assumptions in this community are that you all have the potential to succeed. Our **Vision for Learning *Shine through discovery*** – *let you light shine* asks this of us -- that we can be excellent; we have license to let our light shine.

Year 12, you are a magnificent exemplar to our College of this Vision by your participation and willingness to 'have a go'.

You have exemplified the Marist notion of presence by the way you have valued relationships, through:

- your reflection and spirituality at the Year 12 Retreat,
- your response to the Covid crisis and the support you provided each other,
- your collaboration with your teachers,
- your respect and support of Ms Pastorelli, your PCG teachers and College Leadership Team and other students

You have demonstrated a willingness to get involved and had the flexibility to try new things in our co-curricular initiatives; be it in ministry, creative and performing arts and / or sport.

Many thanks to Anastasia and Mitchell, our College Captains, and the Student leadership group for your animation to and for your year group and the example you have provided to all members of our Community.

In conclusion I recognize and give thanks to our Marist community, specifically our Marist Brothers and tonight Br Terry and Br Paul. The legacy of this Marist Project, now over 200 years old, is that we walk with young people underpinned by being present to each other, respectful in the relationships we cultivate and the people that God asks us to be.

So Year 12, the reverberation of your time in this Marist community is best summed up in the words of St Marcellin Champagnat, "may their lives be an echo of what you have taught them"

Farewell Year 12 - we would look forward to watching how God's plan for you is enacted in the years ahead with **your one, wild and precious life'**.
