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**Final Assembly – Marcellin Campus**

**3 November 2020**

Br Terry, Staff and Students

Last night Mr Martino and I attended the launch of the Lifelink Christmas Appeal at St Mary’s Cathedral which featured students of Newman College in their new promotional video which identifies the works of Lifelink. So, what is Lifelink?

Lifelink is the Archdiocese of Perth’s Appeal to support the special works that are undertaken by the Church. It was established in 1994 to provide ongoing financial and promotional support of agencies, established or assisted by the Church.

Last year, these agencies reached out to help over 37,000 Western Australian families and individuals in need, delivering more than $60 million in caring services and professional programs throughout WA.

Some of these works include:

1. Supporting people with disability and their families through Identity WA
2. Supporting people living with mental illness to have some form of ongoing emotional support through the Emmaus community.
3. Centrecare which supports professional counselling, mediation and training services
4. Day Dawn advocacy centre which helps and assists aboriginal people at risk of eviction from public and private housing.
5. And the Shopfront organization that works with homeless youth and homeless people through the provision of meals and casework.

All of these agencies seek to make a difference and truly reflect the intent of what it means to be a Christian… which is to seek to serve and support those who are in need.

In our community, a group of Year 11 Remar students spent last Friday night on the streets of Perth serving meals and supporting the most vulnerable in our community. Significantly for our students, was the reality of actually being present to homeless people whose lives have been compromised by mental illness, by unemployment, disability, addiction and stories very different to my own.

I remember as a 15 year old student being given the opportunity to be involved in a street retreat in the City of Sydney. At this retreat, we met many homeless people and people whose stories were very different to my own. There was a boy I met who was my age who was drug dependent, homeless, had been in and out of foster care and had worked in prostitution. We got talking about our lives and I realized very quickly that his aspirations and dreams were no different to mine.

Yet the opportunities that I had been afforded of a safe home, of food on the table, of private school education, were never available to him.

There is not a day that doesn’t go past that I don’t think of this young man and wonder what happened to him – did he leave the street, was he able to pursue the education that he dreamed of? For me, it gave me the impetus to commit myself to be a person who would advocate and speak for the disadvantaged; to become a teacher, to work with young people and to hopefully give others the inspiration to do the same.

We are very privileged in this community to have what we have and to be able to live life and live it to the fullest. It is incumbent upon us as a Marist school that we seek to take opportunities to make a difference in the world.

That might start with little things …. being kind to each other, being kind to your elderly neighbour, putting your hand up to volunteer and / or get behind initiatives that seek to support people who are disadvantaged.

As we move towards Christmas, our school will again commit to supporting the St Vincent de Paul Christmas appeal. I urge you to give generously. I urge you to become aware of the social issues that affect families this Christmas, as many people will go without. It is our responsibility, with what we have to give, and serve and support others.

Congratulations to all those involved in today’s assembly. Today has been a celebration of our gifts and our talents.

As we move towards the end of term, we give thanks for the Year 12 students as they complete their WACE exams, we wish our Years 11 and 10 every success in your upcoming exams and for the rest of our students in Years 7-9, I urge you to participate and contribute to the life of this school in the coming weeks.