

Year 12 Celebration ASSEMBLY

Thursday 23 September 2021

Principal's Speech

Good Morning everyone

This is Grand Final week in Western Australia - celebrating the big dance in Perth on Saturday which is the culmination of the AFL's biggest day. The fervour, the excitement and anxiety of Saturday is no different to that feeling of our Year 12 students as their own journey here at Newman College comes to its conclusion. They may not be playing in the AFL Grand Final but it is the ultimate prize in the conclusion of 14 years of education.

On Sunday, I had the privilege of attending the West Australian Community Cabinet with the Premier, Mark McGowan, his ministers and students from across the seat of Churchlands and Nedlands which included 9 of our students in Years 10 and 11.

The Premier put to the students in the room, that we are in a privileged position here in WA; not only having the Grand Final but by the fact that we can meet, we can celebrate, we can go out, we can be at school and study as if life is normal. We know that our Eastern States counterparts, and certainly the Year 12 students in Victoria and NSW, have spent the last 3 months at home trying to navigate the end of their educational journey in lockdown.

So with this privilege, the Premier's words to the students were simple....

"What you have on offer at your school, you need to take advantage of".

In his words,

"Just use it".

Today at our assembly our hope is that those in Year 12 have taken every opportunity that has been afforded to them, as it is for every member of our community, *just to use it*.

An example of *just using it* has been witnessed over and over again in the recent Olympic and Paralympic games in Tokyo. One athlete is a great example of this intent - with our very own Australia Paralympian, from Perth, Madison de Rozario, who won the Paralympics Marathon.

Madison remembers what it was like to dance as a young child. Yet at the age of 4 during rehearsals for a dance concert she caught the flu. While her small body fended off the illness she developed a rare auto immune disease and her body started attacking itself. In a very short period of time, her spinal cord was attacked and damaged and she was declared a paraplegic. Despite this, her family was determined that she was not going to be excluded. In her own words,

"I was in a chair from such a young age that I didn't realise until I was a teenager that there were any differences in my body."

As she got older she struggled with her disability. Yet, with the encouragement of family, friends and her coaches she was able to overcome any challenge, any adversity, any self doubt, to achieve at the highest level, winning a gold medal at the Paralympics in Tokyo.

She said,

“I wasn’t sure how the race was going to go, we knew we would go off hard and that’s definitely not my strong suit. Out there, that’s what I love doing more than anything, it’s nice to be able to bring it home.”

For some of us, and certainly for Year 12 today, even at this late stage, you may not know how the race is going. But you are here, and it is now, and it is still incumbent upon you, as it is for the student in Year 7, that the journey of life is punctuated by opportunities that are there to take if only we commit ourselves, if only we persevere and overcome the adversities that are part of life.

God has given each member of our community talents, gifts – how we use these gifts, how we work towards these talents not only determine what we will do but to find who we are and the people we will become. Character, integrity, and authenticity are qualities that we should all strive towards.

Our Vision for Learning *shine through discovery* aims to create a culture where your light can shine. This faith and learning community challenges every member to be creative, to work in collaboration and, as we are today, celebrating what we have achieved.

As a Marist school, we celebrate the aspiration of our Founder St Marcellin Champagnat to be good Christians and good Citizens. To think that just over 200 years ago that one person’s aspiration to bring education to dislocated and marginalised youth in the South of France would bring us a movement that spans over 80 countries around the world today.

To be part of that Marist family spirit inherently asks all of us to be present in relationships that we form and, for Year 12 today, I hope that the relationships you have formed with your cohort stay in your heart for the years to come. Moreover, that your experience in this community will give you the foundation to be transformative and engage in building a better society in a world that is unknown.

And at the heart of that is in recognising that the Christian message of faith, hope and love will underpin and enable you to navigate the road ahead.

Thank you

We acknowledge and thank your teachers - their efforts, commitment and care for Year 12, for those who supported you upon entry into the school and throughout your years at Newman College.

We particularly thank Mrs Rebecca Bramanto your Leader of Wellbeing; her commitment to this cohort has been unconditional. The love, hope and support she has afforded you has been commendable. Thank you to PCG teachers, all teachers of Year 12 and those who have walked with you at Marcellin, Lavalla and Marian. Thank you to our guest speaker, Mr Phil Walleystack for your presence here today and the inspiration of your story and your commitment to building a better community through the advocacy of the rights, recognition and reconciliation of Aboriginal people.

Year 12, cherish the witness and fidelity of your Marist education. Being present to each other in service and in love engenders the family spirit that underpins the culture of this school.

Today we give thanks for you..... for your story, your narrative, which will be affirmed at your Graduation Mass and Dinner in Week 2 of Term 4.

We wish you every success for your last exam period and the completion of your courses.

Leadership

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our Year 11 students and their participation in our Leadership Program for 2021.

- Our Leadership program commenced this term with 37 Year 11 Students. Thank you to Ms Cristina Guzzomi and Mr Mat Puljiz for your leadership of this program.
- Leadership is about honesty, integrity, confidence, inspiration, delegation, decision making, commitment, accountability, creativity and empathy.

We look forward to the next stage of leadership and the stewardship of this fine Marist school.

Congratulations to **Isabella O'Rourke and Joshua Downes** and all those students who have been selected for leadership. I know that you will let your light shine.

Thank you for the term.