

Year 12 Celebration ASSEMBLY
Wednesday 21 September 2022
Principal's Speech

Good Morning Graduating class of 2022, staff, students, friends

Today, we celebrate the Graduating Class of 2022 and farewell them as a College community. Their journey is just beginning onto a road that is unknown but full of the promise and the hope in which the future brings.

Let us take a moment to consider another journey that that will be celebrated with a public holiday tomorrow. Over the last two weeks the world has been mourning the death of the Commonwealth's longest serving Monarch, Queen Elizabeth II.

Her reign spanned Britain's journey from the crystal radio receiver to the smartphone. Amid momentous social and political upheaval, her falterings were few. She served as the nation's figurehead, supremely able to hold her people together.

But this remarkable moment was not only about the death of the great monarch, but of a 96-year-old woman – a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. It is not only about the end of her life but also about what her life represented.

On Monday her funeral was attended by world leaders, other dignitaries and invited guests. Some 4 million people were in London for the funeral and another 4 billion people watched on TV. The funeral of Queen Elizabeth has united the world more so than any other world leader in recent memory.

Why is this so? And why is it important for us to reflect on this today at this assembly?

Queen Elizabeth was an extraordinary woman whose life unconditional service was exemplified by commitment, resilience and the capacity to bridge cultures, share in grief of those involved in national and international tragedies and offer hope where there was darkness. In one of her Christmas messages broadcast to the world, Queen Elizabeth said,

"Our modern world places such heavy demands on our time and attention that the need to remember our responsibilities to others is greater than ever."

If we consider then the 10 everyday Australians who were invited to accompany the Prime Minister and the Governor General to the funeral, they all exemplify 'why our responsibilities to others is greater than ever'. The Prime Minister said in his press conference that these Australians embody an extraordinary contribution to our nation. For example:

1. Danny Abdallah is the father of three of four children who were killed in a tragic accident in Sydney, Australia in 2020. His children were walking along with their cousin, to get ice cream when they were fatally hit by a drunk driver. Danny is a co-creator of "i4give Day and Foundation," founded in memory of his children, aiming at raising awareness around the power of forgiveness.
2. Prof Helen Milroy was Australia's first Indigenous doctor and is now a highly regarded expert in child and adolescent psychiatry. For more than 25 years, Helen has been a pioneer in research, education and training in Aboriginal and child mental health, and recovery from grief and trauma. She has supported the Aboriginal and medical workforce in applying Indigenous knowledge and cultural models of care.
3. Dylan Alcott, Australian of the Year, was recognised for his "leadership and commitment to developing opportunities for people with a disability". He was also credited with "making an impact for thousands of Australians". National Australia Day Council chairwoman Danielle Roche said Alcott was a champion who had risen to the top of the world rankings "through sheer grit* and determination". "Dylan is an inspirational Australian on and off the tennis court," she said. Alcott's

sporting achievements include Australian Open champion seven years running from 2015 to 2021.

The message today is that you don't have to be born into privilege to have an extraordinary life. Year 12, your journey will be punctuated by the highs and the lows that come with life. How you respond, the depth of your character and your commitment to life will determine the path you take. These everyday Australians are extraordinary by the way they have approached their life, often in the face of tragedy. Their lives are an example of service, commitment, forgiveness, hope and love.

As a College community, the life of the Queen and the lives of these Australians give us pause to reflect on our own lives, our hopes for the future and the path we wish to take.

Our Marist theme this year is '**known and loved, dignity for all**' which asks of us as to consider the other. As a College community, 1900 students strong, we have a responsibility firstly to each other – to show dignity, respect and care to our neighbour and to each other. Our lives will be defined by the relationships that we forge.

To be part of a Marist family we need to be present in the relationships we form and, for Year 12 today, I hope that the relationships you have formed with members of your cohort stay in your heart for the years to come.

Year 12, God has given you talents and gifts – how we use these gifts, how we work towards these talents not only determine what we will do but to find out 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 our light can shine. This faith and learning community challenges every member to be creative, to work in collaboration and, as we are today, celebrate what we have achieved.

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 Mr Mathew Puljiz, your Leader of Wellbeing – for his commitment to this cohort. The love, hope and support he 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.

In our 150th of our Marist Project in Australia we give thanks for our Marist Brothers – Br John Furlong, community leader, Br Noel, Br Paul, Br Joe and Br Terry. Your presence and witness are an inspiration to us all.

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 Term 4.

We wish you every success for your last exam period and the completion of your courses. Newman College, please thank Year 12.

Leadership

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our Year 11 students and their participation in our Leadership Program for 2022.

- Our Leadership program commenced this term with 44 Year 11 Students. Thank you to Ms Beekink 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 **Indiana Lummis and Michael Pethick** (College Captains) and all those students who have been selected for leadership. I know that you will let your light shine.

Thank you all for the term.