



Year 12 Graduation
Wednesday 19 October 2022
Principal's Speech

Good evening Year 12, Staff, Families, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen.
Seven years ago, my young family made the momentous decision to move to WA.
This decision was not easy

Consider the enormity of moving states, leaving family, leaving friends, changing work, my children leaving their schools, leaving our community, and walking away from what we knew to be comfortable. We were excited but also terrified after all, it is a long way across the desert.

We made a choice that was not easy, but we knew nonetheless would be rewarding. We have had our share of challenges, but we have grown and developed skills that we carry forward today. We loved our time in WA! We have made friends and become part of the community that has loved and supported us... and for that we are grateful.

Two weeks ago my family moved back to Sydney.

As I sat on the plane, I felt a sense of anxiety... that same anxiety that I felt seven years ago... but now it was different. I know now that when you make choices that are difficult, choices that require courage, conviction and determination that the feelings of anxiety soon change and lead to opportunities - growth, development and ultimately fulfillment.

Today Year 12, you sit not on plane but here at graduation, at a table with your family and friends, .. perhaps with a tinge of anxiety, but prepared and ready, hopeful of what the future will bring.

Making decisions about life and life choices ultimately determine the path we will take. The ***Road not Taken*** by Robert Frost is a famous poem that has influenced generations across the world as it allows the reader to consider the choices they make in life. Which road should I take – the one less travelled or the easier road?

The poem describes the dilemma of a person standing at a fork in the road, with diversion.

***Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both***

This diversion symbolizes real-life situations. Sometimes, in life there comes times when we have to take tough decisions.

Life is punctuated by these decisions. Sometimes we are pushed and sometimes we are pulled. Sometimes we are invited, sometimes we are instructed.

If we consider our Christian story, Jesus' mother, Mary, at the Annunciation accepted the invitation to be the mother of God. A young woman, not 14 years of age makes a monumental decision, a courageous decision, a bold decision that changed the course of the world.

And ...200 years ago a young man in Southern France made the decision to create a religious order that would provide education for dislocated youth. This young man, St Marcellin Champagnat, contended that we could be good Christians and good Citizens.

For both Mary and St Marcellin they could not have foretold what the future was to bring because of the decisions that they made. But they were brave, they were courageous and they accepted the challenge.

Today, Newman College, a school of 1900 students and 300 staff, is a product of this decision.

Consider this, 200 years on... Marists are in over 80 countries educating over 800,000 students in schools and universities.

In Australia we have 56 Marist schools....

And for that we are grateful.

Today Year 12 as you leave the comfort of our Marist community, you will have to make many decisions about the future. Decisions not just about careers, study and relationships, but decisions about the type of society we want to live in. Year 12, you have been in a Marist community that values the dignity of people.

In 2022 our Marist theme, ***Known and Loved, dignity for all***, challenges our community to consider the other person.

We believe as Marists we are being called not simply to recognise the dignity of all, but let the world know about it by the way we live our lives, for and with others. It's a call to roll up our sleeves and to live our spirituality on the streets.

It includes our neighbour, the student in the second row that often feels invisible, the cleaner on a temporary visa, the family risking their life in a desperate search for a home where they can raise their kids safely, or those suffering from the effects of inequality because of race, sexuality, economic class or gender.

Year 12, as you reflect on your time at Newman College, I hope that your faith and learning experience has given you the tools, the skills and the attitude required to adapt to the world as it continues to change, and to live your life to the full.

St John Henry Newman said –

- ***“To live is to change to be perfect is to have changed often.”***

It is this attitude that can provide a guiding light for a future that is unknown.

In Matthew's Gospel at Mass today Jesus says, *'you are the light of the world...let your light shine for others, that they may see your good deeds'*...

Our Vision for Learning – Shine Through Discovery (let your light shine), has been our guiding light of who you are and what you have sought to achieve.

Let that light stay with you.

As you leave Newman College be assured 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.

Year 12, 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-19 crisis and the support you provided each other,
- your participation in College events, co-curricular, Ministry, carnivals – and who could forget our College Ball?
- your collaboration with your teachers,
- your respect and support of Mr Puljiz, your PCG teachers, College Leadership Team and other students

Many thanks to Joshua and Isabella, 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.

To your families, thank you for your support of our College and enabling us to have the privilege of walking with this fine group of young people.

I acknowledge and give thanks to our Marist community, specifically our Marist Brothers and, here tonight, Br Terry. Our Marist Project in Australia is 150 years old... we give thanks for our Churchlands Brothers community and for their legacy, their grit, their determination and in the decision they made to grow and develop this legacy.

At the end of the poem, Frost challenges all of us who, at that moment, the fork in the road, that change of life

***Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.***

So Year 12, be the people who will make the difference and take the road less travelled.

In conclusion, let us reflect on our College prayer as we go forward:

***Let us grow in wisdom and love
and act with courage to choose what is right.
May we always be open to change
and have the strength to accept
what is new and valuable.
Give us peace and happiness in what we do.***

Farewell Year 12 and we would look forward to watching how God's plan for you is enacted in the years ahead.
