

2019 MASTER'S ADDRESS - ST MARK'S OPENING SERVICE

The Master extended her gratitude and congratulations to the St Mark's Choir as well as the voice soloist Declan Ross, and students Ryan Casey (trumpet solo) and Mostyn Jacob for enabling a performance at this Opening Service.

I am delighted to welcome warmly the new Dean of St Mark's, Dr Areti Metuamate and his wife Dr Jessa Rogers. Ari and Jessa have said that their experience over the last month is that of a genuinely warm, positive and welcoming community, and they are both happy to have talked to so many students and some of our alumni who have made them feel part of St Mark's so quickly.

This service is important not only because it marks the beginning of the academic year, but it also provides an opportunity as Grant said – to chase your dreams - or, in the absence of dreams (per se), to think about your personal goals this year.

The College Club Committee, led by the President, Evie de Jager, together with other student leaders, set their personal and collective goals for Welcome Week - and achieved them. Moreover, they have demonstrated resilience and strength of character, to be able to adjust their goals according to the environment, and, might I add, and the occasional, imposed 'shift in goal -post'.

And, in picking up on the thread of the Gospel reading today - relating to a sense of purpose, and distractions – student leaders have had some tough tests (not as tough as the 'fresher' exam) – and not insignificant pressure from all directions and they have managed to keep themselves from being distracted from their purpose – the purpose of welcoming the new students to St Mark's and the purpose of ensuring that the week is welcoming, fun and inclusive for all.

Speaking about purpose, I'd like to talk a little about our purpose and values - the purpose of St Mark's, historically and today.

Our approach today is very much in line with the vision – or 'dreams' and ambition with which the College was founded.

We were founded as a university residential college of Anglican heritage but always open to all faiths and none.

We were founded as a (residential) academic community affiliated with the University of Adelaide, to offer an all-round educational experience – to live amongst likeminded people, comparable to the great collegiate universities of the world.

We still aspire to this today.

The residential academic community which is St Mark's, and which has always been St Mark's, is one in which as students, you can integrate learning and living with a focus on activities that are academic, more broadly intellectual such as spiritual, sporting, community service, and social. A continuing program of interaction, multicultural exchange, spiritual development, enjoyment, celebration and fun as a community.

We still aim to excel in all these aspects today.

Our *Values* of promoting intellectual enquiry and rigour, a love of learning and a culture of continuous improvement, whilst supporting the well being of each student to enjoy a healthy and happy College experience speaks to the heart of what we aspire. Still, today.

The founders of St Mark's spoke of a broad and liberal education within a collegiate environment.

We still maintain this, today.

In fact, this is even more relevant today than it was then.

In an increasingly globalised world, I believe that a broad, liberal and collegiate education will help equip you, as students, with the skills that you will need for the future. To be able to respond effectively to the change and incredible expansion and growth of knowledge which is a hallmark of the 21st century.

When asked what they were looking for graduate attributes, a recent survey of Australian employers highlighted (to name a few) communication skills, team work, critical thinking and problem solving – and - this is backed up by educational leaders who have long recognised that these skills are encouraged through a liberal and broad (or diverse) education, that helps students to understand their specialty in a broader context.. The learning outside of the classroom, together with extracurricular activities is vital - and this broad education is offered within a collegiate environment.

Our value of fostering respectful relations and our expectations of personal and professional conduct characterised by fairness and integrity for all is characterised by making good decisions about how you behave and how active a bystander you are and as we say each year – “the standard you walk past is the standard you accept” – choosing to take a stand for what is right, not what is popular is a fundamental aspect of leadership and the way a community such as ours should operate to thrive.

As I mentioned at the barbecue for new students and parents, there are challenges with new found freedom - how wisely you use this liberal education – or freedom will reveal your character – not just to others, but to yourself.

One of our missions at St Mark's is to help prepare its students for a place in society and for the labour market of the future – to help nurture those skills required by the future labour force.

With that in mind – we must remember that we do not exist in a vacuum and that we must to consider our place wider Adelaide and the national and international context. For success, and to develop our students further, St Mark's must be in open contact with its environment – where knowledge flows in and out, where there is fertile ground for ideas and talent, forging a link to the realities of society.

There is no certain roadmap to success, either for individuals or for generations. Ultimately it is a matter of judgement, a question of choice. People who make a difference are those who are connected to the world around them. Active, alert, curious and involved.

We cannot predict the future, but we must remember that we are not living during an era of change, but during a change of era.

In closing - I was reminded recently, when speaking with our seventh Honorary Scholar and now General Sir John Monash Scholar, Alexander Makarowsky who (in one of his interviews) quoted the famous saying, attributed to Sir Isaac Newton "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants".

We are fortunate that many giants have gone before us as members of the worldwide St Mark's community.

And, we must stand on their shoulders and aim higher and further. We cannot and must not be complacent in this world of increasing competition and we must seek the benefit of the advice beyond the College Community.

St Mark's needs always - to seek a balance in its life which helps and encourages you as students to maintain a balance so that they achieve to their fullest potential.

And I say this each year also - you are all here for such a short time relative to your whole life, yet it is one of the most critical periods of your life, where you make lifelong friends, establish your work habits, make decisions about your career – where you have the opportunity for endless discussions about the realities of life and a stimulating community in which to belong.

Make the most of your time at St Mark's and remember this is a place where you will belong for life.