

**Address by the Head of St Mark's College, Adelaide, Professor Don Markwell,
at the College Final Service, Christ Church North Adelaide
Saturday 30 October 2021**

Elinor and David¹ – that was magnificent!

Thank you so much for such a beautiful performance. We are all most grateful to you.

Gratitude is, of course, the theme of this thanksgiving service to mark the end of the 2021 academic year for the St Mark's College community.

We have so much to be grateful for.

Here in this beautiful and historic church this afternoon, we are grateful to Christ Church North Adelaide for making us so welcome.

We are grateful for the flowers here, so splendidly arranged by Mrs Mary McLeod, a parishioner of this church who has strong links with St Mark's. Our gym and a College bursary are named for her late husband, Allister McLeod, and she is perhaps best known at College now as Jack Brady's grandmother. Thank you, Mary, for your support for St Mark's, and for arranging these flowers.

Amongst the other parishioners of Christ Church for whose support we are grateful today is the Premier, the Hon. Steven Marshall MP, whose friendship and indeed enthusiasm for St Mark's we appreciate very much.

The links between Christ Church, which was opened in 1849, and St Mark's in fact go back to our founding, the centenary of which we will celebrate in 2025. As well as being actively involved with St Peter's Cathedral, our founding Master – Master from 1925 to 1956 - Sir Archibald Grenfell Price and his family were regular parishioners in this church over many years.

On the northern wall, half-way down, you will see a plaque in memory of our founding Master - "Archie", as he is warmly remembered - and of his wife, Lady Price, without whose personal generosity the early St Mark's College might not have survived; and alongside that plaque are plaques remembering their son, Kenneth, and grandson, Charles – both Old Collegians.

These plaques and others in this Church help to remind us of our great and enduring debt of gratitude to those who have come before us, and especially to our founders and our benefactors, for their vision, their labours, their generosity, and indeed the values which they instilled in the College they created: the values of a residential academic community committed to academic excellence and to nurturing people who would live lives of service to others.

These values are reflected in the College prayer, which we prayed together earlier in this service, and the College hymn, which we are grateful to our Choir for singing, and which was

¹ Elinor Warwick (St Mark's student) on violin and David Heah (Cathedral Organist) on piano had just played the Romance from "The Gadfly" by Dmitri Shostakovich.

written by Archbishop T. T. Reed, an early tutor of the College and later an Honorary Fellow of St Mark's.

The presence here today of members of the Price and Reed families, amongst other distinguished guests, enables us to say again how grateful we are to them for their support for the College, and how gratefully we remember members of their family – as we are grateful for the support for the College of everyone who is here today.

Your presence and your support reflect that ours is a lifelong community of current students, Old Collegians, and friends of the College of all generations.

As we at St Mark's look back on 2021 and ahead to 2022, there is so much to be grateful for.

I am grateful for – and proud of - all that our students have achieved this year –

- superb academic results in first semester
- passionate and dedicated sporting performances throughout the year, from tennis in March to athletics in October, with grit and determination throughout
- the creativity and flair of artistic achievement, both in music reflected, for example, in our Arts Evenings, and in visual arts reflected in Marksenseast
- the wit and warmth of our Variety Evening
- the inspiring community service of our Charitable Foundation, including in fundraising and in working to help those less fortunate than us through Café Outside the Square and Anglicare
- the many social activities organised by the Committee, underpinned by huge amounts of hard work on their part, including such wonderful memory-making events as the winter wonderland Narnia Ball and Mark's Day Out
- the work that has been done on the Gassie to help return it to its former glory
- the many and various activities to promote wellbeing and belonging among our students organised by so many of our student leaders, and
- all the acts of friendship and kindness and camaraderie which students in our community show each other, helping to support each other in hard times as well as good, and building the lifelong friendships which every student, I hope and believe, will take from here.

I am grateful for the outstanding student leaders of 2021 who have worked so hard and so well to make this year a special one for each and every student of St Mark's.

I am grateful also for the outstanding staff who have also worked with such commitment to support our students, including in their academic studies and their personal wellbeing.

As we look ahead to 2022, I am grateful and excited

- for the excellent student leaders who have been elected and appointed for 2022
- for the major expansion in student support we will see with Stuart Meldrum becoming Director of Wellbeing and Dr Rachel Buxton moving to a mentoring and advisory role, with new staff coming on board as well
- for continuing rapid growth in our College enrolments
- for the fact that growing vaccination rates should give us greater scope to have all the activities we want, including those we have had to forego last year and this,
- for the opportunity to welcome our new College caterers, and

- for the fact that next year we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of co-education at St Mark's.

I am grateful also for the scholarships and bursaries which enable students to be at St Mark's who otherwise could not, or would face much more daunting financial challenges.

Many of these scholarships and bursaries are made possible through the gifts – major gifts, Annual Giving gifts, in some cases bequests – of Old Collegians and friends of the College who, grateful for what the College has done for them or for what they have seen it do for others, wish to hand those opportunities on to current and future students.

This is gratitude in action, gratitude that prompts a commitment to the future and a helping hand for others. And each year, our students who are helped with scholarships write letters of thanks to the donors of their scholarships. These letters, all of which I have the privilege to read, provide moving testimony to the truly life-changing impact of such gifts, and are much appreciated by donors.

As the Chaplain alluded to, psychologists have shown that expressing gratitude is good both for the thanked and for the thanker. Indeed, deliberately thinking regularly about what you are grateful for can be one of the most powerful ways of promoting your own wellbeing.

Whether you are leaving the College at the end of this academic year, or returning next year, I hope that you will find the time to reflect on what you are grateful for, and find ways to express that gratitude – your gratitude to friends, to student leaders, to your parents and families, to those who have taught or teach you now, to staff at College, and to others.

To those who are leaving, I say – thank you for all that you have contributed at St Mark's over your time here. We are grateful to you, and we will miss you. Please stay connected with the College over the years and, ultimately, decades to come. As an Old Collegian, you will remain for life a member of the inter-generational community that is St Mark's College.

To those who are returning, as well as those who are leaving, thank you all – thank you for a special and memorable year in 2021, good luck with assignments and exams over the weeks ahead, and best wishes for all that lies ahead.