

Principal's Thanksgiving Address to the Senior School – December 2007

Good evening.

I specifically welcome the newly commissioned Moderator of the Uniting Church of South Australia and the Visitor to the College, the Reverend Rod Dyson. I hope, Reverend Dyson, that your first visit to Pedare is the first of many.

I also welcome the Archbishop of Adelaide, the Most Reverend Jeffrey Driver. Your Grace, we are always delighted to see you.

I acknowledge the Pedare Christian College Board Chair, Dr Howard Harris, and the Deputy Chair, Mr Rick Fogg, and fellow Board members past and present as well as other distinguished guests already welcomed by Mr Jackson.

I thank the parents, guardians, extended families and brothers and sisters for their attendance this evening. I warmly acknowledge my teaching and non-teaching colleagues, including Mr Phil Lewis the Principal of Gleeson College, and, finally, those that bring us all together, the students of Pedare Christian College.

So where does a Principal begin his first annual, Senior School address to the College community? The answer is a simple one and if you guessed I would shape my speech around the students of the College, you would be correct. Our students, our children, are like precious water. In these times of concern for our climate the analogy is a forceful one but no more so than the words of the apostle, Matthew, who sees children and young adults as the greatest of all in the eyes of God's Kingdom. This evening is our thanks and appreciation of their presence among us.

I believe that the first of the four pillars of the Strategic Plan, Governing and Leadership, reflects Matthew's sentiments well and provides a means for me to speak, especially, on the Year 12 students. Mr Jackson has already lauded them however I, too, wish to make comment.

Primarily, the Year 12 students of the College have provided me with a memory of 2007 that is most vivid. All of the students here would well recall the last day of the Year 12s as students, celebrating in this very place. You would remember their abundant enthusiasm and their musical élan as much as you might their openness, spontaneity and friendliness throughout the year. They were perfectly represented by our two College Captains of 2007, Rachael Linke and Jerren Heng. I would like to compliment all the Year 12s for their support of Pedare this year while also acknowledging our College Captains for 2008, Jacqui Harley and Alex Burwell.

In other areas of leadership the Community Captains, at the Senior School, the Middle School and the Junior School, have been cheerful, diligent and resourceful. The service to those in need has

underpinned the Communities' activities with World Vision, Uniting Care and Anglicare among the recipients of student generosity throughout the year.

The second pillar of the Strategic Plan is Learning Development and I highlight several, among many, achievements by students of the College.

The international success of the Year 8 students who participated in a global Science and Mathematics Study involving 350,000 students in 60 countries led to nine Pedare students ranking in the top 1% in Maths and four in Science of all Australian students. The success of Megan Bleeze in the Premier's Anzac Prize, James Fox's Prime Minister's Award for Skills Excellence and Jarryd Maddeford's Australian Vocational Prize also deserve our recognition. Naturally, we all wait anxiously, for the results of the recently completed SACE examinations.

While these attainments are imposing it is the day-to-day learning of students that produce such pinnacles. The 'PODS' programme commencing in the Junior Primary School, the extensive curriculum offerings of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme, evident in innovations like the Year 9's Maths Boat Creation or the Medieval Fair are complemented by the Science Fair or the EXCEL programme. These initiatives link with the scope of senior school programmes in VET and SACE subjects, through the Shared Facilities on the campus. The Australian Business Week and its association with Rotary Australia or the exchanges with General Motors Holden identify the more recent opportunities for senior students at the College. For those fortunate enough to be dined by Ms Kuhlmann's Year 11 Hospitality class the opportunities extended beyond the students.

The College's third strategic pillar, Pastoral Development, remains one of the most distinguishing aspects of life for a student at the College. The Communities of Brooklyn, Eldergreen, Greenwith, Hillcote and Surrey give every one a sense of place. The students have the comfort and support of some gifted educators and in the instance of Eldergreen, the satisfaction of retaining, for the fourth consecutive year, the Community Cup. The Spring Carnival, Battle of the Bands, the Pedal Prix and more broadly, the success of the College in winning the Anglican Cup for the third consecutive year are worthy of note. However, the enterprising and spirited competition in other interschool sports, including debating, represent forums beyond the classroom where camaraderie and companionship find an integral place in the busy, yet aspiring lives of today's young people.

The contribution, by students, as writers and photographers under the guidance of Ms Wendy Klassen and Mrs Sally Tilly, led to the inaugural publication of the Pedare Portal. Such co-operation between staff and students is indicative of the general harmony of the College and the outcome, in this instance, an excellent one.

The parents have also been busy. As usual the Parents' and Friends' have provided welcome support and the added impetus and success of the Quiz Night, the Melbourne Cup Day luncheon and the Christmas Arts Fair have directly contributed to the newly introduced Junior Schooling Music Programme. The outcome is to be the purchase of about 30 brass instruments for the Year 5 students.

Visits during the year by Mr Zappia, Mr Day, Mrs Draper, Mr Rudd and Mr Smith ensured that the political sphere found significant support and I encourage all our students to be engaged in the notion of public and community service. Australia has freedoms that only your continued support will ensure and can represent Christian service and selflessness in our society.

Pedare is a nationally recognised Safe School with reason. Not resting on its laurels of previous years the Success for Boys Programme has led to such boy-centred innovations like Frogwatch or Music Appreciation and even the creation of graphic novels as a way to enhance literacy. Due to Ms Mary Lange's wonderful organisation the large number of camps have also been well attended and is further evidence that my own education foundations seem poor by comparison.

The fourth and final pillar, the resources of the College, are undergoing considerable change. Construction on the Junior Schooling Administration building, financed in part by a Federal Government grant, will commence in the New Year with the carpark and the Resource Centre also experiencing substantial upgrading. These projects are accompanied by extensive re-working of space on the Surrey Farm campus and the intention for a further, major Middle School building project in 2009. Until then, two new transportable classrooms have been purchased to accommodate increasing numbers of students on the Surrey Farm campus and represent the ongoing choice by many parents to seek an Anglican and Uniting Church-based education.

In the classroom the successful Investing in Our Schools grant application for technology innovation will result in 17 interactive learning and teaching mediums across the College. For those wishing to use the jargon these sets comprise Smartboards, digital projectors and laptops. An additional computer classroom on the Surrey Farm campus brings the number of computer suites to four and emphasises the importance placed on the internet in the modern age of teaching and learning.

In staffing, the opportunities for teachers in our contemporary, global world means more movement. Pedare is no less blessed or burdened by this. A number of Surrey Farm staff will take leave next year. Accordingly, I wish Ms Janette Lange, Ms Nicki Slocombe, Ms Susie Carter, Ms Carly Brooks, Mrs Anita Vincent and Mr Shane Beitz great adventures. Other contract teachers throughout the College venture elsewhere and I wish to publicly thank them for their service this year. More permanently, Mr Tony Cretan, our Youth Chaplain, Mr Shane Poole and Mrs Trish Prenzler leave for other schools while Mrs Ottley Chesterfield will take leave for term one before her

retirement. Mr Geoff Yeend also ends a long association with Pedare and we bid farewell to Mrs Heather Lockett, Mr Darren Nenne and Mrs Lesley Evans of the Junior School.

Mrs Prenzler, Mr Yeend, Mrs Lockett and Mrs Chesterfield, as a founding teacher, have been long serving staff whose legacy of professionalism and care will be a cherished and lasting one. On behalf of the College we thank you.

Fortunately, we now look forward to the arrival of our new College staff for 2008 confident in the knowledge that the departure of great teachers welcomes the arrival of equally great teachers; most prominent among them is the first appointed Chaplain to the College, Mr John Morton. Similarly, we look forward to Dr David Wescombe-Down's full return to work.

While concentrating on our staff I would wish to highlight two who have achieved significant professional recognition this year. Firstly, Ms Merrawyn James has been awarded an Endeavour Language Fellowship. This award will sponsor Ms James to China during the break where she will continue to develop her Mandarin language skills. Also, Mrs Gillian Edwards, our much loved Director of Pastoral Development, has been honoured by Adelaide University's Excellence in Teaching award. From a wide field of nominated teachers Mrs Edwards' work in the Success for Boys program and her leadership of the pastoral program at the College has been appropriately acknowledged. I congratulate these ladies.

In conclusion...

I thank you all for your attendance this evening. I offer my heartfelt gratitude to my colleagues at the College, especially Mr Jackson, Mrs Monceaux, Ms D'Angelo, Mrs Edwards, Mrs Mullen-Davey, Mr Zielonka and Mrs Kirk. I also publicly thank the Board for their patience with a new Principal. May I thank Dr Harris and Mr Fogg for their support.

Finally, I wish you all a restful, joyful and holy Christmas and hope that you will spend this time with family and friends. To the students of the College I thank you for your presence among us and remind you that Mr Jackson's choice of Ecclesiastes 11 implied that you should be yourself always, just make it your best self.

Thank you.