

SPEAKING NOTES FOR LAVALLA COLLEGE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF MARIST EDUCATION

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly to you all today and to pass on my congratulations to the community on this milestone event.

I acknowledge the presence here today of Bishop Patrick, Priests of the Diocese, members and representatives of the Brigidine Sisters, the Presentation Sisters, Marist Fathers and Marist Brothers.

60 years of commitment is worth celebrating. When it is 60 years of commitment to Catholic Education and all that has entailed it is a time for joyous celebration. And what better way to do that than as we have today in the celebration of Eucharist together.

When preparing for today and putting together these few words, I contemplated the fact that to have reached this point has taken the combined energies over decades of many people with a deep commitment to the catholic education of young people in this particular area of the sale diocese.

As we have heard from both Bishop Patrick and Brother Michael, the early work of the Brigidine Sisters and the Presentation Sisters have played an essential role in ensuring that Catholic Education, as it resides today in Lavalla Catholic College, is the combined work, commitment, faith and faithfulness of many, including successive bishops of the diocese over many more years than the 60 we are celebrating today

There are also many priests, religious and lay people – teachers and parents - who have all played their part in the story and the history of Lavalla

As is my want, I invariably go to the writings and commentary of Pope Francis and he had this to say, when commenting on creativity:

If to build something we always undo and step on what others have done before us, how can we create something solid? (annual message to educational communities – 2003)

Being creative means being able to read the signs of the times and it has been the reading of those signs over many years that brought about the various changes in the provision of catholic secondary education in this part of the diocese.

These changes took courage as well creative thinking. There is courage and creativity in the decision to leave a place and hand on the responsibility to others to continue the story, just as there is courage and creativity in choosing to stay.

And there is also trust that the sacrifices, the commitment and the achievements will continue to be honoured and not forgotten by subsequent generations.

There is an important message we can hear today as we not only celebrate what has been but what *is* at this very moment. We have today a vision of the future. That future is represented by and in the students gathered here in this space.

And in referencing this message I would like to again quote the words of Pope Francis and ask all the students of the college to bear this message in mind;

Human history, our history, the history of every one of us is never finished;

It never runs out of possibilities;

It is always opening to the new, to what, until now we'd never even had in mind;

To what seemed impossible

As students of Lavalla Catholic College and therefore the recipients of a rich narrative of human endeavour, which ensured that Catholic Education in this region survived and thrived, it can be your future if you so choose it to be creative, committed, faithful to the gospel message and courageous in all you do.

You can choose to read the signs of *your* times and respond with joy and enthusiasm to what life offers you in the coming years. And you can choose, as others have before you, to live lives committed to something beyond the ordinary. Each of you has extraordinary in you. My prayer is that you find that piece of extraordinary and use it creatively.

Thank you again for the invitation to be here today to celebrate with you.

My warmest congratulations

Mrs Maria Kirkwood

Director of Catholic Education

Diocese of Sale