

# Timothy Gregory

College Captain

Speech Day, 4 November 2016

Good afternoon Father Rector, Heads of school Mr Coffey and Mr Fitzpatrick, Guest of Honour Suzanne Le Mire, special guests, staff, students, ladies and gentlemen.

Reflecting on what I was going to say to you all today, I was mostly struck by the feeling that I'm not really in a position to speak from a great deal of experience. Let's be real: you've heard from people with decades of life experiences, while I'm an eighteen year old kid with little to no idea what I'm doing or where I'm going. I don't think I'm particularly qualified to give any kind of advice. With that said, watch me now say things that look suspiciously close to advice.

The biggest thing I have to say in reflection upon my time at Ignatius is thank you, so that's going to be my theme for today: gratitude. It's a quality at the heart of the Ignatian tradition, as I'm sure you've heard a number of times, Saint Ignatius himself believed ingratitude to be the root of all sin. Coming to about the same point in the year as we are at speech day itself – we're near the end, it feels like it's been a while, and we're all tired– it's important to step back and appreciate everything that we have. As a part of the class of 2016, this means saying goodbye, and, of course, thank you.

To the students, of course, for being part of such a wonderful school culture, and the untold efforts and support of all of the parents and families, who I'm sure can never truly be thanked enough. But in particular today I want to say thank you to the staff, who are the true heart and soul of the school. Even if you were to doubt everything about the College, I defy you to say they don't care, and it's that care that is the foundation for such a strong school identity. Through everything that they do the love that they have for this community shines through, as you've seen in the speakers before me.

I can look back upon the range of experiences that this community has given me, and there's a great diversity of them – sport, music, immersions, both inside of class and outside, there have been some great memories. But what's great about the Ignatian community is how clear it is that it goes far beyond simply what I've experienced. For any of the sports I've played,

immersions and retreats I've gone on, or other groups I've been in, there are those that I haven't, but yet even while I'm not involved in them I can see how the community and friendships develop because of them. Amid all the diversity and uniqueness there is a constant tone that arises throughout. What this means is that going through Saint Ignatius is an intensely personal experience, that's basically shaped by what it is you want to do, what you want to get involved with, but at the same time there's an overwhelming sense of community spirit. This shouldn't be taken for granted.

An important thing to note about this is that there's many different ways to go through the College, and ultimately that should be determined by yourself. At events such as today the spotlight does get thrown onto people who do a lot of different things and are always busy, and I have to admit I fall into that category, but there shouldn't be any obligation to get involved in that way. At the heart of the Ignatian tradition should be the attitude and values you hold, and there is a multitude of ways in which that can be reflected in your actions. If you're mad enough to not enjoy chess, don't do it. If you've never tried it but – rightly – think it could be amazing, just go for it. At the end of the day though, the most Ignatian thing that you can do is make your actions and contributions your own. I really appreciate having been in an environment where I felt supported to do what I enjoy, and the extra mile the staff go to make that happen.

That's not to say don't be challenged, but I honestly doubt people will be able to avoid that too much. To steal, ahem, expand upon a lovely analogy a previous school Captain used, school is like juggling. However, while Tom's analogy of the 3 juggling balls, body, mind, and spirit is nice, I think going through school it's often felt more like there are eight or so. And they're all on fire and at any point one of them might explode. And I really don't know how to juggle. I won't demonstrate that one on stage. The point is, it can be hard. However, if you somehow manage to cruise through with no troubles at all, I dare say people would pay you good money to find out how, but more importantly you'd have missed the point. It's well recognised that growth comes through being challenged, and Saint Ignatius will do just that.

At the end of all of this, here's the takeaway: firstly, thank you all, for everything. And secondly, you do you, just make sure it's the best you that you can be.

Go set the world alight,

Thank you