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College Captain

Speech Day 30 October 2014

Good afternoon Fr Rector, Mr Coffey head of Senior School, Mr Fitzpatrick Head of Junior School, Distinguished Guests, teachers, staff, parents, friends and students.

As students of Saint Ignatius College, we are constantly reminded that we are different. Not simply because of our striking red and blue blazers, or the girls dress lengths which are, yes, well below the knee. But rather, things are done a little differently here at Ignatius. We have a certain 'style' or 'spirit' which is difficult to describe to those not familiar with our Ignatian ethos and ideals.

When questioned, "What is so special about Ignatius?" We often make mention of phrases such as "being men and women for others." Perhaps we speak about 'education of the whole person' or being people of 'competence, conscience and compassion.'

Whilst these expressions do have a nice ring to them, how many of us actually stop and reflect on the meaning of these mottos?

With that said, trying to articulate what makes us unique as Ignatians in just a few minutes is an extraordinary feat, and one which surely cannot be done justice.

In my efforts to find something new and inspiring to say to you all today, I found myself constantly drawn back to something said by Pedro Arrupe and the truth it holds to us as Ignatians;

"Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything."

Saint Ignatius College is undoubtedly successful for several reasons, but ultimately, it is love; a love of the College, a love of learning, a love of life, a love of God and a love for one another which underpins what we do here as Ignatius, and it is this love and bond which I am so grateful to have been a part of for the last thirteen years.

Firstly, to the staff, including the groundsman, Mrs McRae in the tuckshop, Mrs Fleming in the book room, Ms George, Mrs Reilly, the IT staff, Ms Beinke in the sick room and all the staff at Saint Ignatius College, your work does not go unnoticed.

On behalf of all the students, I would like to thank you for your constant love, dedication and support. One needs only to listen to the words of Mr Coffey at every Rector's assembly or witness the competitive but loving nature between all the house mentors or Mr Dales trying to know his students, by learning what adventures they got up to on the weekend, to see examples of this love.

You are more than just staff, but you are our friends. I can assure you that without your friendship and your genuine compassion, generosity and sense of humour, we would not be the same people sitting here today. So I thank you.

A special thank you must also go to our Year director, Mrs Kingsborough for all her support and good humour throughout the year. Mrs Kingsborough, you will be truly missed by the College and we wish you the best for the next stage in your life.

Now to the students of the College; I truly believe that the love and concern that we display for one another, is extremely unique to us as Ignatians. I would like to thank you all for your constant support and involvement in activities such as Battle of the bands, Athletics Carnivals, Blue Day and House performances, as well as your constant support shown to us in general. I know that as a younger student, it was always exciting to speak to a Year twelve and let me assure you, that the same can be said of the reverse. Saint Ignatius College is unique in that so many friendships are formed between different year levels and this is tribute to the loving nature of our College as a community.

To the departing class of 2014; what an incredible journey it has been! There have been many examples of what has defined us as a cohort; we have sung 'How rich are the depths of God' on every occasion, the boys have passionately played handball every recess and lunch as if it were their last time and the girls? Well the girls have managed to pull off some ridiculous hairstyles to have the College's very first, 'Miley Monday.'

Some may question our music and fashion choices, but to me, these memories are examples of the love and friendship that we display for one another and for that, I would like to thank each of you. I could not have hoped for a more loving and supportive group of people with whom to have grown up with and experienced school with.

Whilst I know that some are hesitant to leave the familiarity and love of school, I believe that we are ready. We have the Ignatians ideals instilled within us which cannot be removed with our red or blue blazers, and we are ready to step out, grow and become the men and women that we are called to be.

In the years to come, we will all go down different paths, to different universities, perhaps some will travel interstate or overseas, but regardless of where life takes each of us, we are always united by a special love and bond which can never be broken. We are united as Ignatians.

Much like the lyrics of an INXS song, nothing;

“Can never tear us apart.”

Finally, to the remaining students, YOU are the future of this College. I could stand here and tell you what has been said by many before me, that your time will go too quickly, but you won't believe me. In fact, you will often feel that time is not going quickly enough. Lessons will feel like they are dragging on, your assessments will seem to never stop and holidays will seem a mile away.

There's a reason why mottos and quotes resonate with people. It is because, much like a great poem, mottos, quotes and sayings are able to encapsulate a large web of emotions in a short, sharp and shiny way as Mr O'Brien often says.

So, if I could leave you with any advice, the remaining students, it would be to live by another Latin motto that we often hear;

Carpe Diem!

I hope that this has not become somewhat of a cliché as I truly believe in seizing each day as it comes. Spend the remaining years cherishing all the opportunities that you are given and living your life to the fullest, and I guarantee you that school will be some of the best years of your life. I urge you not to worry about making mistakes because fear will be the only thing which can stop you.

“Only when we are no longer afraid do we begin to live.”

We as Ignatians are constantly reminded that we are different and describing what it is which makes us unique is a difficult task. But I sincerely hope that at some point, we all stop and reflect on what Ignatius has meant or means to us. I hope that we are able to find some truth and meaning in our College sayings. I hope that we are able to look around and see all the love that surrounds us. For it is this 'love' which binds us as Ignatians.

“Fall in love, stay in love and it will decide everything.”