



KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1

NOTE: There is a prepared Text written for this presentation available from the ACCS office. Because of its focus on the slide presentation, this transcript differs somewhat from the written text. Readers would do well to have both texts in front of them.

Thank you everybody,

This is novelty for me, sitting down, I feel like the king of Arabia, but anyway, we'll try and, if I get restless, I'll get up and walk around. As a Jesuit, I'm an obedient man – you might find that surprising – but I'm obedient and that's what the committee wants me to do, to sit down.

Whenever I'm introduced as generously as Genevieve has done, I recall the story of a little ten-year-old boy in one of our primary schools in Melbourne, at [Xavier] College, who had just started at the school in what we call grade five, and he came home at the end of the first week and his mother was very keen to find out how he was getting on. So he talked about basketball and he talked about his friends and his cricket. She said: "But what about your teachers?"

He said: "Oh, I've got two teachers: I've got a Jesuit in the morning and a human being in the afternoon." [audience laughs]

I'm going to take off my watch. Brandon is giving me signs of ten minutes to go and five minutes to go. We didn't have that when I was a baby Jesuit. The old Jesuit retreat directors would take off their watches and then disregard them till the next hour. But I will, I'll try and keep an eye on it, Brandon.

You don't need to take any notes, just sit back and - hopefully - enjoy. I've prepared a text and I'll certainly give that to Katherine and the committee, so that you'll have it available to you, if you want it. But thank you, first of all, for the invitation to be here. I love the journal and I was very interested to hear what the Archbishop said this morning and I thought: "My God, I think I should go home now!" [audience laughs]. He's stolen a lot of my thunder [audience laughs]. But it's not easy, actually, I've put a lot of work into this, I hope you'll find it valuable, but it's not easy to say something fresh and perhaps, even mildly inspirational, on the much visited theme of the character of Catholic schools. It's quite a thick speech which reminds me of a cartoon that one of my staff in Sydney sent me [cartoon is shown, audience laughs]. That obviously doesn't apply to you.

If there is anything of inspiration in this talk, a lot of it will come from people like Pope Francis, and you've got a liberal supply

of quotations in your journal, he's been an amazing influence on our Church and on our world, really, in the last two years. The writers of the Vatican document "Education today and tomorrow – a renewing passion" and if you haven't read it, it's an excellent document coming out of Rome.

I'd like to reflect briefly on that word: character, because a lot of material has been written over the years, well before Jesus. Aristotle was teaching that moral virtues, like crafts, are acquired by practice and habit, we become builders by building and lyre players by playing the lyre. We become virtuous and strong of character by doing virtuous acts. In the thirteenth century, that great Dominican theologian, Thomas Aquinas, said that most of what we do primarily affects us. If done poorly, it worsens us. For example, a good run makes the runner run better, a poised dance makes the dancer dance better. In effect, we become what we do.

The archbishop spoke a lot about values this morning, and rightly so, but virtues too, are values in action, aren't they? Some say sport develops character, we used to argue about that one in school, others say sport reveals character. I like Os Guinness' definition in his book *When no one sees: the importance of character in an age of image*.

"Character is what we are when no one sees but God." What a great definition. I'm reminded also of the story of some children lining up for lunch in the cafeteria of a Catholic primary school, and at the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The supervising nun made a note and posted it on the apple tray: "Take only one. God is watching," she said. [Audience laughs]. Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip biscuits. A child had written a note: "Take all you want. God is watching the apples." [Audience laughs]

So character, I think, lies deeper than our values and far deeper than our philosophy. Our character is the deepest expression of what constitutes us as unique individuals. Character is our personal seal, our indelible imprint. I love those words of the Song of Songs in chapter eight, which are often read in marriages: "set me like a seal upon your heart, like a seal upon your arm, for love is as strong as death." That's what character is about.

In Australia we have another way perhaps of describing character and it comes from the theme of Songlines, which are song tracks, as Bruce Chatwin describes in his novel 'Songlines', "Each totemic ancestor, while travelling through the country, was thought to have scattered a trail of words and musical notes along the lines of his footprints, and these Dreaming-tracks lay over the land as 'ways' of communication between the most far-flung tribes. 'A Song', Arkady said, 'was both map and direction finder. Providing you knew the song, you could always find your way across the country.' Isn't that beautiful? And I think that's what we are trying to do in schools, in Catholic schools, to provide Songlines, maps, direction finders.

We had a lovely lady in charge of Catholic education in the Diocese of Parramatta, her name was Dr Ann Clark - she was actually on our Riverview school council in Sydney too. When she died in 1997 and her great friend, Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, preached the homily about her, he said some beautiful words about her. He said: "From the time she was a little girl, she heard and loved the song of Jesus. This is our most important 'songline' in Catholic education, of course, our constant reference point in the Word, Jesus himself." The bishop came back to that again and again: that's our 'songline'. "In the beginning was the Word." Like the apostles, when we are lost and know not where to turn to, we can say: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Jesus, our lighthouse and our 'songline'.

So, what more can we say about our seal, about our indelible imprint, our 'songline' in Catholic education? I'm going to try and say that there are several pathways to ensure that we are walking along the correct 'songline'. In attempting to describe these different pathways, I want to focus not on the 'what' of Catholic education, but the 'how'. Let's focus on the 'how' of Catholic education rather than the 'what'. In the past, Christianity has been very strong on the 'what' but very weak on the 'how'. The Catholic catechism says it beautifully: "We do not believe in formulas, but in those realities they express, which faith allows us to touch. In other words, our Catholic faith is a way of seeing the world." And I will keep coming back to that.

As Clodovis Boss said, "Faith is not a landscape to be seen, but eyes for seeing. It is not a world, but a gaze upon the world. It is not a book to read, but a grammar for reading – for reading all books."

One of my Jesuits education colleagues in Australia has made the same point. He said: "Catholic identity is a verb. It is not a brand, but a way of acting and doing." Isn't that a good way of describing Catholic identity? As the bishop was talking this morning about love, I like to say that too in a lot of marriages that I celebrate, love is a verb, it's a doing word, it's marathon of the heart. That's what Catholic identity is too: it's a marathon, it's not an emotional sprint.

An Australian – I'm talking a lot about Australia at the moment – an Australian social anthropologist, Gerald Arbuckle, who

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is a Marist priest, very influential in this area, he talks about Catholic identity as an on-going process of becoming in a particular cultural context. And the bishop, at least for me, painted that cultural context of Singapore very starkly this morning and very helpfully. But it's not something static. It's like Jesuit formation. You're never formed, you've got to wrestle with it and how you wrestle is who you are. You eventually get there. And Gerry Arbuckle argues, interestingly and, for me, very helpfully, that one of the best ways we can get at Catholic identity, that we can make things change in schools, is through storytelling. He quotes [Steven Denning] of the World Bank, he's writing about the difficulties of educational change. I'm glad they've got them, because we've got them in schools too. He said: "Why storytelling? Nothing else worked. Charts left listeners bemused, prose remained unread, dialogue was just too laborious and slow. Time after time, when faced with the task of persuading a group of managers in a large organisation to get enthusiasm about a major change, I found that storytelling was the only thing that worked." Interesting. What's our story, in our particular school? Gerry Arbuckle takes this argument one step further by demonstrating that Jesus is the master of storytelling, through the use of parables. I think it was Michael Heher, who's an American diocesan priest, who wrote a lovely book on "The Lost Art Of Walking On Water", how about that for a great title. He said that "Jesus expected his disciples to chew on parables." Now, the truth is something - and I think the Archbishop was referring to it this morning - that we pursue, we've never got it. Words are not adequate enough to capture it. And that's what parables do, when you think about it. You know, they provoke you, they stir you, they make you feel uncomfortable too from time to time, as they should. Good storytelling builds on the experience of one's listeners – obviously they hadn't listened very well in that factory. And this is a lovely way of describing it too: that parables are spring board stories, leading people to discover the answers for themselves.

A lovely book written in 1995 by Vincent Donovan who is a Holy Spirit Father, in South Africa, he talks about evangelisation as a process of bringing the Gospel to people where they are, not where you'd like them to be." A very challenging book this is. And, again, "when the Gospel reaches a people where they are, their response to that Gospel is the Church in a new place, and the song they will sing is that new, unsung song, that unwritten melody that haunts us all". This is the Church, in a new place today.

Pope John Paul II agrees with this and in one of his documents, *Redemptoris Missio*, talks about the new *areopagoi*. It's in your journal, Francis does too, that we need to bring the Gospel to where the people are converging in modern societies. Paul in Acts 17 goes to the *areopagos*, that's the central place for the Greeks. That's where we have to go.

"Two things must come together to lead us to that new place – the gospel and the sacred arena of people's lives." The sacred arena of people's lives - where are people at today? So, for me, our Catholic faith is a way of seeing the world.

There's actually a Jesuit bishop in Australia – we don't have many bishops in the Society, but, we've got one in Australia, a dear friend of mine, [Greg O'Kelly] – he sent me this recently about seeing [speaker shows slides, audience laughs]. Thank God you're laughing.

I think humour is a very important part of spirituality, you know. Wasn't it Nietzsche who said: "I'll believe in Christianity when



you Christians show me in your demeanour and your faces that you believe in the resurrection." How about that? So, again another bit of saying.

[Speaker shows slides] And two Jesuits meeting one another, Father General and Pope Francis. At the end of his first year, it would have been November 2013, the Pope turned up to the main congregational leaders from all around the world, and he was just going to have a cup of tea with them but it ended up in a conversation of a couple of hours and they asked the Pope this question: "If you were in our place, what would you do to respond to your call to go to the frontiers?"

And he had some very interesting responses: "The church is grown by witness, not by trying to convert people by proselytism." And he talks about "the witness of generosity, detachment sacrifice, the witness of self-forgetfulness in order to care for others."

"The Church must be attractive. Wake up the world. Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living." And, perhaps, the most interesting thing is, I have been thinking of this for quite a while: "Spend time walking on the periphery, in order really to become acquainted with the reality and life-experiences of people." That's a good question: where is the periphery for us in our Catholic schools in Singapore? Is it the front fence, the back fence? You'll be surprised. And this I what he said: "I'm convinced of one thing: the great changes in history were realised when reality was seen not from the centre but rather from the periphery. It is the most concrete way of imitating Jesus who went to all the peripheries."

The most recent book on Francis is called "The Great Reformer" by Austin Ivereigh – I think that's how you pronounce his name – a very fine book, well-researched, beautifully written. He quotes the Pope saying in Brazil, 2013, "The way we see is always affected by the way we direct our gaze." The question from the Latin American bishop was: "How are we going to look at reality in order to see it?" And the answer from the Pope was: "With the eyes of discipleship."

I remember back in the 1970s our General Father Pedro Arrupe was invited by our [scholastic centre], our Jesuit students, to come and give a talk, in Europe. Now, the only problem was that they only gave him two weeks' notice. And, for a man like that... I mean, his diary is all filled up at least a year ahead, so he couldn't go but he wrote them a beautiful letter, and he said:



"My hope for you, young men, is that you learn to see the world with the eyes of Christ." And I think that's what Francis is saying here, isn't he? With the eyes of discipleship. So, what distinguishes Jesus from all others is his ability to cross all kinds of borders in order to share the life of others and be in solidarity with them.

Back in 2010, when Mary McKillop became St Mary McKillop, a Josephite nun, wonderful educator in Australia, our former prime minister, who was deposed that year, went to Rome and he was accompanied by one of our Jesuits, Fr Frank Brennan, and, when he got there, "Look" – he said to Frank – "I'd like to meet Father General." And Frank said: "Oh, yes, that can be arranged, yes, certainly." So that's what he did. And he asked Father General: "What's the main priority facing the Jesuits today?"

And Father General said this: our number one priority is combating – what he called "the globalisation of superficiality." How about that? The globalisation of superficiality. And there are all sorts of forms of superficiality, of surface living. So we've got to help our young people to separate what's real from the plastic, separating the lasting from the ephemeral, and separating what is essential from indulgence, the fluff and the vacuous. I've pinched that from [J. Chesterton] but I think that it's very good.

I've got a friend who sends me these crazy cartoons: "Will Sir be lining his own pockets?" How about that? And some of you might be asking this question coming up: when is he going to finish? Are we there yet? [Slides – audience laughs]

I've noticed you've got a question this afternoon that picks that up, something about mirroring: "How does Fr Gleeson's sharing mirror what is happening or not happening in Singapore's Catholic Schools today?" I'm not sure that cartoon will help you much but it's there.

So, we're at the frontiers for our schools in 2015 and back in 2009 our General gave a wonderful talk on the 150th

anniversary of Jesuit education on the Philippines, and he talked about two frontiers: the frontier of depth – the opposite to superficiality, and the frontier of universality – which is what Catholic schools, Catholic identity is all about, universality, openness to all. And these are some of the things he said: “Jesus always responded in depth.” What about in Mark chapter two, the story of the man being brought through the roof? I often wondered what the owner of that house thought about that, when he saw these chaps pulling back the roof and lowering their friend in front of Jesus. But Jesus goes on to respond to a deeper need: He forgives his sins. Jesus judged but never condemned. He offered healing, not blame.

I love these words of Ron Rolheiser, talking about the touch of Jesus, describing that as being a good definition of the Eucharist. In the Eucharist “we touch the hem of Christ’s garment and are held to his heart. What happens there is something beyond words and understanding, though not beyond love.”

Jesus always responded in depth. And, from our own Ignatian or Jesuit documents, Christ is the water of life, Christ’s dialogue with the Samaritan woman took him ‘beyond the river banks of what was culturally and religiously familiar’. He goes to the periphery. “He who knows about depth knows about God”.

So, in order to help us get to understand more the frontier of depth, the general asked four questions in that talk and they are very good questions for Catholic educators.

1. How deeply do we respond to our students’ needs, their deepest hunger for meaning and purpose?
2. How deeply do we help our students see? The real beyond the virtual? See people in real need and on the margins?
(The men didn’t see that man at the bottom of the garden)
3. How deeply do we invite our students to think? (versus fundamentalism and fanaticism)
4. And finally, how deeply do we form our students’ inner persons?

When the pope was first interviewed in the middle of 2013, he was asked: “What element of Ignatian spirituality helps you live your ministry?”

He said: “Discernment. It’s one of the things that worked inside St Ignatius. For him it is an instrument of struggle in order to know the Lord and follow him more closely.”

So the test of our education as Jesuits (and, I put in brackets, Singapore education) is if we are able to produce people of discernment.

We can elaborate that, but that capacity to look at life in depth and choose the important things. You know, often decisions are made between three or four goods, aren’t they? We can all make a decision rightly between good and evil but it’s often three or four goods: what’s going to have the greatest impact, the greatest long term value? That’s what the sermon’s about. I heard somebody say that last year, at a conference I was at in Rockhampton, Fr John Grace, the Vicar General.

“Would that our Australian shores were as welcoming as they are protected.” Which is a question about universality and the frontier they’re of. So, in picking that up, our General has asked four questions about universality:

1. Do our students, as a result of their time with us, end up with a broader sense of belonging and responsibility than their own families, classes, clans?
2. Can we break out of our narrow sense of belonging to this particular school?
3. Can we break out of our particular school system and serve those outside the Jesuit (read Catholic Education Office) system in Singapore (read other Jesuit Conference Asia Pacific Provinces and regions)?

Universality is another word for Catholicity. And, finally,

4. Can we break out of our concern for the Philippines (read Australia and Singapore) and start thinking of how more we can serve the wider world of Asia around us?

They’re four great questions about the Catholic identity of our schools. Moving on a little bit and talking about Catholic education as helping young people and everyone involved to see – that’s what Thomas Groome says and I like that. “But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear!” You know, we talk about it as the sacramental vision, we have a very sacramental tradition in the Catholic Church, which is wonderful. It’s a big word but it really means “finding God in

all things and being found by God in all things. You know, being found by God in all things really means allowing God to tap us on the shoulders.

As the Archbishop was talking this morning, I was thinking of Karl Reinher's words: "God is present in the world long before our preaching and teaching". I used to think as a baby Jesuit priest, that I was going to bring God to the world. Sorry, Chris, no, you're quite wrong: God's already there, your task as a teacher and preacher is to enliven that presence in people. That's our task as teachers.

"God comes looking for us and we go looking for God through the ordinary and every day." That's what the sacramental vision's all about. The capacity to see God in the heart of all creation. I think that's at the heart, really, of Catholic education.

Daniel O'Leary – you've got to be an Irishman with a name like O'Leary, but he's a parish priest in the North of England, up in Yorkshire – he has a lovely way of saying it: "It's a graced way of parting the bales of our complicated lives and of perceiving God at the heart of all creation. This sacramental vision happens when we must love the world more, not less, that is how we save it. And in all our efforts nothing goes to waste." We might say 'through incarnational eyes'. What on earth does that mean? I think it means identifying "God's signature on everything around us, to see God's face behind every face, to discover the lover – God who comes to us disguised as our lives."

I heard an interview when I was in Brisbane a few years ago, on the radio, it was a man by the name Graham Long, he was being interviewed, and he was the pastor of a huge city church in Sydney, called "The Wayside Chapel". They have hundreds of people coming through their church every day, some getting a meal, some getting counsel, a lot of them very desperate and homeless people. He had an interesting life, he talked about himself as a lapsed atheist, which I thought was interesting, and he said: "My challenge, as a pastor in this church, is to see the beauty in every face, long after the owner of that face has given up in it." And, to me, that's a beautiful way of talking about love without conditions. To see God's face behind every face. "What the incarnation is saying is that henceforward God is exactly where we are – in this beautiful hall in St Gabriel's – and only there is He to be found." Karl Rahner said that. Painting of Christ in a famous hotel in Melbourne.

God is simply right where we are. . . . Joan Chittister said, "The problem is we're always looking elsewhere." Isn't God clever, hiding Himself in the last possible place where we would look, namely, our hearts? We're always looking elsewhere, at least, I am. You might be wiser spiritual people than I am. But seeing can have its problems, as this graphic shows.

You know, part of seeing is and really teachers help you do that, is to stretch your imagination. one of our greater stories in Southern Australian was by a man, a very controversial man, by the name of Manning Clark. He wasn't a very happy man, he didn't have a happy education. But he said that, when he was at school, in Melbourne Grammar, there were two sorts of teachers: there were those who were life straighteners, they can straighten you, they taught for exams, they could not look beyond the textbook – and sadly, they were the majority – but there was a minority, two or three, he said, they were life enlargers. They are the great teachers, who can stretch your imagination. And I love these words of Thomas Moore: "We are condemned to live out what we cannot imagine." And another writer that I'm very fond of was a lady by the name of Kathleen Norris, a Presbyterian writer from America: "We have become afraid of the imagination, thereby settling for false certitudes and unable to embrace ambiguity and mystery."

I don't know if you have seen – actually, I'm sure you have seen – the film, "Dead Poets Society". I've been in some great arguments about that because I think that in the film, Robin Williams, or [John Keaty], the teacher, was very manipulative. But there's a lovely article written about that by, believe it or not, another Jesuit, this time an English Jesuit, Damian Howard, talking about Ignatian spirituality in the classroom. When I saw it I thought "yes, I can use that in Singapore."

"To be caught in amazement at the beauty, subtlety, symmetry of whatever of something we are studying is a key spiritual gift."

And coming out of the airport last night, Steven was talking (Steven Chin, here), he was talking about how he likes to teach Physics, not that he does much these days, because he's a principal, but he loves to teach Physics because you can get boys so involved in the teaching of that. That's what Damian Howard is about.

"Teachers are called upon to rise up to a major educational challenge, which is the recognition, respect and enhancement of diversity."

And you have that. Listening to the archbishop and listening to those who have been talking to me about the context here



in Singapore, you have that every day. That diversity, that cultural and religious diversity. So, your work is really missionary work, isn't it, and I admire you for it.

Pope Francis – “a master builder of cross-frontier relationships”. Francis gave a talk, not long after he became a pope, to students and staff in Jesuit schools in Italy and Albania and this is what he said, and I think it's relevant to you people here in Singapore: “I have a special greeting to the Albanian college of Scutari which, after the long years of repression, reopened and welcomed Orthodox, Muslim students, as well as students from agnostic families. In this way a school becomes a place of dialogue and peaceful encounter promoting attitudes of respect, listening, friendship and a spirit of partnership.” How about that? That's the Catholic way, that's the 'how' that we're on about.

“Consistent with the sacramental vision of life, Catholic schools seek to offer an integral education.” (Vatican Document quoted above)

Again, I heard the Archbishop saying this morning that faith and reason have got to work as partners, you can't separate them. And, again, he used the words “a way of life” and again, a bell went off in my ear. For me Catholic identity, Catholic ethos, is a way of life. It's not a whole series of belief statements, it might be but it's much more than that, isn't it?

EXCELLENCE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SOCIAL, FINANCIAL OR PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS, IT'S AN EXCELLENCE IN HUMANITY. IT'S FORMING BETTER HUMAN BEINGS; PEOPLE WITH A HEART, WITH COMPASSION, WITH UNDERSTANDING.

Again, this is from the Vatican document. Catholic schools seek "to prevent a situation in which the life of faith is experienced or perceived as being separate from other activities in human life." They're all mixed up together. "Our Catholic tradition asks us to draw all components of our lives together." Crazy photo slides, if you can see them but I like them. At least I might be the only person who likes them, but I like them. That mix of faith and reason, that's what the integral component of Catholic education is all about. The Vatican document says: "Ours must not be a merely functional view of education."

Our General, Fr. Nicolas was out in Sydney in January 2012 and he had a number of questions which were put to him and one of the questions, that came from a young teacher, was a very interesting one:

"With all the emphasis on excellence of outcome, exam scores, etc., is there not a danger that the importance of the process of education will be diminished?"

I've had lot of arguments with teachers over the years with my contention that the relationship is more important than the content of any teaching communication. The relationship that we have with our students. Fr Nico had time to think about it and this is what his response was: "excellence has nothing to do with social, financial or professional success, it's an excellence in humanity. It's forming better human beings; people with a heart, with compassion, with understanding." How about that? An 'excellence in humanity'. "It's forming better human beings; people with a heart, with compassion, with understanding..."

On the slide displayed John's weather forecasting looks to be very useful; I don't know if you can read it. You can hang this outside the principals' office. If the stone is wet it's raining; if it's dry it's not raining; shadow on the ground, sunny – sounds useful, very helpful. If you can't see the stone, it's foggy; swinging stone, it's windy; stone jumping up and down, earthquake; stone gone, tornado. [audience laughs] Thank God you're laughing.

The General also spoke about failure, you know. He said: "I think maybe we can encourage service and I would say I would include failure in the process, as a normal event. I feel as a general talking, that the majority of humanity experiences failure in life: failure of communication with children, failure in marriage, failure in their job, failure in promotions that don't happen, etc. So, failure is very much part of life for the majority of humanity, there should be a way of incorporating failure also in celebrations. And I say we should celebrate failure for the Kingdom of God: when someone really goes so much out of himself that, in a sense he doesn't respond to the expectations of others, but thanks to his sacrifice, in a sense, others do much better."

And Pope Francis picks up that sense of failure in the talk to Italian and Albanian Jesuit schools in mid-2013 I mentioned before. One of the students told the Pope that he was trying hard to believe in God and be faithful but that he often struggled with doubt. So, Pope Francis said: "The journey of life is not easy, because it requires juggling the need to move forward with the

importance of taking time to reflect. If we go too quickly, we'll get tired and we won't be able to reach our destination. Yet, if we stop or take our time, we won't get there either. Life's journey is truly the art of looking at the horizon, reflecting on where I want to go, but also of putting up with the fatigue from the journey. Don't be afraid of failure. The problem with the journey of life and faith isn't falling; it's not getting back up."

And Jesus, of course, faced that. When you look at his life, as a young man, he was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman, he worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty, he never wrote a book, he never held an office, he never owned a home, he never had a family, he never went to University, he never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself. Somebody went on to say: "Nineteen and nearly twenty centuries have come and gone and today he is the leader of the column of progress." This is an anonymous writer. I am far within the mark if I say that all the armies that have ever marched and all the kings who ever reigned put together have not affected the lives of men upon this earth as has that one solitary life."

We've looked at the seal of Catholic education, its sacramental vision, its integral and universal education. But the Vatican document also talks about the climate in our schools and I think that's when they're talking about hospitality. St Benedict used to counsel his monks to receive all the guests as Christ. *Venit hospes – When a guest comes – Venit Christus – Christ comes.* There's a story which originated in a Russian monastery and has an older monk telling a younger monk: "I've finally learnt to accept people as they are. Whatever they are in the world, a prostitute, a Prime minister, it is all the same to me. But sometimes I see a stranger coming up the road and I say: Oh, Jesus Christ, is it you again?" [audience laughs]

So, it is no accident that we call the bread of the Eucharist that we celebrated this morning the 'host', because God shares himself in the most intimate way, in the most hospitable way, at the Eucharist.

Our much-quoted 2014 Vatican document maintains that "Catholic Schools and Universities educate people first and foremost through the living context, that is, the climate that both students and teachers establish in the environment where teaching and learning activities take place."

Hospitality really is an indelible part of Catholic schooling. I've enjoyed the hospitality of Singapore for this last half a day, wonderful, but just a few sayings about hospitality, if I could share them with you:

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it." I saw in a song recently, in some music, which describes Heaven as a place where angels learn to fly. Isn't that great? There are a lot of angels in this audience.

"A city which forgets how to care for the stranger has forgotten how to care for itself." That could well apply to Australia.

"A hero is one who turns strangers into friends." Words used by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, about a great friend of his, namely Cardinal Archbishop Basil Hume of Westminster. "A hero is one who turns strangers into friends." I love that.

"Hospitality - the fine art of having an open soul and a listening mind."

Hospitality is not just about welcoming the stranger. It is that, but it's also about opening our hearts and minds to change. Cardinal Newman said once: to grow is to change and to become perfect is to change many times. Australia is not looking too good there.

"Hospitality is the ability to make another person comfortable in strange space: ours."

The Jesuits have just started – actually it's been going for two years now – a school in Dili, in East Timor.

"To welcome the other means the willingness to enter the world of the other, to let the other tell his or her story."

And Brendon Byrne, one of our Australian Jesuits – world class New Testament scholar, wrote a little book about the Gospel of Luke called "the Hospitality of God" and he was arguing in that book that the term 'salvation' is not as helpful talking more about the hospitality of God, and we've enjoyed that at the Eucharist this morning.

"Receive the guest as Christ."

"To be a true host we must be open to the dignity of each and every person, we must welcome ideas and initiatives as well as people."

And... I'm not sure why I've put that one... oh, yes... because humour welcomes: "I've reached an age where my train of thought often leaves the station without me."

One of our top Jesuit educators in Perth, Australia, took a Geography class to the city once and on the Claremont station he blew his whistle: all the boys got on the train, but he forgot to do so and they went to the city without him.



The Vatican document also talks about the circular character of communication. I think that's very important. Rather than top down or even bottom up, good communication is circular; it is real listening.

"Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say and his teaching made a deep impression on the people because he taught them with authority." Authority comes from a Latin word *augere*, to 'nurture' – I heard the word 'nurture' this morning in the Eucharist – that's what good authority does. It makes things grow. Four types of school. There's a lot of work being done in Louvain University, talking about four different types of Catholic schools. You can see there on the screen that there's a 'monologue school', which has a high Christian identity with minimal interaction with other worldviews (that wouldn't be your school); the 'colourless school', which operates in a neutral sphere, where people are afraid to choose their own philosophy of life (wouldn't happen in your school); the 'colourful school', where there is strong support for plurality, but where the Catholic religion is replaced by a variety of worldviews; and finally, the 'dialogue school', which is the preferred school, for the researchers in Louvain, which explicitly chooses to be inspired by its Christian tradition while accepting the presence of other traditions. In the latter school there is a preferential option for the Christian tradition which keeps re-evaluating what it means to be a Christian in the midst of a plurality of other options. This option is the one we try to aim for, in our Catholic tradition

Surprisingly, that Vatican document I've been talking about doesn't have a great deal to say about social justice and Catholic schools are really known for that, aren't they: for a faith that does justice? Pope Francis calls us to build what he calls in *Evangelii Gaudium* a 'Samaritan church' and he says 'we need to be people of nearness and proximity' – that is the challenge in social justice, according to Pope Francis. Get alongside people – we'll say more about that this afternoon after lunch, if you come back that is, you might not come back, you might go home or something.

That nearness and proximity I like in this little slide here, a saying from Seneca: "Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness." The archbishop spoke a lot about the challenges of our current context, technologically etc., but I think there is good news about the contemporary world. You can talk about the technological evolution, multitasking, I like that [shows slide, audience laughs].

One of my Jesuit friends says 'the airport is the new cathedral'. Another friend of mine who lives in central Queensland, a wonderful Catholic educator, says: "If you want to see love, go to an airport," you know, there are a lot of good things going on. When I was coming back from New Zealand, recently, I thought I should buy alcohol for the community. They're not drinkers, which really meant buying alcohol for myself. But I took it home nonetheless and offered to share it, but that wasn't taken up. But the girl said to me, at the counter, when I paid, "Sir, are you in transition?"

And I said: "Yes, aren't we all?"

She was totally perplexed by that comment. But we are in transition. That's me [shows slide] at another stage in life, 1991, then 2010, then I put 2015. But it is an age of transition and it is the age of the backpacker, isn't it? I was speaking to somebody at morning teatime. She was planning to go soon to Sevenhill, that's the slide picture of one of the roads taking to Sevenhill. Sevenhill is the cradle of the Jesuits in Australia, where we have a wonderful silent retreat centre. Pope Francis picks it up and says: "Our life is journey, and when we stop moving, things go wrong."

Religion's about connection. I could go on about that but I better start moving otherwise Brandon would scowl at me. Listening to an interview: "Religion to me has always been the wound, not the bandage." Dennis Potter, a playwright said that in a radio interview. "Christianity is at its worst" – Kathleen Norris claims – "when it becomes defensive... enshrining orthodoxy in words has caused more trouble, more pain, more evil in the world than it was worth."

Fundamentalism is a terrible thing, and religious fundamentalism in our world – we're faced with it every day now – is a horrendous evil. [Audience laughs about the slide] Those two chaps in the slide are not fanatics, thankfully, and Michael Leunig, a great cartoonist in Australia, has composed this lovely prayer: "We pray for balance and exchange. Balance us like trees... so must the inner life be equal to the outer life." [Slide] This is a worrying group. The easy answers of fundamentalism "are more about control than grace."

Catholic tradition is counter-cultural but it's also pro-cultural. The incarnation has taught us to be pro-cultural to value the things in our culture.

"The world is charged with the grandeur of God." (Gerard Manly Hopkins) said that. I love this particular slide: "Let us discover or rediscover our musical sense." Because it picks up some words which our General offered to Jesuit Universities in Japan: "I suggest that mission today in Japan and Asia must first of all work toward helping people discover or rediscover this musical sense, this religious sensibility, this awareness and appreciation of dimensions of reality that are deeper than instrumentalist or materialist conceptions that life allows us." This is the General: "We are not in education for proseylitism (as Pope Francis has said also) but transformation: we want to form a new kind of humanity that is musical, that retains this sensitivity to beauty, to the suffering of others, to compassion. We offer a Christian education because we are convinced that Christ offers horizons beyond the limit of the interests of economy or material production. That Christ offers a vision of a fuller humanity that takes the person outside himself or herself in care and concern for others." That's our Father General. One more slide. Let us strive therefore in producing in our schools an excellence in humanity. May the Good Lord bless all of us in our efforts to develop an excellence of humanity in our schools, that is more musical. Thank you very much.