



Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL, Bishop of Parramatta

Address at the Opening and Blessing of the Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre at Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta.

17 February 2017

Dear friends,

It's a great privilege for me to be with you on this special occasion in which we bless and dedicate this building known as the Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre. It is a rare honour indeed that the person whose name is given to this magnificent building is in our midst. For bishops if that honour is bestowed on us, it rarely happens when we are still alive. Once, Bishop Peter Ingham and I walked past a Catholic high school in Sale which was named after the deceased bishop called Phelan. He remarked to me that he hoped the students aren't always feeling high.

I congratulate Sr Ailsa for this singular honour. This building is truly magnificent and an icon. It has set a very high standard for other civic buildings nearby.

We rejoice and give thanks at the opening of this building.

I congratulate the College Board, and all those whose vision and hard work have produced this great addition to [OLMC](#). You can be very proud that your efforts have come to fruition in such a successful way. We rejoice and give thanks at the opening of this building. This is a celebration not just of a building but, above all, talents that will be developed, lives that will be transformed, relationships that will be affirmed and enhanced.

When St Francis was told “go and rebuild the church”, he was commissioned to do much more than a physical structure. He repaired, rebuilt and reimagined the church according to the radical vision of the Gospel. Similarly, what we celebrate today is the expression of our commitment to that same vision. This new building serves to remind us that we are here to build community and relationships, to educate, to enhance and to bring the best out of every student.

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The Gospel tells us the story of the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. The spirit of God has anointed me. He sent me to bring the Good News to the poor, liberty to captives, sight to the blind and the year of favour for all. With these words, Jesus set out his mission in terms of justice, compassion, mercy and the fullness of life for all. They sum up those things that Jesus would later do in respect of the social outcasts. They encapsulate his attitude, his vision and his mission.

Jesus would preach, live and die for his manifesto. He would proclaim and defend the dignity of the least, the tax collectors and sinners. We see him challenging ingrained attitudes of prejudice and exclusion; we even see him breaking social taboos and expanding the boundaries of human love, acceptance and friendship.

May it be imbued with the spirit of Jesus who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life for all.

As we give thanks for this new building and for this new milestone, let us commit ourselves to build lives and relationships here at OLMC according to the model Jesus the Master servant showed us. Let this place be filled with God's radical, inclusive and just love. Let it be not only a centre for academic excellence and achievement but also a place where the Gospel of Christ is imparted and people of passion for justice, commitment to mercy and compassion for others are formed. May it be a place where lives are connected, enhanced and transformed. May it be imbued with the spirit of Jesus who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life for all.