

Good afternoon to all members of the Loreto Normanhurst community and a warm welcome to Term 3. Indeed, it is a warm one as I stand here in this glorious sunshine by our beautiful grotto. I hope that that sparks a lot of memories for those of you who have not been on our grounds for a couple of weeks or months; a grotto from which we draw a whole deal of strength over the days. I hope it was a lovely rest for our families. I know speaking with a lot of girls throughout the week in hallways and various opportunities I've had, that for families it was an opportunity for downtime, or a spot of fishing, or some Netflix bingeing. Whatever it was, I do hope and pray that for you, it was one of rest, renewal and recharging as a whole family.

I do know for our year 12 girls, from what they're telling me, there was a nice balance between that and ensuring that their commitments to their studies and their various pieces of work that are looming towards their deadlines. So I hope you've all had a lovely break and returned refreshed and renewed. I know, for me, it definitely was an opportunity to top up the bucket a little bit after what was two very big terms and some months of uncertainty as we all well know. It was glorious though, wasn't it to end the term and start the holidays with our Music Festival in different form, of course. And as I expressed on that night, sincere thanks to all those who made it happen. I was thrilled that this week, we were able to gather through live streaming of course, at assembly for the announcement of the People's Choice Awards.

We didn't have a winning house for the 2020 Music Festival, as you know, but we did have that new award of the People's Choice Award. And if you missed it via your daughters or the announcements on social media, and particularly for all those ex-students out there, I let you know that the People's Choice Award for the 2020 Music Festival was Mornane House. The year 12 Mornane girls were particularly thrilled. They reminded me that when they were in Year 7, Mornane was the winning house. So there's a nice little synergy there as the bookends to their time as students here at Loreto start to form. Again, a lot of gratitude to those members of the community who donated via the Music Festival event to our Bursary. We're just off our target, but I am so grateful, on behalf of the school to all who donated. We're currently sitting at \$46,500.

So thank you. It will make a difference in the lives of many students and families, and ensure that we can enable this education to be one that is life changing for all. And Ms. Liane Giuliano, who joined us just four weeks ago in a new role here at the school - as Director of Philanthropy and Community Engagement - has written a little bit more about that and her role and how it connects everything here at the school, in this week's newsletter. So I encourage you to read that and find out a little bit more about Liane, who we warmly welcome to our community and our circle of friends.

Gratitude is a recurring theme, actually, of our first week back, this week. We actually just had our weekly Examen through the midday gong. We were called to think about what we're grateful for through the week and the moments of gratitude that have been expressed towards us or by us.

This week, as you know, we had our Photo Day. It was a little different to previous years. But fortunately, we were able to ensure that Year 12, had their final photo as a whole year group. As is tradition, Year 12 also have a more casual photo and this, they got themselves dressed up, in various PPE and other outfits. Very, very much at the heart of who they are as a year group, there was a beautiful banner that expressed their thanks. It said thank you to all the health care workers. As a school, we extend that thanks, particularly to those of you as parents, ex-students, staff members who work in that area of health. Know that our Year 12 girls very sincerely were expressing their thanks. I was thrilled that they were able to have one of their 'lasts' in real life with the photos.

At the school this week, we've had a big week of activity as is always the case. Nationally, NAIDOC Week has been moved to November this year, but it was firmly in our calendar and we wanted to honour it. So we were able to begin our week with a beautiful Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony. And there's been various awareness and learning activities for the girls, led by the girls, with all of the students in years 5 to 12 in relation to the theme - 'Always was, Always Will Be.' And today we're in Snug as a Bug in a Rug Day, reminding ourselves of our commitment to take care of our environment by diminishing, decreasing the impact of the use of energy. And so as much as possible is 'off' today and we're all rugged up that extra bit more, in either the colours of the Torres Strait Islander flag or the Aboriginal flag in honour of NAIDOC week and the theme for the year.

I'd like to extend my congratulations to a few teams and groups and girls on their achievements that were recognised this week. Congratulations to Rosemary O'Brien in Year 7 Ward House. This week Rosemary was recognised by receiving a medal and High Distinction from the Australian Speech and Communications Association. Well done, Rosemary. I know a whole lot of work goes into that oratory preparation for Speech and Drama. Congratulations.

Still in that field of oratory, our Archdale Competition kicked off this week, and we had eight teams in our juniors' teams. We were up against our sisters from Kirribilli. It was beautiful to have Round 1 Loreto Kirribilli versus Loreto Normanhurst, and for us to finish four out of eight debates going Loreto Kirribilli's way, and four out of eight going Normanhurst's way. So we even split the wins there. Well done girls.

I know that CSDA debating picks up this afternoon, virtually again. Also, I want to acknowledge the achievements of five Year 11 girls who completed a Philosophy and Critical Thinking course through the Macquarie University program. It's quite a significant achievement by our girls who undertake that course of study at first-year university level. It's a rigorous course in Philosophy and Critical Thinking, and we're very proud of their achievements to that end. So well done. And congratulations on achieving a Credit score in the course to Shayarnee Burns. Distinction was reached by Elizabeth Bolster and achieving High Distinction were Sophie Earl, Matilda Hardy and Emily Stockwell. Congratulations, girls. We wish you well for the continuation and the pursuit of your philosophical thoughts and critical thinking as your academic studies continue.

Good luck to our girls who are heading off for the first weekend of, I guess, "regular" in an "irregular time" term sport, with IGSSA and IPSHA competitions starting up this Saturday. The Hills Netball competition started during the term break. And so we wish the girls competing in Hills Netball all the very best for this week as well. And to our parents, a reminder that all the information has been sent through from the Sports department in relation to the restrictions for spectators, whether it be through IGSSA or IPSHA or through community sport as it's run through Hills Netball. So I encourage you please, to reengage with that communication.

This week began on Sunday, the 19th of July, in what we call across the Loreto network 'Landing Day.' It was the day, 145 years ago, the SS Somersetshire made its way into Australian waters. And on that day, Mother Gonzaga Barry and her companions disembarked that ship and began this wonderful story and legacy of Loreto education in Australia. As I've previously shared, Mother Gonzaga, of course, went on to influence not only our program of learning and our understanding of holistic learning here at Normanhurst and at the other Loreto schools she established, but also left quite an imprint in education nationally in Australia. She had quite an influence on the formation of curriculum and teacher training over her years. Today, quite beautifully, as a bookend to this very week, is Mother Gonzaga's birthday. On this day, 186 years ago, Mother Gonzaga Barry was born in Wexford, Ireland. So we've really been

taking time and taking stock this week to think about the legacy that she has left us and the call that all of us have to serve the world and to serve others, just as she did when she heard her calling at 19 years of age.

There's a beautiful piece of work written by Mother Francis Tobin, who is buried here in our Bush cemetery. She wrote two volumes on Mother Gonzaga Barry's life and her letters in 'Eucalyptus Blossoms.' And in it, Mother Francis says, "to carry out God's plan, to build character, according to his design, that was Mother Gonzaga's Barry's aim in establishing her school." This building of character, this understanding of who we are and taking our place in the world to serve the world and serve others, is something that I spoke with year 11 about this week, as they continue in their discernment in relation to leadership and becoming and taking on leadership of the school and the student body as they head towards starting year 12, and then obviously, entering their final years of school here.

We spoke quite a bit about this notion of leadership as being that of service. Mother Gonzaga Barry gives us the most beautifully personified example of leadership through service and remaining true to the dream and desire that God has for each and every one of us, if we'd only but stop and listen to it and then take heed of that call. And so I'd ask you all to keep our year 11 girls in your prayers as they continue their discernment, and go through the process around selecting and voting in the Student Council for next year. Knowing of course, as I shared with Year 11, that each and every one of them will be commissioned as leaders of our school a little later on this term.

In Gonzaga Barry's message to her children, very early in her vocation here in Australia, she would often say that 'once you win the heart of little child, you can mould the character of a woman whose influence will extend and still be ennobling the world when we have long been dead and forgotten.' And so with that in our minds, acknowledging the role that you as parents, caregivers, staff members, and all of us who play a part in the formation of the character of our young people, we prepare ourselves to enter into a space of gratitude. I leave you with a prayer. And it's a beautiful prayer of Mother Gonzaga Barry's. It is one of gratitude, which I think is perfectly timed in light of what I just shared about Year 12's message this week. It's perfectly timed in light of where we're at right now at the end of a week when we're grateful for the legacy that is being left for us.

And we bring into our prayers all the intentions of those in our community. As I said, our year 11 girls, and our Year 12 girls as they prepare for the HSC exams and to finish off their studies before they graduate and then go on to take on the HSC as well. I call on you all to hold them forever in your hearts and prayers.

And so we now enter into the presence of our loving God who shines this beautiful sun on us today, in the name of God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

And in the words of Mother Gonzaga Barry, we say:

For the life you gave us and preserved amid danger to this day, I thank you, Lord.

For my home, food and restful sleep. I thank you, Lord.

For the beautiful air, sunshine and flowers, I thank you, Lord.

For sight and hearing and the use of my limbs. I thank you, Lord.

For friends and many playful enjoyments. I thank you, Lord.

For the power of thought, memory, understanding and will. I thank you, Lord.

For the many things that I'm able to learn and to do. I thank you, Lord.

And we ask for all these blessings in our lives and all the prayers that rest in our hearts. In the name of Jesus, Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy spirit. Amen.

Thank you everybody. And have a lovely weekend. Thanks.

Ms Marina Ugonotti

Principal