



CAMPION'S BRAG

CATHOLIC LEARNING IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

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CAMPION COLLEGE AUSTRALIA *Celebrating 10 Years*

It is important to recognise milestones. Birthdays, anniversaries, reunions are all significant moments in our life and are worthy of celebrating. This year marks Campion College's tenth year of operation and we hope you will join with us, dear friends, in celebrating this important achievement. Campion College is a truly unique and bold venture in Catholic higher education and in ten years has grown from humble beginnings to the point where it can look forward

confidently to an exciting future as Australia's leading Liberal Arts institution. Without your spiritual and material support these past ten years would not have been possible. Please continue to generously support Campion in any way that you can.

In this edition of the Brag we look back at the Graduation ceremony of 2015.

Dr Paul Morrissey, President

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Graduation

Campion College has just celebrated its 8th Graduation on Thursday 10 December 2015.

Then and Now

Three alumni share with us their story of then and now.

Flash Back

A story by Dr Stephen McInerney as he celebrates 10 years being at Campion College.

Donating

We have our new online donating system in place, please consider donating.

CSWT

A Symposium featuring Prof. William Cavanaugh of DePaul University in Chicago.

and much more...

In the Beginning

Images from the start of the Campion College story (2006-2007).

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Natasha Marsh

Where Are They Now

Since graduating from Campion, I have been employed as a journalist with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. Although I didn't have a journalism degree, I convinced my future employers it was in their best interest to have someone with the transferrable skills of writing, researching and critical thinking. I am also completing a Masters of Theology with the John Paul II Institute of Marriage and Family, looking at the role of beauty in cultivating faith and culture. I will always be grateful for those three beautiful years I spent developing, discovering and cultivating that love of knowledge which I will carry with me forever.

Guest Speaker at Graduation



Guest speaker, Miranda Devine.

Journalist Miranda Devine was guest speaker at the 2016 Graduation. Following is an edited extract of her address.

I am honoured to be here to speak on this auspicious day at this inspirational educational institution on the eve of its second decade. You are the lucky ones, the pioneers, who had the wisdom and foresight to choose Campion to furnish, not just your minds, but your souls for the great journey you have ahead of you.

The times are certainly interesting, as the Western world slowly wakes up to the threat of Islamism, a violent totalitarian ideology every bit as lethal to freedom and our values as was Communism, fascism and those other isms. But I am also going to tell you that you are graduating at a time where the world is full of as much possibility and hope as it is with threat and danger.

We see the culmination of this solipsism today in the hostility to Christianity in once Christian nations, which reject the moral heritage of two millennia, and then wonder why society is fragmenting, and evil multiplying. We see a parallel in the theological blindness and incomprehension with which the West views Islamic State and various other



Above: Graduate Jean Seah, receiving the Campion College Medal from Chairman of the College, Mr Joe De Bruyn. Below: Graduate and Campion College Medal recipient Christian Bergmann with his parents.



manifestations of Islamism. We see it in the fact the nominally Christian West is ignoring the plight of persecuted Christians in Iraq and Syria, who are suffering a genocide in the birthplace of Christianity.

Generations before you have squandered the moral capital of their forbears. We see now what happens when the moral capital runs out, when people lose the social norms and universally accepted moral code to guide them through the minefield of human frailty. We see the old virtues jettisoned and replaced by a public culture that rewards and respects

cheats, liars, manipulators and narcissists, their behaviour encouraged and emulated.

In the place of moral truth came the post-modern disease of moral relativism. Moral relativism is the philosophy that there is no absolute right or wrong, no universal moral standards, that it all depends on social custom or the fashion of the time.

In every tragedy I have covered as a journalist, I have been struck by the nobility of ordinary people: the father of a murder victim forgiving the killer, the dedication and kindness of a detective. Wherever there is evil and sadness, there seems always to be great goodness, in response.

And that brings me to you, the tail end of Generation Y. The last generation born before the advent of the internet, you may even remember the days before iPhones. You will be the last generation to remember the days before Facebook, Instagram, snapchat. Your world view is shaped by global terrorism and the Global Financial Crisis.

You are the most globally aware, rational, technologically savvy generation ever. You are sometimes described as the over-achieving, over-scheduled generation. But you were lucky to be born at a time when children and family were back in fashion. You were cherished.

You are also the South Park and Simpsons generation, skeptical about ideological extremism of any kind and ready to poke fun at the holy cows of political correctness which oppress us. You are street smart, resilient. Your generation is unique in its willingness to volunteer your time and energies to help others.

You have been called a generation of institution builders. You are the "civic minded heroes", ready to replenish the moral capital that has been squandered by previous generations.

To the Class of 2015, I say again, "Congratulations." And thank you so much for inviting me to take part in your graduation.

Matthew Biddle

It's now been four years since I graduated from Campion College, and three years since my wife Carmel graduated. After spending some time living in WA, we moved back to the east coast last year, settling in Canberra. On St Valentine's Day this year we welcomed our second child, Isabelle Clare. Our eldest child, Patrick, will turn 3 in May. Although it has its challenges, we have found parenthood a most fulfilling and rewarding blessing. Recently I was appointed Editor of the Catholic Voice newspaper, the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn's monthly publication. It's a role I'm looking forward to fulfilling to the best of my ability.



Graduation Valedictory Speech

CCSA President Samuel Rebbechi, reflects on life and study at Campion for Graduates over the last three years. Following is an edited extract of his speech.

Valedictory comes from the Latin root 'valediction', which means "to say farewell". It is with a heavy heart, on behalf of my fellow classmates, to bid farewell to the place and people that are Campion College.

The last three years has been a journey of epic proportions, and so I will tell ye the story of the perilous journey. We began so young, so full of passion and energy, filled with an overwhelming desire for knowledge. Looking upon our lecturers as if they were the very gods on Olympus our dream to understand the world's mysteries, however, was swiftly crushed by Dr. Islam. At first it was simply that we couldn't be sure whether a cow was a cow or an evil robot. Within an hour, he had reduced us to Cartesian skeptics sure of nothing but our own consciousness. Dr. Boschiero challenged us constantly taking us through whiggish accounts of history. Dr. Rizzo would leave us with bruised brains as she hurtled through a thousand years of history in fifty minutes, Dr. McNerney would soothe our souls with his sweet poetic tones and Dr Islam continued to be bald and write on an overhead projector.

By the time third year came around our rather eclectic year group had found a common bond. One aspect of this bond was our new found hobby of making Fr. Holohan laugh. We'd often focus most of our energy in tutorials into seeing how red we could make his face. As you could grade the quality of your joke on a scale of rosy to beetroot.

Then before we knew it three years had passed and the journey has come to an end. My fellow graduates, my fellow travellers, we did it! And I could not have wished for a better bunch of people to spend these last three years with. Thank you for your friendship I hope it will continue for years to come. I will forever cherish the memories that we have wrought here together. I will miss each and every one of you.

And to our dearest faculty, Hans urns von Balthasar once said that "To be a child means to owe one's existence to another, and even in our adult life we never quite reach the point where we no longer have to give thanks for being the person we are". Dr. Morrissey, Professor Shannon, Dr Rizzo, Dr. McNerney, Dr. Islam, Dr. Dray, Dr. Boschiero, Dr. Tan, Fr. Holohan, Dr. Bell, Dr. Chavura, we are eternally indebted to you for making us who we are, men and women enlightened by the truth, inspired by the knowledge that is known. You have taught us to be lovers of wisdom, faith and beauty. You have shown us a world "charged with the grandeur of God" and imbued with an intrinsic purpose. We came here looking

for our dreams to be fulfilled, looking for our lives to be made meaningful. And we leave now, with the beauty of the world filling our dreams as we stand in innocent wonder before creation, a single act greater than all of us yet holding a purpose for each and every one of us. Thank you for all that you do and all you have done for us. I hope we make you proud. And so now comes the time to utter that melancholy word:

*Farewell this place I have called home
The bricks and mortar I've come to know
The minds so wise and hearts so kind
The wisdom that only here we find.*

*To my friends, my dear dear friends
for us this chapter must now end
and by many ways we will depart
but never from each others hearts*

Below left to right: CCSA Team, Samuel Rebbechi, Chanel De Bono, Nicholas Augimeri.



2015 Graduates.

Anna Hitchings



Since graduating from Campion in 2012, I have followed my dreams to become a journalist in the secular media. In 2013, I did work experience with NewsLocal, the local news branch of News Corp, and was offered a job soon after. I worked as a relief reporter for eight months before being offered a full time position at the Liverpool Leader, where I still am. Several of my articles have also been published in sister publication, the Daily Telegraph while I have also done freelancing work. I have also become proficient in shorthand and taken up Arabic and swing dancing.

Graduation Homily by Fr Peter Williams

The administrator of Parramatta Diocese, Fr Peter Williams, celebrated the 2015 Graduation Mass. Following is an edited extract of the homily.

In January of 2008 the Washington Post undertook an experiment. They asked a young man to play some tunes on an old violin during rush hour in a Washington subway station. Now it wasn't just any old violin, it had been made in 1713 by the master craftsman Antonio Stradivari and was valued around US\$4m. The player was no ordinary musician. It was Joshua Bell, who is acclaimed as one of the greatest virtuoso's of the instrument in the world. So there stood Joshua Bell in the subway with his violin case open to catch the small change. What happened? In the forty three minutes that Bell played 1097 people walked by, seven stopped for a minute or more, twenty-seven gave money for a total of \$32.00. What can we conclude from this experiment? Perhaps the vast majority of people would have a college education. But of course the response to beauty is not really a question of education. It is innate in the human soul. Many would say that the recognition of beauty and the pursuit of truth are the very staples of what constitutes a complete and fulfilled life.

The content of the liberal arts degree is in microcosm an introduction to beauty and truth mediated through a study of Western civilization. At the core of this human achievement lies a response to the life of faith lived in and through the Catholic Church. At its heart is the response implicitly found in our Gospel passage this morning – "You did not choose me, no I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last..." The response



Fr Peter Williams celebrating Graduation Mass.



Graduation Mass entrance procession.

to that call is not some elusive spiritual aesthetic, but a life forged through the practice of classic Christian charity.

There are of course in our pluralistic society many ideologies that compete vigorously for the minds of the young. Faced with such a dilemma the tendency is often to retreat to the comfort of a rather closed world. We must acknowledge that in the Western world the Christian faith is once again under siege. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council had the prescience to respond to what were the 'signs of the times' and to equip the Church to engage with a template to understand the modern world. In a similar vein in the midst of national calamity some eight centuries before the birth of Christ, the Prophet

Isaiah was also able to express joy and hope: "...God proved himself their savior in all their troubles...he redeemed them himself, he lifted them up..." It is the case that we must develop strategies that will lead to a new sense of commitment with those who shape our society.

In recent days the Commission on Religion and Belief in Public Life in Great Britain has released its findings. It concludes that the United Kingdom is no longer a Christian country and that expressions and symbols associated with Christianity should be expunged from public life. The Church in Australia already understands that there are those who would seek to inflict the same agenda on public life and our education system. Whilst we accept that we cannot superimpose our faith and belief on to others, we still have a right and a responsibility to prosecute our cause and to present the Gospel as a viable alternative.

As graduates you are now ready to take your place in our society and add your voice to the conversation that will ultimately shape the future direction of our nation, but St Paul rightly cautions us that we should do so with "kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" – the hallmarks of a true Christian character.



Elise's Reflection

There is no lecturer more liked or respected than Dr. McNerney. His personal integrity, immense wealth of knowledge, and considerable skill as a lecturer are appreciated by all of his students. A large part of Dr. McNerney's effectiveness as a lecturer derives from the sheer breadth of his knowledge and interests. Dr. McNerney has the knack of spinning each one of his lectures or tutorials into an enthralling coalescence of literature, history, theology, philosophy, and language—a microcosm of the liberal arts. Also appreciated are his sense of humour, his commitment to and knowledge of the Catholic faith, and his willingness to engage with students and participate in college life.

3rd year student Elise McDonald

Dr McNerney on the upstairs verandah, Campion College, 2006.

'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers'

Stephen McNerney, Associate Dean of Studies and Senior Lecturer in Literature

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers", Henry V proclaims in the St Crispin's day speech immortalized by Shakespeare. I am reminded of these words when, ten years on, I recall my first year at Campion College, which happened to be the College's first year of operation. There were only 16 students, four full-time members of faculty (one for each of the core disciplines) and two teaching spaces, but a great many hopes and dreams. We had set out on a tremendous adventure and though we knew we would have the great minds of western civilization as our guides – Homer, Socrates, Herodotus, Aristotle, Virgil, Aquinas, Dante, Shakespeare, Eliot – not to mention Mother Church, we were all a little nervous as we assembled as a College for the first time, in Orientation Week, for morning tea in the cloister.

Our first students came from all over Australia, and as far afield as New Zealand. Some came from homeschooling families or from Catholic parochial schools, attracted by the College's desire to think with the mind of the Church; others were drawn more specifically to the novelty and challenge of an integrated liberal arts program, the first of its kind in Australia. Some found the union of these spiritual and intellectual ideals irresistible.

Apart from the content of my classes – including *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* of Homer, which remain among my favorite books to teach - my memories of that first year include lots of games of table tennis and good

conversation with the students, the occasional heated debate about theology and Harry Potter, and an alarm clock set for 3am (unbeknownst to me) and hidden in my room during an overnight stay on campus, no doubt in mock-retaliation for my insistence on student punctuality at lectures and tutorials!

Since then, the College has graduated dozens and dozens of students; we have seen them form lifelong friendships, grow intellectually and spiritually, and go on to enter the workplace or pursue higher studies, marry and start families or enter religious life. The campus has been gradually transformed, the library collection grown, and the number of staff members increase. All of us, I'm sure, have been changed for the better by our time here, reading and discussing together the great books and the great ideas of our civilization, celebrating together the great events in the College calendar, especially the St Edmund Campion and Reveillon dinners, and worshipping together in the College chapel.

Looking back to that first year, I am full of gratitude. Our first students set a standard of courtesy, attentiveness and diligence which has happily been maintained by the vast majority of our students ever since. Our faculty has remained miraculously stable (three of the original four members are still on staff), in an era when most teaching institutions, like most workplaces, have a high and regular turnover. All of this reveals something vital about the College and its mission.

CSWT

The Centre for the Study of Western Tradition is co-sponsoring with the Institute for Ethics and Society of the University of Notre Dame, a symposium featuring Prof. William Cavanaugh of DePaul University in Chicago. Professor Cavanaugh has established himself as one of the most creative provocative political theologians, engaging the Church's ancient heritage with the world's most pressing political, social and economic challenges. His most famous publications include *Torture and Eucharist*, *Theopolitical Imagination*, *Being Consumed* and his latest *Field Hospital: The Church's Engagement with a Wounded World*. The CSWT's director, Dr. Matthew Tan, worked under Prof. Cavanaugh while a visiting fellow at the Centre for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University in 2013. Prof. Cavanaugh will be part of a panel of speakers at the University of Notre Dame's Sydney Campus on 11th July 2016. If you would like to keep updated on this event, please email Dr. Matthew Tan at m.tan@campion.edu.au.

Before Christmas, I received a letter from a member of our first graduating class. She is teaching in Melbourne, continues to read and reflect thoughtfully on great literature, and now writes her own measured and elegant poetry. If I'd been told in 2006 that I would one day receive such a thoughtful letter from a former student, a visible sign of the College's success, I would have been more than satisfied with the path we were taking - as indeed I am.

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Summer Week

Summer Week 2016 was held January 11th – 15th and brought together young people from all over Australia. Together the group experienced campus life by attending some lectures, sharing meals on the sunny deck, and participating in various activities. Blessed with beautiful weather, the participants were also able to have a swim at Balmoral beach, and to spend a relaxing day at the Jellybean Pool in the Blue Mountains. Although it was only one week, the friendships that were forged will remain. Stay tuned for details regarding Summer Week 2017! Please contact Helen Wagner for more information. study@champion.edu.au

Orientation Week

Monday 22 February 2016 saw 31 students from all around Australia and one student from Canada arrive at the College for Orientation Week. Dr Paul Morrissey, welcomed the students before they received informative presentations from members of the faculty and the student association. Students were given the opportunity to engage with one-another over meals, attend Mass and explore the college surroundings. The week included a trip to Sydney City and an afternoon of fun at Wet 'n' Wild Water World Sydney. Thank you to all who contributed to making Orientation Week a memorable one.



Above: Orientation Week participants.
Below: Timothy Winkels and Elijah Van Rensburg.

Matriculation

On Monday 29 February 2016, Mass was celebrated at 11:00am in the Chapel, followed by a Ceremony and BBQ Lunch to commemorate the Matriculation of 31 new students into Champion College. We wish them all the best on their journey ahead.

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Campion's Brag is a quarterly newsletter named in honour of the manifesto of St. Edmund Campion's mission of faith. It is edited by Yvette Nehme (Director of Development) and compiled by Teresa Gambino on behalf of the Champion Foundation, a non-profit company which has established Champion College Australia as a tertiary institution of Catholic inspiration.

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