

# ST. FRANCIS XAVIER COLLEGE

## FOUNDERS' DAY MASS

### HOMILY

Homily prepared & delivered by

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It is the opening of the school year and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Opening of the College.

Nearly 30 years ago 72 students and 5 teachers turned up for the first day of school at St. Francis Xavier College. Some of them are here today. Several years prior to that, some very angelic and brave people decided that a Catholic secondary school must be established in this area. Some of them are here today.

Who would have thought 30 years ago that the tiny group of founding teachers and students would grow to this vast gathering – a sea of faces. From little things big things do grow. From the tiny mustard seed planted 30 years ago the great Francis Xavier tree has grown and flourished, and now thousands have come to find a home, support and nurture in its vast branches. From little things big things do grow and the growing hasn't finished. All this didn't just happen. It took vision and hard work, fire in the belly and shoulder to the wheel. We acknowledge this today.

The founders of the College chose St. Francis Xavier as College patron. How appropriate to have him as a patron, a person with fire in his belly, a dream in his heart and a steely determination. A wonderful choice of patron – wonderful for us all.

Whenever St. Francis Xavier's name is mentioned a strange but relevant image comes to my mind. I see Francis Xavier hanging over the back rail of a great Spanish sailing ship – a galleon – far out in the Indian Ocean and he is heaving his insides out. He was not a good sailor. As soon as his ship left port for the Far East he became sea sick, desperately sea sick. I don't know if you have ever been seasick. If you have you will know it is a shocking experience. It is so bad at first you are frightened you are going to die. When it continues and continues you are frightened you won't die. At one stage they lowered the sails (turned off the engines) to help him survive. But did he get off at the next port of call? Not Francis. Did he stop making long dangerous voyages on ships? Not our Francis! He had fire in his belly and a steely determination to follow the inspirations of his heart and his God to make a difference with his life. He wasn't going to let a bit of life threatening sea sickness stop him.

No comfort zones for Francis Xavier. His life map did not acknowledge comfort zones. He didn't believe in them. He constantly moved beyond and out of his comfort zone. What a Patron Saint for a school.

Students, teachers, everyone! Out of fidelity to St. Francis Xavier, at St. Francis Xavier College let there be no comfort zones – no settling into comfort zones. Let us all be determined to pursue excellence of the highest order in every field of school endeavour, in study, in music, in drama, in sport, in everything. No mediocrity, no second class efforts, no dwelling in the comfort zone at St. Francis Xavier College. If you see someone with a bucket of paint and brush marking out comfort zones – go out and rub them out.

Students, teachers, everyone, out of fidelity to Francis Xavier and the Lord he served – strive for the highest standards of personal goodness. Do not compromise your standard of goodness for

anyone, do not apologize to anyone for wanting desperately to be the most wonderful human being, the most wonderful daughter or son of God and follower of our Lord that you can possibly be. Do not apologize to anyone for being a great idealist about yourself and your life and your contribution to life.

When you get tired of the effort (and you will), sick of the effort (and you will), because everything in life that is worthwhile costs – think of St. Francis draped over the back of the boat and say a prayer to him to help you through your flat spot and beyond.

If you have the wisdom and the courage to care about these matters, I guarantee that in your life from little things big things will grow.