

HOMILY-BISHOP CHRISTOPHER PROWSE
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALE
OPENING OF ST PETER'S COLLEGE EAST CRANBOURNE CAMPUS
24th FEBRUARY 2012
Phil 4:6-9; Matt: 13:44-46

Dear Friends,

Today is not simply the blessing of an extension of a school. Today is the blessing of an entirely new campus of a school. This is an enormously important day, not simply for St. Peter's College and the newly arrived people of East Cranbourne and the people of St. Agatha's Parish Cranbourne but it is important day for the entire Catholic community of Sale -Gippsland.

We have just heard in the Gospel from Matt 13 how Jesus informs us that when we find something precious we are to leave everything and go looking for that which is of great value. Jesus mentions about the treasure hidden in the field and about a merchant finding very precious pearls. But we have found something even more precious than material things. In Catholic Education we have found, and are finding more fully, our life with Jesus Christ, Our Loving God and Saviour, alive in the Catholic Church.

In the next chapter of Matthew's Gospel we have the beautiful episode of Jesus walking on the water (Matt 14:22-33). Here we have an encounter in a special way between Jesus and St. Peter, the Patron of our College.

It is late in the evening, the Apostles are in a boat already several hundred yards from the shore and it is being tossed about in a storm. About 3 o'clock in the morning Jesus is walking on the water towards them and they are terrified. Immediately Jesus calls out to them in the words of the motto of St. Peter's College *"Be Not Afraid. It is I"*. (v.27)

We see it is St. Peter who gives leadership here in the faith. He wants to go towards Jesus. Jesus tells him to come out of the boat and walk towards Him on the water. We then have the wonderful scene of St. Peter walking on the water. Everything is going well until he takes his eyes of Jesus and puts his eyes on himself. From that moment on he begins to sink. The Scripture has Jesus immediately stretching out his hand and saying to Peter *"How little faith you have, why did you falter?"* (v.31)

To me this is the entire vision for Catholic Education here at St. Peter's East Cranbourne as well as the West Cranbourne Campus and beyond. May we never take our eyes of Jesus. On this historic day let us make a fresh embrace of this vision that animates us.

May St. Peter's College East never be afraid. There have been and there will be enormous challenges facing not only the practical side but also the educational side of educating boys and girls for adult life in Australia. But we must always have Jesus' words echoing in our hearts *"Be Not Afraid"*. May this be not just a motto of the College but be the absolute engine room and motivating force of all that happens in this place.

I am here today as the Bishop of Sale.

I am your Bishop.

I am here to declare to you that today we are planting the seed of the Gospel in a new area of the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. As you can see around us, suburbs are growing like flowers at an incredibly fast rate. May this statement of faith that we are making today; the opening of a new school here in this pioneering suburb, be a statement that we want to plant Christ in all that we do and say. We are Catholic missionaries. We want to bring the Fragrance of Christ in to all that happens here. We want this precious seed of faith to grow and transform our humanity and our culture into something worthy of the Gospel of Jesus. New suburbs and Australian life will become sterile and ultimately boring without the religious dimension of life. Australians are uncertain about this. But we are totally certain and convinced that without Christ life is diminished and humanity is threatened.

Let us pray in this ceremony as we bless and open this new Catholic School that God's Blessing will come upon all that we do and say in the many years ahead. In future years, may generations still to arrive at St. Peter's East Cranbourne, look back in gratitude to all that was said and done on this day, 24th February 2012, and say: "Thank you for not only blessing and opening our newest Catholic School, but thank you for giving us the Gospel vision that has animated us ever since".

I echo the words of Jesus and say to St Peter's East Cranbourne again:

"Be not afraid! I am with you, till the end of time!"