

Good afternoon, Mr Couani, Assistant Commissioner Fileman, Father David Ranson, distinguished guests, Staff, students and our wider school community.

In the past 3 years, it goes without saying that we have overcome many challenges. Here at St Pius, we certainly experienced the concerns that faced every corner of the globe. All over the world, billions of people have suffered from COVID, losing family, jobs, houses, and friends as a result. Schools and businesses were closed, shelves were emptied, and people were isolated. | On the 25th May 2020, George Floyd was unjustly murdered, sparking the fire that was to be the Black Lives Matter Movement. A multitude of ideologies tied to outdated social milieus have been challenged, culminating in increased attention towards issues surrounding equality, race, gender, sexuality, justice and climate change. Each of these global problems paved way for inspirational people to project their ideas and solutions on a global scale. Notable names include Patrisse Cullors, founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, Malala Yousufzai, a Pakistani activist *fighting* for female education, Tarana Bourke, founder of the #MeToo movement and Greta Thunberg, a teenage crusader for climate change. Through deep sacrifice and passionate advocacy, each of these leaders have strived for change. Whilst as leaders they are the face of these movements, behind the curtains there is something more. Can you guess what it is? |

The sea of supporters behind them, not ashamed or worried about standing up. *The tidal wave* of activists, barrelling through city streets, fighting for what is right. | Two is a company, three is a crowd, tens of thousands are a revolution, destined to make positive change. The shoulders on which these voices speak are critical even though it is difficult. Like these leaders, as College Captain for 2023, I am nothing without these prefects and the wonderful class of 2023. **We** are nothing without the support of you, the students, all throughout Years 5 to 12. If you were ever waiting for a call to action, here is one, for **you**, right now. I call for every student to be involved in *the entirety of school life*, ranging from academics, sports, music, drama, chess, outdoor education, your faith life, social justice initiatives, debating, squash, and every other opportunity our great school offers us, because boys, at the end of the day, these are your schooling years and all we could possibly hope for is the best outcomes for every student and member of our school community.

I am proud to say that here at St Pius, there are **boundless** opportunities for every one of us to get involved in, with each pathway accompanied by dedicated staff and amazing resources. For example, just this morning myself, and a number of other students here today, completed our HSC extension 1 Maths exam. Most likely, the majority of you *would hate the idea of* completing your maths HSC one year earlier than necessary. But for those who do undertake the accelerated program, countless benefits are available. As the school leaders for 2023, we strive to present as many opportunities as possible, paving pathways for each student to endeavour upon. So once again, I call for everybody to become fully immersed in the life of the school, to take every opportunity, and be leaders throughout your cohorts.

The school leaders of 2022, led by College Captain Will Staber, were absolutely amazing, and I cannot thank them enough for being **incredible** examples of leadership, who truly made an impact throughout the school. They definitely have left large shoes to be filled, but they leave us with the confidence that myself, and the rest of the student leaders will continue their legacy. Whilst also continuing in their footsteps, we must also continue to lead in the example provided by Mr Couani. | Mr Couani, I'm sure you are sick of hearing this by now, but on behalf of every student, past and present, we sincerely and **deeply** thank you. Your love for the school has certainly shone through your dedicated service to all. You certainly have led by example, being selfless and purely focusing on the growth and development of all students. You have been a role-model for me throughout my time here at Pius, so I can only hope that we can continue **your** legacy for the coming years.

As mentioned beforehand, the College Motto for 2023 will be, "**listen to learn, learning to listen.**" Mirriam-Rose Ungunmerr, who is a First Nations activist and, Senior Australian of the Year 2021, has put forward, and advocates for dadirri, which translates to deep listening. In Dadirri, we put aside our own thoughts, and fully concentrate on the respective person. Deep listening allows for deeper connections to be made, and through that we have the opportunity to learn so much more. Now, I am not demanding everybody to practise deep listening during every maths lesson, which you should be doing by the way, but during conversations with your friends, teachers, and family, where we can learn about their stories and experiences, allowing growth and development within ourselves.

Now, I may not be as tall *or as handsome* as Will Staber, or many of the other captains before me, *but I hold the same passion and love for St Pius as they do.*

On behalf of everybody on stage today and the Year 12 Class of 2023, **we promise** to always be by your side, through the many ups and downs that is high school. **We promise** to always stick up for what is right, and never back down from adversaries. **We promise** to be authentic leaders, and always remain loyal to this wonderful school that is St Pius. We hope that we can do you proud, as school leaders for 2023.

Thank you.

Now I will invite all year 12 students to recite the seniors pledge.