

Year 12 Farewell Chapel – 2020

Opening Reflection

To the year 12 students, it seems like only yesterday the year was just beginning and you were facing Year 12 with excited apprehension. Now, here we are at the end of your Year 12 Journey. It is with a great sense of pride and hope that I farewell you on behalf of the Rostrevor College community. The paths that each of you will take will vary... some of you will move on to university, to work, to a year out, travelling, to ... well, maybe you don't even know! It may feel as if you are leaving school, and a whole chapter of your life is over. And, very soon, a whole new chapter of your life will open, as you move on from here.

If I can offer you any advice it would be firstly to learn more about yourself: step out and try new things.

Take a good look at your life and decide that you're going to make it count. It can be scary to take risks and try new things. Perhaps you've become too comfortable. Perhaps you think, 'What if I fail?' Well... what if you do? It probably won't be the first or last time! No matter how bad, it probably won't be your worst. Whatever happens, you'll grow, in wisdom, experience and character.

Secondly, invest in your relationships.

Each life touches other lives in seen and unseen ways. You don't necessarily have to know somebody in order to experience the impact of their life. A person's influence can continue to be felt long after they've moved on. The Bible says, 'A good person leaves an inheritance'. Be kind, be patient, be for others. The effect you have on others is the most valuable currency there is and I thank you for your contribution to Rostrevor College.

Thirdly, strengthen your friendships.

Throughout your life, friendships will come and go. You will all probably have well over a hundred friends enlisted on the social networking sites such as Facebook, but how many of those do you know well and which of them would stand by and support you in hard times? Make sure that you express your thanks to those who have stayed by your side over the years... your mates, your parents, your teachers.

Friendships are an important part of our development, because those around us help shape our personality. Over the next few weeks when you begin to tackle your exams and finish school, know that you're not alone.

Advice number 4, Remember!

Remembering is a great gift. Remember the good times you've had here at Rostrevor: friends, teachers, work and achievement. Think about what you'll be taking with you when you go: hopefully some good memories and even inspiring classroom conversations you've had with your peers and teachers. The bad times will probably fade, but use those memories to build towards your future too.

As we draw near to the end of another school year, which for some of you means the end of your time at this school, don't just focus on what you're leaving behind. Each and every one of you has grown since the very first day you started at Rostrevor. You have seen many changes, not only in others but also hopefully within yourself. Perhaps you can see that you have gained confidence, self-worth, wisdom and faith for the next challenge ahead. Hopefully you've realised too, that the teacher is not the enemy!

And finally, my last piece of advice... **Learn from what's gone before and move on.**

I don't think that any of your teachers here today will be able to say that life after year 12 gets easier. It won't. You will continue to be confronted with challenges and obstacles... Are you ready for bigger things? Maybe you are. And maybe you're not. But hopefully we have equipped you with some life-long skills to help you manage some of these situations.

Even though you're leaving school you are progressing to another, harder, but also more rewarding stage of your life. There's more ahead of you than behind you – the best is yet to come!

There are many things that I personally hope lie ahead for each of you and I know that I speak on behalf of your teachers when I say the following:

I hope that when you close your textbooks for the last time that you will not close your minds, but continue to enquire and develop new knowledge. I hope that you will take with you the joy of new discoveries, a love of learning and the ability to master new challenges.

I hope that when you empty your locker, that you leave space for new memories and take with you cherished memories. I hope that when you return your lock that you leave your heart open to old friends and to the new friends who will come into your life in the future.

I hope that when you close the door to your classrooms for the last time that new doors will open for you in the future. Doors that lead to new experiences, friendships and opportunities; opportunities for further study, employment, travel and the chance to develop new skills and discover new interests.

I hope that when you fold away your uniform for the last time that you sense the connection you have to all the Rostrevor boys who have gone before you and all those yet to come.

When you put your shoes away for the last time, I hope that you continue to walk in the footsteps of Edmund Rice and all the courageous, intelligent and confident men and women whom you have encountered here at the College.

I hope that when you farewell your friends and teachers that you take with you fond memories of your time at the College and the wonderful experiences you have shared. The Camps, Retreats, Swimming and Athletic Carnivals, Socials, Formals, Music Nights, curricular activities and quality time with mates in the classroom and yard.

And, finally... As you carry your heavy school bags past the gates of the College for the last time, have faith that your struggles and burdens will always be shared with Edmund and Jesus Christ. May you possess the strength to overcome any challenges you may face. And may you continue to reach out and touch the lives of others. Live your life with love and offer compassion to those most in need.

As I have said in the past... "If you leave this great College with the capacity to put others before yourself, then we have done our duty as teachers and mentors, and you can truly call yourself a "Rostrevor Man for Others".

Leavers' blessing

As you move into the next stage of your life. We wish you well for the future.

Take pride in yourself. And give thanks for your growth and for the increase in your knowledge.

Think of others. Aim to do well. Consider all the good things that you take with you.

Dream dreams. Don't be discouraged.

Believe and be strong. Let go of old events that pull you back.

And look up as you face the future!

May the blessings of life and the blessings of God be yours today and always.

May you travel well, and may God go with you.

Amen.

Closing Statement

To the class of 2020, it has been a pleasure supporting you throughout your Rostrevor Journey. As your Head of House I have been privileged to have shared in your laughter, challenges and success over the last 3 years. I hope that when you leave Rostrevor College, you leave this community as confident, thoughtful and competent young men, with the strength of character to face whatever the future holds.

Remember always, the values on which Rostrevor College is based and use them as a foundation to live good lives with gentle hearts.

Thank you, good luck and farewell.