



Year 12 Graduation Reflection

Joshua Prowse & Cailin Green

2 December 2020



CAILIN: Good Afternoon students, staff, distinguished guests and our friends and family here, virtually.

Josh and I would like to thank everyone for being here today and appreciate the opportunity we have been given to reflect on our time at Catherine McAuley College. We hope we can offer some words of wisdom going forward and share some special memories. Writing this reflection has allowed us to fully comprehend the astonishing year that has been 2020. The magnitude of the year's events that have taken place would have seemed unfathomable this time last year.

JOSH: Firstly, we would like to take us all back to 2015 when the majority of us arrived at Catholic College Bendigo, Junortoun as bright-eyed Year 7s. From the first week of struggling to navigate the new school environment, to drowning under the weight of this new-found discovery called homework. Year 7 truly was a jump straight into the deep end of the pool.

CAILIN: Year 7 was full of firsts. First Opening Mass where we walked through the Cathedral, star-struck by the Year 12s who seemed a galaxy away. First Swimming sports where we were introduced to the annual house chant, where Jaara never changed their words. First Mercy Day, Caritas K's and whole school assemblies. The houses we were placed into felt like our new family with whom we spent all our time together; whether it be on camps, in classes or on excursions. And still to this day, we cherish our many friendships formed during those early years.

JOSH: Who could forget the two main highlights at La-Valla, Outward Bound and the Godspell production? Despite being tentative towards the chosen production, we persevered and ended up enjoying every minute of our time in the spotlight.

While Outward Bound was like a slap in the face, it was definitely a worthwhile experience. Something we had never embarked on before in our entire lives that pushed many people to go beyond their comfort zone. We all learnt different lessons in our groups and became closer with people we had never spoken to before. Our time at La Valla ... sorry now Coolock, seems like a world away from our time at St Mary's. Those were the fun, breezy years that introduced us to the benefits of high school before everything got too serious.

CAILIN: Then in 2018 we started a new chapter in our lives, moving up to St Mary's and that's where the real work began. Here was where people started making decisions for their future pathways whether it was VCE or VCAL. Year 10 camp, while relatively short, was valuable in allowing us to navigate our way around the bigger city.

Whereas, Year 11 Retreat provided us with opportunities to reflect on who we are as people and helped connect our year level on a more emotional level. While Year 10 and 11 were filled with great memories, one eye was always on the year 2020 and the challenges involved with finishing school. And wow, what a challenge it has been!

JOSH: All this year we have heard nothing but the word COVID so today we wanted to try and create a new meaning for all who are here today. We have taken the letters of COVID and tried to select words we feel truly represent this year.

First up is, C- Courage: Every single student no matter who you are have showed the Mercy Value of courage this year just to get out of bed, turn up to school or log on to your computer. We have been deprived of our friends, teachers and social interactions for the majority of our Year 12 which has certainly hit hard on each and every one of us.

CAILIN: O-Opportunity: This year has given us the opportunity to show initiative and resilience to help us grow not just as learners but as people of our wider community. Many have suffered more hurdles beyond those involved with completing Year 12, but with challenge comes opportunity. Despite some doors being slammed shut, new ones have opened and the world has changed dramatically.

JOSH: V-Virtual: In February 2020, we doubt very much that anyone imagined that we would spend more than half our year sitting behind computer screens instead of in our classroom. But it is thanks to our virtual technology we have been able to stay connected amongst our peers and hopefully the countless Google meets will give us a reason to laugh in the near future.

CAILIN: I-Imperfection: 2020 has been filled with many blemishes and it is from this that we learn that life is beyond anyone's total control. We did not decide that this would be the year of a global pandemic, it just happened and we can't change that. So, more than anything this year has proven that life is not a checklist of achievements but is in fact difficult and complicated. It is not smooth, but the hiccups of this year will hold us in good stead no matter how upsetting it feels now.

JOSH: D- Different: If there is one appropriate word we can use to describe 2020, it is different. The year has certainly been full of unexpected obstacles that we never thought we would ever have to face, let alone during our final year. But we can all take away the fact that despite everything, we made it, we graduated in the year 2020.

CAILIN: To finish off, we would like to give a massive thanks to all our teachers who have helped us through our Catherine McAuley College journey. We could not have done it without you. A special thanks to our Year 12 teachers who put in the extra mile this year. We understand it was just as tough for you guys as well. Finally, to our peers, we could not have asked for a better cohort to struggle through this year with. No matter what happens on 30 December, you can all hold your heads high and be proud of the fact that you were part of the Graduating Class of the year 2020. Thank you!

**COURAGE
OPPORTUNITY
VIRTUAL
IMPERFECTION
DIFFERENT**