

What's in a Motto?

This Sunday we celebrate the feast of *Corpus Christi*, the feast of the Body of Christ. At many levels, it recalls the Body of Christ of the Passion, the Body of Christ given us in the Eucharist, and the mystical Body of Christ which is us, the Christian community, manifesting the presence of Christ in the world today. When celebrated formally, the Mass of the day has, before the Gospel, a long chant or hymn called a Sequence. Only four solemnities currently have such a Sequence. This one, *Lauda Sion Salvatorem* ("Sion praise your Saviour") was composed by Dominican St Thomas Aquinas in 1264. It runs to twenty-four verses – little wonder then that it is seldom sung today! But why the interest in such a liturgical element? Because the second verse opens with our school motto, *Quantum potes, tantum aude*, "As much as you can do, so much dare to do". In its original context, it is encouraging the degree to which we ought sing and praise our Saviour. For us, it means so much more.

We have many mottoes in the College apart from this school motto. Each House has one. The student body proposes one each year (the current one being "My brother's keeper"). And there is that perennial *leitmotif* of Pedro Arrupe, to be 'a man for others'. Mottoes are reference points, they motivate us, they point to values, they describe our culture and ethos. *Quantum potes, tantum aude* is not simply a rallying cry 'to do your best'. It is grounded in the *magis*, that favourite adverb of Ignatius which encourages us to explore things more deeply, to choose the better option, to act more generously, to seek the greater good. The *magis* never settles for near enough. Yes, there is a boldness in our motto – so much dare to do. No mediocrity and no timidity. Daring often implies risk. Perhaps that is why the *Prayer for Generosity*, ascribed to St Ignatius, is so popular among our young men: "to give and not to count the cost" is an heroic rallying cry, full of youthful zeal and boldness. It takes as its starting point the expectation put before us by Jesus in Luke's gospel that "from the one who has been given much, much more is to be expected".

Man of action that he was, Ignatius would never be content with the fine words of a motto unless he saw them translated into the doing. He reminds us in his *Spiritual Exercises* that "love is expressed in deeds more than in words". So for us, the spirit of our motto would have us look at our gifts and talents as see them not as treasures to be selfishly hoarded, but to be spent liberally in the service of others. As I once heard an Old Boy parent describe his school to his son at the point of enrolment, "Riverview is not a school of privilege, it is a school of obligation."

Last weekend, almost one thousand Queen's Birthday honours were announced and a number of those awards were accorded to members of the Riverview family. There were only fifteen recipients of the highest award, Companion of the Order of Australia. One of those was Julian McMahon (OR1981). His citation reads,

For eminent service to the law and the legal profession, through *pro bono* representation of defendants in capital punishment cases overseas, as an advocate for the abolition of the death penalty, and to human rights and social justice reform.

Julian is perhaps best known to us in his work on the cases for criminals on Death Row, including Van Tuong Nguyen in Singapore (2002-2005), George Forbes in Sudan (2007), and members of the Bali Nine, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, in Indonesia (2006-2015). Julian's is a labour of justice – especially for those to whom it has been denied, for those who, on the edge of life and death, have the greatest claim on our time, talent and treasure. And appropriately, as we approach this Feast of the Body of Christ, Julian reminds us of the sacredness of life – made as we are in the image and likeness of God, called temples of God's Holy Spirit, and being part of the mystical body of Christ.

As he does each year, Julian joined us this week from Melbourne for the Year 11 Arrupe Academy which focusses on Ignatian leadership. Julian spoke principally on discernment, illustrated by many examples

from his own experience, especially in the law. The present generation of Ignatians were rightly proud of their older brother, so much has he dared to do.