



Joe Prowse – Claver House President

Claver House Mass Reflection

Good evening Teachers, Parents and fellow Claverians,

It is a privilege to stand before all of you tonight.

I chose this Gospel reading because I feel it taps into a feeling we've all experienced in the last 12 months: Anxiety.

A global pandemic, lockdowns, schools being shut, job losses – the sheer unknown of what tomorrow would look like. It led us all to become well acquainted with that sinking feeling. Jesus mentions the word 6 times in the passage. But what I believe this reading is trying to teach is that by living in the present moment, one learns how to deal with your anxieties.

2020 was a year unlike any other. Every week it felt as though something was taken away. I vividly recall when activities week was cancelled and remember feeling so disappointed. Disappointed that my younger Claverians would not get to enjoy some of the most fun and defining moments of my earlier years at the college that I was so fortunate to experience. It is the little things that build a sense of community, and many of these moments were sadly missed. Having barely laid eyes on half the year 9 boys' faces in my tutor group last year, it became extremely difficult to build that sense of comradery. The hallway interactions, chatting at the lockers, supporting our fellow Xavierians at sporting events - It is these little moments that create the bonds that last a lifetime.

But as with many things in life, you only realise how much you **miss** it until it's taken away. So, we must promise each other to never take our community for granted again. We have been reminded of the importance of fostering relationships – the importance of being together, face

to face, and truly being present with each other. Schoolmates, teachers, brothers, sisters, grandparents. Whilst we were not able to be present together last year, this year we have been provided an opportunity.

This is exactly why it's important to make that extra effort, to reach out to your tutor group, the lower years, and everyone that means something to us. Forgetting about unnecessary technology, and going out, chatting with your friends, forming genuine connections that build long lasting connections. That is my idea of living in the now. It is the refusal to dwell on past failures and future events, the things that we are not able to control. It is about staying in the present moment and doing everything possible to ensure those around us feel that joy too. Those everyday menial moments that consume our time are the most precious thing we have. If 2020 taught us anything, it's that we can't control tomorrow. What we can control is the relationships we build today.

Year 9s:

This year you've transitioned into the seemingly complex world that is the senior campus with little warning. From meeting you all at Emmaus day, I could tell instantly that you are a great group of guys, with Hamish boasting his 60-inch vertical jump, NBA level some have said. Coming into this year, I want you all to soak up as much of the senior campus culture as possible, throw yourself into everything and try to become an important part of this amazing school – because you are. A lot of stress is put onto you guys in terms of exams and tests, but make sure to not become overwhelmed with study and spend lots of time bonding with those boys around you. These will be your friends for life.

Year 10s:

It feels like I barely know you guys sadly. Having such a broken-up year 9, some of the experiences that accompany that first year have escaped you. But rather than look back on what's lost, try to stay in the present and make the most of the today. You were unlucky last year, but we're all incredibly lucky people to be here. Never forget that. Similar to the year 9s, I



challenge you to soak up the senior school and everything it offers. Enjoy the red and black army and really try to get to know some of the older boys in the tutor group, as from my personal experience, I know that those are some of the best friendships to be made.

Year 11s:

You're the guys who will be backing us up after we leave this year, so it will be up to you to get to know the younger years at a deeper level and ensure house culture stays strong. Keep on striving to do everything you can for this house, like Ed Plunkett last Tuesday at debating, where he dismantled that poor year 9 Gonzaga debater's arguments. Their third speaker was rattled, evidently bringing in a win for Jase and Claver.

And lastly, to my fellow 12s:

Unsurprisingly, this year is already proving to be much more tiring and busier than the last. We need to make sure we take time to care for our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around us. This is the last leg of a 12-year school journey, and I couldn't be more fortunate to share it with you all.

So, this year, I challenge the entire house to be present. We cannot be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. This present moment is all we ever have, there is never a time when our lives are not consisting of "this moment." Although we will always need to focus on **becoming** the best men we can be and **achieving** the goals that we all strive for, I challenge you to enjoy each day as it comes, remain in the present and you'll be amazed how much joy you'll find. I feel if we do this correctly, this will be what defines us.

Lastly, I just want to say that the quality of the house system at Xavier is only as good as the members in it. We are blessed to be in this house, with such an incredible group of teachers leading it, alongside a great group of boys. For me, it's the people that make Claver the best house of all. Good luck for the rest of the year and I cannot wait to spend it alongside you boys. Thanks.

