



# Leavers' Assembly – Rector's Address

Christine Leighton

Monday 30 October 2023



Morena koutou katoa  
Nau mai haere mai  
e nga hau e wha  
e nga iwi, e tau nei

Tena koutou katoa

Our St Andrew's College Leavers' Assembly for 2023... and once again I stand here wondering where the year has gone. Every year we travel the path of St Andrew's College ceremonies, milestones, special events, competitions, learning and assessments, musical items, productions, sports competitions, assemblies and chapel services.

And every year it is the same but different. It is different because each year brings a new group of people each with their own unique abilities, attributes, skills and personalities – a new group of people who keep our school vibrant, alive, full of energy and purpose. At today's assembly we are honouring our leavers of 2023, 11 students from Year 12 and 212 from Year 13.

Twelve of the Year 13 leavers have completed their entire years of schooling at St Andrew's College – some even started in Pre-school. But whether you have spent one, five, seven or 13 years at St Andrew's you have all left your mark on this special place.

We also this morning acknowledge teachers who are leaving at the end of this year, and honour the contribution they have made to the learning of our students – some over many years.

Welcome to parents and whānau who have joined us this morning as we pay tribute to our leavers and share some of their memories of their time here. I am sure that today you feel an enormous sense of pride as you reflect upon the young adult your child has become. A special welcome also to Chair of the Board of Governors, Felicity Odlin, also enjoying the moment as a Year 13 parent.

There are certain milestones in life that are important to celebrate; amongst these your first day of school, your first day of Secondary School, your 18th and 21st birthdays.

Leaving school is another one of these occasions because you are at a crossroad, deciding on a new direction. Your wall of memories is behind you: traditions, values, learnings, relationships and friendships. The foundation of your life is firmly established, and there is a new horizon ahead.

As you face forward with excitement about future opportunities and possibilities, I hope you will remember to be grateful for what you have experienced here at St Andrew's. Gratitude has to be one of the most important attributes for a fulfilling life. Without gratitude we have nothing. As you leave St Andrew's College, take time to say thank you and to recognise all these who have assisted you in your development to date.



Take time to feel proud of your achievements – stop and enjoy this moment with your classmates and friends before you gather yourself, ready to embrace your new challenges.

This morning as you proceeded towards your final assembly, you were celebrated by our Preparatory School students, and the Middle School has honoured you with our College Haka. You also enjoyed a celebration breakfast prepared by Catering Manager, Russell Gray, and his team, and I thank you for the way you participated in Leavers' Chapel last night.

The younger students look to you as people who have achieved great things. They don't necessarily see your personal struggles or doubts. To them you are grown up and knowledgeable. In your senior years this has been your role, as influencers and setters of example. We thank you for the positive influence you have had and the responsibilities you have shouldered. As I reflect on your year group, I see you picking up the challenge set by the head prefects this year, 'Blue and White Doing it Right.'

Thank you for the courage you have shown in your journey throughout Secondary School and thank you for the encouragement you have given to others. May you continue to make time and have the energy to recognise the value of "we" over "I".

But most importantly you leave yourselves in the minds of others, the kind words said, the thoughtfulness shown, others you have inspired, teachers and staff you have appreciated.

One of my favourite quotes from New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield creates a strong, appropriately agricultural image of what it means to leave.

"How hard it is to escape from places. However carefully one goes they hold you – you leave little bits of yourself fluttering on the fences – like rags and shreds of your very life".

Think of your journey at St Andrew's, the people you have met, the friends you have made, the lives you have touched. Think of those you have helped, the service given, the talents you have shared.

In the many publications at St Andrew's College you have been noticed, the *Collegian*, *Regulus*, *On Strowan*, *Rector's Comment*, Facebook and Instagram, and for Year 13, your year group Leavers' Book.

You are physically leaving St Andrew's College, but you remain in the memories of your teachers, friends, classmates, teammates and acquaintances. You remain in thousands of photographs, videos, you are leaving little bits of yourself fluttering on the fences of St Andrew's.

As our 2023 graduates leave your school days behind to realise your dreams, I urge you to take with you the St Andrew's values of Truth, Excellence, Faith, Inclusivity and Creativity.

These values embody our College foundations and by living out these values we believe you will best equip yourselves for the uncertain world ahead; a world that has many challenges.

Here at St Andrew's we have seen you engaging with these future issues as you take part in debates and speech finals, writing and poetry competitions, as members of the Sustainability Council or the Community Service team.



You have engaged with Future Problem Solving, theatresports, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Rainbow Group and the Well-being Committee, and a multitude of sports and cultural activities.

You have demonstrated that you, our future leaders and decision makers, are going to truly contribute and make the world a better place. A place where compassion, equality, justice, freedom, care for our planet and hope for the future is at the top of the agenda.

Keep alongside you, our DPR values and use these to help you make decisions and choices that are wise, inclusive, mindful of others and good for your own personal growth.

As you step into a world of possibility and opportunity, I encourage you all to hold this whakataukī before you.

Tohaina ō  
Painga ki te ao  
*Share your gifts with the world.*

No reira  
kia kaha  
Tena koutou katoa