Good morning Oblate Fathers, Staff and Boys,

It gives me great pleasure to be standing here one more time in front of the community that has built us into the men we now are. I would like to begin by adding my welcome to the new members of the college community.

Iona can offer you so much in every facet of life, but is not a right, it is earned. My message that I wish to impart to you today is that, at Iona, the ideas of jocks and nerds, musicians and captains, servants and leaders, is not separate. At Iona, you don’t need to choose to conform to one of these groups, so throw away the notion of OR and replace it with AND. These arenas of success are not defined by different individuals but rather every area can be adopted by you. Here at Iona, you can be a national athlete AND play firsts in other sports AND be a talented musician AND be an outstanding academic AND be a school captain AND be a man of faith AND serve and be passionate about your community. How do I know this? Well, these men looking pretty spiffy in front of you, were able to be all these things. And whilst this is an assembly for academic success, this is not all that these guys are successful at.

Success is a mindset. It takes consistent hard work. It is the sum of small efforts repeated daily. Success takes a dream, then a goal, then an action. I have a wall of quotes that I have built over the years which has helped me to get to where I am and will continue to inspire me get to where I want to be.

How many of you guys, in your room or on your wall, have a quote or a picture of an idol who inspires you every day? For those of you who don’t, that is my challenge to you. Start a wall of ODIM. That is what I call mine. It stands for wall of ORGANISATION, DEDICATION, INSPIRATION and MOTIVATION.

I also want you to go home and write down your long term goals…Only after you have done that, next to them, write down the dreams that you’ve always had. The most outlandish, crazy, wild ‘never going to happen’ type of dreams. Compare them...if they are not identical, I ask you WHY? You have one life in which to do everything you’ll ever do...so act accordingly.

When you find out what YOU want to achieve AND if that parallels with your dreams...then don’t count the cost. Just do whatever it takes to get to wherever you want, and Iona will help you get there.

Being back here today makes me realise that we, the returning boys of 2016, owe so much to Iona for giving us a steady platform to attain an OP 1-5. Our academic success is a culmination of years of learning and support from our primary school teachers, high school teachers, support staff, tutor teachers and parents and we thank each and every one of you. You all made a very important impact on our learning, and our success is just as much yours.

Good luck for this year and the years ahead boys. Remember that here at Iona you are not bound to one area of school life but rather you are obliged to give everything your all. From sport to music, to leadership to performing arts and, of course, academics, leave nothing undared.
Good morning Fr Michael, CLT members, Iona staff and my Iona brothers. It’s a privilege to be welcomed back to speak at this celebration today which acknowledges all of the great academic achievements of the Class of 2016.

I’d also like to particularly welcome all the new students to the College. Whether you are in Year 5, Year 7 or somewhere in between, I hope you make the most of your time at this College. I addressed you as my Iona Brothers at the very beginning and you’ll soon come to understand what this really means.

During my time at the College, I witnessed many of these speeches from past students and I’d like to take this opportunity to share with you some of the stories that were shared with me. Jordan Waller and Alex Miotti – two past graduates who were exemplars of life at the College and who have continued to excel after school – shared with me some wisdom which I feel needs to be passed on to you – as it was passed on to me. I’ll also share with you some of the best advice Dan Groundwater has ever given me.

I believe that the ability to justify your opinion, your views and your goals, is really important. Jordan Waller phrased this in a rather eloquent way – Why? Why do you do what you do? Why do you want to play First Cricket? What do you want to be an electrician? Why do you want to work an extra hour on that assignment? And once you’ve got your ‘why’, everything else is put into perspective. It’s what you go back to when you’re struggling – to keep you motivated and to keep you pushing forward. It justifies all the hard work when you eventually succeed. You don’t have to explain your ‘why’ to other people if you don’t want to, but you do have to be able to justify it for yourself. I encourage each one of you today to think about your why. Find out why you do the things you do, find the motivation behind it and use that to push yourself forward.

Alex Miotti spoke to the College at the beginning of 2015 and he set a challenge to everyone. He said to go home and write your goal on a piece of paper and then to pin that paper to your desk. I went home and did exactly that and every day for the next two years – the words stared at me while I worked. Every time I looked up, they were right there, right in front of me. So, I’ll echo Alex’s message. Go home today and write your goal down on some paper and pin it right in front of you. It will be a constant and visual reminder of what you want to achieve.

Dan is undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary and motivated people I’ve had the pleasure of meeting. He explained to me this concept of delayed gratification – which is giving up something more fun or enjoyable now, in the trade-off for something better in the long run. I know that this was true for us during our senior studies and it definitely kept us focussed. I ask you to consider this concept and see how you might be able to apply it to your current situation.

You can all achieve goals, whatever they may be. But to do so, you must be willing to make sacrifices along the way. Use your resources and your time wisely and don’t be afraid to ask for help. This institution is a truly amazing place, so take all of the opportunities that are presented to you; whether they be academic or cultural activities.

Thank you for having me speak today and best of luck to all of you for your future endeavours.