

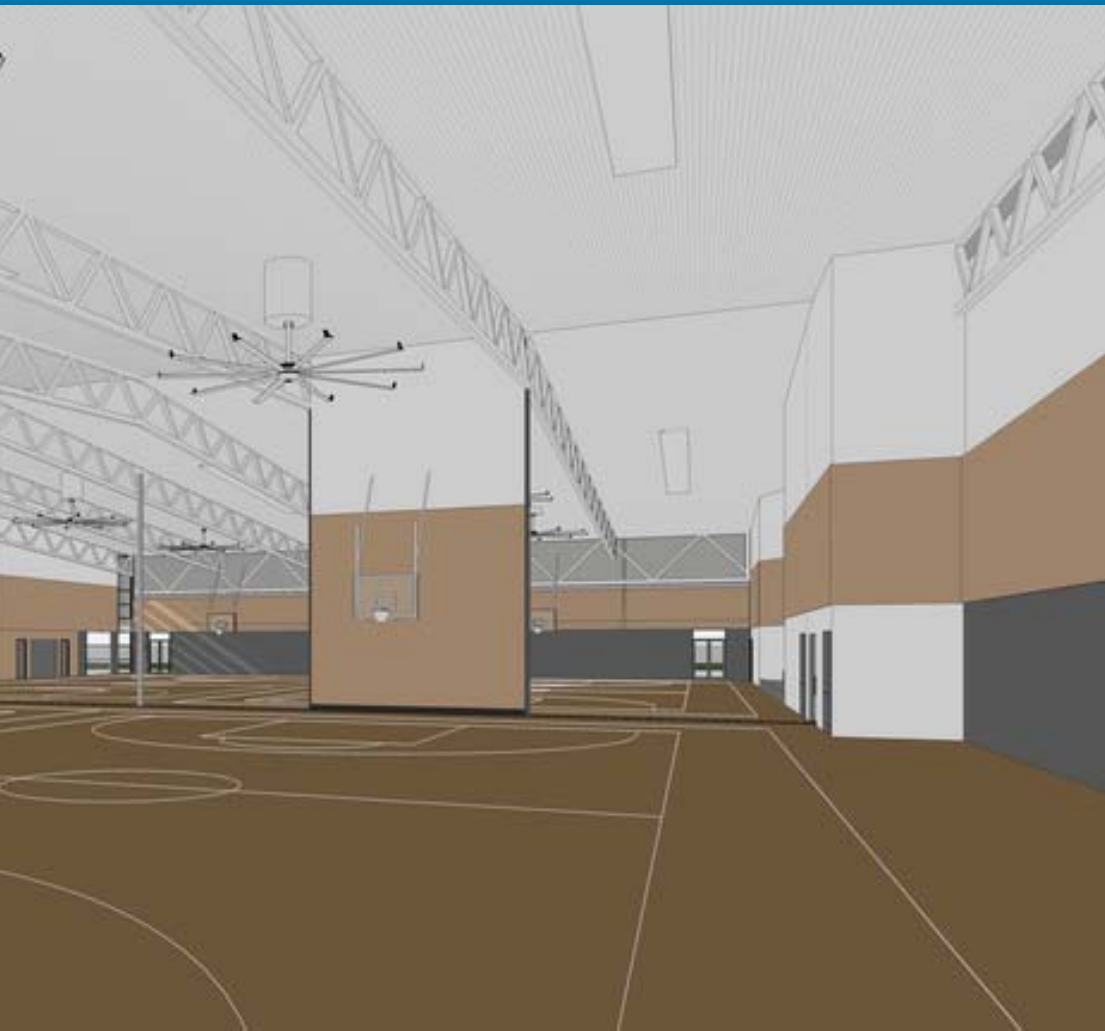
WHAT CATHOLIC LEADERS DO



a personal reflection



THE FIRST AND BEST decision I ever made...





MY MORAL IMPERATIVE

"I am going to be a teacher, and I am going to ensure that young people have hope and choices just like me..."

REFLECTION

1

SCHOOL TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP ARE MORAL ENDEAVOURS

Collectively, we work with and on behalf of society to help young people grow up into democratic citizenry. And, individually and collectively, we strive to create a more equitable and socially just world.

THE EARLY YEARS OF TEACHING AND LEADING...

a surprise full-time permanent job
a leadership role from Day 1
a Year 12 class
and plenty of mistakes



THE INFLUENCE OF THE SCHOOL'S MOTTO

“Firm in principle, gentle in manner”
A mantra for all of the years since

REFLECTION

2

**WE HAVE ALL BENEFITED FROM BEING
GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY**

**– by someone, at sometime and perhaps even
when we might not have been quite ready.**

I hope we have done, and will continue to do
the same, for someone else...



THE SECOND DECISION Do I stay or do I go...?

Xavier College

My resolution

"I want to work in a Catholic school...
and I hope to be a Principal one day."



NEW EXPERIENCES

completely different community
unitised curriculum
intensive support classes
assessment task design
Year 12 classes

REFLECTION

3

LEADERSHIP REQUIRES COURAGE

We must be prepared to step into the unknown
and to challenge ourselves...

... and/or is this an example of what we mean by
the saying "the Holy Spirit leads us...?"

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS...and another Principal takes a risk

In 2000, I was appointed the inaugural Head of Middle School at CBC...

I learnt to lead change; lead learning; and lead people.

I learnt to reflect and evaluate; and to be humble.

I quickly learnt to love CBC.

THE BETTER INFORMED LEADER...

During this period, I completed formal study
I learnt to understand the concept of “praxis”
I learnt to be a researcher and teacher and leader
I gained experiences as a Deputy Principal and Director
of Studies.

REFLECTION

4

LEADERSHIP INCLUDES PROVIDING DIRECTION
exercising influence, and building and
nurturing relationships.



EXPANDING MY HORIZONS

Senior Education Adviser

Exposure to primary schools

Assessment

Assessment design

Action research



EXPANDING MY HORIZONS

FutureSACE Office

An opportunity to contribute to a new qualification
A time of invaluable learning and experience – and
a chance to see the different contexts of schools
and the gifts of leaders

REFLECTION

5

LEADERSHIP SEEMS TO REQUIRE US TO SWITCH

between diving deep and flying wide...
and to have the skill to flexibly switch
between the two.



A FORK IN THE ROAD

Principalship or a University Academic?
I was appointed Principal of Nazareth
Catholic College Secondary in late 2009.



AND THEN THE SELF DOUBT SETS IN...

Can I do this?

Will I be good enough?

How will I manage the complexity?

I remember feeling sick with nerves for the first few weeks.



BUT I FOCUSED ON WHAT I WAS GOOD AT...

learning

being present in the community; and

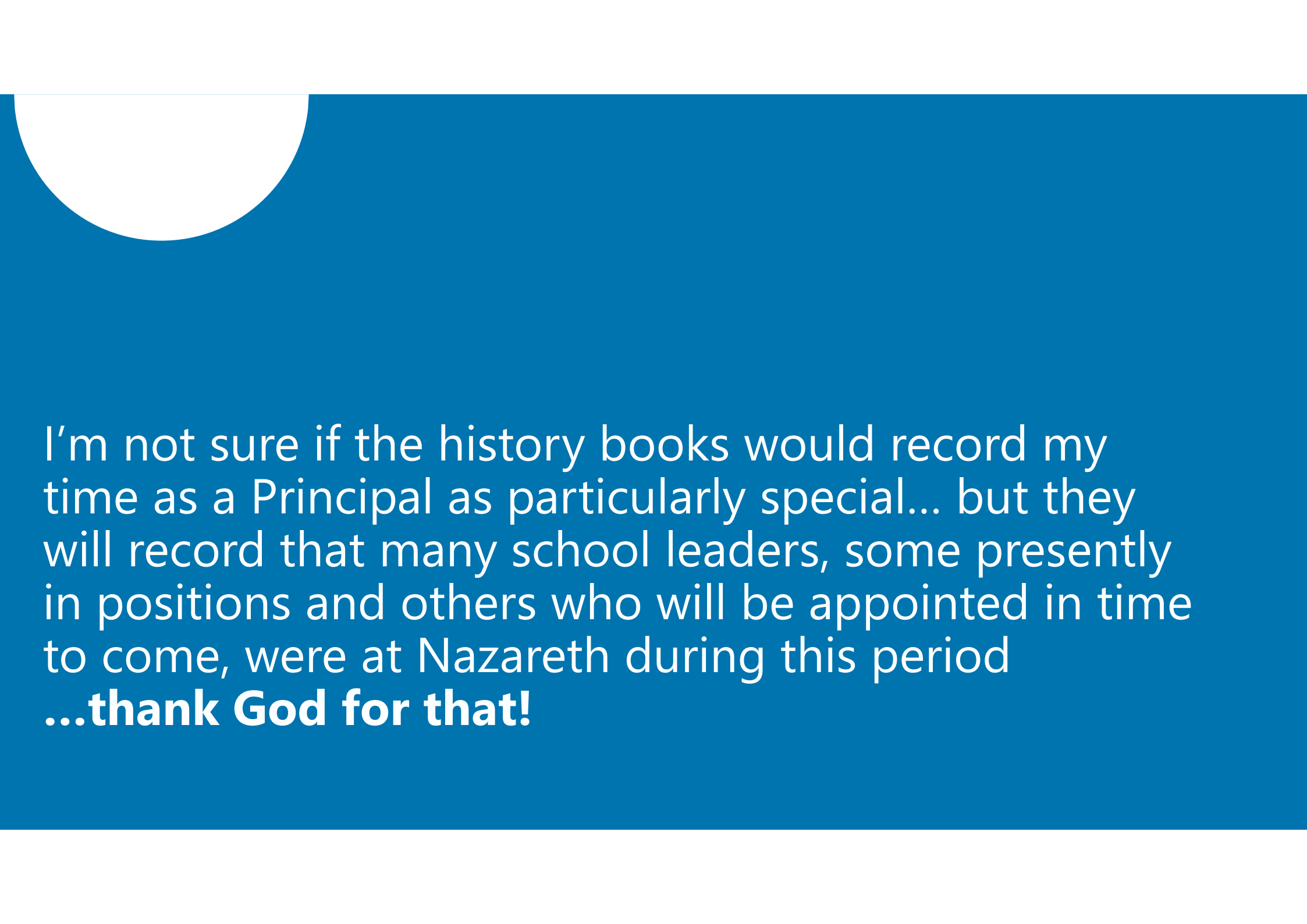
being clear about expectations

**and I learnt how to bring the best out of the
people around me, especially my leadership team.**



My leadership team became the engine room to work with staff, students and families, creating and sustaining a culture of excellence.

And I learnt to lead people differently, to get the best out of them, and to value their gifts.



I'm not sure if the history books would record my time as a Principal as particularly special... but they will record that many school leaders, some presently in positions and others who will be appointed in time to come, were at Nazareth during this period
...thank God for that!

REFLECTION

6

“CULTURE EATS STRATEGY FOR BREAKFAST”

I learnt that culture, or “the way we do things around here”, refers first and foremost to the staff, and their attitudes, behaviours and actions...

You can change culture by changing and aligning staff attitudes, behaviours and actions around a few agreed principles or habits.



A PARADIGM SHIFT...

from School Principal to
Chief Executive of the SACE Board of South Australia



AND, AGAIN, THE NAGGING SELF DOUBT...

and maybe offset by the courage to step out and try... and definitely offset by a belief that this was what God was calling me to do...



BUT WHAT AN EXPERIENCE...

working across three school sectors, the Northern Territory,
Malaysia, China, Vietnam and Singapore
learning to work with a Board and with Governments
learning to keep learning, assessment and certification at
the heart
and learning to be a manager of an international business



NOT TO MENTION SOME “MAJOR STUFF-UPS”

SA NEWS

Mistake found in Year 12 Specialist Mathematics exam taken by 960 students

TIM WILLIAMS, EDUCATION REPORTER, The Advertiser

November 14, 2014 5:14pm



SA NEWS

1200 SACE students received someone else's uni entrance statement, SACE Board investigation finds

TIM WILLIAMS, EDUCATION REPORTER, The Advertiser

December 23, 2015 5:37pm





THROUGH ADVERSITY COMES STRENGTH...

Things always go wrong; the measure is how well we respond to the challenge, keeping students at the forefront of our thinking...

**Through challenge,
you learn much
about others, and
much about yourself**

I learnt that the SACE staff are amazing

I learnt that, in government, the media adviser is very powerful

I learnt that, under pressure, some people resort to "self interest"

I learnt that the Board – my colleagues – supported me incredibly

I learnt that being at the mercy of keyboard warriors and social media is the modern-day equivalent of being thrown to the lions in ancient Rome...

**And, about myself,
I learnt...**

That you need to solve the problem before worrying about yourself

That I can negotiate my way through high pressure situations

That it's best not to make the same mistake twice!

Most of all, through my time at the SACE Board, I learnt to

Think strategically,

and to underpin strategy with a compelling educational narrative

and a watertight business case that highlights the Return on Investment for the government, society and all of the end users of a product

And I received \$17.5M for my efforts and learning!

And I learnt...

To ask better questions which focus on learning outcomes, success indicators and teacher effectiveness

That modern-day authorities no longer define rules; they outline shared values and mission, and they operate within a framework that allows and enables diffused, agile governance.

That being evidence informed is not the same as being data driven...

REFLECTION

7

WE HAVE MUCH TO LEARN FROM LEADERS OF CORPORATIONS AND BUSINESSES.

They can't just "sell" ideas or "processes" or "maybes" or "could-bes" or "theories".

They "sell" a value proposition and the return on the investment. They know the right questions to ask... and, they always do the maths!



AND, HERE I AM...

blessed to be back at Catholic Education,
hopefully wiser for my experience
but definitely fortunate to be in this position
– one I could never have imagined, and
certainly not a role I even dreamt about...



NEVERTHELESS the role certainly has its challenges...



**But, like always,
it's best to play
to our strengths**

Identify a framework for learning, wellbeing and Catholic identity

Commit to it – thoroughly, every day, every week, every year

Invest and trust in leaders and leadership

Invest in teachers and teachers – find the balance between expectation and individual “magic”

Learn to respect the complementary principles of “subsidiarity” and “solidarity”

And be brave...

REFLECTION

8

LEADERSHIP SHOULD NOT BE LONELY

We have to be close to each other; we have to bring out the best in those people around us; and we need to be the type of leaders who others want to follow.



**AND WE HAVE TO
BE PASSIONATE
AND GRATEFUL FOR
ALL THAT WE HAVE**



