

APLEC 10

Educating for Life

ONE HEART. ONE COMMITMENT. ONE LIFE.



Morning prayer started the day on a heartwarming and gentle note. Through learning the history of St John Baptist de La Salle, the APLEC participants came together to reflect on the reasons they chose to come to APLEC.

The theme for the day centred around "Their eyes were opened, and they recognised him". This is our invitation for our eyes to open, for the ears of our heart to open.

Bishop Mark Edwards started the day with the Keynote Panel topic of 'Educating for Life'. He captured our attention with a photo of a sign at the front of a school's gates, that read 'Enter to learn' and as you walk out of the school, on the back of that same sign it read 'Leave to serve'. This was explained as being distinctly Lasallian and that we educate so that people flourish and serve the world.



In a room full of Teachers, Principals, Brothers and Sisters, there is a profound sense of service to the young people in our Lasallian community. Every word was listened to and admired, particularly when Bishop Mark said that 'God calls our students to life, to encounter Him and accompany Him on their journey'. He explained three theological eras;

- the Human Person,
- Evangelisation, and
- Vocation and Trinity.

The Human Person was explained as being at the heart of Christ's teaching; humans are made in the image and likeness of God.



Check out the APLEC Website (<http://bit.ly/aplec2019>)

Evangelisation was described as 'a beggar telling another beggar where they found food'. Bishop Mark asked the question, 'Why are we Catholic?'. He reflected on a time that he met a newly baptised adult that told him the reason why they became Catholic is because 'it is the best way to know Jesus'. Bishop Mark took such an incredible reason even further to say that 'being Catholic is the best way to stay close to Jesus'.

Vocation and Trinity were something that everyone in the room could relate to – Bishop Mark expressed the need for students to dream and believe in their dream. He described dreams as fruit that can go off – you can't wait for dreams to finish themselves as they go off if you leave them alone.

In his conclusion, Bishop Mark forced us to say to ourselves 'I am a mission' not 'I have a mission' and 'Who am I for?' Rather than, 'who am I?'. It is through the needs around us that we find our Vocations.

The audience were asked by Bernadette Miles, Facilitator, to reflect on their own dreams and vocations within their schools. The room bustled with answers and chatter – many conversations were centred around the goals of students and their teachers.



The second keynote presentation was given by Br George Van Grieken, the Director of the Lasallian Resource Centre in San Francisco, New Orleans. Br George is also the newly appointed Secretary Coordinator of Lasallian Research and Resources for the Institute. The topic of his keynote presentation was 'What you can do in 300 years'. He based the answer to this topic on the theme of the day, 'their eyes were opened'. Br George's response to this was "To talk about having your eyes opened is to highlight the bursting in of a new revelation, a new awareness, a new collation of the facts, a new place from where to see things that we already knew".

Br George highlighted five transformative operational dimensions and how those dimensions are applicable today and need to be fed and furthered:

1. De La Salle himself
2. Focus on Education
3. Self adjusting adaptable-relevant
4. Community (Association)
5. Spirit of Faith & Zeal

Br George mentioned vocation and how our vocation as Lasallians is to evangelise through education. Similarly to Bishop Mark, the theme of



Vocation and Evangelisation was tied back to the overarching idea of 'Educating for Life'. Br George left the audience with this question, "How do we make prayer and spirituality real for ourselves as educators and our students in an authentic, understandable and deeply significant way?"

Workshops filled the rest of the morning and afternoon. Bishop Mark Edwards ran a workshop named, 'Enter to Learn; Leave to Serve. Every Life is a Vocation'. This included the theological foundation of Catholic education and what it means to have a Vocation. He focused on what it means to be present and incorporate our Vocation similar to the Disciples on the way to Emmaus: through constant, dedicated and loving presence.

Br Bill Firman's workshop focused on 'Educating for Life in South Sudan – how do we educate amid so much poverty?' Br Bill shared "Like John Baptist de La Salle, I never expected to land in the middle of conflict; I learned to accept it in a spirit of faith'.

Br George Van Grieken drove his workshop with the question "What is it about this educational movement that has allowed it, has driven it, to adapt so many places and contexts, taking on such a variety of education-related works and persisting through so many challenges and difficulties?"

Br Peter Bray's workshop revolved around the Disciples on the Emmaus walk and how it related to Bethlehem University. The workshop with Sir Br Pat focused on his experiences in New Zealand and how that has led him as an educator in the Lasallian world.

Tracy Adams also led a workshop based on those who are often left behind or never get started, with a focus on programs and services developed by *yourtown*.

Following workshops, there was an extended afternoon break, where many groups of educators took part in various walks around Melbourne. The Mary McKillop Walk and Koori Heritage Walk were a huge success, giving an opportunity for many overseas participants to explore Melbourne.

The night began with a chance for participants to mingle over pre-dinner drinks and concluded with a formal dinner where the official launch of the De La Daily prayer app was inaugurated.

The app draws its inspiration from the spirituality of St John Baptist de La Salle (1651-1719) who recognised the centrality of prayer as a way to remember that we are always in the midst of our ever-present God.

Br David explained that the De La Daily prayer app is a collaborative, grassroots project that was created and resourced 'together and by association' by St Bede's College Mentone, Victoria; De La Salle College Malvern, Victoria; St John's Regional College Dandenong, Victoria; St James College Bentleigh, Victoria; St Michael's College Henley Beach, South Australia and La Salle College Middle Swan, Western Australia.

UNTIL STOCK RUNS OUT!

The Papua New Guinea Delegates have a variety of Tercentenary hats for sale. The hats are available in White and Green and are being sold for \$20.



Check out our Twitter Account @aplec2019