



**Emmanuel Catholic College Recognition Ceremony
Official Blessing & Opening of the
Sport & Performing Arts Centre of Excellence**

SPEECH

**By the Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth**

Emmanuel Catholic College, Beeliar
6 April 2016

Good afternoon everyone.

I would like to begin these few words by saying how happy I am to be here with you all this afternoon for this very special occasion in the life of your College. The blessing and opening of new facilities, especially impressive ones like the one in which we find ourselves now, is always a highlight for any school community.

As I imagine you are all aware, this College, like every Catholic school here in our archdiocese and indeed right throughout Australia, stands on the fundamental conviction that at the heart of every human life, and at the heart of the world in which we live, we find the mystery of God. Schools exist to prepare young people for their future, to equip them with the tools they will need to make their lives rich and fulfilling, and the Church is convinced that the most important tool, and one which influences every other dimension of a person's life, is a recognition of the love and presence of God at work in every human heart and in the world around us. That, after all, is what the name of your College means: Emmanuel, a name which means "*God is with us*".

Because God is at the heart of everything, and not just a kind of added-on optional extra, then everything good in life both comes from God and can open our eyes to the beauty and goodness of God. This is certainly true of what we sometimes think of as extra-curricular activities like sport, drama and the arts. These things, each in their own way, and in a way that is different from the more traditional academic pursuits, put us in touch with the depths of our own humanity and help us to give space to all the gifts which God has given us.

For this reason, as we bless and open this wonderful new facility, my hope and prayer is that the whole College community, students, staff and families, will use these facilities to celebrate enthusiastically and joyfully the wonderful gift of life which is God's first and most foundational gift to us all.

Congratulations and sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed in any way to the realisation of what I imagine has been a dream for the College for a long time. Your hard work, generosity and commitment will bring enormous benefits to the present students and to all those who follow them in the years to come.