



**Official Blessing and Dedication  
Emmaus Catholic Primary School**

**Speech**

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

**Friday 17 February 2023  
359 Arthur Street Dayton**

The decision to give the name "*Emmaus Catholic Primary School*" to this latest school to become part of the Catholic Education family of Western Australia was, I think, a very wise one – I might almost say an inspired one.

We have just heard the story from Saint Luke's gospel about the journey to Emmaus of two of the disciples of Jesus who, so deeply disappointed by and even traumatized by the terrible suffering and death of Jesus, were basically running away from the place where these terrible things happened. You can understand why. As followers of Jesus, they certainly did not want what had happened to him to also happen to them. They recognised the danger they were in and decided to get away as quickly as they could. They were being ruled by fear. They were also completely overcome by disappointment. Over the three years that they had been with Jesus they had listened to him speak about God as a loving and compassionate father, they had watched him as he reached out with healing and with forgiveness to all the many people he encountered, and they had grown to love him, to trust him and, in fact, to put all their hopes in him. It is not hard to appreciate how disillusioned and discouraged they must have been. I don't think it is too much to say that they were experiencing a very deep crisis of faith and that they must have been wondering whether anything Jesus had said about God was really true. At times, as they listened to him, they must have thought to themselves that this God whom Jesus was speaking about was just too good to be true. Could God be that loving, that forgiving, that compassionate, that understanding? They had begun to hope that Jesus might be right about God – but when he was so cruelly murdered, they must have come to the conclusion that Jesus was wrong after all. These disciples hadn't just lost Jesus: they had lost their faith in God as well.

Jesus, risen from the dead, steps into this darkness and begins, gently and patiently, to help these two disciples open their eyes to the truth: that not only is God exactly the way Jesus had described him but is, in ways they could never have imagined, able to bring life out of death and love out of hatred. The disciples were overwhelmed by all this and immediately set out to return to the very place they had been running away from. Their fear and their distress had been replaced by hope, courage and energy.



Transforming discouragement into hope, sadness into joy, failure into success and fear into courage: these are exactly the aims that this school, through its principal and its dedicated staff, hopes to achieve for every student in this school and for every family which chooses to send its children to this school. Catholic schools take their inspiration from Jesus and seek to build a culture, an environment, which brings alive in real and concrete ways the attitudes of mind and heart which were the foundation of Jesus' own way of being, of speaking and of acting. These attitudes of mind and heart, so obvious in Jesus, are in fact the attributes of God himself – for Christians believe that Jesus wasn't just a good man, or even the best man who ever lived. Christians believe that Jesus was God among us as one of us.

For Christians this means that we really can afford to put our trust in God, make room for God in our lives, and allow God to help us to become the people he created us to be: people who are alive with the joy of living, eager to embrace the gifts with which God fills our lives and ready and willing to do our best to ensure that other people's lives are better because we are part of them.

This is what this school, Emmaus Catholic Primary School, wants to be all about. As we bless and open the school today my prayer, and my confident hope, is that with the help of the families who send their children to this school and under the guidance of the principal and staff of the school this is exactly the outcome which this school will achieve. How lucky the children who come to this school will be if we are successful in our efforts.