



Term 2 Assembly – Rector's Address

Mark Wilson

Friday 15 May 2026



Tēnā koutou katoa, nau mai, haere mai.

A very warm welcome to you all.

These assemblies are always a special time to celebrate achievement and successes, and it is right and good that we do.

Here at St Andrew's College, there are so many different areas to celebrate and recognise. This assembly will highlight the impressive outcomes and accomplishments our young people are achieving.

Yet it is not simply the trophies or titles that we are here to celebrate.

The purpose of what we do here is more important than titles, scores and wins, or trophies – it is something that will shape the kind of people you become long after you leave this school.

Whether on the sports fields, in rehearsal rooms, on stages, or representing the school beyond our gates, you committed your time, energy, and enthusiasm in a way that reflects real credit on yourselves and on this community.

We have seen outstanding achievements across many sports – such as our Boys' 1st XI cricket team winning both the two-day Canterbury competition and T20, our Mixed touch team becoming South Island Champions and the 3x3 Boys' basketball team runners-up in the National tournament.

We celebrate our Pipe Band, who once again retained their national title – a remarkable achievement that speaks to sustained excellence, discipline, and teamwork.

Our Pipe Band students are also individually claiming most of the silverware across our country at regional and national Highland Games and Pipe Band events – well done for continually challenging yourselves to keep growing, and to be better today, than you were yesterday.

This is also evident in our performing arts groups who work tirelessly, honing their craft and sharing their talents.

A big highlight already this term has been the outstanding Senior School production of *Anything Goes*, which saw standing ovations from the thoroughly entertained and delighted



audiences. My thanks and congratulations to everyone involved both on the stage and those behind the stage who made it all happen.

Something that really struck me in this production is how courageously our young people take up new challenges to grow and develop themselves – for example how well they all learnt and performed to a live audience new skills like tap dancing, or those taking up lead singing roles for the first time. So remarkable and impressive – well done to everyone involved.

It is important that we pause to acknowledge these accomplishments. Success deserves to be recognised – as satisfying as those may be. At the heart of everything we do is a deep commitment to developing the *whole person*: character, values, and capabilities that equip you to make a positive difference in the world.

You are learning the value of hard work – the early mornings, the long practices, the rehearsals that don't always go perfectly.

You are learning dedication: sticking at something when progress feels slow or when motivation dips.

As the American football coach, Vince Lombardi, once said, *"The harder you work, the harder it is to give up."*

That truth plays out every day on training fields, in practice rooms, classrooms and in rehearsals around this school.

You are discovering courage – the confidence and faith to step forward, to take a risk, and to face challenge and adversity rather than shy away from it. You are learning how to work cooperatively in teams, understanding that individual success is so often tied to shared goals and sense of belonging. You are experiencing the camaraderie that comes from belonging – the friendships, the shared laughter, and the moments of collective disappointment and joy that bring people together.

You are also learning that mistakes are not failures, but opportunities to grow.

A coach once told me, you either win or learn. In other words, we learn far more from our mistakes and loses.

There is deep satisfaction in knowing we are growing, learning and improving each and every day to become a better me. Amongst all the competitions and challenges the most important outcome is your character.



That is how you play the game, the effort you put in, how you treat others, how you conduct yourself when things are going your way *and* when they are not – this matters far more than whether you win or lose.

As the legendary basketball coach, John Wooden, reminded us, *“Be more concerned with your character than your reputation or results, because your character is what you really are.”*

The small and regular things every day we do are our habits – these shape the person you become and the impact you have on others. How hard you can work. Your commitment and dedication to tasks. Your courage to do what you know is right. University Colleges look for these qualities. Employers value such attributes. Your future partners will *love* you for it. Your *own* children will be inspired and shaped by it.

You will rely on such qualities when you have tough times in life.

At this school, our ultimate aim is not simply to produce clever thinkers, talented athletes, accomplished musicians or artists, or confident performers – although do we value all of that greatly.

You are at an age you're building the foundations of your adult life. And while you're learning in and out of the classroom, you're also learning and shaping something even more powerful: who you will become.

Character isn't about perfection. It's about direction.

It's about choosing integrity over deceit, excellence over carelessness, faith to move forward – rather than giving up, hard work over complacency, commitment over apathy, responsibility over excuses, and courage over fear.

Keep challenging yourselves. Support one another. Take pride in your effort, as much as your outcome. And continue to make the most of the remarkable opportunities before you.

Thank you for the energy, commitment, and spirit you bring to this school.

No reira, Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou katoa.