

Good morning Bishop Umbers, distinguished guests and friends of the college past and present, staff and students.

We have taken as our college theme this year “growing our story”.

Today in and through this Eucharistic celebration we acknowledge and give thanks not only for our 60-year story, but for the story that is Angela Merici’s story, the endless story of our God, our Emmanuel: God who is with us.

Centuries ago, Angela Merici’s desire to serve God found its reality in the establishment of her “company of women” A company that combined open mindedness and religious commitment in a new and visionary way, a company of women who did not live cut off from the world, but a company who remained integrated in their families or workplaces. The basic motivation for Angela’s whole life was her personal relationship with God, especially her deep commitment to Christ, in whom she found life shaping energy for her company. In fact in one of her writings, the fifth Counsel she wrote “Let them have Jesus as their only treasure” and she urged her sisters in her 10th legacy by saying “the more united , the more Jesus Christ will be in your midst...”

So gathered today in the joyful Eucharistic celebration we come to share and to grow our story.

We give thanks for the wonderful and visionary work of the Ursuline sisters who lived and worked at the college and who through the continuing presence and work of Sr Fran Mileage, Sr Joan Brennan and Monica Vaughan help us to ensure that the love of Christ, so central to Angela, and borne out in our motto SERVIAM, remains at the centre of our school.

The sisters created and nurtured a school where inclusivity and respect were its hallmarks, a school where there was and is deep and gentle prayer. Today we are walking on the shoulders of those women - women who struggled and rose above the battle to secure equitable educational funding, women who envisioned our first buildings , women who wanted and I believe succeeded in building a special company of women at St Ursula’s . Our debt to you is immeasurable and today I publically acknowledge our gratitude for the legacy you have passed onto us to safeguard and to continue to grow.

To the previous Ursuline sisters who were principals of the College and Ms Anne Anderson, first lay principal of the college, is also owed an enormous debt, because you grew the school, not only in numbers from 56 students to over 1000 students but because you positioned it to be one of the best performing schools in the Sydney Catholic Schools System and yet at no time did you compromise that which is the heart of the college – our deep commitment to follow Angela into the footsteps of Christ and to live the gospel through SERVIAM.

To the many ex students and staff who have joined us today, your presence in such large numbers speaks of the formative role St Ursula’s has had and continues to have in your lives. You created the stories that have remained as the living traditions of our college.

To the current community of St Ursula's staff, students' parents and pastors, these traditions are now entrusted to us to cultivate and to bear good fruit.

Thank you most sincerely, to the many staff and students who have helped us to celebrate this joyful and prayerful Eucharist in this our 60th year.

To those who prepared and served in the choir, to our cantors, our readers, our offertory procession, our altar servers and our Ministers of Eucharist, to those who helped prepare the special bags for today, who coordinated transport and supervision and photography and the morning tea to follow for our guests – thank you most humbly.

To the cathedral staff and our fine organist, our thanks for supporting us as we rejoiced in our celebration.

As in all such large events it falls to one person usually to coordinate all the various ministries so that our Eucharist can be joyfully and prayerfully celebrated. My special thanks to our Religious Education Coordinator, Ms Elizabeth Alderton who brought all of the branches together to ensure that our celebration would be a truly memorable one.

Finally I leave you with one of my favourite quotes from Angela Merici

“...Act, have faith, make efforts, have hope, speak to God with all your heart: then you are sure to be amazed...”

Let our next 60 years be truly amazing – an amazing witness to our faith in a Loving God, who is with us now and until the end of time.

Mary Leask

Principal

St Ursula's College, Kingsgrove