

Jersey Celebration

Homily given by Fr. Brian Sandeman at St. Mary and St. Peter's R.C. Church, St Saviour's, Jersey C.I. on Friday 5th October 2007, the 90th Anniversary of De La Salle College, Jersey.

Why did I say YES to celebrating this 90th birthday Mass with you? It was largely because of two memories of your roots. In those days the roots came from the Beeches. A tree lives by its roots; a school lives and grows on its roots.

The first memory is the enormous influence the Beeches had on the local community. Its Old Boys were not conspicuous in politics or in the higher echelons of society; yet they stood for what was best in society, and this was recognised. The Beeches Old Boys were a force for good in the Island.

My second memory was the annual Corpus Christi procession from St. Thomas to the Sacré Coeur. The road lined four or five deep with visitors and locals all clapping, the boys marching clad in white gymshoes, white flannel trousers, held up with the school blue and white belts, and white shirts. Not a speck of dirt to be seen. Those boys in the main came from families who had little spare money.

To-day I have five birthday wishes for you:

- 1) that you may never forget whether in school or outside its boundaries, that a school is not buildings or playing fields – it is YOU. So my first wish is that you will be adult and mature enough to carry the reputation of De La Salle College, to match and even improve on the past reputation of the Beeches.

- 2) In the Scriptures Christ tells us 'Keep my Commandments'. This is not a casual invitation! This is Christ speaking, giving 10 basic rules for living, so that our lives may be meaningful and rewarding and whose length of time is in the hands of the giver.

- 3) My third wish is for you, while at school, to make good and worthwhile friends – life-long friends – who will be there, in times of need, when you have left school to go either into employment or further education and beyond. Good friends are worth their weight in gold.

- 4) My fourth wish is that you form a habit of sharing with God, good and bad times. If you do this on a regular basis, you will find you are at peace with yourself and with those who share space with you on this planet.

- 5) My final and fifth wish is that, if you remember nothing I have said, that you take this thought away with you today. It is that God loves you TOTALLY! He gave you the freedom to say YES or NO. May you never turn your backs on God and so always walk in his love. Always, as the gospel today tells us, 'Turn to God for his yoke is both easy and light'.

May God's blessings fall upon you, your families and De La Salle College today and always.

That is the blessing I wish us all today on this 90th birthday.