

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, staff and graduates.

Congratulations to this year's graduates of the University of Divinity. Thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening.

"We should be shining lamps, giving light to all around us."

These words attributed to the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, are surely inspired by the writer of Matthew's Gospel:

"No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:15-16, NRSV).

This light is a call to be a source of hope, especially in times of darkness, doubt and despair. And this is a call to each of us and one I have responded to as a professed Sister of Mercy for the past five years.

As an experienced teacher of English and Religious Education in Catholic secondary schools, with leadership and teaching experience in Australia and abroad, ministering in Catholic education is a great privilege, with many joys and challenges, especially in the context of an increasingly secularised society.

As a student of the University of Divinity, I have come to appreciate more profoundly the value of theological education, and how this supports who we are and all that we do as Christian people.

Initially, I enrolled in the Master of Education and Theology, and Graduate Certificate in Divinity: the best of both worlds, with my two loves of education and theology brought into dialogue, and my faith, knowledge and vocation nourished as a result.

As I engaged in my studies, encountered people from various backgrounds and Christian denominations, and enjoyed the copious reading and writing, I was encouraged to pursue further studies in research, which led me to complete a Minor Thesis. This now opens the door to possible Doctoral studies.

On behalf of all this evening's graduates, I thank all those who have played a part in our journeys, including our families, friends, religious communities, parishes and seminaries.

I thank too the supportive staff and students of my home college, Catholic Theological College, and the Sisters of Mercy, my family and friends.

May God bless us in our future endeavours and may we let our light shine before others. Thank you.

Sr Emma Jane Llewellyn RSM, MEdTheol, GCDiv, GCRM 2025

