
VALEDICTORY ADDRESS | Friday 30 May 2025

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Archbishop Jeremy, Songwoman Maroochy, distinguished guests, colleagues, graduates, families and friends.

I remember looking at the long list of requirements for ordination and the one thing that felt pretty terrifying was the idea of doing a theological degree. But I was also adamant about not having two Bachelor Degrees, so I took a bit of a prayerful risk and did all of my early subjects at the post grad level. Thankfully just as I entered formation, The University of Divinity came into the mix and I was able to transfer straight over to a Master of Divinity.

I think one of the most unexpected and life giving parts of this journey has been, because of that initial terror, an absolute commitment in setting myself aside before each class, each exam and each piece of assessment and just allow the stamina, clarity and creativity to flow from God. So alongside the Master of Divinity I feel blessed to have done a master class in letting go and letting God. This has been an incredible faith strengthening process, which will stay with me for the rest of my days.

I would like to thank Reverend Doctor Ruth Mathieson and all of the staff at St Francis College. It is not an easy thing to be in the business of educating people who are deep thinkers and seekers within a rigorous, academic context and at the same time, hold space for the paradox that we all live with in ministry and theology: that the more we know, the bigger the mystery becomes. Thank you for holding that for us.

I am grateful to Archbishop Jeremy Greaves and Bishop Sarah Plowman for their words of encouragement over the past five years.

Thank you to my husband, John Harvey, who made many dinners and helped our children with homework and study while I was up in my little studio attending class most evenings. It truly takes a village to get a theological degree and I thank my Ancestors, Elders and community for walking with me every step of the way.

Lydia Fairhall, Master of Divinity 2025

