

Installation of Reverend Dr. Mark Hagemoen

Holy Name of Jesus Church

18 September 2011

Principal and President Reverend Dr. Mark Hagemoen, members of the Board of Directors and faculty, distinguished guests who have brought greetings to today's installation, students, parents, alumni and friends of St. Mark's College and Corpus Christi College, ladies and gentlemen:

Introduction

Before all else this afternoon, on behalf of the Archdiocese of Vancouver, I wish to thank Monsignor Hagemoen for his willingness to place his remarkable and well-trying talents at the service of Catholic higher education in British Columbia at this very promising juncture in its history. He is building on the sturdy foundation laid by the Basilian Fathers and a large number of dedicated lay men and women who are passing on to him a great legacy.

I would especially like to acknowledge the presence of two former leaders of the Colleges who are with us today: Dr. David Sylvester, the founding President of Corpus Christi College who wisely tended its growth and development in its earliest stages; and Dr. John Stapleton who succeeded him, and whose administrative adroitness enabled St. Mark's College to achieve candidacy status with the Association of Theological Schools, and Corpus Christi College to offer Associate of Arts degrees – both of which are remarkable achievements for a two-

year term of office. You are blessed, Father Mark, by your outstanding predecessors in office and by the remarkable community support that has accompanied the growth of the Colleges.

St. Mark's College

Undoubtedly, St. Mark's College, precisely as a theological college which grants graduate degrees, has a unique role in the life of our local Church and enjoys our whole-hearted and enthusiastic support. Through its various programs and diplomas it enriches the intellectual and pastoral capital of the Archdiocese with the soundness of its teaching faithful to the Church's magisterium. I am particularly pleased with the College's outreach to assist our teachers in the Catholic Independent Schools of the Vancouver Archdiocese grow in their knowledge of the faith and look forward to a new partnership in our program for the formation of permanent deacons.

As you know, from its inception, the College, through its campus ministry programs, has also provided for the sacramental life and pastoral care of students, faculty and staff of all those who live on work on the UBC campus. This pastoral ministry, which is integral to the Church's mission, complements academic learning with numerous opportunities to integrate faith with life, and I am very grateful for its zealous service to the whole university community.

Corpus Christi College

Now I would like to say a few words about the specific importance of Corpus Christi College to the Church in Vancouver. Indeed, I would say that if the College did not already exist, the establishment of Catholic liberal arts college would rank at the top of the list of pastoral priorities for the Archdiocese. The Church has a mission, indeed it is her primary vocation, to evangelize – to make known in every sector of social, political, economic, cultural and educational life our salvation in Jesus Christ. Corpus Christi is one such centre – and an irreplaceable one – where this mission of evangelization is being accomplished.

In his writings, especially *The Idea of a University*, Blessed John Henry Newman – a figure much venerated at the Colleges – offered a view of the purpose of higher education. His vision, I believe, underlies what Corpus Christi strives to achieve. The aim of higher education is not, he wrote, primarily to fit students for this or that particular profession or career, although it prepares them for all. Rather, its purpose is decidedly intellectual: it is to transform the mind.

Catholic Christianity is the bearer of a great intellectual tradition. Immersed in this tradition and guided by professors who engage their students in personal and lively dialogue, graduates of Corpus Christi are able to engage fruitfully in conversation and debate, to exercise judgement, to bring to bear on complex issues insights and arguments

from both reason and faith.¹

Cardinal Newman spelled out just what happens at Corpus Christi College for its teachers and students alike when he wrote about he wanted a Catholic college to do: “I wish the intellect to range with the utmost freedom, and religion to enjoy an equal freedom but what I am stipulating for is, that they should be found in one and the same place, and exemplified in the same persons. . . . I wish the same spots and the same individuals to be at once oracles of philosophy [reason] and shrines of devotion.”²

The harmony of faith and reason is not just a slogan to be invoked but is a reality lived in the mission and curriculum of Corpus Christi College. Here the world of reason and the world of faith – the world of secular rationality and the world of religious belief – enter into a profound and ongoing dialogue, for the good of the Church and society.³ More than ever, we need lay women and men – graduates of Catholic institutions of higher learning – who can enrich both our ecclesial and social life with this vision of harmony.

¹ Cf. Benedict XVI, Homily, Coventry (19 September 2010).

² John Henry Newman, *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions* (London, 1904), 13.

³ Cf. Benedict XVI, Address, Westminster Hall, London (17 September 2010).

The specifically Catholic identity of Corpus College – with all that entails – is what makes it unique and why it plays such a vital role in the life of the Archdiocese and is so closely linked to it. This identity is not, of course, secured simply by way of adding Catholic-specific courses or pastoral outreach – indispensable as these are – but must be, on the part of all involved in its teaching and direction, a commitment of intellect and will, of mind and heart, to the conviction that Catholic teaching, ideals, attitudes and principles must imbue all the College’s activities.⁴

To give witness to this conviction, ten days ago Monsignor Hagemoen made his public profession of faith and oath of fidelity as the new head of the Colleges. In a sacramental community such as the Church this public gesture was more than a personal act but it was a reminder that the Catholic Colleges are distinct in so far as they exist to provide, from within the communion of the Church, “a primary and privileged place for a fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and culture.”⁵

As Blessed John Paul II often pointed out, the dialogue of the Church with the cultures of our times is that vital area where the future of the Church and of the world is being played out.⁶

⁴ Cf. Blessed John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 14.

⁵ Blessed John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 43.

⁶ John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 3.

Without the contribution of Corpus Christi and other Catholic post-secondary institutions not only would the ecclesial community be impoverished because of its lack of knowledge of the great Catholic intellectual, moral, scientific and artistic tradition, but society as a whole would suffer, sliding into a noxious secularism which would cut us from our cultural and religious roots. Because of their solid formation, the graduates of both Corpus Christi and St. Mark's College, each in their own ways, will neither passively submit to the dominant cultural influences, nor become marginal in relation to them. They are equipped to engage them. We are proud of them and their contributions – and earnestly hope that their numbers will increase.

Conclusion

Father Mark: many challenges await you in the years ahead, but together we are all together embarked on a thrilling adventure and cause for great hope in our Church and in the society in which we live. Rest assured that you will have the support and prayers of all us – the Catholic community of the Archdiocese, the Board, the faculty, staff, students, alumni and benefactors, as you lead the Colleges in the coming years. May the good Lord bless your every endeavour to secure a flourishing future for Catholic higher education at St. Mark's and Corpus Christi Colleges. And may Our Lady, Queen of the Holy Rosary, guide you with her maternal protection.

_ J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver