




Speech by

David Gibson

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

Hansard Thursday, 15 November 2012

GYMPIE, ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (3.52 pm): This is the time of the year when parents and others from across this great state celebrate with their year 12 children as they graduate from high school. Recently, I had the privilege to be the guest speaker at the commemoration night at St Patrick's College, Gympie. It was a great privilege to look upon those young men and women—which is exactly what year 12 students are—as they prepare to leave school and move into the workforce or further studies. When the Christian Brothers College for Boys was established in 1904 and the Sisters of Mercy High School for Girls was established in 1916—they are the forerunners to St Patricks College—the community was very different. Now, over 100 years later, St Patrick's is a vibrant school that provides many opportunities to all of its students. It reflects the great community of Gympie. As students look forward to the future, they recognise and link in with what Gympie has to offer.

I was asked to speak at the commemoration night, both as a parent of students at St Patrick's and, of course, as the local member of parliament. As the theme for the night was tied into the Archdiocese of Brisbane's Year of Grace, I was asked to speak about the grace in our community. It is an interesting topic and I was able to put forward some of my own thoughts. As I pondered the topic, I thought that perhaps the easiest way to define it is that you find grace in the big events of life, like the miracle of birth or the unity found in a community after a tragedy. But you also see the grace of God at work when people support each other through times of difficulty and times of joy. I described the grace of God as those moments when you bump into God or have a run-in with him. You may not always recognise it. People call it coincidence, serendipity, synchronicity, luck, intuition, or inspiration, but whatever label you want to place on it, you cannot deny that every day, in every way, one of those things happens to you. Those moments of grace are not just found in our successes, but also in our failures. In 2012 as we recognise the achievements of some of the finest academic students across all years, they can be rightly proud of those accomplishments and the recognition of it.

I let all the students in on just one dirty little secret of their parents. It is that we worry. We worry about our children's future, their fears, their disappointments and their successes. This is because there was a moment when we all looked into our children's eyes and we saw within them their true potential, and we simply want them to achieve it.

I conclude on a sad note by acknowledging the passing of Father Stan from St Patrick's parish. Father Stan passed away just this week. He will be sorely missed by the whole community.