

Headmaster's Welcome at the Founders' Day Service on the 150th Anniversary 20th January 2012

Madam Mayor, Sisters of Sion, Governors, Staff, Pupils, Parents, Former Pupils and Parents and Friends:

It is a privilege to be standing here to welcome you to this very special service. This event will serve as an honouring and celebration of the past, but it will also allow us to set the direction for the future.

I would like to invite all present to reflect upon our times at Our Lady of Sion School on what we have gained and what we have learnt. I would respectfully ask that you do not applaud during the service, but assure you that there will be an opportunity to show your appreciation at the end. This is an extraordinary gathering of people; we have past pupils from as far back as 1929 as well as many from later years the 40's, 50's, 60's and beyond. There are more than twenty Sisters of Sion; the vast majority of whom have been involved in the education of young people and many of those at our School here in Worthing. We have received letters and had visits from past pupils from Canada, Italy, Australia and other parts of the United Kingdom. These last few months have been very humbling for me as the messages have come flooding in from people recounting how grateful they were for the education received and to the Sisters themselves.

As you can see from the way this Great Hall is decorated the Founders of our School had and still have an international dimension. The Ratisbonne brothers and the Sisters were unafraid and unbowed by borders and boundaries. The Sisters were powerful, inspirational, determined and committed women. Whilst they were strict and had a reputation for challenging the norms of the day, they were also compassionate and kind in their dealings with others.

The Sisters of Sion sought to enable transformation and growth, seeking always to promote the opening of minds. This they did with courage, steadfastness and usually with some humour and humanity.

And so we are gathered here with memories and stories of what brought us to Sion in the first place. Together we are the life of this school; that life has been shaped by the spirit of our Founders.

But what of the future? It is hard to grasp the extent and depth of change that has taken place in our world, churches and society since our School opened in 1862, but change there has been and change there will be in the years and decades ahead.

I would like to close with some words for the young people of our school; Work together to make our Lady of Sion School a dynamic place, one which welcomes and celebrates diversity. Cherish the values of our Founders; eagerly meet the challenges ahead with the wonder and excitement of your youth. Above all enjoy your school days taking advantage of all that is offered so that as the citizens of tomorrow you will be fearless in the pursuit of justice, peace and integrity for all.

Thank you very much for joining us today

**Michael Scullion – Headmaster
20th January 2012**