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However, if there was one experience that I could recommend each boy in this room to undertake, it would have to be a Kairos retreat. Led by Father Middleton, the three-day experience allowed me to learn how important it is to love yourself and to see the good in all things. It gave me an appreciation for the unconditional love and support of my mates and teachers but in particular my family, without whom I would not be up here today.

As indulging and rewarding as some of these experiences have been, when I was asked to reflect on my time here, none of these individual experiences stood out. What I have enjoyed most at Xavier hasn't necessarily been what I have done and the good times I've had. Instead, the people with whom I have journeyed through Xavier will always be what I remember. To be able to share an experience like an APS cricket premiership, a World Challenge expedition or even just a study session in the library with your best mates is what I have loved most about Xavier. Moments like winning the Summer Carnival yesterday are what give me life at Xavier, and I urge you all to cherish these experiences with your mates, because they don't come around too often, especially with our record – soon to change

Last year affected every single person in this room in a different way. Personally, I struggled greatly during the lockdowns. The same routine of waking up and spending 6 hours staring at a screen for what felt like an eternity had a considerable toll on both my physical and mental health. There were days at home where staying in my room all day seemed like the best way to spend my time, while I would frequently find myself lying in bed at night overthinking everything that was going on, missing out on valuable rest from what was a year full of stress and uncertainty. Looking back, 2020 to me felt like I was a seed which fell amongst the weeds, as everything seemed meaningless, and the never-ending cycle of disappointment often ruined my motivation. However, if the impact of coronavirus taught me one thing, it is that the support of others is what one needs most in life. The regular Microsoft Teams group calls to check up on mates, and the kicks of the footy at the park was what I desperately needed, and this helped me 'produce a harvest', despite initially being 'strangled' by the thorns.

We Cheshirians are so lucky to have such a caring core of teachers supporting us on our journey through Xavier. Personally, the last three years at the Senior Campus wouldn't have been the same without my tutor, Mr Banks-Smith and our wonderful Head of House Ms. Harmer. Always up for a chat about life, sport and everything in between, Banksy has always had a genuine interest in what I am doing, and he has truly allowed me to become the best version of myself. Similarly, Ms. Harmer has always been there for me through the ups and downs. She is the heart and soul of this house, and I can guarantee you that you would struggle to find someone as generous and caring as her. I know winning the summer carnival yesterday brought a lot of joy to her as I don't think we appreciate enough the work she puts into helping us grow as young men.

So, if there is something that I want everyone to draw from this reflection, it is simply to make the most of it. Join that team, that ensemble, try out for that play. Give your all for the mighty Cheshire. Sign up for Friday night school. Be a man for others. We are so lucky to have opportunities like this waiting to be taken. But most of all, appreciate those around you. The culture at Xavier and in this great house is something truly special. There is always someone who will be there for you in the hard times, and as the motto of Cheshire aptly puts it, there should be no call ignored.

Thank you.