

Ostia & Villanova Official Opening

Official Opening

by

Mr Kilian Traynor following a blessing by
Fr John Hennebry OSA Prior Provincial

November 20th 2017

MORE PHOTOS TO FOLLOW

Monday November 20th saw the official opening of Ostia & Villanova following a process of funding, planning and building which began in 2013.

The school was delighted to have local a national political representatives with past pupil Minister John Paul Phelan representing the Government and Cllr Larry O'Brien representing local government. It was particularly good to hear of Minister Phelan's recognition of the work and success of the College for all students in our community.

Fr Hennebry OSA blessed both Villanova and Ostia and wished the students who will use these wonderful new facilities every success and happiness. He spoke of the opportunity which the new Villanova classrooms will present to our young men in Science, Technology and Maths. Fr Hennebry also made a presentation to the College on behalf of the Augustinian

Community for the purchase of additional resources in Ostia. This is greatly appreciated and will be fully utilised.

The Parent's Council, represented by Mary Lou O'Kennedy and Maria Lindell, also made a very generous donation of €12,000 for resources to the College. This funding comes as part of the 'Friends of Good Counsel' fundraising initiative. The College is appreciative to the members of 'Friends of Good Counsel' and to parents and Parents' Councils past and present for all of their work and support.

Guest of Honour, Mr Kilian Traynor, spoke of the significance of Ostia in bringing to the forefront and acknowledging all of our needs. He described Ostia as the manifestation of the Colleges support for all students in our care and in our community, it is however the relationships between students, parents and teachers which is the real support for students with different needs.

Mr Traynor then cut the ribbon to officially open Ostia & Villanova.

Documents from the opening

[Brochure for the Official Opening](#)

[Principals' Address at the Official Opening.](#)

Click below for a time-lapse video of the construction of Villanova & Ostia.

http://goodcounselcollege.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/New-video_Large.mp4

Click Below for a sweep of the school which clearly shows our new buildings.

<http://goodcounselcollege.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/School>

[-Sweep.mp4](#)



Saint Augustine & St Monica at Ostia



St Tomas of Villanova

Jack Whelan – 1st in Ireland – Technology

Congratulations to Jack Whelan (Adamstown) on achieving first place in Technology in the Junior Certificate this year. This is another wonderful achievement for our Technology Subject Department, his teacher Mr Daren Kenneally and Jack himself. Well done to all!

Photo to follow.

We look forward to meeting prospective students and their parents this Saturday. Please arrive in good time as it can be a busy morning.

Schedule for the Day:

09:30 – 10:00 am Meeting of Parents and students. Distribution of Information.

10:00 – 10:45 am Presentation to Parents in the Assembly Hall and boys in the Church.

10:45 – 12:30 am Guided Tours for boys and parents free to view all areas of the school.

Staff and students will be on hand throughout the morning to answer your queries.

There will be light refreshments served in the school dining room for all parents.

Please follow the instructions of our parking attendants in order to manage the safety of students and parents on the campus during a very busy day.

Arrangements for distribution of –

Best of luck to each of the 150 young men collecting their results on Wednesday September 13th. In order to minimise disruption to the 680 students not collecting results the

following arrangements have been put in place.

1. If your son is currently in 5th Year having completed Transition Year last year classes will continue as normal on Wednesday September 13th.
2. If your son is in Transition Year this year he has no classes on Wednesday September 13th. He can collect his results in the College at 11am and you should then bring him home.
3. If your son is currently in 5th year having completed his Junior Certificate last year he will have classes as normal on Wednesday September 13th until 11 am at which point results will be distributed. He can then, if he has your written permission, be brought home.

We restate our view that the best place for our young men to celebrate their results in a measured and responsible way is with their families who have supported them throughout these exams.

We expect full attendance in all year groups including Transition Year and Fifth Year on Thursday September 14th.

Good luck to everyone!

**Please Click on the relevant link below
for your son's booklist.**

[1st Year](#)

[2nd Year](#)

[3rd Year](#)

[5th Year](#)

[6th Year](#)

[Ken Hennelly Creative Writing Award](#)



Luke Kehoe with the Hennelly family



Mr Cullen, Luke and the Hennelly family.

The 'Ken Hennelly Creative Writing Award' is being presented for the first time this year in memory of our colleague and

teacher. Ken was an inspiration to students and teachers alike, always encouraging creativity and debate in his students. He is fondly remembered by past pupils of his as 'Ken Hen' and we are honoured to be in a position to remember his contribution to the College in this way.

We thank Ken's family, and in particular his wife Mary, for the beautiful perpetual cup that will be presented for the very first time to Luke Kehoe (2CN) for his piece 'I am not a refugee. I am human.' We look forward to presenting this great award to more aspiring creative writers in the coming years. Well done Luke!

I am not a Refugee. I am Human.

by Luke Kehoe (2CN)

The World ended right in front of me. It fell apart and shook the ground between our feet. Buildings began disintegrating, crumbling, taking people down with them. And it was the end. They had Vanished.

The country remains crippled. Our President was impeached on corruption, our Prime Minister was assassinated, the Military Coup wrecked havoc on infrastructure. Food is scarce, disease is rife and water is running out. It's now a breeding ground for terrorists who slaughter innocent civilians and behead those who differ. Rebels mow down anyone in their path, women, children, whoever's in their way. The economy is decimated. All the companies have moved away and jobs are virtually

unheard of. International Sanctions continue to demolish any signs of hope for revival.

Hope is disappearing. Love is fading. Corruption is rampant. Evilness dominates the land. The grief is still raw. The pain is still acute. Visions haunt me everyday. Nightmares terrorise me at night. I lay awake seeing them wailing for aid, writhing to be free, begging for mercy. Tears enshroud me when I think about them.

I remember seeing the trees reaching toward the sky as if they were praying for a way out of the forests, the animals dashing for shelter in the heaving swamps and the children rushing for cover in the caves. The dusk sky illuminated red and the sun sunk behind the rolling hills. The bombs fell from the sky like a swarm of bees. The air raid sirens sounded as the ground was pounded like a wrecking ball. The buildings were crushed and the vibrations could be felt millions of miles away. The tides turned and the trawlers were swallowed by a mammoth wave that continued inland. The Arabian sea raged with anger. Some say it was war. I say it was the end of the world. Who am I? One of the survivors. One of the warriors. One of the victims. One of the Syrians.

I slowly lifted my head to scan my surroundings. I didn't know where I was. I had expected to wake up in the rubble of Damascus following the attack or maybe a hospital, but this was different. I could hear the faint sounds of children arguing and the howling sounds of the sea. I was completely disoriented. My vision remained impaired and all I could make out was colours and shapes, no details. In a panic, I lifted my battered legs with great strength and shuffled onto my feet. At this point two great questions were racing through my head. Where are they? What happened? Tears slid down my bruised cheeks as I frantically searched for them. I ran over and back, yelled and screamed for them waiting to hear a response. I didn't hear one. The panic attack deteriorated and I pleaded for them. It was another hour before the effects of

the attack dissipated. Fear struck me. I was by myself. I didn't know where I was, they weren't there to guide me. The most worrying thought captivated me when I realised where I was. I had escaped. I was one of the 'lucky ones' on a boat. A boat heading to anywhere willing to accept us. I was now a refugee.

For the next two days I spent my time thinking about them. I remembered the good times when their faces lit up with smiles and when we'd go down to the beach on a Saturday evening. The boat was seriously overcrowded. The great waves of the Mediterranean sea crashed onto the boat that was holding at least two hundred people. We had to use buckets to remove the excess water from the boat. No one had life jackets, no one knew how to swim, no one knew where we were going. There was no food and those who wanted water ended up choking themselves with salty sea water. The sun blared onto the boat and we ripped the carpets from the deck to cover us from the heat. Children screamed with pain as those who didn't work hard enough to bail out the water were thrown overboard. I remember seeing the face of one boy who was five years old. He struggled to bail out the water as his arms began to fail. The crew saw him, they saw the hardship and loss written all over his face, they saw him praying for mercy, but they didn't care. He was pushed overboard like a fish. He couldn't swim. He couldn't even float. He bellowed with pain as his lungs flooded with water and he sank to the bottom. I felt so helpless, I felt so angry. How could people treat people like that. I remain to this day ashamed of myself for not helping that boy.

Another week had passed and I was now struggling to remain awake. My mouth swelled with agony and my hands were covered in blisters. My stomach rumbled for food and my lips withered like a rose. This was the toughest day. Over twenty others had starved to death. Their bodies were flung overboard and fed to the sharks like they meant nothing. The Mediterranean was

rough, she fought with anger. Things were going downhill fast and I knew we wouldn't survive another day out here. We needed to find some land, we needed to find some hope. Unfortunately, the opposite happened. The huge waves continued to grow and the boat was being hammered from stern to bow. Panic erupted when water penetrated the hull and swamped the bow of the boat. People were screaming, we were sitting in water as the ship's stern lifted out of the water and the bow sunk deeper into the water. Everyone hurried to the boat's stern in a desperate last attempt for survival. Some were trampled on like a herd of elephants and others were crushed against the iron rails. I knew this was the end. I had lost all hope, I had lost the courage to continue fighting. The sea devoured the boat, along with fifty people who perished to death.

After an hour in the water, there was no sound. I was the only one left. The others had lost their lives. Everyone had gone, I was left alone in the Mediterranean with no signs of civilisation nearby. What had the world come to. Why were innocent people dying for no reason? Why were people killing each other like a game? Why were people blind? Why were people greedy? Why were people still calling themselves people?

My legs were frail and my hands were raw with suffering. I was about to let go of the wood that was keeping me alive, I was about to call it the end. Suddenly, I heard the sound of another ship. I could hear the propellers cutting through the water and feel the currents radiating from the hull. My eyes lit up with hope and I suddenly regained the energy to move. I had never swam before but I had to. If I didn't I would die. I thought of them, I thought of how they would have felt if they saw me giving up. Letting go of the wood, I headed for the ship. Kicking my legs harder than I had ever done before and moving my hands in ways I never knew I could. It was amazing, I felt like a new person. I yelled at the boat, jumped up and down in the water and desperately signaled the boat to stop, praying and begging for help.

I was so lucky to have spotted that boat. It saved me, that's why I'm here today. The battle had just begun though. You see, the captain advised me that if I landed in Greece, Hungary or Turkey I would be treated with great cruelty, I would be treated like an outcast. I didn't believe him. I said to him that nowhere in the world would deny life to people who have fled war. I told him that no country would be so cruel, I told him that Europe has open borders. I told him that Europe is my dream, I told him that I can get my life back, I told him that *they will always accept refugees, I told him that they would always accept humans.*

I arrived on the coast of Greece after one week. Now I was alone again. I knew no one. This was a new beginning for me, a start to a fresh life. The first obstacle that I had to cross was customs. I was searched intensely, they performed background checks on me and my family. They interrogated me, asked me why I came here and asked me my religion. Following weeks of legal complications I was finally allowed into Greece. I could finally begin a new life.

Myself and over seven hundred other refugees were loaded onto buses. We were told that we were going to a shelter in Athens. We were told that we were going to get a new life. We were lied to. All of them lied to us. When we realised that we were going to be deported back to Syria, mayhem broke out. We abandoned the buses and marched toward the Syrian embassy in Athens. However, our march for justice was quickly interrupted. Hundreds of Greek police lined the streets and blocked the roads around us. We were cornered. The police were armed. They had guns, they had bombs. The sight shook me with fear. I hadn't seen any weapons since the invasion in Syria. I knew how much damage they could do, I knew how powerful and fatal they were. Tensions continued to escalate as the police closed in and we began shouting for freedom. The police now began threatening us to get back on the buses, but we refused to listen. The atmosphere was highly volatile, it would take

only one person to start a fight. After another thirty minutes, more and more police flooded into the plaza and began barricading the roads around us. Violence broke out as the police began shooting water cannons and rubber bullets. It was chaos. I rushed for cover in the bus as tear gas was thrown onto us. I began to realise that we were not welcome, I realised that we were seen as outcasts, seen as a burden by the people of Europe. Hope once again diminished when I heard the sounds of pipe bombs exploding across the plaza. The police were now raging with anger, beating people with bats and murdering women and children.

It reminded me of Syria. Innocent people were slaughtered by cowards with weapons. Over six hundred people died in the massacre with only one police man injured. We were forced onto huge boats with no food or water and shipped back to where we came from. I had seen Europe. I had seen the amount of hatred in the world. I had witnessed the blood shed. I had been one of the victims. Now I'm back to the beginning of my journey. I'm back in Syria.

The Americans invaded us, the Europeans ignored us, the Terrorists slaughtered us, the Rebels fought us, the Government failed us. And what for? Why is there this much blood shed? Why is Syria the graveyard of millions of people? No one wants to help us, no one wants to see us, no one cares about us. The dreams of millions of people have been destroyed, generations have been decimated. Our country lies in ruins, not one building stands, not one flower flourishes, not one animal lives. Centuries of civilisation have been wiped out. All that is left is rubble, all that is left is bone, all that is left is death.

I've learned so many lessons from this journey, I've learned to love those close to me even in the darkest hour. I've learned to never give up even when all odds are against me. I guess they were right. I guess my mother and father were right:

There is no greater journey than the pursuit of a dream