

## **Opening of the new building of St. Francis Xavier**

Eddie O'Brien was invited by Bernie Borland to attend the formal opening and blessing of the new College building on 31<sup>st</sup> March. The new facility has been up and running for several months now, the formal blessing was conducted by his Grace Archbishop Kevin MacDonald. In attendance was the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Faustino Sainz Munoz.

Eddie was met and looked after by fellow Old Xaverian, Mark Preece. The service took place in a packed upstairs hall. The theme of the service was 'living stones' which also formed the basis of his Grace's homily. (The cairn is a symbol of SFX)

Principal Bernie Borland opened proceedings with a formal welcome and outlined how the College had progressed in twenty five years. (Is it really that long?) He paid tribute to the Xaverian Brothers on the establishment of Clapham College which provided catholic education on the site for eighty eight years. How appropriate, when we ourselves will be celebrating 500 years since the birth of our patron, St. Francis Xavier.

His Grace the Archbishop spoke about symbolism and relationships in modern day life.

The service was modern and musical with a great effort to show the diversity of College's pupils and demonstrate in poetry and dance, a real celebration of the students' work.

Finally Archbishop Kevin, at the entrance of the College, formally blessed the new building and unveiled a memorial plaque. Afterwards there was a great buffet reception where one was able to 'press the flesh'.