

‘There Is A Season’

We are reminded in Ecclesiastes that ‘to everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven’. Perhaps the relevance of that maxim is no more applicable than at the present time as we move into the Easter story; the theology of the passion, the crucifixion of Christ and the resurrection that signals new life beyond death. This will be symbolically celebrated on Sunday with the eggs that have become synonymous with this time of the year, those that have the potential to subjugate the Christian significance during this period of renewal and growth through the challenges and rewards that the Lenten period provides. And, there will be some days of respite and rest over the break prior to the latter stages of the term, which will no doubt be filled with its own intensity and momentum. May it be a time where families can share in the gift of each other, the joy and hope of the season and a spirit of optimism, as we move ahead into the final days of the term.

While on the one hand we are still in the early stages of the year, there is a wider impulse that impels us to respond to the future with great precision and insight. Accordingly, over the last fortnight the selection process for students entering the College in 2018 has begun in earnest. Close to 300 applications have been received for entry into Year 5 and a significant number for Year 7, well in excess of the 104 places that are available at each year level. The Enrolment Committee works in conjunction with teams who interview each and every family to ensure that the application of the enrolment criteria is in accord with the policy approved by the St Ignatius’ College Council. It is apparent from the many interviews conducted that Riverview is highly regarded in the community and the preferred option for so many families, be that on the North Shore of Sydney, in rural regions of New South Wales, in the different states and territories across Australia, or from the eleven different countries of the world from which students in boarding originate. Families will be notified of the outcome of the process in May of this year, and while the College would like to take as many families as possible, it simply is not in a position to accommodate all who wish to come. Thus, in lifting the eyes from the present we bring into view the future and the need for a process of true discernment, fully in accord with the Ignatian tradition that underpins it.

It was instructive to be around the grounds on Saturday to see the summer co-curricular program give way to the intensity of the winter season and the preparations that are associated with it. The boats and oars, cricket bats and balls, tennis racquets and basketballs have been committed to storage across the winter and been replaced by volleyballs, Tae Kwon Do belts, foils in fencing, and of course the scrums, goal posts and footballs. While senior teams went through some well rehearsed drills that have been established in previous seasons, it was wonderful to see so many boys on the Regis campus pulling on the blue and white and taking their positions on various fields and in different codes for the first time. Many of the boys are keen on football – be that of the round, oblong or streamlined kind, but as yet they are not sure of where their skills may lie be they in attack or defence. While these considerations are pursued over the coming weeks, coaches and managers will not only be developing proficiency with skills and team work, they will also be imparting the codes of conduct that are consistent with fair play and spirited competition. The emphasis will be on the need to compete with grace – to win with humility and to lose with dignity. These are, in effect, the lessons of life that will get

played out as character is nurtured and strengthened, for there will be many joys but also some disappointments over the season ahead, be they with injury, selection into teams, personal performance during games as well as wins and losses along the way. And, in many, many years from now, these will be enduring memories for the boys as they move ahead over the next two terms, whether in the first season of enrolment at the College or the last for the boys in Year 12.

And, a new season has begun in Drama with the Year 8 production, *Postcards From Shakespeare* and *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. It is not surprising in the 400th anniversary of The Bard's death, the boys are keen to profile one of the greatest figures in the history of the dramatic arts. Star-crossed lovers, tragedy, shipwrecks, the state of Denmark were combined with audience participation, slapstick comedy, Scottish accents and some superb props to animate these works of classical importance. The O'Kelly Theatre literally came to life with the boys relishing the public performance that they have been rehearsing since the early days of term. Congratulations young men and many thanks to the staff whose passion is infectious.

Yes, there are many seasons at the present time, from the centrality of the liturgical year to those that relate to the educational program in its many forms. For each we give thanks, for it is part of the richness of this extraordinary school that invites the boys' participation in myriad forms. May each and every member of the school community make the most of them.