

Educating for Values

Recently I was fortunate to attend an assembly on the Regis campus. The purpose of this particular assembly was to launch some new awards which align with the key values of Jesuit education: competence, conscience, compassion and commitment. In Jesuit parlance, they are referred to as the 4 C's and they define key characteristics of what underpins the tradition of an educational program in an Ignatian tradition:

- **Competence:** The capacity for our young men to be proficient in their chosen field and to contribute gainfully to the world that they will enter beyond graduation. To this end, we push the cause of scholarship and social development.
- **Conscience:** The desire to develop a healthy and proportionate sense about what is right and what is not. And, to respond with integrity to both. To this end, we encourage the boys to think creatively and laterally about taking a stand and being constructively critical of the world.
- **Compassion:** the inculcation of a need for each and every boy to be mindful of the other with a particular regard for the marginalised. To that end, we require each and every boy to undertake social justice works, be they at the local, national or international level.
- **Commitment:** the importance of endurance and persistence, so that the boys engage in a journey of some duration. Jesuit education is not ephemeral, nor is it superficial. To that end, we ask the boys in all their endeavours to explore the *magis*, to enter that space where they will work assiduously to plumb their own depths and not relinquish until they do.

Boys on the Regis campus will be selected for the way that their own response to different elements of the educational program are responsive to and reflective of these values into the future, and I commend in advance those who will work towards animating these values in the College.

A strong part of the value system of the College challenges the concept and the practice of bullying, harassment and anti-social behaviour. In order to promote the awareness of bullying – its harmful effects and its damaging effects on individuals and institutions, the PDHPE faculty in the senior school have tackled this head on and asked every student to commit to a process of social inclusion and pro-social behaviour in a very visible and tangible way. Covering the glass walls of the Christopher Brennan Library and other public areas of the College is a montage of hands that have been cut out by the boys with their own individual and considered response to reducing bullying. Visually striking, it is a personal and public commitment to work assiduously as a community to counter bullying and to build a spirit of community, one where boys grow through their formation to be men for and with others. It resonates at the deepest level with the principles of Ignatian education, and particularly during the liturgical season of Lent.

Striving for depth and for detail – that inner impulse to know, to discern, to experience and to push personal and spiritual frontiers beyond where they would otherwise go, is equally aligned with the value system of the College. It is seen in the daily reality of school life be it in scholarship, in sport, in artistic or cultural endeavour, or perhaps most profoundly, in the quest for a personal faith that makes sense of life in its most confronting and often enriching terms. That we have seen abundant evidence of that over the last fortnight is apparent in myriad ways – through the drive to persist and not to yield to the pressure associated with Year 12 End of Semester Examinations, in the desire to join immersions yet to be confirmed, through STEM related activities on both campuses, in the production and performance of the Year 8 Plays – *Live at Riverview* and *Tales of Poe* - and, through the multiplicity of events and activities that attest to the diversity of the educational program. Such spirit was singularly displayed in the GPS Swimming last Friday evening at SOPAC which saw First Place awarded to the Intermediate Division, Second Place to the Open Division and Fourth Place to the Junior Division. The following day at the Baseball saw Riverview take yet another premiership in the final. It is not simply about being involved, but being involved to the best of one's personal and team capacities, for only in that way can the extension of

God-given talents be fully realised. And, that is not necessarily about winning a competition or a season; it is about embracing a code of sportsmanship and fair play with a desire to go beyond the superficiality associated with anything associated with extrinsic rewards and kudos associated with them. It is in the inner life and a deeper impulse of integrity.

And, as we approach the latter stages of term, which for 256 boys is the first of many to come, we approach the twilight zone of reflection about all that has transpired associated with a busy and engaging term. Highlights are many; too many to list here – from the thrill (or apprehension?) of walking through the gates for the first time on Day 1, to major school celebrations be they in academic endeavours, pastoral care or cultural or civic pursuits of a broader kind.

Let us approach the final week with that challenging but rewarding mix of expectation and anticipation, knowing that there will be a combination of unanticipated difficulties, surprising pleasures, reassuring hopes, not to mention an affirmation of the strengths and frailties of human existence. In each, there will be moments when our values as students, staff and parents will be questioned, and precisely because of them, strengthened.

Very best wishes for the week ahead.