

# Friends Listen

The etymology of the word friend has a number of linguistic derivatives: from Old English the word *freond* means one who is attached to another by feelings of personal regard and preference; both Dutch and German, *vriend* and *freund*, respectively, inherit the Indo-European root meaning 'to love'. In Japanese, *tomodachi* is written with two kanji: 友 (tomo, friend) and 達 (-tachi, attain). The first kanji comes from the Chinese *you* and represents two hands (友 right and 友 left) working together. The second kanji comes from the Chinese *da* and acts as a phonetic that denotes the word attain, which is a state of being, a state of arrival. Each of these language constructions have become sedimented into the current use of friend: a deep feeling of attachment, a regard and a love for one's fellow person, working together to attain a sense of common purpose. In accord with the student theme for 2017, My Brother's Keeper, the Friends Listen Assembly on Wednesday profiled the importance of friends in a school, friends who have a deep and sincere regard for each other, friends who accept diversity and difference, friends who will celebrate success and rally in support when times get tough or adversity strikes. An insight into what this means was provided by the Vice Captain of the College, Andy Du Pont, who reflected on the importance of friends in his life. With a disarming honesty, Andy spoke about the times of adversity he had faced and who stood beside him along the way. That Riverview is a cradle where friendships are nurtured and strengthened can be attested to on a daily basis: in class, in the yard and on the sporting arena. Late last week, the Nostalgia Lunch brought together friends from graduation classes back in the 1950s, demonstrating the enduring bonds that have traversed the decades, all of which were forged in the crucible of College life.

Our youngest boys in Years 5 and 6 were involved in their Reflection Morning activities throughout the week, learning the importance of discernment and making sense of life experience. Reflection, in Jesuit parlance, is where meaning surfaces through experience. Socrates, in the Ancient World, purported that the unexamined life is not worth living. In the mid 16th Century, St Ignatius of Loyola proposed a spirituality that has been codified more recently into the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP), where a life that is well lived is in due proportion to systematic, sustained interrogation and review. Experience, reflection and action (ERA) – the latter speaking louder than words – speaks to the spirituality that drives the school and forms part of the formal education program. To see this made manifest in our youngest boys who focussed on two themes, conscience and compassion, was something to behold as they interpret a fast moving and at times confronting world. The day concluded with an open discussion about how the values of conscience and compassion could be displayed in everyday life at Regis: in the playground, the classroom, on the sports field and in the relationships between the students and the staff.

As our year progresses into the latter stages of Term 2, the process of leadership formation is underway through the Arrupe Academy. For the boys wishing and aspiring to undertake roles as House Captains and Vice Captains, Proctors or other senior positions of leadership in the College in their graduation year, they are required to participate in an Ignatian leadership program that equips them to understand the values, skills and qualities required to lead with integrity and effectiveness. This is a five-week formation course that speaks to the virtue of leadership through a Jesuit lens and one that has proven instrumental in shaping the quality of leaders that step up to the plate to take on these significant responsibilities. I commend these young men who commit the time and interest to develop their own leadership capabilities, those that are in accord with the principles, values and expectations of the Society of Jesus.

On Tuesday morning, prospective families who are interested in pursuing enrolment for 2020 were treated to an information session and tour of the College. Not even half way through 2017 and the preliminaries for the enrolment cycle three years out is already underway. It is a measure of the esteem with which Riverview is held by the broader community that so many families wish to utilize every opportunity to learn about the College and optimize their access to insights about the educational program. Many thanks are extended to Bas Braham, [whose address impressed the parent body](#), and to our Year 11 boys who acted as fine ambassadors of their school.

Earlier this week, the Provincial of the Society of Jesus informed that we would be losing Fr Ross as Rector of the College from the end of 2017. We are saddened to lose such a wise and prudent man, a person of great depth, intellect, compassion and discernment. But, it is a salient reminder of the call to ministry. Rather than lament Fr Ross' departure, we must be grateful for the wonderful ministry he has brought to the College over the last six years. And, we have the great gift of Fr Jack taking over the role, a person who has an acute insight into the Riverview culture, a man whose inimitable experience in the computing industry, in the American Special Forces, in schools and parishes across the world, will bring a great vitality and vision going forward. It is twin-edged news that brings with it both loss and gain, and in both instances, a sense of gratitude for the Jesuits and their apostolate work in schools. And in both Fr Ross and Fr Jack, the ministry resonates with all the intonations that are synonymous with the word friend: a deep respect and regard, working together to attain common purpose, and in the best of the Ignatian tradition, the impulse of the *magis* to explore the depth of relationship. Over the latter months of the year, we will have a formal opportunity to thank Fr Ross for his friendship and exemplary leadership of the College over the last six years, and the opportunity to welcome Fr Jack and wish him well for all that lies ahead.