

## ***SERVANT COMMUNITY***

Workshop Presentation: Mrs Di Murphy  
Saturday, 20 May, 2000

What is Anglican schooling? What are we trying to do? Why?  
I'm sure that, at some time, you've considered these questions. What were your answers?

I have been at Canterbury College since its foundation year in 1987 and have seen much growth. Certainly this has occurred in student numbers; of course, there are now more buildings and better facilities. But this is not the essence of Canterbury College.

I am going to take the opportunity to tell you some stories; Canterbury College stories. As I do this I want you to think about your school and what happens there. I want you to do an audit, so to speak, of your school. During the presentation, I will encourage you to take notes, not of what I am saying [we'll give you a copy of that later] but of what you identify in your school. I want to hear **your** story, throw around **your** ideas, find out how **you** do things at **your** place because this will give me precious insights into what else **I** can do in **my** school.

Your input will allow me to effectively do an audit on my school.

*Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ appeared on earth as the greatest teacher of all time.*

That statement must have a lot of truth to it, because this teacher changed the course of history as no other teacher has done before or since.

- **Jesus gathered disciples to him ...**

Any Canterbury College Latin student will tell you that the word '*disciple*' comes from the Latin '*discipulus*', meaning '*student*'. ....So whom did Jesus teach?

Well, that was two thousand years ago, so there will probably be a great difference between the people Jesus taught and our students today in this 'postmodern era'... I'm not so sure! Have a look at the Gospels and see if you can recognize any of these characters in your class.

**The insecure student** In John's Gospel, we find the story of the sick man who wanted to be made well but who couldn't find anyone to put him in the pool when the water was stirred, and who felt bullied by those who always stepped in ahead of him when he got close to the water.

**The experimenter** Do you remember the story told so eloquently in Matthew's Gospel of Peter's attempt at walking on water? He got there finally, but not without some well chosen encouragement from Jesus.

**The eager student** If we look in Mark's Gospel, we find the man who ran up to Jesus and said, "*Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?*" Jesus looked at him, loved him and gave him an even greater challenge, to give away his possessions to the poor.

**The discouraged student** What could be more depressing than the story in Luke's Gospel of the disciples on the road to Emmaus who, in their despair at what had befallen Jesus, did not know who was their companion on the journey.



<b>The humiliated student</b>	The Gospel according to John, and the Scribes and Pharisees bring a woman who has been caught in adultery. They want to punish her to the fullest letter of the law, but Jesus says to them, <i>“Let anyone among you who is without sin cast the first stone at her.”</i>
<b>The unpopular, unaccepted student</b>	We all remember the story of that great social outcast, the leper, whom Jesus cleansed. The Gospel according to Matthew.
<b>The gifted student</b>	This was Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a leader of the Jews, who visited Jesus by night, and hence undercover, with the revelation that <i>“we know that you are a teacher who has come from God”</i> . [John]
<b>The crafty student</b>	I can really relate to Zacchaeus because he was short, too short to see Jesus through the crowd. So he was ingenious enough to climb a sycamore tree. [Luke]
<b>The shy student</b>	Remember the woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years? She timidly touched the hem of Jesus’ garment. [Mark]

All of these students are probably in the one class!

- **Jesus gathered disciples to him; he said, “Follow me.”**

Isn’t this so true for all of us, our students are looking to us for a lead, for some sort of role model, for someone to follow.

Hugh Mackay, eminent social psychologist, entertaining speaker and author, calls our current generation of students the *“options”* generation. They want to make their own decisions, but they are looking frantically for a framework on which to hang it all. For that reason, their most popular T.V. viewing are shows like *“Friends”*, *“Neighbours”*, or *“Home and Away”*. I know that Hugh Mackay is right here because I feel that I’ve probably done the survey for him. This is one of the questions which I ask all prospective secondary students at interview. A bit scary, really!

We, as teachers, have a responsibility to provide a good role model for the students in our care. We encourage them in good habits of working industriously and productively and challenge them, each of us in our own subject areas, to discover their true potential. The challenge to us is to inspire our students to greater heights, to help them overcome obstacles, to recognise their strengths and support them in their weaknesses.

Every student at Canterbury College belongs to a Form Class. These classes are named after their Form Patrons, so I know that a student in 1MR is in Michelle Reed’s Year 1 class and a student in 8TK is being cared for by our Korean expert, Ted Kim, and is in Year 8. The Form Patron is the person primarily responsible for the welfare of the particular student and the person whom we encourage the parents to contact as a first port of call.

As with all of our schools, Canterbury College has high expectations of behaviour for students and staff. The respect must be mutual to be effective.

Our expectations extend to what people say to one another. The College has a ‘no swearing’ policy and students throughout the school are aware that, if you swear, you go home and do not return to normal classes until you have come back to school with one of your parents and discussed the incident with a senior member of staff. Parents have been very supportive of the policy, almost without exception.

Students at Canterbury are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, especially students in the secondary school. We have high expectations in the wearing of uniforms but the system we have in



place has been carefully formulated so that you can't find yourself on detention for having a bad day. Primary and secondary students with any item of uniform missing or a problem in this area report to the Head of Primary or me to procure a pink slip. If a member of staff approaches the student concerning the uniform problem, the production of the magic pink slip takes the pressure off. Staff trust that either Barry or I have negotiated a solution to the problem with the student and the return date on the pink slip indicates when the problem will be rectified. Often, on my way back from the Chapel in the morning, my conversation is punctuated by someone producing a pink slip and indicating that he or she now has the tie or hat which had been missing. A smile and the handing over of the pink slip and the problem no longer exists. One of the great aspects of this system is that, if a student has been unable to replace a uniform item due to financial difficulties or the like, Barry or I are the only ones in the school who need to know.

- **Jesus gathered his disciples around him.....**

One of the most important things we do in our schools is to create community. This is where the real nurturing takes place. I am sure that your school has its own way of expressing this phenomenon; at Canterbury, we talk about the school 'family'.

When Jesus gathered the disciples, they cared for one another. The disciples tried to protect Jesus from the crowds which followed him; Jesus saw their need for nourishment and fed them. Mind you, as in all communities, things were never perfect; they required effort and adjustment. Jesus sometimes chastised the disciples when they were on the wrong track and would have liked them to have had a longer attention span; they seemed to go to sleep at the most crucial times. But he showed his love for them and helped them grow as people.

The establishment of community allows the development of trust and a professional closeness in relationships. It is a three-way partnership between school, student and parent.

There is a good deal of ownership in our school because our parents contribute in many ways to the smooth running of the College. Mowing the grass at the working bee, serving in the canteen, covering books in the library, coaching the cricket team, serving as a member of the Board of Directors ...all contribute to a better Canterbury College and the use of the talents of each one for the good of all.

The school family needs to be a caring community where each member is valued.

There are communities within community. Each Form Class is a community in itself with its own set of rules and expectations. All Form Classes in a particular level become another community under the direction of the Year Co-ordinator. The secondary school is a community in itself as is the primary school. All come together as one school family. As is synonymous with most families, all members join in the highs and lows together.

Part of my job as Dean of Students is to co-ordinate the Welfare staff in the secondary school; we call ourselves the Welfare Team. This group comprises the five Year Co-ordinators, the Guidance Counsellor, the Chaplain, the Learning Support Co-ordinator and myself. We meet every second Tuesday morning at 7.30 am in the Board Room. Last year, we progressed to taking it in turns to provide breakfast for the meeting and it is a wonderful way to start the day.

Over the past few years, we have successfully put our heads together on many issues and have developed policies in many areas, including bullying, sexual harassment, gender equity, special needs, leadership, crisis management and child abuse.

One of the most interesting areas of discussion and development arose as we extended the Social Development program to include sex education components. Having developed the scope and sequence of the program, we then spent two days on an intensive inservice exercise with Family Planning. However, we still hadn't finished the task because, although we had acquired the necessary skills, we



were very conscious of wanting to give guidance to our students which gelled with the expectations of the Anglican Church.

My daughter had spent her first year of secondary teaching in a Catholic school in Cowra, N.S.W., and she had been involved in teaching their *Life Skills* course. She had been given written guidelines on the teachings of the Catholic Church in relation to all the topics in the course and it seemed that this was the sort of guidance we needed from the Anglican Church. As we discovered how difficult a task this was, it was our Headmaster who took up the challenge and produced a caring document extolling tolerance and good manners for all. This gave us the direction we needed.

The Year Co-ordinators at Canterbury College are the most inspiring group of people as they act as advocates for students in their respective year levels. We decided long ago that there was no fun in spending all our time on the problem areas, so we make a concerted effort to identify and acknowledge those students who quietly and unobtrusively go about the task of being a Canterbury College student, without featuring in the more prominent areas of recognition.

Last year, my Year 9 Co-ordinator [a Maths specialist] invited me to the year level assembly to present certificates to about 50% of the cohort who she felt fitted the criteria listed above. As the students led the Assembly in prayer, I wondered what I should say to them. I didn't have to think for long, because the prayers were followed by two students reading the day's text, the parable of the prodigal son. When my turn came, I explained to the students how pleased we all were when those students who had experienced difficulties had sorted out their problems. However, we knew that the father in the story had two sons and that one son had been very responsible and had stayed home to look after the farm. We wanted to say that, even though we were delighted with the return of the son who had been lost, we were very grateful to the son who had stayed.

Several times a term, I have morning tea in the Board Room with students in Years 8 and 9, whose Form Patrons have selected them as the best students for the term, not in academic results or sporting prowess but in their contribution to the success of the Form Class. It certainly beats dealing with the challenges, and the Teacher Aide who prepares the morning tea for me always puts out special treats for the students. Mrs Singer gets her reward from the students at the next break as they take up my suggestion to find her and thank her for making them feel special.

Hugh Mackay says that:

*"You can tell whether a community is functioning properly or not by the respect people show towards each other, especially people who are total strangers to them."*

Visitors to our school are always impressed by the natural friendliness of the students and their willingness to help. Prospective families can tell me the names of the students who have looked after them on Open Day or Foundation Day. Probably the best advertisement for the demeanour of our school is the family which parks in the wrong car park and has to negotiate a less public path to the Administration building. These people inevitably tell me about a member of staff, teaching or auxiliary, or a student who has assisted them in finding my office.

On a daily basis, I have many visitors to my office; the student who is worried about a friend; the teacher or Year Co-ordinator who wants to air a concern about a student or a family; the Headmaster always willing to listen, giving sound advice or personally launching into tackling the issue at hand; the parent who needs to talk.

On occasions, I talk with prospective parents who are concerned about whether their children will "fit in" in this school. These parents did not attend private schools themselves and this prospect for their own children is 'unknown territory'. Some have fears that, with Canterbury College's impressive reputation, it



may be elitist and in some ways out of their depth. It is at this stage that we put aside the glossy brochures and go for a walk around the grounds.

In our travels, we come across students, teachers, parents and support staff, and as I tell the visitors a little more about the school, I relate the stories of some of the people we encounter. By the time we return to my office, the question of “fitting in” no longer needs to be asked.

- **Jesus chose some of his disciples to become apostles.....**

The word “*apostle*” comes from the Greek “*apostolos*”, meaning “*to send off*”. The apostles were no longer students, they were sent out ahead and on their own.

Isn't this what we are ultimately preparing our students for? To send them out into the world, to make a difference?

The tolerance and respect we can teach them for themselves and others are necessities for our world.

It is important for our students to care for the wider community. We are looking at developing caring young people who will not turn their backs on those in need. We have worked hard at Canterbury College on implementing our catch phrase, “*Canterbury College cares for the community!*”.

Many years ago, at St Mark's, Slacks Creek, during a sermon which was a little boring, I read in the Pew Sheet that the Parish Pantry was empty. [St Mark's Parish Pantry now operates under the banner of Anglicare and for many years has supplied food to needy families in Logan City.] By the end of the service, I had resolved to try to harness a captive audience of the 600 students attending Canterbury College at that time. 600 times one can of groceries added up to a lot more in the pantry. And thus St Mark's Parish Pantry became part of the culture of Canterbury College.

During Lent each year, the students collect groceries as part of a House competition. I often wonder what the recipients of our groceries make of the letters which appear on the top of each can or packet. It is actually the students' way of telling me into which box I should put their groceries. “B” is for Becket, “C” is for Cranmer, “R” is for Ramsey and “T” is for Temple. I am sure that these former Archbishops of Canterbury would be impressed with the community service their names are providing. I have to apologise to incoming students and their parents whom I interview during Term I as they have to share my office with a plethora of groceries. At least they find out about the Parish Pantry early in the piece. In the lead-up to Christmas, each individual class in the school packs at least one Christmas hamper. They come duly decorated and the office ladies put the Christmas tree in the school foyer early, so that the students can bring their gifts along.

St Mark's and the community benefit from the efforts of the students, but Canterbury College benefits many times over. There is the joy of giving. I wish you could read some of the messages the children write on the Christmas cards for the hampers and the sight of a foyer full of beautifully wrapped food carries a great sense of achievement. Our students are aware that one of us on our own will not feed many people but that all of us together are a force to be reckoned with. Together we can make a difference.

However, the most vital ingredient in the success of such a venture is the classroom teacher. Without the enthusiasm, encouragement and gentle reminders of the teacher who has the most influence on each group of students, this exercise would be a dismal failure. The pride of a job well done and a developed sense of caring which some of our teachers manage to instill into their classes, ought to be bottled.

The Headmaster recently received a letter from a past student. “*What's so special about that?*”, I hear you say.



The student left Canterbury prior to 1995 and, consequently had not met the current Headmaster. Andrew Shum was the School Vice-Captain in 1993. He is now an Australian Army Captain serving as part of the United Nations' Military observer team near the village of Viqueque in East Timor.

Andrew wrote to Paul Bland asking for donations of unwanted toys.

He wrote,

*“ I am continually humbled by the friendliness and happiness of the children, who, in the face of great hardship, seem eternally grateful for the limited amount of joy my colleagues can add to their lives.*

*I would like you to consider the willingness and ability of Canterbury to donate any well-loved, but now discarded, teddy bears and small toys to some of the children of Viqueque. Most houses in my region were destroyed by fire in the fighting and all contents suffered a similar fate. I am sure the children of Viqueque would renew any lost love for these items and remain eternally grateful.”*

Within a week, the College Administration office was transformed into a toy warehouse as a result of the response of students and their families. The Headmaster had great difficulty getting in and out of his office and the administration staff learnt much about the intricacies of packaging oddly shaped items and Australia Post.

Canterbury College now supports an impressive list of charities and we have now appointed a member of staff as the Services Co-ordinator. Suddenly, all of these worthwhile causes are not coming across my desk and the job is being done so much more effectively and efficiently.

We have tried to make our school available as a place of meeting or retreat and have hosted many organisations including Anglicare for Training Days, the parishes in Logan for a succession of planning meetings over a considerable period of time, the Diocese of Brisbane for Parish Council Training Days for the Southern Region, the Principal and Heads of Department of one of our local secondary schools for their strategic planning day. Last year, we were delighted to host the meeting of forty Heads from the Association of Heads of Independent Schools in Australia, the first time such a meeting had been held outside the larger and more established independent schools.

Our community spreads to Korea and Japan through our sister school network, and branches further into the world with our international students and exchange students.

- **Jesus gave his apostles authority, giving them the gift of the Holy Spirit.....**

We've done all the easy questions. If we can just solve this one, we'll have top marks. How can we help our students discover and develop their spirituality?

It is important to have in our curriculum a religious education component. It is the opportunity to gain knowledge and to question, but there have to be similar opportunities in all subject areas.

Canterbury College, although an Anglican school, offers places to students of all denominations. One of the questions I ask at interview is, *“Do you belong to a Church or parish?”*, and almost feel compelled to leap over the desk and embrace anyone who actually answers *“yes”*. I'm not in great danger of doing myself a damage because it doesn't happen often. Parents are agreeable to their children having religious education [and on occasions this is why they want their children to come to the school] but it seems to be an area where they are feeling a little out of their depth or believe that it is someone else's responsibility.

In one of my first conversations with Paul Bland, after his appointment as Headmaster of Canterbury College at the end of 1994, I said, *“If you have any missionary zeal about you, this is the place to be!”* His quiet response has a message for all of us, *“Or if you have any missionary zeal about you!”*



Last year, I decided to make the time to teach a Year 11 Religious Education class. There were many reasons for this move, one being that I wanted to get to know the Year Elevens better.

One of the first things I did with my class was to ask the students to consider what they wanted to get out of the course. I put it to them that if they and I were going to spend this time together every week, it was only fair that we should all expect to get something positive out of it or else it was going to be a waste of time. The students were aware that the R.E. course for the semester involved a unit on Comparative Religions, information which was relevant to the Semester II topic in English.

So the students put pen to paper for me and the list was interesting. Many nominated “field trip” as a desirable component of the course, but a significant number had problems with the spelling of “field”. Consequently, we started our R.E. course with spelling lessons. One student for whom I have the utmost respect wrote, *“Please don’t just talk about Christianity because some of us aren’t Christians.”*

The Chaplain did the same activity with his classes and got a similar response. So we were ready to plan! My one over-riding desire was to create experiences for the students, to try to make them think and feel. I have to admit to not having the magic wand that makes everyone malleable, mature and co-operative and makes the apathy of some students vanish, but I have been inspired and excited by the enthusiasm and support of a good percentage of the class and buoyed by some reports from parents and other teachers that perhaps there has been an inkling of interest in some of the more difficult students, even though it is not the done thing to admit it. I wonder do they realise that they are teaching me at least as much as I am teaching them!

Our field trips saw us travelling to St John’s Cathedral and then, several weeks later, to a Buddhist Temple. The tour of the Cathedral was a busy time as the students collected information for their worksheets in order to complete their assignment to create an information brochure for visitors to the Cathedral. Almost to the person, the students were overawed by the Cathedral and its atmosphere.

For me, there were several magic moments.

As I sat with my class in one of the side chapels and they deciphered the intricacies of the Icon Cross, one of the girls whom I didn’t know very well leaned over to me and said, *“I just want to sit here and think.”*

When the information sheets were handed in, one student related the story of her conversation with the man who always seems to be dusting in the Cathedral. He told her that he loves working there and never tires of the magnificence and beauty of the building. I was delighted that she had sought him out and had given him the opportunity to tell his story.

Our trip to the Buddhist Temple was a much more hands-on affair as we perched on cushions to meditate, sat at desks to hone our calligraphy skills and took turns in sounding the temple gong.

Great experiences and we all learnt a great deal!!!

Sometimes, it can be the youngest members of your school who are the greatest advocates of a Christian school. In 1998, when our Preschoolers travelled to St John’s Cathedral for the nativity play, they had the opportunity to meet and chat with Bishop John Bayton. *“We believe in God at Canterbury College,”* one Preschooler announced forthrightly to the Bishop!

Several years ago, while I was engrossed in some weighty matters in my office, I received a phone call from two of the teachers in the Infants Department of the school.

*“Di, can you spare us an hour next Friday?”* and they told me the time. *“O.K., I’m yours. What am I doing?”* [A visit to the Infants usually involves being immersed in craft activities and games in the company of the most excitable and grateful little people you could ever wish to meet. It always makes a



great diversion to tedious work and, provided I only had to hold out for an hour, I was only too pleased to have been invited.]

The answer to my question came carefully worded and more than a little long-winded.

*“You know that the Chaplain is away on sick leave, the Youth Minister is unavailable and the Headmaster is away in Japan visiting our sister school.” “Yes.”*

*“And you know how the Preschoolers have a special Chapel service once a term.” “Yes.”*

*“Well, we’re due to have that service next Friday, and we want you to take it for us.”*

Well, I had already said “yes”! *“What do I have to do?” “Amongst other things, you have to tell them a story. They love stories!”*

All students at Canterbury College love stories because we have a Headmaster who is a gifted storyteller and who can successfully entertain any student from 4 years to 18 years. So this was a hard act to follow. I decided to enlist the help of some of our very talented Year 9 Drama students and together we worked at creating a miracle for the Preps. I had decided to tell them the story of Jesus’ feeding of the five thousand. We managed to borrow some costumes and everyone was looking sufficiently Biblical as the time approached for the start of the service. For the Preps, it is ever so important to look the part, so I donned an alb and waited to greet them on the Chapel steps. *“Mrs Murphy, are you the God lady today?”* asked one young man as he strode confidently into the Chapel!

As I started to tell the story to the Preps, right on cue, a mother and her son [who had been carefully hidden in the vestry until the appropriate moment] entered at the back of the Chapel. The mother laboriously counted out the five loaves and the two fish for her son [the Preps love to count] and then placed them carefully in a basket. As her son walked down the Chapel aisle searching for Jesus, lo and behold, Jesus and several followers had miraculously appeared not far from where I stood at the lectern. [They had been hiding under the altar and had snuck out while the Preps had been looking to the back of the Chapel, counting loaves and fishes.]

The Preps were even more impressed when Jesus started to distribute the bread from the little boy’s basket and managed to find some for every person in the Chapel [thanks to a carefully placed tea-towel which had hidden a horde of food]. The crumbs in the Chapel let us know that our miracle had been a success.

I have always wanted formal interaction between students in the primary and secondary departments and have managed this over the years with the Year 12’s and varying degrees of success.

Last year, I decided to use my Year 11 Religious Education class to make the connection between primary and secondary. In the light of what I had done with the Preps, I was keen for my Year 11’s to do something similar with the current Preps. However, by the time I had run the idea past the Chaplain, the Head of Primary and the Assistant Chaplain, my idea had evolved to sharing a Chapel service with the Year 5’s. This is the year level which has been designated, at our school, for admission to Holy Communion, and the R.E. program in this year level thoughtfully reflects the necessary preparation. I felt that it would be valuable for my Year 11’s to share the journey with them and offer support and hopefully, indirectly, to gain something special themselves.

The Year 5 teacher whom I approached proved to be the greatest asset I could ever have hoped for. She encouraged me, did much behind the scenes without any fanfare and helped me convince the students that it was all their own idea. Working around the theme of *‘The Last Supper’*, students in both classes nominated to be in one of five groups, music, drama, liturgy, art or food. We had only an hour to organise, create and rehearse other than time organised by the Year 11’s in their lunch breaks. We breathed sighs of relief as all went well on the day as the Chapel was taken over by musicians, students, some parents and Jesus and the disciples decked out in a range of bed linen.



It was great to watch the Year 11's maturely dealing with spasmodically co-operative Year 5's to produce something with which they were all well pleased.

The stories I have told you so far have all been about people rather than buildings and that has been deliberate. However, at this point, I want to raise the question of the importance in our schools of a quiet, holy place to which to retreat in the busyness of the school day. The Chapel at Canterbury College is one of the most important buildings in the school although it will never rival the Resource Centre and the Administration building for architectural grandeur.

Our Chapel arrived at the College on the back of a truck as a gift from Churchie at a time when we were desperate for classrooms. The old wooden building served as our first Year 1 and 2 classrooms; the teachers were dedicated and light of foot as, in those days, the floor was in great need of replacing. When we no longer needed these two rooms as classroom space, the Parents and Friends Association converted the building into the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The building holds one hundred people at a pinch and as such is too small for many of the functions we would otherwise like to hold there, now that the school has grown. The work of refurbishing the Chapel began with the gift of pews, an altar, font and prayer desks - all of them surplus to the needs of existing parishes. An historic bell was donated to the chapel; student artwork [particularly a superb processional cross] also enriched the worship of the school.

Installing the Chapel's beautiful stained glass began when the Senior class of 1996 donated money to commission two panels of glass for the sanctuary. The simple design used the Canterbury Cross supported by symbols of the four school Houses. The scholar's book, the spiritual man's light, the reformer's bell and the martyr's crown celebrate the lives of Archbishops Ramsey, Temple, Cranmer and Becket. The two panels define the sanctuary in a simple and colourful way.

Two additional panels were added to the Chapel in 1998. The first one celebrates the school's commitment to reconciliation and incorporates a memorial to two groups - the Japanese martyred at Nagasaki in 1597 and the Anglican martyrs of New Guinea who were murdered in 1942. The window was opened in August last year in a service conducted in English and Japanese and bringing together students from Japan, Australia and Papua New Guinea. The central cartouche of the window shows children of different nationalities joined together in peace. The last window was funded by the youngest children of the school to celebrate their pets and their love for the Australian bush. The window shows St Francis, the patron saint of animals, standing under a tree in the school grounds and calling to him the birds and animals of the homes and bush of the school family. The artist worked from photographs of pets provided by the children themselves and there are many excited students certain that their dog, cat, bird or pony made the final cut.

Our Master Plan features a new chapel set up on the hill and our stained glass windows have been made so that they can be transferred to the new building when the time comes. I hope and pray that that more impressive building will retain and develop the ambience which pervades our humble Chapel, which has been the place of solace for many in times of grief [we have had several funerals], and a place of great joy [baptisms and now weddings].

I personally believe that it is important to bring students and staff into the sacramental presence of Christ through the celebration of the Eucharist.

During the year, each class is rostered on to one Sunday service in the Chapel. Parents are encouraged to attend with their children and join the usual Sunday congregation. At this service, the class is responsible for the readings, the intercessions, the procession of the elements, the collection, morning tea, etcetera and it is a coming together of the Form class for a special occasion.

At a gathering of all the Anglican parishes in Logan hosted by the College last year, Canterbury was represented by 6PR [the class rostered on to that particular Sunday]. The Chapel could not



accommodate these numbers so we reverted to the Library Undercroft which was suitably set up for the occasion. It was an evening service and the students had prepared parts of the service, including a drama presentation which introduced the short sermon from the Chaplain. The play featured a young girl talking to God [who was carefully hidden, with microphone, behind a strategically placed curtain] and effectively carried a simple message to the congregation. After the service, one mother told the tale of how her son had told her only several hours earlier that he had to go to school for the service. As she protested, “*Look, Sam, I don’t think I have time to take you to school at such short notice!*”, her son pleaded, “*But Mum, I have to go. I’m God!*” Talk about having the winning argument!

Our school camps are special times for the year levels involved. It is a time to run away from the routine and familiarity of school to enjoy the outdoors and discover things you didn’t know about yourself and others. It is a means of getting closer to your peers and being exposed to new experiences, like the scary sight of your teacher in pyjamas. It is also a time for us for the sharing of the Eucharist. The Headmaster visits every camp and celebrates the Eucharist with the staff and students. Whenever we celebrate Holy Communion at our school, we do so with an open altar so that communicant members of any Christian denomination are welcome to share in the meal.

Growing in faith and coming closer to God very rarely happens by a sudden, miraculous experience. We have no magic wand which can create such a situation. But we do know that it happens through perseverance, the opportunity to search and ask questions, dedication and the small encounters of life. It happens through caring for one another and praying for one another. It is so important that our students and staff see the spiritual side of things as something for everyone rather than something for a select few. We must change the thinking from ‘*They do this*’ to ‘*We do this*’.

Our young people are living in a time where instant gratification is very much to the fore. But there are no quick fixes for finding God and living a godly life. This makes our job so much more difficult as we prepare future leaders to take their place in the world, with the responsibility of living in peace through compassion and tolerance, through caring and right thinking, through putting aside their own selfish pursuits for the good of others.

The Reconciliation Window in the College Chapel carries the message of *Psalm 133*,

*“Behold how good and lovely it is when brothers live together in unity”.*

and the story of the window concludes with

*“May the window remind all who worship here of the love of God that brings all of us into the one family”.*

Isn’t that the message Jesus sent out with the apostles?

---

Mrs Di Murphy is the Dean of Students and Registrar at Canterbury College, Waterford. She also serves in both administrative and liturgical roles in her local parish.

