

Father Philip Murphy's first Assembly at St Paul's

5th September 2013

Reading: Colossians 1:15-20

Why do we have a School Chaplain?

Well, yesterday we heard from Miss FUNG and Mr LI, the new Social Workers here at St Paul's. They reminded you that their role here is to support you, in good times and in bad times, and that they have a genuine care for your emotional and psychological well-being.

A School Chaplain is also here to care for your well being and to support you in good times as well as in bad times. A School Chaplain is available for you to come to talk to privately, or for groups of you to speak to me. I am interested in who you are and what you are doing. Or you may have questions about God, or your own faith.

But I have another purpose here in this School, a School which is founded on Christian Principals. It is to be a **priest among you**. I am here looking after your spiritual well-being.

There are a number of things a priest is called to do. Among them:

- A priest is to proclaim the Good News. To share the bible with you and to teach about Jesus Christ. We have a bible reading at every Assembly and at many other times in the life of St Paul's.
- A priest is to pray and to pray for you. You can always ask me to pray for you or for anything you are worried about or thankful for. Every day that I am here I will also be in the Chapel to say Morning Prayer and Prayers near the end of the School day. The Chapel is open each day for you to use and to be able to go in to pray. If I am there alone saying these prayers – out loud as I do, don't think you can't come in. You can. You are more than welcome to sit in the Chapel and listen to the prayers and to leave when you have to. Often when we notice somebody is talking in a room we feel that we shouldn't go in. With the Chapel it is quite the opposite, you are encouraged to go in!
- A priest is to celebrate the Sacraments and to prepare people for the Sacraments. Starting next week I will be celebrating the Eucharist on Tuesdays and Thursdays every week in our College Chapel on the 8th Floor of the Stewart Building. On Tuesdays at

12.40, during the lunch break, and on Thursdays at 3.45 after School has finished. You are welcome to come to these celebrations, even if you have never been to the Eucharist before. There will be posters up near the Chapel about the services. I would also welcome anyone who would like to read at the Eucharist to speak to me, and anyone who has been trained to be an Altar Server in their own Church who would like to assist me – and in time I will be happy to train anyone who would like to become an Altar Server in our Chapel.

- There are other Sacraments that will be available or you can be prepared for such as Confirmation, but I will speak about those later on in the term.
- A priest is to bless – to bless people and things that we use. I am looking forward to tomorrow when I will be blessing our swimmers at the Swimming Gala.

These are just some of the things a priest is called to do – to proclaim the Good News, to pray, to celebrate the Sacraments and to bless.

I am here in the College as a Chaplain to everyone, students, teachers and all the staff here.

In our reading this morning from Paul's letter to the Colossians, Saint Paul said that Jesus Christ is the image of the unseen God. We cannot see God the Father, but Jesus shows us the Father.

A priest is to be the image of Jesus in the community he serves. That is not an easy thing to do and we don't always get it right. But that is what a priest is called to do. He is to be an image of Jesus, showing people the way to God the Father.

Because, as St Paul goes on to remind us, God wants us to find fullness in him. To find our joy, our purpose and our love in God.

Why do we have a Chaplain?

Because God is love and through his ministers God wants to show and celebrate that love. In his word, in the Sacraments, in the life of prayer and in our service to others.