

Morning Assembly - Talents

2nd November, 2015

I had the opportunity last Wednesday to witness first-hand the intensity of the Division One Inter-school Swimming Competition at the Kowloon Park swimming pool. Altogether, twenty one schools in Hong Kong participated in this competition. The impressive speed of the student athletes, the immense pressure that swimmers had to face from the media and their coaches, the meticulous attention paid to the organization of the events, the professionalism of the officials and the roller coaster ride of people's feeling as they followed each event, made the D1 Swimming Competition look somewhat like a mini-Olympic Games.

Feelings were running high as each event progressed. In the swimming pool, swimmers were competing hard for the medals and some only won by the slim margin of 0.2 seconds. At the poolside, parents, coaches, alumni were busy taking photographs with professional quality cameras, punching data into the computers to decide on the next strategic move and checking the ranking of each school in the championship. Up in the spectator stands, the cheering team of each school was doing all they could to support the swimmers. The whole place was emotionally charged.

I was there for the whole day and I enjoyed every moment of it, even though I am not really a sports fan. I shared the excitement when our swimmers gained momentum and overtook the others. I shared the disappointment when we were disqualified in one of the events. I saw the tears of our students when they were overcome with emotions. I saw the efficiency and sense of discipline displayed by our time-keepers which won the applause of many officials and spectators in the competition. I also enjoyed seeing our 100-student strong cheering team shouting at the top of their lungs, singing songs that they had created for the event, chanting slogans, waving the school flag and giving the heartiest cheers to their schoolmates. Their war cry was uplifting, their movements were choreographed and their chanting was in unison. People invariably turned to see their mesmerizing performance. I am so glad to see that our students, parents and alumni have so much pride in the College. I really wish that more students and teachers could

have been there to share that pride. I also cannot help but think that our students are really talented and they have put their talents to good use. Those who are good at swimming compete. Those who are strategists plan. Those who are meticulous work as time-keepers. Those who are good at languages rewrite lyrics for the songs. Those who are good at singing sing. Those who are good at organizing look after all the logistics.

It somewhat reminds me of the Parable of Talents as told in the Gospel of Matthew. A talent in ancient times was a kind of money. The parable speaks of a Master who was going away for a long journey. Before the trip, he asked his three servants to gather together. To each of the servants, he gave them some money. To one he gave five talents, to another two talents and to the third only one talent, according to his abilities. He asked them to put the money to good use. The servants did as they were told. The one who had been given five made another five talents. The one with two managed to get two more. Finally, the third servant with only one talent decided to dig a hole in the ground and hid it. When the Master returned from the long journey, he asked them to give an account of what they had done with the money. “Well done, good and faithful servant,” he said to the first two when he learned that they had each doubled the amount given to them. Then the third servant with only one talent said, “Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.” The Master of course was angry with this lazy servant who was quick to make excuses for his slothfulness. He took the one talent and gave it to the first servant.

There are two things about the parable that I would like you to take away with you. First, God considers you valuable and He gives each one of you some gifts, each according to his abilities. There is, therefore, no need to complain that “Chris Wong” sitting next to you is good at everything that you are not. There is also no need to feel miserable that you do not have as many talents as others. Second, God has given you gifts of different kinds and He expects that you use them well. If you do, you will have more talents and you will discover more talents, like the first two servants. If you do not, you will lose them because what you have will be taken away from you.

You may say that you do not know what your talents are. This is what you need to find out in the process of growing up. Both your parents and the College have provided you with lots of learning opportunities for you to discover your talents. Through participating in activities and through learning, you gradually know more about your strengths and your weaknesses, your likes and your dislikes. This self-knowledge is essential for you to eventually find your own niche in life. You can also help other people to discover their talents. If you notice something special in others, remember to encourage or compliment them. Your friends, your teachers or even your parents may have forgotten that God has given them special gifts and you might see them. Tell people what they are good at and remind them that this is what God has given them.

Back to the D1 swimming competition, our students have certainly put their talents to good use and I am sure the memory of the event will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Yuen Dick Yan, Dennis

*Principal
St. Paul's College*