

*“Non nobis, Domine”, “Not unto us, but unto thy Name be the glory”*

In the great and gracious Providence of God, we meet this evening on what has been known for centuries upon centuries as *“Good Shepherd Sunday”*. The theme is wonderfully expressed in one of the psalms for tonight, Psalm 23, the Shepherd’s psalm. But this is also the Sunday in which we remember *“the Battle of the Atlantic”*. At first glance it might seem a most curious conjunction of commemorations - the soft, comforting image of Christ the Good Shepherd alongside the harsh, sombre realities of an extraordinary naval campaign. But there is a connection, and one which speaks profoundly to us as a school.

The dominant icon of the understanding in the School Chapel, captured in the centre window over the altar, is the image of Christ the Good Shepherd, an all-too-familiar but compelling image of God’s providential care. Here the dominant icon of the understanding is the image of Christ Crucified. The two images are intimately connected; the latter bringing out the deeper meaning of that care imaged in the former. It is a care that embraces and triumphs even over our betrayals of God’s love. It is a care that challenges and confronts us with the learning acquired only through sacrifice.

The counter to the dominating influence of the therapeutic culture which reduces everything to self-esteem, this care awakens us to the objective principles of the educational purpose of King’s-Edgehill: the formation of character, the education of the whole person, the commitment to things worth doing and therefore worth doing well, the sense that the good of the individual is found within the ordered life of the community and not otherwise; in short, the consecration of ourselves individually and collectively to truths held sacred.

In a way, it is captured in the mottoes of the school: The King’s motto - *“Deo, Legi, Regi, Gregi”* - For God, for the Law, for the King, and for the People - and the Edgehill motto, *“Fideliter”*, Faithfully, for at issue always is our faithfulness to these ideals and principles. When I was at the University of King’s College, there was a college cat named Gregi, after the *“Gregi”* in the school motto. Tragically, Gregi was flattened by a pizza delivery van, which perhaps goes to show you just what happens when everything is reduced to simply ourselves and those larger ideals and principles are forgotten or lost sight of!

The care that challenges and convicts liberates us from the prisons of the self. Rather than the cozy, cuddly sentimentality of *“sweet Jesus, the cream of my caffè latté”*, this care signals something much more robust, more like *“Drop-kick me Jesus through the goal-posts of life”*. Perhaps that is what this week has felt like!

We have gone from the muck-in-the-ruck of the CAIS Rugby weekend to a stirring march through the streets of Windsor on a lovely Sunday evening in May, and in between? Well, it has been the week from Hell, it might seem. Certainly, it has been a week of remarkable intensity. It has been a week of cadet drill and more cadet drill to the endless cadence of *"left/right, left/right"*. It has been a week of rugby and track and band and even choir. It has been a week of *"call to remembrance"* practices and competition, of visits to Province House and to a performance of *"Twelfth Night"*. It has been a week marking the beginning of the IB exams. It has been a week even of classes.

It has been a week culminating in a marvellous musical medley of everything and anything from *"Echoes"* to *"Dvořák"* under the baton of *"Maestro All-that-Jazz, Just-call-me-Blues, Rock-n-roll Smitty"*, a splendidly executed sunset ceremony in the damp and the cold, an absolutely outstanding Cadet Inspection, damper and colder yet, an impressive parade of colours, and now, and now? Why? It's Church! *"These are a few of your favourite things"*.

For all of this belongs to the care of the Good Shepherd in the educational programme of King's-Edgehill School. Are the Headmaster and the faculty crazy? Don't answer that! Do the *"3 M"* musketeers plus one - Medina, Medina, Miles and Maly - get some sort of perverse pleasure out of inflicting pain? Don't answer that! But ask yourselves this. What has been the challenge of this week? It has been, I think, the challenge to honour the intention of the things belonging to the School's purpose and being. These things are not mindless, aimless and without honour, without dignity and without purpose. Quite the contrary.

Now, it's true you weren't consulted. No-one asked you about how you felt about having to do all of this. And some of you may have felt quite aggrieved and injured by all that you have had to do this week. We have, of course, prevented you from writing the great Canadian novel, from discovering the cure for SARS, AIDS and the highly contagious and rampant Foot-in-the-Mouth disease, from redesigning the road-map for peace in the Middle East, from becoming President of Harvard, from winning the Pulitzer Prize for the best Irish fiction written in Chinese, the Nobel Prize for vaporising all the world's Weapons of Mass Destruction, and all manner of other things to which you are indubitably entitled. It has been, after all, a whole week! Stifled! Bad School! Bad School!

Think again. Do you really think that there is any point in asking little Johnny, *"Johnny-boy, how would you like to wear a dress, a nice itchy wool dress, plaid and pleated, and go stand in the muck for a few hours and get yelled at for not knowing your left hand from your right foot?"* Now, whose crazy? But think again. And think about the intention and the integrity of these ceremonies and events. Think about what they signify. It was cold and wet yesterday and Friday night, to be sure. But

how much colder, wetter and far deadlier were the waters of the North Atlantic during the Battle of the Atlantic? You shall be most fortunate indeed if the events of this weekend become your war-stories.

No. The point in a way is that your feelings are not the measure of these things. They have an integrity of their own. It belongs to your education to enter into them and to honour their intention. It is not a matter of intelligence so much as a matter of intellect, a matter of commitment to the disciplines of learning in all of their forms, a matter of dedication to the pursuit of excellence and the disdain for mediocrity. Things that are worth doing are worth doing well and the things that are most worth doing are the things that are done to the glory of God.

The lesson that Jessica read from *The Book of Exodus* speaks about the consecration of ourselves to the Law of God reminding us that in the season of the Resurrection the things of the past of Prophecy, Law and human experience are neither forsaken nor forgotten. The lesson that Liam read from *The Gospel according to St. John* tells us of the third resurrection appearance of Jesus. Both the Law of the Old Testament and the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the New Testament have to be taught. Only then can we enter into and live their meaning. Only then can we be freed from the prisons of ourselves.

We have had occasion to talk about two metaphors for education. There is the ancient Greek idea of the Odyssey, the adventure of learning through suffering, and there is Jewish idea of the Exodus, the adventure of learning through obedience to what is revealed. The two come together, it seems to me, in a third metaphor, one which signifies the deeper meaning of the care of the Good Shepherd. The image of Christ Crucified signals the idea of learning through sacrifice. It is the one which speaks to the joy, the dignity and the redemption of our humanity in its fullness and in its integrity.

It means that you yourselves are not on parade so much as the principles of the school made visible through you, through your sacrifice and commitment to the things that matter. It has been a week of stress. We have been in it together. You have come out shining like diamonds and if you should write that great Canadian novel or win that Nobel Prize someday, probably next week, perhaps it will be in no small measure because of the things of this week and because of the ideals of this school. What is a diamond, after all, but a piece of coal which has stood up under pressure?

No doubt we all mess up and make mistakes, showing ourselves unworthy of the very principles which define and dignify us. But in the care of the Good Shepherd, through his death and resurrection, we can be recalled to the things which matter. "*Non nobis, Domine*", "*Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy Name give the glory*" is the saving note which keeps us from the idolatry and the vanity of

ourselves, and can even make us *"immortal diamonds"*. The poets, like Gerard Manley Hopkins, put it best, even with respect to the radical meaning of the care of the Good Shepherd on this Battle of the Atlantic Sunday.

*Enough! the*

*Resurrection,  
A heart's-clarion! Away grief's gasping, 'joyless  
days, dejection.*

*Across my foundering deck shone  
A beacon, an eternal beam. ' Flesh fade, and mortal trash  
Fall to the residuary worm; ' world's wildfire, leave but ash:  
In a flash, at a trumpet's crash,  
I am all at once what Christ is, ' since he was what I am, and  
This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, ' patch, matchwood,  
immortal diamond,  
Is immortal diamond.*

*"Non nobis, Domine", "Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy Name be the glory"*

*(Rev'd) David Curry - Chaplain  
KES Church Parade  
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Easter II, May 4, '03*