

Congratulations!

As this is the last Monday assembly for some time, I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate you on your successes and achievements over the past six months. Of course, six months is quite a long time and there have been so many successes and achievements that it is not possible to mention all of them this morning. However, the manner in which you have gone about your responsibilities in this the 155th Anniversary year has impressed me and has certainly not gone unnoticed.

The events of the past two weeks were typical of what has been happening since the 1st of September last year. The boys who were actively involved in the Form 1-4 Parents' Day last Saturday did a wonderful job. It was a very long day for all concerned but from my observation the planning was meticulous and carried out smoothly and efficiently. Many of the parents spoke to me about your politeness and helpfulness; from the boys on the Welcome Table in the entrance to the boys organising proceedings outside the classrooms. All along the chain the tasks were well executed. It is a credit to you that our parents have this view that St. Paul's College boys can be relied on to do the job that is required and to do it with a smile on their faces.

The same can be said of the boys who made the arrangements for the Red Cross Blood Donation Day. While it might be said that as this event is held each year it is simply a matter of following the same format, the fact is that giving blood is a serious business and must be carried out professionally and meticulously. The Red Cross Unit needed to be alert to any problems that might arise while at the same time providing encouragement and reassurance to those giving blood. My observation was of a Unit that knew what it was doing, remained calm and carried out its duties right through to the time that the doctors left the College grounds.

At last Friday's assembly, we were treated to a performance by the Orchestra as part of the warm up for the Music Festival. We would all agree that they not only delivered a commendable performance but that they also performed well as a team. Team-work in the Orchestra is as important, if not more important, than teamwork in a sport. There is no place for an individual in the Orchestra; that wonderful final sound can only be the result of a combined effort. This is why maintaining teamwork in each of our musical groups in the lead up to the Music Festival is critical to their eventual success.

Last week's Photo Day is another example of SPC efficiency. The two days passed without a hitch due to the sublime efforts of the Students' Association Executive Council and Officials, the Prefects' Council and the Committee Prefects. Like a well-oiled machine, they not only managed to keep the schedule on time but also ensured that all boys were present and properly dressed and groomed. School photo days can be chaotic but this was certainly not the case last Wednesday and Thursday. Furthermore, this time of year is additionally busy for these students with the running of the Students' Festival and its many activities and events.

There have also been some notable successes by individuals, no more apparent than the accomplishments of those boys who come on to this stage each assembly to play the piano, play the organ, read the Bible passage, present a report or deliver an announcement. Do not underestimate their achievement; it is no easy task speaking in a second language to a gathering of over five hundred classmates and teachers. Yes, they are nervous and yes, they would probably prefer that they were somewhere else. But when asked, there is no hesitation of their behalf to say 'yes', and I am sure that you would agree when I say that the confidence of these boys has improved considerably because they have been given the opportunity to participate in assemblies.

I have also had an opportunity to look carefully at the Form 1-4 and Form 6 results for First Classwork. By and large, I congratulate you on your efforts in the classroom. It is important that you look carefully at the mark you received in each subject. These marks are more important than your overall position in the Form or in a Class. As a general rule, you ought to be scoring over 50% in each subject. If you have the ability to achieve a much higher mark, however, then 50% is not acceptable. You are the only person who can judge whether the marks you received were a true reflection of your efforts. It is essential that you are honest when making this assessment. The boys in Forms 1 to 4 must also look very carefully at their performance in English, Chinese and Mathematics. These subjects are the building blocks for the future and must be given special attention. To the students in Form 6, it is time to reassess your progress to date, and to make whatever readjustments are necessary. The brutal fact is that more than half of your classmates from Form 5 were not able to return to SPC for their final two years of schooling. Each Form 6 boy has an obligation, not only to himself but also to all the students who did not have the opportunity to return, to work conscientiously and with maximum effort.

To Form 5 and Form 7 students, I wish you well as you prepare for the examinations. By this stage in the school year, you should have a clear understanding of what needs to be done. This is a stressful time for each of you but you need to know that you have the full support of your teachers, classmates and parents. Although examinations are an exercise for the individual, they are also founded on teamwork. Do not forget that your teachers, classmates and parents are key ingredients to your eventual success.

It is also important that I express my gratitude to the teaching staff, office staff and janitors for their hard work and dedication over the past six months. As we are all aware, each of the activities I have mentioned this morning have been either coordinated or supported by our teachers. I do hope that you find time in your busy schedules to thank your teachers for the work that they do in the classroom and for the multitude of activities and programmes that run in the College.

Finally, I would like to thank you for maintaining an acceptable level of dress and appearance. We have high expectations of boys attending SPC and I make no apology for insisting that hair is cut and well-groomed, that uniforms are worn correctly, and that you behave in a manner befitting a student of St. Paul's College. For every student who

comes to our College, there are countless more who cannot secure a place. Grasp the opportunity that has been given to you and take pride in being a student at SPC.

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