

23 March 2022

Dear members of our School community

The radical statement “God loves everyone!” shaped Christianity from the very beginning, as it spread throughout the world, welcoming everyone equally (see, for example, 1 John 4: 16-21 and Galatians 3: 28). Indeed, it is why Christianity was initially such a threat to the hierarchy of the Roman Empire. Jesus called, and continues to call, the most unlikely of people to be his key followers. The first disciples were humble fishermen, hardly high-flyers in the ancient world. As the Jesus movement spread throughout the Empire and beyond, it shaped societies and communities in a profound way. Following the example and teachings of Jesus, the early Christians changed the way women, slaves, children, the poor, and anyone, who was on the fringes of their communities, were welcomed and accepted.

At its best, Christianity welcomes and celebrates diversity and is in turn enriched and strengthened by that very diversity.

As we begin another year, with the shadow of COVID-19 still lurking over us, it is good to be reminded that God calls people from all walks of life. Christians are called to welcome the marginalised, the downcast and the oppressed, the people who perhaps don't always quite fit in. This call to radical inclusiveness, the life-changing call which Jesus made to the disciples and makes to us today, remains the gift that will transform the world. It will shape the way we look after members of our community who feel like they don't belong, and it will affect the way we challenge all our students to look at the world around them with compassionate eyes.

This year has already seen significant debate in the public sphere about the proposed federal Religious Discrimination Bill. In addition, there was a strong reaction to a Christian school in Queensland planning to require parents, and more recently teachers, to sign a very particular definition of faith. The public discussions which followed did not paint Christians in a particularly flattering light and, sadly, may have given the impression that Christians are generally intolerant of difference and diversity.

Yet, a generous acceptance of difference and diversity is precisely what both strengthens Christianity in general, and Anglican schools in particular, and in turn strengthens our society. Bishop Jeremy Greaves, Bishop for the Northern Region of the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane and Chair of the Anglican Schools Commission in Queensland, has written very helpfully on this topic and we commend his article to you: [We are “all children of God”: Diversity is an enduring theme at the heart of the Christian story.](#)



St Peter's College remains committed to being a place where all parents, students and staff feel accepted and welcomed. We are enormously enriched and strengthened by our diversity. We believe that diversity contributes powerfully and directly to the quality of a boy's education. We are committed to being a boys' school that promotes responsible relationships and positive attitudes towards girls and women. We are uncompromising in being a safe and inclusive learning community respectful of diverse backgrounds of race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and nationality.

The words of the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu are worth quoting:

"Each human being is of intrinsic worth because each human being is created in the image of God. That is an incredible, a staggering assertion about human beings. It might seem to be an innocuous religious truth, until you say it in a situation of injustice and oppression and exploitation." (The Essential Desmond Tutu, compiled by John Allen, Mayibuye Books, p. 8).

May God bless you this year and may God bless our School community, that we may always be welcoming of difference and inclusive of all.

Yours sincerely

Tim Browning
Headmaster