

Homily for St. Luke's School Graduation June 24, 2014

The reading from 1Corinthians tells us that "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit that gives them all..... The Spirit's presence is shown in each person for the good of all." The "good of all" is an important concept and deeply rooted in the world of the Bible. Sometimes it is described as "the common good." Often it is connected to the theme social justice and peace.

The New Testament revelation displays God as a community of persons living in a union of perfect love. In other words, God's life is a living for each other kind of life.

In our culture around graduation time there is much talk about following your dream, living your life to the full, becoming the person you want to be, realizing your life project, without much awareness that such talk stands in contradiction to our very nature as human beings created in the image and likeness of God. Sometimes we go too far thinking my life is just about me. Surely life is not just about following your dream, or living your life to the full, or becoming the person you want to be, or realizing your life project or carrying out your agenda. It is about God's dream for you, it is about becoming the kind of person God wants you to become; it is not about carrying out your agenda, it is about doing the will of God. We remind ourselves of this every time we pray the Lord's Prayer. God wants to free us from being merely preoccupied with ourselves and what we want, so that we might become free to give our lives away in the service of God and our neighbour, and to seek not merely our own good but the common good.

Only when we live according to our deepest God-given identity will we find ourselves and the great happiness that God so much desires for each of us. The surest way to discover what God desires for each of us is through prayer. Prayer is sometimes described as the lifting up of the heart and mind to God. Basically it means to live in conversation with God, and it is through such conversation that we not only come to know God but ourselves as well. Dear friends, put at least as much effort into growing your own spiritual life as you put into your studies.

Never let a day go by without thinking of God, giving him thanks for all his blessings and asking him to help you, especially when you are being tempted and tested. Always be grateful. Be grateful for your classroom teachers, and to your parents, your first teachers, for all their love, support and inspiration over the years. You have learned from them some great lessons which hopefully will serve you well down the road of life. Remember that you are called to use your gifts, not selfishly, but for the good of others.

Dear friends, I congratulate you on your graduation night and wish you well as you continue your journey. Have a wonderful summer break. Don't forget to come to church on Sundays or Saturdays, even when you are on vacation. Don't forget to pray. Remember that you are loved. And don't forget to love your closest neighbours, the members of your own families. And remember that no matter what twists and turns your life takes, you are loved by God, yes, loved always and forever by the God who is love.

Father Neil