

Chapel Homily by Riyan Amolk

Good morning boys, and good morning staff. It feels great to be back here at the Junior Campus, and I thank the rev. for allowing me the privilege to speak to you in today's chapel service. I know most of the staff here, and I'm sure a few might just remember me too. But for all you boys to whom I am, I guess a stranger, here's a bit about me.

I first came to Dilworth in year seven in 2007. I was in Mr. Procter's class 7P, and then in Mrs. Lewis- Roberts' class 8LR. I was, and remain, assigned to Dungannon, and for my two years down here, had boarded in the best house, Cotter House. This year I am in year 13, which is my final year at school. My contributions to the Senior Campus include being a school prefect, a member of the 1st XI cricket team, captain of the school table tennis team, and a member of the choir.

Now, as I recall my six years of history at this school and list my achievements, I may sound like a pretty ideal student. A long Dilworth career, school leader, fairly competitive skills on the sports field. I must admit, I've done reasonably well during my time here so far.

However, despite my progress and what not over the years, I still remain the first person to confirm that my journey through the years has been just as hard as it has been rewarding. I know that like many of you, my struggles have included homesickness, getting used to the routine, and the Dilworth way of life in general.

Some memories of my early struggles include my breakfast menu, which consisted of a single piece of toast with butter. My habit of making mum do my bed at home exposed my weak bed- making skills at school, which meant my dorm would always get the lowest points and be last to breakfast. This was something that frustrated not just me, but also my dorm mates, and above all, my housemaster from back then, Mr. Norton. Hockey trainings at the ever- so- lonely start of the week at King's School in the winter, in which, I'm slightly nervous to admit, I used to quietly get annoyed by Mr. Vos as we were made to run around in the cold as he stood in the middle wearing a nice, warm jacket. And of course, supper, in which we were to pick two biscuits and a drink. Since bringing food from home is not allowed, supper to me was the time of day I looked forward to the most. I always chose Gingernut, not because they are my favorite, but simply because they would last longer. I could go on and on, but I think you all get the message that I had a difficult time at the beginning.

But despite having such a tough time, there was something that kept me going. There was something that let me walk through the fire, without getting burnt. There was something that helped me swim in deep waters, yet keep afloat. That something was my trust in God. I always knew deep inside that God has a purpose behind me being here, and I was certain that he had a plan for me. When life becomes tough, people find comfort in things, or people, that would never fail them, or abandon them. For me, my constant solace was the Lord. A Bible verse that stood out for me, and still

does, is Jeremiah 29 verse 11, which says "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. It is because of these words that I was assured that everything happening to me was according to God's plan, and that in time, all my uncertainties will be crystal clear.

Slowly but surely, I came to realize that apricot jam on toast actually tastes better than butter, and a bowl of weet-bix isn't too bad either. I figured out how to make a tidy bed in seconds, and that it feels good to be early to breakfast rather than having to rush. I understood, and this is the good part Mr. Vos, that I was made to work hard in hockey trainings while Mr. Vos stood warm because after all, it was me who had to step up on Wednesdays and play my best game, to represent my team, and my school. And I became aware that having just a couple of biscuits for supper made me cherish the little I had, rather than taking for granted the plenty I wished to have.

But most importantly, I reckon that on a whole, my trust in the Lord has given me the will to keep striding forward, and has provided me with wisdom and an ability to decipher the meaning behind what happens to me in my life. After all, it's part of God's plan. If I had not kept my trust in Him, I would not have been standing up here talking to you. In fact, I would have been just another random boy attending a public school, with no special experiences, and nothing different to do.

So you see boys, if it wasn't for my trust in God, I would not have come this far. I have been shown a new direction in life, and it's all starting to make sense these days. Dilworth has changed my life for the better, and to all of you lads, I have to say: irrelevant of how much or how little you do, give your best at everything, and remember to have trust in the Lord, for He knows the plans he has for you. Plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Thank you.