Dear Parents, Staff and Students

Travels to other countries and cities, experiencing different cultures, ways of living, thinking and being, visiting great libraries, museums, art galleries, cathedrals and cultural icons, is always a rich experience. We can learn so much and often it is the unplanned encounters that provide lasting memories. Add to this experience, the opportunity to learn in renowned educational institutions as in my case, The Harvard School of Graduate Education and Boston College, meeting avid learners who seek to discover new knowledge, new understandings, and insights and perhaps wisdom, is such a rich and awesome privilege....fills ones heart with gratitude. I have many stories to share.

Where to begin?

Gathering at Harvard with almost two hundred educational leaders from all over the world brings a sense of great anticipation. Our opening session on a Sunday afternoon, (there is no Sabbath day in Harvard), was led by a Professor of Psychology, Robert Keagan, with a focus on adult learning and the challenge of change, both personal and organisational. I particularly remember these words in his opening address: "I have been teaching in this auditorium for over 40 years". One could think, will this be like "Groundhog Day" or will the ideas and presentation be new and insightful? And of course it was the latter as his paradigm, grounded in research and practical wisdom, unfolded with a presentation spanning three hours. It was the foundation for all the learning that followed in the coming week. Yet apart from the new concepts that were superbly explored, it was Keagan's brilliance as a facilitator of learning, drawing in a large audience of adult learners in a formal setting, that was compelling; the art of teaching at its very best with passion, wisdom and experience shining through. Oh the joy of being a teacher, an educator! Learning, yes it is life-long!

Professors, and educators with impeccable academic credentials, bringing the highest expectations of scholarly learning, contemporary or new knowledge for 21st century learners integrating the very latest technology and grounded in research; this is Harvard. Add the interactions and insights
of talented, inspiring educational leaders with worldwide experiences and educational vision and it becomes rich indeed.

At Boston College I chose a course with Timothy Radcliffe op: The essence of this course; “An Abundant Life in Christ” in the evenings over five days, was to explore how we live in God and how God dwells within us in every sphere of life. As a Dominican friar and Master of the Order of Preachers from 1992 – 2001, Timothy Radcliffe’s scholarly credentials are equally impressive as those scholars at Harvard. Yet his presentation, engagement and exploration of ideas was diametrically different. His style was poetic and philosophical, rich in storytelling, with humour and laughter. There was not a PowerPoint in sight! His work was grounded in rich theological and scriptural knowledge, faith seeking understanding, exploring the search for meaning; what it is to be human. Wisdom abounded. This was an entirely different perspective from the scholars at Harvard, yet entirely complementary. This too was lifelong learning and perhaps there is nothing more important. As the renowned theologian and educator Thomas Groome said to me in a casual conversation at Boston: 'There is no God talk at Harvard!' Why don’t you stay here a few more weeks?"

On my journey home I travelled to New York, primarily to visit the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, but of course there is so much to experience in New York. All learning is placed in perspective in this Memorial which is profoundly respectful of human dignity and the sanctity of human life. The Museum graphically tells the story of that cataclysmic day that tragically changed our world, of Ground Zero, the aftermath of destruction followed by the design and building of the Memorial and Museum. This could so easily have been a monument to national patriotism and yes there is a hint of that, but of much greater significance is the witness to the very best in what it means to be human, even and especially in the face of adversity; the inextinguishable human spirit that seeks goodness above hatred and evil; love, compassion, service of others, dignity, resilience and sheer courage. These eternal values are raised up in this very sacred place. Hope is present in the midst of great sorrow.

Surely these values and concomitant understanding of what it is to be human must be at the heart, at the centre, of the education of our young people, all over the world. I know they are the foundation of our education at Mt St Michael's through the Gospel message, the way Jesus lived and taught as articulated in our Mission Statement and in the Vision of our Graduate: Women of Compassion, Conscience, Competence, Commitment and Confidence.

I returned to the College for Mary Aikehead Day and this was the message in abundance. There was such spirit and joy on that day. It was good to be home.
In the midst of my travels, I had the opportunity to worship and pray in several churches, chapels and cathedrals. I remember each occasion vividly for different reasons. At a chapel in Boston College the concluding hymn of our midday prayer was the eternal classic, Amazing Grace, a classic because it always rings true.

“The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
as long as life endures.”

Sincerely,
Alison Terrey

Please remember in your prayers Zoe Drynan and her family, especially Mr Drynan who is currently battling cancer.

Condolences to Isabella Buckland-Baker and her family on the sad passing of her great grandfather.

Condolences to Danielle Davis and her family on the recent passing of her uncle.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all these families.

Let’s catch up over coffee...

Parents - come along and catch up with friends or meet some new friends Thursday morning from 8.40am

28 August 2014
at the Garden Wall Courtyard

For information please call
Jenny Kemp on 3858 4946
or email: jkemp@ msm.qld.edu.au