

Assembly (2015 10 14)

Principal's Address: "Finding Learning in All Experiences" (Extract)

Have you noticed the two posters on our notice board opposite the footbridge in the last few days?

On one of the posters are the two statements:

"Finding God in All Things!", and
"Finding Learning in All Experiences!"

It will take much longer than this Assembly to fully explain them, and even if we have that much time, giving a full explanation is perhaps not the best way. I would prefer to just give you some hints and leave it to you to gradually discover and appreciate their meaning in the days and years to come.

"Finding God in all things" is at the core of Ignatian Spirituality and is rooted in our growing awareness that God can be found in **every one**, in **every place** and in **everything**. He is not present only in the Church. Neither is He present only in good times, in happy relationships and in success. Sometimes, His presence is even stronger in times of difficulty, in times of failure.

The second statement "Find Learning in All Experiences" is my own invention but it is an extension of the first statement and summarizes the ultimate reason why Wah Yan encourages a wide range of activities inside and outside of the classroom.

For example, in times of difficulty, we might think this is when God is not there. But very often, God is actually in the *overcoming*, the action we take in order to navigate the constant difficulties of life. No matter whether we succeed or not in overcoming the difficulty, this action, this strive, this great effort of "overcoming", itself is a beautiful Godly act. It is also a great opportunity for learning.

And what if we fail? We all like to win. But it is a given that each of us will fail in our lives sometimes. Nevertheless, when we hit our limits and fail, we will also find Him helping us to face failure **honestly**, yet **positively**! In this way, we may seem to have lost a battle on the surface, but deep down, we have learnt to become a better person - a more profound and meaningful victory.

Today, we have several students who would like to share their thoughts and experiences with us. We will also be facing a tough fight in the coming Inter-school Swimming Competition soon. These are all further examples of the meaning of these statements.

Now on the other poster is a new question everyday and you can find the answer at the lower right hand corner of the poster the next day.

Why are these questions posted? They are not the tips for your exam or your tests. We started this to help students appreciate that knowledge itself is full of wonder and the pursuit of knowledge can be a joy in itself. Getting good exam grades or even a bright future are only byproducts!

One of our major concerns of the School this year is to develop students into **Self-directed Learners**.

Now the best self-directed learners are those who are able to appreciate **the joy of learning itself** by being **curious** about everything around them, regardless of whether it will help their the exam. We always talk about freedom at Wah Yan. In a way, a self-directed learner in the highest order is someone whose intellectual curiosity helps him **break free** from the limits of the syllabus imposed by others. **The world around him is his syllabus!**

So with the "A Question A Day" campaign, we hope students can appreciate the wonderful world of knowledge which is **boundless!**