THE WAY

TERM 3 | THE WAY NEWSLETTER | FRIDAY 5 AUGUST 2022



FROM THE CHAPLAIN

This week I showed our Year 9 student two deadly objects – a Katana (imitation) and a match.

I asked them to choose the deadliest. Most of the students chose the sword because it looked dangerous.

I then told them about what happened in Queensland in the summer of 2020. On 19 November, a teenage boy and friends started a bush fire that destroyed hectares of land and ruined 14 homes. Who would have thought that one little spark could cause so much ruin. What probably started as a joke and a bit of fun lead to disaster.

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The bible has something to say about this.

It takes only a spark to start a forest fire! The tongue is like a spark. It is an evil power that pollutes the rest of the body and sets a person's entire life on fire with flames that come from hell itself. - James 3:5-6

This passage teaches us that words, while seeming innocent and little, can start fires. Word fires spread & ruin the whole body – here it means the body of people not a physical body. One little word said in private can spread and change public attitudes that ruin a community.

I asked the students to stop burning each other as words said in jest undermine trust which in turn ruins our community. I asked the students to choose words that warm people rather than burn people.

Raising children is a hard grind and sometimes careless words come from us – I know. Let us choose our words well. When we choose poor words, let us have the courage to apologise to our children and start again.

Reverend Denis Oliver
College Chaplain

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