THE WAY

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FROM THE ASSISTANT CHAPLAIN

Who'll be there for you?

So no one told you life was gonna be this way
Your job's a joke, you're broke, your love life's D.O.A...

If you're from Gen X, like me, these words might bring back some memories! These lyrics from the theme song from the hit US sitcom, Friends, by the Rembrandts, sum up the disappointment and despair brought about by broken dreams and hopes.

But...
I'll be there for you
(When the rain starts to pour)
I'll be there for you
(Like I've been there before)
I'll be there for you
('Cause you're there for me too)

Thank God for our friends, right?

But what if those friends aren't all that you'd hoped they would be? What if they aren't always there for you?

Sadly (as the show often taught us), we can't always rely on our friends - or even family members

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- to care for us. People are too often self-absorbed and busy. Worse still, we might discover that they weren't genuine friends in the first place. And of course, distance and death can separate us from those people we have grown to love and trust.

This week I shared the story of Tiwi Islander and former AFL star Anthony McDonald-Tipungwiti with students from Years 7, 11 and 12.

Anthony's story is one of courage and effort through adversity, but it is mainly about the friendship and love of a middle-aged Victorian woman named Jane McDonald, who he came to know as "Mum." If you have a spare few minutes I encourage you to read it for yourself here.

Jane McDonald's care and concern for the young Anthony gave him a chance at a new life, a proper education, and a new family. Without her, his dream of becoming an AFL player would have almost certainly been dashed.

However, although he learnt to rely on Jane, she kept pointing him towards her own source of love, strength and comfort - Jesus Christ. In an interview with The Age Newspaper in 2016, Anthony shared the difference that a relationship with Jesus has made for him:

"Everything changed when I accepted God into my life," he said. "I went to the church down the road last year and the pastor had a talk and it was the right time for me to go to that path like my brothers and sisters, and change my life. It gives me a lot of strength and courage to know that He's there, to help me and guide me through…"

Anthony had learnt the hard way that people wouldn't always be around for him. And he knew that might be true even for his new "Mum", Jane. But he had found a friendship with the God who would always be there for him. The great thing is, that no matter where we are in life, all of us have free access to the same God through Jesus.

God has said,
"Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you."
So we say with confidence,
"The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid."
- Hebrews 13:5-6:

In the year ahead, I pray that we might all find that security and confidence to overcome challenges and adversity with the help of our friends, family members, College community and of course, our ever-loving God.

Mr Peter Butchatsky
Assistant Chaplain

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