

**ST LAURENCE'S COLLEGE: THE LIGHT ON THE HILL
AND THE CHARACTERS WHO KINDLED IT**

***A Relaxed Look at Origins, Excavations, Evacuations,
Intrepid Travellers, Generosity and Genius***

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Mr Alan Druery

At the 75th Jubilee Dinner, then Principal, Br Tom Kruger, spoke of the images of St Laurence's that had meaning for him. He referred, among others, to what he described as the 'Cannon' image. This notion was derived from an article that appeared in *The Queenslander* newspaper of 15 February, 1879. 'The permanent and volunteer forces of Brisbane staged a mock battle and the action spilled over onto the ridge on which stands St Kilian's College. The attacking force pushed their guns up onto St Kilian's ridge exposing the enemy forces (holed up on Highgate Hill) to their fearsome barrage and routing them from their defensive positions'.

St Laurence's College (SLC) in its earliest concept, was a simple operation. Two of its important functions were:

- to liberate the poor, and
- to hand on the faith.

Tom Kruger extended the Cannon metaphor by describing the school as 'an assault weapon, launching the poor, many of them Irish poor, into positions of social and economic prominence in the community. The school was a bastion of faith.' It is worth remembering Tom Kruger's image as we go forward to consider some aspects of the history of this institution since and prior to, its conception.

Perhaps there is no substance to Tom's 'cannon' image but there are surely some remarkable coincidences at critical points in the evolution of SLC which suggest that it does have just a little validity. That it was built on St Kilian's hill is self-evident as is the fact that

its historical precedents are to be found in the record of its predecessor, St Kilian's College.

Now to some of the coincidences:

- St Kilian's was itself founded in 1871. Students of history will recall that the Franco-Prussian war ended in February of that year.
- The original St Kilian's was burned down in 1898; the year in which the USA declared war on Spain in retaliation for the sinking of the USS Maine in Havana Harbour.
- St Laurence's College Foundation Stone was laid in July 1914, a few months before the declaration of World War I. (Archbishop Dunne had made over, 3000 pounds to a new St Kilian's School Building Account in May, 1914. The new school was originally named St Lawrence's, after Dunne's old school in Dublin. Fr Tom Boland comments in *James Duhig*, [Queensland, UQ Press, 1986], 118, that 'the flattery produced no result' in terms of further grants from Dunne.)
- The college was officially blessed and opened in April 1915, just two weeks before the Gallipoli landing.
- In 1919, the St Laurence's site and buildings were taken over by the neighbouring Mater Hospital, to provide patient accommodation and a mortuary; as the hospital struggled to cope with the ravages of the disastrous flu epidemic which probably had its origins in the trenches of Europe. (Boland, *James Duhig*, 167).
- In 1942, the entire college community was evacuated to 71 Chatsworth Road, Greenslopes to make way for the Australian Army's occupation of the South Brisbane site. (At the same time, its other near neighbour, Somerville House, was taken over by the US military for similar purposes. Contrary to popular reports, on departure both occupying forces left the respective buildings in good condition).

For now, at least, we'll move beyond the cannon image to consider other things.

In order to avoid bogging down in a recitation of historical events, I have prepared a chronological list of the significant ones in the development of St Laurence's and copies will be provided to all in attendance and appended to the text of this talk. I should say, at this stage, that I have drawn heavily on College Annuals of past years and I am obviously indebted to homilists, Jubilee speakers and others from earlier years, for much of the historical data included in my address.

I want to record my personal thanks to Mr. John Moffat for his assistance and his courtesy to me in the preparation of tonight's address. We all owe him much for his painstaking and inspirational work over almost thirty years, in compiling an accurate record of the fascinating history of St Laurence's.

As a one-time student of history, I indicated to John that I would be quite happy to access archival/source material as a basis for tonight's talk. He explained that it would be difficult to do that since a nameless Principal in earlier times, who had been seriously displeased by a Congregational leadership decision, had burned most of the existing records. Such are the wonderful anecdotes which emerge when we begin to reflect on history!

I want now, to return to Tom Kruger's assessment of the dual purposes for which this, and many other Christian Brothers' Colleges were founded: *to liberate the poor and to hand on the Faith*. People who inject their own stories into talks of this kind could fairly be regarded as suffering from unbridled conceit or a burning desire to bore their audience to death. I admit to neither of these motivations; but a brief insight into my own experiences as a past pupil and a former staff member across a twenty year period may help add realism and sharpness to my thesis that St Laurence's has remained faithful to these original objectives.

I was a year-four student at Christian Brothers' College (now St Patrick's co-educational College) Mackay, when my 45-year-old dad

was killed in an explosion in the garage he was managing. At the time only two of my siblings had left school; one to take up a pharmacy apprenticeship (earning about 17s 6p a week), the other to begin studies at Banyo Seminary (which ended abruptly when dad died). Compensation payments were minimal in those days and with enormous courage, and little else, my mother faced the huge task of rearing the remaining four of us on the widow's pension.

To her credit, we children didn't realize until many years later that we were among the poor of society in those times. Sometimes, there were holes in our shoes and our clothes were well worn – by several of us – before they were discarded but we didn't feel greatly deprived or disadvantaged. We had lots of love within the family and plenty of company in the Catholic community of those times.

The Brothers' College Principal was Br J. V. Reilly who had succeeded Br P. (Bluey) Morahan in 1945 when the latter transferred to St Laurence's as Principal after a memorable term as the wartime Principal of CBC Mackay. On the weekend that my dad died, Br Reilly rode his pushbike out to our home to offer his prayerful support and to hand my mother a ten pound note to ensure that we would have enough food for our immediate needs. This act of compassion and generosity was followed by a refusal by him and his successor, Br W. L. {Bill} Davy, to take any fees from the Druery family for the two of us who remained at the college and for my younger brother who attended later.

In January 1951, Br Bill Davy succeeded Br Bluey Morahan as St Laurence's principal. A month or two later our family removed to Brisbane for the sake of the educational and employment opportunities available to family members. Because we stayed temporarily in our aunt's house at Coorparoo we gravitated naturally to St Laurence's. Here, my mother attempted several times to persuade Br Davy to accept fee payments. Every time, they were refused and she finally accepted the directive 'never to try that again'.

My mother's ancestry was Irish and her pride precluded her accepting what she saw as charity; hence began an era that saw a dramatic growth in parental involvement. Her determination to repay

the Brothers and the school for the education of my younger brother and me saw her become involved in the tuckshop, the annual fetes, mending brothers' soutannes, making gauntlets for the ATC band, cooking for cake stalls in the local neighbourhood and a multitude of similar activities in support of Br Davy's drive to improve the school's facilities, add a swimming pool, involve it in new sporting associations and generally lift its profile in the local community.

Of course, she wasn't alone in her endeavours but I feel sure that she worked off our indebtedness to SLC and to the Brothers, generally, by continuing her association with the College throughout the period of my subsequent involvement here as a teacher over the next 14 years

How did St Laurence's rate in terms of its second original objective? Perhaps you are better placed to make that judgement but I can say that, together with the family environment in which I was reared, it left me with an unshakable conviction that God was real in my life, a realization that prompted my involvement with church from the time of my completion of Year 12 here until my retirement, for the third time in 2004.

My experience is certainly not unique. It has, however, led me to advise innumerable inquirers in subsequent years not to let pride dissuade them from seeking admission to a Catholic school on the grounds of inability to pay. It has also prompted me on many occasions to urge Catholic school principals to remember our origins and never to forget the significance of bicycles and ten-pound notes for families in our care.

In recent years, St Laurence's commitment to these principles is evidenced in the foundation, by its past pupils, of the W.L. Davy Centre for children suffering emotional problems, neglect or abuse. I suffered none of those disadvantages but I publicly owned the fact that I was a 'charity' case who, at the time, qualified easily for the ministrations of an Institute founded by Edmund Ignatius Rice two hundred years ago. This observation allows me to return to an examination of Tom Kruger's two original objectives. You will recall that the first of them was: *to liberate the poor.*

I have to say at this point that I feel liberated !

How have we done overall? The College Annuals are replete with the names of former pupils who have reached the top of their respective professions. To name any of them here would be to do a serious injustice to those who may be inadvertently omitted. It may be sufficient for me to say that from my time there I can personally recall the names of those who were, or later became Priests and Religious, Academics, Judges, Lawyers, Officers in the Armed Forces, Medical Specialists and General Practitioners, Psychologists, Accountants, Politicians, etc.

There were others who excelled in other fields and, for their sins, spent time languishing in a nearby Government institution. Perhaps they could at least claim to have been proficient, if not 'good' at what they did. It is well known that many of this latter group were quick to call upon the compassion and support of 'Dan' (their former teacher), when they felt the pressures of their incarceration. He never failed to respond to their appeals for help, and the prison staff finally worked out that this mystery man was none other than Br Sherriff, affectionately named after the current TV character Sheriff Dan Troop!

The upward socio-economic mobility of the Catholic community - not just at SLC - is clearly evident to any observer of societal trends in Australia over the past 150 years. Noted historians and social commentators have frequently remarked on this phenomenon.

An important question for us is whether this has been achieved at the expense of our quintessential identity and the Edmund Rice mission. Has St Laurence's remained faithful to its working class roots? Its beginnings were unpromising enough if we recall the early reaction of Br Barrett to the suitability of the original site in 1874. Across subsequent history, we do find his negative opinion balanced by the informed views of those who have seen SLC 'in action'. As we reflect on a few of them, (drawn largely from the 1975 Diamond Jubilee Magazine) the flavour and character of this place – which, in the words of staff member, John Pillis, in the 2000 Annual 'can consume a person's life' – begins to show through:

The State Inspector's Report of May 1915:

'The school, which was opened on 12 April 1915, is a splendid building occupying a particularly fine site. It is furnished and equipped in the latest and most approved manner.'

School Report, 11 June 1920 - W. M. McCarthy:

'St Laurence's will become one of the finest establishments, it is full of promise.'

'The school stands in the highest public estimation, of which the increased Roll call gives ample evidence.' (Enrolment: 416, Grade 3 to Senior).

School Report, 18 May 1940 - E. F. Keniry:

'The (3) pupils in the Senior class – too few alas! – are among the most refined I have found on my rounds.'

School Report, 27 April 1943 - J. F. Doyle:

'A branch of the St Vincent de Paul Society does practical work among the soldiers in the military hospital (at Greenslopes).'

School Report, 15 July 1952 - S. R. Young:

There is a fine ATC Unit with a remarkably fine band.'

School Report, 15 July 1962 - J. A. McGlade:

'There is an excellent spirit in the College and it is being conducted with considerable efficiency. The acquisition of 30 acres of playing fields at Runcorn is a farsighted move that will reap rewards in future years.'

School Report, 15 July 1967 - J. A. McGlade:

'The construction of two new blocks will revolutionise conditions which have been growing worse with rising numbers. The great building extension along the heights of the cliff over the oval will be one of the outstanding sights of Brisbane.'

School Report, 15 June 1971 - J. S. Campbell:

'St Laurence's continues to be impressive as the largest school complex in the Queensland Province.'

In the early 1950s, unprecedented increases in enrolments saw the emergence of a crisis in the form of a facilities deficiency, that coincided with the decline in vocations which began to impact on all religious institutes at that time. Two quotes illustrate the problem:

1. 'Classroom accommodation is inadequate for the numbers. A building programme cannot long be postponed.' (School Report 20th June 1956, C.C. Marlow).
2. Tom Kruger's comment in the 1990, 75th Jubilee edition: 'the 1950s and 1960s were times of extraordinary growth. This is starkly seen in the following statistics: the school size in 1950 was 502; in 1956, 754; in 1961, 962; in 1964, 1158. Listen to some of the class sizes of this time...Br Stan Cusack taught 56 Year 4 students in 1953; 105 students in Year 6 in 1954; 105 Year 6 students again in 1955; 113 Year 6 students in 1956 and 112 Year 7 students in 1957.'

[At the same time, Br Joe Hodgkinson, who taught next to me, lamented the fact that he had only 97 students and felt that the Principal must lack confidence in him because he couldn't make the hundred!]

But there was hope on the horizon! St Laurence's was to be blessed by the appointment of a series of 'Builder' Principals who were equal to the daunting challenges of the times. As well, the incomparable Pat O'Neill had ridden in on his pushbike in 1953, the equivalent of a full cavalry regiment in terms of his impact over the next 44 years!

Before moving on to take a look at some of these larger than life characters who have graced the St Laurence's stage, I'd like to recount some of the incidents which, for me, are an unforgettable part of my own experiences here and which have become part of the folklore of this place. They are, of course, personal, random and anecdotal. Ask any ten SLC old boys and you will be regaled with ten different sets of anecdotes. These are mine:

The incomparable 'Bluey' Morahan who, in the late 1940's, one day found himself trapped on the top floor of the Monastery while an allegedly hostile meeting of mothers was going on in the downstairs

parlour. Bluey knew he would be ambushed, if seen, and if he used the stairs to reach the front door he would certainly be spotted. His solution was to climb the verandah balustrade and 'shin' down the downpipe; after which he took off probably at speed given his reputation as a runner. The mothers' meeting held on until the gathering gloom of the approaching evening forced them to leave in order to prepare their evening meals. It's doubtful if they ever discovered how Bluey eluded them on that day.

The Gloucester Street railway station (now closed) was a great asset for St Laurence's as it served the famous Beenleigh line which delivered so many students to its back gate each day. It must also have figured in the nightmares of all of the principals of the time. Almost every Monday morning school assembly featured a Beenleigh train travellers' lineup outside the principal's office. This was inevitably followed by a 'hit' parade when punishment was meted out to those judged guilty of upsetting Queensland Rail, the odd passenger, or the near neighbours with their latest prank or misdemeanour.

On one occasion, Br Bill Davy was heard quizzing one young offender about his malicious stone-throwing attack on the guard on a moving train. He was saved by his protestations that he hadn't been aiming at the guard but was engaged in a student contest to see who could throw a rock over the train carriages as the train passed through. He didn't win! What really saved him was Br Bill's assessment that such an accurate shot couldn't possibly have been deliberate. Nobody was that good! I think the student was happy to escape with only four of the best.

In Br 'Mickey' Spillane's time here, lost property was a huge problem. It accumulated so rapidly that there was a container the size of the modern mini skip constantly filled with items retrieved from the floor of the dressing sheds etc. One of the best finds was a pair of school uniform trousers. Only God knows what that student wore home that day!

After years of exasperation, the Monday assembly finally dawned when Br Spillane stood before all with a triumphant glow and

announced that, at last, he was able to name one of the careless culprits responsible for the growing pile of lost clothing. 'This time' he said, 'the lost item has a name on it!' So saying, he held up one of the grubbier, once-white Jackie Howe singlets we had seen in years and invited the owner to come forward and claim it when he spelled out the name. Unfortunately, he hadn't had time to check it carefully beforehand. With the aid of the microphone, he read out each of the letters partially obscured by dirt and grime. It read, 'P. O'NEILL'. The year-8 teacher Pat O'Neill, sheepishly raised his hand and said, 'That'll be mine Sir!' I don't recall the lost property issue ever being raised again.

The same Pat O'Neill (former Marist Brother and perennial bachelor) used to move into the Monastery as caretaker when the brothers went off for their Christmas holidays. On one such occasion Pat installed himself upstairs in the almost eerily vacant Monastery, but concerned about a spate of break-ins and enterings in the area, armed himself with a borrowed .303 rifle. In the dead of night, he heard an intruder struggling to open the downstairs rear door facing the Convent at the Mater Hospital. Pat loaded the rifle, negotiated the stairs in the dark and began moving quickly towards the source of the noise. Unfortunately, he tripped in the dark and dropped the rifle which discharged. The bullet travelled the length of the corridor and exited through one of the lead-lite panels in the back door. The would-be intruder was never seen again and no deaths were reported among the Sisters at the Mater convent but Pat looked decidedly pale for some days and his association with firearms ended abruptly at that point.

At a Grade 5 interschool football match (probably against the old foe, Marist Ashgrove), the opposing winger made an impressive dash down the sideline with only his opposite number between him and the try line. The mother of our own poor little innocent who was confronting the rampaging winger shouted frantically to her son 'Get him Michael, tackle him, stop him!' Unfortunately, despite his best efforts, poor little Michael was trodden into the turf by his bigger opponent. It seemed that nothing could stop his charge towards the try line and ultimate glory. Wrong!!! Michael's mother tossed her

handbag to a friend and took off after him. She effected a copybook tackle feet from the line; dropping the opposition winger like a stone. Such was the passion generated by the old and indefinable school spirit of SLC!

SLC has always done well at acknowledging its student achievers. Again, in Brother Spillane's time, young Johnny 'D' excelled, as a 12 or 13 year old, by winning the Under-16-years Queensland Squash Championship. On the usual Monday morning assembly, Br Spillane called him up to the verandah, lauded his achievement and then made the fatal error of asking him if he would like to say a few words to the boys. Johnny was far from shy and quickly replied, 'Thanks Bruvver, I would. 'He then climbed onto the box which allowed him to reach the microphone; held up his hand for silence and said, 'Boys, tomorrer youse can all have a holiday to celebrate my win!'

Three significant lessons were learned that day by:

- 1. the students - that not all promised holidays eventuate;*
- 2. by Johnny - that he didn't wield the same authority as did Archbishop Duhig when it came to granting one-off holidays; and*
- 3. by Br Spillane - never to give a microphone to a student without a pre-agreed agenda.*

Time permits only a few examples. There are many more.

Now to some of the characters! Everyone to whom I spoke could readily name their favourite or most significant character. We all have them and our choices are naturally governed by our own experiences. Sadly, there are fewer and fewer people available who can speak first-hand of the wonderful early years which provided the foundation for today's SLC. I was able to speak with two fellow parishioners, Laurie Greaves and Brian Matthews, who were survivors of the Greenslopes evacuation. They immediately named **Br Bluey Morahan** (1945-'50). They remembered, affectionately, his weekly Friday religion lessons which they deemed invaluable.

Bluey was larger than life. He ran everywhere and used a stopwatch to time the boy sent to collect the mail each day. During the War, he was questioned, probably by American military police who were highly suspicious of this man dressed (disguised?) in clerical garb who, at precisely the same time each afternoon carried a small suitcase with him as he disappeared into the scrub at the City's Victoria Park. They suspected he may have been a spy with a small radio transmitter in the case. Its contents were actually his running gear and he used the privacy of the bushes to change as there were no dressing sheds. The police were eventually convinced that he was who he said he was, despite the unlikeliness of his story.

Fr. Ray Kearney (Senior 1955: ordained 1962) saw **Br Bill Davy** as the person he most wanted to be like when he became an adult. For those who were here at that time, there could be no other answer to the favourite character question. In many ways, Bill Davy ushered in the new era for St Laurence's. The community became heavily involved with the school from then on. The summarized list of significant events captures many of his achievements during his time here (1951-56).

A list of principals, also appended, carries many names with which we can individually identify. I knew **Br Stan Adams** (194-44) in his later roles in congregational leadership and in Catholic education and I admired him greatly. He did much to help bring together the diocesan and congregational elements of the Catholic school sector during the critical years of the 1970s, 80s and 90s, when we had to fight so hard for survival.

I learned much of Br Bluey Morahan through my brothers, who were taught by him in Mackay, and from my classmates here at SLC when I arrived as Bluey departed. I taught under **Brothers Terry Fitzgerald, Bernie Crawford, W.F. (Mickey) Spillane and Paul Macrossan**. I left the college in May 1970 to join Fr Barney O'Shea in the two-person Catholic Education Office. Our infant daughter died only six weeks later. In his concern for our family, Br Macrossan loaded the college car with brothers and drove out to our home. When I answered the door, he was quick to extend his

sympathy and almost as quick to warn us against striking a match. In his efforts to top up the car's fuel tank on the way out, he had saturated himself in petrol. Not much could have gone into the car! Why look further for characters? We are surrounded by them.

There are many whose names will live on for the boys of recent times. Among them are **Terry Brady, Steve Grundy** and **Tom Kruger**. In future years, the names of recent, present and future Lay principals will be added to the list They will no doubt have earned their place in this distinguished company.

It would not do to focus entirely on principals when such outstanding work was being done by staff members at all levels. Who could forget **Br Gordon Boniface Sherriff** who, for forty years dispensed compassion, support and love to all around him while labouring to produce his annual floral carpet and to promote respect and love for Mary, the mother of Jesus. In the 60s (1962-'68), **Br Darcy Murphy** put his stamp on this place and on many of those students who laboured in it. He did what many of us did: he taught vigorously, he coached sporting teams, he led the Air Training Corps, and he inspired students. His distinguishing features were the vitality and energy with which he did all of this and his phenomenal success rate. He kept a roll of all of the students he ever taught.

In earlier times (1935-'36 and 1945-'53), **Br J. E. McElligott** was on the staff. He taught us English and French. The student material with which he had to work was not all that impressive but the man was an intellectual giant and was regarded as one, by three outstanding professors from Queensland's only university at that time. He enjoyed the respect of Andy Thomson, Cecil Hadgraft and Jim Mahoney; all leaders in their respective professional fields. **Br Stan 'Doc' Campbell**, (1965-'66) of Gregory Terrace fame was another outstanding classical scholar of his time.

For many students, it tends to be their particular classroom teachers who are most kindly remembered All of them deserve to be named but that is not possible here. Some should be mentioned because they seemed to strike a chord with the wider SLC community, sometimes it might have been something as apparently insignificant as their

work in mowing ovals in their free time, which caused them to be remembered. Whatever the reason, these few names will ring bells for many former students:

Len Levander (1952-'56, ATC boss, science master and exactor of severe penalties if anything less than excellence was contemplated by a student), **Bernie Hampton** (1960-'72 and 1976-'03), **J. H. Wright** (1979-'03 ?), **B. C. Powell** (1955-'61), **Brian Steele** (1969-73), **Laurence Mousley** (1950-'54), **H. S. Sharpe** (1955-'61), **Stan Cusack** (1953-'57), **Bob Fredericks** (Old Boy and three time staff member).

How is it possible to assess adequately the contributions of long serving Lay staff like these: **Pat O'Neill, Paul Forrester, Gerard Osborne, Bob Rea, John Moffat, John Pillis, John Nash, Paul Gair** and others like them. From earlier times names such as these emerge: **Des Whittle, Peter Flynn, Reg Baker, Paul Corkeron, Tom Mahon, Arthur Barrow, Brian Daly, Kath Bartlett, Fay Mee, Rita McMenemy.**

How could former ATC band members of the 1950s and 1960s forget the role played by Band Tutor, former prisoner of war and RAAF Warrant Officer, **Norm Henstridge**; the aroma of whose cigar heralded his arrival on Wednesday afternoons long before he himself appeared on the school site?

The list is a lengthy one and as I have said earlier, none deserves to be omitted. All gave unstintingly of their loyalty, their dedication and their skills. This school has been graced by innumerable such characters. The results of their efforts can be seen in the thousands of former students who have led stable, productive and responsible lives and have contributed generously to Church and community.

This brings me to the final element of this reflection on what began here in 1915.

The current Archdiocesan vision comprises three key elements; *Jesus; Communion; and Mission.* Measured against these elements, my assessment is that St Laurence's continues its outstanding record in relation to the first two. Until relatively recent times, it produced

impressive numbers of former students among the ranks of clergy and religious congregations. Jesus is alive and well in what is taught here and how the Message is lived here – the 'culture' of SLC.

The college also rates very well on the criterion of 'communion'. The sense of community, the promotion of care for others and the prevailing spirit within the college are clearly evident on public occasions, sporting and other competitive pursuits, funerals of staff members and community members, participation in charitable and outreach activities.

Many boys, while at school, have participated in the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society, the YCS, the Edmund Rice Society, the Paulists, the Dominic Savio Club, and fund-raising drives for charities. Yet, in the field of 'Mission', our recent graduates (of the past decade and more) are not engaging in significant numbers with the church agencies involved in its care for the community and its care for the world, or, dare I say it, in its liturgical life where the mission is authenticated, revitalized and refuelled.

There are exceptions but, sadly, they are too few. There may be great personal satisfaction, but there is no great merit in the fact that the spirit, so strong in our school students, often translates only into the desire of old boys to meet on a regular basis for Friday night drinks or to play football together. These are legitimate pursuits but they are not enough. As personally satisfying and enjoyable as that association may be, it does nothing to improve the state of the world by promoting the 'mission' of which we are all obligated to be a part.

Unhappily, this same circumstance applies to many recent graduates of all our Catholic schools and the Church is languishing as a consequence. The unique experience in which St Laurence's students have been privileged to share, imposes on each of us an obligation to 'own' as ours, the mission of Jesus and the church he established to promote it.

I am not here to criticize Catholic schools and especially not this one to which I owe much. I have spent 44 years working for Catholic education. I believe in it. The task of our schools in today's world is

difficult enough. What I do want to do is to challenge this and all other schools and their students of yesterday and today to face this task and to be trail blazers in turning the tide. Don't wait for others to be the leaders. You are 'the salt of the earth'; in terms of educational opportunity you (we) are a privileged elite.

Contrary to some public opinion, the churches have a vitally important role to play in today's and tomorrow's world. Apart from the beliefs and values they bring to society, in secular terms they and other non-government entities, voluntary associations and community agencies constitute the so-called 'third sector' of society. As such, they afford to governments {the 'public' sector} their best option for delivering essential assistance and services to the community. Bureaucracies are notoriously incapable of delivering those same services and the 'private/for profit' sector is focused on outcomes other than the wellbeing of the community.

For interesting analyses of this perspective, the writings of Ted Gaebler and David Osborne, *Reinventing Government* (New York, Penguin, 1993), Peter Drucker of the Drucker Foundation (1999) and Hugh McKay, *Reinventing Australia* (Sydney, Harper Collins, 1993) are enlightening.

Quite simply, we are not entitled to complain that the Church has nothing to offer us. We, including young people, must not see ourselves as the recipients or beneficiaries of the Church's efforts. We are the Church. We must be, in Gospel terms, Christ's hands, and His Church's energy source and its heart.

I believe we can do that. If this doesn't happen, the future history of St Laurence's will be much less remarkable and the mission of the Church and the charism of Edmund Rice will cease to flourish. That would be a tragedy and one in which St Laurence's College and its thousands of graduates should have no part. The challenges are out there. The world urgently needs and awaits your (our) response.

*Alan Edgar Druery,
OAM, BA, BEd St; MEd Admin. (UQ);
FQIEA; FACE; FACEA; D.Univ (QUT)
and his wife Helena are parishioners of St Bernard's,,
Upper Mt Gravatt.*

*Alan attended St Laurence's College South Brisbane
(1951-1954) and taught there from 1957 until May 1970.*

*He held the positions of Executive Secretary of the
Queensland Catholic Education Commission (1973-
1983) and Executive Director (1983-2001).*

*Currently he is Chair of the Queensland Chapter of the
Australian Catholic University.*