

HODGSON HOUSE CHAPLAINCY

As I reflect and report on the chaplaincy position at Hodgson House I am deeply aware of the societal background on which this ministry rests. For instance we live in an aging society. Life expectancy has grown from eighteen years at the time of Socrates to something exceeding eighty years at the present time. In fact it is quite usual to find individuals well in advance of even this latter figure as is the case at Hodgson House! Other important factors to be kept in mind is an awareness that ministry, and chaplaincy in particular is being carried out at a time when there is a need to rationalise resources at the same time when we have a larger population of aged in need of greater resources. It is therefore important to remember that those who are aging today are precisely the ones to whom we are indebted for our present culture and standard of living, a point to remember when we encounter a fairly common opinion that persons who by age or illness are somehow less important and therefore not entitled to a fair share of resources.

Spirituality has many facets. It is expressed and enhanced in a variety of ways both formal and informal, religious and secular, including, but not limited to religious and philosophical beliefs and practices, art forms, prayers and meditations. As people struggle with issues of life, death and aging in a society where former values are changing or in some cases being swept away, it is important to maintain a presence of stability based on sound standards and beliefs yet being open to people and their specific needs. I feel we as church are fulfilling that role and this is confirmed by favourable comments from residents and families.

At this time I wish to acknowledge the work of previous chaplains, parish workers, volunteers, and the many who have worked in this facility doing ministry and chaplaincy work at Hodgson House over a number of years. I must record my deep appreciation for the work of an army of volunteers whose unstinting help is invaluable. These consist of people from various denominational groups who take ecumenical services of worship, musicians, and others who aid in provision of the Eucharist on a regular basis. It is appropriate at this point to recognise the staff of Hodgson House who fully co-operate and support and encourage the chaplaincy service.

On a personal note I count the experience of chaplaincy at Hodgson House a deep and enriching experience.

Finally, in the Talmud it is written, "Respect an old man/person who has lost their learning: remember that the fragments of the tablet broken by Moses were preserved alongside the new. It is our sacred trust to care for both old and the new, to make both feel as if they were holy, for indeed from the very beginning both were created in God's image"

Dermot Buchanan

Chaplain