

It doesn't matter whether the medium is a magazine or it is online pushed straight to your device, as Grant says fake news, factoids, fallacious fabrications are as old as human history!

And Grant speaking about the fact that these are magnified by social media and some of the prominent people using it made me automatically think of the Kardashian Jenner families – just this morning, Kylie Jenner who has 104 million followers on Instagram and 24.5 million on Snapchat had the capacity to brutally take down snapchat with just one snap!

But the truth is out there somewhere Skully...I mean Grant.

Thinking about the theme of truth that Grant has selected for his sermon tonight, made me think about being true to one's self. Parents in the congregation might be able to relate to that film *Punch Love* where Emma Thompson's parting words to her daughter as she drives off to College to start her new era in life were "Be true to yourself honey! " Sounds simple right?

Freshers who are at the eve of their first real day and year of university, there are not just the Kardashians, the Jenners and other influencers on social media and an abundance of Fake News everywhere, there are also the influencers in a close knit collegial community and it is important to be true to yourself.

All of a sudden you find yourself in an entirely new world made up of entirely new people. It is an exciting time, a new adventure and can be a wonderful test of your personal independence and growth, but it can also be a test of your recognising that you are who you are for many reasons. You do not have to be who other people want or expect you to be and you do not have to feel pressured from other people around you. You never have to do what other people are doing or join in something you're not keen to explore.

Be your authentic self and try not to worry about what others think. Know your strengths because this will allow you the confidence and skills to make wise choices and good decisions...I'll come back to that in a moment.

For those people who are Tolkien fans you may remember in the scene in the Fellowship of the Ring when Sam, looking forlorn says:

"This is it"

Frodo turns around to Sam and says “ this is what?”

“If I take on more step, it’ll be the farthest away from home I’ve **ever** been”

Frodo pauses and says “Come on Sam, Remember what Bilbo used to say “It’s *a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don’t keep your feet, there’s no knowing where you might be swept off to.*”

At College, potential new and enriching friendships are all around you. Put yourself out there and step outside of your comfort zone – you never know what you will learn.

And when you do step out of your comfort zone, as the Dean regularly says “make good decisions”.

Understand that your time at College and University **is** precious, and you have a source of vast knowledge at your fingertips.

Don’t just *attend* university. Engage with your coursework.

Engage with the content, with your lectures and tutorials because this will ensure that you are getting the information you need (not to mention that’s also what you will be paying for) .

Know you are capable of working *incredibly* hard and **never** let anyone convince you otherwise.

Take advantage of the opportunities living in College gives you even if it’s just learning from another student who has grasped a concept more quickly than you – or vice-versa. Seek help from the tutors because that is what they are there for. Ask questions. Challenge theory and thought.

Put in the time, work hard, be humble but confident, and you will achieve success. Also, remember to appreciate how lucky you are right now to be in a place and at a time that allows you to simply have the opportunity to gain an education.

Live according to your family values and to the values at St Mark’s – and we have been talking a lot about these over the last week. Because we have a

mutual responsibility to live according to those values and to negotiate what it means to live them together.

We *always* need to be able to answer the question – is the way I am living consistent with St Mark's Values? Am I being true to myself and true to the College Values?

St Mark's great strength is the positive ways its Values have been lived and have evolved over generations.

And my last piece of advice whether you arrived ten days ago like the Freshers did or five years ago as Henry Hole did. Seek a balance – at St Mark's we are here to help you achieve that balance so that you can achieve your fullest potential.

And

You are all here for such a short time relative to your whole life yet it is one of the most critical periods of your life, where you make lifelong friends, establish your work habits, make decisions about your career, have endless discussions about the realities of life - and a stimulating community in which to belong.

Make the most of your time here and remember - this is a place where you will belong - for life.