

REFLECTION:

MAO'S LAST DANCER WAS A FROG IN THE WELL...

A frog lies at the bottom of the well, living on meagre light, food and water. And yet the frog is happy enough. That is, until one day, when a sparrow friend from above describes a whole new world. Only then does the frog dream of something wider, bigger, greener.

The Anglican School's Conference in Brisbane last weekend had many treasures. One of them was hearing Li Cunxin, subject of the book and film *Mao's Last Dancer*. As he spoke, his hands glided as if in dance. He was spellbinding. He tells the story that once he was the frog, trapped and stuck at the bottom of the well. His grandfather told him the story many times over. With it he dared imagine something more than the generations of poverty he had been born into. With good fortune, great pain, hard work and many friends, Li found a way out of the well.

Question: how many 'frogs' can make their way out from the well? How many have to remain?

At the end of the talk, Li spoke of his greatest achievements. They did not include his dancing. They were around his relationships as a husband and a father. His call to a bigger life is not an invocation to grand success, but a fuller but more selfless life. This is what Jesus calls for: "Come, follow. Live a fuller life. Let it not be defined by your own needs and success. Let it be measured by the love you have for God and others around you. Be defined not by the life you have but the life you give." Among the people and across the land, God looks out for justice and righteousness (Sunday's reading: Isaiah 5:7).

At Radford, we dare to imagine the flourishing of our students and ourselves, but more than this; the flourishing must not come at others' expense, but rather, provoke and nurture a wider flourishing. It is an holistic and sustainable flourishing. No one need remain at the bottom of the well.

Some would argue that the Federal election has been the steady descent to the bottom of the well, and this on all sides. The vision we hear and share is not about a big or expansive national life.

O God, we pray for our leaders and those who seek public office. Lift their gaze. Turn their interests beyond the immediate and popular; turn them towards a nation whose greatness can be measured in the wealth given over to the least, the smallest, the most vulnerable.

RAS

This weekend, a group of students will be undertaking the **40 Hour Famine** with World Vision.

The floods in **Pakistan** are an unbelievable disaster. Aid money moves slowly. A sum of money from the RAS Charity Fundraiser will be donated on Friday. This will be decided upon this at RAS on Thursday. There is enough there for \$2000-\$4000. Red Cross is the likely Non-Government Organisation Agency.

A BBQ will be hosted next week with other things for sale to supplement this.