



From: Michael Spencer
Sent: Monday, June 01, 2015 10:10 AM
To: allstudents; AllSPSAdults
Subject: LOVE

As read in chapel this morning:

This morning, in front of the altar in the Chapel of St. Peter & St. Paul, you will notice four large letters spelling out the word LOVE. This is a gift from the form of 1970. The late 1960s were a very turbulent time in American history. Dr. Martin Luther King and Senator Robert Kennedy were assassinated in 1968, the Civil Rights Movement continued but not without continuing tensions across the nation. In the summer of 1969, thousands gathered at a dairy farm field in Woodstock, NY for a music festival – a response to the political and historical tensions of the time. Change was everywhere in the air. And it had leaked into, if not popped, the bubble of St. Paul's School.

Into this charged atmosphere, in the middle of a Friday night, a 16 foot high, 54 foot long sculpture was stealthily put up on the chapel lawn facing the rectory by a small group of sixth formers from the form of 1970. It was a total surprise. On Saturday morning, the Rector, The Rev. Matthew Warren, passing by a window in the rectory, glimpsed only one or two of the four huge letters. Sensing mischief, he called one of the deans and told him that, "The boys have been out doing pranks, get those huge letters off the lawn immediately." The dean asked him, "What do the letters spell?" Warren took a second look out the window, "L...O..V..E...LOVE! Forget what I just said! Get me a step ladder and inform the school that morning chapel will take place on the chapel lawn!"

That morning, the school came together and became one in an entirely spontaneous, deeply moving "agape communion service." Agape is one of the Greek words for Love – it means, "God-centered love of others." Agape was a key concept in the religious studies classes at the school...and that is the love that the students who created the sculpture had in mind.

This past Saturday morning, for their 45th anniversary, the form of 1970 gathered around a smaller sculpture which they created...a reminder to all of us that at the end of the day, we need to gather around the values of our school prayer: to be kind, unselfish, thoughtful, and compassionate...all summed up in one word...LOVE.

"Let the love that you are be what you do; there are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the earth."

~ Rumi, Muslim Sufi mystic

