



Congratulations to the class of 2017 on their excellent matric results

FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

The new year has started well at St Mary's School. We celebrate our 130th year in 2018 and to begin celebrations we hosted a cocktail party for the community in The Close on Wednesday evening. We also launched a collection of St Mary's girls' art and poetry over the generations, entitled, *More than the Sunshine Will Stay with Us*. My sincere gratitude goes to Pauline Grainger, Graham Wood and Kathy Mittendorf for the enthusiasm and care given to this project. Copies of the book are available from the Clothes Cupboard.

St Mary's School was always, is now, and will continue to be about the girls who attend the school. There is never a doubt about the reason for the school's existence and I believe that this purpose encourages the St Mary's girls to become their best selves. It is evident in their art and poetry, and it was certainly evident in the matric results of 2017. I congratulate the class of 2017! The results were excellent and testament to the hard work and dedication of the teachers and the girls. The school chose to publicise the results via social media because it gave us the opportunity to celebrate all of our girls. Please refer to the summary below, which highlights why we are so very proud of our girls:

- 100% Pass
- 100% Bachelor Degree Pass
- 407 Distinctions (80%+)
- 82 A+ symbols (90%+)

- 34 Placements in the Top 1% in a subject
- 42 Pupils (42%) with an aggregate of 80% or more
- 64 Pupils (63%) with an aggregate of 75% or more
- 83 Pupils (82%) with an aggregate of 70% or more
- 101 Pupils (100%) with an aggregate of 60% or more
- 22 Pupils (22%) obtained 7 or more distinctions

The table on the website that records the school's results from 2008 reaffirms the consistent academic achievement of our school.

I have the privilege of attending a Fellowship at Teachers' College, Columbia University, for the next two weeks. It is an opportunity for personal development and growth in my leadership and I am most grateful to the Board for this time away from St Mary's. In my absence, the deputy heads, Ros Howell, Penny Mullan and Tinhiko Nkuna, will be responsible for all matters at the school. I shall return via London where I will host a gathering of Old Girls in the spirit of community.

I extend best wishes to the new girls and staff at St Mary's. Welcome to our community and may you find personal reward in our values of love, community and integrity.

DEANNE KING
HEAD OF SCHOOL

FROM THE CHAPLAIN



We start the school year in the midst of the season of the Epiphany. This is a month-long season that begins with the Sunday of the Epiphany, in which, in the life of the church, we focus on the visit the wise men from various countries paid to the Holy Family (Matthew 2:1-12), having learned through their studies and various fields of expertise that the “king of the Jews” (v.2) had been born in Bethlehem, and that they were to follow the star to ascertain the place of Jesus’ birth. The visit of the wise men is key to our awareness that there was something remarkable about the vulnerable baby Jesus. Thus, many of the Bible readings throughout the season of the Epiphany point to the identity of Jesus as the Christ, as worthy of awe and wonder.

Today, there is much that is uncertain in the world and in our country. How will the newly elected leadership of our country’s governing party work together and how will they implement the decisions made at the conference during the course of December 2017? How will the tenuous relationships among countries, and among various demographic groups within various countries, play out this year? (See, for example, the Eurasia Group’s top 10 risks for 2018 as reported in the January 15 edition of *TIME Magazine*.)

Much would also have been uncertain for Mary and Joseph as new parents. Consider again that Nativity scene: Mary, likely a teenager, and her husband Joseph, first-time parents in a town not their own, away from their support system and having to stay with the animals the night of Jesus’ birth. Certainly, God had already sent God’s angels, on a couple of occasions, to guide Mary and Joseph. Mary had already shown remarkable courage and a deep peace within, in accepting God’s plan for her, while Joseph too had been obedient to God such that he had cast aside his own suspicions of his pregnant wife-to-be. However, there was so much that must have seemed uncertain to this couple, holding the infant Jesus. There would have been the practical questions they would have had to figure out on their own that night: how to fold a cloth nappy and put it on; how to interpret their newborn infant’s cries? There would also have been questions as to how their

own and Jesus’ future would unfold, given God’s plan for Jesus. Would this baby grow up different from others his age; how does one prepare a child for Messiahship, for example. Obedient and supportive as Joseph is said to have been, did he find it easy in his heart to accept Jesus as his own child and to love him as his earthly father?

I like to think Mary and Joseph had support that is not mentioned in the Bible: perhaps the so-named wise men could offer words of wisdom befitting their name; perhaps there were seasoned parents the Holy Family could talk to, or a midwife who looked after them. Of course we cannot know this to be the case for sure. What is certain is that with each revelation of Jesus’ identity as Saviour of the world, Mary “treasure[s] these things in her heart” (Luke 2:19,51) – she finds consolation within these revelations. The revelation of Jesus the Messiah is also a source of joy and consolation for others, such as Simeon and Anna who recognise the infant Christ in God’s temple (Luke 2:22-38).

It is significant that our 2018 school year begins in Epiphany. Let us, like Mary and Joseph, like Simeon and Anna too, find joy and consolation that in the midst of all that is uncertain, Christ is Lord. As Mary and Joseph must have – although again we are not told this is the case – let us spend time asking God to guide us and trusting that God will do so. Let us listen and notice as God unravels God’s plan as to how we can be agents inspired by God’s Spirit, who reveal the Saviour to one another, to our land and to the world. (Incidentally, the *TIME Magazine* edition I referenced earlier is guest edited by Bill Gates, who, together with contributing authors, seeks to highlight today’s good news.) The Epiphany is, after all, rather exciting!

REVD CLAUDIA COUSTAS
CHAPLAIN