



Seasons greetings (St Mary's 2021 Christmas card by Asha Pitman (Form II) )

## FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

The uncertainty of the future is balanced by the certainty of the rhythm dictated by the school calendar and the seasons. The end of this school year has arrived with the successful completion of examinations, the sounds of the children preparing for carol services and the planning of final events for the year. We have endured a difficult year and the St Mary's community has been acutely aware of the challenges of educational and health inequality in South Africa, social justice and psychological well-being. There is, however, a sense of gratitude in our community for our school environment and the education that our children receive.

The environment has a significant role to play in education and its influence is one of the pillars of the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy. For many years we have wanted to enhance the Pitt Block and upgrade what the building offers to learning and teaching at St Mary's. Finally, these ideas and the project has found traction with the appointment of architects. I am pleased to announce that, after a lengthy and detailed process, the school has appointed Rebel Base Collective to design a new learning space for St Mary's that will connect the Junior and Senior Schools physically and offer flexible learning spaces.

Financial planning to support this project has been ongoing for several years. I am grateful for the prudent way the Board, and specifically fincom and Maryanne Lansdown have managed the finances of the school. The Board bid farewell to Alan Pullinger this month as he stepped away from fincom and the St Mary's Board after seven years of service to our school. Alan's decision was made in the light of governance awareness given that FirstRand executives are well represented on our Board. We are grateful to Alan for sharing his time and expertise so generously to ensure that St Mary's is in a sound financial position for the future.

Lovelyn Nwadeyi of L&N Advisors has completed her diversity learning programme for management, teachers and pupils at St Mary's. Workshops and sessions have run throughout the year, including parent webinars. The L&N Advisors programme was step three in the process that began in 2020 with the Orleyn investigation and report, followed by the Mandate Molefi survey on transformation and diversity. I am expecting a report from L&N Advisors which will be shared with our community.

The school year will end with our first quad travelling to Port Alfred to participate in the annual South African Schools' Boat Race. I wish them well as they tackle the challenge of the Kowie River against other competitive teams.

As we close for the festive season holiday, I wish all our families a blessed Christmas and treasured time with family and friends.

DEANNE KING  
HEAD OF SCHOOL

## FROM THE CHAPLAIN

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem. (Matthew 2:1)*

In the story of Christmas, it is the story of the visit of the Magi that often draws my attention. The story of the Magi is our story. The mention of the visit of the Magi was no accident. It is an invitation to see ourselves in the story.

The Magi were from the east. The mention of where the Magi were from locates them geographically, yet it distances them from Bethlehem. Does it matter that the angel appeared to the Magi from the east or to us in South Africa? We would do what the Magi did after the announcement. We would plan to go and see for ourselves.

*15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."*

*16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. (Luke 2:15-18)*

What do you give someone who has everything? I always imagine that this is the question the Magi asked themselves after the angels appeared to them announcing the birth of Jesus. They knew they had to go bearing gifts. The question is, what do they give someone who has everything? The answer to this question is beautifully expressed in the last verse of the Christmas carol: *In the bleak midwinter* by Christina Rossetti.

*What can I give Him,  
Poor as I am? –  
If I were a Shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a Wise Man  
I would do my part, –  
Yet what I can I give Him, –  
Give my heart.*

This is the spirit of Christmas: to do our part and to give what we can.

As we celebrate this festive season, we remember those in our community who are mourning, especially the Moremi and Sigamoney families.

To all, I wish you a blessed time of rest and joy.

REVD RAKGADI KHOBO  
CHAPLAIN





## MUSIC

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music performance examinations have continued over the past term and we are proud of all the girls who have achieved their goals of submitting videos of their four performance pieces in various instruments. Their results are all astounding, considering the adverse effects that a pandemic has imposed on learning an instrument on a remote platform over a considerable amount of time this year:



Giana Govender grade 6 flute and piano



Anna Shaw grade 4 piano



Lai Yi Pinkney grade 4 piano



Mira Kathararoo grade 8 piano



Kganya Kodisang grade 4 violin



Lana Fuzile grade 2 violin



Annika Gertenbach grade 7 piano



Tshegofatso Modise grade 2 violin



Emily Alston grade 4 piano

DUDLEY TROLLOPE  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

## ED-TECH



Congratulations to Bemnet Worku (Form I) whose project entitled *Vocabulous* placed first in the Grade 8-9 Curriculum Challenge at the Excellence in Education Awards.

LERATO SHUPING  
EDTECH LEADER

## ED-ADMIN

St Mary's uses a school management information system called Ed-Admin to distribute termly school reports and to provide parents with an opportunity to inspect and amend personal information recorded in our database.

Below, please find details as to how to access the Ed-Admin St Mary's portal:

- You will require a Parent ID whenever signing into the parent portal. If you are unsure of your Parent ID, please email [portal@stmary.co.za](mailto:portal@stmary.co.za) with both your and your daughter's names and surnames for assistance.

- To access the St Mary's portal, please click on the link below or visit the school website on [www.stmaryschool.co.za](http://www.stmaryschool.co.za) and click on the portal login on the top right of the page.

<https://stmarysw.ed-space.net/pparentportal.cfm>

- Enter in your Parent ID and choose 'forgot password'. Please ensure that you enter the email address that St Mary's has on record and enter in the CAPTCHA code.

- You will then receive an email. Once received, click on the link in order to set up your password. Choose a secure password. You will then receive another email to confirm your password has been changed. You can now proceed to log into the portal.

If you experience problems logging into the secure portal, please contact [portal@stmary.co.za](mailto:portal@stmary.co.za).

## FOUNDATION



We would like to appeal to our community to support the St Mary's Foundation and at the same time stand a chance to win a two night stay for two people at Thornybush, valued at R18000!

To enter this lucky draw competition to win this fabulous prize, [please click here](#). Tickets cost R100 each and all proceeds will go to the St Mary's Saturday school programme, Ikusasa Lethu (Our Future).