



Made by St Mary's Junior School and Janet Wells (Junior School IT teacher) to remember the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic of 2020

FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

"It is resilience which has empowered the best of our responses to the pandemic. Resilience enables us to respond to those challenging moments in life that can be ripe for change, innovation and transformational creativeness"¹

I pondered over these words from our Archbishop during the holiday, without realising that we would have to draw on our resilience once again as our plans to start the new academic year were dashed. I think that we have all, teachers, pupils and parents, felt disappointment at not being able to begin the school year and enjoy the promise that it always holds. But true to the character of our school, and as Sarah Warner noted in a letter to parents, we were “disappointed but undeterred”.

The health and well-being of your daughters require that the school balances any decision that we take. At present we await the legislated regulations that will be published in the government gazette and which may provide some leeway to independent schools. I ask that our parents understand the flexibility required in our planning, and the complexity in managing spectrum of opinion in our community. I thank parents for entrusting us with your daughters on Monday and Tuesday as we arranged the academic details and distributed resources to begin the remote learning programme. The girls arrived on campus full of mirth -

their confidence and enthusiasm were contagious. Together with their teachers, they embraced the project of three weeks of remote learning.

I have confidence that the academic programme will progress well. The lessons learnt last year will inform a sound approach by teachers in these next weeks. Thereafter, learning and teaching at St Mary's will be enhanced by getting back into the classroom to enjoy the undeniable value of personal interaction and collaboration. However, what we will have missed are the events and ceremonies that mark the beginning of the school year. These will be a priority for when we return to campus. The St Mary's management and staff will plan creatively to host these special events on our calendar, which usually mark the transitions to senior school, for the girls' enjoyment and memory making.

The Covid-19 pandemic requires a national commitment to control the devastating effects experienced across our country. St Mary's is committed to playing our part and I urge all our families to respect this time of social distancing and encourage your children in responsible community behaviour. Our girls, through their response this week, clearly understand the ties that bind and what makes us human. This experience is a part of their education.

Welcome to the girls and families new to St Mary's School. It is my hope that you will find an educational community at St Mary's where your daughters will flourish in the values of love, community and integrity.

We also welcome the following teachers to St Mary's School: Olebogeng Boinamo joins the technical team in The Edge; Michelle Musnitzky joins the Senior Primary; Klaus Jansen van Vuuren is the new head of dramatic arts; Danielle Mowatt is the new head of visual arts and James Beall joins the English department .

1. Archbishop Thabo Makgoba at a Christmas Eve Mass with Lessons and Carols at the Cathedral Church of St George the Martyr in Cape Town.

DEANNE KING
HEAD OF SCHOOL

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

*Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.
Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
The LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.*

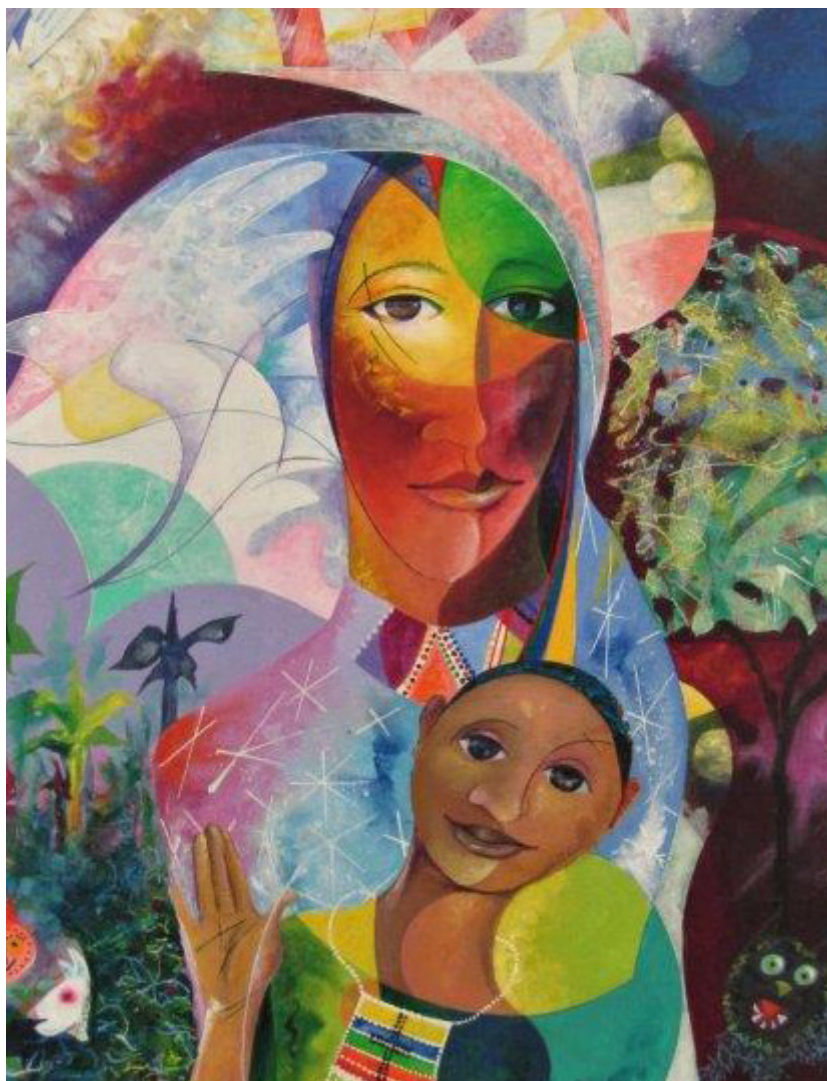
- Psalm 85:7-13 (NRSV)

A wise priest once said that, in relation to God, a word in our current usage that is closer to the intention of the word "fear" in its original language, is "awe" – to be in awe of God.

At this, the outset of the 2021 school year, let us look to God's Word for guidance for this year. The phrases that stand out for me, are "let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace", and "the Lord will give what is good". Whilst the year does not begin according to our plans, and Covid-19 is very much still a defining part of our reality, these words speak to me of trusting in God that within our present reality, there is and will be peace, and good, that is of the Lord. It is for us to live this year with the single-minded intention of hearing when the Lord speaks peace and gives good – albeit they are not to be found in the absence of Covid-19 and its impact on society. Some of that seeking must mean being the vessels through which God speaks peace, and gives what is good.

May 2021 be a blessed one for you and your families,
and for our community as St Mary's School

REVD CLAUDIA COUSTAS
CHAPLAIN



Madonna and child by Joseph Capelle