



St Mary's School
Waverley
Founded 1888



Sunset beyond the jacarandas (photo: Quix)

FROM THE JUNIOR SCHOOL HEAD'S DESK

We could call this week momentous, depending on our definition of the word. Our matrics finished writing their examinations on Wednesday – the same day the Grade 7s attended their Valedictory service and day-long picnic – and Mandate Molefi concluded the focus groups they have run in our community with the Old Girls, pupils, teachers and parents. That these events are important seems to me beyond question. That they will have significant bearing on the future is, mostly, cause for celebration.

The urge to look ahead into the new year and leave the travails of 2020 far behind us is great, but it is what we choose to take forward, and how, that will determine the quality of our experiences and encounters, as well as the choices we make in 2021. We have spoken at length about the losses endured this year, especially by the girls, and the temptation to dwell on the list of cancelled events and curtailed activities persists. In this version, an undeniably compelling one, the past months constitute a time of deprivation and enforced gratitude borne out of painful recognition of what we once had, and what we have lost.

In another version of the story, one that I hope will gain momentum as we learn to cast a more critical eye on what has been, the year has presented us with an incredible – in the sense of “not to be believed” – opportunity to liberate ourselves from hidebound habits and ways of thinking. This is not an original view; it has been peddled by self-help

gurus and influencers all over the world. The careful application of the idea in schools, in our school particularly, is what could yield remarkable results. One small, relatively uncontentious example from this week presents itself for discussion: the Grade 7 Valedictory celebrations. This year, owing to our sensible and successful compliance with Covid-19 protocols and precautions, the Junior School could not host the usual Valedictory dinner on campus. Over the years, the event has grown from an outing to the theatre with the girls and their teachers, to a dinner hosted on campus for the girls, their parents, and the teachers, to a carefully curated experience designed to meet the ever-evolving expectations of our community.

I loved the dinner last year, especially as it was hosted in the Junior School, and because we took the decision to allow the girls to dress in civvies. I loved it, and I shall continue to look back on it fondly, but what I saw on Wednesday when almost all of our girls came to school in shorts and t-shirts, participated respectfully in their chapel service, and then spent a day playing – yes, playing – and picnicking on the campus, startled me into thinking that maybe we have been getting the celebration wrong. And that impulse – to pause and observe with newly peeled eyes – is what we need to honour, as teachers and parents who have watched our children make something of this year, which we could never have imagined, even in our wildest grown-up dreams.

SARAH WARNER
JUNIOR SCHOOL HEADMISTRESS

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

I have been reading *Liturgies from below: Praying with people at the ends of the world* (2020), by Claudio Carvalhaes. The excerpt below is taken from the preface to this book, written by Sudipta Singh who is mission secretary, research and capacity development to the Council of World Mission (CWM). Given the challenges we face as a school, as a country and as a world, I find these words apt:

“Prayer, according to Jewish theologian and rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, “is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehoods.” To put it differently, worship is a subversive activity that contests and overthrows the prevailing sinful order of injustice and inequality. For Moses, the burning bush experience at Mount Horeb was not only an alternative experience of theophany; it was also a tutorial for an alternative understanding of worship. The alternative experience of theophany enabled Moses to reimagine God as the vulnerable One, deeply affected by the scars of slavery. In the vision of the burning bush, Moses encountered God as a co-sufferer who was embodied in the life stories of pain and struggles for freedom and dignity of the enslaved communities. The sacramental and liturgical symbol of fire in the burning bush provided Moses with an alternative understanding of worship. Worship should [instill] in the enslaved community the audacity to believe that the blazing fire of the Empire¹ cannot destroy the beauty of life. The green leaves in the liturgy of the burning bush empowered Moses to believe in the possibility of a beyond of Egypt. Worship is therefore a life-changing experience where we are invited to

[realise] and denounce our power and privileges in order to become credible and authentic comrades of the communities at the margins who are engaged in the salvific mission of turning the world upside down.”

— <https://a.co/dvc5vfH>

In line with President Cyril Ramaphosa’s declaration of a five-day mourning period from 25 to 29 November in order to remember both those who have died as a result of Covid-19 and also victims of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), our South African flag has been lowered to half-mast. As a community, we continue to hold those who grieve the loss of a loved one, and all those affected by GBV, in our prayers.

The Collect set for the Feast of Christ the King, which we celebrated on Sunday 22 November:

*Most High God, majestic and mighty,
our beginning and our end:
rule in our hearts and guide us to be faithful,
worshipping the One
who comes as Saviour and Sovereign;
and who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.*

¹In 2010, the CWM identified Empire “as the context in which we are called to be partners with God in God’s mission to transform the face of the earth” (p.18).

REVD CLAUDIA COUSTAS
CHAPLAIN

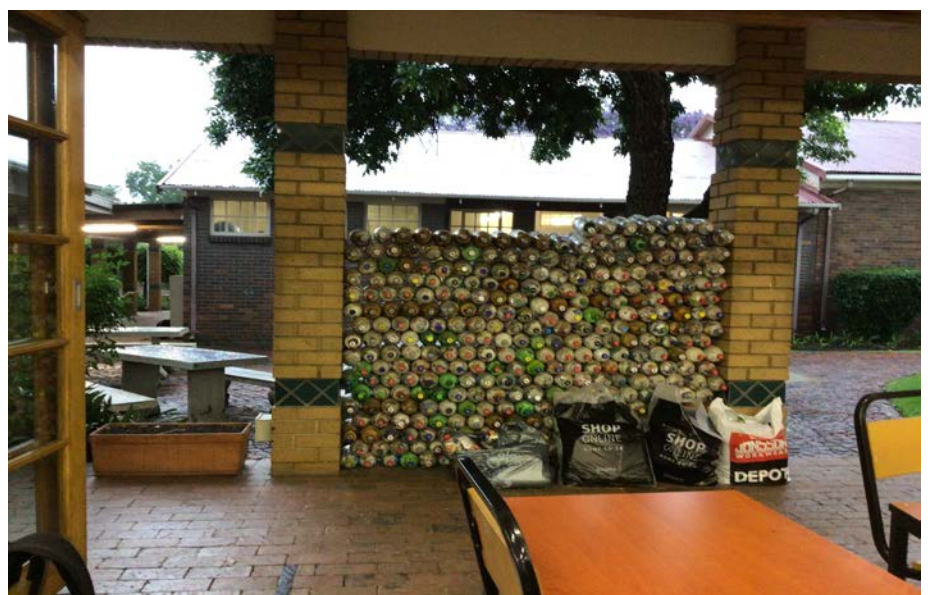
ECO-BRICKS

Junior School girls and their families have been making and collecting these eco-bricks throughout year. They are going to the Khuthaza Foundation where they will be used as bricks.

ROBYN RICHMOND
SENIOR PRIMARY TEACHER



Eco-bricks ready to be delivered to the Khuthaza Foundation



Eco-brick wall

Following amphibians, the Grade 4 girls skipped a few vertebrate groups to focus on mammals.

Our investigation began with a look at the characteristics specific to mammals and culminated in poster presentations of species found in the Savanna biome.

Such value was added by the various specimens brought in by many girls but, particularly, Isabella Landman. Thank you to her father for sharing his collection with us.

ANGIE JENNETT
SENIOR PRIMARY TEACHER



GRADE 5

The Grade 5 girls designed and painted their papier mâché cats as part of their Design and Technology programme.

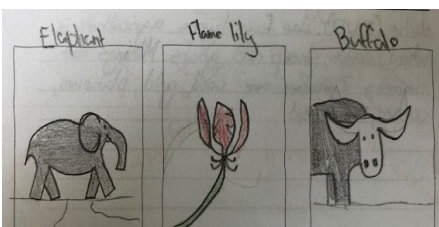
TEENA LOWNDES
SENIOR PRIMARY TEACHER



GRADE 6

For Information Studies, the Grade 6 girls researched Zimbabwe and created a booklet. These are some of the covers and pictures from their booklets.

ROBYN RICHMOND
SENIOR PRIMARY TEACHER



LITTLE SAINTS

This week, Little Saints exploded with colour and fun! Tuesday morning saw the arrival of crazy, colourful hairdos and hats in celebration of our funky hair day. On Thursday, the Little Saints staff spread a little hope during this time of uncertainty and social distancing. Children and parents were welcomed at the Little Saints drive thru by staff in fancy dress who handed out biscuits with a message of hope and thanks. It was a dress up day with all the children arriving in their chosen fancy dress costumes. Yesterday was pyjama day where the children enjoyed eating popcorn while listening to stories. This helped to make up for the storytelling evening that the children missed during lockdown.

CELIA DIANA AND ANGELA MORTIMER
HOD: LITTLE SAINTS AND GRADE 00 TEACHER



WE'RE GOING ON A LION HUNT

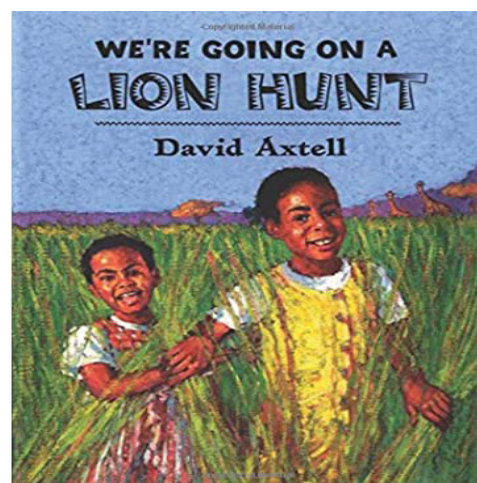
The Little Saints children have studied a well-known children's story called *We're going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen with illustrations by Helen Oxenbury. We have extended this to study an African adaptation of the story entitled *We're going on a Lion Hunt* by David Axtell.

The children have worked on a collaborative project to make their own artwork to illustrate *We're going on a Lion Hunt*.

Please click on the link below to view the story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhTevlOvwKA&feature=youtu.be>

CELIA DIANA
HOD: LITTLE SAINTS



THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Our congratulations are extended to the following girls who completed their President's Awards during this turbulent lockdown year.

Bronze Award:

Christianna Balambanos
Caroline Maskell
Sally Mohlakola
Scarlett Moore
Kate Pournara
Jacqueline Trickett
Mia van Heerden



Proud to be



Silver Award:

Aleksévi Charalambous
Jordan Dart
Sarah Millard
Rebecca Sinner

Gold Award:

Niamh Craker
Nivia Shannin Govender (matriculated in 2019)
Rebecca Lee

In addition Mia Boscia, Jessica Lansdown and Xenia Theorides have recently submitted their bronze awards and are waiting for their approval.

MELANIE BLAIR
PRESIDENT'S AWARD CO-ORDINATOR

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS



During lockdown, Zoom training was offered for Grade 2 to senior girls. Grade 1 girls were invited to join Zoom classes in the third term.

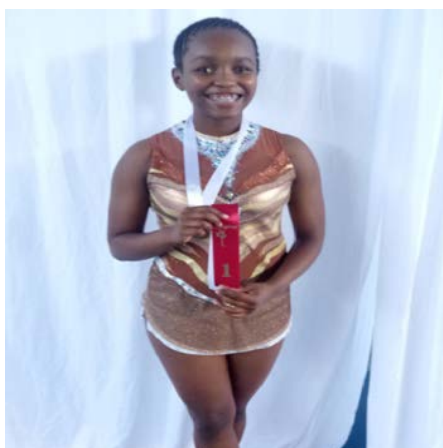
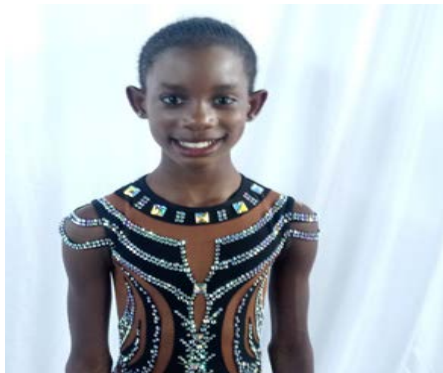
In Term II, many Level 1-7 gymnasts participated in online competitions. Thanks are extended to all the parents who sent in videos of the routines for the competition.

Our gymnastics coach, Natallia Paizakis emigrated to Belarus during lockdown and has decided not to return to South Africa in 2021. Two new coaches have been appointed to coach in 2021.

Earlier this month, 12 girls participated in the Empress competition in Johannesburg, winning many place ribbons and medals. Congratulations to Riley Vance who placed first in Level 3 U9.

Zeinab Kone entered the International Online Rhythmic Gymnastics Tournament "Regina" from 20 to 22 November, in the Junior Olympic 2007 B category. The competition offered rankings for both Africa and the world, and was moderated by Brevet 2 Canadian head judge, Svetlana Joukova. Zeinab won a gold medal in clubs and a silver medal in ball, ranking first as the gold medalist overall for her age group. She placed ahead of gymnasts from Sweden, Turkey, Australia, Egypt and the Philippines. Well done, Zeinab!

LINDA GIURICICH
HEAD OF RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS



BASKETBALL

The Covid-19 pandemic played havoc with all co-curricular activities this year and team basketball was no exception.

However, once training sessions were allowed again, these were embraced by committed and enthusiastic girls who made the most of the time allocated to them. The focus was primarily on strength, conditioning and basic skills and, although the girls missed the competition of their usual matches, they certainly benefited from the time on the courts.

Head basketball coach, Emma Ledwaba, supports a charity called UITKOMS - Home for Girls. The basketball girls and staff decided to collect food to donate to the charity and their generosity in supporting UITKOMS was much appreciated.

TARYN DE WINNAAR
HEAD OF BASKETBALL



Basketball coaches and girls with the food they collected

TENNIS

Tamsin Hart, a past St Mary's pupil who left in Form IV to train full time at a tennis academy in Barcelona, came back to her old school and joined in on a practice session with two of our top players: Lilitha Ndungane (Form II) and Amukelani Mokone (Form IV).

Tamsin shared some of her experiences over the past 18 months with Lilitha and Amukelani. Tamsin has been offered a full scholarship based on her tennis prowess at Campbell University, North Carolina, and she will be starting in January 2021. We wish Tamsin everything of the best and hope to see her on the WTA tour soon. Tamsin is now the fifth tennis player from St Mary's to study at a college in America. She follows in the footsteps of Imaan Hassim, Maja Gledic, Alexis Tensfeldt and Nina Patience.

RENÉ PLANT
HEAD OF TENNIS



Lilitha Ndungane, Tamsin Hart, Amukelani Mokone

WATER POLO

The following girls will be participating in the 2020 Gauteng Water Polo Regional Water Polo Festival in Johannesburg from 4 to 7 December. Many water polo players maintained training during this year in their respective age-group Gauteng squads. This festival replaces the annual inter-provincial tournament that sadly had to be cancelled.

Below are the players who are available to play in the festival. Unfortunately, not all squad members are available to play:

U16 and U19 age-group section:

Samantha Faber
Nyakallo Kodisang
Paige Bonatz
Abigail Milella

U15 age-group section:

Lorin Kozinsky
Aimee-Rose Houlston
Emma Morley
Luca Botes

U14 age-group section:

Amy Smith
Chloé Theorides
Ciara Lynch
Mikayla de Bruin
Rachael Mang'ana
Grace Faber
Francesca Genovese
Jessica Black
Analia Ntombela

KELSEY THOMSON
HEAD OF WATER POLO

FROM THE FOUNDATION

The Grade 7 girls of 2020 unveiled their plaque to commemorate both their time in the Junior School and the fundraising efforts for the *From One Girl to Another* campaign. All funds raised go to the St Mary's Foundation for scholarships for girls in need, our Saturday school Ikusasa Lethu, our teacher development programme, the community assistance fund helping current St Mary's families experiencing financial hardship, as well as the endowment for the sustainability of St Mary's for years to come.



The Grade 7 girls handed over their beautifully crafted hearts to the Grade 6s for them to begin their campaign for 2021.

LISA GROBBELAAR
HEAD OF THE FOUNDATION



THE SIZANANI MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

The Sizanani Mentorship Programme (sizanani.org.za), founded in 2007, provides mentorship, skills training and career guidance to high school learners from Alexandra township, who attend Saturday classes at St Mary's Ikusasa Lethu Programme. Our group of mentors – about 80 to 100 professionals from South Africa, France and other countries - organise outings with their mentees (114 this year). They help them to achieve their goals, without any financial assistance. Sizanani also offers R500 000 funding to university students, who have attended Ikusasa Lethu, and help them to find work opportunities.

Owing to the challenges faced by many families in Alexandra this year, Sizanani also organised cash, food, clothes and sanitary product donations for an amount of about R350 000. During lockdown, online support was provided to the learners, including tutoring, with the help of about 40 students. They expressed themselves in a "Covid diary" (<https://www.sizanani.org.za/blog>).

We should be grateful to welcome some St Mary's families, teachers and alumni as mentors. From February 2021, you can be part of Sizanani as mentors or speakers (during our Life Orientation talks or at our career fair). We are also looking for companies which can welcome our Grade 11 or 12 learners for a half-or full day visits during public school holidays or which would be willing to fund our students or sponsor our activities. If you would like to experience Sizanani, you can join about 30 mentors and mentees for a collective outing in Pretoria on 16 December (visit the Javitt art museum and picnic at the residence of the French ambassador).

With your help, we can achieve more and provide support to each learner's needs. To become a force for change, please contact:

Samantha Mutoredzanwa,
Sizanani Programme Manager

Contact Number: 081 319 6532

Email: stmutedzanwa@gmail.com



The Schmidt family and their mentee, Felicia Tshitete

The National Institute of Communicable Diseases sent out an alert about three confirmed cases of measles between 30 October and 5 November in two provinces, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

These cases do not yet comprise a cluster or outbreak, defined as three cases within one health district within one month, but they do warrant heightened attention.

Owing to complications and mortality associated with measles, I feel that it is important for families to be aware, seek help early and have a blood test especially if measles-type symptoms are present (conjunctivitis, a cough, runny nose, fever and a rash).

Also please ensure your children are up to date with their MMR/measles vaccines. Vaccination is the most important way of preventing measles.

SISTER LEIGH SULLIVAN
SCHOOL NURSE

FROM THE PTA

The year 2020 was not the year any of us imagined when we began the new school year. When lockdown was imposed, everything seemed to screech to a halt. With no opportunity for parents to attend annual school events or have a quick catch-up at the coffee shop, we have felt disconnected from our school community. But what the year has shown us is our ability to pull together and support each other during these challenging times.

Among ourselves, we shared humorous memes, inspirational videos, and spiritual mantras; anything to help us cope during the various levels of lockdown. I extend a big thank you to everyone for playing their part, big or small, during this year and I look forward to building a stronger community in 2021.

So, as we end the school year, whether you are taking this time to explore our beautiful country or stay home to enjoy your space with your family and reflect, we should like to wish you and your loved ones a safe and abundantly blessed holiday season.

Last but not least, we say goodbye to our matriculants, the class of 2020. We can only imagine how this final year of schooling must have been for you, but we believe that the lessons you have learnt in recent years and through the support of your family, have built resilience, strength and determination to endure any obstacles which may lie ahead.



We should like you to remember this as you go out and explore the world and what it offers.

We, as the St Mary's community, wish you and your family all the best and urge you to remember that you always have a home here.

REFILOE HOOHLO-ZEPHYRINE
PTA CHAIRPERSON

IKUSASA LETHU

The main focus of the community partnership programme at St Mary's is our Saturday school, called Ikusasa Lethu (Our Future) which supports academically talented learners from five high schools in Alexandra by providing an extra full day of school for them every week.

In addition to teaching, we do everything we can to support these learners to overcome any barriers to their success. Ikusasa Lethu is funded entirely by external donors, which means that this year has been a tough one. We are appealing for donations of pre-loved items which you may no longer need.

Ikusasa Lethu Bright aims to collect pre-loved and no-longer-needed scientific calculators which are necessary for the learning of each learner on our programme. Only Casio scientific calculators are required.

If you happen to have either a used calculator in good condition or a new one that you would like to donate, please stop by the Community Affairs office on campus or email Robyn Knowles at robyn.knowles@stmary.co.za. Alternatively, please place the calculator in the Ikusasa Lethu box in the Junior or Senior School reception areas.

ROBYN KNOWLES
IKUSASA LETHU PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

ST THERESA'S CONVENT SCHOOL

Our thanks are extended to all the girls who donated their pre-loved books to St Theresa's Convent School in Coronationville.

The children are very excited to begin the new year with a library full of books.

LINDA MAISHMAN
JUNIOR PRIMARY TEACHER



FROM THE FOUNDATION

St Mary's  Foundation




The St Mary's Foundation would like to thank all our funders who have continued to support us during this unprecedented time. The year 2020 has proven to be a very challenging year for us all.

Should you be in a position to assist the Foundation with an end of year donation towards our programmes, it would be greatly appreciated.

We wish our St Mary's community a restful break with loved ones and we pray the new year brings hope and happiness.

Make a difference



DONATE



Community fund for St Mary's families in financial distress

A number of current St Mary's families are experiencing financial hardship. We have set up a community based fund for these families.



Bursary programme helps develop future women leaders

The bursary programme supports 30 pupils through their senior school at St Mary's.



Saturday school, Ikusasa Lethu (Our future) programme

Two-hundred and fifty (250) learners from the five high schools in Alexandra, Grade 9 to matric, attend the Saturday school.



Endowment fund

For the sustainability of St Mary's for generations to come.

<https://www.stmaryschool.co.za/foundation/donate-now>

LOVE, COMMUNITY, INTEGRITY

A celebration of carols and florals!

Place: The chapel at St Mary's School, Waverley
Date: Sunday 29 November
Time: 17h00

Tickets can be booked via Quicket and cost R100 each.
All proceeds will be donated to the *Ikusasa Lethu Programme*.

Only 100 tickets may be sold,
owing to COVID-19 health and
safety regulations.



Tickets for Carols and Florals can be purchased by clicking on this link: <https://www.quicket.co.za/events/123330-a-celebration-of-carols-and-florals/?preview=t#/>