



St Mary's School
Waverley
Founded 1888

ST MARY'S NEWS



Tel: 011 531 1800 | smsenior@stmary.co.za | www.stmaryschool.co.za

22 May 2020



From Monday 18 to Wednesday 20 May, the St Mary's support and estate staff practised social distancing while attending Covid-19 procedural training

FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

Our school campus is deserted and quiet; it shows signs of nature inching forward in our absence. This is not the natural state of our campus. Usually, it inspires a sense of possibility, which is almost tangible in the classrooms, corridors and playgrounds.

Some of my special moments in a day are watching a crocodile of Little Saints boys and girls as it makes its way through the school exploring aspects of our campus; the Junior School girls who walk down the Queen's Path on their way to The Edge, filled with exuberance, joy and mischief, calling out, "hello, MsssKing!"; the entertaining conversations on the corridor of the senior girls which filter into my office.

Few things depict this time of crisis and strife more than a deserted school. It brings to mind James Baldwin's phrase, "trouble stretched above us, longer than the sky".

The return to our campus will be slow and measured as we exercise patience and wisdom. The health and wellbeing of our pupils and our staff will take priority.

St Mary's will have a dual responsibility in the coming months: to maintain a balance between the phased return to campus and the

stringent health and safety procedures.

The academic year at St Mary's has not been lost. It has required all of us to teach and learn in new and challenging ways, but our girls have certainly "claimed" their education, as Adrienne Rich would say. With a physical return to school, the teachers will focus on the assessment of each individual to inform and guide remediation and the syllabus for the rest of the year. St Mary's commitment to educational excellence and opportunity is unwavering.

In the coming weeks and months we, teachers and parents, will prepare our children to return to the playground, the classroom, the stage and the sports fields where they will once again share with friends the pleasure and the joy of exploring, learning and growing into their future best selves.

DEANNE KING
HEAD OF SCHOOL

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

Thursday 21 May marked the Feast of the Ascension – the day upon which we remembered that Christ, having appeared to his apostles on several occasions following his resurrection, ascended into heaven, instructing his apostles to stay in Jerusalem to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:44-53).

The opening line of Christina Rossetti's poem, Ascension Day, is captured in quotation marks:

"When Christ went up to Heaven the Apostles stayed"

The quotation recalls a line from Scripture that resonated with the poet, and marks the theme of the poem: the apostles' deep yearning to go with Christ, as they had done each day of his active ministry, and yet their obedience and contentment in waiting in Jerusalem and in doing the will of God.

Rossetti's closing two stanzas stay with me, particularly her *crescendo* in the first line of the last stanza which leads into the main task of the disciples - to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47):

*For as a cloud received Him from their sight,
So with a cloud will He return ere long:*

*Therefore they stand on guard by day, by night,
Strenuous and strong.*

*They do, they dare, they beyond seven times seven
Forgive, they cry God's mighty word aloud:
Yet sometimes haply lift tired eyes to Heaven—
"Is that His cloud?"*

It was the apostles who stayed, as it is we who are here today, to be Christ's body here on earth, empowered by the Holy Spirit. We, too, are called to do, to dare, and seven times seven to forgive and to declare God's Word. For us, too, there will be times when we feel tired and gaze to where we know the apostles saw Christ last rise. It is from these times of gazing that we are fed and renewed again by Christ in whose gaze we sit.

REVD CLAUDIA COUSTAS
CHAPLAIN

BLAZER AWARDS

The following girls were awarded Service Honours Blazers in the awards assembly this morning:



Itumeleng Mosiah



Shivani Dharmalingam



Emma Craig

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The St Mary's health and safety task team has been working around the clock to get our campus ready for the return of our girls and Little Saints boys. Ros Howell's team has devised a working plan, which forms part of a comprehensive document outlining the five main areas of compliance implemented by the school:

1. Screening of staff and pupils at designated areas once they arrive on campus, comprising temperature checks and the completion of a questionnaire. Parents will have access to the car park but must remain in their vehicles at all times. Girls are asked to stay at home if they are not feeling well.
2. Physical distancing of 1.5 metres must be adhered to.
3. The wearing of masks is mandatory. Parents are responsible for the purchasing of these masks and need to ensure that their children have two masks when entering the campus: they should wear one and keep the other in their bag.
4. Regular cleaning and sanitizing of the school campus.
5. The maintenance of personal hygiene by everyone on campus through regular hand-washing and the provision of hand sanitizers throughout the school.

The support and estate staff have been preparing the campus for the return of pupils. They have received training in the five main areas of compliance, and the campus has undergone a deep clean.



Ms Quix wearing a visor as she screens staff for entry onto the campus

NATURE ON CAMPUS



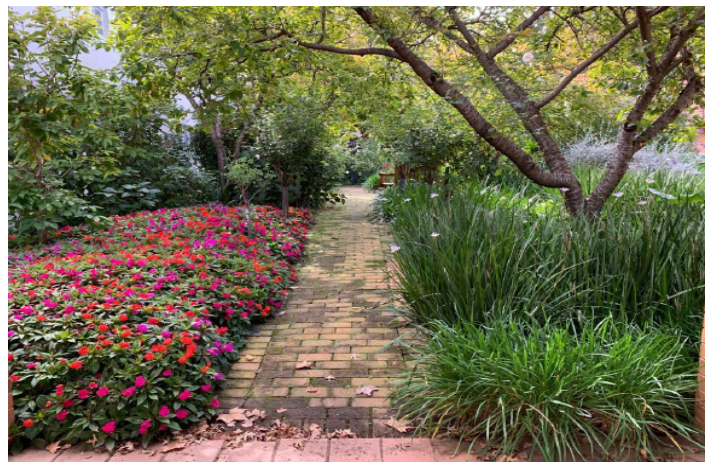
Ducklings have taken up residence in the swimming pool



A pair of baby spotted thick-knees was born this week



Striking red hot poker plants (Kniphofia uvaria) around the Howell Hub

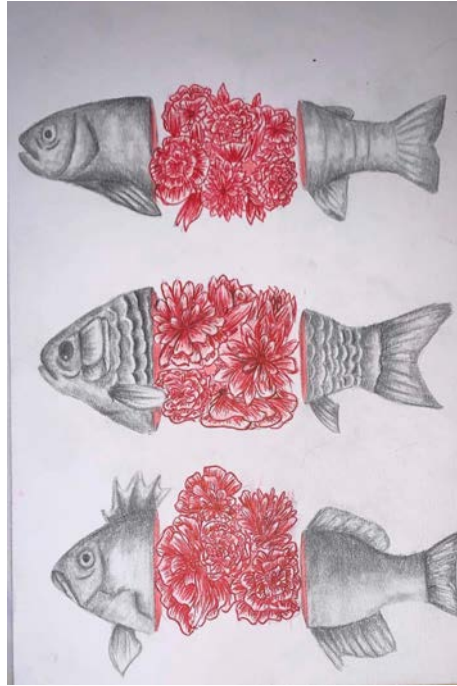


The beautiful chapel gardens just before Easter

FORM IV VISUAL ART



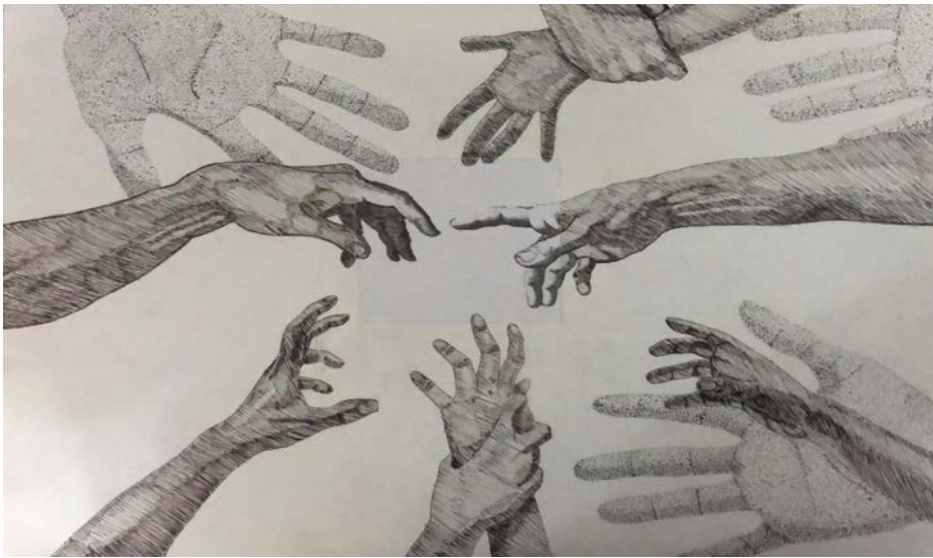
Robyn Gush



Ande Dhlomo



Mieke Smit



Kerry-Leigh Morrison



Tokelo Monnagotla



Ghita Economakis



Nandi Msimanga (digital art)

JUNIOR SCHOOL



Personification and Covid-19

The Grade 6 girls have been exploring the use of personification in poetry in their remote English lessons. Many of their poems expressed a sadness and profound sense of loss for what, as Phathu Marenda reminded me in our lesson “we took so readily for granted”.

However, despite our grieving for normalcy, the girls have not lost their characteristic sense of humour as Amy Saunders wrote: My iPad nags me to “go to school!” Where my “classrooms” are waiting (With all their rules!) Impatiently telling me what to do!

Indeed, they have also not lost their optimistic outlook and hope, as Emma Godfrey wrote in her poem *The Lonely Playground’s Lament* that one day the playground will hear the joyful sound of the girls’ singing and fragments of lunchtime conversation again.

When we do return to school, in whatever form that takes, I have faith in the indomitable spirit of our St Mary’s girls and their appreciation of the community to which they belong.

Lauren Howden Cross
English teacher



Katherine Davidson (pictured above) in Grade 6, works remotely on her English assignments. Emma Davidson, her mother, has been supporting the Senior Primary mentors in developing resources and remote workshops to support the girls in managing any anxiety and stress they might have experienced during lockdown. In addition, she has developed simple, effective exercises to help the girls express their feelings about the possible return to school.



The lonely school

*In the early morning of another day
The school parking lot is quiet
And mourns the cheerful greetings of
“Hello” and “Morning”
Uttered to the guards.
Missing is the girls’ chatter –
Even the rumbling of tyres.*

*The classes are empty.
The desks and chairs are bare,
Longing for the scratching of pens –
Even the erasing of countless pencil lines,
Anything.*

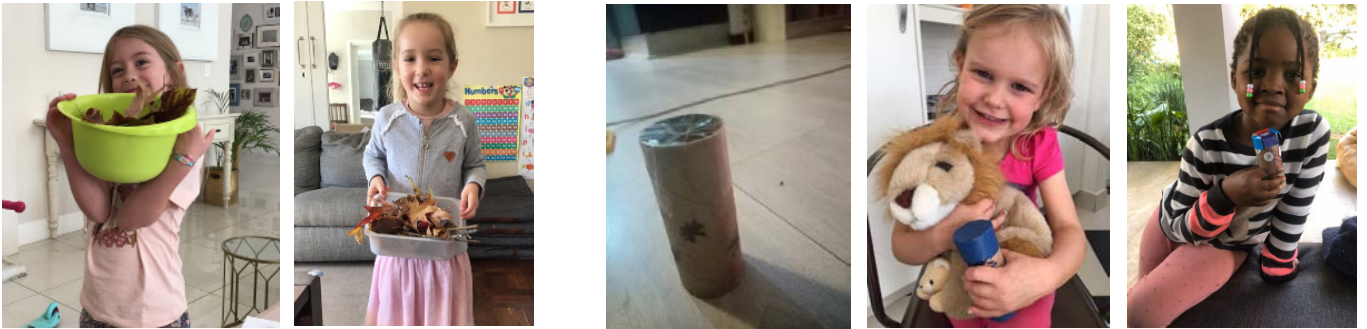
*No one to hear the bell singing:
“It’s time for break!”
No frantic scabbling of girls
And shouts of glee.
No one is there.*

Excerpt from a poem on personification by
Hayley Wise
Grade 6



LITTLE SAINTS

What kind of autumn treasures can you find?



Music shakers, made from items found around the house

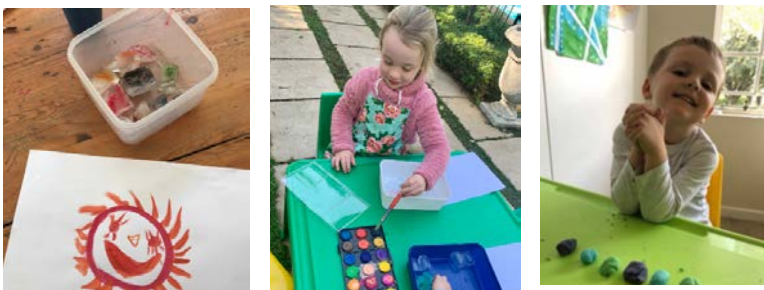
Let us use our imagination and transform our autumn treasures into something else!



Circles, circles everywhere!
Let us find circles around the house; are some hiding in unexpected places?



Cloud dough, painting with ice, play dough and experimenting with bicarb and vinegar!



Physical activities to help keep our minds and bodies strong!