



1863

ST ANDREW'S SCHOOL
BLOEMFONTEIN

Mr Roland Rudd
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Issue 59

17 January

My family and I had the opportunity to spend the holidays with my parents in Still Bay. At the end of the year, I loaded the hounds, the baggage and the family into the car and hit the road. Daniel and I spent every day at the harbour. It was a great opportunity to spend time together and just 'gesels'. I fondly recalled my younger days on the harbour. Times were different then, and my brother and I (at our request) were dropped early morning and collected late afternoon. We fished when the tide was high off the wall and explored the various rock pools when the tide was low. Low tide also presented the opportunity for a quick swim and lunch (slap chips covered in salt and vinegar) from the local vendor.

Many lessons were learnt on the harbour. Apart from the opportunity to refine our fishing skills and improve our knowledge on the local fish species and regulations, many more life lessons were learnt. Respecting others and the area they occupy, was one of those critical life lessons. Failure to do so would result in tangled lines and frustration at best, or serious altercations at worst. The need to use sun block to look after oneself proved an invaluable lesson, when you returned home in the evening red as a crayfish and glowing like a halogen bulb with heat. Other lessons included using a knife safely after learning the hard way with a gash or two. Learning to tie a knot properly became a priority only after losing a big catch etc. All of these lessons were learnt in the relative safety of the harbour. Of course, there were some surprises like a 'skelm breaker' (big and unexpected wave) breaking over the harbour wall and threatening to knock you off, but you were still fairly "safe", provided you could swim... The safety of the harbour provided us with opportunities to learn and experiment, and prepared us for what was to come... That old adage goes "Time and tide wait for no man". The general rule therefore is that one goes to sea when the weather co-operates.

Over the course of this holiday, we were provided with a small window in terms of available time to head out to sea. Daniel was excited with the opportunity to try and catch his first Bonito (a type of tuna sport fish). Preparations were made the day before, and I watched Daniel meticulously plan for the outing. It was here that he was using all prior knowledge and experience in his preparations. I am sure that he went to sleep confident at night that he had done what he could in terms of making sure he was ready. Early the next morning we took to the sea. Daniel was firstly met with a boat rod of substantial size that far outweighed his harbour fishing "toothpick" in comparison, a new reel of different design, and a substantial drag in the water of the lure. The sudden pressure of having a Bonito strike his lure, sent the young man lurching forward against the side of boat, with him hanging on with all he was worth. After some composing on his part, the battle to reel the sport fish in started. The young man was huffing and puffing with every turn of the reel. After finally landing the Bonito, he successfully managed another four, now better prepared than before.

Supremely confident, Daniel now looked to the reef fishing that was to take place. It was not long before the young man retired to heaving the remnants of his supper over the side and finally retiring to a foetal position on an old sack at the bottom of the boat. The weather finally turned, and the wind started gusting prompting the need to return to shore. Now thoroughly green and dehydrated, Daniel was faced with a wet and rough trip home. When the sea turns ugly, it turns ugly. The young man held on for dear life as the boat made its way over and in many cases through the waves in what can only be described as a scene from Deadliest Catch (Alaskan crab fishing in the Bering Sea). Daniel fondly remembers the trip because he landed his first sport fish, managed some reef fishing, and made it back to the shore despite difficult sea conditions. The point is, he was prepared for this task in the proving grounds of the harbour, and despite this had to face formidable challenges unknown to him, in achieving his objective and being rewarded with freshly baked fish and bragging rights.

School is the proving grounds for life. Our boys come to school and operate within the relative safety of the campus. Whilst a safe environment is created, life still happens. Boys make mistakes, things go wrong, and they don't always work out and times are not always easy. This is ok, in fact it is essential. Our boys will leave the school having learnt how to rise to the occasion. The reward is that our boys will be well prepared for the realities of life after school – they will show tenacity and grit. They will learn to enjoy the good times and work through the tough times. They will learn to understand that hard work leads to great rewards and that the journey is not always seamless. My father loved using this quote from Gary Player whilst coaching his soccer teams, "The more I practice the luckier I get." It was drilled into us as players. Along with that came a serious amount of hard work and disappointments, to eventually winning league titles.

With the new year ahead of us, rejuvenated and reenergised by the December holidays, I would like

to wish each of you a blessed and prosperous year. New members of our school will be finding their feet, as I am sure families alike may be starting new positions in their own fields. The Matrics have their final steppingstone on the road to life after school. The year ahead is filled with possibilities. Whatever opportunities, challenges, or uncertainties you may face, you got this. Walk with God and continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 60

24th January

"I'll be back" is a catchphrase associated with Arnold Schwarzenegger. It was made famous in the 1984 science fiction film *The Terminator*. It was one of my favourite movies back in the day and I have followed *The Terminator* franchise watching all of the movies. In the movies, one often waited to hear what Arnie was going to say next. There was an inevitable build up to a catch phrase with the cameras focusing in, ahead of some epic action scene. This would rock the cinema with excitement.

This scene inevitably played out in everyday life when you looked to use the same vocabulary and accent in various events unfolding in one's personal life - as well as trying to look cool by wearing the dark glasses. I remember trying out one of these phrases at a Grey Ball when approaching one of the Eunice ladies: "Come with me if you want to live"... It did not go well, so in turning around, after facing some serious gunfire (and laughs), I dropped another quote: "Hasta la vista baby" and made my way back to the other side of the hall. I wish my present self could travel back in time to stop myself from that embarrassing situation...

Ms Meyer's office space has become a "safe space" for many boys. The boys pop in for a chat, a hug, or just to sit on her lap before heading off. It is wonderful to watch their interactions, and one gets to know the boys and a little more about what makes them tick. Sitting in my office this week, I experienced one of those *Terminator Déjà vu* moments. The words "I'm Back in town" resonated from the office. Looking up from my desk, there before Ms Meyer stood a young man, who announced his arrival with all the confidence in the world, wearing a wry mischievous smile. I watched what unfolded. I started with the assumption that he was wanting to make himself known to us.

Later I wondered to myself whether he may have been unconsciously warning us of what awaited... Or perhaps he meant it literally because he had just started in Grade 1 and had probably just returned from holiday... I did not ask. However, I came to understand that this young man is a regular to Ms Meyer because he pops in to visit often, has a quick chat on most occasions, and goes about exploring the (entire) office space before heading off to the playground. He also discovered the sweet bottle in my office and has made his appearance at my door on more than one occasion now. I wait in anticipation for this young man to arrive at my door, wondering how next he will announce himself or what the next chat will be about. On exiting my office on Thursday, he stopped in the doorway, turned slightly, looking over his shoulder directly at me. A second or two passed, he smiled and said "I'll be back"... I could not help but laugh and wonder to myself what mission this young man was on his way to.

Having visited the new Grade 1's this week, I have so much more respect for my Grade 1 teachers. I think we forget what it means to have one or two little ones at home. I could swear that some of those Grade 1's is powered by an internal nuclear power cell - just like the *Terminator*. The energy and excitement in the classroom are something to behold and experience. The Grade 1's has also been treated to new classrooms which is different from what they have experienced in the past. Last year we converted an old boiler room and revamped one of our existing Grade 1 classrooms, building in mezzanine levels allowing the boys to explore and climb whilst in class. The hustle and bustle about the school is back. You can feel the energy and excitement around the campus because the boys are back in town and ready for the new year.

Yes, the boys are back in town and if you watched cricket like me in the 90's you will remember the cricket anthem 'The Boys Are Back' signalling the start of exciting local cricket - the tune got everyone humming and singing and excited about the cricket. It has been great to interact with the boys over the course of the week. The start to the term has been jam packed with activities. We have hosted House Braais for the Junior Houses as well as orientation meetings for the respective grades, we have had our Inter House Athletics and Galas, we have had our first blood drive, our grade 8's have been busy with orientation, we have hosted touring teams from St Johns and KES, we launched our new Tutor Group system within the Houses in the senior school and then of course we launched the 160th year celebrations with our Opening Ceremony on Sunday.

At this opening ceremony we recognized those Bloemfontein schools who played a significant role in the history of St Andrew's. We believe it appropriate top it is appropriate to express gratitude to both

St Michael's School and Grey College for their collegiality in hosting and accommodating boys when St Andrew's was without school buildings and teachers – something I did not know. The original school buildings adjacent to the Cathedral were commandeered by the British forces to be used as field hospitals, after Anglo-Boer War broke out on October the 11th, 1899. At the end of the Anglo-Boer War (1902) St Andrew's School was without the leadership of a headmaster or teachers. The former school buildings in the Cathedral grounds were used as a Church Hostel for boarders who attended classes at Grey College while the 'new' buildings became Oranje Meisieskool. The nuns of St Michael's School ran a day school for boys which kept the flame alive of an educational experience associated with the Church. At this opening ceremony we also recognized the "Godfather" of St Andrew's, Mr Colin Hickling. His name is synonymous with the school, and has made an invaluable and indelible impact on the history of the school. Mr Hickling was presented with a portrait drawn by Siyabonga Gaans, the young aspiring artist, who joined St Andrew's this year, after Mr Hickling noted the dream of this young man to attend St Andrew's.

We have so much to be thankful for at St Andrew's. President M.T. Steyn who was amongst the first boys to be enrolled when the school opened on the 16th November 1863, after securing the foundation stone of the new school, said, "here let true faith, and fear of God, and brotherly love ever abide, and let this place be set aside for the nurture of the young in the knowledge and obedience of the Lord." As such the chosen logo for our 160th year celebrations are based on the architecture and design of the heart of the school – our Chapel – and the slogan reads Celebrating 160 Years of Saints Brotherhood. We pay homage and respect to our rich history and celebrate the fact that St Andrew's stands firm as a Christian school and remains a beacon of hope and a source of light, for the Free State and South Africa. Ours is a brotherhood linked by generations over a 160 years. As we move into the future, it is my hope that we will continue to strive to be light bringers, change makers and hope bearers and will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires of us "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 61

31 January

I often think of those teachers and coaches who made a positive impact on my life. Whenever a bunch of mates and I get together we reminisce fondly about the good times and even the bad times with those teachers we loved. Somehow, those we did not enjoy, never come up in any conversations. It is as though they were never part of my schooling journey, and their very existence is locked away deep in my subconscious as "the one's whom shall not be named".

Yearly learners and parents alike, wait in anticipation to hear who their teacher will be. The jubilation and excitement of getting the preferred choice can so easily be juxtaposed against the disappointment of not. I would equate the experience to being similar to South Africa being awarded the soccer World Cup in 2010 vs the disappointment of 2006, when Charles Dempsey of New Zealand abstained from voting for South Africa, and we lost out. Yes, he is one of those "whom shall not be named" in my history. I felt a shiver down my spine just thinking of that Kiwi... Its true though, every year, learners and parents jostle and pull on strings to try and secure the teacher of choice. Whilst the supposition is that the teacher of choice, results in automatic success, this is not true. Success boils down to commitment, attitude, effort, and co-operation on the part of the learner and parent working with the teacher. A positive disposition towards a drive to achieve is a recipe for success. Having your preferred choice as your teacher / coach should only be seen as the cherry on top. Boys must learn the resilience to fight back from disappointment. Invariably they will also find that if they work with their new teacher that he/she teacher has good qualities too.

It is of course a great compliment to any teacher when learners and parents speak highly of the teacher. In listening to what learners and parents have said, it has become abundantly clear that those teachers all have one thing in common – they care deeply for learner. They have taken the time to get to know the learner and have invested time and energy into building a relationship with a learner. A universal truth is that you can be the world's worst teacher or coach, but if you have a relationship with the learner, they will work for you. It is also true, that if you have a relationship with the learners, you don't have discipline problems. You need to be able to relate and laugh, you need to be firm but fair, you need to be open and honest, and you need to keep your cool when things don't go right. I mean, how much can go wrong when you are dealing with 20 plus boys in a classroom or on a sports field...

At St Andrew's, we pride ourselves on the brotherhood amongst our boys and on the emphasis, we place on relationships. Our House System, with Tutor and Family Groups, creates a sense of identity

and belonging for our boys and staff. It is through this system that we focus on the pastoral wellbeing of the whole learner. We must be doing something right, because when one of the tutors walked into her tutor group, the boys were waiting to wish her happy birthday and present her with flowers... I love those funny moments that abound at Saints. On visiting Little Saints, the teachers could not wait to tell Revd. Ashe that the boys call him Revd. "Ass" – I must say I agree with them... One of the Grade two teachers walked into her class this week, the class was completely quiet, and in amazement she asked what was going on or who did what as any good teacher would assume. The one learner put up his hand saying, "Mam you said we must go look for our manners, so we found our manners". One of my Grade one teachers was making mistakes, and one of her learners asked why she was making mistakes, to which she replied that she had not had her coffee. The boy concluded with a big sigh saying, "That's a big mistake". One boy came to my office and asked whether teachers have buttons. I enquired further as to why and he responded saying "The teacher said we are pushing her buttons". There is also a rumour doing the rounds at Saints, that Revd. Ashe is driving former President Nelson Mandela's Mercedes Benz.

The days you spend at school are some of the best days of your life. You remember the friends, the camaraderie, the school Tuck Shop food, the balls, the sport, the mischief, and you remember those significant individuals who shaped you into the person you are today. There is a Japanese Proverb that goes "Better than a thousand days of diligent study, is one day with a great teacher." We aim to send out gentlemen, men of substance, men of courage who strive to do as the Prophet Micah requires "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God" and good men have a better chance of coming out of a school with the help of teachers. It is my belief that boys who feel that teachers are on their side and have their best interests at heart, will always work FOR the teacher - or at the very least WITH the teacher.

Issue 62

7 February

As you have come to know me, I love "a cup of Joe". The iconic nickname, a "cup of Joe," has several origin stories. In researching these, I came upon one legend concerning Josephus Daniels, the Secretary of the Navy during World War I. In 1914, he banned alcohol consumption on all U.S. Navy ships. Since coffee was the next strongest substitute, sailors sarcastically deemed it "a cup of Josephus,". As you can imagine that was a bit of a mouthful and instead the snarky nickname became shortened to just "a cup of Joe." Another theory is based off the meaning of the word "Joe" in slang, as in "He's just an average Joe". Joe refers to the average man on the street – the "gewone mens". Someone who works for a living, looks to provide for his family and is after the basics in life. What better drink for the average Joe.

Whatever your preference, Dirt, Mud, Jitter juice, Java, Daily Grind, Lifeblood, Tar, Rocket Fuel, Pick-Me-Up, Go Juice or Even Worm dirt, coffee is a convenient kick-start to your day. If you are like me, then you too will have your local coffee shop that you frequent. I love it when I get to know the people in a particular store. It just feels right walking into the store, when one is greeted by faces you know. Coffee is also a great over a conversation – oh what serious and light-hearted conversations have been had over a cuppa. I certainly cannot do a road trip or get going with my day without a cup of coffee. The smell of coffee brewing gives me a warm and fuzzy feeling – especially on a cold and rainy day.

It dawned on me just the other day, whilst walking the fields in the early morning hours, that despite my love for this drink, I cannot stand a mouthful of tepid coffee. As the coffee cools down it becomes increasingly unpleasant. I wondered to myself why such a dramatic change. Trying to rationalize this in the early hours of the morning (before fully awake), I could only conclude that it had to do with the dissipation of energy in the form of heat leaving the mug. I decided to investigate a little further, and on visiting one of my barista friends found an explanation. As hot coffee cools, lactones break down to become carboxylic and chlorogenic acids. These acids present themselves via a bitter /acidic flavour in the cup. This combined with the oxidization that is also occurring as coffee cools down just makes for a super unpleasant taste most of the time.

Coffee is such an apt description for what can happen in life when people lose their passion, love, or drive for something. The result is that bitterness and imperfections are highlighted, and a person becomes unpalatable to others. The good news of course is that people are so much more than coffee. When we lose our warmth, we can remedy this. It does however require the realization that we may need help to do this. I am increasingly concerned by the number of learners, parents (and staff) who are struggling. I implore families to reach out and advise us when there are concerns around their

sons or concerns at home. We are here to assist, and we have the means to do so. Your son's Tutor Teacher is your first port of call for all matters pastoral pertaining your son. I encourage open and honest lines of communication so that we can look out for the needs of your most prized possession. Revd. Steenbok, Mrs Scholtz our in-house Educational Psychologist, the Heads of Houses, me and so many others are here to assist you and your son.

I would love for every boy to go through school feeling the warmth and comfort of a sense of belonging to the St Andrew's family. Our Tutor and Family groups are geared towards creating close family units within the school, where we focus on building relationships and creating a sense of warmth within the school community. When staff and parents work together in support of the boys, we can get the water to the right temperature. When making a cuppa Joe, the temperature of the water is what matters most - pour at a lower temperature and you will extract fewer of the bean's nascent flavour notes and end with a more bitter taste; pour at a higher temperature, and you'll discover a coffee that's extracted more from the bean. The ingredients for a successful cuppa coffee are on offer to every Joe who enter these gates. The St Andrew's coffee shop is open for business. There are many flavours on offer, and I encourage boys to fully partake in and try out the various opportunities on offer in Academics, Sport, Culture, Service and so much more.

I love the feeling you get when I enter the school Chapel. Many a guest has come to me and said they feel there is something special about the place. I love watching our local Barista, Revd. Steenbok brew and work his magic in the Chapel. The Chapel is the place we get together as a family, that is where we start our day. Like a good cuppa coffee, the Chapel fills us with warmth and sends us out ready for the day ahead. Micah 6:8 says "You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God".

Issue 63

14 February

"Het jou Katvis!" Got you! You have been caught! Noodling is the act of fishing for (large) catfish using one's bare hands or feet. Basically, the noodler places their hand or foot inside a discovered catfish hole and then attempts to catch the large catfish waiting in hiding.... Although the concept of catching fish with only the use of the arm or foot in the water is simple, the process of noodling is more complicated. The choice of catfish as the prey is not arbitrary but comes from the circumstances of their habitat. During the spawn, catfish will dig or enter a hole underneath a structure submerged in the water. The female will lay the eggs in the hole and the male will guard the eggs. When the eggs become fry, they will leave and the male will also leave the hole. To begin, a noodler submerges in the murky muddy water to depths of up to 6m and places their hand inside a discovered catfish hole. Catfish have notoriously raspy teeth which are incredibly tiny and dense. Added to that the catfish's mouth and throat are lined with bristle-like sharp points. Oh and their teeth are curved inwards to help them keep prey in their jaws. Nothing scary about that! So simply put, noodling involves finding a catfish hiding underwater, sticking your arm (or foot) in its mouth, and dragging it out of the water with your bare hands. You use your own fingers as bait and the Catfish's bite as the hook. If all goes as planned, the catfish will swim forward and latch onto the fisherman's hand. If the fish is particularly large, the noodler is in for a battle. It is not going to end well for either the fisherman (predator) or the catfish (prey).

Catfishing on the other hand, is when someone sets up a fake online profile to trick people (who are looking for love), usually to get money out of them. The purpose of catfishing is to troll or harass the victim, scam the victim, or steal the victim's identity. It is a social engineering scheme in which one or more perpetrators use deceptive tactics to retrieve personally identifiable information (PII) from unsuspecting victims. If your child has access to a electronic device, they are seriously at risk of being catfished. I cannot stress this enough. I bet you can think of at least one person that you know that has been scammed or catfished... Our children have in many instances unrestricted access to powerful devices. Did you know that our mobile devices these days have more computing power than all the greatest supercomputers through the turn of the 21st century. The Apple iPhone 12, for example, can perform approximately 11 teraflops, or 11 trillion operations per second — more than 5,000 times faster than the mid-'80s Cray-2 Supercomputer, several multiples faster than the computer onboard NASA's Perseverance Rover currently exploring Mars and — perhaps most significantly — faster than the laptops most of us are carrying around... All that power in the hand of a young person. Yes, electronic devices are now part of the norm for our children, but I think we need to have a serious rethink!

Like the catfish in the hole, there are predators lurking out there. They are noodling and working to lure our children into their grips. You may think these predators lurk in the murky dark waters of the

world your child does not venture into or is connected to. That is not the case. The electronic device brings these predators directly to you child. They operate as if choosing a meal of the menu at the local MacDonalds. They are committed to the cause, often befriend the child, and winning their trust which may take months to do. They engineer a reality where it is almost impossible to separate the real from what is not. Adults and companies are constantly scammed. Financial institutions are constantly working to protect themselves from cyber-attacks, yet in most instances we think our children are safe? Unfortunately, all too often, we realize the truth when it is too late. The bottom line is our children cannot operate these powerful devices with unrestricted or unsupervised access. I guess you would not allow your child to go cruising around in your drop top BMW, or take a chance at operating NASA's Perseverance Rover. One of the basics taught when I was younger is don't talk to strangers or stranger danger... This however does not seem to apply nowadays. Yes we are quick to tell our kids not to walk alone in the mall or talk to strangers standing outside on street corners, but we are happy for them to talk and walk with people on social media channels.

All too often I sit with families in my office and deal with the fallout when things go wrong. Our children are being coaxed into sharing person personal information and images of themselves and then being held to ransom by cruel and unforgiving predators. The impact and consequence of this has lifechanging effects on our beloved children. Families bankrupt themselves to save their sons and daughters from being publicly humiliated by these criminals. This is not far removed from you. If you don't believe me, take the phone of your child, and do a bit of a dive into files and images shared and stored, chats had on WhatsApp and other platforms, games being played, websites being visited. I have no doubt that you are going to be surprised and shocked at what you find. If your child keeps their device from you and has a code to unlock, but is unwilling to share, I suspect you have something serious to worry about! The reality is we grew up in an age when things were very different. All I had to worry about was making sure I got home by the time the streetlights turned on. Failure to do so would result in an immediate hiding, and timeous arrival on the next occasion. When we wanted to sneak a peek at a naughty image, it usually involved a covert operation of bargaining with friends, who would secure clippings or a magazine from their father's stash of adult magazines, and then trying to sneak those past teachers at school and parents at home. The closest we got to easy access to ladies in skimpy clothes (legally) was the Sports Illustrated Swimwear Edition – every teenage boy and dad's dream. Not so now. Inappropriate content is just a click away. Our children are being pushed content and have access to content that is simply beyond what they can manage psychologically and emotionally. Our youngsters are at the mercy of Huggy Wuggy (far from a cute cuddly bear) and Slenderman – it is the stuff of nightmares – pure evil. Go ahead, type it in and see what comes up. Our children have access to strangers in 3D worlds like Roblox, Fortnite and various online gaming platforms – in other words our children are playing with strangers! Did you know that on the cell phone, there is a Google Microphone, and if you say the word porn, it brings up over 9 million websites...

Parents, we need to act to protect our children. We need to monitor and limit access to electronic devices. We need to be present and involved. Our children live in a duality that we were not exposed to. Reality and cyber reality cannot be easily separated. The brain of our children competes with a supercomputer and synchronization happens every time they pick up a device. We move to protect our private personal information on our own electronic devices through encryption technology, passwords, and antivirus software – should we not be doing the same with our children who operate exposed and unhindered in a seemingly limitless space fraught with potential dangers and malice. Parents are and remain their children's keepers. I subscribe to the same theory that the American Professor Abigail James told us in a staff meeting at Wynberg several years back. 'The job of bringing up children is to ensure that they remain innocent as long as possible - which was referring in that instance to drugs and alcohol. The idea is that the longer you can hold them off, the more the brain will develop and be able to handle it.'

As always, I hope that we will continue to as the Prophet Micah requires of us; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God" – in all that we do

Issue 66

21 February

"Be Good, Be Nice, Be Kind" The words my mother repeated daily to both my brother and me before we were off to school. These words have stuck with me and are now the same words I share with my children daily, "Be Good, Be Nice, Be Kind" – to everyone. What a wonderful mantra to try and live out daily. The more you repeat something, the more likely it is to stick. Earl Nightingale said

"Whatever we plant in our subconscious mind and nourish with repetition and emotion will one day become a reality".

My mother and father played a significant role in shaping both me and my brother as men. Respect for women was a non-negotiable in our house. My father modelled how to be a good husband and father and to both of us. He also modelled what it meant to be a man – to live with integrity and honour and look after family, always putting himself second to others. Boys will grow to be men, and the values instilled in our young men, sets the foundation for later life. Respect for women and respect for others is one of the core character traits to being a man.

Over the last two weeks in the build-up to Valentine's Day, we have been focusing on the fairer sex. We heard from our female staff members what they appreciate about men and their behaviour and what not. We also asked the ladies from our fellow sister schools what it was that they appreciated about men. A confident man, who behaves in a courteous and respectful manner is what is appreciated. Other positive attributes highlighted was a man who respect boundaries, offers his jacket, smells good, tells a lady she looks pretty, knows how to dance, and checks up on a lady. Childish, rude, and inappropriate behaviour is what is not appreciated. This includes a man who behaves in a bombastic and arrogant manner, smokes, makes inappropriate jokes, makes a lady feel uncomfortable, does not respect arrangements like time and place, and disrespects his own family. The female staff appreciate it when the boys do things to make them feel special, show that they care by waiting at the door or assisting in carrying goods, noticing when they are looking pretty and behaving in a polite and respectful manner. The female staff don't appreciate it when boys laugh at their expense and are not mindful and considerate of their actions and words.

It is important that our young men come to understand that old school values are very much applicable to our modern world. They are now just as important as they were back then. What our boys see on TV (and in real life), of men and celebrities, with multiple girlfriends behaving in a chauvinistic fashion, treating women as trophies, disrespecting boundaries and disregarding morals and values is clearly not what women value. Our role as men is to guide our boys on the journey to becoming a man. In an era where the very concept of manliness and masculinity is being challenged, it is up to men, to set the record straight. We cannot allow or tolerate men who behave in a manner that undermines the dignity, value, and rights of women. We need to expose our learners to good examples of men in everyday life and have them hear what women are expecting, as well as calling out inappropriate behaviour and actions. We need to educate our boys to understand that what they see on TV and in social media is far from what is expected. I always ask to the boys, how they would feel if that was their sister or mother – whether being spoken about or being treated in a manner. I also ask boys what would they do or say if their mother was standing behind them looking over their shoulder. It is important for the male figures that boys interact with to set the example. "Small boys become big men through the influence of big men who care about small boys." - Unknown.

Boys' schools are very relevant and play an important role in producing young men of honour, dignity, and substance – men who are good fathers, husbands, and brothers. At St Andrew's we value and appreciate the ladies with whom we interact daily. They are all special to us. At St Andrew's there are so many examples of ladies who go above and beyond the call of duty looking after our boys and excelling at what they do – we are privileged to have them in our lives. We work to educate our boys to value, appreciate and respect women. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said "The role of women in the development of society is of utmost importance. In fact, it is the only thing that determines whether a society is strong and harmonious, or otherwise."

How much better would the world be if all men subscribed to the following: "Yes, I'm Old School. I have good manners. I show others respect and I will always help those who need me. It's not because I'm old fashioned. It's because I was raised properly." - Unknown. Having read that quote, I'm sure many of us are thinking that sounds like my dad. Let us continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice (be good), Love Mercy (be nice) and Walk Humbly with God (be kind)".

Issue 67

1 March

Sometimes you've just got to throw the rule book out of the window. I googled to see if I could find out where I had heard this phrase before - to no avail. What did come up was this quote by Ray Bradbury — "Sometimes you just have to jump out the window and grow wings on the way down." I can't help envisioning a coach standing next to the field and simply tearing up the playbook and going with the flow of the game.

There is no rule book when it comes to leading a school. I have stopped telling myself that I have seen everything. Every day I see and learn something new. In a school of nearly 800 boys, it is inevitable that something will happen. When parents sit in front of me, face cupped in hands about something "silly" their son has done, I always remind them that boys are allowed to make mistakes, that school is the place to make these mistakes, because the consequences for these mistakes after school are so much worse. I then usually proceed to tell them that when you have one boy, you have a semi-functional brain, but when you add another boy, the brain capacity halves. As you add another and another that brain capacity continues to diminish and that is why you inevitably end up with boys doing silly things. When boys tell you they don't know why they have done something, they mean it. This is because the prefrontal cortex is still developing and they rely on a part of the brain called the amygdala to make decisions and solve problems more than adults do. The amygdala is associated with emotions, impulses, aggression, and instinctive behaviour. They don't think before they do! Our job as parents and teachers very often is to prevent the amygdala from erasing our sons from the gene pool. Just take a minute and think about some of the death-defying antics your son has done... There is no (survival) rule book for raising boys.

Often when faced with difficult situations and matters of less desired behaviour, sticking to the rule book becomes very difficult to do. I ask myself how one applies a cast in stone set of rules when every situation differs. Yes, the rule book can act as a guide, but it is never to supersede gut feel, wisdom, experience and understanding of each situation and the person in it. Things are not simply black and white, and we cannot get paralyzed by the rule book for fear of a slap on the wrist or consequence. This is one thing I believe every leader should know. As parents, we apply the same principle at our own homes. Sticking strictly to the rule book, removes emotions, it removes the human factor. This does not mean that one cannot reach the end of the line with someone, but I am of the opinion one needs to be able to say that you have walked with the person as far as you possibly can. There is a wonderful saying "Every kid is only one decision away by a caring adult from being a statistic." Kids always deserve another (2nd, 3rd and 4th) chance – we need to remember this.

In a hotly contested Derby match in Cape Town, one of the Bishops players missed a tackle which led to the opposition's winning try. The boy after the match went up to the coach and apologized for missing the tackle. 'No need to apologise,' said Basil, 'you were in the right position to make the tackle and that is what really counts.' Our boys are often in the right position - all we must do is accept that they make mistakes sometimes. How we respond is critical. Had Basil responded inappropriately, he could very well have ruined this boys love for rugby and his school. I loved listening to another story from a respected coach, that we must not overtrain and smother the natural instinct and raw talent, through rigid set plays and game plans. Players need to have the freedom to express themselves without fear of failure. It is only through failure that we learn the real lessons of life. It takes a quality parent / coach / teacher to allow a boy to fail and offer him a helping hand and encouraging word as he picks himself up from disappointment. The drills and training should help players realize their potential and talent by outstripping the aims and objectives of the drills. Think of the booster rockets that come away from a spaceship when they have done its job. The booster rockets assist in getting the spaceship into orbit and then the spaceship operates from there on its own.

As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires of us; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 68
7 March

"What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?" Beyond A Boundary (1963). Beyond a Boundary is a memoir on cricket written by the Trinidadian Marxist intellectual C. L. R. James. James recounts the role cricket played in his family's history, and his meetings with such early West Indian players as George John, Wilton St Hill, the great batsman George Headley and the all-rounder Learie Constantine, but focuses on the importance of the game and its players to society, specifically to colonial era Trinidad. It mixes social commentary, with commentary on the game, arguing that what happened inside the "Boundary Line" in cricket affected life beyond it, as well as the converse.

On one of my visits to the office of my headmaster as a passionate head of sport, I was offered advice in the form of a quote 'What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?'. We were discussing the importance of exposing boys to multiple opportunities on offer and debating the trend of specialization at an early age. With the increased emphasis on professionalism and competition at schoolboy level, the trend was that boys were practically playing the same sport throughout the year with rather limited exposure to any other opportunities on offer – other sports, service, and cultural opportunities etc. A season would end, and boys would be given a break for a month at most, and pre-season training for a particular sporting code would once again go into full swing. It is so important to stress to our boys the importance of taking part in multiple opportunities on offer. It is such an enriching experience. I can still clearly picture a Wynberg 1st Rugby team, who managed an unbelievable season, standing on stage at the Major Production and the Choir Festival. These boys took the opportunity to involve themselves across board at the school. They were prefects, academics, water polo and cricket players. They were supported both by their coaches and parents, so that they could participate right across board. Similarly last year watching the St Andrew's boys run between Rugby, Hockey, Tennis and Squash fixtures over the derby weekends was testimony to the fact that the boys at St Andrew's are all-rounders.

It is important that we keep perspective at school. This is why we emphasize the importance of having our boys participate in a wide range of activities. Our expectation is that boys are involved in a Summer and Winter sport, that they are involved in Cultural and Service opportunities and that they apply themselves to their academics aiming for a Batchelors Pass as a minimum. The Chapel Choir for instance is the oldest activity at St Andrew's. What a wonderful opportunity for the boys to get involved in such a prestigious activity. One of the highlights at our Old Boys Reunion weekend is when past choristers join the boys in the Chapel Choir in the singing of the school hymn. The Saints Music Academy is another opportunity for our boys to explore their musical talents and perform before an audience. Cubs and Scouts are another opportunity for boys to participate in a stimulating activity filled with important life skills. I encourage parents to motivate their sons to explore and get involved in the various activities on offer.

I would hate for any learner to go through his Saints career not involved or singularly focused on only one activity. This is where parents need to support the school in helping us ensure that their sons are actively involved and making full use of the opportunities on offer. There are a plethora of benefits in exposing our boys to a wide variety of experiences that will stand them in good stead after school. Mike Ditka head coach for the Bears from 1982 to 1992, who was twice both the AP and UPI NFL Coach of Year (1985 and 1988) says "Success is about taking advantage of Opportunity." St Andrew's is a school of opportunities. It is my hope that every member of the family will make full use of the opportunities on offer.

Similarly, I would encourage teachers and parents to continually grow, continually extend themselves, change environments, try out new adventures, because like C. L. R. James says "What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?" It is always in your interest to continually change and to never stagnate. Similarly for institutions, change and turnover is good because it brings with it fresh ideas and new experiences.

As always, continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 69

14th March

Perspective. The word perspective comes from the Latin word 'perspicere', meaning 'to observe, look at'. If you Google the meaning of the word perspective, you are offered this explanation - to think about a situation or problem in a wise and reasonable way: You must keep things in perspective. Working with boys, one needs a healthy dose of perspective, wisdom and reason.

A wise man once said, "When you have one boy, you have a semi-functional brain. When you have two boys, you have half a brain. When you have three boys, you have a third. And so on". It is something I have mentioned before in my newsletters, and it is so true when it comes to working with boys. Boys are prone to do "silly" things without thinking. They often behave like a pack of Jack Russel's. That is ok. They are boys after all. Pause for a moment and think on the silly things your son has done under your watchful eye and especially when you are not watching.

Working with boys is such a rewarding experience. Watching our boys go from loving, cute and cuddly gnomes to macho, testosterone filled giants (with little hearts) happens in the blink of an eye at school and at home. Every phase a boy goes through comes with its own set of challenges. As they mature the young rams start jostling for positions in and amongst themselves in their herd before inevitably wondering a little further and squaring up against the older rams. It is perfectly natural for boys to jostle for positions and establish a pecking order in and amongst their peers of similar age. Competition is not something we can keep from our boys after they leave school - this is a reality. What is not acceptable is top-down jostling where a power imbalance exists - there can only be one victor in that instance. Similarly, one needs to keep perspective that when the young ram attempts to jostle for position with an older more experienced ram - the outcome is also inevitable. In most instances, peer on peer jostling is easily resolved after a sit down with the parties concerned. The boys move on long before the parents do. This is where the adults need to keep perspective.

At school we know we are dealing with your most precious possession and that in many instances you will respond like a tigress or female bear defending its young against any perceived threat. We also know that in many instances, your instinctive reaction to a perceived threat (which is also the most precious possession of another parent or a teacher/coach) is possibly on occasions emotional, unfounded, unwarranted, one-sided and uninformed. When emotions run high, the wrong decisions are made. Therefore, we always act in the best interest of the boy sitting before us. There are always two sides to a story with the truth being somewhere in the middle. At a boys' school, "We are in the business of second chances". Boys need to be taught that there are consequences for actions yes, but retribution and punitive measures are not the answer. Here adults need to keep perspective. We are dealing with boys, and we are also dealing with someone else's most precious possession. The pursuit for 'justice' is often at the expense of the notion that the shoe could so easily be on the other foot.

I love the poem by Chaplain Bob Fox - He's just a little boy. He summarizes so clearly the very essence and nature of the boys we are working with. It is a poem that we should all keep in the back of our minds when dealing with our boys - whether at home or school. He is just a little boy (with a small heart), but one day he will be a man - and it is in these watershed moments that we determine what kind of man he will be. God willing, he will be a man who does as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

He stands at the plate with his heart pounding fast.
The bases are loaded, the die has been cast.
Mom and Dad cannot help him, he stands all alone.
A hit at this moment would send his team home.
The ball meets the plate, he swings and he misses.
There's a groan from the crowd, with some boos and some hisses.

A thoughtless voice cries, "Strike out the bum!"
Tears fill his eyes, the game's no longer fun.
So open your heart and give him a break,
for it's moments like this, a man you can make.
Keep this in mind when you hear someone forget,

He is just a little boy, and not a man yet.

- Chaplain Bob Fox

Issue 70

23rd March

I am sure that you will agree with me, there is something magnificent about the stained glass windows in Churches and Cathedrals. When one enters a Church or Cathedral your eyes are immediately drawn to the splendour of large windows, full of colour and light, complimenting the warmth of the stone and wood designs inside of the building. It brings such a sense of peace, appreciation and reverence for one's place in the house of God. I remember competing with my brother as a younger kids to find a spot on the pew in an area enveloped in beautiful colours.

If you were to visit Europe today to tour the grand old Cathedrals, you'd be amazed at the beautiful stained glass windows in many of them. We are fortunate enough that we are able to visit our very own grand old Cathedral here in Bloemfontein in St George Street - the Cathedral of St Andrew & St Michael. The Cathedral's name is the result of two important events in its life: The foundation stone was laid on St. Andrew's Day and Bishop Twells (St Andrew's School founder) held his first service in the Cathedral on St. Michael's Day. In Cape Town, one could visit St John's Cathedral in Wynberg or St George's Cathedral in the city centre - both magnificent historical buildings.

From a historical point, stained glass windows developed as a theologically important art form as way to convey to the masses things the church wanted them to see, think about, and understand, including Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection etc. The way light goes through stained glass often has an enchanting effect on the people and spaces below. Light is central to achieving the desired effect. The light that passes through stained glass windows is often seen as a symbol of the divine light of God. This light can represent many different things, such as hope, truth, love, and life. It's also a symbol of Christ himself, as he is often referred to as the "Light of the World."

Our school motto - Fiat Lux - meaning "Let There Be Light", is also the first words God utters in Genesis 1:2 "When in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the earth being untamed and shapeless, God said, Let there be light!" We all carry light inside of us, that divine spark, placed there by God - a spark that I believe is the very essence of God. The way we live our lives can very easily be compared to the windows of a Cathedral. We have a choice with what happens with the light inside of us. Does the light shine through in our words and deeds to bring warmth and colour to the world, inspiring and enriching others for our presence. Like the stained glass windows of a Cathedral our lives can represent love, hope, truth and life to others.

Our School Chapel is also called the Heart of the School. It is central to all that we do at St Andrew's and everything emanates and flows from there. Our Chapel, like the windows of a Cathedral allows light to shine over the campus encompassing every corner and every person, with our values and aims; Service to God and the community, justice, fair play, truth and honesty, friendliness, unselfishness, courtesy, consideration, appreciation, humour, reading, playing, sportsmanship and pride in work.

One need not look far to find the light. There are many examples of the light that abounds at St Andrew's; the light in the eyes of the young boys in our care filled with optimism and excitement, the light staff members bring to the school daily when they take care of other people's children, the light of the kindness and care shown by our security guards as they watch over our community, the light in the joy of the kitchen staff in preparing meals for our children, the light in the kindness of placing protea flowers on a desk of a colleague, the light in kind and caring words for young learners who arrive to school anxious for having to say goodbye to their folks, the light in the pride taken by our grounds team in the appearance of the campus, the light in the coming together of a community to find the tooth of a little boy. The same is of course applicable at our homes where one could ask whether your child, spouse or loved ones see, feel and experience your light or even at work in the way you impact your immediate environment and colleagues.

Amanda Gorman says "There is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it." We have become skilled at worrying and at keeping fear alive, instead of fuelling the light we all carry with us so that we can make a difference daily in all that we do and all we encounter. As the time of Easter Eggs, Hot Cross Buns, Pickled Fish, and holiday approaches, I hope that all families will enjoy a blessed Easter holiday and that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 71

12 April

Can you remember the white Caltex Easter Bunny? In 1990 the price of petrol was a mere 94 cents a litre. When you were sent to the shop bearing a R2 blue note, you would return with more sweets than your pockets could handle - that is if you were fortunate enough to be afforded a R2 note... I remember the Caltex Bunny making his appearance around Easter. You could find him by taking a trip with your folks to the nearest filling station. As a reward for behaving well, you could get yourself a pack of white bunny cards. Collectibles back in the day. Out of interest they now go for R149 a card on Bid Or Buy. Had I known that back in the day, I would have held on to those collectibles - The 1990's equivalent of Bitcoin. Imagine that - the 1990's child a millionaire for holding onto their Caltex cards.

I fondly remember waking up to the excitement of trying to chase down a Bunny, or wrestle one of either the dogs or my brother for a share of the hidden treasure in the garden. Easter has always been a time of excitement for me. Chocolate eggs, hot cross buns, pickled fish and of course holidays. Easter break in my opinion has always come at a time much needed, after the wonderful December holiday, the broke January period, and the lengthy battle of settling into the normalities of the start of the year once again. It always seemed such an appropriate break.

Stores filled to the brim with Easter eggs, the smell of fresh hot cross buns filling the morning air, colourful posters advertising the best deals on Easter goodies, excited children and chocolate crazed shoppers all make for a festive atmosphere in shopping centres. As much as this festive atmosphere provides for excitement, we should not forget the significance and importance of what Easter is really about. I would be the first to say, that my love for pickled fish along with the hunting of hidden treasure (now competing with my own children and five hounds), is one of my highlights of the Easter period. Yes, I am very competitive when it comes to Easter goodies. Just yesterday, I finished a delightful batch of pickled fish specially prepared for me.

Schools have also got involved in hosting various festivals dubbed Easter Festivals during this time. A time of great competition and rivalry in and amongst many South African schools. These events draw massive crowds and are often televised, followed with a massive viewership. Much money is to be made out of the excitement around these Easter Festivals. Sport and competition are the order of the day and what an awesome opportunity it is to get to watch world class school competition.

I have however become increasingly aware that my excitement for all on offer during this period has clouded my appreciation of the significance of Easter. I think we all tend to fall into the trap, of perhaps forgetting what Easter is really about. It is time perhaps just to check ourselves again. Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus and his death at Calvary, where Jesus willingly gave himself, to fulfil God's will, so that we may be saved. Easter Sunday commemorates Jesus' resurrection into life everlasting. Easter is thus a very special time, where we remember the last week in the life of Jesus, and that He rose from the death, bringing us forgiveness, so that we may have life after death and bring us closer to God.

Whilst we enjoy all that is on offer during Easter, let us be reminded of the sacrifice God made for us, giving his only Son, so that we who believe, may be redeemed, and come to rest in Heaven at the end of our days. In spending time with loved ones, let us reflect on, remind each other of and appreciate what Easter really means for us. As the sun sets on Good Friday, and rises again on Easter Sunday, let us be reminded that darkness and death was forever overcome by the light that is Jesus.

May you continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God"

Issue 72

18 April

We are into the Winter season, and I enjoy walking the campus looking over the busy fields - huddles of players and coaches interspersed in and amongst the busyness of ball games and training regimes with parents standing grouped together along the touch lines eagerly viewing the hustle and bustle. Along my afternoon walk this week, I was reminded of a time when I attended Southern Free State soccer trials at CBC, back in the day when I was in Grade 6 (Standard 4) - I had my eye on making the U13 SFS team.

Something happened to me that day. I can remember the moment so clearly; like it happened yesterday. I sat on the side of the rocky cement embankment, under those large blue gum trees, waiting to have my name read out. Well that never happened. Teammate after teammate was called forward and congratulated, and my turn never came (along with the majority of others seated). Holding back my tears as best I could, I managed the long walk of shame and disappointment back to the car (in my opinion), where my mother was seated. I could see by her facial expression that she knew exactly that her son's life had come crashing down round him. Oh perspective... I was met with It's OK, I'm proud of you. I can remember the scene as we drove out of CBC, along the wooden bollard poles, eventually exiting the campus – it really was like a scene in a movie. All that was needed was a tumble weed being blown across the tar road. I cannot recall the conversation in the car – it was as if nothing else was said, but I know that my Mother would have offered comfort and wisdom all the way home.

How we deal with disappointment is an important life lesson. No one likes to be disappointed. Disappointment can break us, or it can make us. We all deal with disappointment differently. Our age, experience and maturity certainly play a role in the way in which we respond to disappointment. Experiencing disappointment and how we respond is an essential part of life. Death and Taxes are two things in life that you cannot escape. Disappointment is another. Whilst death is unavoidable and taxes are oh so painful, disappointment can act as a motivator and something positive can come from it. Disappointment can make you stronger, it can motivate you, it teaches you grit, it makes you appreciate what you have, it means you have a passion for something and provides an opportunity for growth. Disappointment can also teach you the difference between expectation and reality – like when you expect to make the SFS U13 soccer team as an U12 player.

I attended a sport conference where research into tracking and following the throughput of U13 provincial Rugby players at Senior Sa Schools level was presented. Most of those boys who played provincial level Rugby at a junior level don't do so later. The findings point to the fact that these "big" youngsters can pick up a ball and bulldoze their way through the opposition who have not yet matured or grown. Boys mature at different rates – you simply need to line boys of a particular grade up. Some are scruffy men whilst others are still baby faced. In later years these "big" boys are met by other "big" boys who have also matured and are able to square up eye to eye. The major difference of course is that one of them has had to learn to deal with disappointment and how to respond to it. The result is a player with more grit and more developed in terms of skills. Now size is no longer a factor. In many instances, boys who don't make the A teams (or provincial teams), are forced to deal with disappointment. They are forced to reflect, re-evaluate, work harder and face the truth; he can give up and settle with the status quo or he can bounce back. The same applies to us as adults. Perhaps you were disappointed because your business failed, you missed out on a promotion, or your relationship failed. Think of your disappointment as a troubleshooting tool to understand more about the world, correct your assumptions, upskill yourself and become more knowledgeable and wiser. You can also correct your actions to better achieve your goals.

As a coach, I have had to disappoint players (and parents), in terms of selection. Selection is not an exact science, and I can comfortably say that I got it wrong on many occasions. How one delivers disappointing news is important. These tough conversations need to be handled with care. This is something that every person in a position of authority needs to be mindful of. William Yeats said it best – "I have spread my dreams beneath your feet. Tread softly, because you tread on my dreams". How your message is delivered, and the support offered will play a significant role in the response of the person concerned. I am sure that there will be boys disappointed because of selection into teams for the weekend and for the Derby fixtures – this is where both coach and parent should take hands to support the young man in dealing with and bouncing back from disappointment. Francis Drake (the explorer) said "There must be a beginning of any great matter, but the continuing unto the end until it be thoroughly finished is which yields the true glory". In other words, it is not how you start but how you finish that really matters. It is how you finish up the season not the first match which counts in the end. I also know that teams, coaches and parents secretly hope and compete for an unbeaten season, but I am of the opinion that an unbeaten season should be seen as a curse where the unfortunate boys are denied the opportunity of learning from their mistakes and fighting back from disappointment. We should rather aim to be better at the end of every training session or match than we were at the start and constantly move forward, honing our skills towards achieving to our full potential.

As always, continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 73

25 April

This week whilst driving in my car in the late afternoon, I felt the warmth of the last Autumn sun against my skin and I was overcome with a sense of peace. I felt my energy return and my thoughts immediately turned to the 'Man of Steel'. Superman is a native of Krypton a planet that had a red sun. Under a yellow sunlike that of Earth's, his Kryptonian cells act as living solar batteries, absorbing solar energy and giving him superhuman powers. He is faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. He uses his amazing superpowers in a never-ending battle for truth and justice.

"A hero can be anyone, even a man doing something as simple and reassuring as putting a coat on a young boy's shoulders to let him know that the world hadn't ended". What I love about this Batman quote is that it reaffirms what I firmly believe - there is a superhero in every one of us. Yes, that is right, I am of the opinion that you have superpowers. Some of us are so in tune with ourselves that our superpowers are palpable, whilst with others there may only be an inkling of what these superpowers are. I believe every one of us, at least once in our lives, experiences a moment when we are able to experience our superpower.

I think in many ways we have been conditioned to believe that if we don't wear a mask or a cape, are able to run fast, fly or lift a building, then we are simply ordinary because we don't fit the mould of what television tells us a superhero is. This is far from the truth, but I can understand, how we come to believe that someone dressed ordinarily, living an ordinary life, working an ordinary job, is simply, ordinary. Batman, Superman, Spiderman etc. also lived ordinary lives, but wore their suits, when revealing their superpowers. Klark Kent says "My father believed that if the world found out who I really was, they'd reject me... out of fear".

I don't believe we need to look far and wide to find superheroes living amongst us. Take for instance, Sadio Mane. Mane is an exceptionally talented / gifted footballer. He uses his gift / talent as a soccer player to reveal Mane's heart and his spirit of giving - which I believe is his superpower. Mane has been known for his philanthropy during his time with the Reds, regularly doing all he can to improve the lives of people back in his native Senegal. He has donated £41 000 pounds to the Senegalese National Committee fighting the COVID pandemic, he has helped transform his small village, which has an estimated population of 2,000 people, to a stage where Bambali is on the verge of becoming a town. He built a £455,000 public hospital, which includes a maternity care unit. Mane's father died when he was a child and the lack of health services in his home region has become a big cause in his life. He says "I remember my sister was also born at home because there is no hospital in our village. It was a really, really sad situation for everyone. I wanted to build one to give people hope". In the movie Superman, Jor-El, father to Kell-El (Clark Kent) says "You will give people an ideal to strive towards, they will race behind you, they will stumble, they will fall, but in time they will join you, in time you will help them accomplish wonders." In one of the latest movies, it is revealed that the S on Superman's chest means Hope.

This week, I witnessed another superhero in action. I watched a young man and saw his face light up as he proceeded to one of the staff who gave him a big hug, and then did one of the kindest acts I have witnessed. This staff member removed a tube of lotion from her bag, and proceeded to apply cream to the legs, arms and face of this young boy. This act of kindness touched this young boy (and me), and this young boy returns daily to her, for his dose of love and hope. Sound like Mane, Superman or Batman? Someone who gives hope... Someone who does something as simple as reassuring a young boy that he is loved... On another occasion I watched an anxious young boy approach a staff member before school and saw him consoled and comforted. As the two of them sat in the chair I watched the anxiety drain away from this young boy as he was reassured and comforted, giving him the strength to face the day.

Jor-El when speaking of his sons' talents / gifts / powers says "What if a child dreams of becoming something other than what society had intended? What if a child aspires to something greater." It is our responsibility to protect and develop our superpowers and the superpowers of those around us. The world would surely be a better place with more superheroes walking amongst us. We need to encourage the talents and dreams of our children, encouraging the development of their talents and gifts. The same applies to our colleagues and friends. I recall a moment when my son Daniel, burst out through the garden gate, after having donned his Superman cape. I swelled with pride and hope as I watched the young superhero rushing out into the world driven by his feelings of excitement, his dreams, and his ambitions to make the world a better place. I would argue that love is surely one of

the greatest superpowers we possess. 1 Corinthians 13:13 “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love”.

You are someone’s superhero, and it is my hope that you will use your superpowers to do as the Prophet Micah requires; “Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”.

I want to leave you with this thought to ponder: Have YOU thanked a Superhero in your life lately?

Issue 74

3 May

“If your nothing without the suit, then you shouldn’t have it”. – Spider-Man: Homecoming.

On Wednesday I was awoken by Tauriel (Elf from The Hobbit) and Harry Potter, along with a pack of rabid hounds, who felt it best to storm my room in the early hours of the morning. The morning silence shattered as the battle cries rung out, the horde of hounds, elf and magician swept across the bed, each seemingly aiming for a sensitive piece of aching body. Licks to the face, paws to the crown jewels, nibbles to the hands and toes, an arrow to the head, and a whack from a wand, all prior my cuppa Joe, saw my once kingly reign undone. The raid planned to SEAL team precision, shattered the morning peace. Why the quest to vanquish the king? –International Book day.

I arrived at school and was greeted by Spidermen, Supermen and Batmen of differing shapes and sizes. All learners excitedly explaining their superpowers and arguing which character was the best. The boys amazingly were able to scale climbing equipment at what seemed impossible speeds and with seeming effortless ease. In the corner of the playground on my morning stroll, I watched Spiderman and Ironman scale a slender tree by hugging it tightly and pulling themselves along the trunk. As the two manoeuvred towards the top, the young tree started bending under the weight of the superheroes. Tony Stark made the calculated decision to drop off from the branch which sent Spiderman hurtling through the air ending up in puff of dust. Rushing over to Peter Parker, now having removed his mask out of sheer shock, he assured me that he would live to fight another day. On approaching Tony Stark and asking him what went through his mind, he told me that it was J.A.R.V.I.S. (Just A Rather Very Intelligent System), the artificial intelligence who controls his suit. Pretty good answer in my opinion...

Sitting in Chapel ahead of the long weekend, I looked out over the pews filled with our superheroes. I was filled with so much hope for the future and so much hope for South Africa. I called to the front a select group of four superheroes. We proceeded to talk about the superpowers of each of these heroes. Superman being very strong because of the energy of our sun and being able to fly and shoot Lasers from his eyes. Spiderman who was bitten by a radioactive spider giving him the ability to climb walls, shoot webs and making him stronger than normal. Captain America being a genetically engineered super soldier and leader of the Avengers. What they have in common is that something extraordinary happens or happened to each of our ordinary guys which gave them their powers. The same with Captain St Andrew’s our fourth superhero – a young man dressed in his full school uniform. His superpowers are that he is respectful of his brothers, well-mannered, proud of his uniform and appearance, kind and caring towards others, loves God, is courteous, honest, respectful of women, friendly, considerate and displays sportsmanship. Like with the other superheroes, something extraordinary happens to young men who attend St Andrew’s. An education at St Andrew’s ensures that we turn out men who are good brothers, good citizens and men who become good fathers and good husbands - men who are changemakers and hope bringers.

Tony Stark was right; your suit does not define who you are. “Heroes are made by the paths they choose, not the powers they are graced with”. We all have choices to make, we all have paths to choose, we all have powers we can use, and it is my hope that you will choose to use your powers to do as the Prophet Micah requires; “Do justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”.

Issue 75

10 May

Over the long weekend I popped in at Mediclinic to check in on an old family friend. I was heartened by the strength and positivity that poured out during our conversation. Multiple surgeries, radiation treatment, multiple bedside lights of machines and a frail and failing scarred body so obviously evident to me, seemed to have little effect on the attitude of gratitude from this friend.

Thankful for the small gestures of flowers, WhatsApp messages, kindness from the nurse acting as a full-time carer and the expertise of the doctors all outweighed any self-pity or concern for self as her eyes lit up as she constantly smiled thankful for the visit. I was astonished at the optimism and hope for the future shown, despite all my visible observations to the contrary. How brave. What an example. Five days later a message arrived of this friend being placed on a ventilator.

I spoke to the boys about having an attitude of gratitude. I shared this story with them and reminded them, that across from our fields, there are people who will not be leaving Mediclinic, as I was able to do, and they are able to do. Around our school there are people who have only a box to sleep in when the cold Autumn nights set in and who have no idea where their next meal will come from. Oprah Winfrey said, "Being grateful all the time is not always easy. But it is when you least feel thankful that you are in most need of what gratitude can give you: perspective." We need to learn to be appreciative of the good things, the difficult times, even the challenges in our lives.

Good health, good friends, good physical fitness, a great cup of coffee, a good belly laugh, our job, people, time, and life are some of the plethora of things we should not take for granted. It is easy to be grateful and thankful when everything is easy, and things are good. But what builds character and strength and helps us grow, is showing gratitude in the difficult times. It teaches us to rely on those around us and make us thankful for those beside us during these times. Once we take time to reflect on what we can be thankful for, we regain perspective. And then gratitude transforms the situation. There will always be someone better off and worse off than what we are. But it is our attitude of gratitude that will determine our happiness with our own life and our own circumstances.

We all need to take a second look at the beggar on the street corner instead of staring directly ahead of us whilst in the car or hear the car guard hailing you whilst you sneak into your car pretending not to hear the call or choose to wrap and donate our leftover food as opposed to disposing of it in the dustbin. "There but for the grace of God I go". We are all too lucky not to be in the same situation. Perspective is a wonderful reality check. I often ponder on what their story is. We drive the burbs, in admiration of the mansions of others, whilst our own mansion shelters us from the freezing cold and sweltering heat those on the street are subjected to.

We have much to be thankful for and appreciative of at St Andrew's. We have wonderful facilities, an awesome community, a rich and meaningful heritage and history of over 160 years, and of the best education in the world with much to look forward to. We live in exciting and changing times. Times that require critical and creative thinkers, compassionate and empathetic individuals, leaders, strong oral and verbal communicators, team players and collaborators and resilient individuals with a strong work ethic. Times that require high calibre human beings who are difference makers. An education at St Andrew's means that we aim to guide and prepare these young difference makers to go out and be good fathers, husbands, and brothers. Not every boy who attends St Andrew's comes from a privileged background, but every boy educated and leaves us at the end of matric, does.

At St Andrew's service is one of our pillars and we expect every learner to be involved in service to other. John F Kennedy said, "To whom much is given, much is expected". There is a plethora of opportunities on offer for our boys and the community. We will be hosting a Blood Drive on 22 May in our Centenary Hall from 09h00-14h00, and we are currently collecting dry foods and non-perishables for those in need. I would like to encourage all members of the Saints community to get involved in service to our wider community.

With an attitude of gratitude, you can turn a negative into a positive and get to appreciate every breath of life and every new sunrise. "Find a way to be thankful for even your troubles and they can become the blessings in your life." You have an opportunity to place your feet beside your bed and take steps another is not able to do. Start each day on your knees. With an attitude of gratitude, you will do as the Prophet Micah requires: "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 76

17 May

Driving down Nelson Mandela Road, I came to read the slogan against the backdrop of Naval Hill - "Do What Others Say You Can't Do". What an inspiring message by one of our leading Banks. To go the extra mile, you must be willing to do what others will not do. Steve Jobs said, "The extra mile is a lonely place".

The origin of the 'extra mile' refers back to ancient Roman times when the Romans were in Judea enacted a law which gave the army permission to force the local civilians to carry their equipment for a mile. In Matthew 5:41, Jesus exhorts his followers (at this stage all would be living in Judea and all of whom would understand the hatred of this policy of carrying the Roman army's equipment for a mile): 'If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles'.

My father always said to me as a youngster, "There are few people along the extra mile. Anywhere worth going and anything worth achieving requires sacrifice, blood, sweat and tears". How true. Perhaps this can be loosely translated to "When the going gets tough, the tough get going". There is a big difference between talking the talk and walking the talk... Everyone will tell you that they walk the extra mile, but that is not the case. Most who go there think, "No one else is here... Why am I doing this? This is harder than I thought!", and turn around, leave, never to return. We tend to see the extra mile as a lonely place instead of seeing it as a place filled with opportunities.

In every institution or grouping you find 'Extra Milers' – average Joe's and ordinary Jane's who arrive early and leave late, who freely assist others with tasks, who volunteer before being asked, who provide advice, guidance, and leadership when things go wrong and simply do more than expected when wanting to accomplish something. Extra milers display resilience and grit especially in unfavourable environments and situations and flourish in favourable environments. Extra milers are always looking to do something different and special and are always full of pleasant surprises. They take time to share in their skills and wisdom, and mentor others. Extra milers are really a dime a dozen, and they influence team performance and dynamics positively. Extra milers are easily identifiable through their actions.

I love walking the campus in the afternoons where I watch clusters of boys training and honing their skills in groups or individually. There is just something special when you get to watch a father and son in the cricket nets or on the rugby fields - the interaction, the dedication, the imparting of skills and knowledge between father and son. I would similarly extend this to the teacher / student and mentor / mentee relationship when you see a coach or teacher going the extra mile with a boy. I am fortunate enough to interact with many extra milers, dare I say change makers, daily. I see my colleagues going the extra mile because of their love for the boys and their profession. I see parents going the extra mile in support of their children, the staff, and the school community. I know that I can call on members of the school community at a drop of a hat and without any hesitation support and assistance will readily be available.

In any environment it is noticeable that the extra miler makes a significant impact - they affect change and inspire others to put in extra effort. Showing up with commitment, determination, diligence, and the ability to get things done will compel others to follow in your footsteps. We are a school of extra milers. Old Boys of the past have gone on to make a significant impact in various areas of life. Old Boys like Mr Fred Brownell of '57 who designed our SA flag, Mr Colin Hickling of '57 Mayor of Bloemfontein, Mr Clive Richardson of '49 who was both a Springbok hockey and cricket player, Mr Johan Coetzee of '95 a professor at UOVS and Mr Charles Haddad of '96 who was recently ranked as one of the best scientists in the world to name but a few.

It is my experience that going the extra mile is not beyond anyone. It simply means that one needs to be prepared to give more, do more and the result however small will speak for itself. This is an important principle I believe we should instil in our children – through our words and our actions. This is one of the important lessons we try and teach our boys at St Andrew's – we want them to be extra milers at school, at home and in life. Extra milers who make a difference and extra milers who are prepared to do what others say they can't do.

I hope that you will go the extra mile to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 77

24 May

The unmistakable words 'A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...' along with the iconic opening theme song has become synonymous with the Star Wars franchise. Every child of the 80's grew up with many hours of epic adventures of good vs evil as the battle for the fate of the galaxy was brought to home gardens and school playgrounds of planet Earth. Master Yoda, Darth Vader, Luke Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi, all memorable characters synonymous with a internal and personal

struggle of light and darkness. Younglings and apprentices play a central role in the Star Wars saga as they are groomed and trained by their masters and mentors in the ways of the force - both light and darkness.

The word Mentor means "wise adviser, intimate friend who also is a sage counsellor," especially of one who is young or inexperienced and has historical origins in Greek Mythology. Ulysses entrusted his son Telemachus to the care and direction of his old and trusted friend, Mentor, before setting out on his epic voyage. By nearly all accounts Mentor was a protective, guiding and supportive figure who acted as a wise and trusted counsellor to Telemachus, son of Odysseus, and this is where we now use the word mentor, and verb 'mentoring'.

Master Yoda, the small, wise and powerful 900-year-old Jedi Master, is in my opinion the most beloved character in the movie franchise. He trained and mentored Jedi for over 800 years (including Luke Skywalker who would eventually defeat the Sith). Yoda really knew his stuff and ultimately served as the Jedi Order's Grand Master. He proved to be a real threat to the Galactic Empire and the Sith - the bad guys wanting to destroy the Jedi Order. Yoda is not only a master of the Force, but his powerful quotes can help teach mental strength, motivation, discipline, perseverance, and the way of the Jedi. I always felt those cryptic Yoda quotes packed enough punch to awaken the force in any Padawan (apprentice Jedi).

A mentor can influence our very way of thinking and being - and the influence of a mentor can be for the positive or negative. Obi-Wan Kenobi, a Jedi Master, vowed to train Anakin Skywalker as a Jedi making Anakin his apprentice. Throughout the movie franchise Anakin is torn between the influence of the Light Side and the Dark Side. As Anakin grows stronger and more powerful (eventually surpassing his master), concern arises from Yoda and the Jedi Order about the Chosen One - Anakin was prophesized to bring balance to the Force by destroying the Dark side. Yoda warns Anakin to overcome his fear when he begins his training saying "Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering." This quote foreshadowed Anakin's eventual dark path as he transitioned into Darth Vader after being corrupted by a Sith Lord, becoming the most feared villain in the franchise.

I believe we can all relate to having a mentor - a person of significance and influence in our lives. Whether a family member, a friend or colleague, a mentor will come to play a significant influence on your life. Boys especially need and rely on their fathers for guidance, mentorship and discipline. Boys also rely on their fathers to model how to behave in the world and relationships. A father sets their son's concept of what a man is. Dad will be the first standard of masculinity in his son's life, and he'll be the one with the longest-lasting impact. One of the most important things boys learn from their dads is how to treat a woman. Research suggests that positive time a boy spends with his father can reduce the likelihood of him becoming anxious, depressed, or aggressive. Boys also crave warmth, affection, and tenderness from their fathers. Boys need their fathers to be present mentors, teachers and guardians. Research also shows that boys who grow up with absent fathers can suffer lasting damage. They are more likely to end up in poverty, drop out of school, become addicted to drugs, abuse women, have a child out of wedlock or end up in prison. Here is a scary statistic for you: It is estimated that 2.13 million children in South Africa is fatherless and 9 million grow up without fathers. Research shows that one out of two fathers is absent in his child's life in South Africa. What a tremendous challenge for us.

The need for daily contact and positive relationships with an adult or mentor is now more important than ever. Schools should play their roles in fostering and creating opportunities to develop leaders and mentors and encourage positive peer on peer relationships between older and younger boys as well as adults at school. Gone are the days of a power imbalance and ruling through fear. Positive mentor and mentee relationships are the order of the day. Focusing on positive relationships, in which the younger inexperienced boys are guided and mentored by the older boys and teachers in the traditions and values of the school, through a system of mutual respect (where respect is earned and not simply instilled by force). Those mentors who have the most significant impact on the lives of their mentees do it through compassion, kindness, respect and friendship. This goes on to result in a significant bond between mentor and mentee. A focus on relationships of mutual respect and brotherhood should be placed at the centre of conversations in schools and outdated traditions and ways of doing things need to be revised.

A mentor requires one to provide guidance, advice and feedback to the mentee. It also requires serving as a role model, teacher counselor, advisor, sponsor, advocate and ally thereby equipping the mentee with all their tools to become better versions of themselves (and to even surpass their mentor). Yoda says "We are what they grow beyond. That is the true burden of all masters."

"To be Jedi is to face the truth, and choose. Give off light, or darkness, Padawan. Be a candle, or the night." - Yoda. It is my hope you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God" - in doing so you will be the candle in the night. Fiat Lux.

Issue 78

31 May

I recall planning a lovely West Coast weekend away with my wife several years ago. We were gifted an opportunity to stay at the Port Owen Marina. The marina is in Velddrif approximately 150 km's from Cape Town. It has that real West Coast small town feel and is one of my favourite small towns to visit. Velddrif is known for its fishing industry, tourism, and salt production. Along the river's edge you find small coffee shops, abandoned fishing skiffs, and Bokkom factories in the world famous Bokkom Laan. The weekend turned out awesome, save for a slight complication.

On Friday morning having carefully planned 'cover' for my U14C water polo team, I walked into my Headmaster's office to request an early departure after school, having made all the necessary arrangements to ensure my team was well supervised in my absence. Seated at the table, I approached my headmaster whilst he was furiously typing away at his laptop and presented myself before his desk. He looked up and I proceeded to present my well thought out plan. I was met with a glare over the screen. What, What? Enough said. It was at this point that I made an about turn and scampered out the office. I was at my post at 16h00 that afternoon. My team was better warmed up, immaculately turned out, and more professional on arrival than ever before. I knew that my Headmaster would be in attendance (as he always was). I was not wrong. To me it felt like his eyes were burning a hole in the back of my head whilst he sat and watched the sport on offer. Afterwards the team and I were congratulated by the Headmaster, and the conversation continued as if nothing had happened. The experienced Headmaster knew no further input was required to correct the actions and intentions of his young and enthusiastic (but inexperienced teacher). Important lesson taught and learnt about responsibility and accountability.

I have had the privilege to work for two brilliant Headmasters, both of whom I have the world of respect for. Totally different individuals in terms of personality and approach. The example the Headmaster sets as leader plays an important role in the life of the school community. Like all leaders in a school (and in life) which include parents, teaching staff and pupil leadership, the headmaster is responsible for setting high expectations and modelling professionalism, responsibility, and accountability. The headmaster is also responsible for building relationships and forging connections within the school community and beyond. A great responsibility rests on the shoulders of a modern-day headmaster. Gone are the days of a draconian enforcer - an era when the corridor past the headmaster's office was empty of all human traffic. Setting an example through word and deed as well as creating opportunities for growth and learning is the best way a headmaster can foster professional growth and inculcate a sense of responsibility and accountability within the team.

Teachers as leaders needs to inculcate a sense of connection and a sense of responsibility and accountability amongst their pupils. The same can be said of a coach. They are responsible for creating a fertile teaching and learning environment based on positive relationships (connectedness) - one in which all members can make mistakes and fail, experiment and trial answers, interact and collaborate with others, teach, and learn from one another, and collectively support one another in achieving to the full potential of each individual and as a collective. The school environment is very much like a good percolator. The example set at the top filters down - headmaster, governors, teachers, senior pupils, coaches and parents etc. We all have a role to play. We all have responsibilities and are accountable to each other on different levels within the complex environment that is a school.

We all strive to raise respectable, responsible, and accountable young men. In order to do this, our actions and especially the actions of the young men of St Andrews need to model the behaviour expected from others. Remember: everything we do sends a message. This is what my Headmaster made me do that day. I sent the message to my team that nothing was more important than their match. If I had gone, what would I have said to a boy who later came to me wanting to go on a weekend away?

As always it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 79

7 June 2023

Driving back from Bethlehem with Gregg Hobson, I was reminded of a childhood memory when the both of us started singing to "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)" by The Proclaimers that came up on the radio.

I fondly remember sitting in the front seat of my father's Chevy Fleetside V8 bakkie. Once a term we would head out to Maselspoort on a Friday afternoon for a weekend of caravanning and camping. The short distance always felt an eternity because the road lay between us and a weekend filled with adventure. The trip to Maselspoort was made much shorter by having old school tunes played through the tape deck. 500 Miles became synonymous with our trip to Maselspoort. My brother and I would sing the song with great enthusiasm as we bounced around on the front seat. The only break in silence would be the momentary stop and start rewinding of the tape to get back to the start of the song. Inevitably the cassette was listened to so much that the tape eventually pulled out, crumpling up, and resulted in a crow's nest beyond repair. What a sad moment.

Old school tunes just seem to be the best. They are engrained into our psyche forming part of our mind and soul. I am sure that when your old school favourite pops up over the air ways, you like me, turn up the sound and sing along. What wonderful memories are brought back. It is even better when you have a partner who can sing the duet with you. In this case, the old school tune made me think of old school values. Try as they may, like a good tune, old school values don't go out of fashion. I am happy that my parents exposed me to these tunes. I so appreciate artists like Elvis, Neil Diamond, Creedence Clearwater Revival and Cat Stevens etc. Similarly, I believe that I was raised the old school way. Respect for elders, honesty, integrity, ownership, helping others, kindness were all non-negotiables. I was not allowed to party with friends and come and go as I wanted. Sometimes it felt that the 'old people' just did not get me, that they were wardens and me their unwilling prisoner. In many instances it just felt old fashioned and outdated. What did my parents know about being a teenager trying to navigate a world of social pressures, teenage parties, alcohol, cigarettes, and punk rock music. I look back to how much simpler it was then. The teenagers of today have so much more to contend with than we ever did. It is our responsibility to shield and protect as long as we can and ground them in those very same values by which we were raised.

Parents today need to be so much more awake. The world is upside down in many ways. At the risk of sounding old, the music being produced, makes no sense. Constant cussing, shouting, and womanizing seem to be the order of the day. It just does not sit right with me that our kids are listening to this. Cat Stevens sings "Oh very young what will you leave us this time? Will you carry on with our wars and hate? There'll never be a better chance to change your mind. Will you carry the words of love with you?" Bad Bunny on the other hand sings "You're horny and I'm horny. If I was your man, I'll post a photo on Friday and Monday. So that everyone sees how sexy you are". Not such sound advice for young men today. As a disclaimer I had no reason for searching Bad Bunny, other than having watched the latest paper view WWE event where Bad Bunny was marketed as being host. He has considerable reach considering he has 44.9 million followers – is your child one of them?

"Yes, I'm Old School. I have good manners. I show others respect and I will always help those who need me. It's not because I'm old fashioned, it's because I was raised properly". Like a golden oldie, old school values never go out of fashion. As always, I hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 80

14 June

The phrase "boys will be boys" dates back to 1589 originating from a Latin proverb "sunt pueri pueri, pueri puerillia tractant". The proverb means "boys are boys and will act like boys". Many societies have been saying some form of "boys will be boys" for at least 2500 years. The phrase is often used in schools as well. Our job as adults is to change the thinking to "boys must become men".

Reflecting on my camping trips to Maselspoort in my newsletter last week reminded me of one of those times when boys will be boys. One of the uncle's from a neighbouring caravan had a beautiful Olive snake. He allowed the inquisitive youngsters to view and pet the snake. It was then that my

brother and I decided we too would like a snake. Our parents were not going to buy us one, so we needed to make a plan. Off we went into the koppies of the Maselspoort surrounds. Turning over stones and searching crevices we eventually discovered a prize Naja nivea in an old wooden stump. We returned to the caravan with a one meter long 'Geel Slang' – also known as a Cape Cobra. Our bright yellow snake sent the adults screaming off in various directions as we made our way across the campgrounds. My father and a couple of the uncles forcefully pried the snake from us and dropped it, dancing and hopping about, as the snake shot off across the lawn back into the veld.

This past week the freezing temperatures set in over Bloemfontein. We experienced our first minus temperatures and resulted in the emerald-green fields, now being turned snow white as the frost set in. A video surfaced on Facebook of four boys running and skating along the frost designing a wonderful St Andrew's badge in the middle of the field. I suppose the boys thought it wise to keep warm in the crisp morning air, and what better way of showing their love for the school. In the afternoon I was approached by an unimpressed rugby coach after he discovered the brown emblem emblazoned on the main rugby field. We are due to play host to the Independent Schools Festival in just two weeks. I could not help but chuckle to myself and even like the video on Facebook.

Boys often do things without thinking (with no malicious intent). I often sit with red faced parents and share with them the adage that when you have one boy you have one semi-functional brain, when you have two boys you have half a brain, and three, a third and so it goes on. School is an environment where boys must be allowed to make mistakes. If we claim to understand boys, we must understand that boys often behave like a pack of Jack Russell's. They will push boundaries, they are competitive and will challenge one another and they will make mistakes. School should be an environment like that on a farm. The sheepdog (adults) needs to keep moving and guiding the sheep (boys) forward (career) between the electric fence (boundaries). The electric fence is there to help remind the sheep that should they touch the fence they will experience a shock (consequence). The presence of adults' results in a scenario where the possibility of young men being removed from the gene pool, can be avoided – just like my brother and me.

"Boys will be boys" must never be used as an excuse for thoughtless, crass or inconsiderate behaviour, and our job as adults is to change the thinking to "boys must become men". For example a group of boys standing and catcalling or whistling as a young lady walks by – one cannot minimise this by suggesting in a light-hearted way that this is typical male behaviour – it is not. One can never dismiss bad behaviour. Boys clearly need to understand that there are consequences for actions and must be held accountable for bad behaviour. School is a place where mistakes can be made, and where the adults come along with a safety net catching the boys as they fall. The consequences for mistakes after school are so much more serious. At Saints, we hope to raise boys who chose to put their foot on the brake instead of the accelerator when faced with the choice of speeding over a yellow robot. Young men, who think before they act, responsible, respectable fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons.

I like the metaphor of the bridge of adolescence taking boys into manhood, crossing over the waters of adolescent temptations. On the other side are the male role models setting the example of acceptable ways of tackling the trials and tribulations of teenagerhood. Occasionally while on the bridge, boys look back at their boyhood. They might even slip backwards sometimes. All this is normal, and they rely on good men to help them back on and over the bridge of troubled water. Boys need to be mentored and coached through the inevitable challenges of life.

I found this quote on a website: "Boys will be boys, or so they say, but I am raising my boy to be a man one day. Shouting is not nice and kicking hurts. Nobody likes their face in the dirt. So, boys that fight, kick and shout will be boys that sit in TIME OUT!" I include, boys will also be playful and silly, self-confident and courageous, dependable, loyal and faithful, intelligent and kind, vulnerable and loving, honourable, fair and ethical.

"Puer iustus est ille sed crescet ut homo sit unus dies" - He's just a boy but will grow to be a man one day.

As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 81

20 July

“A son is the clearest reflection of his father in the world.” Happy Father's Day to all the fathers out there! Salute to those dads and father figures who are present, sacrifice, are kind and caring, show up and are the foundations of their families.

The origin of Father's Day is credited to Sonora Smart Dodd of Washington, whose father, a civil war veteran, raised her and her five siblings after their mother died in childbirth. She is said to have had the idea in 1909 when listening to a sermon on Mother's Day. Local religious leaders came to support the idea, and the first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910, the month of the birth of Dodd's father. Like so many others today, Dodd, recognised the role her father played in raising her and her five siblings. Not having a mother, the role of her father in their lives must have been brought into focus whilst sitting in church, listening to that sermon, bringing honour to a mother she never knew. I can only assume that she must have been filled with mixed emotions and this must have sparked an intense desire to celebrate and recognize the most important person in her life - her father.

It is important to remember that Father's Day does not only celebrate and honour biological fathers, but also other males such as grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers, adoptive fathers, mentors or others considered father figures (or who have assumed parenting roles). Celebrating Father's Day is both a honour and privilege, but also bestows a responsibility upon fathers being a call to action for ‘fathers’. Being a father / father figure, is a massive responsibility when raising a future generation of men. Now more than ever South Africa and the world need responsible, loving, ethical, respectful, caring, kind, intelligent, trustworthy, dependable, faithful men.

The role and influence of my father in both the life of my brother and I is not lost on me. Ever present and involved, disciplinarian, adventurer, provider and protector. The main buck in the household, we knew exactly where we stood. Fishing and surf instructor, millwright, astrologist, geologist, biologist, teacher, agronomist, farmer, leader, handyman, carpenter and all round 'jack of all trades' best sums up the role my father played in our lives. We were privileged to grow up with an involved and present father, as well as involved and present men (grandfathers and uncles). The presence of men shaped our sense of identity - much of my life experience comes from my father. I grew up next to the sporting fields, on boats, and in nature. I can also recall Grandpa Roland, taking my brother and I out to sea at the age of 80 (on the boat that he built). Not only were we schooled in fishing that day, the two young 'skiewies' both turned green and fed the fish whilst the old man enjoyed the lovely, packed luncheon for three. At age 80, he was still able to 'school' his two grandsons, who thought they had what it takes to brave a rough sea. I think back now, and realize the old man took us to sea with no GPS, navigating on gut instinct and using landmarks - always finding the fish. My Uncle imparted a love of the railway and air force. Our traveling together over holidays took us to weird and wonderful destinations across the country.

Boys need their male role models. There is simply no escaping this. Growing up without a father figure negatively affects a boy. In 2016, it was estimated that 2.13 million children in South Africa were fatherless, and 9 million grow up without fathers, a tremendous fatherhood challenge for the country. South Africa is also reported to have the highest percentage of absent fathers in Africa, second only to Namibia. The Statistics South Africa General Household Survey of 2016 also shows that 71% of children under the age of 17 live with an adult man in the same household. It is also widely accepted that the absence of fathers plays a very significant role in gang problems – just look at the Cape Flats. Many boys without fathers develop a swaggering and intimidating persona in an attempt to disguise their underlying fears, resentments, anxieties, anger, disappointment, feelings of rejection and unhappiness. The absence of a father undeniably results in a lot of pain causing irreparable damage, increasing the chances of risk taking behaviour – smoking, drinking, drugs, sexual immorality etc.

When a boy appears in my office in regards to more serious psychological, emotional and disciplinary matters, I guess that in 75% of the cases these boys come from a household where there is a uninvolved, absent or abusive male role model. I base this also on my observation of the lack of presence of fathers in my office when serious conversations are to be had. It is heart-breaking to hear a boy yearning for recognition of his father and for confirmation of his sense of identity as a man. For example it means the world to boys to have their father standing beside the sport field or other activities cheering them on calling their name, being present and interested.

To check my gut feel, I decided to contact several heads of schools, psychologists and heads of pastoral support. I was not surprised by their feedback. It was disproportionately high indicating that the absence of fathers or male role models (or present but abusive fathers), resulted in emotional, psychological and behavioural issues. At least two from those asked reported they felt it was as high as 90% of boys who had issues, came from single parent families with no male role model present. Others reported that they felt between 70 and 80% of troublesome boys came from single parent families where the father was absent. One reported that "We had an intervention with most of the trouble makers in our secondary school – they were all fatherless", whilst another reported "Most of the boys misbehaving have no father figure". A departmental official reported that from their experience "most of the problem learners come from families with fathers who are in the military or law enforcement because they behave as disciplinarians and create antagonism in the family bordering on abuse". One of the mental health professionals said that most of the young people seen by them "are so desperate for an emotional connection with their dad, like their dad showing small things like physical affection i.e. giving a hug and telling them that they love them and are proud of them".

Most boys will get into trouble at some stage, but a good father mentors them through that. Boys get something from their fathers – a sense of belonging, acknowledgement and validation, a sense of direction, love and identity. Boys who lack a caring male are at real risk of getting into real trouble and losing their way and identity. As teachers we are privileged to be working with these young men. Teachers should never forget the role they play in the lives of boys as well. A mental health professional commented that "what most of the young men who had absent fathers did, was they managed to find teachers. Teachers have filled the roles of fathers in different stages of their lives. Teachers become their psychological father".

As always it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 82

20 July

The word Loadshedding is sure to raise the ire and get the blood boiling of any South African. The irritation of having life disrupted is just unacceptable.

Over the past term, there was an increase in frequency of loadshedding. I recall starting term 2 at stage 6 - yes stage 6, and just when we were returning from Easter holiday. There were no way things were going to improve when everyone got back to work and the demand for energy increased seemingly exponentially - and it did get worse.

Over this holiday I had some time to sit, breathe a bit and reflect. I don't want to minimize the negative impact and effect of loadshedding on the economy, interest rates, rand strength and all the other associated negatives that come with it. I also have some choice words for those who have broken Eskom and looted the state. However, in reflecting on a personal level, loadshedding came to mean something different and provide much needed 'downtime' from the hustle and bustle of the business of an 'always on' lifestyle. The reality is we are not able to switch off. We are always connected and switched on but are in fact more disconnected and less in touch with ourselves than ever. TV, Cell phones, Wi-Fi, Social Media, Emails, electronic devices have us so hooked and caught up that it reminds me of the movie The Matrix. We live our lives through avatars and portray images and stories far from reality. People are keyboard cowboys and believe they can say and act anyway they want behind a screen. The introduction of AI, now speaking and thinking for us has got me really worried. Videos of AI avatars speaking of morals, religion etc. abound on social media networks. Yes - take a moment to think about that - AI telling us what to think, AI speaking and writing for us... Scary times. I don't think we should take this lightly.

Loadshedding as mentioned provided me with forced downtime. It provided an opportunity to reconnect with my family. Extended power outages meant we found ourselves sitting around the same table - eating and playing board games by candlelight. Board games and card games are just different to playing something on the screen. People are present, it is much more intimate and personal. Getting to bed early in the evening, being forced to read a book before bedtime, having a conversation with one's spouse and kids before bed proved to be such a blessing. At work, power outages meant getting out of the office and out into the passage and fields. The boredom or not having to answer a never-ending stream of emails proved to be a blessing. Being forced home early in the afternoon to a family at home - what a blessing.

COVID taught us many things and forced us into doing things differently. The one thing it did do in the initial stages - it forced downtime. The world in many ways came to a standstill. It forced us to slow down, and it forced families together. It would seem, that post COVID we have come to forget the important lessons taught - life and time is precious. In many ways it would seem we have gone into overdrive trying to make up for lost time - how silly.

Loadshedding to me has become a reminder to do exactly that - shed the load and stop and breathe. I try not look at or plan for loadshedding unless I really must. It has changed my perspective and perhaps life is simpler when the power is off. I have come to love the saying "God gave Europe the watch, but he gave Africa the time." It helps put things into perspective for me. Loadshedding provides me with time that I never had. Perhaps it can for you too.

As always it is my hope that you will do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 83

26 July

There is an Indian Proverb that reads "Blessed is he who plants trees under whose shade he will never sit."

The word Legacy comes from latin 'legatus' who was a messenger sent from Rome to other countries and tribes. In time, the word came to be used as something that is left behind or 'sent on' from one family member to another generation in the form of money, goods or land. Today it still has that meaning - and more. It is not only something tangible left to future generations but also a culture and a way of doing things.

This week we launched our 160th Astro Legacy Project. Those who walk these grounds today, are privileged beneficiaries, of a legacy left by those who went before us. Much of the beautiful facilities we have access to at St Andrew's, are the product of a dream and ambition to do something remarkable. In 1954, the decision was taken to embark on an ambitious plan of building our own school Chapel. At that time the Chapel was foreseen at a time of financial crisis, yet despite that, the Chapel planned and built by 1956. The school magazine of 1955 acknowledges a long list of personal donations to the Chapel fund. In his address at Speech Day in December 1955, Mr Harison, then headmaster, expressed his gratitude to the Ladies' Committee for their donation to the Chapel Bell – which tolls to this day.

Our Lindsay Tuckett High Performance Centre, started with the concept of a Farm Shed, providing a facility for aspiring cricketers to plough their trade. What we ended with was a world class facility, that spring boarded our Cricket forward. Our school community reap the benefits of a facility built with the loyal support of Old Boys' and members of the school community.

The tireless efforts on the part of Colin Hickling and members of the school board secured the use of Victoria Park. Efforts around Victoria Park, started early in the 2000's and it was only in 2013, that these efforts were paid off. Countless hours and personal sacrifice went into this project, yielding both Little Saints and the Saints Club. The facilities itself were once again refurbished and upgraded through efforts of the school community.

Our state-of-the-art waterless Astro will be the first of its kind in Africa. Work has already started, with the grass on our beloved Cabbage Patch, being lifted as part of the Mandela Day Community Outreach, and donated to Relebeletse – a underprivileged school. To date the fund raising initiated has received support the Saints community for which I am thankful. Much work lies ahead of us, and I encourage the whole Saints community to get behind this project – because we will be leaving a legacy. Our current community and generations to come will reap the benefits of the work we do today.

We all have different means of supporting, whether it be time, or expertise, both are invaluable and necessary. We also all move within various circles of influence and are able to shift opinion and sentiment in support of this Legacy Project which I encourage you to do as well. We need the community on board and supporting this drive, and the reality is that we need you to contribute financially. Whether you are able to contribute R100 monthly, or you are able to give R200 000 as a

once off donation, we need your support. There are various ways to get involved with supporting the Legacy Project.

1. Why get involved? Because you are leaving a Legacy, like those before you. Those who gave, so that your son may enjoy the privilege, he does today.
2. Why not raise school fees or use school fees? The SA Schools Act is clear, school fees may not be used for Capital Projects, thus the reality is the funds need to be raised through fundraising initiatives and donors – which is why we need every member of the Saints community on board.
3. The Astro is our collective responsibility. It is our job in this world to make it a better place for those who come after us - be it our family, our community or our schools. As a parent, old boy, teacher or pupil of this school, what would you like to 'send on' as your legacy?

As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires, "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 84 2 August

My alarm buzzed me awake on Friday morning launching the early morning trip. I had to have my daughter at Eunice for her hockey tour by 3am. The dogs seemingly uninterested in the early morning movement remained tucked away under the blankets as we braved the morning freeze. A final pit stop along the way at the garage to stock the last bit of 'padkos' and we were good to go. On arrival at Eunice the evening air was filled the sporadic light from the headlights of cars, and one was able to discern bodies moving in the dark much like that of a zombie horde. Between the morning groans one could on the odd occasion hear a word of goodbye as the younglings left their drivers behind.

The trip on Friday reminded me of the many occasions as schoolboy that I went on tour. The skills and life lessons learnt were invaluable. We are privileged at schools like Saints and Eunice, to have the opportunity for our children to go on tours. Bloemfontein is also such that we have a bit of a travel culture. When I was in Cape Town, I was always astounded by the amount of people (old and young) who never left the borders of the Republic of the Western Cape. Whilst living in Cape Town I must admit that my wife accused me on occasion of living in a bubble. My radius of operation was Wynberg, Muizenberg, Fish Hoek, Gordons Bay and Hout Bay over weekends and the West Coast, Overberg or Garden Route if I felt like a bit of a road trip. In Bloemfontein over the last year and a half I have visited destinations in eight of the nine provinces for work and recreation. Similarly, my daughter has been on more tours and seen more places than in her years in Cape Town.

The skill of learning to pack a tour bag is an art. One can so easily spot the 'seasoned' tourist vs the beginner. The experienced tourist just makes it seem so easy. This skill afforded our children from an early age is a invaluable opportunity. I can identify three stages of packing for tours that one goes through. Stage 1 is when Mom packs your bag for you. Your role in the matter is simply to make sure you are present to walk the corridor fetching and delivering the necessary tick box items at the demand of your mother. Every item is meticulously packed, and in fact you probably have double of what is needed just in case. Padkos is sorted along with pocket money. Stage 2 is when you start packing for yourself. Mom is no longer involved other than providing you with prompts and reminders. Generally essential items are forgotten, there is an excessive number of unnecessary items for just in case, and there are simply too many bags making for a very uncomfortable trip. Stage 3 only comes after a couple of unpleasant trips and lessons learnt. It is here where the seasoned campaigner stands out. Light compact and easy touring are the name of the game. Clothes and underwear can be worn unthinkably more than once, in fact, one often returns with less intentionally than when one started. Having the opportunity to tour provides this experience and learning curve for our children and much more.

A bus carrying 60 odd persons proves to be quite an experience. An early morning departure generally means it is going to be very cold on the bus. Yes, in my day there was no heater. In fact it was mandatory to keep some windows open, which inevitably meant a jostle for who the unlucky persons who would be having the minus degrees wind howling over them like a Cape South Easter. As the first rays of the sun would break, the bus would come to life, with someone generally at the back of the bus playing some loud music. The smell of breakfast padkos would waft throughout the bus. You can clearly discern between last night's take aways and mom's home-made goodness.

Inevitably someone would open a tinfoil selection of wrapped boiled eggs or chicken which meant it was game over for smells on the bus. The trading and sharing of foods (excluding boiled eggs of course) between members also created for good conversation and special bonds. As the bus came to life, music from the aspiring DJ at the back, would be transferred to the bus sound system to great irritation of the teachers. I do however think most of us learnt a lot about music genres on these bus trips. At pit stops one needed to strategically plan - you could not get to the bathroom and stand in line to order food at the same time. Inevitably one would negotiate with a friend as to who needed the bathroom the most, whilst the other would place and pay for the food order, to be relieved later by the returning bathroom-goer.

Any mistake in planning or delay in action would result in disappointment of being chased back to the bus without your food order. A couple hours into the trip are when things would get interesting... Now gorged to maximum capacity, people would start feeling the effects of motion sickness or of the mix of copious amounts of processed foods. The smell of farts and burps, the first warning signs, would alert you as to what is to follow. The foul smell of vomit or someone doing the unthinkable in the lavatory set in motion a series of eruptions with the bus coming to an abrupt halt having to face the ire of both teacher/coach and bus driver.

The journey, especially on the way back, with sleep deprived and exhausted, battered, and bruised bodies, always seemed unending. Arriving back at home, one was immediately filled with a sense of appreciation to see your parents and make your way to your own bed or couch - those comforts taken for granted daily. Inventory and stock usually takes place a day later, and it is then when the inexperienced come to discover what all was left behind for failing to check accommodation and the bus on exit.

Having the opportunity to tour and sleep away from home provides our children with an almost exponential growth curve. They make memories that will last a lifetime. They learn real life lessons and skills, that will stand them in good stead in the future. They forge bonds with friends and their coaches and teachers. For many of our children this is the closest thing to fending for themselves that they will experience whilst at school, other than school camps offsite for example. I see touring as an integral part of the school experience for our children. Whilst much has changed since I was young, (I would argue our tours were more challenging), the experience remains similar. I was privileged to tour on trains, something we are no longer able to do, but now we can fly or travel on good 'ol faithful – the 60-seater bus. I just hope staff insist on boys putting their phones down and interact with each other like we did - that is part of the magic.

As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 85

10 August

On Wednesday we celebrated National Women's Day. For many, the day may simply be an opportunity to sleep in late and enjoy a much-needed mid-week break. There is however, so much more to Women's Day. I feel we need to take time and reflect on the significance of the day.

Women's Day marks the anniversary of the great women's march of 1956. Over 60 years ago, on the 9th of August 1956, more than 20,000 South African women of all races staged a march on the Union Buildings in protest against the proposed amendments to the Urban Areas Act of 1950, commonly referred to as the "pass laws". The march was led by Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophia Williams.

National Women's Day draws attention to significant issues women still face in our Democratic South Africa, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, pornography, unequal pay, schooling for all girls, discrimination and sexism.

Boys schools have a significant role to play in recognizing the importance of women in society and in our lives. Boys schools also have an important role in educating the boys about and correcting past injustice when it comes to the fairer sex.

A woman who made a significant impact on my life was my grade 1 teacher, Mrs Dot Dippenaar. One of my most vivid memories of my childhood is my first day in grade 1. My mother handed me over to my new caregiver, nurturer and teacher.

An interesting statistic is that by the time a boy leaves grade 1, at the tender age of 7, a boy has spent approximately 14% of his life in the care of his teacher. Mrs Dippenaar made a significant impact on me, like so many others, who followed after in her care. I have been very fond of her ever since.

Boys are fortunate and privileged to be in the care of loving ladies from an early age. At Saints we are blessed with dedicated and passionate ladies across the grades. Our ladies are involved in academics, sport, culture and service. The ladies at our school bring balance. They temper the male testosterone. They provide the motherly touch and love needed to prevent a 'Lord of the Flies' scenario that no doubt would exist in an environment of unchecked male ego. The ladies of our school provide a much-needed space for the boys where they can display affection and ask for advice. Many of our boys crave the care and attention of a mother figure so often missing in their own lives.

Respect for women is a non-negotiable at St Andrew's. We hold the women of our school, the girls in our sister schools and females in general in high regard. We expect of our boys to display good old-fashioned manners. Boys are expected to open doors for the ladies, allow ladies to go first, help with carrying equipment, and always engage in a respectful manner. Our boys are constantly reminded to appreciate the women in their lives.

I take my hat off to the ladies in our Pre-School and Foundation Phase for the way they handle the limitless energy of 25 energizer bunnies. I am convinced that there would be a massacre if a male was asked to do the same. I salute the ladies in the older grades where the boys are shown the ropes by strong women having to manage adolescent teens. Managing a teen at home proves problematic enough, but our ladies manage to educate and get these young men to pass - remember this... Our longest serving staff member Mrs Kerry Gower is the epitome of a lady, and a loving mother figure to many a generation of boys. She is our Matriarch and a Saints legend. The boys need the special ladies of Saints, and I am thankful for their contribution to building our school and our community.

As always it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God."

Issue 86

16 August

It has been two years this month since my appointment at St Andrew's. I clearly recall my interview that took place in the Centenary Hall. An intimidating panel made up of Board Members, Departmental Officials and Union Representatives – approximately twenty in total arranged in a U-shape, with all eyes on me. Admittedly they are certainly not as intimidating now as back then (since I have got to know them). What a special group of people we have at Saints.

I think back to my interview and the most pertinent question asked was, "What my vision for St Andrew's is". To create a school where every boy feels he belongs. A school focused on relationships – between the boys, staff, and parents – the entire Saints community. A school where every boy is free to be himself and buys into the vision and ethos of the school. A school focused on values and traditions, where we constantly re-evaluate and reflect on meaningful and relevant traditions. A school where we understand boys and where we understand that we are working with a parents most precious possession.

Two years later, I reflect on whether I have stayed true to my North Star. Barak Obama spoke of the importance of having a North Star. He said, "There are gonna be a core set of values that shouldn't be up for debate." It is important to have a North Star because it guides everything we do and guides us in the direction we should be aiming. Sometimes we need to readjust the direction we are moving, by going backwards or sideways or around obstacles, but constantly correcting our direction back towards our North Star.

Over the two years I have been asked on multiple occasions why I write a weekly newsletter. The answer is that I do it because I want the community to get to know me, I want to constantly reflect and crystalise my thoughts processes, and I hope to share some lessons learnt along my journey. Much of what I have to share is not education specific perse. Some make time to read it, whilst others disregard it. It does however provide a point of reference when visited by parents and staff.

I try, as Barak Obama said, keep a core set of non-negotiable values as a focal point for all we do at school. Our House System, focused on relationships, offers all-encompassing pastoral care to all the boys at school. Our Chapel is the heart of the school providing spiritual direction. We continue to

hold on to the rich heritage and traditions of generations past, whilst embracing the new in a quest to remain relevant. Two years on and I reflect on where we are. I am pleased to say that I believe we are still moving in the right direction. The surest confirmation of this of course will be, will be what our boys have to say.

As always, it remains my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; “Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God.”

Issue 87

23 August 2023

In conversation this past week, I got speaking about my SeSotho Mama, and reminisced about a time I found myself safely nestled, snug as a bug in a rug, strapped to my SeSotho Mama’s back, when I was but a wee baby. My children too had the privilege of being raised on the back of another South African, their own isiXhosa Mama, Cindy.

I often smile to myself when I see the next generation cocooned to the back of their African Mama. Resistance to being wrapped up proved to be futile and one soon learnt to accept one’s fate. Hands and legs bound in an embrace likened to a Koala Bear hugging a tree. Face peering out from above the blanket with wide inquisitive eyes like that of a bush baby. We were educated by the ‘back’... The world was surveyed, and destinations explored from atop a vantage point of our Mamas back. Any mischief was put to a swift end by being swung over and around the shoulder, to a position where we could cause no further harm. Skin shimmering and hair neatly combed with a healthy dose of Vaseline meant we looked our best. The best kind of sleep also was that of your face resting on the back with the swaying motions as your Mama went about with daily chores. I learnt so much from my African Mama, my first caregiver. Be it young or old, when my African Mama spoke, I listened. I think many a South African can relate. I was raised on the back of a South African. I am African, I am South African, and proud of it.

Our country is a beautiful country, a rich and dynamic country of cultures, religions and races historically worlds apart that come together and make it work. Our country is unique like that. Against all odds, despite what problems we face or differences we have, South Africans always find a way to make it work. Our people are adaptable, enterprising, resourceful, creative and innovative. We have multiple examples of leaders who have made a significant impact on the global stage;

- Tata Madiba our first democratically elected president, global activist and Nobel Peace Prize Winner,

- Christiaan Barnard the surgeon who pioneered the first successful heart transplant,
- Mahatma Gandhi: spiritual leader and political and world activist,
- Nkosi Johnson: child HIV / AIDS activist who died of the disease,
- Desmond Tutu: spiritual leader and Nobel Peace Prize Winner,
- J. R. R. Tolkien author who wrote The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings (also born in Bloemfontein).

When I googled top great leaders of the world, Mathama Gandhi and Nelson Mandela were ranked 1 and 2 respectively, above the likes of Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King Jr and Abraham Lincoln to name but a few. We have so much to celebrate about being South African, and we need to keep perspective and focus on the positives as opposed the hang-ups around Eskom as example. My view is that the plethora of issues with Eskom, is simply accelerating our path toward green and renewable energy. There is already talk of Eskom becoming redundant in the Western Cape. Many households all around us are already reaping the benefits of freeing themselves from the grid. Where else in the world do you have a country where you are encouraged to celebrate your cultural heritage by lighting a fire for a good old braai.

Our schools should be reflective of our society and bring together all members of our society. Our learners need to be exposed to the rich variety of cultures and races, languages and traditions woven into the fabric of our country. In this way learners are turned out better equipped to interact with the various individuals they will be interacting with on a daily basis. At Saints our community is privileged to have families from all walks of life. From privileged to the underprivileged, our boys sit next to one another in class, play together on the playground and sports fields and attend Chapel where they sing and pray together. Our parents meet up daily in the parking lot and stand next to one another along the sport fields chatting amongst each other and supporting their sons. Our Old Boys visit the school, and create opportunities for the next generation in a variety of different fields of work. As a school we reach out to and support the community and fellow schools. A school like ours

is an asset to the community and country and plays an invaluable role building our nation. Not all learners who attend St Andrew's come from a privileged background, but all learners who matriculate at our school do.

I would like for our school to be known as a school for the ordinary person / *gewone mens* / *motho ya tlwaelehileng* with a focus on creating a diverse and inclusive community, built on relationships. As always it is my hope that you will do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 88

30 August 2023

We have five rescue hounds, all of them of the Afrikanis breed, meaning they are street *brakke*. What I know for sure is that their mother was a dog and their father was a dog. They are a mix and match of varying shapes and sizes. Each with their own distinctive personality and each occupying their own space and place within their pack and the household. Scarlett is the eldest and the matriarch. Chrissy, the biggest is a real flower child. Bonnie the smallest has the brains. Then we have the brothers of destruction Kylo and Eddie.

Scarlett and Chrissy the two older females, love going for a ride in the car. Chrissy is like my shadow, following me where I go. Scarlett is the protector of my daughter. We both share a special bond with our Hound. One could argue that both on the receiving end of some special treatment, although not blatantly obvious. There are after all three other hounds vying for attention as well. I decided to take it upon myself to take Chrissy for a ride in the mornings to Eunice when I drop my daughter off. Chrissy shakes with excitement as she sneaks off to the *bakkie* whilst the other hounds are preoccupied in the garden – we worked out a strategy for her to slip out unnoticed. It was not long before my daughter expressed the wish of having her hound, Scarlett, accompany the morning 'Uber'. It was not long before Chrissy became much more reserved about hopping into the back of the *bakkie*. The sense of excitement that Chrissy experienced daily, was soon dampened by having to occupy the same space as Scarlett. Scarlett being the protector of my daughter and alpha female did not enjoy sharing the space with Chrissy, making the ride an unpleasant experience for Chrissy. Chrissy no longer wanted to accompany us in the event of Scarlett arriving to join in on the trip. I could not bear leaving my hound behind after the excitement initially shown. I resolved the matter by loading Chrissy into the back seat whilst Scarlett occupied the boot – things quickly returned to normal. Chrissy and I now have wonderful conversations whilst listening to my favourite playlist as we travel back to Saints in the morning, whilst Scarlett gets to stick her nose out in the morning air - peace restored.

My pack of hounds often remind me of working with boys. I believe it fitting to liken a group of boys to a pack of Jack Russels. Jack Russels, like boys, are competitive, test boundaries and establish a pecking order in and amongst themselves. Every member of the pack has its own distinctive personality and build, that plays a role in determining its place within the pack. A Jack Russel by its very nature, does not understand its own size – so similar to a young boy. Jack Russels are often used in lion farms to teach the bigger male cubs what it means to be a member of a pack by giving the lion a 'hiding' when needed. The fearless Jack Russel is of course removed from the pen for its own good when the young male lion gets its first burst of testosterone. It is then when the situation becomes dangerous for the little Jack Russel – not that this fearless little dog is bothered by this. Sound similar to a young man?

Whilst both my daughter and I love our hounds, it was not acceptable for Scarlett to make the ride unpleasant for Chrissy. In the same way it is in no way acceptable for any boy to make the 'ride' unpleasant for another boy - at school or elsewhere. I realize of course, that at home your experience of your son may be that he is the most adorable, well-behaved, respectable, and idyllic young man. In reality, the lived experience of another, may not share this sentiment. Believe it or not, but your son may in fact be interfering with and making life unpleasant for another boy through his words, actions or cyber behaviour. We don't love them less for this but it is important for us as adults to regularly 'check' the behaviour of our young men discussing expectations and appropriate behaviours with them.

I often tell the boys that:

- A joke is only a joke if both parties are laughing.
- No means No. It does not mean maybe.
- You don't have the right to determine how another person must feel or react about your behaviour, actions or words towards them.
- If you won't do or say something in front of your mother, then it is not ok.
- By accident is not an accident, if it is repetitive behaviour.
- Being older does not mean you get to determine what someone must do for you or that someone must respect you – respect is earned.
- Just because it was done to you, does not mean it must be done to someone else.
- Bullying on social media is just as harmful as other bullying. Don't encourage bullies by liking or sharing their comments or posts.
- Liking or sharing a post or image that is inappropriate, hurtful or done without permission qualifies as an act of defamation.
- No one has the right to undermine, humiliate, intimidate, hurt or otherwise negatively impact the life of another person no matter how normal, talented, intelligent, odd, awkward or quirky they are. Bullies do that, and there is no place for bullies in school, work or society in general.

Parents need to take an active role in modelling appropriate behaviours and have real and meaningful conversations with their sons about what it means to be a good man. When speaking with boys, I often refer to this quote that reads "Blowing out someone else's candle doesn't make yours shine any brighter".

As always it is my hope that you will do as the Prophet Micah requires, "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 89

7 September

At the heart of the City of Roses, lies St Andrew's School, established in 1863. A story of a school as old as and interwoven in the history of the city of Bloemfontein, established as a Fort by British army Major Douglas Warden in 1846. When you enter the sandstone memorial gates, established in honour of those who fell during World War 2, you are flanked on by an impressive row of trees and your eyes are immediately drawn to the Chapel, the heart of the school, established at the very centre of the campus. This is where you will come to meet the men in blue. There are now 189 Schools in the City of Bloemfontein, 3032 Schools in the Province of the Free State and 24 900 Schools in South Africa. Not every boy who enters through our gates comes from a privileged background, but every boy who leaves us does.

St Andrew's school has been in the business of educating 160 years' worth of generations who have passed through this institution. Old Andreans still visit their beloved school, adorned in their black blazers, and will once again be congregating for festivities this weekend for this year's Central Reunion. I hope to see many a past generation joining their alma mater in the 160th year of our existence. The Old Andreans are an important link of our community and play an important role as custodians of the values of St Andrew's. Whilst much has changed, I am sure that Old Andreans visiting the school will attest to the fact that much remains the same. Values and morals founded on Christian principals remain deeply entrenched in the DNA of the school. Manners, respect for others, humility, self-discipline, pride in appearance, brotherhood and camaraderie are still the foundation of a good Saints education.

Walking the corridors, I am so proud to be associated with this school. I wrote in one of my earliest newsletters that one can hear the whispers and feel the heritage of this great school. There is just something different about Saints. Visitors to the school often remark on what they can best describe as the characteristic spirit of the culture of the school. Be it the boys in blue greeting visitors and the manners shown to these visitors, the old historical buildings, or world class facilities, or the professional, caring and supportive staff, the culture of the school permeates all who enter the gates or interact with members of the community, leaving them asking themselves what it is about this school that makes them feel this way. It got me thinking...

Gordon Forbes, Old Andean from the class of 1950 said "Ethos, ethic, culture, call it what you like. There is something about St Andrew's that strikes a very rare balance – grand, but not too grand, modest, but not too modest, proud, but humble, stylish, yet simple, warm-hearted, down-to-earth, practical, with a touch of nobility overlaid by a sense of humour. It was a suitable ethos – perhaps too elusive for young minds – so that it would be years later that we would be able to sum up our feelings in a single sentence. Saints, we would decide, was a serious school that managed to avoid taking itself too seriously!"

St Andrews will continue to service the City of Bloemfontein and the surrounding community for generations to come. Long after we are all gone, it is my hope that the boys in blue continue to build on the legacy of generations past, staying true to our founding principles, and continue to serve as a beacon of hope living out our motto: Fiat Lux – Let There be Light. As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God."

Issue 90

14 September

I think many of us can relate to that time old, honoured tradition, of absolute silence in the SA household between 19h00 and 20h00. Depending on your home language spoken, it meant that SABC 1 2 or 3, dictated what 30-minute period you were required to be silent. The jingle to the evening news bulletin signalled for all and sundry to stop moving about and be quiet. The adults positioned themselves in their recliner chairs, favourite 'cooldrink' or coffee in hand, poised to watch the latest new headlines. Any disruption to the news would result in a prompt scolding or a hiding. Young and old gathered in the same room for fear of missing out. The news anchors of the 80's and 90's were somewhat celebrities in their own right. Riaan Cruywagen, born in 1945 was a veteran news leader, with a career spanning nearly half a century – and he never aged a day... Riaan's signature signoff at the end of the bulletin; "Good day", raising his right hand, and making a goodbye wave and hand salute to viewers signalled the return to normality. Children were free to move about, and the household returned to life once again.

I tend to avoid the news these days. I find so little positive news being disseminated on radio and TV. The never-ending increased cost to living with the latest interest rate hike, fuel and food price increase, the latest corruption scandal and Eskom drama seem to hog all that is ever spoken about. The only thing that interests me now is the weather. I find life simpler by avoiding the news in all its forms, and focus rather on looking for the positives that surround me. One could so easily get despondent about living in South Africa. At the Mom's Night Out last week, the power went off leaving the venue dark, but the Moms were not so much as moved. No moan or groan or shock, the conversations and laughter continued. I could not help but chuckle to myself. The same happened in Checkers. The power went out, cell phones were whipped out to light up the isles, and people went about their shopping with the generators kicking in after several minutes. At the local garage I watched a taxi being rocked back and forth, music pumping, as the driver and petrol attendants filled the taxi to the brim making sure to cash in on every drop before the petrol price increase. The 'gewone mense' keep me hopeful. South Africans are a resilient people. Where the government or municipality fail us, we make a plan. Frustration and failure are turned into action (and jokes around the campfire).

There is so much to be thankful and hopeful for in South Africa. The hope and future for our country lies in the youth of today. At a recent conference for the heads of public boys' schools, I was reinvigorated by the positive work being done in like-minded schools. Without fail, these schools, who reach a significant portion of the learner body, all aim to turn out well rounded young men, leaders, and entrepreneurs. Men who will contribute to building our society, correcting past injustice, finding solutions to problems past, present and future and place South Africa on an upward trajectory as a country of opportunity for all, progress, innovation, wealth, and success. We make things work, we grow up hard, and we raise resilient youngsters who I can guarantee will be featuring on the world stage in the future.

St Andrew's continues to be a school of good news. This past week one of our grade 1 boys, Ethan Style, asked his friends and family to buy pet food instead of presents for his birthday, that he then donated it to the SPCA. Old Boy, Gerald Coetzee was included in the Proteas team for their series vs Australia, and was also included in the World Cup Squad. Siyabonga Gaans in Grade 8, Joshua Kleovoulou and Carter Crossman in Little Saints, had their art works selected for inclusion in the

Santam calendar with the theme 'What the world needs now' – see what I mean about Saints boys... Gregg Hobson, our director of cricket has been made Convenor of Selectors for the Knights cricket team and AJ Van Wyk, our first team cricket coach, has been appointed as the Bowling Coach for the Knights team. Our soccer department, headed up by my Elliot Motseki, has launched a soccer night league, the first of its kind in the Free State. See news articles below, in media section.

At St Andrew's we will continue to strive towards turning out quality young men, men who are good fathers, brothers, and husbands. Young men rooted in Christian values and whose attitudes reflect the kindness, mercy and compassion of Jesus and the love of God for everyone. At St Andrew's we will continue to strive towards living out our motto; Fiat Lux / Let There Be Light, lighting the way in the community in which we find ourselves. As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

To quote, famous anchor man Ron Burgundy, "You stay classy, St Andrew's".

Issue 91 20 September

The small things matter.

The movie, Top Gun: Maverick, made the F/A-18 Super Hornet famous, much as Top Gun did for the F-14 Tomcat in the 1980's. I am sure that many a young man aspired to be a fighter pilot emulating Maverick, after watching the action unfold to the sound of 'wicked' music on screen. Well, that is certainly where my love for aircraft came from. Few people know, but I applied to be admitted to the Airforce. It was my first big interview. Several candidates and I, were given the opportunity to appear before a panel of high ranking officials from the various divisions of the SA Defence Force. We had to go through a stringent set of tests and a medical evaluation, before qualifying for an interview. All I wanted to do was pilot the Rooivalk helicopter, the state of the art, attack helicopter, still in service in our Airforce today.

If you look closely at the nose of the F/A-18 Hornet, you will notice a small single Phillips head screw. Some people call this the million-dollar screw. If you were to unscrew it, the wings of the Hornet will fall off – or so some believe. The Hornet costs around \$67 million. The "6 cent-screw" (actual cost) holds the small metal cap on the front of the nose cone. This is the last screw to go in, it keeps the nose cone together, and due to the way it is manufactured, prevents the nose cone from coming apart due to aerodynamic forces - causing catastrophic failure. In other words this "6 cent-screw" keeps a multi-million, fourth generation, all-weather, supersonic, twin-engine, carrier-capable, multirole combat aircraft, designed as both a fighter and attack aircraft, in the air. It is the small things that matter.

In conversation with AJ Van Wyk, our Head of Sport at the senior school, he once remarked that "If you take care of the small things, the big things take care of themselves." I cannot agree more with Mr Van Wyk. When you focus on the small things and give attention to detail, then you seldomly need to attend to the bigger things. One can also think of it as "Controlling the controllable." As a coach, arriving on time, arriving prepared, arriving dressed for the occasion and arriving enthusiastic, is all part of controlling the controllable. It sets the tone for the entire training session. When the basics are in place, the rest takes care of itself. The same can be said for teachers arriving to impart knowledge and skill in the classroom. "Winging it" is a recipe for disaster. Arriving unprepared, means the basics are not taken care of, and this usually results in bigger issues cropping up. Good teachers are prepared, are waiting for their learners at the door, greet them enthusiastically, and set the tone for what is to follow.

The small things matter, is something we believe in at St Andrew's. John Wooden said, "It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen." At St Andrew's the little things matter. They are in fact the non-negotiables of what it means to have the St Andrew's DNA. Learners are expected to be well-dressed, well-groomed and take pride in their uniform and appearance. Learners are expected to have manners, be friendly and greet adults and visitors. Learners are expected to have empathy and respect for others. Learners are expected to live out a God-centred and God-fearing Christian life. Learners are expected to aim high and display grit, perseverance, and tenacity in overcoming obstacles and challenges. Learners are expected to be involved in the life of the school – academics, culture, service and sport. The small things are the things that set us apart.

When running a marathon, you ignore the pebble stuck in your shoe at your peril. It's the small things that matter. So, what is your "6 cent-screw"?

As always it is my hope that you will do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God."

Issue 92

27 September

I was sitting in an interview with a prospective teacher this past week . During our conversation I was met with the following question: "Mr Rudd, what is it like to teach in a boy's school?" I let my thoughts go.

Imagine standing with a tennis ball in your hand. Before you, a heaving mass of thirty plus Jack Russell's. You throw the ball, and chaos erupts. Several of the Jack Russell's dart off after the ball competing to retrieve the coveted prize. Others dart off in different directions, chasing birds and exploring the surrounds. Others are engaged in play fighting with each other. Others get into a scuffle for a perceived wrong. At least two are still sitting before you, having not realized what is happening around them - even aware of the presence of a ball. And there if of course, that one, who is busy lifting his leg against yours... Those trying to return the ball are continually having the ball wrestled from their mouths by other eager competitors. A single thirty second throw, turns into an hour activity of managing mayhem. The seemingly impossible task of trying to get every Jack Russell focused on the ball, does not stop you from giving it another go hoping for a better outcome. That is what teachers do in a boys' school - daily.

On average, most boys work for their teacher / coach. They do so, when there is a relationship that exists between boy and mentor. You can be the worst teacher / coach (in the world), but if a relationship of trust and respect exists, a boy will work to move mountains for the teacher / coach. Boys are loyal to the bone, they are kind, polite, honest and eager to learn (and please). Boys don't sit down and take out their books without being prompted, they don't do their homework timeously, they are great at finding excuses to do anything other than focus on something that does not interest them. Boys walk around with an elaborate 'bravado' to cover up for their sensitive, intuitive, empathetic, compassionate, and understanding nature / soul. Boys don't hold grudges, they can sort each other out, sort out difficulties, and then move on with life. Boys are also great at doing without thinking – research shows that testosterone plays a key role here.

What I can tell you, is that it is a richly rewarding experience working with boys. It is a pleasure to watch the boys grow up and change before your eyes on a yearly basis. One year they have squeaky voices, and the next, they are covered in hair with bulging muscles and bellowing voices. It is rewarding to help boys discover and explore their talents and potential. The advantage of teaching in a boys' school is that the environment allows a boy to remain a boy for as long as he wants and needs. Because girls mature faster, they generally outperform boys in the early years. The social pressures in a boys' school are so much less stressful. They boys have no need to try and impress the opposite sex and the boys are not outdone by girls – who have a biological advantage. Boys learn differently from girls. They need to continually move about, and they cannot remain focused for extended periods. In a boys' school we can focus exclusively on the needs of boys and the boys can learn that there are many routes to manhood. Importantly the boys get to learn that strong bonds of friendship, teamwork, and social interaction are what matter most in later life.

If you can get the boys on your side, your life will be easy and rewarding. They will look out for and look after you. You will laugh and cry together. Boys need firm boundaries, they need consistency, and they need a caring and understanding heart. You must also realise that boys will always rise to the occasion. If you set a challenge, they will meet it – for good or bad. Testing boundaries is part of a boys' DNA - which is something mothers struggle to understand. This means jumping into a pool to test the depth, testing home rules of what time to report in, testing when it is inappropriate to use language etc.

Feel free to test my theory. Randomly introduce a ball into a group of boys, and watch the chaos unfold. As always, it is my hope that you will do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 93

11 October

You are so much more than a mark.

It never made any sense to me. It still does not. I just can't get it. It caused me untold trauma. The many hours of preparation, the frustration and despair with coming face to face with a sequence hieroglyphics and having to navigate question after question, and then failing dismally. I am now 40 years old, and I still sometimes wake to the dread of having faced a plethora of incomprehensible numbers and symbols. For others, it just came naturally. Not so for me. In fact, it determined the direction of study in my tertiary years. It also caused untold angst in my house. Speak to me instead of nature and animals, and I am transported to my happy place, immediately perking up, and singularly focused on the topic at hand, not a worry in the world.

The end of term signals a time when children return home 'bearing' a report card. For some, this may mean a reward for excelling, whilst for others, not so much. A poor mark may mean a rather dismal atmosphere at home. Some chores and consequences will be the order of the day, and perhaps even for the holiday. It is however important that one keeps perspective. A mark on a report card, does not define your child. Excellent achievement needs to be celebrated, whereas a poor mark may indicate a lack of effort and attention to detail, and likely a lack of understanding. The conversations at home can go horribly wrong. This is something to be avoided. I am yet to meet a learner who purposefully goes out of their way to underachieve or even fail. Your child is so much more than a mark on a report card.

I would like to provide you with several tips for handling a bad report:

1. Praise and acknowledge the good work. Look for it. Don't forego the good focusing on the negative.
2. Assure your child that a grade does not make him a failure.
3. Discuss grades, but don't lecture. Children don't appreciate being lectured and tune out. Discuss and reflect on what happened and mutually agree to helpful strategies going forward. By working as a team, you'll both find a solution that will set them up for future success at school.
4. Don't punish poor grades. Fear can block learning. Focus on a new start. Reward by recognizing and building on special interests.
5. Encourage proficiency and not perfection. Some children are C students but excel in other areas of like – that is ok. Nurture your child's gifts but also discuss academic expectations.
6. Beware of pressure. It's good to be a concerned, involved parent, but don't encourage your child to compete with others over grades. "Children should compete only with themselves and do their best," says Dr. Nolan. "Pressure can result in depression, not sleeping and other significant problems."
7. Meet with the teacher. Engage with the teacher, the more you communicate and understand academic progress, the greater the chance of your child's success. Your child's teacher can be the most valuable resource in setting them up for success.

The boys are now back at school, and should have new goals and a game plan to tackle the new term – it is an exam term after all. As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God."

They are after all so much more than just a mark. Remember, every child gets the occasional disappointing grade. We all trip up, even as adults. Yes, we are not perfect and we too make mistakes. Sometimes your child's own hurt or shame is enough to set them on the right path. At other times, your intervention may be needed to make sure it's not the beginning of a pattern. Bad grades can be embarrassing and it's probably not something that your child wants to tell you about immediately. Yes, that is sometimes why a report is not forthcoming and only discovered after much prompting or even a call to the school. Be sure however, that your child knows that, while you dislike the grade, you love them. They are after all so much more than just a mark.

As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God."

Issue 94

18 October

We are 'Sea Fishermen'...

During the short holiday, we were able to breakaway for one day to the Tierpoort Dam for a fishing trip. This was only our second opportunity since returning to Bloemfontein that we had an opportunity to put a line in the water. During the bitter cold of Winter, we had a quick attempt at landing a fish at Glen on a day visit, but without much success. My son, who is an accomplished 'Sea Fisherman', did not enjoy the fundamental difference in approach to freshwater vs marine fishing on his first attempt; that being one of patience. Freshwater fishing usually involves much attention to bait preparation, and then sitting around for the fish to bite. Marine fishing on the other hand is much faster affair with lots of action. In conversation on leaving home, Daniel commented to his friend that we (him and me), are 'Sea Fishermen', subtly hinting at the possibility of failure in advance, because of not being accustomed to this 'foreign' experience.

Camping chairs, cool boxes, tackle boxes, fishing rods, and braai unpacked with the gazebo set up and good to go. Watching carefully and listening attentively to the advice of our freshwater pundit about different concoctions of flavours, and varying types of bait from mealies, to floaties, to pap and variety of different arrangements of the rig, it was evident that we had much to learn and also alluded to how woefully underprepared we were. The day turned out successful – well for some of us. My son landed his first ever Carp, along with the other members of the crew landing a Carp each. My resolute approach to wanting to use a tried and tested setup was met with epic failure. Fishing for Barbel in water conducive to Carp and other species proved to be a costly mistake. The pack of freshly bought P&P chicken fillets and the tub of chicken livers, went to waste. Not a nibble, and an almighty sunburn, was my 'just' reward for the day.

Being teachable, willing to adapt to new challenges, being observant, resilient, prepared and accepting of advice, are important life skills. So much is missed out on when these skills are absent or lacking. Often, unfortunately, adults are set in their ways. The saying: "You can't teach an old dog new tricks", comes to mind. I am sure you can relate to this sentiment in your own personal workspace – a frustration indeed. You are, however, never too old to learn something new. Even an old dog will not be caught by the same trick twice. I love working with the youth because they are keen to learn, excited to try out new things, happy to take advice, embrace change freely and are unsullied by experience. As they journey through life they are moulded in their daily interactions with the world. This is why we, as adults, need to 'handle' the youth with care. They are trusting of the advice and input adults. We imprint our views and experiences on the youth. Therefore, we have a responsibility to ensure that we make a positive impact through our interactions and create a net of safety to catch our youth when they trip or fall. William Yeats summed it up so well "I have spread my dreams under your feet; Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."

Successful fishermen, need to adapt to changing environments and conditions, and sometimes, like in life, the fish just won't bite and you only end up with a sunburn. That, however, should not stop you from learning from the experience and trying again. At the end of the day, "There is no losing in fishing. You either catch or you learn. Either way, it's better than work." – Unknown.

As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God."

Fiat Lux

Issue 95

25 October

The word "vacuum" comes from the Latin "vacua", which means "empty". It is a space, supposedly, with nothing in it, not even air or gas. Vacuums do not exist naturally on earth, they are manmade. Even in Outer Space, there are still particles. So, space is only close to being a vacuum. Astronauts must wear a space suit designed to hold in air at the pressure humans are used to on earth when operating in the vacuum of space. Without this space suit their body will not be able to function properly.

I cannot help but sit and reflect on our community of Bloemfontein, the Free State Province and South Africa. There is so much to be hopeful for and excited about. A place and space of possibility and opportunity. 1994, marked the birth of the Rainbow Nation, a nation united. Nelson Mandela was elected as the first President of post-Apartheid South Africa, and was flanked by leaders like Thabo Mbeki, F.W De Klerk and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. These were leaders who worked to bring the community and the country together, truly emphasizing the idea of “with-ness” or togetherness. They further embodied and lived the meaning of the ancient African word Ubuntu; meaning humanity to others. These leaders, sadly, are no more, and there exists a vacuum of leadership in our country – a great lack of someone meaningful and who matters.

The vacuum left by the absence of leadership has resulted in debilitating consequences for the country. Political parties and leaders scramble for power and are constantly at each other’s throats, sewing division, mistrust, anger and hate as they further add to the vacuum. The examples set by those in power leave much to desire. Our ailing economy, junk status currency, failed parastatals and tenderpreneurs, the rise in living costs, loadshedding, chaos in the medical, farming, mining, import, export and educational sectors, crime, failing road and rail infrastructure, and the increase in the gap between the rich and the poor are all symptomatic of the vacuum in leadership that exists. We are teetering on the brink of a ‘near’ failed state. There is a mass exodus, as skilled citizens look to greener pastures. In 2020, the cumulative stats of South Africans emigrating amounted to roughly 915 000. Whilst this number is on the increase, there is hope. There is no such thing as a perfect vacuum. There is still light at the end of the tunnel. The hope of our country rest in our youth.

The youth unfortunately, live the everyday consequences of the lack of meaningful leadership. The vacuum left by leadership in our country, is in fact an opportunity to effect change. A space has been created for a new generation, to occupy. This generation have more to do than ever, and a great responsibility rests upon their shoulders. They have a wonderful opportunity for a reset, an opportunity for a stocktake, and a change in direction not only locally, but globally as well. An opportunity to meaningfully fill the vacuum with a new generation of brave leaders. St Andrew’s and other institutions like us, along with the many other educational institutions all around the country will play a crucial role in shaping the future of our communities, our country, and the world. The key is meaningful leadership emphasizing that we take hands, and work together, towards a common goal of a better South Africa and world for all.

Like the Astronaut, who needs a special suit to operate in a vacuum, our boys at St Andrew’s too, have been equipped with a suit of blue. They wear the cross of Saint Andrew on their heart bearing our motto Fiat Lux – Let There Be Light. The lessons learnt and the values and morals instilled at St Andrew’s, equip them with the necessary skills to operate in, and fill the vacuum that currently exists not only in our local communities and South Africa, but globally as well.

Through their journey at St Andrew’s, our boys are tasked to protect what is good, fight what is wrong, strive to be better, be concerned for one another, act with integrity, remember the past and continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; “Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God”.

Issue 96

1 November

I dread standing in a queue to access some sort of service. I especially get worked up when I need to stand in a queue at a license department or my ultimate ‘favourite’, Home Affairs. I really need to psyche myself up to go and stand in a queue at Home Affairs.

Most of you will be lucky enough to have avoided Home Affairs, in Wynberg, Cape Town. The way it works there is that you need to arrive very early (anything from 4am), stand in a queue that snakes its way down the corridor and into the basement of the mall even before actual doors open. During your wait, you need to hope that when Home Affairs eventually open at 8am, you are too far back in line, meaning you are over their daily limit. On opening of the doors, you need to worry about when some official will pop out and seemingly nonchalantly notify you that their system is down... If all goes as well as it can, and you do get a ticket, you need to wait outside, fill in forms hoping that you don’t miss anything, and then really hope that when you get to the designated counter, the official is not on lunch or that it is in fact the correct counter. Of course, you also need to ensure that you made triple sure that you have everything with you – failing that, the process will restart. It feels like simply accessing services at Home Affairs, requires as much planning, patience and precision as a special ops covert military mission.

I have heard that one can pay to have someone stand in line for you. I respect such an entrepreneur, and will gladly offer payment, to alleviate my suffering. In Bloemfontein, I have heard that one simply needs to drive through to Thaba Nchu, as their service is excellent and that they are proficient. It was only after a couple of frustrating experiences and trips to Home Affairs, that I became aware of Standard Bank doing passports at selected branches. Let me tell you what a painless and efficient service. The catch, you need to be a Standard Bank client. It revolutionised my experience. I am noticing that there is more and more talk of services going electronic and saving use the hassle of unending queues. For now, it is that just talk, so the immediate future still holds queues for most of us. The irony of all this effort to access a service, is that there is usually a reward in leu of the 'pain and suffering'. At the License Department, one accesses the right to drive or have a car on the road for example, whilst at Home Affairs, one accesses the right to travel abroad.

This week in conversation with a group of Old Boys, reminiscing about days gone by, the conversation quickly moved in the direction of the privilege they had to attend St Andrew's. They spoke of how doors were opened and how they were set up for their future. It mattered not, race or creed, but donning the Blue Blazer provided them with an advantage. Access to St Andrew's is a passport to privilege. Just like a normal passport, the St Andrew's Passport comes at a price – manners, respect for others, wearing the Blue Blazer with pride, giving the best versions of themselves in every sphere of school life etc. The basic premise being, 'to whom much is given, much is expected'. The same can be said for other fine educational institutions that service our community and country. As of 2022, the total number of schools in South Africa amounted to nearly 24,900. The majority of these schools are public entities, covering around 90.8 percent of the total number of schools. Our learners have access to the top 1% of educational institutions in the country as well as globally.

Not every learner who attends St Andrew's, comes from a privileged background, but every learner who attended St Andrew's, has unlocked a passport to privilege. A quality education is hard to come by and it is to be cherished. You are given a head start in life that others dream of. Your passport to privilege can take you places. What you chose to do with it, is up to you, but in my opinion, taking the Blue Blazer passport without giving anything back, is arrogant and selfish. Nelson Mandela said; "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

Mr Bridger summed it up so well when he said to our Matrics at the Leavers Dinner this past Thursday evening; "Your roots will count in your favour". As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do what the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 97

7 November

With Remembrance Day around the corner, I have been looking around campus, hopeful to spot poppies around the campus. For two years now, several staff and I have been trying to sew poppy seeds around the campus, particular in the area around the front of the school. It is my hope that the front of the school will one day be transformed by poppies, at around the same time as Remembrance Day.

Last year, I went on a mission to harvest the seeds of poppy's that had sprung up around the campus at random times into Spring and Summer. The seeds that I collected I went and sprinkled them around the campus and my garden. My thought was, that the millions of seeds that I sewed, would spring up all around the campus. In Cape Town, yearly, poppies spring up along the sidewalks and even in nooks and cracks along the pavement and tar roads. My impression from seeing this, is that these plants are a hardy type of 'weed' able to grow almost anywhere. The sewing of the seeds here on campus, has disproved this belief. My attempt at recreating a Flanders type poppy covered scene is progressing much slower than I had hoped.

I have stopped to observe the individual flowers that have popped up around the front of the school and in my garden. The paper-like blossoms have a vibrant red colour and are actually very delicate. They appear almost overnight and are gone just as fast. Any of the strong winds at this time of year will significantly shorten the time that one has to enjoy the vibrant little flower. Once pollinated the petals fall off and you are left with a seed pod. The pod itself, has an ingenuous design. The pod bears a sealed crown in the early stages and as the plant dries out, the pod does so as well, opening the crown. The seeds inside the pod free up. If the plant is pulled up and shaken the seeds pour out of the pods. Interestingly, if one leaves the plant long enough, as the stalk dries, it bends and turns the pod

upside down, allowing the seeds to escape naturally as the wind blows on the stems.

The poppy has signified remembrance, consolation and hope through history. Today it carries the message of peace and remembrance as we remember those who gave their lives during the Great Wars. The poppy is a common plant of disturbed ground in Europe, and is found in many battlefield locations, including Flanders, which is the setting of the famous poem "In Flanders Fields". Flanders Fields was a major battle theatre on the Western Front during the First World War. A million soldiers from more than 50 different countries were wounded, missing or killed in action there.

Remembrance Day takes place on 11 November. It is an occasion still honoured in many countries around the world. On Remembrance Day, we acknowledge the courage and sacrifice of those who served their country and acknowledge our responsibility to work for the peace they fought hard to achieve. It is on this day that we also wear a poppy. The sandstone Memorial Gates, at the entrance of our school, recognize those 56 young men of the St Andrew's family, who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Great Wars, as well as the Border Conflict. Our Memorial Wall bears the inscription of the names of these young men as well as the verse from the poem For The Fallen; "Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning. We will remember them". Remembrance Day is a poignant ceremony that takes place annually at St Andrew's. We come together as a community and read out the names of our fallen brothers, lay wreaths, and play both The Last Post and Reveille amongst other significant and meaningful happenings.

We are fast approaching a generation, where every day, the memories of these Great Wars are disappearing from living history. The last living veteran of World War I was Florence Green, a British woman who served in the Allied armed forces, and who died on 4 February 2012, aged 110. According to US Department of Veterans Affairs statistics, 119,550 of the 16.1 million Americans who served in World War II are alive as of 2023 – that is approximately 0.7%. We dare not forget, and we grasp this opportunity, to reflect on, educate and inspire, fostering a sense of gratitude, empathy and respect for those who served, and paid the ultimate sacrifice defending our freedom and protecting our way of life.

The poppy plant must die to sew its seeds. I hope there will come a time when our gardens perennially, are adorned with poppy flowers at the front of the school, in memory of the lives lost and bullets fired, so that all who enter our gates will be reminded; "Lest We Forget".

As always it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God."

Issue 98

15 November

On the sea, a fisherman attends the school of hard knocks!

From my days as a greenhorn (young and inexperienced) fisherman on my Oupa's boat, I was tasked with pulling the anchor. This is a particularly labour-intensive task. Inevitably some strain would go into getting the anchor free from the bottom of the ocean. This meant holding on for dear life as you inched in every piece of rope, hoping for the swell, to raise the boat enough to free the anchor or break the trip line. A trip line is a thin piece of line used to secure the chair of the anchor, and when broken, orientates the anchor with its flukes (hooks) facing down and thereby freeing the anchor from the seabed. One hundred odd meters of rope to haul in by hand and lifting the weight of the anchor sixty odd meters from the seabed, whilst the eager crew reluctantly waited in anticipation for the anchor to surface. Anchor once again prepared and set, one was instructed to hear the anchor and chain out once on the chosen mark. Any delay would result in a scolding and continuously grumbles, as the boat would have in that "millisecond" drifted off the mark resulting in no fish biting... Then of course, one was treated to recovering the anchor once again...

Later year, my view on recovering the anchor changed somewhat. I still don't enjoy the physical aspect of recovering the anchor, and I am not sure sometimes how my younger self-managed this job. The blisters and rope burns on young and inexperienced hands, the stings from the Portuguese man o' war (blue bottle jellyfish), an occasional hook caught in the rope and finger, many a big fish lost around the anchor rope because of failing to haul the anchor in fast enough, and the illogical fear of some sea beast grabbing onto the anchor as it was being pulled to the surface was all part of the learning curve. Any experienced fisherman will tell you that you don't mess with the sea. Things at sea can literally change in an instance. Engine failure, for obvious reasons, can turn catastrophic.

When the wind and swell come up, and the anchor rope starts moaning against the stay of the boat, that signals the time to go! You ignore this at your peril.

The following quote was placed on my desk by my PA; "In order to realize the worth of the anchor, we need to feel the stress of the storm." It got me thinking. When all else fails, and you are in the dwang, this is when you come to realise the importance of your anchor. It can keep you from washing ashore against the rocks, and also keep you pointed in the right direction when the storms come – nose into the waves – giving you a fighting chance. Having an anchor, however, means that you must be prepared to put in the hard work. You don't gain the benefit of an anchor without investing into its use. So, what is your anchor? Is it God, is it your spouse, is it your family, is it your job, is it all of this? We all need an anchor particularly when the wind starts to blow.

At Saints, I believe we assist learners in several ways to weather the storms of life. We allow them to learn the ropes in a controlled environment, and yes, sometimes they get battered and bruised, which is all part of the learning curve. It is in the tough times though, that we assist them with mastering the skill of setting their anchor, to keep them off the rocks and to appreciate the calm and peace of a lazy day in the sun. The main part (shank), of our St Andrew's anchor is our Christian based education, whilst the values, morals and life lessons we instil form the rest of the anchor (the flukes, crown and stock). Cesare Pavese said; "What world lies beyond that stormy sea I do not know, but every ocean has a distant shore, and I shall reach it". Just as every ocean has a shore, every challenge has an end, and this quote highlights the importance of perseverance, even in difficult times. We thus send out resilient young sailors, equipped with the necessary knowledge, grit and skills to brave the unknown waters of the open ocean in search of their destination.

My Pops always reminds me when things get tough that "A calm sea does not make for a good captain". The old pirates words are so true... When times get tough, that is when one is tested. Batten down the hatches, drop your anchor and hold on to your faith, sit it out and refuse to sink - because this storm will also pass.

As always, it is my hope that you will do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God."

Issue 99

22 November

You want me to do it??

Have you ever been in a situation, where individuals attempt to dodge responsibility / accountability, or the too-hot-to-handle topic, is seamlessly passed left and right in a 'Faf de Klerk' like manner. The inevitable skip pass or worst-case scenario, the hospital pass resulting in a crash tackle directly to the exposed rib cage. It is in one of these meetings, that an ex-boss, irritated by back and forth, piped up exclaiming, "You want me to do it?"

I often reflect on this statement and its application in how I chose to live my life. When I walk the campus, I am intentional about deviating from my intended path to pick up litter along the way. The boys are inevitably prompted and scurry about to assist. I do this in an effort to engrain into the boys, that we need to take responsibility for our campus. Choosing to walk past a piece of litter sends a very clear message; it's not my problem. This sentiment smacks of arrogance. This may seem a small and insignificant gesture, but even a pebble thrown into a lake sets in motion ripples that cascade across the surface and agitate the norm. You have heard of the butterfly effect?

Sometimes I can't help but feel like we are increasingly living in a society of 'finger pointers'. It's your problem, it's your fault, it's their fault, it's the government, it's the teacher, it's the boss, it's the coach, it's the Department, it's the Municipality, it's Eskom, it's corruption, it's someone else's responsibility, someone else will pay etc. We need to guard against a culture of blame and apathy, taking root in so many areas of everyday life. It's easy to blame others and exonerate oneself from responsibility, accountability, and action. Perhaps it makes us feel better about ourselves. My Pops always warned me of pointing fingers. He said, "If you point a finger, there are four fingers pointing back at you." Take ownership. Take responsibility. Take action. We can learn much from the Japanese Soccer and New Zealand Rugby teams.

The Japanese soccer team became a fan-favourite at the 2018 Soccer World Cup in Russia. Having progressed through the group stages, the team went and lost to Belgium 2-3 in the knock-out stages,

after being up by 2 goals with just 25 minutes left to play. The result was they were headed home. The heartbroken team, before leaving, showed an impressive display of good sportsmanship and even better manners. On the field, the team respectfully bowed to their opponents. They then filed into the locker room to change. Before departing, they left the room spotless, and also left a thank you note in Russian for their hosts. The devastated football fans, did their part too, and took the time to clean up all trash in the Rostov-on-Don soccer arena, leaving virtually no trace of their time there.

In James Kerr's book *Legacy*, on lessons of leadership from the New Zealand All Blacks, former fly-half Andrew Mehrtens talks about the ritual of 'sweeping the sheds' after a game. "It's an example of personal discipline, it's not expecting somebody else to do your job for you," he says. "It teaches you not to expect things to be handed to you. If you have personal discipline in your life, then you are going to be more disciplined on the field." This phrase captures the sense that no individual member of the team is bigger than the team and its ancestors. In this tradition, everyone is responsible for the smallest details, including cleaning the locker room. It also captures important character traits of humility and taking responsibility for your own actions and not having any sense of entitlement. The team ethos is that no-one looks after the All Blacks. The All Blacks look after themselves, because "better men make better All Blacks".

Do you sweep your own shed? The next time you walk into a bathroom and the cistern is running, do something about it. Don't drive past an open gate, stop, and close it. Help someone in need and lend a helping hand whenever possible. Stop and thank the cleaner, security guard or gardener. Show and treat others with respect. Clean your own curb and do some recycling, don't wait for the municipality to take away your rubbish. Reduce your electricity and water consumption, don't wait for the crisis. Carpool, don't complain about the fuel price. Cancel your Showmax, DSTV, Netflix, Prime and Spotify accounts and prioritize your education. Leave places in a better condition than you found them, don't wait for someone else to do it.

Taking personal responsibility is part of our St Andrew's culture. It is the way we do things around here.

As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires, "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Issue 100

29 November

Whispers from the past...

I was greeted by a voice from the past, this last week. The signature and distinctive "Hellooo" of my Ouma Moeks, echoed from inside the lounge. Could it be. I made my way to the lounge to investigate this phenomenon to find my daughter. It was her who was enquiring as to who was there, after she heard the shuffling on a quiet Sunday afternoon, whilst working on her studies. On pondering on this greeting, it came to me, that my daughters greeting was no different to any other enquiring salutation. It was just that I was oblivious to this distinct likeness.

Reminiscing about the past, I had hoped to hear her voice once again. And here it was, her voice echoing in that of her great granddaughter. My Ouma was known for her baking and for being ferociously protective of family. The Godfather, made it her business to know everyone's business. She directed conversations and 'handled' any so-called family 'skande' decidedly, not accepting any other way, other than her way. She was also the family repository of the family history, genealogy and the pedigree of each member of the family (as decided by her integral knowledge). Scones, muffins, milk tarts, pies and other eats were always readily available, whilst the recipes spanning decades were closely guarded. Family albums detailing generations were carefully put together. These now have been passed on and her legacy lives on.

It's times like these when one gets to reflect, on the importance of heritage and heirloom. Those seemingly insignificant nuances, moments, traditions and perhaps even irritations, are now what is valued and treasured. It is now when I reflect that I realize how they shaped me and by extension my family. My children will not get to experience the bakes and eats, unless I share it with them. They will not get to learn that their Great Great Grandfather van der Westhuizen was the youngest South African to fight in the Great War in 1914, or that their Great Grandfather was an engineer responsible for building various dams around South Africa, or that the Afrikaans side of the family made a living on the rail industry in the early days, or that the Welsh side of the family was shipped to South Africa

for being pirates.

Over the course of this year, we have been celebrating the 160th year of existence of our special school, St Andrew's. The year's celebrations culminated in the birthday celebrations on Thursday 16 November as well as the Legacy Dinner on Friday 17 November. This was an opportunity to bring together the wider Saints' community (past and present). The year provided an opportunity to celebrate the heritage of our school and to look forward to the future. On occasions like these, it is important to recognize and respect the whispers that come to the fore. At St Andrew's we are fortunate to have numerous custodians of the values, traditions and heritage of our school - the likes of Colin Hickling (our Godfather), Roger Crawford, John Anderson, Adrian von Maltitz, John Bridger, Roy Gordon, Chris Thomas, Stephen Kahts, Stelios Tsangarakis, Sergio Nunes, Brendan Jacobs, Andre Bothma, Gregg Hobson, Richard Chemaly, Kerry Gower, Margo Morgan, Kassie van Kasterop and many others, a combination of both old and young, Old Boys, past and present Staff and Parents, all who continue to add to the story of St Andrew's in one way or the other.

Roger Crawford, on the Legacy Dinner, said the following: *"Sharing the history of the school builds both commitment to, and pride in the institution. Knowing and sharing the school's history is to differentiate our school. On the other hand, it has been my life long mantra that one should 'never let one's memories be greater than your dreams.' Recently I stood in the Champion Hall and paused to look at the portraits of the headmasters who added their own chapters to the compelling story of St. Andrew's ... Each drew on the history of the school to be the foundation of their dreams and aspiration for the school. A critical aspect of celebrating an enduring educational institution is to remind oneself that 'a teacher affects eternity as no one can tell where a teacher's influence stops.' A history of a school is essentially a history of the teachers. Stephen Covey said, 'the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.'"*

Family heritage, institutional knowledge, legacy, tradition, culture, custom or call it what you will, plays an important role in defining who one is whether in your family set up or institutionally, and thus in essence, where one is going.

As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet Micah requires; "Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God."

Issue 101 **6 December**

Debonairs or MacDonalds?

Have you ever tried to get your kids to choose between what take away option will be had for supper? It inevitably turns into an argument. What was meant to be a simple activity turns out to be a rather frustrating experience of driving up and down, excessive time spent in the car and a variety of different now cold take aways that need to be re-heated at home. I come from the school of eating what you are given on your plate or being told you can choose what kind of pizza you want... Our children cannot even choose what they want for supper.

Our children need their parents now, more than ever. The world has grown into an increasingly complex environment that our children must navigate daily. The world you knew as a child is incomparable to the world our children now face. Growing up in the 80's we had our problems. The bad guys were all TV bad guys featured on MacGyver, Airwolf and the A-Team. One could ride your bicycle without helmets and protective gear, and no one judged you for it. Cooked meals were served daily in homes and there was no Food Network or Gordon Ramsay to make you feel like an underachiever. MTV played music videos and did not host talk shows. Your parents' home is what you aspired to have one day, not some renovated mansion from HGTV. No caller ID on phones, so you could call the girl you had a crush on and hang up after you heard her say hello... True romance. Your father was able to track who you phoned and for how long, and your pocket money was deducted against your illicit phone calls. Mad Magazine made fun of everybody, and nobody got offended. The news was only on at 19:30, not all day every day, even if there was no real news to report. Life was much simpler without social media, phones, computers, and internet dominating our lives. We grew up in trees and tree houses, and played in mud puddles for fun, whilst testing rafts in streams whenever it rained. Hide and Seek or playing cricket in the streets under lights, was the order of the day, whenever a group of kids got together. Different times.

Our children cannot even choose what they want for supper, but we allow them to choose their own

pronouns. We allow children unrestricted access to technology and super computers more advanced than the technology that put the first man on the moon. We allow our children to choose between a selection of Vapes and E-Cigarettes, so they don't feel left out in their friendship circle, despite the negative health implications. We are absent, with nameless avatars and artificial intelligence raising our children. We allow our children to decide whether they want to go to Church or not and whether they want to get to know God or not. Anxiety, burn out and a plethora of psychosocial issues are commonplace. Our children need us to start parenting (again). I grew up in a house where certain things were non-negotiable. Yes, old school parenting. Parents who were present, set an example, laid down the rules and headed up the family. Your child does not need more friends – they need their parent. My Pops always said "Vroeg ryp, vroeg vrot." Time to take charge of the controllables again...

At the end of this year, I am concerned by how exhausted my daughter and son are. Young people should not be bone-weary come the end of a school year. It is unnatural. I believe this is symptomatic of effects of this fast paced, ever changing, and complex environment they operate in daily. In conversation with my mother the other day, I was telling her how tired the kids looked and went on to say that Daniel needed to spend two full days on the harbour wall, just fishing, and he will be back to being himself. I must say, I can fully relate to this as well. I cannot wait to spend time with my kids this holiday. It sometimes feels like we live past one another, just connecting for seconds a day. A change in scenery and pace is needed. Time to take ownership of the controllables again. Please do the same and make time to be available for your children in whatever way you can.

As always, it is my hope that you will continue to do as the Prophet requires; "Do justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God".

Fiat Lux
Mr Roland Rudd
Headmaster.

