

12 September 2019



ST CHARLES COLLEGE
S O U T H A F R I C A

Dear Friends of the College

Seven days of active personal reflection (Thursday 12/09 – Wednesday 18/09)

In the past week, ‘xenophobia’ and ‘gender based violence’ have been widely protested throughout the country as people’s fear has turned to outrage, and that outrage has risen to the surface. I am so pleased that people are outraged – we should all be.

As a husband, father and son I do not mind letting you know that fear for my wife, daughter and mother is part of my thinking every single day. A lot of my conversations with them will include “be careful” or “rather let me go and pick that up” or “please make sure” or “phone me the moment you get there”, because I know that there is much danger out there. I have very old fashioned ideas of my responsibilities as a male to protect, but at times the social environmental problem seems so overwhelmingly out of control - and I know that I cannot be everywhere all the time. It is this kind of climate that cultivates and establishes a culture of fear and I believe that fear cannot be the final result of our thinking.

At school I demand that boys who express strong opinions back up their words by a real life willingness to translate their words into concrete action – concrete action that actually makes a difference. The truth is that when the height of the outrage of the protests has subsided, the reality of life for those most vulnerable will continue to be vulnerable and miserable – unless something changes. Our challenge to our community is to find something practical to do that will directly make a difference, not to appease our social consciences, but to ensure that those who live in fear every day have hope that tomorrow will be better; and where injustice has occurred, that those who have inflicted harm are held accountable.

God’s Word offers some very important guidance for situations such as these:

¹⁴ if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14

and:

⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:7

I do not think that the President can change the hearts of wicked men alone. Popular protests are good for awareness and for bringing down regimes, but it will take a work of God, who knows the hearts of men, to change those hearts. We believe that He is able to establish justice – if we ask Him.

So there are two points of action:

1. to pray for our country
2. to put into action what we know and can see needs to be done

Kindness

It is interesting that *KINDNESS* has been shown by scientific study to be a powerful force for change. Firstly, when we practice kindness, the pleasure centre in our brains is activated and it literally makes us feel better. This should be no surprise, for the very words of Christ are that *“It is better to give than to receive.”* The second point is that it has been found that people to whom kindness has been shown, are more likely to be kind to others. It would seem that it is possible through small acts of kindness to start a chain reaction that will impact the social fabric of our country.

Practical suggestions:

- Switch your cell phone off and pray twice a day for 10 minutes e.g. at 9am and 9pm
- Appreciate diversity as the strength of our society and actively say something positive to someone different to you
- Find a way to practically encourage or support those who deal with the daily tragedy of violence and intolerance e.g. police, social workers, medical staff in hospitals and clinics, paramedics, family lawyers, emergency services, etc.

You can help

Please send us your thoughts and ideas that could spur our community on to do good deeds that practically improve the lives of those who live in fear. We have asked our community to take time to submit their ideas and we’ll share those ideas via our school app/newsletter and by email.

Please send your ideas through to: lovepmb@scc.co.za

Yours faithfully



Allen van Blerk

PRINCIPAL

 Pietermaritzburg