



## ST CHARLES COLLEGE

S O U T H A F R I C A

Dear Parents, Guardians and Grandparents

I know I never knew Tito Mboweni personally, but somehow it feels like I did. Hearing the news of his passing and the tributes of family members and presidents, I join those paying tribute to his legacy of independent, principled financial steering of our economy during very difficult years. We are fortunate that men and women of calibre have been among us.

### **If it is not winning that matters most then what does matter the most?**

Every year, thousands of conversations are held with parents who love sport and enrol their children at schools with dreams of future fame and fortune. The conversation from the schools will likely be educational wisdom which tries to temper expectations, while parents will be trying to be convinced that the school can guarantee that their son will be on the winning side. I admit I prefer winning because it feels better than losing, but in recent years, I have noticed through careful observation that you learn almost nothing from winning. If our aim truly is to develop a quality human being who has the capacity to handle both good and bad days, then we need to appreciate the matches we lose because it would seem that it is the competition itself, and not the result, that forms and challenges our character.

In South Africa, we despair at the failure of our numerous SOEs which do not run on sound business principles. That's because there is nothing to fight against and so they don't work to improve because there just isn't any competition. If we are challenging at least half our boys to start their own businesses one day, then they need a range of experiences where they personally experience both failure, and success, and learn to recognise the learning opportunity that lies in every situation and outcome. It seems that when we win, our very next action is defence – not really an inspiring aspirational goal.

### **Pound of flesh**

If you work with a lot of different people, you might notice how differently people apply grace to their fellow human beings. From an early age, some boys are wired to fight for their rights and to make sure they get their share, but we are grateful to have, among our boys, a majority whom are extraordinary young men, able to place matters in perspective. It is our privilege to support this kind of thinking so that we will one day have more adults with compassion for other people and an understanding of the struggles others go through.

While working as an attorney, Abraham Lincoln was approached by a wealthy man to file a lawsuit against a poor man who found himself unable to pay a debt for \$2.50. Lincoln was eventually persuaded to take the case, but charged his client a fee of \$10, which he insisted be paid in advance. Lincoln reportedly gave half the fee to the man in debt who settled his debt with the wealthy man, plus something to alleviate his poverty. The story, whether true or legend, highlights where our attitudes need to be in light of the grace that we have been shown. It goes against human nature, but the teaching of Christ has always divided humanity because it asks for the unthinkable:

*“Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.”* LUKE 6:28-30

I suppose our human reaction to such an outrageous philosophy tells the story of how far we can be from the mind of God.

Yours faithfully

Allen van Blerk  
PRINCIPAL