



The Eyrie 2020-21

**The Eyrie....
where the
soaring
eagles..
..refresh
..rejuvenate
and reaffirm
their faith in
the Creator
and His
Creations.**



St. John's
High School
Chandigarh

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a green saree with gold borders and a black sleeveless top, is walking outdoors. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a clear blue sky and some greenery.

From the Principal's Desk

*A*n extraordinary year with the steepest learning curve I have ever seen! We leap frogged from reluctant traditionalists dragging our feet, straight into a set of professionally competent, avant garde digital experts who handled online classes, embedded links, Power Point presentations, Google forms, Google Classrooms, Child Rights, Constitutional Duties, Subject integration, COIVD19, Cyber safety.....the list is never ending...with ease and panache!

So what did we learn?

We learnt that the human spirit is indomitable. We learnt that we are better than we think we are. We learnt that “impossible” is just a word. And, most of all, we learnt that compassion, kindness and sacrifice are written into our very DNA.

Almost 300 hundred EWS children. Thanks to the vigilance of the teacher foster parents of these little ones and the prompt response of the Chandigarh Police, not one family went to bed hungry.

Special children, distressed parents, strained and overworked staff.....the team of administrators and counselors swung into action.....each one's needs were met.

Parents in financial straits...not one child was permitted to leave. We tightened our belts and gave concessions galore!

So how did we script this incredible story? The answer – through sheer faith in God's provision, courage, fierce love, persistence and a refusal to give up. Everyone pulled together.

Teachers played with their very lives and went to the infected slums to distribute learning material to the kids under lockdown.

They went to each other's homes to support and teach.

Others held special classes for those who were struggling.

The alumni contributed materially with mobile phones to ensure every child was able to study online.

Parents took on the onerous task of teaching their children at home and reinforcing what was taught.

The children adapted to the new normal and did their best to keep themselves engaged.

The administrative team oversaw the needs of every member of the Johnian family, both near and extended.

And through this all ran one miraculous thread.....the magic of kindness...that wove a brilliant unsurpassed pattern of love and concern.....a design at once familiar and unique....one begun by the Brothers and continued to this day.....brighter, better, alive and well.

How blessed we are in St John's.

May God's grace and wisdom and the spirit of Blessed Edmund Rice continue to guide and lead us.

Pro Deo et Patria!

Kavita Ma'am



Vandana Bansal
Senior School Coordinator

Ups and downs in life are very important to keep us going because a straight line in an ECG means we are not alive...

RATAN TATA

It has been a year of triumph and turbulence, a year of hope and despair. A year where we have learnt that life doesn't get easier or more forgiving, it is we who get stronger and become more resilient. The normal becoming NEW normal. A year that has taught us that 'Nature' heals and balances everything. A year which has strengthened family relationships. It was a challenging year for all of us, especially for my dear colleagues... who had to move from blackboard teaching to online teaching and they, like true Johnnians, sailed smoothly.

During this time, you have gone to incredible lengths to help your students and in the process made the teaching- learning a fun activity. From embracing remote learning opportunities to providing mental and emotional support to every child in your care, you have moved ahead with your indomitable spirit.

Dear students, I wish to congratulate all of you for partnering your teachers in overcoming their fears of technology and supporting them whole heartedly. There remained a connect between you and your loving teachers. Not to mention, your Forbidden Smart phones became your most powerful tool in learning and you have USED/MISUSED them to the best of your abilities.

Kudos to all of you for making this New Normal a huge success. I would also like to thank all the young volunteers for supporting and encouraging the Covid warriors. I will always be proud of my Johnnian gentlemen.

In the end I would like to say –

'It is only in our darkest hours that we may discover the true strength of the brilliant light within ourselves that can never, ever, be dimmed....'

God Bless!



Nitika Singh
Middle School Coordinator

It seems strange...this year just flew by! It seems like yesterday that I was watching the news about this virus that had choked some lives in a foreign land and was spreading like fire, compromising the immunity in people. The next thing I know, schools were closed down, the city was under lockdown, the streets were empty...there was silence! I could hear the birds chirping, dogs howling and many strange sounds that I had never heard before. But not a single soul...all were petrified and inside their homes...only the wildlife was walking the streets.

That was the time I felt scared and lonely...I had never felt like this before. It seemed like an apocalypse. And just then I got a call...“Let's gear up”, she said. “Our kids and staff need us”, were her words. Kavita ma'am had no doubt about what needed to be done. Her clarity of thought gave me hope and a reason to feel safe again. I knew then in an instant that I am not alone. My school, my people had my back and I had theirs. I don't have a recollection of the number of online meetings we had, to discuss virtual classes, online counselling, e content to support academics etc. We were faced with a very novel situation.

Were we prepared? HELL NO! This pandemic broke us, cracked our beliefs, put fear into us...but these cracks paved the way for light to come in...gave us a moment to stop and think. Who am I? Where do I belong?I got all my answers. I BELONG IN ST. JOHN'S. The very fact that St. John's is a school with a heart, paved the way for innovations and initiatives. This time has been a blessing in disguise in many ways. We were pushed beyond our limits to try out things we never could or ever thought of doing...yet we did. Many mental barriers were broken...from 'I could never' to I CAN! Our relationships strengthened. This time brought us all emotionally closer to each other. The relationship between the school, teachers, parents, children and alumni strengthened like never before. The Brothers inspired us to extend a helping hand, to bring order into chaos, walk the extra mile and most importantly to believe in God and walk gently on the path created by Him. Thanks to our parents and children who were so cooperative in coping with all the sudden changes without any complaints. Special mention of all the amazing teachers who burnt the midnight oil to make sure their students didn't suffer a single day. Our alumni stood by us like a steady rock! I feel so blessed to be a part of such a compassionate community, where people care about each other. It might sound a bit idealisticbut for me St. John's is an ideal HAPPY SCHOOL, a place with rainbows and angels... a place where miracles happen!



Neelam Bhandari
Junior School Coordinator

Dear Johnians, the future bearers of India, nothing in this life defines us more than our beliefs, our goals and how we go about achieving them. The most crucial aspect is to be passionate about our goals. Swiss Philosopher Henri Friedrich Amiel underscored its importance

when he wrote,

'Without passion man is a mere latent force and possibility like the flint which awaits the shock of the iron before it can give forth its spark.' Passion is what drives us and keeps us motivated in the face of adversity or failure.

The second aspect is belief. More often than not, what we can or cannot do, what we consider possible or impossible, is a function of self-belief rather than our true capability. Always believe in yourself but be careful not to stray towards overconfidence. Incessant persistence always pays. It's easy to start doubting yourself at the first instance of failure but giving up would be a tragedy.

As Samuel Beckett famously remarked 'Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better'. Failure is the best teacher of all and learning from our mistakes, the zeal for constant improvement, is what makes us better.

The third aspect is hard work. Being passionate and believing in our capability will be all for naught if we don't actually put in the required effort. It's the willingness to outwork and outlearn everyone which separates the successful ones from others.

The fourth aspect is adapting to change. It's a VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) world and one has to be willing to learn, unlearn and relearn skills in order to stay relevant. Opportunity can come knocking at your door in any form. Change is inevitable, growth is optional.

The last but a very important aspect indeed is morality. In the quest to succeed and achieve, it's important to remember our values for they keep us steady. All said and done, you're remembered not only for how much you've achieved but also for how many lives you've touched, the difference you made in their lives. That is a legacy worth living for.

Aspire now! Adore Now! Achieve Now!



BAD TIMES - GOOD TIMES

By – Team Eyrle

The year gone by, has been one of the most challenging years for all of us. The pandemic has forced all of us to remain indoors, for most of the year. Needless to say that the most affected section of the society was the one which is most vulnerable to such disruptions- the school going children. The children lost their beloved school environment, they lost the jovial company of their schoolmates, they lost the comforting presence of their teachers amidst them and in a nutshell, they lost the joy of just being school kids.

No wonder, such a desperate situation required all of us, to rise to the occasion and take the bull by the horns. We, at St. John's, are not new to adversities. However, this was a new challenge for us also. In addition to conducting online classes, we had to keep in mind the creative engagement of the children.

With this as the main motive, the editors of The Eyrle were invested along with the other members of the Student Council. A lot of online activities were conducted for the benefit of the students. These activities were duly recorded and reported by our Team Eyrle. The never-say-die spirit, of the entire Johnian Family was in full flow during the entire process of creating this edition of The Eyrle.

We were very clear about one thing, right from the very beginning, that this edition of The Eyrle was going to be very different from the earlier editions, given the constraints of the times. We decided to go for a soft copy of the magazine, which gave us an incredible freedom to go ahead with a lot of creativity. You will find and enjoy a number of new and different features in this edition of The Eyrle.

This year has been special for us for a number of other reasons as well. Under the dynamic leadership of our Principal Mrs. Kavita Das, we went International for our Virtual Online Debate. We were declared the Best Boys' Day School in the country. Hence in a way the Bad Times have proved to be the Good Times for all of us at St. John's.

We hope you enjoy this labour of love. Hoping to see you with still better editions of The Eyrle in the coming years, in better times.

Happy Reading!!!