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Character Scholarship Community



Welcome to our sixtieth edition of "The Academic Journal," a bimonthly bulletin in which you can read about MCA's educational philosophy, instructional methodology, and the various viewpoints and positions of our faculty, staff, students, and families.

The Times We Are Given

COVID, Part II

Some of us thought we were masters of our own universe, but then an organism so small that 100 million could fit on a pinhead toppled that thought and produced world-wide fear, whether it was the fear of infection and possible death or the fear of losing one's freedom or personal autonomy. Some of us thought that our country's science, technology, and social structures were strong enough to maintain a healthy and peaceful society, but then we saw death tolls rising and violence in the streets and in the capitol.

Realizing that we are frail, that we are not in charge, and that we do not know all things, we can still humbly use the wisdom we have to make the best decisions we can and to keep moving courageously forward. We have to carefully weigh what to do with the times that we are given. As Gandalf says, "Courage will now be [our] best defense against the storm that is at hand."

We will all suffer in this life, but we also need to hear and grasp that it is possible to live an upright, generous life in a dark time. It is possible to provide an oasis for others. It is possible to be an oasis, an encourager, who brings hope and blessings instead of dread and hopelessness. As far as we truly embody what is ultimately true, good, and beautiful we can be an oasis of peace in a world torn apart by upheaval, violence, warfare, and sickness.

We are facing struggles we never anticipated and for which we have no ready solution. We are confronting despair, evil, and uncertainty. However, let's not merely try to survive this ordeal in order to get back to a more comfortable life. As a school community, let's endeavor to classically educate our children, even in this environment, so they can live full lives. Our vision remains the same: to develop wise and virtuous citizens who lead in a constitutional republic and who pursue truth, goodness, and beauty.

Will this be easy? No. It might be the most difficult thing we've ever done. It might mean doing something we never planned on doing. It might mean facing our fears. It might mean giving up some of our routine, comfort, and security. For Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings*, it meant trekking across Middle Earth constantly fearing for his life and not knowing if any of his seemingly inconsequential efforts made any difference at all in the face of the great forces against him. It meant being stabbed in the shoulder by the Lord of the Nazgûl. It meant being stung by the demon spider Shelob. It meant having his finger bit off by Gollum. It meant carrying the searing weight of the ring. However, it was also an opportunity to humbly be a beacon of goodness in his world. It was an occasion to love.⁴ Each trial Frodo endured and each act of goodness he discharged mattered greatly, but he did not know this, and we do not know this until we look in retrospect at the big picture. As Mother Teresa said, "We can do no great things, only small acts of great love."



During this time, I certainly hope and pray for our health and well-being, that our country is set right, and that this virus stops plaguing the world. In the meantime, may we draw encouragement from the lives of Americans during the polio epidemic, from

those who lived through the bubonic plague, from the Christians during the Roman Empire, from all those who have died having lived a noble life, and from all those men and women and boys and girls today who live honorably. May we find a national courage that has lain dormant for decades. May we acknowledge that we humans are just that—humans—not all-powerful and not completely autonomous. May we remember that our common life depends upon each other's toil.

People say, "I'll never be the same again after this." The real danger, I think, is that we may be exactly the same after this pandemic is over. May we gain an appreciation for what is truly important. May we have the heart and find strength to grow by embracing truth, living out of goodness, and displaying beauty.

These are the times we are given. Had any other condition been better for us than the one in which we are, divine love would have put us there.⁵ May we live these times courageously with wisdom and virtue, so that we, too, might be a beacon of goodness in the world.

Kirby R. McCrary, Headmaster

Works Cited

⁴ David, Christopher. "Opinion: Lord of the Rings and COVID-19: It Was Not for Us to Decide." DSRN, 18 Mar. 2020, disrn.com/opinion/opinion-lord-of-the-rings-and-covid-19-not-for-us-to-decide.

⁵ Spurgeon, Charles. *Morning and Evenings: Daily Readings*. London, Passmore & Alabaster, 1896.

