

After morning Mass today I told all the first and second year students to remain for a few words from me. What I wanted them to hear was that the acrimony that sometime arises during the night study time must not carry on to inhibit us from performing with our full potential on this new day. So, for example, where I threaten that I will never speak to the Form I students again due to their outlandish behavior during night study “never” can have a duration of about 5 minutes, but of course I don’t tell them so.

Then there are those who have had to sign into the “Law Breakers Book”. This is more serious. These are the students who have weightier transgressions like being AWOL (absent without official leave) from the study room. So along with signing the book and the date and time of the offence they must also put down their mother’s phone number as well. Now comes a time of tears and lamentations then they go down on their knees when I give them my phone and tell them to call their Mom and tell her where they are and what they are there for. The grief and remorse resounds through the courtyard and dead silence reigns in every study room within earshot. Normally a cell phone is almost a physical appendage to a teenager, hand, flat against her ear but lying there on my desk with the order to pick it up and call their Mom it becomes a white

hot untouchable. I push it toward them to make the call and they push it back to me with an elbow to resist even the semblances of picking it up. However even in these cases, when the remorse seems genuine and the pleas for forgiveness sincere there can be redemption. Then the offender’s name along with their Mothers’ phone number can be eradicated with ‘white out’ from the Lawbreaker’s Book.



and he thought it was me making the rumpus but it really was not like that because I wasn’t there and I promise that I’ll never do it again so don’t worry Mom.” “Here say hello to Father.” So I pass along pleasantries and extract a promise from the student too and make her say the school prayer out loud repeating the petition “lead me to seek beyond my reach and give me the courage to stand before your truth.” In most cases it is a real reformation and our relationship gets to another level of understanding. Then come simple little hints like.”Have you been on the phone with Mom recently?” And of course then and there we make the call.

The campaigning for the coming Presidential election in four weeks time is up to fever pitch. Reading the narrative of the politicians’ fervor both here and in the American press one need only to substitute the American candidates with their contentions speeches condemning their opponents along with their grandiose promises and then of their Tanzanian counter parts and just think of the newsprint that could be saved with just a single printing just switching the names. One very naïve commentator chided all the candidates that they should not make promises that they know they cannot or will not fulfill if elected.

The election fever even hit our own school during the recent election of new Prefects. The supporters of one Prefect hopeful canvassed for her with a hand written and illustrated manifesto of 10 crucial issues that she would strive to implement should she be elected, all of which related to food .Peanut butter and bottled water on every table in the dining hall are a couple of the items I now recall . One of the interesting aspects concerning the current election process here in Tanzania this year in the consolidation of all the opposition parties behind a single candidate to take a stand against the ruling party which has held power since independence in 1961 .Therein lies hope for change.

May the Good Lord bless you all and keep us firm in our care of the little ones of whom He said” let them come unto me” .

Most gratefully and sincerely,  
Father Damian