



COLLEGE OF
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 7, 2021

Dear Students and Colleagues,

Like many of you, as I watched the insurrection that occurred yesterday in Washington, D.C., I was left with disbelief, sadness, anger, fear for our democracy, and so many more emotions that I am still attempting to process and articulate. Regardless of our individual political beliefs, as a country and community, I firmly believe that we need to pause to reflect on what we can learn from this moment. This message cannot, and should not, capture all the emotions felt and lessons learned, and yet I offer the following observations.

Words matter. Yesterday we learned that when leaders use language that incites and encourages violence, some who are emboldened by those words will act. As you process your feelings and thoughts with others, I encourage you to also think about the words you use and how others receive those words.

Human dignity matters. We can and must continue to commit to respecting the human dignity of others. Growth can come from disagreement and discourse; however, violence in response to disagreement ignores the human dignity of others.

Mount Saint Vincent matters. Now more than ever, our country and our world needs the excellent [mission](#)-driven education that we offer at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. In our mission we commit to being authentically inclusive and developing the whole person. Further, *“in the spirit of Vincent de Paul and Elizabeth Ann Seton, we foster an understanding of our common humanity, a commitment to human dignity, and a full appreciation of our obligations to each other.”* To be educated is to be liberated from ignorance. The events of yesterday affirmed for me that we are blessed to be a part of a learning community that offers an educational experience defined by our mission and values.

I pray that in the days ahead, we hold our mission, values, and commitment to human dignity close in our hearts and minds.

Holding you individually and collectively in thought and prayer,

Susan R. Burns
President