

NEWSLETTER No. 32 – Thursday, 22nd October 2009

“Now and again bestow some praise”.

Catherine McAuley (1778-1841) Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy.

Dear Parents, Students and Staff,

Our staff professional development day on Friday provided an excellent occasion to receive tuition from a very knowledgeable student of the Scriptures, Fr John McKinnon. Fr John travelled from Hamilton to make himself available to us and we greatly appreciate his generosity. Complementing Fr John were Fr Matthew with a workshop on the components of liturgy and the liturgical year; Mrs Denise Knight on the story of the early Sisters of Mercy and their relevance today; and Mr Tony Finn on parental attitudes to religious education. To round off such a valuable day, Mrs Mary-Lou Towns offered a workshop on meditation. It is rare that we can get our whole staff together to participate in such a worthwhile venture and I am confident all valued this opportunity.

Mr Darren Atkinson, Principal

REMEMBRANCE DAY



The Hon. Ken Wright of the Mildura RSL WW1 Memorial Steering Committee has invited St Joseph's College to participate in a Dedication Service on Remembrance Day. To better understand the role of past students of the College in WW1, we are seeking assistance from families who know that their forebears were students of St Joseph's College and servicemen or women in The Great War. We are particularly interested in those who made the ultimate sacrifice and did not return from war. Sadly, records of the early years of the College cannot be found and students of History are undertaking research to see what they can discover from this period. Should you have any information that may be helpful please contact History Teacher, Miss Belinda Quick, at the College.

SUBJECT LEVIES 2010

Subject Domain Leaders have been asked to keep subject levies at 2009 levels when planning for next year in light of some of the challenges facing our local economy. In all but a few subject areas with very high levels of consumables, this has been managed and I appreciate the commitment of our Domain Leaders to this goal. While this will provide a small saving, I know every dollar helps.

WORLD TEACHERS DAY

UNESCO has dedicated **Friday, 30th October** as World Teachers Day. The teachers of St Joseph's College are highly dedicated and deserve acknowledgement of their commitment to their profession. The College will thank the teaching staff by hosting a special morning tea on World Teachers Day. Member for Mildura, Mr Peter Crisp, and Mayor Glenn Milne have both written to the College, acknowledging the work of teachers and their support for World Teachers Day.

YEAR 12 CELEBRATION DAY

Year 12 students will commemorate the end of formal classes tomorrow with a day in which they can celebrate with their House in the morning and then proceed to the Stadium as a year level. The Year 12's will have a chance to reminisce on their time together, share a BBQ lunch and will then be dismissed. We are especially wary of potential dangers and legal requirements around students in cars and have asked that cars are not brought to school on this day. We hope that the Celebration Day will be an appropriate conclusion to a demanding year enjoyed safely by all members of our community.

Classes for each subject will continue until the day of the exam and the subject teacher will remain available as per the timetable to assist students with revision and exam preparation.



DRAMA AND DANCE PERFORMANCE

Senior Drama and Dance students showcased their performance pieces at the Mercy Theatre on Sunday evening. The high quality of the student work was clearly evident and they appeared very well prepared for their examination. Congratulations to these students and their teachers, Mrs Jade Kemp and Mrs Janine Kerr.

Mr Darren Atkinson, Principal

END OF YEAR MASS AT THE ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE STADIUM

FRIDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER

The final Mass for 2009 will be an opportunity for parents, families and friends to show their prayerful support for our students, especially our departing Year 12 students. Parents of all year levels are invited. We ask that you inform Mrs Tracy Aston at the College of numbers attending, so that suitable seating arrangements can be prepared. This Mass is usually a time for Year 12 parents to reflect on the journey of their children through school and to pray for them as they venture on to new studies or employment in the future. If you have elderly or persons requiring special arrangements please also advise Tracy.

Dr Tony Finn, Director of Religious Education

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL REPORT

It occasionally alarms me when meeting people in social situations. When people find out that I am a teacher, I often get met with negative statements about the "children of today". Sometimes schools and parents are blamed, but the children of today are often represented as selfish, rude and in need of "good old fashioned discipline". If we rely on the media for our opinions, or just focus on the more visible misbehaviors we might occasionally see, then we might be justified in thinking that the youth of today are in desperate need of redemption.

My own experience is quite different. I can honestly say that in reflecting on my life both as a student at school and in thirty years of teaching, the students of today are better behaved and schools are safer than ever before. Schools are a more caring environment and more nurturing in their style. The recent discussion over whether the use of a wooden spoon was appropriate in managing children, reminded me of the strap that was evident in my own secondary education. The removal of corporal punishment in schools was one of the first steps to creating the more caring and positive environments of today.

We still have student misbehavior and those who are caught up in negative instances will feel the hurt of those experiences, but the restorative approaches we use to deal with infringements, are far more effective both in the short and longer term. Wherever possible, we try to use positive measures to reinforce better behaviours and resort to punishments less often. Punishments tend to create aggressive responses and resentment but will occasionally be used when other options have not been seen to work.

Last Thursday my Year 8 Mercy Works class in association with Mr Eddie's VCAL class assisted some of the residents of Princes Court Homes in a visit to the Mildura Show. The students assisted the residents from the car park to the hospitality marquee and also assisted on tours to various displays. The staff of Princes Court Homes were very appreciative of the support that the students gave and made the visit far more relaxing and enjoyable for all. I wish that those people who complain about "the youth of today" were with Mr Eddie and I to witness the care and consideration of these students in their dealings with the residents. They were patient, engaged in humour with those in their care and genuinely enjoyed the experience.

Mr Kevin Towns, Deputy Principal



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

STAFF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

As Mr Atkinson has briefly explained in his opening to this newsletter, the staff of our College participated in a day aimed at helping to better understand their role as members of a Catholic Secondary College, within the Mercy tradition. This day enabled our staff to gain valuable credit towards the Diocese of Ballarat requirement that all staff more fully understand our Catholic tradition.

The Mercy Education Tradition: Mrs Denise Knight, inspired by her visit to Dublin earlier in the year, was able to help staff explore the Sisters of Mercy tradition in Australia. Denise paralleled her own journey in life to that of Ursula Frayne, the first Sister of Mercy to bring Catherine McAuley's message of Mercy to Australia. These early Sisters had many difficulties in a strange land far from their native Ireland. Similarly, Denise explained that the early Sisters of Mercy in Mildura, after whom many classrooms in our College are named, left their homes to travel to isolated Sunraysia to establish our proud tradition of Mercy here at St Joseph's College. This session helped all staff to better appreciate our Mercy heritage, which we use to influence all aspects of life in our College.

CURRICULUM

The Scriptures (How to better understand the Bible readings): Fr John McKinnon was able to lead staff to see the world view of the writers of the Scriptures. This is essential if readers of Scripture are to fully understand the meaning of passages as they are products of their culture and their time in history. Fr John provided an overview of the first century life and times of Jesus, through the use of Luke's Gospel. This included the geography of the land, the occupations of the people, the way that society was structured, the religious life of the people as faithful Jews and an overview of society generally. There was particular emphasis on the how Jesus spoke of "the poor" – a more literal interpretation of poor, materially and socially underprivileged. This provided a challenge in terms of how we address "the poor" today as a Catholic school. There was also a more detailed session on the Gospel of John.

Religious Education and Parents: Mr Tony Finn used findings from recent research to highlight to staff how many parents relate to Religious Education in our College. The over-riding message was that parents are very supportive of our Religious Education curriculum and expect that the whole College staff, processes and structures reflect the Christian message and values. Of particular interest was the expectation of parents that teachers in the College should be setting a good example in areas of morality, respect for Catholic traditions, support for liturgy and prayer and that these aspects should be present across the curriculum. Staff were subsequently challenged to see themselves as agents of the Christian tradition in all subject areas and in all activities involving staff or students. Staff were also made more aware of the depth of the Religious Education curriculum and the need for all staff to own and support it.

Meditation: Mrs Mary-Lou Towns led series of sessions on Christian Meditation in which staff were encouraged to experience a form of prayer and reflection that allows individuals to go beyond the day to day demands of life to find a more personal experience of God and inner peace. This will better equip many of our staff in helping students to value this type of experience. This is in line with parental hopes that students will learn meditation practices and will explore a range of prayer formats.

Church Life and the Liturgical Year: Fr Matthew Thomas presented a session on Church life which explored many of those particularly Catholic practices and rituals that are often not fully understood by many people. This will help to ensure that students will be able to gain greater knowledge and skills for liturgy from more staff, especially as we celebrate our Masses and other liturgies. Parents have expressed the desire for their children to be active in liturgy and this session will be of assistance in preparing them for these Eucharistic celebrations (Masses) and other liturgies such as Ash Wednesday.

This week we continue to explore the RE curriculum that is in place for this term.

Year 9: There has been a strong focus this semester on responsible decision making and the impact that this has on relationships. We examine the range of relationships that young people are building: with peers, brothers and sisters, parents, at school, at work, in groups and clubs, romantic attachments, friendships, with religious traditions and the wider community. The emphasis has been on making informed decisions that take into account the key values and principles that affect their decisions, the impact of the decisions on themselves and others, the actual process of decision making and the need to gather sufficient information to assess options satisfactorily. Key Christian principles and teachings are presented as guidelines for decision making. This involves the interconnectedness of morality, sexuality, relationships, identity and religious tradition. This is supporting the strong parental call for students to discuss and work through facets of morality and decision making as faced in contemporary society.

Year 10: Students have been analyzing the nature and impact of the Reformation in the sixteenth century that led to the Protestant movement. The challenge to the Church at this time and its subsequent effects for centuries was examined in the light of the ecumenical movement which is aiming to rebuild closer relationships between Christian churches today. To complete this term, students are investigating the nature of Prophets and Saints in our world today. This looks at people who are living according to Gospel values and who are good role models for young people today as examples of Christian beliefs and values in action in modern society. Students are being helped to examine the possibilities in their own lives for a sense of 'mission' or 'vocation' that will give them focus and purpose as they continue to build towards adult lives. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is presented as an example of a young person challenged to respond to a 'mission' to follow a plan that she believed was her calling in life. Other modern 'saints' are researched as people who can give rich witness to the Gospel. This unit strongly supports the call by parents to help their children to examine society and to be equipped to critique it and to respond positively to their challenges.

COMMUNITY SERVICE - YEAR 12

I would like to congratulate those Year 12 students who have finally completed their community service for 2009. There has been a deluge of paperwork this week, as was needed in response to some strong encouragement. Students who are still completing the process, need to do so immediately, or see me personally to negotiate completion. Parents are firmly encouraged to discuss this with their son/daughter to determine their current status in this area.

Dr Tony Finn, Director of Religious Education

BINGO

THURSDAY, 29TH OCTOBER

Kara Toms	0414 778 178
Pam Gooding	0400 277 995
Craig Stanbridge	5021 1417
Richard Bryans	5024 7800
<i>Emergency: Di Eagle</i>	5024 2667

THURSDAY, 5TH NOVEMBER

Margaret Burton	0409 502 414
Sally Fishwick	5024 7299
Robert Burton	0409 502 414
Ron Leamon	5022 1904
<i>Emergency: Alan Cameron</i>	0429 201 326

LOCAL EXCURSIONS

Monday, 26th October

Period 2 & 3 REL102D to Christie Centre (Miss Burke)

Tuesday, 27th October

All Day SSSSA Cricket (Mr Collins, Mr Doyle, Mrs Minter, Mr Wilson)

Wednesday, 28th October

Period 2 & 3 PEDOB0B to Lock 11 (Mr Ficarra)

Period 6 & 7 GEO222A to CBD (Mr Liepins)

Thursday, 29th October

Period 6 & 7 GEO222A to CBD (Mr Liepins)

Friday, 30th October

Period 1 - 5 PEDOE0B to Coomealla (Mr Doyle)

YEAR 9 EXAMINATIONS

Please note: there was an error on the Term 4 Calendar (attached to Newsletter No. 30) in relation to the Year 9 Examinations. Year 9 students will undertake their examinations from **Thursday, 26th November to Friday, 4th December.**

SUNRAYSLIA ABW PROGRAM



During the week of **Monday, 5th to Friday, 9th October** 99 St Joseph's College and Senior College students took part in Australian Business Week (ABW) at Sunraysia TAFE. Year 11 students studying a Business Management, Accounting, Economics, Legal Studies or VCAL subject were involved in this program.

Nine groups were formed to become companies running hotel chains and students were involved in listening to many lectures, participating in several team building activities, forming a product for trade display and TV advertisement, undertaking an oral presentation, presenting a power point show and a written report about their company.

During the week students were also involved in business lunches and on Friday were dressed up in business attire for judging. Presentation was held on Friday evening. Each group was awarded for something outstanding that they accomplished during the week. The overall Grand Champion Team was 'Tres Bon'.

ABW was a great week where students got a taste of what it is like to work in the business world. Students were able to apply the things learned at school, to real day situations and come up with strategies to help with the success of a company. The week also provided students with a lot of skills, such as teamwork, delegation, communication and negotiation skills; which will not only assist throughout school, but also in preparation for the future.

I encourage any student studying the above subjects in Year 11 next year to participate in this very enjoyable week. I would also like to thank all the staff, business mentors, judges and guest speakers for giving up their valuable time to help us during the program.



Olivia Cirillo, HPA07

SUNRAYSLIA INSTITUTE OF TAFE SCHOLARSHIP



Brenda Sefo of Year 11 has been awarded a \$1,000.00 scholarship to attend Sunraysia TAFE in 2011. Brenda received the scholarship because of her business knowledge, aptitude and active participation in the ABW Program at TAFE. Brenda showed wonderful leadership, sound communication skills and outstanding creativity in the areas of marketing and business during the week. Congratulations to Brenda and best wishes wish your future business studies.

Miss Paula Cox, ABW Coordinator

TABLE TENNIS VICTORIAN SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

On **Friday, 9th October** Joel Dorman travelled to Melbourne to compete in the Victorian Table Tennis Singles Championships. This is a state wide competition open to all schools across Victoria. Joel played six games in his pool and was successful in getting into the final in the intermediate division. Joel played a tough four set match and finished runner up. This was a fantastic effort and was a great experience for Joel.



ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

A few weeks ago, Year 9 Environmental Science students received a visit from Ben Graham of Markwell Sunraysia Toyota. Ben brought along the Hybrid Toyota Prius sedan and explained the workings of the car to the students, who are currently studying car emissions and energy efficient vehicles in their Environmental Science unit. Students were shown how the car uses both an engine and a battery system to power the vehicle and numerous features which make the car friendlier to the environment.

Mr Robert Wolfe, Science Teacher



A THOUGHT FROM THE URSULA FRAYNE CENTRE

LIVING WITH TEENS PART 2

Communication

Communication plays such a critical part in these years and makes living together easier or more difficult. How we talk, listen and respond has a big impact on our relationship with our teenagers. The words, the tone and the look on your face can create a feeling of genuine respect or disrespect.

Two questions to ask yourself in every situation are:

- What is the message my teenager is getting from me right now?
- How would I feel if another person spoke to me in this way?

Be an approachable parent

It is easy for young people to tell parents good news, but difficult and sometimes scary to give parents bad news. It requires great effort from parents to keep emotions under control, not to over-react and to stay 'cool' while hearing the bad news. With this approach you are more likely to know what is happening in your teenager's life.

Listen

Having family and friends who are good listeners and who are non-judgmental helps keep communication open.

When young people talk to parents they often get advice, reassurance or a sermon before they have had a chance to really say what they want to say. This not only breaks down communication, it also stops teenagers finding their own ways to deal with problems.

The most helpful responses are ones that show interest and open the way for teenagers to talk on, such as: 'how come?', 'you must have felt...', 'that sounds exciting or scary...'

Allow for silences, without jumping in to fill the space.

Nagging

Many disagreements with teenagers stem from parents nagging. Most parents feel that one little reminder doesn't hurt—and might be helpful. To most teenagers they get the message that the parent doesn't trust them to remember or wants to control them. Nagging usually results in sullenness, resistance to obey, or arguments.

Learning to tolerate minor irritations and stand firm on serious issues can improve relationships. On important issues focus on your feelings and the way you experienced what happened—rather than blaming your teenager. Be clear about what you expect and what you think is fair and work out together about how both of you can make it better.

Conflict

Conflict arises over such things as freedom, time limits, friends, sexual freedom, activities and having their own point of view. Usually the response is an emotional one (by both teenagers and parents) which takes away from the real dilemma. Shouting matches and exchanges of ridicule only hurt and drain us of energy.

When things are quieter is the best time to rethink the 'rules' and see if they are still appropriate as your teenager grows older and more responsible.

- Temper your reactions to negative comments. Weigh up the issue—is it really important to win this battle? Sometimes it is wiser to let teenagers 'win' the small issues because you have to stand firm on the big ones.
- It is important to say you are hurt when your teenager says or does something that is hurtful to you, (but don't become defensive or attack back).
- It is just as important for parents to admit when they are wrong, without fuss or excuse. This also sets a good example and sends the message that you don't see yourself as always right or perfect.

Anger

Anger is always a response to another feeling such as feeling hurt, frustrated or frightened.

This very natural and powerful emotion causes many parents to feel uncomfortable and have difficulty when their children become angry.

From the early years many children are made to feel guilty for expressing anger and grow up convinced that to be angry is to be bad.

Instead of trying to stifle anger, it is important to show children how to manage this emotion without hurting or damaging themselves and those around them. The first step is for parents to model the sort of behaviour they want to see from their children.

A good relationship

A good relationship between you and your teenager is a protective factor against your teenager being manipulated, duped or seduced by outside influences.

What are the ingredients of this relationship?

- Respect and patience
- Listening, exploring and negotiation rather than telling
- Spending time on activities that your teenager enjoys and covering safety issues such as cars and drinking

Praise and criticism

Praise that looks at your teenager's personality or character can be unhelpful and create anxiety. It can be difficult for a teenager to hear that they are great, clever or generous and puts them under pressure to live up to the impossible.

Praise that describes efforts, accomplishments and feelings is much more helpful and safe.

Criticisms usually spark an outburst and can become so heated that parents and teenager lose sight of each other's point of view. When teenagers get messages about their inadequacies, they usually become defensive and resistant to change.

Be clear about behaviours that are acceptable in your family, but emphasise the unique talents, abilities and the individuality of your teenager.

PRAYER

This week is Mission Week in the Catholic Church and it is a time for highlighting the need for all people to take time to consider the way that we view our mission in life, our vocation. All people are called to live full human lives, using the gifts and talents available to us; ensuring that we use these for the betterment of others and our world. As single persons, parents, priests or religious, all are called to relationship with God in 2009. Our response determines how we end up living this out.

*Jesus, your mission, your lifestyle and direction,
helped to shape our world through the relationships,
teaching and example during your life on Earth.
We pray this week that we will also find the vision,
strength and commitment to be able to play our part in
building the Kingdom of God in our families and work places,
within our friendship groups,
within our College community and within the wider society.
We pray for those struggling to find direction and support in their lives,
that they will be able to see things more clearly and
find the help from others to continue positively.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.*

Debutante Presentation Ball 2010

The St Joseph's College Debutante Balls continue the fine history of providing a wonderful and memorable evening of tradition and ceremony.

Planning has commenced for 2010 and two dates have been selected ~ **Saturday 24th & Saturday 31st July**. We are currently seeking expressions of interest from young ladies who will be in Year 11 in 2010. At this stage it is envisaged that debutante training will be conducted on Wednesday evenings commencing in May. It is preferred that that debutante's choose partners from the College. Partners are to be Year 11 onwards only.

Please complete the form below and return to the Student Office as soon as possible.

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St Joseph's College Debutante Presentation Ball 2010

Debutante Name: _____ Homeroom: _____

Debutante Telephone No: _____

Partners Name: _____

Partners Telephone No: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO THE STUDENT OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.