Dear Parents

I don’t know about your workplace, but in many of the school and non-educational places I have worked in or been a part of, people spend a lot of time talking about what they are doing, seeing, going to or where they will be some time in the future. Often conversations are about future holidays, the arts (movies, theatre, concerts) and even their career path “down the track”. I am sure you know people who are constantly in a state of planning their next holiday or next “thing”.

Advent is no different. In fact, it is a crucial element defining us as Catholics and Christians more generally. It is a time when we, as Christians, look forward to the birth of our Saviour. The countdown to this significant feast is a time of anticipation and excitement.

At Assembly last week, we spoke about young people’s almost-obsession with living “in the moment”. The great struggle with adolescents is their brains are not yet wired to “think ahead” and plan. We see this at school with hastily completed assessments, “last minute” task-finishing/exam preparation and I am certain this is replicated in most homes with completing chores and punctuality. Count the times you have said (or wished you had said “But you didn’t think!”) It is all best typified with that current buzzword/acronym “YOLO!” (You Only Live Once). Its appeal is not confined to the current crop of teens either: how many parents remember Robin Williams’ call to “Carpe Diem!” (Live for the Day) in the film Dead Poets Society.

According to the Ordo (a little calendar book that gives instructions about each days feasts), Advent has a “twofold character”—as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ’s first coming to us is remembered; and as a season when that remembrance “directs the heart and mind to await Christ’s second coming at the end of time”. So lets think ahead!

Anyone finished their Christmas shopping yet…..?

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Our inaugural Creative Arts Gala Evening was held in the TAS Courtyard two weeks ago. It was a lovely evening, sitting around on the steps, listening to a variety of musical performances, watching our drama students exhibit their street theatre skills and view the major works from Visual Art, Textiles and Woodwork. Many thanks to our Food Technology students who catered for the evening as well. In what is the busiest time of the year, congratulations to Mr Davidson and the Creative Arts staff Ms Hempenstall, Ms Kovacevic and Ms Lemaire and to Mr Shelton and the TAS team in Mrs Brown, Ms Pangallo and Mrs Reavell. We look forward to the student showcase evening becoming a significant event on the school calendar each year.

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In Benny’s Bites last week we alerted parents to changes in the local car parking arrangements. There will be no access to the car park in front of St Benedict’s College beginning this week. This may affect some morning drop offs. Most importantly, there are a number of parents who sit and wait in the kiss and drop of an afternoon. This will no longer be an option as pedestrian access is also changing and parking and waiting will now pose a danger to students. All parents will need to park in the current available spots and walk across to pick up your child this week. It’s a bit of short term pain for much bigger gains and there will be an extra 100 car parking spots next year.

Could I strongly suggest for this week only, if at all possible, that your encourage your child to catch the bus.

The information last week also included arrangements for the last week of school. Note that on our Beach Day, the Oran Park Drive crossing and gates will be closed and the only access to the school will be by school bus or parent morning/afternoon drop off.

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As this is the last newsletter of the academic year, on behalf of the all staff, can I thank you for your wonderful ongoing support and positive feedback. Although our building programme is forging ahead and we have wonderful new facilities, the College has been built on much the stronger foundations of good teaching and positive, close relationships with our families. Raising adolescents is a challenge in these times and it is our hope that we have honoured the trust that you have placed in us. Over 200 new students and 15 new staff will join us next year and nearly all of them tell us the reason they want to enrol/ work at St Benedicts is that “we hear it’s a good school”.

I wish you a safe holiday period in whatever you do and may all the blessings of the Christ-child be with you and your family over this period and into 2015. I very much look forward to us continuing to build the College together next year.

Michael Hanratty
Principal

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**PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS**

Tuesday 16 December
8am—2:30pm

If you wish to discuss any concerns in regard to your child’s Semester 2 report you can make an appointment with a particular teacher by contacting the Office. The teacher concerned will then contact you to organise a time.

**Christmas Mass Times 2014**

**St Aloysius, The Oaks**

Christmas Eve: 7.00pm (Carols from 6.30pm)
Christmas Day: 9.00am (Open air)
Reconciliation: 2nd Rite Tuesday 16 December 6.30pm

**St Anthony’s, Picton**

Christmas Eve: 6.00pm (Menangle), 7.00pm (Tahmoor), 7.30pm (Douglas Park)
Christmas Day: Midnight (Tahmoor), 9.00am (Tahmoor), 9.00am (Douglas Park)
Reconciliation: 2nd Rite Wednesday 17 December 7.00pm

**Camden**

Christmas Eve: 7.00pm (Camden and Leppington), 9.00pm
Christmas Day: Midnight, 9.00am
Reconciliation: 2nd Rite Wednesday 17 December 7.00pm

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**Wishing you all the joys of this blessed Christmas Season from all at St Benedict’s**
**MISA Sport**

Last week our MISA teams competed in their final MISA game for the year. Unfortunately there was no game for our Girls Basketball Team and Boys Oztag Team, however the other 3 MISA Teams represented St Benedict’s in the final round with the same determination and spirit that our students have shown all year. A special mention to Ms Chalmers and the Girls Oztag Team who came away with a 3-2 victory to place 7th. The final placing’s for this Term were:

- Girls Oztag - 7th
- Boys Oztag - 6th
- Boys AFL - 6th
- Girls Basketball - 7th
- Boys Basketball - 4th

Congratulations to the following students who were nominated as the Most Valuable Player for the MISA season for their team;

- Courtney Schonell (7-9 Girls Oztag)
- Noah Weaver (7-9 Boys Oztag)
- Lachlan Abbott (9/10 Boys AFL)
- Lyllie Conwell (7 Girls Basketball)
- Jonah Nader (7 Boys Basketball)

Finally I would like to thank all of the staff and students who have participated in MISA this year. From making themselves available for trials to representing the College week in and week out. We are very lucky to have such enthusiastic students, matched only by their MISA coaches who, in addition to coaching and referring the games, wash the team jerseys every week. Without you we would not be able to compete in such a fantastic competition. Thank you.

**School Sport**

As we near the final week of College Sport for the year I would like to remind students to please ensure that they have their College hat with them every week, as well as a drink bottle.

Information and permission notes regarding Semester 1 sports for 2015 will be coming home soon. Please return these via student homerooms as soon as possible.

Thank you to all of the staff and students for your participation in Sport in 2015; it has been a great year of physical activity at the College.

Yours in Sport,
Mrs Pereira

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**RANIER UNIFORM NEWS**

**Additional Trading Days**
**January 2015**

- Tuesday 20th 9.00am – 1.00pm
- Thursday 22nd 1.00pm – 5.00pm
- Tuesday 27th 9.00am – 1.00pm

Last trading day for 2014 – **Thursday 11th December**

Regular trading commence – **Thursday 29th January 2015**

- Tuesday 9.00am – 1:00pm & Thursday 1:00pm – 5:00pm
- 1st & 3rd Saturday of the month - 9.00am – 1.00pm

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Mathematics Update

Congratulations to all the students who represented St. Benedict’s College in Mathematics competitions this semester.

The ‘Human Calculator’ Competition

On Friday 28 November a team from St Benedict’s entered the ‘Human Calculator’ competition held at St Gregory’s College. This involved competing against the other Diocesan schools to answer questions using only ‘mental maths’ skills - students were allowed only 3 seconds to answer each question.

Congratulations to Alex Kolokotas and Alex Mougios who represented year 9 and year 10 respectively, both performed strongly in a very tough section. In the year 8 section, congratulations to Isaac Hobman who came second in his year group. Representing Year 7, and winning our first - of hopefully many - ‘Golden Calculator’ awards, congratulations to Zac Winters.

‘Enrichment Phase’ of the “Mathematics Challenge for Young Australians”

At the assembly in Week 9 we recognised Portia Zuber, Carol Halim, Isaac Hobman, Alex Kolokotas, Thomas Walker and Kody Fletcher for their work in the ‘Enrichment Phase’ extension activity. This was the second extension activity completed by these students this year - in addition to their normal school and assessment work these students are to be commended for their work on this very challenging problem solving activity. This was the first time the College entered this competition, and the Mathematics Department is indebted to these students for their positive example and for making it easier for students in subsequent years to compete in this challenge.

Australian Mathematics Competition Results

This year 26 students from the College participated in the Australian Mathematics Competition. All students who participated in the country-wide competition are to be commended for their willingness to involved in this challenging co-curricular opportunity. The students names and their respective award level are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jason Ertl – Proficiency</td>
<td>Chaltu Etana – Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Halim – Credit</td>
<td>Kody Fletcher – Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Popovic – Participation</td>
<td>Jackson Lewis – Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zac Winters – Credit</td>
<td>Patrick Stafford – Proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portia Zuber – Proficiency</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Conlon – Proficiency</td>
<td>Chelsea Barnes – Proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitchell Orridge – Credit</td>
<td>Ebony Billett – Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaac Hobman – Credit</td>
<td>Bianca Dunn – Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gabby Hooton – Proficiency</td>
<td>Alex Mougios – Distinction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Josh Iorns – Proficiency</td>
<td>Manish Nath – Credit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jayden Price – Proficiency</td>
<td>Astrid Turner – Proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jenna Sarkis – Proficiency</td>
<td>Ashleigh Robinson – Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jake Schloeffel - Participation</td>
<td>Courtney Wilson – Proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elysse Stevens – Proficiency</td>
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‘tis the reason for the season