



St Benedict's Catholic College Newsletter

Vol 6, Issue 15 4 November 2016

Dear Parents

We are moving closer to the end of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, symbolised by the closing of the Holy Doors of the four Roman Basilicas on November 20. We should take time to reflect on what the Jubilee Year of Mercy has meant for each of us throughout this very special year.

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis asks us "what are you waiting for?" (EG 120) and by doing so he presents each of us with a challenge to take personal action to live out our lives in ways which bring about God's Kingdom - a world where each person is loved, where people are merciful and compassionate to one another, where we talk with the poor. The exhortation is inspiring in many ways and challenging in many others.

As a Benedictine community we see Mercy most centred on the notion of Hospitality. The stranger at our door must be received as if they were Jesus himself. Practising hospitality and gratitude in particular, is a daily event in the lives of those at St Benedict's College.

As Mercy people we should ask ourselves what difference have I made to the lives of others? Have I welcomed the stranger, comforted the sick, stood with the oppressed, sheltered the homeless, and fed the poor? Most importantly, what do I plan to do after the Jubilee Year of Mercy? How can I continue this Mission of God in my life for others?

Last week Yr 11 students travelled to Rathane, in the Royal National Park, for their Senior Retreat. The theme of the Retreat was based on the text from Matthew's Gospel "Where Your Treasure Is, there your Heart is also". Time was spent in examining the place of faith and God in our lives, experiencing healing, reconciliation and gratitude. At times challenging and other times extremely moving, our congratulations go to Mr Costin and the Retreat team for the opportunity for the students to immerse themselves in their faith.

We continued to keep our HSC students in our thoughts and prayers this week as we moved into the final round of examinations. In the younger years, Year 6 students have been undertaking the "Smooth Steps" transition to High School Programme with Mrs Keedle and the Learning Support team. It has been fantastic to see the excited faces each Tuesday as the 6 week programme begins. It will continue until Orientation Day.

Michael Hanratty
Principal



NOVEMBER

- Mon 7** 2017 HSC Information Night
Yr 11 Parent/Teacher Night
- Tue 8** Yr 9 & 10 Exams commence
Yr 12 Sign Out day
P&F Meeting 7pm @ College
- Fri 11** Yr 9 & 10 Exams finish
- Fri 18** Yr 8 Science Excursion
- Wed 23** Yr 7 2017 Orientation Evening
- Fri 25** Yr 7 2017 Student Orientation

DECEMBER

- Thurs 8** Duke of Ed - Canberra Day 1
- Fri 9** Duke of Ed - Canberra Day 2
- Mon 12** Yrs 7-10 Reports distributed
- Wed 14** College Closing Mass
- Thurs 15** Beach Day
- Fri 16** Parent/Teacher Interviews
(Pupil Free)

JANUARY

- Mon 30** First day for Years 7 & 12 students
- Tues 31** Years 8-11 commence

**P&F Meeting
Tuesday 8 November
7pm
in the Library**

All parents welcome.



The P&F is seeking your help for an important upcoming event.



**Friday 25 November
9am to 12:30pm**

Year 7 2017 Orientation Day BBQ

We would greatly appreciate the help with this annual event.

Please contact Clare-Ann Taylor on
0401 199 635

CATHOLIC MISSION and VISION

This week saw the Year 11 students at Rathane, in the National Park, for their Senior Retreat. This is a key part of the year for Year 11 and a special time for all involved. The theme this year was based in scripture, 'For where your treasure is, there your Heart is also'. This theme allowed us to look at what is important to us, what is of value to us, and what we treasure. This is done in an environment where we explore some of the key themes of the school, and to what degree students have developed a Love of God, Love of Neighbour and Love of Learning. The program allows students to build trust with others and to be able to explore these issues and discuss them in small groups. I must say that I am very grateful to the Year 11 students for their openness to the retreat program. It was so very pleasing to see the students enter the retreat with such an openness, enthusiasm and willingness to listen with the Ear of the Heart (which is an important Benedictine quality). I would also like to acknowledge and thank Ms Chalmers, Mrs Creswick, Sr Anne-Marie, Mr Shelton, Mr Lo Cascio, Mr Gavin and Mr Davidson for giving up the three days and two nights to share in this experience. Their experience, wisdom and enthusiasm truly leaves this as a lasting legacy for all involved.

Last week five students attended a liturgical ministers training day. This day is run by the Bishops Office and allows students to be trained as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. This is truly a special ministry and Maddison Crawford, Anthony Conlon, Cooper Davidson, Caitlin Burke and Jayden Price had the opportunity to attend this day at St Gregory's College and learn about the Eucharist – what it is, its importance and the manner in which it is distributed to communicants. It really is pleasing to see so many students take advantage of this opportunity and I look forward to them undertaking their ministries in both the College and their own parishes. I would encourage all students to take these opportunities when they present themselves.

Our Catechist program continues to progress well at Harrington Park Primary School. Our Year 10 students are continuing to enjoy and benefit from the experience. The reports I have received are that students are doing well in this program. It is great to see our students not only teaching the younger students, but also engaging in the salvific mission of the Church.

Our Year 12 students last week sat the Studies of Religion Higher School Certificate examination. Students felt that the paper was a fair one and we now can only hope and pray that they get the results that are reflective of the hard work and dedication that they approached this subject.

Our Year 11 students now begin the Higher School Certificate course and as they prepare for their first assessment task we wish them good luck in their endeavours.

It's a busy assessment time for all in the Religious Education department as Years 7, 8 and 9 have now completed their final task for the year and Year 10 will complete their final assessment in the examination block. We wish all students the best of luck in these tasks.

Mr David Costin
Director of Mission and Vision.



Highlights from the Senior Retreat



SENIOR RETREAT

The Senior Retreat 2016 provided students with the unique opportunity to develop an understanding of themselves in the world. They were challenged with the ideas of what they value and what they believe is important to them, as this is where their 'heart' lies.

On the first day, the Year 11 cohort settled into their cabins and enjoyed the beautiful scenery at the Rathane Centre, Port Hacking. All students took the opportunity to let go of what had previously been holding them back during a burning ceremony of messages written by the students in Year 10. From here, all of Year 11 engaged enthusiastically in a range of activities that allowed them to explore their relationships with their friends, family and with God. One highlight was the Amazing Race, where students were challenged to work in a team and overcome any difficulties they may face in order to succeed.

On day two, Year 11 were fortunate enough to once again have Sam Clear share his incredible story and the impact this had on his faith. One of the most positive experiences of the senior retreat was the celebrations of reconciliation and liturgy. All of the students should be commended for the reverence and participation during these ceremonies, especially the students who were involved in the reading of the scriptures, the role-play and the music ensemble. The students were then called to put on their thinking caps for a game of trivia, where the boys' table took out the main prize. The final day of retreat came around all too quickly.

Students were given the opportunity to explore their own personal strengths and gifts as well as receiving recognition for these strengths and talents from their peers. Overall, senior retreat was an awesome journey for all involved and sincerest thanks must go to Mr Costin, Mr Lo Cascio, Mr Davidson, Mr Shelton, Mr Gavin, Mrs Creswick and Sr Anne-Marie for giving up their time to spend with us on retreat. The biggest thank you must go to all the Year 11 students for making this such an awarding and unforgettable experience.

Miss Chloe Chalmers
Year 11 Coordinator



Highlights from the Senior Retreat



Year 9 Camp

If you are not fond of camping, I can assure you that you will have an absolute blast with your friends on this amazing journey. As a part of Year 9 Camp, we were able to participate in a range of activities that allowed us to step out of our comfort zones. With activities such as Rock Climbing, Raft Building, Archery, Kayaking, Wood fire Pizza's and Camp Fires, it provided many students with the ability to build confidence and awareness of the nature around us. Many students, including myself, are definitely looking forward to our next camp.

As a part of this wonderful and enjoyable journey, as a year group, we have learnt and experienced the new world around us. We have stepped out of our comfort zones and found a new strength within ourselves.

Claude Abdallah
Year 9



Diocesan Basketball

On Monday 31st October 2016 the Junior Boys (Yrs 7-9) Basketball team competed in the Diocesan Carnival at Minto Basketball Stadium. Playing all Diocesan schools on the day, the team was a highly competitive outfit securing wins against St Johns, St Josephs, Magdalene and Holy Spirit, as well as two narrow losses as part of the 8 games played. The boys put in a great effort despite a number of players having minimal experience. Jonah N and Lachlan Parker led the team with great intensity, Jonah being our top scorer on the day. They were ably supported by enthusiastic efforts from Aiden Wood, Joshua Sharkawy and Jayden Madrid as well as great defensive performances from Conor Mack, Connor Hempenstall and Damon Siutz. All team members are to be commended on the way they represented the school with distinction both in their sportsmanship and competitiveness.

Mrs Emily Cranney - Coach



**YEAR 11
PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS
and
HSC INFORMATION NIGHT
Monday 7 November
E Block**

Details for booking interviews for the Parent/Teacher sessions on Monday 7 September have been emailed to families. The online bookings are available **until Monday 7 November at 9am.**

A reminder that the HSC Information Session scheduled to commence at 6:00pm is compulsory for students. Year 11 students are to attend in summer uniform.

**YEAR 7 2017
PARENT INFORMATION EVENING**

The Information Evening for parents and students for Year 7 2017 is being held on **Wednesday 23 November**. A letter is being sent home this week with further details. If there is a problem with the session you have been allocated, please contact the Office for alternate arrangements.

STUDENT ORIENTATION DAY

The Year 7 2017 Orientation Day is **Friday 25 November**. Students are expected at the College at 8:15am for a 8:25am start and are to be collected at 2:15pm. They are to wear their current school sports uniform, including a hat. Lunch will be provided. Further details are provided in the letter which will be sent this week.

Please note that the carpark is a shared area and parking spaces are limited.

STUDENT PICK UPS FROM THE CARPARK...

We have noticed that some parents are picking their children up at the bus bay of an afternoon. THIS IS HIGHLY DANGEROUS. Apart from the No Standing signs in Hollows Drive, there are no road crossings for students and the area is now beset with concrete trucks, B-Double trucks and trades appear to be paying little attention to school zones. The school buses act as a screen and students cannot be seen crossing the road.

Should you wish to drive your child home of an afternoon, please pick them up in the designated area at the **front of the school**. Students will be sent back to the Library if they are seen looking for a parent pick up. I am sure you join with us in not wanting a tragic accident to save 5 minutes joining the queue in the car park.

College Access for Walkers

The double entrance gate located near the church, for students walking to school, will be opened from 6:30am each morning. There has been some confusion as to which gate has been unlocked. In future, the right hand gate (as viewed from outside) will be the gate unlocked. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

**ST MARY MACKILLOP PARISH SACRAMENTAL
DATES FOR 2017**

As so many people are already preparing their 2017 diaries, Fr David Catterall PP (Oran Park) has decided to publish, before the end of the school year, the dates for the St Mary MacKillop Parish celebrations of Confirmation, First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion (Eucharist) in 2017.

The 2017 dates for these sacraments are to be found on the flyer that is also available on the parish website www.marymackillopparish.org.au

It is essential that any families who want their child/ren to receive any of these sacraments, attend the Parent Information Night for the relevant sacrament. **Please note: that the Parent Information Night for Confirmation 2017 will be held on Wednesday 9th November 2016.** For more information on the St Mary MacKillop Parish 2017 sacramental program please email oranparksacraments@dow.org.au