Dear Families,

Last week I read this quote and thought about how relevant it is to any social setting.

“We’re going to skip the part where we fight/argue/blame each other and move onto what we can do about this situation.”
~ Apollo 13 Crew Member

Society often looks to blame. People often get bogged down in past events and lose focus to think creatively and move on in a positive manner.

One thought that keeps me grounded when things go pear-shaped is asking “has anyone been hurt?” I wonder what strategies you use and how you influence your child to respond when things don’t go their way. Humour is always great medicine.

As we enter into the Church season of Advent, may we take time to prepare our hearts and minds to welcome Jesus in a special way at Christmas time.

Prayer for First week of Advent.

Lord God, we light this candle to thank you for your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world. We who have sat in darkness have seen a great light, the light of Jesus Christ, our salvation. We give you thanks and praise in Jesus’ name, because he lives and reigns with you in your glory, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Homework Survey

Many thanks to the families who took time to complete the homework survey. Your responses will be taken into consideration. In the meantime please, please, please set home protocols to support daily reading, number facts and oral language activities at home.

One response commented on “the growing technology focus, in particular the impressive presentation midyear by school captains on google apps was evidence of collaboration. Maybe we should be talking about what we are preparing kids for with after-hours collaboration via technology and inquisition?”

Many thanks to Vaughan for sharing his secondary school knowledge by facilitating a Study Skills program for Year 6 students and parents. The focus for the night was to show how to
study, how to review, time management, diary structure and a toolset for parents, especially in relation to noise and light in the home environment.

Below is a link to the Government Ministerial Inquiry to Approaches to Homework.

**Victorian Government Ministerial Inquiry to Approaches to homework**

**FINDING 5** ...........................................................................................................................

There is strong evidence and general agreement that homework at the primary school level has little impact on academic performance, but may play an important transitional role in preparing students for secondary school and beyond. (p.21)


**Leading Languages**

The benefits of learning a language:

- develops an understanding of how languages work which leads to improved literacy skills, including English literacy, see: Linking languages and literacy
- helps students develop critical thinking, analysis and problem solving skills
- teaches students about other peoples, their ideas and ways of thinking
- inspires interest in and respect for other cultures
- enhances employment and career prospects
- contributes to social cohesiveness through better communication and understanding
- contributes to economic, diplomatic and strategic development.

**Vacancies on Parent Advisory Council**

There are three parent vacancies on the PAC for 2015. This committee meets eight times a year and is instrumental in guiding policy formation and in providing feedback to school leadership in relation to parents’ perspective on a range of issues. If you are interested in taking up a position on the PAC for 2015, please leave your name and details at the school office.

The school community acknowledges and shows appreciation to Helen, Sarah and Vicky who are not returning to the PAC for 2015. Sarah has served the school community as the parent
rep from the PFA. On some occasions, Sarah attended two meetings in the one week to keep communication open between these two important school parent groups.

Helen has provided insights into policy writing and has broadened perspective by offering other dimensions during discussions. We know Helen will continue to offer her services and wisdom to her children’s colleges.

Vicky has shown commitment with communication and in sourcing ideas from a wide selection of parents when issues were raised. Thanks is extended to Vicky for taking on the secretarial role during this year.

**Year 4 Children Delivery of Christmas Cards**
Thirteen children from Year 4 have volunteered to deliver a Christmas card on behalf of the Parish to families in their neighbourhood. These children will be accompanied by their parent and will be spreading Christmas cheer by way of a card. Other children in the school have been asked to make a card on behalf of the Parish.

You may be lucky enough to be on the receiving end.

**CLLC Project**
Congratulations to Mrs Chubb, Ms Williams and Mr Ooi for their informative presentation about engaging upper primary students in relevant writing to improve student learning outcomes. This presentation was the culmination of two year’s Action Inquiry Research Project about students’ writing.

Our teachers shared their results with 200 Catholic primary schools across Melbourne. St Martin’s school moves from strength to strength because of the commitment of the teachers to keep learning and sharing their research.

**State Winners**
Congratulations to our Year 3 & 4 Girls Hooptime Basketball team for winning the State Champion title.

Thank you to our PE teacher, Mr Witchell and to the parents for supporting the girls along their journey to State.

**State Election**
With both ALP and Liberal candidates promising to give 1.5 million dollars towards the three million dollar project to refurbish the junior building, 9 classes and an art room, Saturday’s election was a win for St Martin’s school.
In 2012, an application was completed for a Capital Works Grant for the junior school project. Up until now this project funding application has not been successful. With the election campaign both parties were given a list of Capital Works projects, required by Catholic schools, by the Catholic Education Office in Melbourne. We are fortunate that both electoral parties took St Martin’s School’s needs into consideration.

**Staff News**

It is with mixed emotion that I announce staff changes to the school community. My role as Principal is filled with many proud moments and times when sometimes I wish we could catch that moon beam and stand still. The greatest privilege is witnessing growth and commitment of staff members, students and parents.

I take this opportunity to publicly thank, congratulate on their career moves and extend best wishes to:

- Dominic Bolger, taking time to travel to achieve his dream of a working holiday in Europe. He will not have any issues picking up a teaching position. *(Dom has shown great dedication, commitment and interest in learning. He has created a positive classroom learning environment and is always on board to volunteer his services. Special thanks to Dom for taking on the coordination of the school concert this year.)*

- Tracey James, accepting a teaching position at Holy Spirit in East Thornbury. *(Tracey has shown outstanding service to our school as a classroom teacher and eLearning leader. Our school has made giant steps forward because of her vision and hard work and generous donation of her personal time to establish the school computer network. Every child in her class has been challenged at their level of learning.)*

- Melissa Karakaltasas accepted a teaching position at Geelong College. *(Melissa has filled the walls with song and music and has taken on leadership roles with the coordination of the School Choir and Chess Team. She is a creative, capable and committed specialist music teacher who has engaged every child during her time at St Martin’s school.)*

- Mary Snipe, retiring from her role as Religious Education leader of St Martin’s school. *(While on leave this year Mary placed her energy into her family and her personal needs. Although Mary will not be returning to St Martin’s as a staff member she has generously offered her services to assist with integrating RE into our daily lives. As mentioned last year Mary has been a creative, committed and hard-working leader with all members of St Martin’s community.)*

- Kim Yeomans will be returning to her teacher-librarian position for the start of the 2015 school year. *(At times during her year of personal enrichment Miss Y has jumped onto her LRC blog to share latest book news. We are most grateful to Mrs Philp for keeping the LRC running smoothly and for providing a welcoming spirit during 2014.)*
St Martin’s has been enriched through the contributions made by Mary, Melissa, Tracey and Dominic. We are fortunate that they chose us as part of their professional teaching career.

A full list of staff duties will be included in the first newsletter for 2015.

It’s a BIG WEEK in Footy next week. Year 6 Graduation Mass and school formalities on Tuesday, 9th December and whole school concert on Thursday 11th December are both special milestones for our school.

Come Lord Jesus and fill our hearts with your Peace.

Regards Trish Stewart Proud Principal