Dear Families

During November, the Catholic Church remembers those who have died; we pray for and remember our loved ones. The term ‘All Souls’ reminds us of our connectedness to our God.

In these last weeks with you, I reflect on the magnificent souls of the family members who have died during my time as Principal. In particular, I remember the strength, courage and positive attitude of our precious Year 4 student Daniel. He reminded us of the goodness that can come from bad things happening to us.

I remember the grief, five years ago, that the Year 1 parents shared when Jacinta, Bruno and Soula, all Year 1 parents, died from cancer related illness. Precious Year 1 students losing a parent was tough. Throughout their illness, they showed determination and unconditional love to protect their families.

Four years ago, another much loved soul was taken from our community. Mick, friend to all and caretaker of our grounds and more importantly our students and ourselves, left a hole in our hearts that comes when there’s no opportunity to say goodbye and thank you.

The enormous community support given by all members helped us through and reminded us of the Gospel values of goodness, care, compassion and love. St Martin’s is the BEST school community and together we pray and thank God for the precious souls who have gone before us and who have helped shaped us to follow St Martin’s steps of not refusing the task.

Advent

Advent is the beginning of the Church’s Year. It is a time of promise, expectation and participation as we prepare for the great celebration of the birth of Jesus. Advent is the time we wait in joyful hope for our God to be born in our hearts. The season of Advent recognizes the coming of Jesus, the Son of God, in a special way. God’s Son became one of us and one with us, to share our human experience fully and completely.

The first week of Advent commences Sat/Sun 28th and 29th November. Yr 1 students have been invited to a special Parish Mass on Saturday 28th November at 6pm. It will be an ideal time to link Advent as a time of waiting for Christmas, waiting for Jesus to be born anew to our hearts and minds.

Resilience

Sometimes things don’t go our way, sometimes inappropriate choices are made, sometimes it rains and sometimes it’s too hot… whatever happens in the downs of life we need to be RESILIENT to bounce through another day with a smile and a positive attitude.

Lead researchers, Helen McGrath and Toni Noble, define resilience as, “the ability to cope and bounce back after encountering negative events, challenging tasks, difficult situations or adversity.
and to return to almost the same level of emotional wellbeing; the capacity to maintain a healthy and fulfilling life despite adversity and even be strengthened by the experience."

As adults our actions are the best example for our students. Life is too short to carry negative emotions. If we can teach the children to bounce back we know they will have a happy and fulfilling life.

**Thoughts about GIVING**

At a presentation last week, Michael Carr-Greg said that those who give of themselves are less likely to suffer any form of mental health issues. The Prophet Kahlil Gibran supports this idea in his reflection:

*You give but little when you give of your possessions.*

*It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.*

*There are those who give little of the much which they have, and they give it for recognition, and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome.*

*And there are those who have little and give it all; these are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty.*

*Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes he smiles upon the earth.*

To the members of the Fete committee, to all those who gave generously of their time to assist and support the parish/school fete we offer our sincere thanks for showing God’s love through your actions. We were blessed by the ideal weather and the safe and jovial atmosphere.

The wonderful community spirit showed St Martin’s true strength of not refusing the task when it comes to supporting each other.

Thanks to all those who pitched in and helped with the clean up on Friday night and to the troops who gave up their precious Saturday to finish the pack up.

Special thanks to Bill, Karcher guru, for cleaning middle yard, even the concrete steps look brand new!

Once profit has been determined, parish and school families will be informed.

**School Capital Works Projects**

Wooden seating on bottom yard is being replaced and sleepers are being installed near senior adventure playground and at the edge of the grassed area.
RSL Scholarship
Each year the Year 6 students are asked by Watsonia RSL to vote for a student who has displayed leadership, service and support for others. The worthy winner for 2016 is Levi. On Remembrance Day, Levi and his family attended a ceremony at Watsonia RSL. Levi was amongst Year 6 students from other local schools to be awarded a $200 scholarship to support his secondary education. Congratulations Levi, you have every reason to be proud.

Yr 6 Study Skills... WEDNESDAY 18th NOVEMBER, 7pm in the GECCO
All Year 6 students and their parent/s have been invited to attend a Study Skills workshop generously facilitated by Vaughan in his efforts to consolidate the students’ transition and acquisition of relevant study skills for secondary colleges. The feedback from this program last year was positive. It is expected that every Year 6 student will avail themselves of this opportunity. Thank you Vaughan on behalf of the school community for making time to support our students with their transition to meet the requirements of secondary schools/colleges.

St Martin’s Parish Annual General Meeting
A reminder to all families to attend the Parish AGM on Sunday 28th November at 11:15am in the GECCO. This is an opportunity to hear the Annual Report and goals for the coming year.

Parent Advisory Council Members (PAC) for 2016
Thanks to parents, Julie O, Rachel W and Jason C for joining the PAC in 2016.

CDF Student Banking
After 10 great years of magnificent service, Gerry, mother of Bridie, is finishing in her role as coordinator of student banking for St Martin’s school. Thank you Gerry for your ongoing commitment and gift of time to support students to adopt regular banking habits.

Patsy, former school parent, coordinated this service prior to Gerry and she too coordinated the banking for 10 years.

Another volunteer parent is needed to coordinate the students’ on-line banking. If you are able to take on this activity for the students please contact the school office. No pressure to sign up for 10 years. You need access to a computer and internet for on-line transactions.

Junior School Building Project
At this stage, costing for the Prep-2 capital works project is being evaluated by Catholic Education Melbourne, Capital Works Team. You will be advised as soon as details have been finalised.
Chess Club
Congratulations to the members of the Prep–3 school chess team, who represented the school in a chess tournament on Tuesday. Four members, Billy, Riley, Ryan and Ashton have made it through to State competition and Zackary won a medal for coming second in the Prep division on the day.

Thanks to the parents, teachers and Oscar, Year 6 student, for supervising our students and thanks to Mr Zac for his ongoing commitment to supporting the students with Chess Club each Tuesday during lunch break.

Whole School Photo
Take two tomorrow, Thursday 19\textsuperscript{th} November at 9:00am. Summer uniform thank you.

World Peace
We pause to pray for peace in our world as we slowly hear of events that led to the tragic loss of so many lives in Paris.

\textit{Enjoy the energy of the sun and the energy from knowing you are part of a fabulous school community.}

\textit{With appreciation for all your big and small contributions. Together we achieve greatness!}

\textit{Trish Stewart, Proud Principal}