Dear Parents,

Term 1 is quickly disappearing and drawing to a closure. It is always a very short Term and we generally try to compress so much into it. With only a couple of weeks to go, I feel that I have only just begun to get a feel for the culture, life and happenings of our School. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting the many parents (and students) in and around the School yard over the last month. I do ask everyone’s patience as I begin to connect names and faces. If I have not already had the chance to meet you, please step up and introduce yourself, as I would welcome the opportunity to have a chat.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY
Yesterday was an important day to acknowledge women and to remind everyone of the need to strive for gender equality. One of my three daughters reminded me of this today with the picture below:

LENT
The Fourth Week of Lent

"Lent is a period of 40 days when we pay special attention to prayer, fasting and being especially charitable, as we prepare for the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus at Easter. The manner in which we observe Lent can take many forms. It can be a time for more prayer or, more importantly, a time when we endeavour to pray better.

The fasting of Lent can be a lessening of the amount we eat or enjoy ourselves, or it can be a deciding to be less selfish in our daily lives and the denying of ourselves of some less than necessary pleasures.

Finally, Lent is a time when we can make even stronger efforts to be charitable, friendly and more forgiving in our daily relationships with those around us.

On the practical side, we could donate or support St. Vincent de Paul. This is one way in which we can make an effort to give, have something less for ourselves and at the same time do something for those who need our support.”

PREP NEWS
Today is the Prep students first Wednesday that they will have attended school. This week they have experienced the weather conditions that we normally experience in February. We wish them well as they now attend regular times with all other students as they embark upon their journey over the next 13 years of formal schooling. (Mind you, having said that, I do recognise that the students do have a few short weeks to finish the Term upon - so the acclimatisation still continues for the Prep students).

SCHOOL CLOSURE DAY
Please note that there will be a Pupil Free day this Friday 11th March. Staff on this day will be organising the framework for the new Semester 1 student report.

PLEASE NOTE! The OSH Club will be open on Friday for families requiring this service. Please book if you need the service this Friday.
PARENT HELPERS PROGRAM
On Monday it was pleasing to see so many families attend our parent helper training session facilitated by our Junior Literacy Leader Jo Menta. The parent helper program begins in earnest as of the beginning of Term 2 and we look forward to welcoming all trained parent helpers into the classrooms. Our teachers greatly appreciate your preparedness to assist (as do your children!).

PAC MEETING (Parent Advisory Council)
On Thursday 10th March we will have our next PAC meeting. The main agenda items include:
- a review of the PAC Charter
- discussion regarding this year’s External Review Process

2017 PREP ENROLMENTS
Enrolment Forms are available from the office for Prep 2017. Current families are asked to collect your enrolment package from the office or phone them to have one sent home. New families can contact the office and an enrolment pack will be mailed. To assist our planning it would be appreciated if existing families can lodge enrolments over the next couple of weeks. Our Open Day and Information Evening are scheduled for Tuesday 15th March.

Today we sent home a postcard with information relating to our Open Day / Evening with each of the Prep – Year 2 students. Parents are invited to pass this postcard on to interested friends, neighbours or colleagues.

PARISH / SCHOOL MASTER PLANNING UPDATE
On Sunday, members of the Parish Pastoral Council, Parent Advisory Council, Master Planning Group and School Leadership Team met to discuss the development of Version 2 of the Parish / School Master Plan. The first Master Plan was developed in 2013 and during the ensuing time there have been major developments that have required a revision of this plan. As events have unfolded, there has been the need to ensure that we keep in mind the needs of the whole Parish / School precinct. It is not possible or desirable to consider any one element in isolation. Therefore we need to ensure that the Master Plan considers all potential implications for the School / Parish over the next generation.

The full Master Plan involves three major elements:
1. Refurbishment of the Church.
2. Development of the existing car park opposite the school.
3. Construction of new learning areas for our students.

Firstly, it is clearly apparent that we need to renew our Church. It underpins our communal faith identity and must be redeveloped to serve the contemporary and future needs of our Parish. In order to repair and renew our Church and maintain our Parish facilities and services, we require a loan and an ongoing income stream to pay off that loan. (The Parish does not have the income to service a significant loan from its current income.) After significant exploration by the Master Planning Group, it has been determined that the best option to provide for the Parish would be to enter into an agreement with Villa Maria Catholic Homes, the partner that is approved by the Archdiocese. As stated in information circulated last September, the intention would be to lease the land on the west side of Silk Street (opposite the school) to Villa Maria Catholic.
Homes (this would not include 3 and 5 Silk St). The intention would then be that Independent Living Units would be developed on the site for retirees, with vehicle entry from Interlaken Pde and some Parish parking available from a separate Silk St entry. From this development, the Parish would have a guaranteed income stream that would service loans associated with the Church renovations, ensure long term viability of the Parish and the capacity to continue to deliver and expand upon Parish services to the community.

At this stage, we expect to build a learning space of approximately 1000sq metres with at least nine classrooms. There is consideration being given to providing parking underneath this building. In the next fortnight, we intend to develop a brief to be provided to the architects. From there we anticipate that an initial drawing will be available early Term 2.

PARKING
Last week, a parking inspector was booking cars after school along Silk Street. His particular focus was upon cars that stopped on the north side of the crossing which is a 2 minute zone and the disabled parking spot immediately outside the gate on the top yard. Please be conscious of the restrictions that apply as they are in place for all our students’ safety.
DROP OFF: We are in discussions at present to try to see if it is desirable or viable to have the bottom yard open in the morning from 8:30am for a drive through kiss and drop - STAY TUNED.

God bless,

Dane Malone
Principal.