

St Monica's Religious Education Newsletter



Advent: Peace, Joy, Love & Hope

A time for waiting...

"The virgin will be with child and give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel"

Matthew 1:23

"O Come let us adore Him... Christ the Lord"

Dear Parents, students and members of our St Monica's community,

The 2015 school year is drawing to a close and as we wrap up at school over the next few weeks, we will begin to prepare for the birth of Jesus during Advent. Advent is a time for waiting. A time when we should allow ourselves to slow down and reflect. Although at this time of the year, it isn't always an easy thing to do, allowing ourselves and our families this opportunity to stop, be patient and prepare will give you the opportunity to fill your lives with hope, peace and joy as we wait for the coming of our Lord.

Two major school events are to take place before the term concludes. In Week 10 we have Christmas Celebration on Tuesday 8 December, and our Year 6 Graduation/End of Year Mass the following week on Tuesday 16 December. Both dates are compulsory school events and all students from K-6 are expected to attend. These will be the last two events on our calendar where we can

celebrate the year that we have had, farewell our Year 6 students, and join in the joy of the Christmas season as a school community.

Our **Social Justice** focus for this Term will be on two main areas:

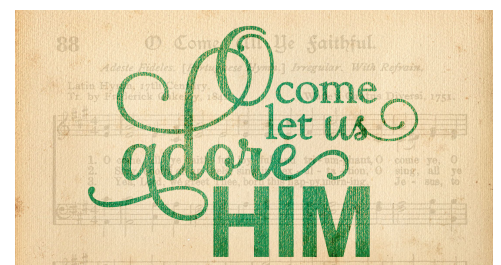
- St Vincent de Paul Christmas Hampers
- World Youth Day Fundraising

As a mercy school, we will continue to support people/areas of need in our local community. Donating food for the Christmas Hampers will allow others in our community to enjoy the spirit of Christmas with their families. More information on these two Social Justice Events are located in this edition of the RE Newsletter.

Our Year 6 Leaders this year have demonstrated outstanding growth and development in their leadership and organisation skills. I have been working alongside all our leaders at different points throughout the year and they have continued to step-up and produce amazing liturgies, prayer,

religious displays and articles for our RE Newsletter. I would like to commend all of them on their hard work throughout the year and wish them all the best of luck for the beginning of the next stage in their lives.

I would like to wish our community a safe Christmas and holiday season. Enjoy time with family and friends and have a fantastic New Year. We look forward to seeing everyone at the beginning of the 2016 school year.



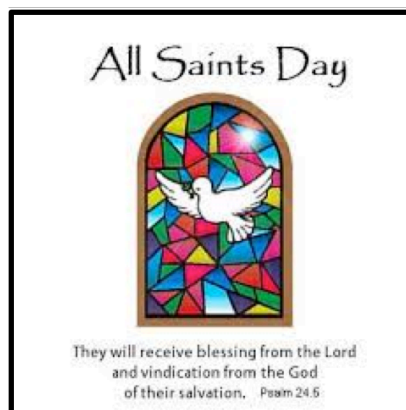
Peace and love,
Michelle Rosewell
Religious Education Coordinator

Editorial from our Christ-centred Leaders

Mercy Day

Mercy Day is a special day of celebration and an opportunity for all Mercy Sisters, their associates, and partners in ministry to celebrate and rejoice with Mary, the Mother of Mercy. The Religious Sisters of Mercy are members of a religious institute of Catholic women founded in 1831 in Dublin, Ireland, by Catherine McAuley. In 1827, their mission was to create a school that would educate poor young girls and also as a home for homeless girls and women. The Sisters of Mercy made sure that every girl and woman in the community had the chance and opportunity for an education in their lives.

By Hayley Herder - Beke & Abbi Lewis



All Saints' Day

All Saints' Day is a day for all people of the Catholic faith in Australia to remember and honour the saints. Some churches hold a special service or mass on All Saints' Day. Many Catholic schools may have lessons for students to learn about the role of saints in the history of Christianity at this time of the year. Special masses are held and prayers are offered. All Saints Day focuses on all saints that have done great work in their time. On All Saints Day we pray the **Litany of the Saints**. Many of the saints had different purposes to help people.

This common feast was celebrated in Antioch, and the Eastern Churches, both Catholic and Orthodox and still celebrate it now.

By Alisha Merchant & Debra Chirchir

EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY

8 December 2015 – 20 November 2016

“It will be a Holy Year of Mercy” – Pope Francis

The ritual opening of the Holy Door of Mercy in the Basilica of St. Peter, December 8, 2015, marks the official start of the Jubilee of Mercy. From that moment, in every Catholic Church in every diocese, the faithful are called to celebrate and live the Jubilee, particularly through the liturgy. Please find below the official Mercy Prayer to share with your families during this important time:

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.
Show us your face and we will be saved.
Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;
made Peter weep after his betrayal,
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.
Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:
“If you knew the gift of God!”
You are the visible face of the invisible Father,
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:
let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.
You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.
Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,
so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,
and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor,
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,
and restore sight to the blind.
We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of
Mercy; you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever.
Amen.

Prayer at St Monica's



A Spotlight On...

Miss Clough

In Religious Education in 2015, each stage has been implementing our school formation goal 'to deepen our understanding of different prayer forms'. The goal was chosen to introduce prayer into each classroom and to help the children understand how they can respond, reflect and demonstrate their knowledge of scripture through prayer. Each teacher's aim is to provide the students with opportunities of prayer, both formal and informal to develop a deeper understanding of prayer.

Early Stage One has been completing this goal in many ways. For example:

- Personal prayers in writing.
- Prayers of Thanksgiving
- The Angelus
- Our Father and Hail Mary
- Prayer before meals
- Spontaneous Prayer
- Meditation
- School prayer

The children have had opportunities to share their prayers to support their understanding of community spirit. Each child has been given numerous opportunities to write and share their prayers as part of our St Monica's community.

2015 Sacramental Program

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held this term, on Friday 20 November at 7:00pm. The students who are receiving this sacrament have almost completed their lessons. All students making this sacrament will need to arrive at the Church by 6:45pm. If you have any questions please email Jenny on: stmonicasacraments@gmail.com or myself: mrosewell@parra.catholic.edu.au.

Social Justice: St Vinnie's Christmas Hamper Appeal

Our St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal will begin on Monday 30 November. We will be collecting a range of non-perishable items that will be donated to St Vincent de Paul and used to make hampers. These Christmas hampers will be donated to families in our community who are less fortunate, so they have the opportunity to celebrate Christmas with their families and friends.

We would like to ask that every child donates at least one non-perishable item to the Christmas hamper in their classroom. Some food suggestions include tinned food (vegetables, fruit, baked beans, tuna, etc), pasta, cereal, jam, soup, noodles, bottles or drink or juice, or anything else that has a long expiry date.

The hampers will be donated to the St Vincent de Paul who will then distribute where needed.

WYD Fundraiser

We will be holding a fundraiser on Friday 27 November, to raise funds for all the pilgrims in our parish who are travelling to the Philippines and Poland next year for World Youth Day. Millions of young Catholics from across the globe will join Pope Francis in Krakow, Poland for World Youth Day in July next year. One itinerary will take us via the Philippines to work with young people devastated by an earthquake 18 months ago. The other will re-trace the footsteps of Saint John Paul II through Poland. On this afternoon students will have the opportunity to purchase ice blocks (50c), lolly bags (50c) and novelty toys (50c). The afternoon will begin at 2:20pm and commence at 3:00pm.

2015 DATES TO REMEMBER

Christmas Concert

Tuesday 8 December – In the playground
Commences at 7:00pm

Year 6 Graduation/End of Year Mass

Tuesday 15 December – Church
Commences at 6:00pm

Please make a note of these dates on your calendar. All students are expected to attend both events.

Term 4 Calendar of Upcoming Events

Here is a list of the Liturgies and Masses for Term 4, 2015. There is always an open invitation for you to join us in prayer. We hope that you might take up the opportunity to attend Mass with your child's class during the Term.

| Week | Date | Event | Location |
|---------|--|--|--|
| Week 7 | Friday 20 November | Reconciliation Mass | Church, 7:00pm |
| Week 8 | Wednesday 25 November Thursday 26 November Friday 27 November Sunday 28 November | ES1 Parish Mass Stage 2 Parish Mass Stage 3 Parish Mass First Sunday of Advent | Church, 9:15am Church, 9:15am Church, 9:15am |
| Week 9 | Thursday 3 December Sunday 6 December | Stage 1 Parish Mass Second Sunday of Advent | Church, 9:15am |
| Week 10 | Tuesday 8 December Sunday 13 December | Christmas Celebration Third Sunday of Advent | Under croft area, 7:00pm |
| Week 11 | Tuesday 15 December Sunday 20 December | Year 6 Graduation & End of Year Mass Fourth Sunday of Advent | Church, 6:00pm |

2015 Christmas Concert

Our 2015 Christmas Concert will be held on **Tuesday 8 December**. Please read the details below:

Where: Undercroft Area

Time: 6:45pm arrival for a 7:00pm start (children will be lining up in their assembly lines near the flags)

What to wear:

ES1 – Black and/or white clothing

Year 1 – Christmas Colours (red, green & white)

Year 2 – Christmas Colours (red, green & white)

Stage 2 – Christmas Colours (red, green & white)

Stage 3 Girls – White clothing

Stage 3 Boys – Black clothing

Please note NO THONGS allowed for all students

On the night, ice blocks will be available for 50c each and a coffee van available for coffee, tea, etc. You are welcome to bring a fold-up chair or picnic rug to sit on.

Please be reminded that this is a compulsory school event.

If you are unable to attend, please let your class teacher know ASAP.



The Nativity

A Christmas nativity is probably one of the most recognisable symbols of the Christmas season. The word *nativity* is taken from the Latin *nativus*, which means "**arisen by birth**". Nativities are art, models, carvings, or live demonstrations depicting the night of Jesus' birth. These scenes generally contain the same elements: the Christ child in a manger; His mother, Mary; His earthly father, Joseph; shepherds; angels; various barn animals; and sometimes three wise men.

Saint Francis of Assisi created the very first nativity scene in 1223 in an effort to promote the true meaning of Christmas and worship of Jesus Christ. His idea caught on, and soon a new Christmas tradition was born.