Dear Parents and Friends of St Francis,

‘Today’s prayer ‘A Franciscan Blessing’ reminds us that nothing in life is impossible and through our own belief and conviction we can achieve great things. It is our call to look after those in need and to work together to bring about hope and justice. Our year six leadership teams have been learning about the importance of working together, sharing the load and giving everyone a ‘fair go’. It has been amazing to listen to their conversations and to hear such wisdom being shared and communicated. We are blessed to have such great young leaders in our school.

As we lead into the Lenten season Pope Francis’ message is … “invite all of the institutions of the world, the Church each of us, as one single human family, to give a voice to all of those who suffer silently from hunger, so that this voice becomes a roar which can shake the world.”

Pope Francis

His message is quite simple; no one should suffer from hunger. Appropriately Caritas’ Project Compassion theme for this year is ‘Food for Life’.

Shrove Tuesday

Today our Social Justice team together with our amazing Wellbeing officer, Tam Perry, organised pancakes for students and staff to celebrate Shrove Tuesday. A gold coin donation ensured a healthy kick-start to our annual Caritas Project Compassion Campaign and of course the yummy pancakes filled many little tummies before recess. Thank you to Tam, our Social Justice team and volunteers for helping out today.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of blessing ashes made from palm branches blessed on the previous year Palm Sunday, and placing them on the heads of participants to the accompaniment of the words “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel”.

Lent represents the time spent by Jesus fasting for 40 days in the desert, where he endured temptation. Lent originated as a mirroring of this, fasting for 40 days as preparation for Easter.

Tomorrow marks the beginning of Lent and we are celebrating by going to Mass as a whole school at 9:30am. Everyone is welcome.

Suggestion Box & Parents Club Meeting

Thank you to everyone who has returned their ideas and suggestions and have placed their forms into the ‘Suggestion Box’. As was mentioned in last week’s newsletter we are very interested in your opinions and would like to give everyone the chance to suggest any social events or fundraisers that you consider our community could initiate for the coming year.

Parents Club Meeting

Our first Parents Club community meeting will be held on Monday 2nd March in our gathering space at 7pm. We will be discussing these suggestions and looking to initiate new ideas coming forward. All are welcome, past, present and aspiring members. Please come along. Your contributions are appreciated and an important ingredient for building positive relationships for our entire community. We appreciate that people are very busy and their time is precious, however, it would be wonderful to see lots of new faces and sharing many new ideas of how our parents and friends club can work together to achieve great things for our school. This is not the AGM, we will discuss a future date for a P&F AGM at this meeting.

Grade 6 Leadership Day

Last Friday our Year 6’s travelled to St Mary’s Primary School, Mooroopna to participate in the Sandhurst Goulburn Valley Deanery Leadership day.

Key Dates

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<th>Week 4</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, 17 Feb</strong></td>
<td>Shrove Tuesday Pancakes for sale prior to recess gold coin donation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday, 18 Feb</strong></td>
<td>Foundation Rest Day Ash Wednesday Mass 9.30 a.m. All Welcome</td>
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<td><strong>Friday, 20 Feb</strong></td>
<td>NO LUNCH ORDERS</td>
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Coming Up

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<tr>
<th><strong>Wednesday, 25 Feb</strong></th>
<th>Foundation Rest Day</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, 27 Feb</strong></td>
<td>Red Balloon Day Joint activities day with Nathalia Primary School</td>
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<td><strong>MARCH</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, 3 Mar</strong></td>
<td>Student Free Day – Staff PD</td>
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<td><strong>Monday, 9 Mar</strong></td>
<td>Labour Day Public Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, 16 Mar</strong></td>
<td>Student Free Day – School Cluster PD</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, 17 Mar</strong></td>
<td>School Board Meeting 7 pm</td>
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This was an amazing opportunity for our year 6 students to listen to leaders from around our community, connect with other Year 6 students and further develop their own leadership skills. There were many highlights including…

**Some inspiring quotes from guest presenters at the Leadership Day**

**Mr Paul Desmond ~ Our new Director of Education Sandhurst Diocese**

‘When you realise something is not right, fix it!’
‘We can always be better tomorrow than we were today’.
‘In Leadership…tackle it, fix it, do something better’.

**Fr Rob ~ Inspirational Musician and Parish Priest St Kilian’s Bendigo**

‘Be who you want to be and be who God wants you to be’. ~ Fr Rob

**Brady Trelfall ~ Distance Runner and Teacher St Patrick’s Tongala**

‘Find your passion, this ultimately leads to happiness’.
‘There are no secrets, it comes down to hard work’.

Thank you to all of our Year 6 leaders for the way you represented our school and participated enthusiastically in all activities. Mrs Williams, Tam and myself were very proud of you all and enjoyed sharing this experience with you.

**Sorry Day**

Our Year Five Fire Carriers participated in a Sorry Day ceremony held at SMOTA. Kate Francis, Jack Myers, Jasmine Galambos, Ella Wilson, Ebony James and Darcy Backway listened to the history behind Sorry Day and the significance it holds for all Australians. The students tied ribbons signifying the connection Aboriginal Australians have to their land, their culture and to their people. Our students represented our school community with dignity and pride. Thank you to the students, teachers and parents of SMOTA for the invitation and for allowing our students to be part of this significant event.

**Commissioning of our Fire Carriers**

At our assembly yesterday morning, Cassie Brooks, Sam Boyd, Kate Francis, Jack Myers, Jasmine Galambos, Ella Wilson, Ebony James and Darcy Backway were all commissioned as Fire Carriers for our school. The Fire Carrier Commissioning ceremony involved current Fire Carriers to warm their hands over a small flame and to place their warmed hands on the faces our new carriers. This has been a tradition in the Aboriginal culture for thousands of years. Fire is central to their culture in many ways. It represents warmth, light and a campfire is a place where people danced, sang, shared stories and learned how to connect with creation.

Best Wishes for the coming week,

Chris Summers
A Franciscan Blessing

May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half truths and superficial relationships so that we may live deep within their heart.

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people so that we may work for justice freedom and peace.

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war so that we may reach out our hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world so that we can do what others claim cannot be done.

Amen

ST FRANCIS CARE BOX WINNER:
Congratulations to Ella Brereton who was the winner of the St Francis Care Box. Ella won for caring for her buddy at the opening school mass. Students who are observed by a staff member behaving in a manner over and beyond what is expected have their names placed in the care box and each week Mr Summers will pick a student’s name from the box. Winners receive a lunch order on the school. Well done Ella.

THANK YOU:
Since 1999 Bovine Inseminations Herd Improvement Service of Tongala have provided our school with an annual sponsorship and we are pleased to announce that this year is no different. We are very grateful to Bovine Inseminations for their continued support of our school and we take this opportunity to publicly thank them for their generosity towards not only our school, but to all the other rural primary schools that they support.

STAFF BADGES:
Fr Chris attended our assembly on Monday morning and blessed the staff name badges before praying that teachers and support staff be strong in their leadership and to guide our students to be the best they can be. Chris Summers then presented the staff with their name badges.

“START BY DOING WHAT’S NECESSARY, THEN DO WHAT’S POSSIBLE; AND SUDDENLY YOU ARE DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE.”

Francis of Assisi

OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT WE ARE BUILT IN THE COUNTRY OF THE YORTA YORTA PEOPLE. WE PAY RESPECT TO THE TRIBAL ELDERS, AND CELEBRATE THE CONTINUING INDIGENOUS CULTURE IN AND AROUND THE NATHALIA AREA.
Moira Harmony Festival

Story Writing/Drawing Challenge/Competition

Victoria Police with Rotary are running a story writing or drawing challenge / competition and invite students to participate. There will be prizes to be won including items donated by local businesses and the opportunity for ONE STUDENT to work with our local Senior Sergeant and be a POLICEMAN FOR A DAY.

A winner from each school will also be invited to present their entry publically via a presentation at the Moira Harmony Festival. Students are invited to submit an entry identifying “OUR CELEBRATION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY”. Students are free to present their entry however they like.

Entries could be drawings or a story like one about a person from overseas telling his or her life story that includes “Who the person is? Where the person came from? When the person came here? Why the person came here? What the person does here? And how the person’s life has changed?”

Entries must contain student’s name, year level, school and phone number on the back are to be submitted to your school office staff and forwarded to Senior Sergeant Mick LOGAN, 32 William Street, Cobram 3644 by Friday the 8th of March 2015.

Moira Harmony Festival
Saturday 21st March 2015
Cobram Civic Centre & Mivo Park 4pm-8pm

BACKGROUND

The Moira Harmony Festival is a core multicultural celebration within Moira Shire for Cultural Diversity Week that celebrates the rich and diverse cultures in the shire. The event aims to promote mutual respect, awareness and understanding of cultural diversity and at the same time foster a sense of belonging and encourage cultural exchanges among members of the Moira Community.

The Moira community has a strong tradition of fostering cultural diversity, particularly as it relates to the acknowledgement and celebration of the growing number of cultural groups that make up our community. Throughout the period 1940 to 1970, migration to Australia and, in turn, settlement in Cobram involved predominantly people from European origin. From the mid-1970s, new arrivals also came from the Philippines and South-East Asia. In recent years, a number of settlement programs have encouraged Arabic-speaking migrants from Iraq and Kuwait, as well as people from India. The Moira Harmony Festival aims to celebrate cultural diversity. The activities aim to encourage and celebrate a greater understanding, acceptance and dialogue in multicultural and multi-faith diversity throughout the Moira Community.

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