Praying Lent This Year

Our steps are slow,
Our breathing ragged,
Our burdens heavy.
This walk to the cross,
It is not easy,
Yet Christ walked it for us.
For the joy
that we set before him,
He despised the shame,
He bore our blame,
And shared our pain,
Now let us build on the rock,
That is Christ.
Let us walk the way of the
cross together,
Moving forward without fear,
into God’s eternal purposes.
For Christ himself is with us,
every step of the way.
Let us trust in God alone,
And find the joy that Christ did,
Obedience to our loving God.
Dear Parents and Friends of St Francis,

Last Tuesday was a wonderful day of affirmation and recognition that as a school and community we are on the right track regarding the way we are supporting our students in the way they learn.

Kathy Murray and Malinda Vandeer Lest from the Early Life Foundation spent the day observing and mentoring many of our teachers as we begin to implement the Walker Learning Approach. In terms of a change of pedagogy (or the ‘how’ we teach) St Francis is in a time of transformation. Our journey has just begun. Change is never easy and at times will get us all out of comfort zones. There will be times of self-doubt and wonderment but deep down we believe this approach will be for the benefit of all students and is in line with the Vision and Mission of St Francis. It’s exciting times.

The Walker Learning approach provides our students opportunities to become life long learners, build resilience, provide choice, and promote social awareness and support explicit instruction based on learning domains outlined in the Australian curriculum. A common misconception of Walker Learning is that the children play all day. This is far from true. Investigations or ‘play based’ strategies make up 45 mins of the day and within this time there is always explicit learning skills being taught. Kathy made this very clear in her parent presentation and there were some very thought provoking questions raised. It was great to have many parents in our community present who heard these messages and who now, I believe, have a greater understanding of the approach.

It was affirming to hear Kathy explain to our staff and parents that we are well on the way and that our learning spaces are inviting and supportive of student needs. Our staff has worked extremely hard to transform and create vibrant learning environments where our students feel supported, challenged and given choice. I am extremely proud of their commitment and desire to make the new approach work. If you haven’t done so, please come in and have a look around.

Kathy will be back next term to mentor staff, helping and supporting us throughout the year. For parents who couldn’t make it on Tuesday another Information session will be held later next term.

Each week we will add snippets of the program that will help explain or clarify terminology or parts of the program. This week we have included the general overview. In the coming weeks we will provide the opportunity to borrow information, books and resources regarding Walker Learning from the office.

Please don’t hesitate to contact the school or your child’s teacher for further details.

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG)

Our Garden to Plate concept has really come alive this week with all classes making savoury scones, fritters and seasonal fruit platters. The kids have had a ball.

Thank you to the many helpers who have signed up to be part of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program. Talk about parent engagement!
SAKG ties in beautifully with Walker Learning, whilst educating our students about the importance of making good food choices and healthy living.

Thank you Kerry Conroy for making this program come alive!!!
• to facilitate the development of students' organisational and oral communication skills and to increase their self-confidence
• to encourage students, parents, and teachers to engage in open and honest dialogue
• to encourage students to accept personal responsibility for their learning
• to increase parent understanding of their child’s learning through improving attendance at and satisfaction with the reporting process.

YEMP ~ Youth Engagement Mentoring Program - Commences Tuesday 23rd Feb.
Last year a new initiative titled YEMP ~ Youth, Engagement, Mentoring Program was organized through the Nathalia and District Community Association. Due to its overwhelming success YEMP will be on offer for all year 6 students throughout 2016.

The YEMP program aims to empower the skills and confidence of young people in the community whilst fostering positive relationships with various local organisations. Permission forms and information has been sent home to year 6 parents.

Commissioning of our new FIRE Carriers On Monday our New Fire Carriers were commissioned as part of our Sorry Day assembly on Monday. FIRE stands for Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Reconciliation. Congratulations to the following students who will lead our school as FIRE Carriers throughout the year.

Nikita Pawlowicz
Hayley Wigmore
Emily Woods
Kate Francis
Taylor Wilson
Darcy Young
Corey Legge
Shontay McCabe-Jackson
Zara Limbrick
Gus Bramwell
Ned Bramwell

Visiting Classrooms and Teachers Before School
Whilst we appreciate parents volunteering to help out in classrooms, please be aware teachers are very busy getting things organised and ready for the day.

Please Note: If you need to see your child's teacher regarding issues or concern please organise a time mutually agreed upon.

School Assembly Change of Time!!!
Please Note: We are changing the time of school assemblies on a Monday to 2:30pm. This will begin on Monday 29th February.

Positive Behaviour Workshop Support Workshop
There is a great opportunity for parents and carers of students or young adults with autism to attend a workshop in Benalla on Monday 29th February. Please refer to the attached flyer for further details.

School Voucher Raffle Tickets
Just a reminder that the School Voucher Raffle tickets need to be returned to school by Friday, 26 February 2016 as the raffle is being drawn at Assembly on Monday, 29 February 2016.
Red Balloon Day – Friday, 26 February 2016
On Friday, 26 February 2016 we are participating in Red Balloon Day, which is a day in which we show our appreciation to our local CFA for all they do for our community. The students are encouraged to wear red to school and bring a gold coin donation, with the funds raised being donated to our local CFA. The School is purchasing red balloons, which we will fly from our school fence as a sign of our support for the CFA. The schedule for the day is as below.

Have a wonderful week everyone

Chris Summers
Community Fundraiser for Ella Wilson

At St Francis School, we are happy to support such a worthy cause to assist Ella Wilson, daughter of Anthony and Di, during a difficult time.

Ella, in Grade 6 at St Francis, is currently undergoing treatment at the Peter MacCallum Centre in Melbourne after the removal of a brain tumour late last year.

The Nathalia Tennis Club is hosting a fun evening of tennis, a fun run, BBQ and raffle on Friday 4th March from 5.30 to support Ella and others receiving treatment at Peter Mac.

St Francis Primary School has been asked to assist with the bbq. We are looking for volunteers to help cook the bbq and to serve.

We are also looking for donations of: bread, bbq meats, onions and coleslaw.

For those who wish to donate bread, you can see Lonky at the school office and pay for the amount of bread you wish to donate. Lonky will keep a list to give to Brereton’s Bakery who will deliver the donated bread on the day. A loaf of bread at Brereton’s Bakery costs $3.40. Any donations, however big or small, are gratefully accepted.

Even if tennis is not your thing COME ALONG and enjoy a BBQ and social evening.

*Enter a tennis team of 4 (adults/secondary students)-$40.
*Junior 2km Fun Run organised by Yalca Social Committee.
* BBQ tea, Raffle, Dessert/Cake stall, Bar.
SOCIAL SKILLS BLITZ

This week, our Positive Behaviour Blitz is Cooperation

Cooperation is the act of working together or jointly; of being united in producing an effect. By developing cooperation skills, students build relationships as they complete tasks, utilizing their own skills and those of others to their best advantage. Cooperating encourages students to compromise and negotiate and creates opportunities for unity and harmony to occur.

In Week 3 our Social Skills Blitz was around Cooperation. The following students were nominated by their peers and teachers as displaying positive behaviour last week:

Brodie Armstrong, Sarah Connelly, Cooper Bloodworth, Darcy Backway, Sara Galambos, James Ormond and Dylan Morgan

Winner of the care box was Brodie Armstrong

Congratulations Everyone!

GRADE 6 LEADERSHIP DAY, FRIDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2016

Hi, my name is Darcy Backway. On Friday the 12th of February the Grade 6’s travelled by bus to Mooroorpna to a leadership day. The guest speakers were Paul Desmond, he is the CEO of the Sandhurst Diocese, Uncle Leon Saunders who talked about the Barmah, Mooroorpna area and talked about his Aboriginal culture.

Brady Threlfall who is a professional distance runner who talked about being a good sportsman, preparing for big events and setting goals you can achieve.

Damian Drum spoke about what he thought qualities good leaders have and being a leader doesn’t mean you have to be the loudest in the group for your opinions to be heard, you just have to listen.

From this day I have been inspired in becoming a better leader at my school and community.

Darcy Backway, Grade 5/6B

St Francis Catholic Primary School acknowledges the Bangarang and Yorta Yorta people, the traditional custodians of the land on which our school is situated. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside Aboriginal people for reconciliation and justice.
On Wednesday 17 February we had a visit from Lyn Loger helping some of our 5/6 students complete some special art pieces for the Bardi Gras street parade. They look awesome!
Walker Learning in the early childhood years bring back to life the aspects and elements of development not as a fad or an old fashioned way of thinking about early childhood but as a vibrant, necessary piece of evidence based on neuroscience and development that brings rigor, facts and the tracking and observation of children's development, learning and skill acquisition back into our major role and focus in early childhood education. One of our major aims is to ensure effective and smooth transition for children as they move between their early childhood and early primary years. Walker Learning ensures a consistency of teaching and learning across the early childhood and primary years.

It acknowledges that culture, community and family have a significant impact on a child's life and learning - However it would be naïve to ignore the importance of the biology of the developing child just as it would be naïve to ignore the importance of culture on the developing child. Walker Learning uses elements of development as a vibrant, necessary piece of evidence based on neuroscience and development that brings rigour, facts and the tracking and observation of children's development, learning and skill acquisition back into our major role and focus in early childhood education.

It provides systems for planning, documentation, implementation, relationships, and defines open-ended play based curriculum based on child development theories rather than simply children's interests.

- It is a play based approach that is embraced and implemented across Australia and internationally and has been for over 20 years. It uses elements of the great traditions and theorists of child development and play and is the very first Australian play based curriculum developed and implemented in Australia and exported onto the world stage.

- It has been developed to embrace play pedagogy in Australia and internationally not only in early childhood but into the first three years of school and beyond so that all children, regardless of where they live and what age they are, may access their universal right to play and learn and be educated. With other great educational philosophies, such as Montessori, Regio, Steiner, Walker Learning has defined itself with clear educational philosophy and theory.

- The uniqueness of Walker Learning is that it brings to early childhood an Australian based and designed culturally appropriate play based pedagogy that has been developed for the diverse range of Australian communities. It is the first time Australia has an Australian designed play-based curriculum.

- Walker Learning embraces the concept of the "Whole child". This concept has been around in history and education for many decades and changes over time. In Walker Learning, we embrace the child holistically in terms of their overall development, using neuroscience and developmental theory as a foundation. We embrace the culture and family and relationships within and beyond community as major influences in a child's life and learning.

- We accept the diversity of children and families and cultures and that all children are born with the natural ability to learn and develop by exploration, investigation and the need for explicit direction and instruction. The whole child concept includes the child as capable and an active participant in their learning alongside the adult and extended community. We view the education of a child as a systems model whereby the community, relationships, culture are all interconnected.