Dear Parents and Friends of St Francis,

Last Thursday I had the privilege of being commissioned as a new principal to our diocese. It's official... you're stuck with me! I am officially principal of St Francis Nathalia. As I have expressed in earlier editions of our newsletter, I am very grateful for this opportunity and have been humbled by the generosity and support of our entire community. As many of you know taking on the role of principal wasn't an easy decision and something I haven't taken lightly. Family circumstances, location and changing schools made for, at the time, an uncomfortable and somewhat difficult decision. To be honest I was a bit scared, unsure of how I would be received and whether or not I was ready for such a responsibility. New school, new community and what I had been doing was familiar and comfortable and ahead everything was unchartered and a bit murky.

Five weeks in I am feeling much more comfortable and reassured that my decision was the right decision to make. I appreciate your patience as I 'learn the ropes' and expect there will be a few stumbling blocks along the way. As a staff team one of our first gatherings we had together this year was looking at how we can turn an obstacle into a stepping-stone. In life's journey we encounter many obstacles however it's the way we tackle these that makes the difference. If we look at obstacles as being obstacles then that's what they will always be, however if we look at obstacles as being stepping-stones we can use these as leverage to get to where we want to be or as a 'step' in another direction. These can and will determine our happiness or define who we are. I’m under no illusion there will be obstacles but I also know that with the support of our community, and with what I am currently experiencing, together we will step in the right direction and help one another to achieve great things for our school and more importantly for the benefit of our children.

Commissioning Mass & Catholic Education Sandhurst Leadership Gathering 2015
In conjunction with the Commissioning last Thursday, together with our school board chair, Jim Brereton and school board member Alison Dietrich, we attended a special Eucharist celebrated by our Bishop Rev. Les Tomlinson. At this celebration all new principals and school board chairs were welcomed to our diocese and commissioned in service to their communities. Later in the evening we also had the privilege of listening to an address by our new director of Education for Sandhurst, Mr Paul Desmond. Paul spoke to us of his passion and vision for education within our diocese and shared part of his journey and past experiences. We are all very grateful to have Paul at the helm and welcome him to our diocese and look forward to seeing Paul when he next visits our school. Thank you to Jim and Alison for attending the commissioning mass and being witness to my commitment to principalship. Much appreciated.

On Friday 20th principals, school board chairs and parish priests attended a Leadership Gathering in Bendigo. Bishop Vincent Long OFM gave an outstanding Keynote address expressing his views of the difficulties and challenges we face as catholic leaders and educators. Bishop Long came to Australia by boat as a refugee and has faced much adversity in his time as a migrant and as a Vietnamese Bishop. His story was quite remarkable. Aside to Bishop Long’s address, much of our day was spent discussing and reflecting on his messages. As leaders and as a community of believers in Catholic Education we do face many challenges however like the obstacles as stepping stones message I shared earlier, these challenges can be overcome and will path a way for greater things to come in Catholic Education and for the Catholic Church.

Closure Day 3rd March ~ Glen Pearsall Professional Development
On Tuesday of next week we will be having a closure day for teachers to attend professional development with Glen Pearsall. Glen Pearsall is one of the most dynamic and practical presenters currently working with teachers in Australia. He understands classroom dynamics and uses ‘hands-on’ theories and techniques when teaching behaviour management. We look forward to spending time with Glen and working alongside him within our cluster schools.

Due to our closure day on Tuesday, our newsletter will be distributed on Wednesday.
Learning Walk ~ March 17th
On March 17th Sally Livermore our diocesan Parent Engagement Officer will be conducting a Learning Walk for parents after recess. Last year our school participated in Parent Engagement professional development with George Otero from New Mexico and we began exploring ways we can best involve and engage parents and students in learning opportunities. A great way to open discussions and share ideas about school engagement is to hold a Learning Walk. Learning Walks provide an opportunity for parents to come into our classrooms and observe what’s going on. Sally Livermore will be here from 11:30am onwards on March 17th to conduct our Learning Walk and open up valuable discussions for parents. I have been involved in a number of these Learning Walks in the past few years and highly recommend that parents take advantage of this opportunity especially to get a better perspective of what is happening in our classrooms. More information about the prospect for parent engagement will be presented in the coming weeks.

Parents and Friends Information Evening ~ Monday March 2nd
An information evening for parents will be held next Monday 2nd March at 7pm in our gathering space. All past, current and prospective parents are most welcome to attend. This meeting is not an AGM but rather a chance to discuss ideas and suggestions raised through our ‘suggestion box’ campaign and will provide an opportunity for parents / friends of St Francis to think about the prospect of joining our P&F Community Group. All welcome.

Easter Egg Donations
A major fundraiser for our school is our Easter-Egg raffle. The best part about this Easter Egg raffle is that parents don’t have to sell the bulk of the raffle tickets! These are sold on Easter Saturday at the Easter street market. We do ask though: Please donate Easter Eggs to add to our baskets for raffle. Thank you.

Red Balloon Day and Swimming Fun day ~ Friday 27th February
On Friday, 27 February 2015 we are participating in Red Balloon Day, which is a day in which we show our appreciation to the 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 rather a chance to discuss ideas and suggestions raised through our ‘suggestion box’ campaign and will provide an opportunity for parents / friends of St Francis to think about the prospect of joining our P&F Community Group. All welcome.

Immediately following this event, our Grades 3–6 will be joining the Grade 3-6 students from the Nathalia Primary School at our local swimming pool for a joint swimming fun day. Students will need to bring their bathers and towel, a packed lunch and drink bottle. Our Foundation-Gr 2 students will return to school and their day will continue as normal. A joint fun day with the Foundation-GR 2 students with Nathalia Primary School will be organised for later in the year.

Have a wonderful week everyone

Chris Summers

Praying Lent This Year
Lent offers us all a very special opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and to deepen our commitment to a way of life, rooted in our baptism. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we've done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need.

Almighty and Everlasting God,
You have given the human race
Jesus Christ our saviour as a model of humility.
He fulfilled Your Will by becoming Man
And giving His life on the Cross..
Help us to bear witness to You
By following His example of suffering
And make us worthy to share in His Resurrection.
We ask this through Lord Jesus Christ. Your Son.

Amen.
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 4 our Social Skills Blitz was around cooperation. The following students were nominated as displaying positive behaviour last week:

Annabelle Flenley, Matthew Jorgensen, Marcus Burns, Henry Myers, Maddison Locke, Zara Limbrick, Darcy Backway and Josh Woods.

The winner of our Care Box this week is Lauren Cobledick for caring for other students.

Congratulations everyone

CARITAS/PROJECT COMPASSION:
Thank you to everyone for participating in Shrove Tuesday – the pancakes were delicious and $195.90 was raised for Caritas. We also thank all the families who donated pancake mix, it was very much appreciated.

PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS:
Parent/Teacher Interviews are scheduled to take place on Thursday, 19 March 2015 from 2 p.m. onwards. Please contact Lonky at the school office to book in times with your child/ren's teacher/s. We hope that all of our families will avail themselves of this opportunity to meet with the teachers to discuss their child/ren's progress.
Community News

Numurkah Saturday Junior Soccer
Come and Try Soccer

All boys and girls 5 to 11 years of age.

When: 5pm Wednesday 4th March
Numurkah Showgrounds.
Registrations accepted from this date.
Followed by a sausage sizzle.
Cost $95.00 for 15 week season from April to August.
Season starts Saturday 18th April.
All welcome.

Any enquiries please contact Ange Gibbon 0419 109 949 or
Jacquie Hughes 0411 045 291 or email numurkahjuniorsoccer@gmail.com

Nathalia Football Club
Under 14’s Training

Training will start on Wednesday 4th March at 5.00pm
Registration will be taken too.
For any enquiries contact coaches
David Zammit 0438016329
Heath Redwood 0427260410
All current and new players welcome.

St Francis School
Chapel St, PO BOX 66, NATHALIA, 3638
Phone: 03 5866 2271 Fax: 03 5866 2136
School Email: principal@sfnathalia.catholic.edu.au
Newsletter Email: vdaniel@sfnathalia.catholic.edu.au
Web: www.sfnathalia.catholic.edu.au
School Wiki: www.stfrancisnathalia.wikispaces.com

CARITAS AUSTRALIA

Project Compassion :- Eric and Ma – growing food for life

Married couple Eric and Ma had an unprofitable farm and limited diet before training at the Tutu Rural Training Centre, supported by Caritas Australia. Now they have a successful farm, a sustainable income and food for life. Eric and Margaret (Ma for short) are thriving in their homeland of Fiji. Comprised of over 300 islands, life in Fiji’s rural communities can be isolated. Throughout the country youth unemployment is high, nutritious food is in short supply, and life expectancy is much lower than in Australia. Eric and Ma credit the Married Couples Course at the Tutu Rural Training Centre for changing the direction of their lives and giving them the personal and agricultural skills they needed to raise a healthy, happy family and grow food for life. The course empowered the couple to participate fully in making decisions about their future. “The program at Tutu has truly enriched us and opened a new pathway for us where we have been able to prosper safely in life,” says Eric.

Tutu runs courses to teach people from the remote northern islands of Fiji the skills they need to build strong relationships, maintain healthy families and become successful farmers. Over 25 years, Eric and Ma have worked hard to establish a farm that provides a sustainable food source for life and an ongoing income stream that has allowed them to raise and educate their six children, who are now raising families of their own. Before Tutu, Eric worked hard on the family’s farm, but his labour was unprofitable. “We didn’t know how to manage a farm,” says Eric. After their training at Tutu, the farm now flourishes. Most of the family’s daily food is grown in their own fields. Growing their own food helps the family avoid the serious health problems that many Fijians experience due to a lack of fresh fruit and vegetables in their diets. “I think we were blessed to be part of the program in Tutu. Tutu opened a new door for us. Without Tutu we wouldn’t be here where we are now,” says Eric. “And it’s only possible thanks to you wonderful people of Australia.” Without Tutu we wouldn’t be here where we are now, and it’s only possible thanks to you wonderful people of Australia.”