**Key Dates**

**Week 6**

**Friday, 6 March**
World Prayer Day
All Welcome
Flyer enclosed

**Monday, 9 March**
Labour Day Public Holiday

**Monday, 16 March**
Student Free Day – School Cluster PD

**Tuesday, 17 March**
St Patrick’s Day
celebrations
Mass at 9.15 a.m. – all welcome
Students can wear green
Gold Coin Donation
School Learning Walk with Sally Livermore from the Catholic Education Office
11.30 a.m. all parents welcome
School Board Meeting 7 pm

**Wednesday, 18 March**
PSG Meetings

**Thursday, 19 March**
Parent/Teacher Interviews

**Friday, 27 March**
Last day of Term 1
2.30 p.m. finish

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**Coming Up**

Dear Parents and Friends of St Francis,

I would like to share a quote I found the other day that caught my eye:

‘If you always put limit on everything you do, physical or anything else, It will spread into your work and into your life. There are no limits. There are only plateaus, and you must not stay there, you must go beyond them.’

*Bruce Lee*

Apart from being a wonderfully gifted martial arts expert (as an actor, questionable), Bruce Lee has inspired many people with not only his actions but also his words. And moreover, he practices what he preaches. The same can be said with what we are hearing and witnessing from Pope Francis. He is teaching people to move out of their comfort zones and to get out there ‘to get your hands dirty’. Helping those who are less fortunate, disadvantaged and marginalised is the perfect example.

In last weeks newsletter I shared part of my journey on becoming Principal of St Francis and I guess Bruce Lee’s quote resonated with my journey as teacher, to deputy principal and now principal. By getting out of our comfort zone, trying something new and challenging and not staying in the securities of what’s familiar and easy (plateaus) we can all experience life’s great gift of belonging and sharing of talent. Although not easy and sometimes not pretty, ‘getting dirty’ and helping those less fortunate than ourselves can be the most rewarding experiences we can have. As a catholic community we have a call to do what is right and just.

We have an incredibly generous community at St Francis. This is being witnessed through the generosity and support from members of our care team who have been donating food, hampers and their time to make sure that some people in our community who are ‘doing it tough’ and struggling are being cared for. It is a great service we provide and I would to thank everyone who have donated food, made casseroles, supplied their time and have given generously to those in need. I particularly would like to thank Tam Perry for her tireless work in making sure this continues to happen and being proactive in our school. If you are in a position to help out and would like to donate food please do so, or if you’re not sure of the correct protocols or procedures please contact the school, every little bit counts.

**Designing Pedagogy Program ~ Literacy**

As part of our review of Learning and Teaching last year a recommendation that was put forward was to develop a whole school philosophy around pedagogy and best teaching practices. To begin this process we have been successful in an application for being part of a diocesan program to help improve literacy and numeracy. We have opted to undertake improving literacy and our instructive practices when teaching literacy skills. It sounds very scientific but it’s not ~ we just want to improve the way we teach our students how to read, write and communicate. The particular focus we will be concentrating on for this year is writing. Mrs Williams, Miss Newman and Mrs Mestrom have accepted the roles of participating, coordinating and representing our school within the project and have attended an introductory session last Wednesday. We thank them for their commitment and look forward to their journey and especially look forward to implementing new skills, practices and methods that help to improve literacy and writing across the school. Very exciting!

**Red Balloon Day and Swim Fun Day**

Last Friday the Nathalia Fire Brigade visited our school as part of their annual awareness raising and fund-raising campaign. With red balloons flying and children waving our community ‘fireys’ were given a rock star welcome. At 10:30 we visited the Nathalia PS to see the fire trucks in action and formally meet Captain Koala. The kids had a ball getting sprayed and having a close up look inside the trucks. As we know the CFA is a vital service to our community and we are forever grateful for the voluntary commitment and dedication of our ‘fireys’. Thanks.
3-6 Swimming Fun Day
Friday was a big day. As well as Red Balloon day the students from grades 3-6 participated in a swimming fun day at the Nathalia swimming complex. Students from the primary school joined our students and participated in fun activities as a school community social event. All students had a wonderful time playing games, swimming and meeting new friends. Thank you to all those who were able to help supervise and run events, especially Kylie Botterill, Brodie Ross, Fiona Baker and Helen Ginnivan.

Glen Pearsall Professional Development
Yesterday all staff across the Nathalia Learning Community had the privilege of attending a professional development day with Glen Pearsall. Glen Pearsall is one of the most dynamic and practical presenters currently working with teachers in Australia. His presentation and theories regarding good teaching and learning practices were outstanding. His presentation about differentiated learning highlighted the importance of adapting the curriculum to suit the learning needs of all students. Understanding that students all learn differently and adapting the curriculum to suit individual needs is a challenge however as teachers we are getting more proficient. Our ‘play based’ program in the junior years is testament to this. As a learning community we were very fortunate to secure Glen’s services and we look forward to working with and learning from Glen in the future.

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.

St Patrick’s Day ~ 17th March
To be sure, to be sure! To help celebrate St Patrick’s Day all students are encouraged to wear green on March 17th. A gold coin donation will ensure we are continuing to be positive contributors to our commitment to Project Compassion for 2015. We will begin our day with a special Mass celebration at 9:15am in the Church. All welcome! Please help celebrate this special event for our school.

Parents and Friends Information Evening ~ Monday March 2nd
Last Monday we held an information evening for parents to help promote and rejuvenate our Parents and Friends committee for 2015. Thank you to those who could make it. At our meeting we discussed future fundraising ideas and ways we can best engage parents in our community. There are opportunities to take on leadership roles in the Parents & Friends.

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 to those who have donated Easter eggs already. Please keep them coming!

Preps / Foundation Students ~ Starting ‘full-time’ this week.
Our preppies are beginning their full week of school this week. For some children this will be very tiring and challenging. Please keep this in mind and if you notice your little one becoming too restless or tired please let us know and we will endeavor to accommodate their needs.

Head Lice Checks!
Unfortunately we have a number of students with head lice. We ask parents to check your children for head lice. If we all work together, checking and treating where necessary, we will be able to keep the outbreak of head lice under control.

Parent Teacher Interviews ~ March 19th
Please be aware we are conducting our parent teacher interviews on Thursday March 19th. These are a great opportunity to meet with your child’s teacher to discuss their progress and to set learning goals for the coming term. Interviews will commence at 2.00 pm. Further information regarding Parent Teacher Interviews will be advertised in the coming weeks.

** Please note: Due to a clash of dates Shirley Jean and Lisa Booth’s grades 3/4 will be having parent/teacher interviews the following Thursday 26th March.

Newsletter Emailed:
If you would prefer to receive your newsletter via email please contact the office. If you already receive the newsletter via email and no longer require a hard copy of the newsletter sent home, please also let Lonky know at the front office.
Praying during Lent:

Have a wonderful week everyone.

**Chris Summers**

**Praying During Lent**

Loving Father,
So many times I turn away from you and always you welcome me back.
Your mercy and love gives me confidence
Thank you for the invitation to share, fast and pray so that you can form a new heart within me.
Your powerful compassion for my weaknesses leads me to ask for mercy and await with great hope the Easter joy you share with us.

**God’s Invitation**

Lent is a season of being invited by God in a deeply personal way. "Come back to me, with all of your heart," our Lord beckons (see Joel 2:12). "We will," we respond, but we aren’t quite ready; our hearts are not prepared. We want to squirm, evade, avoid. We note that our souls are not yet perfect. We think we are not ready for God to love us.

Yes, of course I want to have a deeper relationship with God, we tell ourselves earnestly. And we will...soon. God calls to us again: “Come back to me, with all of your heart.”

This is from *Praying Lent* by Andy Alexander, SJ, and Maureen McCann Waldron.

**NORTH EASTERN INTERSCHOOL EQUESTRIAN TEAM CHALLENGE:**
The North Eastern Interschool Equestrian Team Challenge is being held on the weekend of Saturday 25 April 2015 and Sunday 26 April 2015 at the Tatura Equestrian Centre. Entries close on Friday, 27 March 2015. Teams will consist of a maximum of four riders and team members must represent the school they are currently attending. Please telephone the office by the end of this week if your child is interested in putting a St Francis team together.

**COMMUNITY WOODWORK CLASSES:**
The Nathalia Secondary College conduct community woodwork classes on Monday afternoons from 4.30 p.m. – 7.00 p.m. There is no charge for the lessons themselves however participants will need to pay for the cost of materials used. This class is open to all ages and abilities. For further information contact Jack Tynan at the Nathalia Secondary College on 5866 2331.

**2015 CANTEEN PRICE LIST ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER**

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.

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This week our Positive Behaviour Blitz is Honesty.

Honesty is a trait desired in relationships with family and friends, with workmates and by employees. Honesty inspires trust and encourages openness. Honesty is something to be valued. It demonstrates the value we place on ourselves and our relationship with others.

In Week 5 our Social Skills Blitz was around cooperation. The following students were nominated as displaying positive behaviour last week:

Jayce Limberick, Pat Ryan, Aiden Botterill, Oliver Sheehan, Darcy Conroy, Sara Kolundzija and Cassie Brooks.

The winner of our Care Box this week is Brodie Sposito.

Congratulations everyone

RED BALLOON DAY

Pictured left is the Nathalia Fire Brigade outside the front of St Francis. Below left, students from St Francis, Nathalia Primary School and Glenvale School all together on the Nathalia Primary School oval saying thanks to our local fireys. Below students having a play with the water hose.