Prayer Space

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT – 8 March
Cleansing the Temple ~ John 2:13-25

The Jews revered the Temple in Jerusalem as the place where God was present in a special way. One day Jesus came to the Temple and found a lively trade going on in animals and birds for sacrifice, and money changing. Taking a small whip Jesus drove the traders out of the Temple and overturned the tables of the money changers with the words: 'Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!'

The vigorous reaction of Jesus was due not only to the desecration of the Temple but also to the fact that these traders were part of a system, which used the Temple to exploit the poor.

That same concern for the disadvantaged drives Caritas Australia to support programs such as the Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes Manage Your Income, Manage Your Life Program, which aims to break the cycle of poverty and malnutrition for First Australians in remote NSW.

While there is abundant food in Australian cities, the story is starkly different for First Australians living in rural communities, where low incomes and limited access to nutritious, affordable food reduces the health and well-being of families.

Karen a sole mother-of-six living in remote Central NSW had few places to buy food and prices were high due to freighting costs, and lack of local competition. Karen had neither the skills nor the money to provide a nutritious diet for her family — until two years ago when she enrolled in the Centacare program.

Through a series of budgeting and nutrition workshops, monthly budget planning sessions and cooking activities, Karen has gained the tools she needed to take control of her money, and provide regular, healthy meals for her family; ‘Food for life’.

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.
Dear Parents and Friends of St Francis

I hope everyone enjoyed the long weekend and managed to spend time with family and friends. The busyness of the term doesn’t seem to be getting any less busy and having a ‘mini’ break on the weekend was like a blessing in disguise. It was good to reaquaint myself with the family and take the kids to the NAB Challenge footy match at Deakin Reserve in Shepparton. Although North Melbourne defeated my beloved Hawks it was great to see a quality game and spend time with family and friends. There are only 17 more sleeps until the real season starts. I can’t wait.

I would personally like to thank our dedicated and hard working staff over the past few weeks and especially wish them all the best for the next few weeks that lie ahead. We have had staff members attending a multitude of different Professional Development days such as Glen Pearsall, designing pedagogy in literacy, conducting literacy testing across the junior years and being committed to learning new skills such integrating Google Apps for Education (GAFE) and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden. These learning experiences help drive our commitment to delivering the best educational opportunities that our students deserve. It is important for all of us to keep up to date with current trends in education whilst focussing on our goals and directives. I am very grateful for the exceptional work our teachers are doing and will continue to do for the betterment of our school. Thank you.

You will notice I have left a few advertisements in this week’s newsletter to continue to highlight some of the events on the horizon. These include:

• **Easter Egg Donations** ~ Please continue to donate Easter eggs for our raffle. This is our major fundraising event for the term. Thank you to those families who have already donated eggs.

• **Parent Teacher Interviews** ~ Thursday 19th March. Please call the school to book a time to visit your child’s classroom teacher. It is an extremely important part of our reporting, assessment and communication process.

• **Learning Walk with Sally Livermore** ~ 17th March 11:30am. This is a great opportunity for parents to have an informal look around our school and have a chat about what is going on. Another great way to be a visual presence in our school.

• **St Patrick’s ~ ‘Go Green for a Day’** ~ 17th March. We will be celebrating St Patrick’s Day by dressing in green and attending mass at 9:15am. A gold coin donation will help to raise money for Caritas Australia and support our social justice team in their commitment to helping others who are less fortunate.

**ESCIPE ~ Enhancing School Catholic Identity Project**

*On Monday 16th March we have a school closure day to help us unpack data sets relating to our Catholic Identity. This is a diocesan program and all Catholic Primary schools in our diocese commit to one day a year to look at current strengths and weaknesses and future recommendations for enhancing the Catholic Identity of our schools. We will be joining staff from St Joseph’s Cobram and Numurkah next Monday to complete this initiative.*

**Football Clinic ~ Grades 3-6. Thursday 12th March Nathalia Football Ground**

On Thursday 12th March the students in years 3-6 will be attending a football clinic conducted by players from North Melbourne FC. The clinic begins at 10:45am and will finish by approximately 12:45pm. Children from Nathalia PS, Waiaia PS, Katinga South and Katinga PS will join our students. We look forward to learning new skills and meeting some of the current stars of the game. (Hopefully we can arrange Hawthorn players to visit next year then we will be talking quality!)

**St Francis Community Group ~ A New Way of Thinking!!**

At our recent Parent Community Group meeting (formally St Francis Parents and Friends Club) it was suggested that we trial a new way to operate our Parent Community Group and move away from the traditional structure of parent associations or P&F. We are in forever changing times with the busyness of families, work commitments people being generally time poor and finding it difficult to commit to a ‘permanent commitment’ of president, secretary, minutes taker etc. A treasurer is a position that does need to be held and we ask for a parent volunteer to come forward to take this on.

So… a number of people have been thinking outside the square and have put forward a proposal we can trial for this year. A summary of these proposals is listed below.

a. Meeting free (or limited) Community Group Meetings ~ our technological age means we can use email, Facebook or flyers to promote events and activities.

b. Coordinators running different events ~ these coordinators and key personnel will allocate ‘Team Members’ or volunteers who will help run events or activities.

c. A checklist will be prepared for each activity so coordinators and team members will be able to run designated activities effectively and with confidence. Coordinators, with the help from Lonky will put these together.

d. Documentation of activities, costings etc will be maintained through the office with all correspondence of emails, etc being sent to Lonky who will document these in a central folder.

e. Opportunities for parents to be involved in events and activities will be advertised continuously throughout the year with the ‘main’ events for each term being sent out via a flyer and in the newsletter.

f. A weekly ‘barometer of success’ will be presented in the newsletter highlighting where we are at with our goals of money raising.

This proposal will take effect in the coming weeks with an events flyer and information on who to contact to become part of a team. We hope to involve as many parents as we can and please feel free to contact the school for further information.

**Barometer of Success**

As part of Stewardship of Resources for St Francis, each year it is expected that our school will commit to raising additional funds. These funds will be put towards improving the educational needs of our students through hardware or programs and / or improving school grounds and facilities. This year our Community Group is aiming to raise $8000 for our school. A barometer of success will be displayed in our newsletter in the coming weeks to motivate and keep our focus on raising the required funds. There are many exciting events, initiatives and activities that we can all get involved in, many of which won’t require monetary donations. Please join us as we strive to actively involve our community and make our school the best it can be.
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!

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 2.00pm. 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 interviews the following Thursday 26th March.

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.

School Board Meeting ~ 17th March
Our first official Board Meeting will be held next Tuesday 17th March at 7pm. We look forward to formally gathering to outline our strategic directions for the coming year and to listening to significant and timely presentations from Phil Bretherton and Sally Livermore. Phil works in the Catholic Education Office as the assistant to the Director and heads up governance, research and communications. Phil will be speaking to us regarding school governance and directives and Sally Livermore (CEO Parent Engagement Officer) will share with us her findings of our learning walk and how we can best engage parents more fully within our school community. We look forward to spending time with Phil and Sally and welcome their continued support of our school.

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.

Q: How do you start an Irish joke?
A: By looking over your shoulder.

A Texan rancher comes to Ireland and meets a Kerry farmer. The Texan says, “Takes me a whole day to drive from one side of my ranch to the other.” The Kerry farmer says, “Ah sure, I know, sir. We have tractors like that over here too.”

Earth Hour ~ Friday 27th March
Earth Hour 2015 will be held on Saturday, 28 March between 8:30pm and 9:30pm. The event is held worldwide towards the end of March annually, encouraging individuals, communities, households and businesses to turn off their nonessential lights for one hour as a symbol for their commitment to the planet.

On Friday, 27 February St Francis will participate in Earth Hour activities by switching off the lights in the school for the whole day. We look forward to more information from our sustainability team in the coming weeks.

Have a wonderful week everyone.

Chris Summers
BOLD is bringing Karen Starkiss from Dyslexia Assessment and Support Services and SPELD Victoria to Bendigo for an information evening for families.

**Support your child with Dyslexia or other Learning Difficulties in Upper Primary or Secondary School.**

**Time:** Arrive 6:30pm for a 6:45pm Start  
**Where:** Catholic Education Centre, 120 Hargreaves St Bendigo  
**Cost:** $10 per family  
Complete the registration form located at [www.bold.org.au](http://www.bold.org.au)  
**Enquiries:**  
- email info@bold.org.au  
- Information: Judy 0408 312 027  
- Booking: Jenene 5434 3922

**FREE NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK EVENT:**  
Rumble in the Gums is a FREE event to be held in National Youth Week on Saturday 11th April, 2015. The event will be held at Federation Park (Cobram Skate Park) in Cobram from 11am-5pm. The day will feature a number of great attractions to cater for all ages including; live music featuring young local talent, kids rides, face painting, petting zoo, mechanical bull ride, skate workshop, street art demo, market stalls and food stalls. Come along to this fun and affordable day out and celebrate the young people in our communities. For more information on this event just search 'Rumble in the Gums’ online and be listening to STARFM leading up to the event.

**CARITAS:**  
Last week we welcomed Kerry Stone from Caritas who spoke to the Grade 5 and 6 students about Project Compassion and the ways in which Caritas were able to support communities through education, resources and development. The students enjoyed Kerry’s visit and hopefully it gave them a greater understanding of why we participate in Project Compassion and how every little bit goes a long way to helping someone less fortunate than ourselves.

"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."  
-Anais Nin

**REMEMBER ST PATRICK’S DAY NEXT TUESDAY, 17 MARCH 2015. REMEMBER TO WEAR SOMETHING GREEN! GOLD COIN DONATION TO GO TO CARITAS. MASS AT 9.15 A.M. ALL WELCOME."**