**Prayer Space**

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT – 22nd March**

‘Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, There will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.’

(John 12: 24-26)

In our hearts, O God, you have written a covenant of love, revealed to us in the life of Jesus, your Son.

Raise us up with him – the single grain fallen to earth that yields a harvest of everlasting life.

May our lives too bring forth a harvest of good works as we follow the pattern of his life.

We ask this through Christ, our deliverance and hope, who lives and reigns with you forever.

Amen

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

Welcome to the final week of term. It has been an incredible beginning to the year and personally to my role as principal. There have been many highlights. As I have mentioned before I am very grateful for the hospitality and kindness bestowed from all levels across our community, and in reflection of the term we have had, there is much to celebrate and plenty to look forward to.

Thank you to all parents who have put their hands up and helped out on various occasions including: Hello Night, Pancake Tuesday, swimming / water fun days, football clinics, learning walks, library visits, reading in the mornings, Care Team provisions and super dooper days. Without the generosity of our parent community much of what we do would be impossible and the children would miss out on many opportunities. The inclusive spirit among our families is supportive of our school’s reputation and together we will continue to look for ways to be more inclusive and welcoming of others into our wonderful community.

Thank you to our school board. Even though we have only met on a few occasions, the discussion and positive energy at each gathering has been affirming of the strategic direction and development of St Francis. I look forward to continuing this positive relationship as we strive to make our school the best it can be.

Thank you to our staff who selflessly give much of themselves when providing engaging learning experiences for all students in their care. We are very lucky to have such a hard working and diverse staff and I am very grateful for their commitment and generosity to all students and families.

Finally, thank you to our students. They are the heart and soul of our school and are the reason we do what we do. It has been beautiful to see the growth and maturity of all students across the school. To see our students learning and interacting the way they were last Tuesday on our Learning walk was testament to their keenness and desire to learn. I’m sure you were able to see evidence of this when you attended your child’s parent teacher interview last Thursday. If you were unable to attend Parent / Teacher interviews please make sure you contact your child’s teacher to organise another time. These interviews provide great opportunities to discuss your child’s progress and to set learning goals for the remainder of the year.

Our ‘preppies’ have started full days at school and are coping extremely well. They have settled well into the routine of school life and have become more independent. Like many of you, I am amazed how quickly kids pick up the skill of reading words, correcting mistakes and telling you how to do things because that’s what their teacher has told them! My little girl has all of a sudden become a ‘big school girl’ and no longer needs need mum and dad’s help anymore. Great for their independence albeit terrible for our desire of not wanting to let them go. Although I must say I am looking forward to daylight savings finishing soon so I can get my little ones (and older ones) out of bed and off to school without having to half dress them in the car!!

Remember Holy Week starts this Sunday with Palm Sunday. Holy Week is the pinnacle observance of the final days of Jesus’ life before we celebrate his resurrection on Easter Sunday. Please take the time to join our parish for any of these services.

Parish Holy Week Events and Times:

- Holy Thursday: 7.00 p.m. Mass of the Lord's Supper
- Good Friday: 3.00 p.m. Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion
- Easter Saturday: 7.00 p.m. Easter Vigil
- Easter Sunday: 9.30 a.m. Mass
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Reconciliation for Easter:
- Good Friday: 9.00 a.m.
- Holy Thursday: 9.00 a.m.

Have a wonderful Easter everyone and enjoy a safe and relaxing holiday.

Chris Summers

Learning Walk and Parent Engagement

Last Tuesday Sally Livermore, our diocesan parent engagement officer, led many of our parents and visiting staff from St Mary of the Angel and Nathalia Primary school, on a learning walk to observe our students in their classrooms. Part of the exercise was to look and discern what was being taught and to formulate wonderings and questions on how the children were learning. These were later used to generate a community conversation involving parents, staff and student leaders and proved to be a fantastic way to hear different perspectives of what is happening around the school. These perspectives will be used to help drive improvements for learning and teaching whilst framing opportunities for future parent engagement. The success of our learning walk verified the importance we all place on wanting to involve parents as much as possible in their child’s education. For further information regarding our learning walk, or on ways you can become more involved in your child’s education please contact the school or visit: www.ceosand.catholic.edu.au and follow the links for parents. We will be holding another learning walk later in the year. Thank you to everyone who were part of this amazing experience.

Comments and wonderings that were shared:

What we saw…
- Children engaged
- Real purposeful learning
- Everyone was busy
- Children knowing what to do
- There were good visuals
- Family photos were displayed
- It looked comfortable and relaxed
- Calm teachers (this is a good thing!)
- Noise of investigation not disruption
- Respect of each others learning
- Children knowing their boundaries and working together
- Organised chaos!!

What we felt…
- Parents were welcomed and were involved
- As a parent I felt reassured that my child was being engaged and was enjoying school
- The students were focused
- The children were aware of what they were meant to be doing
- The children had freedom to explore and investigate

I wonder…
- How much time goes into planning all of this?
- How do students transition from the ‘play based’
classes to the more traditional classrooms higher up?
- Do teachers ever get a break?
- What does the data tell us regarding play based learning? What are these students doing in secondary school?
- Is there a quiet time?
- Do the students like not having their own space or table to sit at?

**Sandhurst Switches Off ~ Friday 27th March**

Earth Hour 2015 will be held this 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.

This Friday, 27 February St Francis will participate in Earth Hour activities by switching off the lights and non-essential power in the school for the whole day. This has been a commitment of our diocese for a number of years now and raises awareness of how we can be more sustainable and less damaging to our environment. Thank you to our sustainability team for promoting this and sharing with us much information at yesterday’s assembly.

**Confirmation & First Communion Preparation 2015:**

Our parish Sacramental Program for Confirmation and First Communion begins on Monday the 13th April at 7pm in the convent meeting room. This meeting will provide information about Confirmation and First Communion, as well as being the first session of the Sacramental Program. It is an expectation that students participating in the program attend all six sessions leading up to their Confirmation and First Communion, and have received the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please contact Veronica Williams (0408 136 010) or the office if you wish to be a part of this. The celebration of Confirmation and First Communion will take place on Friday the 15th of May at 7pm.

You will notice I have left a few advertisements in this week’s newsletter to continue to highlight some of the events on this week. 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 3/4 Jean & Booth**~ Thursday 26th March. It is an extremely important part of our reporting, assessment and communication process.
- **Sandhurst Switches Off ~ Earth Hour Friday 27th March**
- **Last day of school ~ Friday 27th March ~ School Finishes at 2:30pm**

**Easter Egg Donations and Raffle ~ Helpers Needed!**

Thank you to everyone who have donated Easter Eggs or something for our raffle hampers. There is still plenty of time to donate more eggs. **HELPERS ARE NEEDED** to sell raffle tickets on or before Easter Saturday especially Good Friday, and in particular to do a whip around the local hotels. Please contact the school or Kristy Brereton on 0438 088 860 if you can help with selling tickets or Jim Brereton on 0417 349 464 if you are able to help sell tickets at the local hotels. This is a major fundraiser for our school and in the past has raised significant funds.

Pictured left: First, second and third prize – a big thank you to Kristy Brereton and Jess Davies for putting the baskets together. Tickets available from the school office $1.00 each or 3 for $2.00.

**Leading Languages Professional Development ~ Speaking French**

Last Thursday Shirley Jean and Chris Summers attended a languages professional development day in Shepparton. Our day involved learning about the importance of providing a multilingual program and differentiation of the
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curriculum. Sarah Pavy, a head teacher and consultant of languages in schools, provided a fun and interactive day of learning.

Shirley Jean (3/4 class teacher) has taken on the role of delivering a languages program for our school. It is a legislative requirement for all schools to teach a language and we are providing the opportunity for our students to learn French across the school from F – 6. Our program began earlier this term and it has been nice to hear students learning to say some basic words and phrases. We are thankful for the commitment of Shirley to take on this role and look forward to further developments and implementation.

French word of the week...

Bienvenue
(Welcome)

During the first term Foundation to Grade six have been learning about French. We have been learning about the months, years, days, colours and so much more. Sometimes we play games or sing songs. Next term we hope to extend our knowledge in French
- Cassie Brooks

Bon Vacances
(Happy Holidays)

Youth Engagement Mentoring Program ~ YEMP
The Nathalia Community House has received $75,000 funding through the Victorian Government Engage Youth funding to conduct a three year engagement and mentoring project for young people in Nathalia and District. The
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project is being undertaken in partnership with the local primary and secondary schools to empower young people to develop Partnerships, Skills, Connections, Health and Well-being plus Community Engagement. Six of our senior students have been invited to participate in the program for next term.

If you would like to know more information on this project please contact Sue Maloney at Nathalia Community House on 58662449 or call into 44 Blake St Nathalia.

Water Fun Afternoon
The F-2 students participated in a water fun afternoon with junior years students from Nathalia Primary School. This combined event was a great success with students enjoying many water related activities ranging from water pistol fights, sponge and bucket relays and egg (water bombs) and spoon races. The main idea of the afternoon was to enjoy time meeting new friends, having fun and of course getting wet! Thank you to the many parents who came along and helped out and to the junior years teachers who coordinated the events. Great fun.

Andy Jones ~ Children’s Book Author
Whilst the foundation - two students were getting wet, our 3-6 students and students from the Nathalia PS enjoyed an afternoon in our library with Andy Jones a well acclaimed children’s book author. Andy entertained the students with many funny stories and singing songs. He even managed to get some of the staff to ‘show their moves’ by asking different teachers to dance. Andy Jones was invited to Nathalia as part of a regional library promotion.

This week, our Positive Behaviour Blitz is Tolerance.

Tolerance is a skill, which can reduce conflict. It is an ongoing process. Tolerance encourages us to respect opinions and practices, which differ from our own, and to be free of bigotry. Tolerance encourages understanding and appreciation of individual differences, minimizes generalisations and helps combat prejudice and discrimination.

Week 8 our Social Skills Blitz was around tolerance. The following students were nominated by their peers as displaying positive behaviour last week:

Isabella Nave, Ryley Barton, Callum McKeown, Grace McKeown, Chloe Hildebrand, Ebony James and Nikita Pawlowicz

The winners of our Care Box this week are Sienna Jorgensen and Nissa Maynard for caring for other students. Our winners receive a lunch order at the canteen.

Congratulations everyone

Pictured right are Josh Woods and Emily Woods – both students are keen cyclists and we are very proud to announce that Emily took out the Junior 11 Girls Track Club Championship and Josh came 2nd in the Under 13 road race. Congratulations to you both.
Pictured below are the Under 12 Shepparton Basketball League Grand Final Winners. Six of the eight boys attend St Francis Primary School and the coach is our very own School Board Chairperson, Jim Brereton. After losing their first game of the season by 30 points the boys then went on to win every game thereafter, culminating in them winning the grand final 34-13. They displayed great teamwork, sharing the play amongst all team members which lead them to their convincing win. The team had two rules: play as a team and have fun. The boys were very gracious in their win and Jim was very proud of each and every team member.

School Photos:
School Photos are scheduled for Friday, 24 April 2015. Photo envelopes will be sent home with each student this week. If you wish to purchase school photos please complete the form and return the same to school with payment prior to Friday, 24 April 2015. We have family photo envelopes at school if there are any families who wish to have a family photo taken.

Thank You:
We say a big thank you to the Nathalia Women’s Health & Support Group for their very kind and generous donation to our school. The Nathalia Women’s Health & Support Group main fundraisers are the Biggest Morning Tea and the Pink Luncheon and they will be holding these events again this year on 22 May and 23 October respectively. We are extremely grateful to be part of a community who are so willing to support our school.

Nathalia Community Early Learning Centre:
The Nathalia Community Early Learning Centre are again running a holiday program and a flyer with all the relevant information is enclosed in this newsletter.

Nathalia Lawn Tennis Club – Easter Tournament
The Nathalia Lawn Tennis Club is hosting it’s annual Easter Lawn Tennis tournament from Friday the 3rd of April to Monday the 6th of April. Our tournament is a social weekend catering for players of all levels and for those who do not play. There are many social and non-tennis events throughout the tournament, the main one being a Sunday night roast and music night featuring Laura Byrnes-Smith and Jessica Brooks. Excepting the open events, all grades and age groups are played using the round robin format allowing every participant multiple sets and restricting events to specific days so that you are not committed to a four day event. To enter and to print entry forms please visit: www.tennis.com.au/nathaliatc.

Nathalia & District School Football 2015
Information session and meeting to be held on Wednesday 25th March @ 4.30pm at the Nathalia Community Centre (Dancocks Room). If you can’t attend please pass on your details, contact number and email to Nicole on 0416 103 993. All Welcome.
Looking back on Term 1

What a fantastic way to finish the week: grades 3-6 from Nathalia primary joined St Francis kids in the library to be entertained by author and all round funny guy - Andy Jones! Comments from 3/4 M "Best afternoon ever!"