



Dear Parents and Friends of St Mary MacKillop Primary School

OUR VISION

This week I would like to revisit Our Vision and Learning Platform at St Mary MacKillop and invite parents to reflect on how these aspirations are a reality for your child.

Our Vision

That St Mary MacKillop be a Christ centred community that challenges students to develop their unique gifts and talents through a supportive partnership of school, parents and parish.

Learning Platform

We believe that teaching and learning should be an engaging experience for both students and teachers. This engagement is characterised by the setting of high expectations, explicit teaching, quality relationships and a belief in life long learning.

This is best achieved within the positive and supportive environment of the school community within the Catholic tradition.

Action Plan 2016

Through our St Mary MacKillop Action Plan for 2016 we have set the following goal for teaching and learning this year based on our current needs

Religious Education

For all students to improve their knowledge of God/Jesus and Sacraments through a deeper understanding of Scripture.

English

All students will achieve at least the expected growth when responding to and composing texts, using the DEC Comprehension and Writing Continuum.

Mathematics

For all students to improve by at least one growth point in multiplication and division and for vulnerable students to achieve accelerated growth in this domain.

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE DURING LENT

If you have ever heard of songwriter, Johnny Mercer, you will recognise these lyrics:

"You've got to Accentuate the positive,
Eliminate the negative,
Latch onto the affirmative
Don't mess with Mr In-between."

Not that he intended to do so, but Mercer could be giving us some excellent advice for last weeks Ash Wednesday and the forty days of Lent.

As we all know, Jesus retreated into the desert for forty days to prepare for His ministry. It was for Him a time of reflection and contemplation. For us, to pass time in the desert means to find occasions when we create a little emptiness and silence around us, rediscover the road to our heart, remove ourselves from the noise of external distractions, enter into contact with the deepest source of our being and faith. Thomas a Kempis offers a traditional perspective when he writes, "Happy and wise is he who endeavours to be during his life, as he wishes to be found at his death."

On Ash Wednesday, our foreheads were marked with ashes to remind us that life passes away on earth: "Remember you are dust and unto dust you shall return". There is an old English tombstone that bears the following inscription that is, indeed, a very solemn reminder:

"Remember friends as you pass by, as you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so must you be. Prepare for death and follow me!"

Definitely, "for Adults Only", that one!

The ashes are made from the blessed palms left over from the Palm Sunday celebration of the previous year. These ashes are "christened" with holy water and are scented by exposure to incense. Whilst the ashes symbolise penance and contrition, they are also a reminder that God is gracious and understanding to those who are of goodwill: "For generous and merciful is He, slow to anger, rich in kindness." Prophet, Joel. 2:12.

If we are not careful, Lent can be so dreadfully boring if it focuses only on the negative, for who wants to mourn their sins and shortcomings for forty days! Father James Martin S.J., author of *My Life with the Saints*, has some good advice to offer: “When it comes to religion, joy has a lousy reputation. When you hear of someone described as “religious” what usually comes to mind is someone who is terrified that somewhere in the world somebody might be having a good time. St Teresa of Avila even prayed, ‘From sombre and solemn people, deliver us, O Lord.’ So today, during lent, instead of going around with a sad look on your face, have a laugh, for God’s sake!”

Mourning our sins is about calling attention to them so that we can discard them; it is about improving our spiritual lives and seeking a closer relationship with God. We should observe Lent, because we want to accentuate the positive influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives and to eliminate the negative influence of sin. So, we have to “Accentuate the positive, Eliminate the negative, Latch onto the affirmative” and be happy about it!

Let us Pray:

**God, our Father, we ask that
You accept us as we are,
vulnerable, flawed and in need of Your love.
May Your Spirit be powerful within us so that
joy, love and peace
may be expressed through
the actions of our lives.
Amen.**

SUNSCREEN AVAILABLE FOR STUDENT USE

As we continue to experience days of high ultraviolet index St Mary MacKillop PS is supplying sunscreen for students if they forget theirs. The sunscreen lotion (Ombra Ultra Sport SPF50+) is fragrance and perfume free and designed for sensitive skin.

If your child has an allergy and you do not wish your child to use this lotion please send your child’s teacher a note.



Miss McNally attending Krakow WYD 2016

As part of the Parramatta System Direction young teachers in our diocese have been given the opportunity to attend World Youth Day in Poland this year. I am pleased to announce that Miss McNally will be attending World Youth Day during July this year.

All Pilgrims are preparing for their pilgrimage as part of their faith formation.

As you are aware we have been raising funds to help support the pilgrims through the Krakow WYD 2016 fundraising raffle. As the raffle will be drawn on March 20, I ask that all raffle tickets be returned ASAP. The prizes in the raffle are a new Toyota Yaris, European Tour for two, Apple Ipad Mini and \$500 cash prize.

Please join me in praying for Miss McNally and other pilgrims of the world as they prepare for this prayerful experience.

Thought for the Week

*“Jesus is waiting for us and wants to heal our hearts
of all that tears us down.*

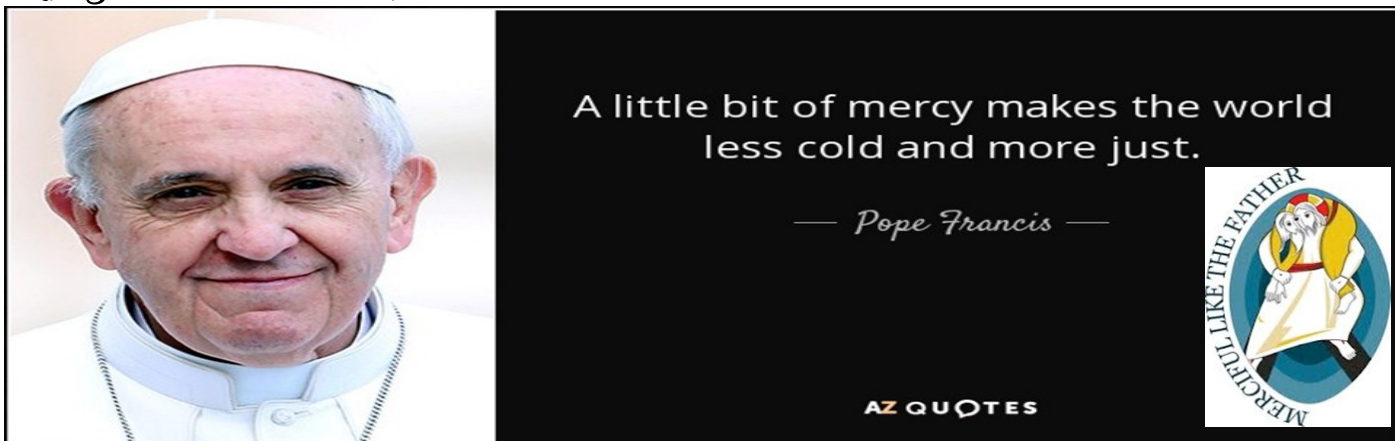
He is God who has a name: Mercy.

Pope Francis

Have a Blessed Week

Michael Sicilian

PRINCIPAL



Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy: 8th December 2105 – 20th November 2016

Pope Francis has proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy to take place from 8 December (the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception) 2015 until 20 November (the Solemnity of Christ the King) 2016. The Year of Mercy is a special time for the whole people of God to remember the gift of mercy that comes to us from the Father and to consider the manner in which we are the face of God's mercy to those we come into contact with each day.

Why a Jubilee of Mercy? (Pope Francis in his own words)

Dear brothers and sisters,

Many question in their hearts: why a Jubilee of Mercy today? Simply because the Church, in this time of great historical change, is called to offer more evident signs of God's presence and closeness. This is not the time to be distracted; on the contrary, we need to be vigilant and to reawaken in ourselves the capacity to see what is essential. This is a time for the Church to rediscover the meaning of the mission entrusted to her by the Lord on the day of Easter: to be a sign and an instrument of the Father's mercy. For this reason, the Holy Year must keep alive the desire to know how to welcome the numerous signs of the tenderness which God offers to the whole world and, above all, to those who suffer, who are alone and abandoned, without hope of being pardoned or feeling the Father's love. A Holy Year to experience strongly within ourselves the joy of having been found by Jesus, the Good Shepherd who has come in search of us because we were lost. A Jubilee to receive the warmth of his love when he bears us upon his shoulders and brings us back to the Father's house. A year in which to be touched by the Lord Jesus and to be transformed by his mercy, so that we may become witnesses to mercy. Here, then, is the reason for the Jubilee: because this is the time for mercy. It is the favourable time to heal wounds, a time not to be weary of meeting all those who are waiting to see and to touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone the way of forgiveness and reconciliation.

May the Mother of God open our eyes, so that we may comprehend the task to which we have been called; and may she obtain for us the grace to experience this Jubilee of Mercy as faithful and fruitful witnesses of Christ.

(Celebration of first vespers of Divine Mercy Sunday, 11 April 2015)

Opening School Mass and Year Six Leadership Induction Ceremony St Nicholas of Myra, 9:45am Friday 19th February

Please join us for the annual Opening School Mass at St Nicholas of Myra Church on Friday 19th February at 9:45am. At our mass we will gather as a school community to pray for God's blessing on the school year and welcome our Kindergarten students, new students across the grades and new teachers to St Mary MacKillop Primary School. We will also induct the Year 6 students into their 2016 leadership roles. We Look forward to seeing you as we celebrate our Catholic Faith together.

The Season of Lent

The second week of Lent begins this Sunday 21st February. The Season of Lent offers us all a chance to grow in our relationship with God through regular prayer and works of mercy. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our lives, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we have done and failed to do, and to come back to God with a change of heart.

During Lent we look for a renewal of our lives and we seek the meaning of Jesus' self-less love, so that we might reflect that love to others. We have to work hard to resist temptation and to change some of our bad habits. We know that this will not be easy but we are encouraged by the works of mercy that Christ gave us:

Religious Education News—Continued

*Feed the hungry
Welcome the stranger
Clothe the naked
Comfort the sick
Visit the imprisoned*

During Lent Christ is asking us: who might we feed, welcome, clothe, comfort or visit? Let us show Mercy to those who are most in need.

Project Compassion 2016 (Social Justice Initiative)

On Ash Wednesday all classes received a Project Compassion box to place on their prayer space in their classroom. Over the next few weeks the students will be encouraged to give generously to those less fortunate than themselves. It would be appreciated if you could support your children in putting their compassion into action this Lent by supporting the 2016 **Project Compassion Appeal**. You can also donate online via the website www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion.



Project Compassion, Week 2, brings you the story of Duangmala and Hum Noy from Laos
Sunday 21st February, the 2nd week of Lent:



Second
Sunday
of Lent

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF
PROJECT
COMPASSION



With limited support services for children living with intellectual disabilities in Laos, Duangmala feared that her eight-year-old son, Hum Noy, would never reach his full potential because he has Down Syndrome. However, he now has the chance to learn and thrive at a school for children with intellectual disabilities, supported by Caritas Australia.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2016 and help children living with intellectual disabilities in Laos learn, grow and reach their full potential. You can donate through School boxes, by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413.

Project Compassion, Week 3, brings you the story of Dominic from Papua New Guinea
Sunday 28th February, the 3rd week of Lent:



Third
Sunday
of Lent

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF
PROJECT
COMPASSION



Generational poverty has led to many challenges in Dominic's community in Papua New Guinea, including gender inequality, alcohol abuse and violence. Since receiving training in the Caritas Australia supported Community Conversations program, Dominic has learnt communication and problem solving skills to lead his community towards a more peaceful, prosperous future.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2016 and help empower communities in Papua New Guinea to lead their own development and create more harmonious futures. You can donate through School boxes, by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413.

2016 Sacramental Program - Reconciliation

Many of our students will soon begin preparing to receive the Sacrament of First Reconciliation. All preparation classes occur within the parish and I ask that during their time of preparation, you keep the candidates in your prayers.

Mrs Gillard
Religious Education Coordinator

From the Assistant Principal

Penrith Panther visit St Mary MacKillop

Next Monday a selection of Penrith Panther players will visit St Mary MacKillop and speak to all the children in K-6. The focus of this year's Community Carnival visit is "Wellbeing" and will reinforce the importance of sleep, hydration and belonging in a young person's life.

Additionally, they will be encouraging students to lead active lifestyles by providing information on how to register for a Junior Rugby League team or be part of our "come and try" clinics in 2016. Participation in activities such as Junior Rugby League can further enhance overall wellbeing by giving young people a place to belong, creating positive relationships and by providing a sense of connectedness.



Parent Reading Workshop

Mrs Rowan will be leading a workshop next Tuesday afternoon 2.15-3.00pm for any parents who would like to volunteer their time to come up to school and read with some of our students. The information shared during this session would also be of interest to any parent who would like strategies in helping children read.

Learning and Teaching Mathematics

Earlier this week I attended a two-day Extending Mathematical Understanding course. I would just like to share with you some insights into what current research is showing around how children learn numeracy skills.

Children construct mathematical ideas from their own personal experiences. Therefore, it is important for children to realise that 'maths' doesn't just happen in a school 'maths' lesson. It is important to point out to children the mathematics in their every day life and experiences Eg, sporting scores and records, time, money, speed, distance, shape, length, angles, etc.

Children learn through being actively and intensively engaged in mathematical learning experiences. Children learn by 'doing' the maths not just by being a passive listener.

Children construct mathematical ideas through discussing, listening, simulating and reflecting upon their mathematical experiences. Therefore, opportunities for children to 'talk' about maths, reflect upon strategies used and discuss ideas are crucial.

Mathematical learning involves taking risks, and this requires confidence. Maths needs to be a positive experience for the children. Children need to have a 'growth mindset', an "I can be good at maths" attitude rather than 'its too hard' or "I'm not good at maths" attitude ('Closed mindset'). These mindsets are often developed at an early age and are often influenced by the experiences shared by parents or loved ones.

Steve Cauchi
Assistant Principal

DELAY IN TERM 1 STATEMENTS

Please note: Australia Post's delivery times have changed, which may cause a delay in some parents receiving their Term 1 statements later than usual. This could be an extra 1-3 business days in most cases.

Parents please note that all fees are due 7th March 2016



WELCOME BBQ - WHAT A GREAT NIGHT- THANK YOU

A very big thank you to the amazing Outback Steakhouse (Hicks family) for their generous contribution in making this event more delicious than ever. Over 290 family members from our school attended this event organised by our school leaders, teachers, the P & F and parent volunteers. Fun raffle prizes were claimed, Fete 2016 information was shared, families mingled and had the chance to meet friends and teachers during a social setting. Thank you to all our volunteers who always make these events such a success, you are true role models of St Mary MacKillop's quote 'Never see a need, without doing something about it'. WELCOME!!!

FETE UPDATE!!!

SMMP FETE 2016 - SAVE THE DATE - SUNDAY, 1st May 2016

Our amazing Fete leaders Michelle Darwen, Erin Carroll, Jenny Inskip, Natalie Cilia and their fantastic team are working hard to bring together our major fundraiser for the year.

FETE STALLHOLDERS WANTED

Currently the fete team are looking for families interested in setting up a Fete stall. For more information on the relevant paperwork please contact Michelle Darwen on michelle.darwen@outlook.com.au.

FETE BUSINESS PROMOTIONS & DONATIONS

Do you own a business and wish to promote it during this huge event? Then why not donate a prize towards the Fete raffle or chocolate wheel (gift or monetary). For more information please contact Erin Carroll on escarroll1@optusnet.com.au

FETE - TRASH & TREASURE DONATIONS

Don't forget ALL DONATIONS for our Trash & Treasure and Garden & Craft stall can be left in the labelled boxes located in the school front office.

Items need to be in good condition and can include books, DVD's, records and CDs.

FETE - GARDEN & CRAFT DONATIONS

Garden - Donations of plants, potted cuttings, seedlings or empty pots (to be delivered to the school between 26 - 29 April).

Craft - anything relating to handiwork including baby wear, beanies, scarves, hand towels, aprons, library bags, hair accessories and jewellery.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)- Tuesday, 1st March 2016 @ 7PM in the School Hall

Come and join us for our Annual General Meeting where the next team of volunteers will be voted in for the current positions, which will be deemed open. President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Fundraising Team x 4 and Parent Representative Council x 2. At this meeting you will have the opportunity to meet the current P & F team who provide information and reports relating to special events, communications and fundraising items as well as the Principal's report. PLEASE JOIN US and become part of a dynamic team of parents as 'Together We Grow' (SMMPS).

Parents Representative Council Meeting - Monday, 29 February 2016 @ 7:00pm

Location: Patrician Learning Centre, Patrician Bros College, 100 Flushcombe Rd. Blacktown.

"Setting up for success for your child in 2016". This topic will include What you can do to help your child, How parents can help with Goal Setting, How to approach/What to ask/What to expect from Parent/Teacher interviews, How to read a school report, How to help create good study patterns for students.

For more information, please contact: prcparrasecretary@gmail.com

Zooper Dooper - SALE ON FRIDAY (weather permitting)

Zooper Doopers are on sale every Friday during recess from 1:30pm. Zooper Doopers are sold at 60c for a full size and 30c for a half size (please note: limit 2 per student). Volunteers are always appreciated for these sales, so if you are able to volunteer your time to sell Zoopers Doopers to our gorgeous students, please ensure to leave your name and contact number at the front office for Jenny Inskip.

On behalf of the P & F Association we wish our Year 6 leaders and representative teams every success and joy in their vocations throughout the year. You are such amazing role models for all the younger students at our school and we are very proud of you. Onward and upward precious ones.

God Bless.

Liz Whalen

President

On behalf of the P & F Executive Team

Dates for Your Diary Term 1 - 2016

<i>DAY</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>
Friday	19 February	09:45am 2:20pm	Opening School Mass (St Nicholas of Myra) Whole School Assembly
Tuesday	23 February		Nepean Zone Swimming Carnival @ Glenbrook
Thursday	25 February	10:45am-11:30am	AFL to lead "Footy Frenzy"
Friday	26 February	2:20pm	AFL to join Whole School Assembly 2M Item Diocesan Swimming @ Blacktown
Monday	29 February		2017 Kindergarten Enrollments Open Young Leaders Day Allphones Area
Tuesday	1 March	10:15am 7:00pm	Mr Michael Pate (Xavier College) visiting Year 6 P & F AGM Meeting
Friday	4 March	2:20pm	AFL to join Whole School Assembly
Monday	7 March	3:15pm-4:15pm	Catholic School's Week AFL Clinic
Friday	11 March	9:15am 2:20pm	Year 1 Liturgy Whole School Assembly 3W Item
Monday	14 March	3:15pm-4:15pm	AFL Clinic
Tuesday	15 March	9:00am	Year 5 Graffiti Workshop
Thursday	17 March		St Patrick's Day School Cross Country
Friday	18 March	9:15am 2:20pm	Year 3 Mass Whole School Assembly 6 Mc Item
Sunday	20 March		Palm Sunday
Monday	21 March	3:15pm-4:15pm	AFL Clinic
Friday	25 March		Good Friday
Sunday	27 March		Easter Sunday
Monday	28 March		Easter Monday
Tuesday	29 March		Staff Development Day (no school)
Thursday	31 March		NSWCPA Swimming Trials @ Homebush
Friday	1 April	2:20pm	School Photo Day Whole School Assembly
Monday	4 April	3:15pm-4:15pm	AFL Clinic
Friday	8 April	2:20pm	Whole School Assembly Term 1 Concludes
Monday	25 April		Anzac Day Public Holiday
Tuesday	26 April		Term 2 Commences

Kids Can Act

Drama Studio

For kids of all ages



Mrs Parkes presents...

After School Drama Classes

@

St Mary MacKillop School Hall

Wednesdays 2016

@ 3.15pm **Junior Kids** (K-Year 2)

@ 4.15pm **Big Kids** (Years 3- 6)

Enquiries and enrolments to be completed through the website below
or call Cathie for further details. Please do not contact the school

www.kidscanact.com.au

kidscanactstudio@gmail.com

Mob. 0414 475 158

**Limited Vacancies in the Infants Class
at 3.15 pm Wednesdays! Enquiries and
enrolments to be completed through the
website listed or call Cathie for further
details. Please do not contact the school.**

St Dominic's College

**Open Day on Sunday 6th March
between 9am and 2pm.**



Xavier College

Open Night
Tuesday 8th March
from 4.30pm-
6.00pm for
prospective families for 2017.



Faith, Courage, Tolerance

Caroline Chisholm College, Glenmore Park provides

Catholic Education

for girls in Years 7 – 12

Enrolling now for 2017

An **Open Night** on Monday 7th March from 6.00 pm to 8.30 pm
includes information sessions, displays, performances and tours.

All considering enrolment in 2017 are invited to attend.
For further information contact the College on 4737 5506.

STAGE 3 EXCURSION HYDE PARK BARRACKS MUSEUM

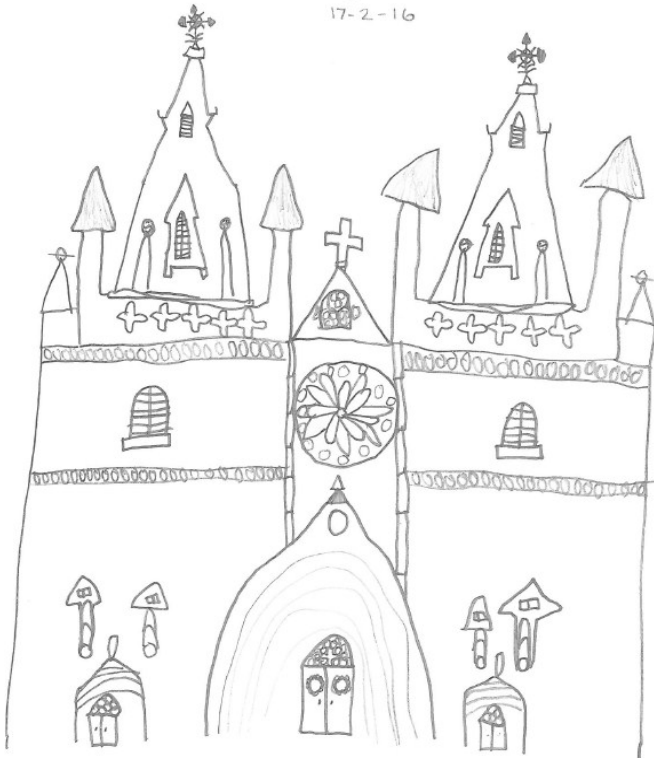
Yesterday, Wednesday 17th February, 110 students from Stage 3 and our teachers visited the Hyde Park Barracks Museum in the city of Sydney. We are learning about the convicts and migrants of early Australia and how they lived. We also visited St Mary's Cathedral, Hyde Park and the War Memorial. It was a great day to experience our city in the 21st century and 200 years ago. We hope you enjoy our sketchers of St Mary's Cathedral.

Abbey K and Grace A

Chloe Proud

5G

St Mary's Cathedral
17-2-16

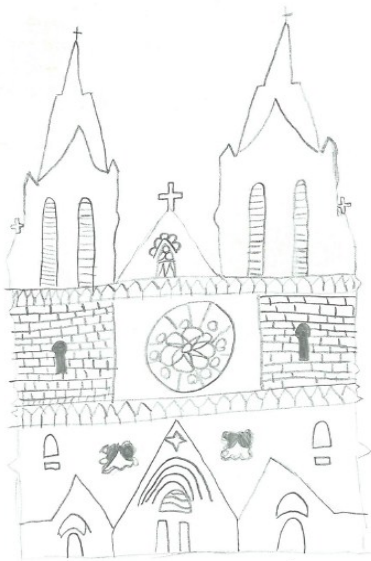


St Mary's Cathedral
Sydney
17-2-16



Isaac
Scurfield
6M

Sienna Murphy
5PM



St Mary's Cathedral
17-2-16

St Mary's Cathedral
17-2-16



Javier
GMcC