Dear Parents and Friends of St Mary MacKillop Primary School,

The Season of Advent

Here’s a good insight into life: “Life is not about being better than someone else. It is about striving to be better than you used to be.” (Author Unknown).

St Augustine had another good insight when he wrote: “When people choose to withdraw far from a fire, the fire continues to give warmth, but they grow cold. When people choose to withdraw far from the light, the light continues to be bright in itself but they are in darkness. This is also the case when people withdraw from God.”

And withdraw from God we all do, not out of disbelief necessarily, but mostly out of forgetfulness, because we are just too busy with the rest of life. With Christmas just around the corner, we might be too busy to give attention to what we are actually commemorating. Those who live “by the cash register” will do everything they can to keep our attention on our wallets and purses. The Three Wise Men seem to have had the true understanding of the Christmas event. They spent many weeks in anticipation as they travelled from their homeland to Bethlehem. When they arrived, their purpose was to honour the newborn child and out of courtesy they brought one gift each.

We, too, have the opportunity for a period of anticipation in the Season of Advent. Of course, Advent is a constant season for, within our own lives, we are continuously waiting to become, to discover, to complete, to fulfil. Hope, struggle, fear, expectations, are all part of our Advent experience. God does not come to us from the sky, he comes to us in the daily story of our lives in people, places and events.

Advent invites us to prepare for the commemoration of God’s coming by taking time to have a closer look inside ourselves away from the busy outside. This looking inside is not about remorse or regret, nor about listing ways life over the past year could have been different; it’s not about wishing we were better people. It’s about forward movement, getting new bearings, relying more on God for directions. It’s about a fresh start, getting closer to the “fire” and the “light” that are God’s love and compassion. Advent is a time to

“Rejoice, let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is nigh.” St Paul Phil 4:4,5

As well, Advent is a time to:

“Accept surprises that upset your plans
shatter your dreams,
give a completely different turn to your day
and – who knows –
to your life.
It is not chance.
Leave the Father, to Himself weave
the pattern of your days.”

Dom Helger Camara. A Thousand Reasons for Living.

Thought for the Week

“If there is anything we wish to change in the child, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could better be changed in ourselves.”

Carl Jung

Peace and Best Wishes.

Michael Siciliano
PRINCIPAL
St Vincent de Paul Christmas Hampers:
The true spirit of Christmas is about giving ….. giving from the heart and giving out of love, just like God gave us his son Jesus Christ on that very first Christmas. As Jesus grew he instructed us about how we should look after each other:

> For I was hungry and you gave me food,
> I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
> I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
> I was naked and you gave me clothing,
> I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

Mt 25: 35 – 36

It is evident from the amount of donations that I have seen in classrooms that we have embraced the true meaning of Christmas and I am very thankful for the generosity within our community. The words spoken by St Mary Mackillop; “never see a need without doing something about it “ are truly alive within our school community. All hampers items will be presented to a representative from the St Vincent de Paul society at the morning assembly on Friday 6 December 2013.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation:

A huge thankyou to Mrs Anne Tucker (Sacramental Coordinator), the group facilitators, parents and class teachers who prepared the children so well.

Mrs Leesa Gillard
Acting Religious Education Coordinator

Mathematical Assessment Interviews 2014

Throughout the year our staff have continued to focus on the teaching of Numeracy. All staff have been trained in the administration of a special assessment tool called the ‘Mathematical Assessment interview (MAI)’. This is a one to one interview with a student, which takes approximately 30 minutes. The information gathered from this assessment is used to help teachers analyse the mathematical understanding of students in Number. This information provides teachers with detailed information about children’s number knowledge. Teachers are then able to provide more targeted learning opportunities to enhance student learning. To assist staff in gathering this information, we will be inviting students to be available on one of the following days for approximately 30 minutes to meet their 2014 class teacher to conduct the interview. Students would need to be dropped off and picked up by parents or a designated adult either side of their allocated time. Our aim is to conduct this interview for as many students as possible in this time frame. This will not only provide staff with knowledge of individual students but data will then be analysed at the class, grade, school and diocesan level and assist in the promotion of student growth in mathematical understanding. In the coming days families will receive a letter identifying an interview appointment time for their children for a MAI. If there is more than one child in your family, we will try to organise for siblings to have their interview at the same time or at least after each other. The children who are not assessed during these days will be assessed as quickly as possible in the first weeks of Term 1. The intention is that every student will be assessed within the first 3 weeks of Term 1.

2014 Maths Assessment Interview Schedule

Tuesday 28 January - 11:15am-3:40pm, Wednesday 29 January - 3:15pm-4:20pm, Wednesday 5 February - 3:15pm-4:20pm, Wednesday 12 February - 3:15pm-4.20pm. 2014 Kindergarten parents will receive a letter confirming your MAI time in the coming days. Kindergarten interviews will take place on 29, 30 and 31 of January.

Please contact Mr Cauchi if you have any questions or queries regarding this information.
Parent Helper Morning Tea Invitation

A “Thank You” Morning Tea will be held on Monday 2 December 2013 commencing at 11:00am in the Multi-Purpose Centre. The purpose of this Morning Tea is to express our appreciation for the generous involvement of parents in the reading support groups, classroom helpers, library assistance, sport carnivals, excursions, creative arts, religious events, clothing pool, selling of iceblocks or general school support. It will also give all our parent helpers an opportunity to meet others who are part of this important work.

We are looking forward to seeing you on the 3 December at 11:00am. Please reply to the office by Friday 29 November, for catering purposes.

End of Year Reminders

Bus Travel 2014:
Parents are reminded that students who travel by bus and are going into Year 3 2014 need to re-apply for a bus pass. Applications are available from the school office. Applications must be returned ASAP.

Not Returning to St Mary MacKillop Primary in 2014:
If your child (K-5) is not returning to St Mary MacKillop in 2014 we need this confirmed in writing as soon as possible to enable us to plan our overall staffing and learning groups for next year. It will also assist us with the enrolment enquiries we are receiving for next year.

P & F News

Bargain Bus Shoppers Fundraiser
What a wonderful day had by all whilst being in the company of savvy shoppers ready to chase some bargains. By the end of the day, the bus was fully loaded with everything from shoes, handbags, TOYS, clothes, jewellery, giftware, homeware, manchester and lots of delicious chocolates and nuts. Raffle prizes were also won by the beautiful ladies on the way back home. We wish to sincerely congratulate and thank Mrs Bryant for organising this fundraising event on behalf of the P & F in such a short time and so close to Christmas. These events are tricky sometimes, however, she did a tremendous job and her infectious and positive energy made the trip all the more fun and exciting. The 2014 Bargain Bus Shoppers event will be booked soon, and we will keep you posted to 'save the date' for bargain shopping next year and look forward to a day of shopping again.

Zooper Dooper Sales for December 2013: Monday 2, Wednesday 4, Friday 6, Tuesday 10, Thursday 12, Monday 16. Children are please reminded to kindly dispose of their rubbish in the bins provided around the school. Let's all do our job to keep our school grounds beautiful.

SMMPS Autumn School Fete 2014 - Next Meeting:
Monday 2 December 2013 at 6:45pm in the Multi Purpose Centre. Hope to see you there.

SMMPS Autumn School Fete 2014 - Invitation to Parent Stall Holders:
Parents from our school who wish to book a stall during our school fete to promote their business venture are invited to do so by contacting Fiona Bryant at fionaw@smartchat.net.au. Fiona will then send out the Stall Holders booking documentation and contractual information to book a designated space for your stall, as they will be occupied fast once we begin to advertise to the community.

Volunteers Required for Kindergarten 2014 First Day of School:
There will be a note going out in the next week to ask for your kind assistance on the First day of school for the 2014 Kindy families arriving and commencing their new journey at St Mary MacKillop Primary School. If you are able to volunteer your time on Thursday 30 January 2014 from 8:15am, it would be very much appreciated as your guidance, administering, nurturing and serving of tea and coffee and handing out tissues would assist in the settling period of a very anxious, yet exciting day for children and their families (we have all been there and we all know how it feels). Thank you kindly in advance for your understanding and benevolence.

Liz Whalen
President
On behalf of the P & F Executive Team
### Dates for Your Diary Term 4 - 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>2 December</td>
<td>11:00am</td>
<td>Parent Helpers Morning Tea - All Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>6 December</td>
<td></td>
<td>Semester Two Reports Sent Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>9 December</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>School Christmas Concert @ St Dominic’s Michael Mangan performing with students</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>13 December</td>
<td>6:00pm-9:00pm</td>
<td>Year 6 Farewell Disco</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>16 December</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Year 6 Graduation Mass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>17 December</td>
<td>10:00am</td>
<td>Year 6 Graduation Ceremony</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2:00pm</td>
<td>Class Promotions Ceremony</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>18 December</td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 6 Fun Day St Mary’s Indoor Sports Centre and last day of Term 4 for all students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>19 December</td>
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<td>Staff Development Day - Pupil Free Day</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<td>Staff Development Day - Pupil Free Day</td>
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### Dates for Your Diary Term 1 - 2014

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>28 January</td>
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<td>Staff Return</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>29 January</td>
<td>8:45am</td>
<td>Students Years 1 -6 commence Term 1 2014</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>30 January</td>
<td>8:45am-12:00pm</td>
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<td>31 January</td>
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<td>Kindergarten ½ day</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>3 February</td>
<td>8:45am</td>
<td>Kindergarten commence full days</td>
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<td>Primary (Year 3-6) Swimming Carnival @ Penrith Pool</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>3 February</td>
<td>3:30pm-4:30pm</td>
<td>Kindergarten Parent Information</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>6 February</td>
<td>5:30pm-7:30pm</td>
<td>P&amp;F Welcome BBQ</td>
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<td>10 February</td>
<td>3:00pm</td>
<td>P&amp;F Afternoon Tea</td>
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<td>3:30pm-5:30pm</td>
<td>Year 1-6 Meet the Teacher</td>
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<td>Nepean Zone Swimming Carnival @ Glenbrook Pool</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>28 February</td>
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<td>Diocesan Swimming Carnival @ Blacktown</td>
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### Maths Olympiad

**Question:** (Term 4 Week 6)
A frog hops along a number line starting at the number 0. On each hop to the right he moves 3 units and on each hop to the left he moves 2 units. Each hop to the right is followed by a hop to the left. Every hop, regardless of direction, takes 1 second. If the frog’s first hop is to the right, how many seconds will it take before he lands on the number 12 for the first time?

**Answer:** (Strategy) Determine the amount of time needed for the frog to read 9 on the number line, then add 1 additional jump.

For every 2 hops, which takes 2 seconds, the frog ends up 1 unit further to the right. Thus, to reach the number 9, it will take 18 jumps, or 18 seconds. One more jump will take him from the number 9 to the number 12. Therefore it takes a total of 19 seconds to reach the number 12 for the first time.

**Question:** (Term 4 Week 8)
What is the value of the following? 48 + 8 - 40 + 16 - 32 + 24 - 24 + 32 - 16 + 40 - 8 + 48