Dear Families

Today is Ash Wednesday and today I had the pleasure of attending both our celebrations in our school Chapel. Children from grades three to six celebrated Mass at 9:15am and our junior school celebrated a special non Eucharistic Liturgy directly after that. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and as such our preparations for Easter. I say pleasure because the manner in which all the children celebrated was a credit to themselves, their teachers and their parents. Both celebrations were most reverent and the children responded and sang beautifully. As Father mentioned in his Homily this morning it is a time when we stop and take note of some of the things in our lives that need fixing and then taking steps towards addressing those things in the hope of making things better. It is a simple challenge but one that can have terrific results. Even the small changes we make can have a big impact on the way we feel about ourselves and the impact our actions have on others.

I don’t often do this via the newsletter but it is a case of “drastic times require drastic measures” and I believe that we have reached a crisis point with regard to our current Parents and Friends Association. The Parents and Friends Association is a strong contributor both financially and in a community building sense and its members remain dedicated to building a strong supportive school environment. Their efforts from year to year with the Parish Fete, the Mother’s and Father’s Day Stalls, financing school and classroom initiatives and resource purchases and the organisation of major and minor fundraising activities continue to show just how integral this hard working group is to the success of St Robert’s. Over the years the Parents and Friends have answered the call from our key area coordinators and have generously funded the purchase of books, programs, musical instruments and equipment. They have supported a variety of school activities by providing fruit, drinks and special treats for the children in support of a number of special events that take place over the course of the year. I have no hesitation in saying that without the support of the P&F the school wouldn’t have a great many of the wonderful resources and opportunities it has. They do great work and have achieved so much in so many areas”. So why do I suggest that our P&F is in crisis. To put it simply, our current executive is functioning without a Co-ordinator or an Assistant Co-ordinator.

These two positions were vacated at the end of last year and despite all efforts it looks as if we will be going into our next meeting scheduled for the 26th of February without a Co-ordinator. So here is my plea. If there is anyone out there who is remotely interested in finding out more about the role or taking it on, even if only for a short period of time, I would welcome an opportunity to have a word with you. The role is by no means a difficult one as the executive support from other members of the group is enormous. So, as they used to say in the old Mitsubishi Ad… Please Consider!

Don’t forget our Fish N’ Chip Night tonight, I hope to catch up with many of you there.

God Bless, and have a great week Mark.

CONGRATULATIONS

We extend our congratulations to Catherine Day (our 2012 Gr 5 teacher) and her husband Evan Brown on the safe arrival of ‘Amelia Mary’.

EMAILING OUR NEWSLETTER

We are currently experiencing some problems with emailing out our newsletters and some families did not receive a copy last week. Thee appears to be two problems one with our Optus recipients, it seems that Optus is rejecting our emails as Spam and the other problem is with our software provider and they are working on it. In the meantime if you do not receive an emailed Newsletter extra copies will be available out side the office.

BIRTHDAYS

The St Robert’s School community wish to congratulate the following children on the celebration of their birthday this week and throughout the January:

13th February Briody Kenny-McNamara
14th February Charlotte De Grandi
15th February Brandon Turley
17th February Nicholas Anglin
STUDENT AWARDS
Congratulations to the following students who have received certificates this week for outstanding work.

Gr F CC  Summer Madden
Gr F CC  Miller Kennedy
Gr F JP  Mikayla Whelan
Gr F JP  Joseph Afford
Gr 1MC  Oscar Hart
Gr 1MC  Alessandra Zappone
Gr 1YE  Ben Groves
Gr 1YE  Renny Bowden
Gr 2LO  Morrissy Roth
Gr 2LO  Xavier Smith
Gr 2KT  Joshua Power
Gr 2KT  Sophie Walker
Gr 3KH  Bonnie Leslie
Gr 3KH  Casey Morrissy
Gr 3JS  Sam Bowden
Gr 3JS  Madeleine Starling
Gr 4MA  Petra Faoro
Gr 4MA  Lachlan Trethewan
Gr 4MM  Dominic Bongiorno
Gr 4MM  Freyja Tew
Gr 5PB  Maya Laffan
Gr 5PB  Lucia Erhardt
Gr 5DB  Jesse Morrissy
Gr 5DB  Eamonn Murphy
Gr 6RM  Charlie Harris
Gr 6RM  Ruby Cotton-Kennedy
Gr 6SP  Jackson Bourke
Gr 6SP  Emily Gordon

CONGRATULATIONS
We extend our congratulations to Kym and David Brooks on the safe arrival of ‘Lucy Joyce’ sister for Thomas (Gr 4MA and Emily (Gr 2LO).

INDUSTRIAL ACTION
Due to Industrial Action Chilwell/St Robert’s After School Care will not operate on Thursday 14th February.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Project Compassion
Project Compassion is an extraordinary, ongoing demonstration of the faith, love and generosity of the Catholic congregation and caring supporters, in the name of justice and peace. It is the lifeblood of Caritas Australia and without it they would not be able to do the valuable work they do.

Each year St Robert’s run the Project Compassion Campaign during Lent. Starting on Ash Wednesday, 13th February, we are asking our community to help us raise money and offer hope to the millions of families who fight for justice, peace and survival every day.

In 2013 Project compassion carries the message, “Open doors into the future” which is taken from Pope Benedict’s message “We work towards a brighter and more humane world so as to open doors into the future”.

This year’s Project Compassion stories are about children, young people and the communities who support them. Caritas Australia’s partners around the world are helping open doors into education, sustainable livelihoods and supportive environments. As a result more young people now have hope for a future.

In 2013 we will share stories from people in Mozambique, Bolivia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indigenous Australia and Papua New Guinea. Their stories humble and inspire us and show how your contributions to Project Compassion help people build better lives for themselves, their families and their communities.

This year our Grade Six students will be conducting the Project Compassion Campaign throughout Lent as part of their School Leadership Role and we ask that you support them in this important task.

TODAY IS NATIONAL SORRY DAY
The National Apology Day in 2013 marks the fifth anniversary of then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s National Apology to the Stolen Generation. It is remembered as a significant moment, not only in the history of Australian national life, but as a day when Federal Parliament was the most appropriate place for such a statement to be made, broadcast nationally to homes, workplaces and public spaces. It is a moment that will be remembered by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians for the acknowledgement of past injustices and pain, and the expression of a desire for a future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility. A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter of our history.

Similar significance is also attached to 3rd June, Mabo Day, when the decision overturning Terra Nullius took place in the High Court in Canberra.
HEALTHY EATING POLICY
This year St Robert’s is actively involved in the Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program. As part of the ‘Healthy Eating and Oral Health’ component, we will continue with our commitment to encourage all members of our community to eat only healthy food choices at school. We ask that parents and carers pack only healthy choices in their children’s lunchboxes. Items that are high in sugar and/or high in fat are classified as ‘sometimes’ foods; we ask that ‘sometimes’ foods (including most ‘special treats’) not be sent to school. For many years, we have encouraged children to eat ‘fruit first’ for their recess snack; many classes have a ‘fruit break’ as part of their morning program. We ask that chocolates and lollies, and packaged treats that use these types of ingredients, not be included in lunchboxes. Fresh fruit and vegetables are the preferred option, in line with the recommendations of the state government’s ‘Health Promotion Achievement Program.’

Due to the high number of children in our school with significant to severe nut allergies, we ask that nuts and nut products (check labels on muesli bars, etc), not be sent to school. We also ask that – where possible – peanut butter and nutella spreads be avoided. If this is not feasible for your child, please inform the classroom teacher. Many early child care & pre-school settings adhere strictly to nut-free, healthy eating routines. We hope that all families will cooperate with us in our commitment to maintaining a low-risk, healthy learning environment.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING ISSUES
We are experiencing some traffic and parking problems around our school. The main problems are cars parking across neighbour’s driveways, preventing them from exiting their driveways and incorrect parking at pick up and drop off time. We have been advised that the Parking Inspector will be paying us a visit soon. Whilst we appreciate the difficulty around our school at peak times we ask that courtesy to our neighbours and compliance with traffic regulations be observed by all at all times.

GATE FOBS
For the safety and protection of our students all external gates are locked for the duration of school hours ie; 9:15am to 3:15pm. The school has installed an electronic access control system which can be unlocked using an electronic fob. To allow entry into the school grounds these fobs are available for families to purchase at a cost of $10. If you would like to purchase a fob please email the office on nolas@srnewtown.catholic.edu.au and we will send you an application form.

PARENTS AND FRIEND ASSOCIATION
The Parents and Friends would like to extend a very warm welcome to all the new families beginning at St Robert’s this year. We would also like to welcome back all our students, parents and teachers. We hope that you have had a fantastic beginning to the new school year.

The first Parents and Friends meeting will be held in the staff room at 7.30pm on Tuesday 26th February. If you would like to come along and join in or just listen to what happens you are very welcome. If you would like a copy of the agenda in advance then please send an email to Helen at the following address hlazzaro@shcgeelong.catholic.edu.au.

We are looking forward to a great year with many activities already in the planning stages. Keep an eye out in the newsletter for upcoming events and notices.

If you have any questions then please don't hesitate to contact a member of the committee.

Next Meeting Tuesday 26th February. Everyone welcome

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB
Issue No: 1 was distributed last week. All orders are due back to our School Office by Friday 15th February. Envelopes & Orders should be clearly labelled with your child’s name & grade and with the correct money. If you have any queries please contact Diana Skratulja on 0427 522 940.

E.M.A.(EDUCATIONAL MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE)
The EMA is available to assist families on lower incomes with financial assistance to cover the costs of educational expenses and will be paid in two instalments. From 2013, the EMA will no longer be paid 50/50 between the parent and the school. To be eligible for receipt of the EMA the claimant must be a parent or guardian of a primary school student and hold a current
Centrelink Pension Concession or Health Care Card or a Veterans Affairs (TPi) Pensioner Card or be a Foster Parent on the first day of Term 1 (29th January) for the first instalment. Parents who fit this eligibility criterion are invited to collect an application form from the office. Completed forms, together with a photocopy of Pension/Health Care Card, must be returned to the school office by Thursday 28th February 2013.

Payment Amounts for 2013

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New Payment Options for 2013
Paid by direct deposit, paid by cheque, paid to the school to be held in credit towards educational expenses. Further information on application forms

LATE CLAIMS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED

Chilwell P.S. Outside School Hours Care
Term 1 – February 2013
To book or cancel care please call Olivia or Laune on 0417 014 973

SCREEN ACTORS GEELONG
Drama classes for kids & teens.
Explore your creative side and get involved in Screen Actors classes this term. Great for drama, confidence, making friends and having fun!
SPECIAL TERM 1 OFFER: Get one of your friends to enrol with you and you'll win a free spot in a "Casting Workshop" next month with a TV Commercial Casting Director! This is a fantastic opportunity for people of all ages and experiences (it doesn't matter if you're brand new to the acting game)... so don't miss out!
Book now... places limited! 5229 1600, geelong@admin.screenactors.com.au

NEWTOWN & CHILWELL FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB - CLUB REGISTRATION
For all current and new junior Football and Netball players including Youth Girls Under 16
FRIDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 2013, 4:30PM – 9:00PM at Elderslie Reserve, Read St, Newtown. Players welcome in all age levels, Sausage Sizzle and coaches in attendance. Training commences: Under 9-12 Thursday 7th March at 4:30pm, Under14-16 Tuesday and Thursday at 4:30pm from 5th March 2013
www.newtownchilwellfc.com.au

School Advisory Board Committee Members
Fr Kevin Dillon frkd@stmarysgeelong.com.au Website: www.srnewtown.catholic.edu.au
Mark Soldani marks@srnewtown.catholic.edu.au Scott Bowman jacscottb@hotmail.com Lisa Northey bluffcottage@live.com Gabrielle Sinclair sinclair.five@bigpond.com Ian Courtney Ian.Courtney@originenergy.com.au Gabrielle Moody gabshaun@optusnet.com.au Sonia Lazzaro sonlou723@gmail.com and Katrina De Grandi k.degrandi@bigpond.com

DATES TO REMEMBER
FEBRUARY 2013
Wed 13th Fish ‘N Chip Night – 5pm to 7pm
Mon 18th Whole school assembly 9:05am
Tue 19th Grade 1 Parent Information Night 6:00 to 7:00pm
Wed 20th Information Night Gr 2, 7pm to 7:45pm
Thur 21st Beginning of School Year Mass, whole school Mass 9:10am
Sacramental Enrolment Evening 1, St Mary’s Basilica 7:30 to 8:30pm (Parents only)
Fri 22nd St Robert’s Cross Country Grade 4-6, Eastern Gardens
Wed 27th Sacramental Enrolment Evening 2, St Mary’s Basilica 7:30 to 8:30pm (Parents only)

MARCH
Mon 4th St Robert’s Athletic Trials, Grade 4-6, Landy Field
Whole school assembly 9:05am
Tues 5th Parent Information Night Grade 3 & 4, 6pm to 7pm
Bellarine and Geelong North Division Primary Schools Swimming Championships – Kardinia Pool, eligible St Robert’s reps only
Mon 11th Labour Day Public Holiday
Sat 16th St Patrick’s Day Races
Mon 18th Whole school assembly 9:05am
Fri 22nd GDCSSA District Cross Country Championships, eligible St Robert’s reps only
Wed 27th End of Term 1 for students, dismissal 3:30pm
Thur 28th End of Term for Staff, ‘Kids Matter’ staff in-service day
Fri 29th Good Friday
Sun 31st Easter Sunday

APRIL
Mon 15th Term 2 commences
Thur 25th Anzac Day Public Holiday
Fri 26th Whole Parish School Closure Day – Religious Education staff in-service