Dear Families

Our first meeting of the school Advisory Board will take place next Thursday 17th March and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome the newly elected representatives, Stacey Ciach-Foundation, Megan Patterson-Grade One, Carmen Morrison-Grade Three and Corinne Summerhayes-Grade Five. These new members will join Fiona Tayler-Grade Four and David Tarrant-Grade six who will be in their second year of representation on the Board. The position vacated by Michael Reid as Grade Two representative will be discussed at the meeting. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing members, Angela DeGrandi, Katie O’Sullivan and Kym Brooks for their commitment and invaluable contributions during their time on the Board. Thank you.

The response to my letter last week inviting parents to nominate areas in which they can volunteer at the school was great and I sincerely thank those of you who have nominated your help across many areas. If you haven’t and would still like to indicate an area it is not too late. Please fill out the form and return it to school as soon as you can as we are currently putting together a data base and we would love to have as many families as possible nominating in at least one area. If you have lost your form please drop into the office and pick one up.

God Bless you all and have a great week, Mark

FAMILY COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT
Our family community garden is now one year old and it is once again time to give families the opportunity to take control of one of eight garden plots on offer for this year. A big thank you to those families who signed up last year. From my perspective it was great to the children nurturing their crops to a point where they could harvest and enjoy the fruits of their labours. There is nothing like “Fresh from my garden!” Those families are most welcome to try again but I am sure you will appreciate that having had your turn last season new families will have first dibs and it is time to turn in your keys. If any family is interested in taking responsibility for a garden plot please pop in and see me and we can organise a key and I’ll let you know how it all works. Grab me on the yard in the mornings or pop into the office at any time. Just register your interest with me and I will assign a plot to your family. From then on you can come up with the kids and plant whatever you like, nurture your crop and cultivate when ready. The children can access their family plot to weed and water at play time and lunch times, before or after school and families are free to come up on the weekends to work their plots if they want. This is a great opportunity for families who may not have gardens at home to create some really worthwhile family time. Depending on the amount of interest we may need to rotate through interested families on a seasonal basis. Please let me know if you are interested. Remember, “First In, First Served!”

ENHANCING OUR CATHOLIC IDENTITY

A letter from Fr Kevin Dillon, Parish Priest of St Mary of the Angels, Geelong

Dear Parishioners of (and visitors to) St. Mary’s. It’s not often that I write the “front pages” of our parish bulletin in “letter form”. Only when it’s an occasion of some significance and / or when I want to say something to you “from the heart”. So I guess both those boxes are ticked for this week’s bulletin. Given the focus on your church and mine over the past fortnight, I have to tell you that I’m hurting. Badly. And I’m pretty sure that many, most, maybe all of you are too. Over the past ten years, as I have become increasingly aware of the pain of church related abuse victims, I’ve tried not to “harp” on the issue. If I’ve written about it one week, then I haven’t spoken about it at Mass. And vice versa. I don’t know what I’ll speak about this weekend. It’s Thursday night and I’ll think about that tomorrow. But the saturation media coverage of both Cardinal Pell’s evidence to the Royal Commission and the presence of
around twenty victims from Ballarat who journeyed to Rome makes it impossible to write as if this week’s events didn’t happen. There has been too much of this already, over decades, but if there is one thing that has changed in this sorry saga it is that the silence has been broken, and the denial is no longer acceptable. I’ve just put down the phone, having spoken for about 30 minutes each, to two distressed callers. I’ll focus here on just one of these. She is a senior lady who lives interstate - a lifelong, faith-filled Catholic for whom her church and her faith have been her most precious possessions. She is devastated. Distressed to tears. Lots of them. Her church is bleeding - and so is she. She’s in her late seventies and life is tough enough for her already. She doesn’t need her most enduring and treasured support in life to be damaged almost beyond recognition. There are lots of people like her in our parish, and in every parish. Some are her age, but others are young, searching. Maybe attending Mass only occasionally, but still wondering whether to “hang in”, or step away and move off. It probably sounds trite but maybe we’ve reached a fork in the road where we know that our friendship, our connection with Jesus Christ cannot rise or fall with the words or actions of other people - no matter who they are. Mass, the Sacraments, devotions, spiritual encouragement and guidance, charitable works - these are all gifts which come to us through the Church. They are invaluable means through which we can, if we choose, draw closer to Jesus and to one another. But it’s our choice as to whether we use them or not. And it’s not easy to value them as much as we might when the organisation which provides them seems not only to have lost its way, but to have betrayed its message, its mission and ourselves. No, not easy - but still worth doing nonetheless. Worth looking beyond the human failures, shortcomings, sins and crimes to the person of Jesus, who still loves His Church - even when it fails to love and recognise Him it its most vulnerable. So try to hold on - because it’s worth it. And you’re worth it.

Fr. Kevin Dillon

PROJECT COMPASSION – MONEY TRIAL & CRAZY HAT DAY – WEDNESDAY 23RD MARCH
To raise money for our Project Compassion Campaign we will hold a Crazy Hat Day and will be organizing a Money Trial. Children are asked to bring a gold coin donation for the Crazy Hat activity and bring coins to be placed on the Money Trial. More detail to follow.

SIBLING ENROLMENTS FOR 2017 AT ST ROBERT’S
Believe it or not - we are coming up to Enrolment time for 2017!
We have been very busy with enquiries for places at St Robert’s for 2017 so once again we will initially only be looking at siblings and Catholic families living in Newtown. In order to have an idea of how many positions we may have to offer it would be helpful to know how many siblings are planning to commence in Foundation in 2017. If you have a child commencing school next year please pick up for an Application for Enrolment Form from the school office and we will register your child for 2017, forms will be available at the office.

NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST BULLYING
‘With our own two hands ..... Building Respect!
On Friday 18th March St Robert’s will gather together for a whole school action, a giant Fence Message – Bullying – No Way! Each class will work on a poster of one giant letter from this slogan which will then be placed on the Nicholas Street fence, weather permitting.

CLASS CONTACT LISTS
We would like to have these Contact Lists completed by this Friday. To date there has been a 95% return of the forms which were sent home recently, thank you. If your form is not returned it will be deemed that you do not wish to be included on these lists. A reminder form has been sent home today to those families who have not replied. If you receive a form could you please complete and return it to school tomorrow to ensure that we can comply with your intentions.

COMBINED CATHOLIC PARISHES CAR RAFFLE
This is a major fund-raising project in the parish - with four cars to be won! A book of ten tickets for this raffle was sent home last week. As the prizes for this raffle are over $5,000 this raffle must be officially audited by accountants, therefore all tickets must be accounted for. If you do not feel you can sell this book then please just return it to the school office immediately and it can be redistributed to be sold elsewhere. Thank you to the many families who have returned their books so promptly.
TERM 1 SCHOOL FEE ACCOUNTS DUE FRIDAY 18TH MARCH

School Fee accounts are due for payment by Friday 18th March. Whilst there are two billings in Term 1 there is no billing in Term 4. Payment can be made by; cash, cheque EFTPOS or internet banking (banking details below). (Please remember to enter your family code or surname).

St Robert’s General Account, National Bank, Melbourne
BSB Number 083 347 Account Number: 647 110 294

ST ROBERT'S PARENTS AND FRIENDS EASTER RAFFLE

The Annual Easter Egg Raffle is on again. We are asking every family to donate an Easter Egg for our raffle prize and these donations can be left in the baskets outside the office. We would like to have over 20 prizes so there are more chances of winning. The raffle will be drawn at the final assembly on Term 1. All eggs can be left at the office. One book of tickets for this raffle will be distributed this week, tickets are 50c each and more books will be available at the office if desired.

P&F HOT CROSS BUN FUNDRAISER

The Annual Brumby’s Hot Cross Bun Fundraiser is on again. The Parents & Friends will be selling vouchers for $7 each. The voucher entitles you to six delicious hot cross bund redeemable at any Brumby’s Bakerery store in Geelong right up to Easter Sunday. The Parents & Friends will receive $2 profit from each voucher sold. Order forms were sent home recently or are available at the office.

Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund (CSEF)

The CSEF will ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. CSEF will be provided by the Victorian Government to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

If you hold a valid means-tested concession card or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible for CSEF. The allowance will be paid to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions or sporting activities for the benefit of your child. The annual CSEF amount per primary student is $125. CSEF is applicable for all year levels not just those that attend a school camp. This can be used to cover items that are part of school fees such as Excursion Levy, Swimming Levy, sporting Activities and Camp. Contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from www.education.vic.gov.au/csef. For more information about the CSEF visit www.education.vic.gov.au/csef or contact Nola at the school office. The CSEF replaces the Education Maintenance Allowance – if you were eligible for EMA you should apply for CSEF.

It's Food Fair time at Chilwell Primary School -
Friday 18th March. Lots of food stalls,
Silent & Live Auctions, Music, Wine, Rides for the kids and fun!
Come for dinner from 4 pm. till 9 pm. and bring all the family.

ST ROBERT’S PRIMARY SCHOOL Auskick 2016

Auskick is back bigger and better in 2016.
Commencing weekly from Saturday morning the 16th April at 9.00 am to 10.00 am on the school synthetic oval (hey mum no mud). Boys and girls from 5 years old (this year) are welcome. For those interested please log on to aflauskick.com.au/ click register and follow the prompts to “St Roberts” to register.
STUDENT AWARDS
Congratulations to the following students who have received certificates this week for outstanding work.
Gr F CH Joshua and Leila
Gr F LM Millie and Ethan
Gr 1KH Will and Billi
Gr 1YE Harrison and Ava
Gr 2CC Lachlan and Zoe
Gr 2KT Iggy and Jonathan
Gr 3JB Meg and Sam
Gr 3NF Gus and Monteya
Gr 4MA Oliver and Mackenzie
Gr 4MM Freddy and Ava
Gr 5/6DB Yanah and Holly
Gr 5/6PB Osca and Dibs
Gr 5/6LO Tadge and Indigo
Gr 5/6SP Seamus and Annabelle

BIRTHDAYS
The St Robert’s School community wish to congratulate the following children on the celebration of their birthday throughout January and this week.
Happy Birthday to:
9th March Pearl
Tess
10th March Ethan
11th March Sonny
12th March Kai
Zoe
14th March Xavier
Matthew

DATES TO REMEMBER

MARCH
Fri 11th St Robert’s Cross Country, Gr 4-6, Eastern Gardens
Mon 14th Labour Day Public Holiday
Tues 15th Foundation Transition Interviews
Wed 16th Sacramental Enrolment Evening 2, 7pm at St Mary’s Basilica
Foundation Transition Interviews
Thur 17th St Patrick’s Day
School Advisory Board Meeting, 7:30pm
Fri 18th National Day of Action Against Bullying – Whole school action – Giant Fence Message
Tues 22nd Sacred Heart College Open Day: Tours 4pm and 5pm, Information Sessions 5:30pm and 6:30pm
Thur 24th Holy Thursday
Whole School Assembly and drawing of the Easter Raffle, 1:50pm
Last day of Term, Children dismissed 2:30pm

APRIL
Mon 11th Term 2 commences
Fri 22nd GDCSSA District Cross Country
Mon 25th Anzac Day Public Holiday
Fri 29th School Closure Day Mathematics Professional Development Day for Staff

MAY
Fri 6th GDCSSA Athletics
Sun 8th Mother’s Day
Tues 10th NAPLAN
Wed 11th NAPLAN
Thur 12th NAPLAN
Year 4 Eucharist Family Activity Evening 7:00pm
Sat 21st First Eucharist, St Mary’s Basilica, 6:00pm
Sun 22nd First Eucharist, St Mary’s Basilica, 11:00am
Sat 28th First Eucharist, St Mary’s Basilica, 6:00am
Sun 29th First Eucharist, St Mary’s Basilica, 11:00am

JUNE
Mon 13th Queen’s Birthday Public Holiday
Tues 21st Cadet Visit/Excursion, Deakin Grade 5/6
Wed 22nd Cadet Visit/Excursion, Deakin, Gr 5/6
Fri 24th Reports go home
End of Term 2

School Advisory Board Committee Members
Fr Kevin Dillon frkd@stmarysgeelong.com.au Website: www.srnnewtown.catholic.edu.au
Mark Soldani marks@srnewtown.catholic.edu.au Carmen Morrison morrison.carmen.r@edumail.vic.gov.au
David Tarrant david.tarrant4@bigpond.com Angela De Grandi dominic.degrandi@bigpond.com Fiona Tayler btayler@people.net.au Kym Brooks kymgibson@ncable.net.au Katey O’Sullivan katevos@bigpond.com