Dear Parents and Friends of our School Community

Recently, our staff attended the special Commissioning ceremony at St Patrick’s Church.

Father Paul said:

In our Parish, in our schools, in our families, in our lives, in all we do, God’s work is being done. We are all ambassadors for Christ. Like those who preach the message of Jesus, we are appointed and sent as the labourers for the harvest. We are all called to share the Good News.

The work of teachers seeks to enable their students to recognise and celebrate God in their lives. Teachers seek to travel a part of the journey with their students in their lifelong relationship with Jesus and lifelong journey of learning and growing. Today in our Parish, we commission our teachers in their work on behalf of the Church.

May we, as a Parish, pray for our teachers, and those entrusted to them, throughout the year. In the name of St Patrick’s Parish I now commission you as teachers of our Parish School. Tell the Good News and share the gift of learning with your students, your fellow staff and with everyone connected with the school. I ask everyone here to remember you and the mission that you carry for us.

After receiving a lit taper, teachers responded:

Today, holding the symbol of faith before God and before the Parish, I offer my services to the teaching of students in our St Patrick’s School. Jesus is the Light of the world and my light. Trusting that his light will be my guide, and with the prayers, help and support of this community, I will carry out the work entrusted to me.

This year, we continue to explore the ways we can be actively Living the Sacred in this very honourable career.

The momentum is building for the school’s musical Oliver! The cast has been chosen, the script is in the hands of the Producer and Director, and notes have been sent about the rehearsal schedule. It will be crucial to work together to make this a wonderful success. Can you open your calendars and insert the performance dates 22nd, 23rd, 29th and 30th August? Don’t miss this wonderful event!

This week, I received news that based on My School data, ACARA has identified schools across Australia that are demonstrating above average improvement in performance on NAPLAN. Three Catholic schools have achieved this in NSW and St Patrick’s is one of those schools. This is a wonderful acknowledgement of the work done by teachers to address students’ learning needs. I congratulate our staff.

Mrs Frances Robertson
Principal
From the AP’s Desk

FaceBook, KiK, Instagram...there is some hope!

“The scourge of cyber bullying” appeared on page 3 of the Daily Telegraph last week. In the article Psychologist Michael Carr Greg says that “schools have failed to provide guidelines and discipline in the use of digital technologies.” Yes, in some cases, schools have been negligent in dealing with this problem.

When I attend Assistant Principal meetings, many of my colleagues state that the biggest drain on their time is chasing up things that happen in cyberspace. I have not experienced this to the same degree, and one situation last week probably showed why.

In talking to a parent about the inappropriate use of a portable device, they stated that they had set up their child’s account. This was their way of ensuring their child was safe when using a social media site. That the child and parent had created an environment where dialogue and trust complemented the use of social media is very encouraging.

The role of the Assistant Principal?

I thought it would also be beneficial to outline my role description. Like all employees in a Catholic school, I am in partnership with the Principal in supporting and promoting an atmosphere where Catholic principles and practices flourish. What sets my role apart is the nature of the working relationship between myself and the Principal.

The day to day roles (chores) that I perform include: classroom teaching, staffing administrator (employment of relief staff), liaising with teachers and Campus Coordinators on student issues, contacting parents, developing policies, managing the school calendar, supporting teacher classroom management and attending enrolment interviews. I am the mentor for Ms Luaun Edwards, who is an early career teacher. I also feel it is important to be a visible presence at school functions and in the Parish.

This list is not definitive, as my duties can be varied and change by the hour...minute...second.

Sometimes, I will redirect queries to the relevant Campus Coordinator or teacher. This is to be expected as the role of the Assistant Principal is not necessarily to be an expert in everything.

I welcome interaction with parents and students, as we continue to work towards positive school improvement in all domains. If you have any feedback or queries please feel free to email me mark.vanommen@cg.catholic.edu.au.

Mark Van Ommen
Assistant Principal
Today is **Ash Wednesday** and this marks the beginning of **Lent**. Lent is a period of forty days before Holy Week and Easter. It is a sacred time in the calendar for the Church and can be for each one of us. Ash Wednesday reminds us that our lives are finite or limited and that on examination of our lives we know we can do better. We fail and often miss the mark of being truly the person we could be. Lent calls us to prayer, to fasting or denial of self and to extended generosity toward others, especially those in need.

**Caritas** provide small boxes (**Project Compassion**) in which, over the forty days we can place even small amounts of money which can be sent off to assist missionary works. If you wish to have a Project Compassion box they are available at the doors of the Church or through the school.

We are constantly offered opportunities to remind us life is sacred.

In this time of “**Living the Sacred**” we can adopt simple acts of prayer, acts of discipline and acts of giving and instantly the idea of sacred living comes to life. Each time this occurs our lives are blessed by God’s grace and joy.

**A Prayer for Lent**

**Loving God**

In this time of Living the Sacred
May we see all as holy, as dearly loved by you
Clothe our lives in kindness, gentleness and patience
May we forgive, forgive and forgive
Over all these virtues
may we put on love
and bind us together in perfect unity. Amen

Paul Mackay
Religious Education Coordinator

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**We are People of the Covenant**

Year 7 have been learning about the promises that God made to his people, starting with the building of the Ark with Moses. They have also discussed how promises are a significant part of our lives. After 6 weeks in High School they have made some of the following commitments:

- I have a commitment to interact with others, including those who are older than me.
- I’m going to really try to make more friends this year.
- I have made a commitment not to day dream during lessons.
- I want to get good grades and I’m going to really work for that.
- I want to really participate.
- I have promised myself not to fool around in class this year.
- I want to take pride in my uniform.
- I want to be cooperative and friendly with everyone.
- I have promised to do my best in High School.
**School Board**

We have a new School Board to help meet the demands and challenges that await us in this school year. Members of the Board for 2014: Frances Robertson (Principal), Mark van Ommen (Assistant Principal), Father Paul Huthnance (Parish Priest), Erika Statham (Chairperson), Kaye Pearce (Secretary), Bernie Sullivan who has a dual purpose role of being a member of St Mary MacKillop College Board, Karen McGufficke (P&F Representative) and parent representatives: Richard Clarke, Ruby Curtis, Simon White and Community Representative: Mark Herbert.

One of the many challenges our Principal and School Board will face will be the commencement phase of a consultation process for members of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), parishioners and our parental school community and general public on the first stage of building changes that may eventuate within our Secondary Campus. A DA application to Cooma Monaro Shire Council needs to be completed by the end of March 2014.

Our School Board will be further enhancing and nurturing our relationship between St Patrick’s Parish School and St Mary MacKillop College, Isabella Plains in Canberra over this next 12 months. By all reports, our former St Patrick’s Parish School students of 2013 are doing very well in their new surroundings. I would encourage our existing or new families to introduce themselves to any of our School Board members and feel free to find out what is happening in and around our school.

Erika Statham

*Board Chairperson*

**Kindergarten Support Evening**

On **Tuesday 11 March**, we will be having a **Kindergarten Support Evening** in the Kindergarten classrooms from **6.00pm until 6.45pm**.

This is a great opportunity to listen to helpful information about the growing responsibilities and expectations of a Kindergarten student, understanding the ways that parents can work in partnership with the teachers to build reading and writing skills and being shown some important foundational numeracy skills.

This is an informal evening, where we will rotate through three short sessions of 15 minutes each. Please feel free to join us. RSVP to the Kinder teacher by Monday 10 March.

**Brumbies Ball Raffle**

This Friday there will be a raffle for a signed Brumbies football. The price for the ticket is 50c or you can get three tickets for $1.00. All the money raised will go towards purchasing new K-10 sports equipment. We look forward to lots of tickets being sold!

**and coming events...**

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<th><strong>Friday 7 March</strong></th>
<th><strong>Thursday 13 March</strong></th>
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<td>World Day of Prayer</td>
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<td>NRL Anti-bullying Talk 11.00 am</td>
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<th><strong>Saturday 8 March</strong></th>
<th><strong>Monday 17 March</strong></th>
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<td>Cooma Show</td>
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<th><strong>Monday 10 March</strong></th>
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<td>Catholic Schools Week</td>
<td>Fly the Flag Car Rally</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Tuesday 11 March</strong></th>
<th><strong>Thursday 20 March</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Support Evening 6.00 pm</td>
<td>Parish Council Meeting 6.00 pm</td>
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<th><strong>Wednesday 12 March</strong></th>
<th><strong>Friday 21 March</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Welcome to new Secondary families</td>
<td>Year 9/10 ArtExpress Excursion</td>
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Cooma Show BBQ & Catering

The P&F still need lots of helpers from about 11.00am onwards to assist with the BBQs and the Luncheon Pavilion at the Cooma Show on Saturday 8 March 2014. We also require donations of cakes and slices. Please contact Karen McGufficke 0417 496708 or Tammy Byrne 0428 645323 if you can assist.

P&F

Pancake Tuesday

It is believed that Shrove Tuesday originated during the Middle Ages. Food items like meat, eggs, milk, and fish were regarded as restricted during Lent. To keep such food from being wasted, many families would consume those items that would inevitably become spoiled during the next forty days.

The English tradition of eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday came about as a way to use as much milk, fats, and eggs as possible before Ash Wednesday began.

Harry Laing Workshop (Years 3-6)

On Wednesday Harry Laing came to teach the students some fun drama exercises. The students enjoyed all the exercises, but our favourite was “Hairy Hands”. We hope that Harry will come again. The day was very enjoyable.

Written by Riley Marks and Alex Smith

Aliyah Bartlett – “it was fun, different funny and spontaneous.”
Aidan Childs – “it was fun awesome and exciting.”
Jorja White – “it was tots amazeballs”
Arthur Bottom – “it was epic”
Jack Williams –Hartas – “the play was awesome.”
Ava Barrett – “he was very interactive”
Emily Smith – “he was funny and hilarious”
Luke Fely – “it was funny”

P&F
**Homework Support**

Homework and assessments can build up and sometimes, a little bit of support and a regular routine can make all the difference. Every Thursday afternoon, from 3.30pm - 4.30pm, a homework support group is offered in the Secondary Library. Afternoon tea is provided. Karen Lonergan (from Youth Connections) and Lou Mackay will be in attendance. Access to computers is available. Parents are required to collect their children at 4.30pm. All are welcome.

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**Sports Report**

Last week saw students across the school participated in three different sporting events. First up was the Cooma Schools Netball Carnival with teams from Year 3 all the way up to Year 10 competing. Most teams had at least one win on the day but unfortunately we were unable to bring home either the primary or secondary champions trophies this year. Congratulations to Bombala and Snowy Mountains Grammar schools for winning their respective competitions.

On Friday St Patrick's had three teams play in the Brumbies Rugby 7s competition at Nijong. Competition was very tough from Monaro High who ran out winners in the 7/8 and 9/10 competitions. Congratulations to Damien Hayden and Bailey Rogers who were named best in team.

Friday also saw 14 students travel to Yass to compete in the Archdiocesan Swimming Championships. A large number of students set personal best times, and Maai Johnson was a stand out for the school, winning the 15 years female age championships and Maai is now headed to Sydney for the Combined Catholic Colleges' Swimming for 6 events.

Congratulations to all students who have participated enthusiastically and to the best of their abilities in these events. A very big thank you goes to the many parents and carers for transporting, timing keeping and supporting these students in these endeavours. A very big thank you to the staff who helped organise and supervise students (and sometimes at very short notice): Glenyce Moxon, Steve Joyce, Kevin Dunne, Alyson Hulley and Tina Wawrzeniak.

Mr Lawley

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**Junior Soccer**

St Patrick's 2014 Junior Soccer Registrations are now open!

- Registration Forms are now online through Football Federation – Australia *
- Registrations close **Friday 28 March**
- 2014 Season will kick off **Saturday 3 May**
- Teams will be combined boys and girls
- Age groups are from Under 6 - Under 13

* For further details about the 2014 Season - Registration Information or if you can assist in any way, be it with St Patrick's Junior Soccer (Coaches/Teams Managers), please contact Simon Buckley on 0412 245 495 or email simon_buckley@bigpond.com.
Year 6 know that KidsMatter

Year 3 are ‘God’s Beautiful Creation’

Year 7 are making the most of learning in Secondary school
Infants Primary Assembly

We recognise the value of assembling young people in order to build community. However, there are times when assemblies can consume a lot of time in the mornings; time that could be better spent in the classroom with their teacher.

Starting next week, we will have morning assembly on Monday and Friday only to ensure that we give students as much teaching and learning time possible during core learning time.

Monday morning assembly will be prayer, National Anthem, weekly messages.

Friday morning assembly will be prayer, birthdays, SWAG awards and, at times, sporting or other awards.

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning students will go to their normal classrooms to meet their teacher.
Positive Parent Involvement - you make a difference

Positive parent participation demonstrates to children that you value learning as well as their school.

Parental withdrawal from children’s education is a big problem these days as increasingly parents are worn out from working too hard or being involved in a variety of activities. By the time you get home from work or doing other activities you are spent.

But the message for parents is clear - become involved in as many aspects as practical in your child's education. The involvement of parents helps break down the mystique about school that can exist for some children. Their chances of success are better when they see school as an extension of home rather than merely an institution for learning.

Positive parent participation demonstrates to children that you value learning as well as their school. Children copy many of their parents’ views so your positive attitude to school and learning is catching.

Many primary schools offer parents classroom jobs such as hearing kids read, taking small groups in elective activities and assisting children when writing stories.

Parent participation is much broader than helping out in the classroom. There is a range of simple ways to assist teachers to maximise the learning of your child. These include: hearing young learners read, helping with homework and making sure kids go off to school happy, healthy and with plenty of sleep.

Here are some more ideas to help you participate in your child’s education in positive ways:

✓ **Find out** what your school is trying to achieve for your child and show your support for its aims. Discover what sets your child's school apart from others.

✓ **Support a broad, balanced curriculum** that offers children a variety of educational experiences rather than a program that focuses narrowly on the traditional 3 R's.

✓ **Direct constructive criticism through the correct channels** such as your child's teacher, the principal or the school's governing body. Gossip or thoughtless criticism within the general community can easily tarnish a school's reputation.

✓ **Become an advocate** for your child’s school and promote its positive features throughout the wider community. Encourage your child to take pride in their school through your example.

✓ **Attend school activities** such as open days, concerts, sports events and celebrations. Invite other members of the community along as well.

✓ **Consult with your child’s teacher** about practical ways that you can assist both at home and at school.

Positive parent participation in school and learning is a proven criterion for student success. One practical way to assist your child as a learner is to become actively involved in his or her school-life.

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PO Box 167 Balnarring VIC 3926  P: 03 5963 1798  F: 03 5963 1722  E: office@parentingideas.com.au

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