I was very happy to welcome our families to the Boarders’ End of Year Liturgy. It was well attended and became a very reverent celebration of the cohesion and achievements around the boarding experience of St Mark’s.

The evening gave me a chance to wish the Year 12s farewell. They are fine young men and I wanted them to know that we will miss them and wish them all the best. I spoke about the admiration I have for Boarding Captain Patrick Williams and my absolute confidence in his leadership. I had a chance to say that I enjoyed very much my time with the Salesian House Council and talking to our parents because parents are fundamental to our success. I said that there was a wonderful tone in the place. The boarders are good young people who do well together. The year seemed so positive.

In my reminiscence I said that the Pope has named this a ‘Jubilee Year’ which means that we celebrated a particular theme. It is the ‘Year of Mercy’ and the idea of an open door has become a theme. The students inspired me deeply with their understanding of this and they are part of the Salesian door being opened in hospitality. The fundamental principle of the Salesian Boarding House is hospitality. The place exists to shelter and to nurture and so welcome is at its foundation. It’s a great achievement created by the whole community and I have experienced it as the underpinning Salesian House philosophy. I know that this belief is its strength. Denise Arbon’s gracious smile and Pauline Broekx’s gentle organisation have meant security for so many families. David’s reassurance and the structures of support all work so well. The students seem to be committed to making the place work.

I offer my congratulations and best wishes as the year comes to its end and the boarders begin to return home. I offer my thanks to those who work so hard to make Salesian House so successful. We have been in a ‘good place’ together.

Greg Hay
Principal
Salesian House Report

We began the 2016 school year as a community of believers, with renewed energy and excitement. The year continued with marked enthusiasm and inspiration and our hopes for gentleness, laughter and joy to others was quite evident as the year progressed.

Patrick Williams was inducted as St Mark’s College Captain and also Salesian House Leader and with all his other commitments has proven to be a very worthy leader.

Some of our other proud achievers this year are Will Dickson and George Seppelt who achieved Aviation Solo Flying Licences. This has been an amazing achievement. Will, and Aleksandr Weatherstone competed in SA and Victoria with their pistol shooting, enjoying success.

Edward Bray won Best and Fairest for Senior Colts in Northern Areas Football Association and Henry Hall received a trophy for most goals kicked in Senior Colts.

James Boston and Harrison Quinn are commuting to Adelaide each weekend to play cricket in the Woodville District Cricket side.

Academic Excellence was awarded to Harry Mead, Courtney O'Dea and Patrick Williams in Semester 1 and to Harry in Semester 2.

The three highlights for the boarders this year would be the Tenpin Bowling Night, Paintball Skirmish and the Quiz Night with our Samoan visitors on their Siva Tour, when they dined with us for the three days they visited.

Patrick Connell was the recipient of the Salesian House Award for 2016 for being a student who is caring, loyal, welcoming, studious, and respectful to family and House-parents, along with other positive attributes.

The End of Year Liturgy and Presentations to our Year 12s was enjoyable, inspirational and, in my mind, has the strongest impact for the year as we all gather to celebrate together and enjoy a supper prepared by Chef.

Our Year 12s have finished their schooling and are now preparing for their exams. I hope they achieve the results they deserve as they move on to the next phase of their lives. Good luck to Patrick Williams, Brad French, Tom Kelly, Callum Reynolds and Sam Butterick. Thank you to all the boys’ families for their support.

Tom Hill has been elected to be our Salesian House Leader for 2017. Tom is very worthy for this position and he will receive his badge on the first night back, January 30th.

As the result of a suggestion from our Parent Council we will begin the 2017 school year with a Liturgy in the Bosco Chapel on the first night, followed by a barbecue tea. Further details will be sent home in the New Year.

We will also welcome 9 new students and their families to join with our current boarding students and families.

David and I are taking Long Service Leave for the last six weeks of this term. Pauline will assume my role and Matthew LoBasso will assist Pauline and do David’s role.

I wish every student and their family a very Merry Christmas and Happy, Healthy and Safe New Year and we look forward to seeing you all in 2017.

God bless.

Denise Arbon
Boarding Coordinator

My name is Will Dickson and I have been a boarder at St Mark’s since 2014. Due to the experiences offered to me while attending St Mark’s I have become a valued member of the Port Pirie Pistol Club and the opportunities and skills it has provided me with have been exciting. My journey within the Club has included many competitions which have furthered my skills and have lead me to be selected for competition at both State and National levels upcoming in December. This opportunity is one I look forward to and plan to undertake at the best of my ability. The Port Pirie Pistol Club has been a fantastic club to be a part of, and not only do I plan on continuing my membership, I also encourage those not currently involved to come and experience what the club has to offer.

Will Dickson, Year 10
On Monday the 31st of October we were lucky enough to be able to go Paintballing at the Port Pirie facilities. We thoroughly enjoyed our time and it meant we could have fun with one another while doing something that not many of us had done before. We had the opportunity to play in teams and also individually, which made it enjoyable and exciting. There are lots of strategies and tactics involved in trying not to be eliminated. Although we came back with some bruises it was thoroughly enjoyable and we can’t wait to challenge the teachers next year!

*Bernie and Portia*

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*Excerpts from the Year 12’s reflections:*

**Sam:** Living away from home can have its challenges, but living with 29 other kids from the country can help overcome difficult times.

**Tom:** I am grateful for the support, love and guidance my parents have given me. They have encouraged me when things got tough and have always been just a phone call away.

**Callum:** Our teachers have pushed us and challenged us to keep going when it was tough. I especially thank Mr Gibson, who has been a positive role model and mentor.

**Patrick:** With a grateful heart I thank those teachers who visit regularly, offering support and tutoring. I extend a big thank you to the teachers who drive the bus on Wednesday afternoons for ‘street night’ and to those who have gathered our boarding community together for Tuesday night prayer.

**Brad:** I thank Mr & Mrs Arbon & Mrs Broekx for their support, Chef for the food, especially the birthday teas, Tanya for cleaning our rooms and school counsellor Katrina for your visits to Salesian House.

*Patrick was a worthy recipient of the Salesian House Award for 2016*
Coping with uncertainty

The state of being uncertain is a frequent experience for us all. Typically, at any one time we may be feeling uncertainty about our relationships, our health, our financial state or the completion of our schooling years. Although uncertainty is a common experience you would imagine that we manage it well; however largely most of us don’t. When we describe how it feels when we are uncertain we tend to use negative terms like apprehensive, doubtful, fearful or uncomfortable; an overall feeling of having no control.

Uncertainty feeds feelings of vulnerability which may result in reactions like difficulty sleeping, rumination (persistent worries or what if’s) feeling irritable, angry, fearful and demotivated.

‘When we feel uncertain and experience uncomfortable reactions as described many of us start generating negative self-talk or a pervasive way of thinking and acting; that is when a person feels they must be in control always (Cognition, 2016). It is not unusual that we might jokingly use language like ‘control freak’ and having a ‘need’ to be in control. At its superficial best this can translate into a person who has a self-perception and reputation of being confident, well prepared and seemingly know what they are about, however being in control always is an illusion.

Sadly, many who pride themselves as always being in control cope poorly when they inevitably face challenges that are outside their control or which do not respond to the techniques they have traditionally used. The most healthy and adaptive approach to things we face in life is to be flexible, to accept that we have good and bad days, and most importantly that we have the self-belief and resources to pick ourselves up and keep going even when the future is uncertain.

Some preliminary tips for coping with uncertainty;

- Step back and see it in perspective, is it important that you have certainty (therefore control) over this matter? Some matters that are uncertain for you are fundamental and vitally important, but not all.

- Take a good look at the matter that is uncertain. Dissect it. Is there anything that perhaps is not uncertain about it? Can you influence some aspects of this matter? If yes, do so, if not, so be it.

- What thoughts have been in your mind about the matter that is uncertain? Are you catastrophising? Are you thinking in ‘black and white’ terms? Are you using emotional reasoning or punishing yourself with ‘what if’ or ‘if only’ thoughts? What help do you need to turn it around, who are your supports; your confidants.