The end arrives and the Graduation is celebrated. Bosco honours its students and our student leaders go to Melbourne. There is a parent survey to do. Farewell to Staff and God’s blessings to all.

Our time in school this year is fast coming to a close. There is an excitement and an emptiness about finishing. The classroom posters have come down, the secondary playgrounds are empty of students and there are vacant Bosco classrooms and swinging locker doors. At Benedict there are final activities being planned and there has been a determined effort with Reports. The remnants of a busy 2015 are being discarded. The litter of paper being piled in classrooms has to be sorted. The staff are getting ready to move classrooms or create new offices in response to the building program. The students are beginning to take home the work of the year. There are special activities being planned. There are staff getting ready to leave and there are classroom parties unfolding. Underpinning it all is a sense of gratitude for things. It is a good time and a sad time. All of the richness of the year will end. All of that summer relaxation will start.

What we try to do is make sense of the year and celebrate all that is important. And at St Mark’s there is so much that is important. There are assemblies and presentations, formalities and speeches. There are invited guests offering formal hand shaking to polite applause and proud students. There are parents who know that rituals are very important in our school communities and they have attended in big numbers. It is a great time and a sad time. All of the richness of the year will end. All of that summer relaxation will start.

Bosco Presentation Night

One of our most important nights on the school calendar is the Bosco Presentation Night. It is an opportunity to affirm scholarship and to thank those who have played a significant role in the life of St Mark’s College. It is one of our chances to applaud the efforts of individuals who have tried so very hard over the year. A highlight this year was the affirming speech given by special guest, Director of Catholic Education, Brenda Keenan. She applauded the life of the College. She could see our wonderful students being acclaimed for their effort and for their achievement. Certainly we thanked parents for the partnership we shared in the educational journey and we thanked community members for their contribution. We saw many young people step onto the stage to receive an acknowledgement. I was very proud of them at the ceremony and realized it reflected how important scholarship is to the students.

Student Leaders to Melbourne

I had a chance to take our new College Captains, Eve Cappelletto and Patrick Williams to the Salesian Captains’ Conference in Melbourne over the weekend. There were 16 student leaders from schools throughout Australia and these new Salesian school leaders were able to dress up and gathered family to applaud their achievement. They have nervously waited to receive a certificate that makes sense of being educated. They have graduated. After so many years they have finished. They will have been joined by loyal and loving family and there has been applause. They were truly beautiful on that night. It is our gala event and it is a profoundly important gathering.
to network with their fellow Captains, learn more about leadership and have a memorable experience. There were sessions around leadership, Don Bosco and vision, and it was an inspiring group with which to work. Melbourne remains a remarkable town and I valued a chance to see Eve and Patrick so comfortable with other leaders and making such a wonderful contribution. They received their badges at Presentation Night. I am confident of the leadership for 2016.

**Parent Survey**
You would have received an email inviting you to complete the Parent Satisfaction Survey. The survey will close next week. Perhaps you might click on now to complete it. The results will be very important and will be published on our website. The survey is absolutely anonymous.

**Benedict Parent Survey** - [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R3JPFFG](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R3JPFFG)
**Bosco Parent Survey** - [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RFFQ8HH](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RFFQ8HH)

**Goodbye to Staff**
It is time to say thank you and goodbye to staff who are leaving. I express my appreciation for their work. I thank them for their devotion to the students and love of their subject. I acknowledge their service. They love this place and they leave with our best wishes. These are good teachers who care. I think we have shared with them the spirit of Don Bosco and the Good Samaritan commitment to hearts, and I thank them for their work and sense of vocation. They have made an impact on our children.

From the Benedict Campus we farewell to: Sarah Freer, Lauren Cable (maternity leave) Lisa Parletta, Louise Kitto, Amber Kuhl, Henry Whiting (returning to Adelaide). Genevieve Richter will be taking a years leave.

From the Bosco Campus we farewell to: Ben Mader, Sandy Lee, Rohan Cheong, Michael King, Jane Bennett (returning to Adelaide) Veronica Travers (absence for an adventure) and Monique Maddigan (moving interstate).

May they leave our College feeling richer and with good friendships and happy memories.

**Saying Thank You**
I want to say Happy Christmas and thank you for the year. It has been rich and busy and diverse. I acknowledge the guidance and auspice of the College Board. I thank especially Kingslee Stanley as a Board Chairperson and who offers wise counsel and is able to manage those meetings with a gentle agricultural common sense and patience. I want to thank the P+F for their service and hard work. They are tireless, generous and creative. I thank in particular Jo Court for her extraordinary work as President. I would like to extend my gratitude to those in the Boarding House who build an atmosphere that is so very positive and create such a special community. Denise and David Arbon and Pauline Broekx continue to make it a real home. I thank the Campus Leadership Teams and the College Executive team who continue to respond with tremendous energy and passion to many challenges. I thank the parish especially the Bishop, Father Paul and Father Francis for supporting the spiritual and pastoral needs of the College. I thank the parents whose partnership supports and enriches. I thank the students whose innocent energy and growth inspires. Our school is in good shape. This is wonderful work that we do, sharing partnership, with parents, supporting children’s learning and knowing that God has specially blessed this place. I extend my deepest Christmas blessings to you all and look forward to beginning again after the holiday healing.

Merry Christmas.

**Greg Hay,**
Principal

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**End of Term 4**
Wednesday 9 December
Benedict 12.20pm
Bosco 12.30pm
Foundation to Year 10 Semester 2 Reports Issued

**School Resumes for all students**
Term 1 Week 1
Monday 1 February 2016

Congratulations to our Class of 2015 pictured above at their Year 12 Graduation.
Religious Education

As the school year draws to a close we have much to be thankful for. This week we celebrated the gifts of the 2015 school year at Benedict Campus and bid farewell to our Year 7 students as they moved on to their High School Years. We also had the opportunity to formally thank and farewell staff who will not be with us at St Mark’s College next year.

I would like to thank those children and families who will be supporting upcoming Parish events. This coming weekend we have the blessing of the Christmas Cribs. Everyone is invited to bring along their nativity to have it blessed during the 10:30am Mass on Sunday 6 December.

We also have some students who have volunteered to take part in the Nativity Play on Christmas Eve. This is a wonderful way to enable all to experience the joy and hope of the Christmas story.

Last week our M Team travelled down to St Joseph’s House. We celebrated Mass with the residents, sang them some songs. The students handed out Christmas cards and presented the 2 beautiful lamps that we purchased with our fundraising money. It was a rich experience for the residents and students alike. I would like to thank all of our M Team members for their work in our school community throughout the year. A special mention to Mrs Genevieve Richter for her support of the M Team Group as teacher leader.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a blessed and Merry Christmas. I look forward to seeing you all at school in 2016.

Katie Pole, RE Liturgy/Sacramental Coordinator

St Mark’s College
BOSCO FRONT
ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

Due to renovations the Bosco Front Administration Office will close early at 3pm on Friday 4 December. We apologise for any inconvenience.

Bosco Front Office will close on Wednesday 9 December at 1pm and reopen on Thursday 28 January 2016

School Resumes for all students (Term 1 Week 1) on Monday 1 February 2016

MERRY CHRISTMAS

WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES ALL THE HOPE, WONDER AND JOY THAT THE SEASON CAN BRING

BEST WISHES FROM THE STAFF AND COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT COMMUNITIES
From the Deputy Principal

‘You Can Do It’ Education Program

Last Tuesday afternoon, Benedict Staff took part in a Professional Development session with one of South Australia’s ‘You Can Do It’ Education Program co-ordinators, Mr Rob Steventon. This was a wonderful opportunity to delve deeper into the core elements of the program that is central to the ‘Five Keys to Success and Happiness’. Staff learnt many new strategies and ways of using the program in their day to day teaching and within their personal lives as well. Being the end of the school year meant that Rob used all his wit and charm to ensure the staff not only enjoyed the session but also took something new away with them. I thank the staff for their commitment to their own learning and their passion for assisting the wellbeing of our students here at Benedict Campus, each and every day.

Benedict’s Got Talent and Star Award Presentations

Next Monday at 11.00 am in the Good Samaritan Hall is the much anticipated Benedict’s Got Talent. Many students have been practising hard in their spare time and attended auditions to become a finalist in this much loved school event. There will be two finalists in each year level this year, making for a tougher choice for judges and more competition. Just before this event, I will be presenting our latest Star Award Students to those who have been working hard using their five keys to success and happiness. Parents, friends and other family members are more than welcome to attend. We hope to see you there!

Last Day of School Year and Deputy Awards

The last day of the 2015 school year is next Wednesday. This day will begin in the Good Samaritan Hall at 9 am with our Deputy Principal Awards being presented to those students who have shown ‘Academic Achievement’ within the school. Students enjoy this day as a last chance to see their friends and teachers before the big holiday break over the Christmas and New Year seasons. Our school day ends here at Benedict at 12:20 pm.

Staff Changes for 2016

We have a number of staff leaving Benedict Campus at the end of next week. We wish Henry Whiting, Louise Kitto, Lisa Parletta and Amber Kuhl all the best in their future endeavours. Each of these teachers have brought their own special qualities and expertise to our staff and the students have thrived in their care, support and learning environment they have given. We hope and trust that they have fond memories of their time here at St Mark’s College and look forward to hearing from them in the future. We wish you all well.

Gen Richter is taking some leave for the year in 2016. We wish her relaxation and joy in her time with family and friends and look forward to hearing all about her adventures in 2017. We are also very excited about the upcoming ‘new additions’ to the families of our two staff members, Lauren Cable and Sarah Freer as they joyfully await the arrival of their first child. We hope that they enjoy this special preparation time as they approach a new phase in their lives from a couple into a family. We look forward with anticipation for their news and wish them well in the journey ahead.

Uniform Reminder for 2016

The start of the 2016 school year will see our new College Uniform becoming fully integrated for both Summer and Winter. The old crest is still alright to wear on the navy school jumper, although everything else must be the new uniform. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Farewell Year 7’s

It is with sadness and hope for their future that we farewelled our Year 7s today in a moving liturgy. We have enjoyed their kinship and comradeship throughout the year and wish them the very best at Bosco Campus in 2016. We hope that they will not be strangers as we see them at the various College events that we share. We wish them every success in their future and may God be with you all as you begin a new adventure into High School.

Good Samaritan and Salesian Award Winners

This year two Year 7 girls were were joint winners of the Good Samaritan Award - Chloe Hillier and Lillian Keain. Our Year 7 boy that received the Salesian Award was Sam De Gioia.

Congratulations to these three fine students who have displayed great leadership, friendship and care to all here at Benedict Campus during 2016.

Thank you

I would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt ‘Thank You’ to the St Mark’s and Benedict community for making me feel so welcome this year in my new role as Deputy Principal. I have found this to be a warm and friendly community that takes care of those around them and displays a tremendous sense of justice and generosity for those in need. The many smiles and kind words of thanks and encouragement have been greatly appreciated and it has been a privilege to have led your community this year.

The students here are both honourable and kind, with smiles at the ready and stories to share. There is pride in their voices, hope in their hearts and a love of learning that is ignited and developed through the love and care of our wonderful and hardworking staff. I trust that you all have a restful and safe holiday with family and friends and that the Christmas season is a joyous and prayerful one. I look forward to sharing time with you and your children in the new year and hope that we can continue our great partnership in 2016.

Merry Christmas and see you all in the new school year!

Kylie Smith,
Deputy Principal - Benedict Campus
MERRY CHRISTMAS
and a
SAFE
and
HAPPY
NEW YEAR

From the 2015 Benedict School Captains

This year I was lucky enough to be elected School Captain, alongside Theo Dimou! I have had a great year and enjoyed every part of it.
My favourite things to do were going down to Adelaide with the House Captains and representing the school in different events and activities, I have also enjoyed being School Captain because I have been able to help students when they need it and I have loved doing that.
Being School Captain has made me very confident and I am glad to have had such an amazing opportunity.
Overall it has been an amazing year and good luck to next year’s School Captains you will be great.

Maggie Waters, 2015 Benedict School Captain

My name is Theo Dimou and I am one of the School Captains at Benedict Campus alongside Maggie Waters. It was an honour to be elected School Captain 2015.
I have really enjoyed being School Captain and the ride is almost over, now we start to prepare for High School.
I have enjoyed the responsibilities and the activities I’ve participated in as School Captain. Being School Captain has helped me with my confidence I enjoyed getting to meet new people.
The responsibilities I have had are; hosting assemblies, going to Adelaide with the other Captains and leaders of the school to celebrate Don Bosco’s 200th Birthday, talking to the Bosco teachers about what’s been happening at Benedict, enjoying a breakfast with the other Captains as a gift for leading the school, taking part in Benedict and Bosco Masses, organising fun activities for the school, getting to know the Foundation kids and helping the students whenever they needed it.
The last activities to look forward to are; being one of the judges in Benedict’s Got Talent, saying a speech about what my time in Benedict has been like from Foundation to Year 7 at the end of year Liturgy, travelling to Adelaide to attend a presentation for the Premiers Be Active Challenge which was hosted by Jay Weatherill and hosting some final assemblies.
I would like thank Mr Hay, Mrs Smith and all the teachers who have guided me this year in my role as School Captain. I am very thankful.

Theo Dimou, 2015 Benedict School Captain
From the Deputy Principal

A place of welcome
Fresh faces, nervous smiles and a sense of excitement filled the Polding Lawns as we gathered Monday morning for our new student orientation. It was a day full of promise and new opportunities as students embarked on their journey as a secondary school student. The day was jam packed with information, hands on activities and new faces. Parents, I hope that your sons and daughters came home and shared stories of their day with you. I trust that our new students, whilst they still might be a little nervous, left knowing that we are most excited for their arrival next year. Bosco is an exciting place, rich with opportunity and I am confident that they will love the place, just as much as we do.

A place of celebration
On Thursday last week Salesian House students organised a Christmas gathering. It was quite the show, the teachers came in droves. Salesian House knows how to celebrate, there was tinsel and bon bons and not to mention roast of every kind, we even had a visit from Father Christmas. Following the shared meal our Boarders organised a friendly game of backyard cricket, it was the staff vs students. Staff form was strong with Mr Sheridan’s ‘banana bowl’ taking a hat-trick, he interchanged well with fast bowler Tamara Kelly, and we had the element of surprise. The students fielded a strong team with Courtney O’Dea and Josh Kleing making the big runs, they were a determined and competitive group, making it a very close game. It was a wonderful evening, as staff and students enjoyed the richness and simplicity of sharing a meal and playing a little competitive sport.

A place where community and learning meet
As we approach our final week I would like to take this opportunity to remind families of the following:

- Monday 7 December - Year 8 & 9 Activities Day
- Tuesday 8 December – Year 8 & 9 Swimming Day
- Wednesday 9 December - Year 9 Rite Journey Day and Year 8 Christmas Liturgy and Farewell. Student dismissal and report distribution 12.30pm.

It is important that families know that all three days are normal compulsory school days and there should not be any ‘days off’. Absences will be followed up. The final week is planned specifically to engage students and build community. They will have the opportunity to engage in a series of mentally stimulating sessions designed to challenge and educate in a practical way.
A place where the stars gather
On Wednesday evening the BGC was transformed into a magical world of spotlights, glamorous dresses and celebrities. With an audience full of excited families, the Year 9/10 Drama classes held the annual Boscars. There was a red carpet, dramatic performances, short film presentations and even a vocal performance. For many students, this was the very first time they have performed on stage. With a mixture of nerves, butterflies and a myriad of lines, students performed beautifully. I congratulate Fiona Clarke and her cast on a wonderful performance.

A moment of thanks
As the term concludes and summer sets in, I look back and reflect on the year that has been and smile. What a rich and rewarding experience it has been, filled with many moments of gratitude. I have seen and experienced a community of deep and rich connectedness and feel privileged to be part of the St Mark’s community. Amidst the hard work and learning, there is much laughter and celebration. I take this opportunity to thank the Bosco staff for their commitment to learning and contribution to community life.

I wish all our families a safe and happy Christmas and I look forward to working with you again in the New Year.

Kate Kilpatrick, 
Deputy Principal - Bosco Campus

Year 10 Outreach

The Smith Family
Twenty Year 10 students volunteered their time to be involved in the 'student2student' Reading Program supported by the Smith Family. Our students became peer buddies to younger students from disadvantaged backgrounds who require assistance with their reading proficiency. The program involved our students making phone contact with the students twice a week for 6 months. Danielle Stoneham, Program Coordinator for the Smith Family was most impressed with the commitment of the students. She recently visited Bosco Campus to present certificates. The program was most successful with post testing showing significant improvement in reading levels. We congratulate all of our reading buddies for their generosity of time and commitment to the program.

Mrs Jane Gibson, Year 10 Coordinator

Smith Family Program Coordinator Danielle thanks Year 10 students Zali and Samantha for their contribution to the 'student 2 student' Reading Program.
Around the College

Year 11 Child Studies

Students from Year 2 Red visited Bosco Campus recently, where they completed a cooking practical with Jesslyn Oxford’s Year 11 Child Studies Class in the Home Ec Centre. The cooking assignment was part of the Year 11 Child Studies practical. As well as having a lot of fun, the students enjoyed creating and eating some delicious food together.

SMC Tennis

Only 2 matches to go before the Christmas break and we have been very lucky so far with the weather this season! Don’t forget this weekend (5 December) all Saturday matches will be played at 8.30am due to the Port Pirie Christmas Pageant. The last match prior to Christmas is 13 December after school has finished! The season will resume at the beginning of February when school resumes.

School Contacts

Please note that if parents for any reason need to speak to a school contact the responsible people are; Kylie Smith or Des McKeough at the Benedict Campus and Jesslyn Oxford or Kate Kilpatrick at Bosco.

Unavailability

If players are unavailable for matches, please notify the coach as early as possible. In most cases we are able to arrange replacements if we are given enough notice. Please also remember to notify your coach if you are unable to attend training as they have given up their valuable time to help our Club.

Inter-Association Tennis Matches

A number of our players represented Port Pirie in the Association match at Gawler recently. Unfortunately we were not very successful score-wise, but by all accounts it was an enjoyable day of tennis! The next association match will be held in Pirie on Sunday 13 December against Southern Flinders—the day after the last programmed junior match. Players need to notify Dennis Buchanan of their availability by this weekend.

Thank you to all parents and players for their efforts in the first half of the season-playing, scoring, coaching, managing and helping in the canteen. Have a Happy Christmas and New Year!

SMC Tennis Committee

St Mark’s Sport proudly sponsored by

alsanto constructions
Year 11 Drama students recently studied 'The Cagebirds' and came up with their own interpretation of a Director’s Concept. The concepts were varied and inspiring and the use of dramatic elements including costume, make-up and lighting helped to emphasise the themes of the script.

In addition to this, they have been studying Clowning and their self-devised skits were performed at Benedict Campus last week. The audience participated enthusiastically as the clowns danced, skipped, tricked and hid from each other. An outstanding effort by all. Congratulations!

Sandy Lee, Year 11 Drama Teacher
Year 9 Agriculture

Horse Management course

On 16 October, Shan Daw came to the Agriculture centre for 3 lessons to give our Year 9 students an introduction to Horses and their behaviour.

To extend our knowledge we spent a day at Shan’s property on the 9 November to obtain a better understanding of the amount of time you need to spend with horses to keep them happy and healthy. 24 Year 9 Agriculture students attended from Mr Mader and Mr Matthew’s classes.

On behalf of St Mark’s we would like to sincerely thank Shan, Jim, John, Aimee, Katie and Dagmar for providing us with their horses and teaching us how to manage them. We would also like to thank Joel Head for driving the bus and cooking our sausage sizzle lunch, and extra staff helpers John Mullin and Kym White.

Although the day was hot it was a great experience and I’m sure that we’d love to do it again. We loved the effort that Shan put into running the course for us even though it was really hot.

Bernadine Butterick and Sophie Burt,
Year 9 Students
**McNally Farm News**

**What’s been happening at Ag?**

Our inaugural Trade Skills students held a BBQ on their last day and made a small presentation of thanks to TAFE Lecturer Jason Penfold.

Trade Skills Centre student Archie puts the finishing touches on his fire pit box.

Trade Skills students were involved in hay production.

Hay bales in the paddock at St Mark’s College after a record harvest.

**Our Alpacas**

On Thursday 19 November, Mrs Kay Mudge visited the Ag Skills Centre to see the Alpacas she kindly donated to the school in August this year.

After not seeing her for several weeks, it was obvious that they remembered her. She was really glad to see them and how much they have grown, we took some photos and went back to the class where Mr Hay and Mr Matthews gave her words of thanks.

*Bernadine Butterick and Sophie Burt, Year 9 Students*

Our Alpacas Jasper and Kamahl had their first haircut on 20 November at a local farm.

Our Alpacas Jasper and Kamahl were presented to Mrs Kay Mudge as a Thank You gift for donating them both to the College.

Alpacas Jasper and Kamahl obviously remembered Mrs Mudge and she was thrilled to see them again and how much they had grown.

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Parents and Friends News

Up and Coming Events
Monday 7 December – St Mark’s Parents and Friends Xmas Dinner at the Flinders Motel on Main from 6.30pm. RSVP on the P&F Facebook page or to dj.court@bigpond.com

Reflection in 2015
Tuesday night I had the privilege of attending the St Mark’s Presentation Evening for Bosco Campus. I am so proud of each and every one of our students who have not only achieved academic success, but have also become respectful and resilient young adults, who will remember their past school years with happiness and pride. The leadership these young adults display is the result of our guidance, not only in the classroom, but also at home, on the field, in the workforce and in the dance halls of our community. We all should be proud of who they have become.

Parents and Friends forms part of this guidance and this year we have proved this in many different ways. $6,000 in funds has been raised to not only help families in our community, but also to purchase resources for our school so our children can have the best facilities and education we can offer them. We have also provided countless hours of volunteer work to bring our community together, help in a small way with the production of High School Musical, costumes, catering, book covering, and of course the lolly pop ladies during our car park changes. Each task seems small, but it is the small contributions that help make our school work so seamlessly well. We have also been a voice for you on such topics as our car park, communication tools, and parent engagement.

Your opinion matters and we have started implementing improvements in the way we work based on your results from our survey this year. So I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the Committee first, but also to our teachers, school staff and of course you our Parents and Friends.

What can you look forward to in 2016.
2016 is all about becoming an engaged parent. Which is simply to be actively involved in helping our children learn. This includes healthy eating, providing good routines for rest, exercise, social engagements and volunteering our time. It’s important to write down and remember what we currently do to actively help our children learn, and only commit to volunteering our time to one or two things that we feel most passionately about at school.

So 2016 will be all about change. Good change…

We have just received grant funds to form a task force of Teachers, Students, Old Scholars, the Church, Parents and the School Executive that can work solely on identifying joint goals to excel our children’s learning. If we can bring our existing good ideas together and form one group instead of working separately on the same solutions we will be able to achieve a higher education for our children quicker and with more ease. This group will need to work out the best way to do this and provide an action plan to coordinate ongoing engagement in the future. Our aim is to bring together the whole community, especially you our Parents and Friends. Early in 2016 we will be calling for 2 of our parents to get involved in this task force.

Let’s continue to tackle important issues which may ultimately shift the future direction of not only Parents and Friends, but our school as a whole. Please, if you have ever wanted to get involved and have a voice, now is the time. You want your children to succeed in life, then let us make our school an even more engaging, welcoming community which helps and supports our students to excel in education.

Our Parents and Friends AGM will be Monday 7 March at 7pm. If you want a voice and a vote please urge you to come to this meeting.

If you prefer to volunteer your time in other ways then keep an eye out for yet another crazy fun filled Movie Night in first term 2016, and our Great Campout in the middle of the year. Whatever you do, try something new and you’ll be surprised just how rewarding being an engaged parent can be.

Once again thank you so much for your support in 2015, we hope you have a very Merry Christmas and we’ll see you all again in 2016.

SMC Parents and Friends Committee

St Mark’s Family Fun Day

Parents and Grandparents helped out at the St Mark’s Family Fun Day.

Sarah, Lucy and Taylah entertained the crowds with some hip hop dance.

A variety of delicious foods were on offer.

Davyn and her mum Carmel had a lot of fun participating in the Amazing Race.
Volunteers

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the heart.” Elizabeth Andrew

This is a quote that describes how important our volunteers have been in our school community. Volunteers share their joy, laughter, bring a kind word, a warm heart and empathy for a person. They are dedicated, compassionate and willingly give their time to help others.

This year St Marks’ College has been fortunate to have 14 LAP volunteers throughout the year and were able to support 35 students. Friendships have been formed between our volunteers and students’ confidence has grown. I have been able to share many personal journeys with both the LAP students and volunteers and I would like to acknowledge and thank them for their support during the year on behalf of our school community.

I would like to thank…. Jayne Gebert, Chrissie Dennis, Tina Pansini, Ann Dillon, Mary Higginbottom, Jo Court, Alice Ngatamariki, Lynette Clyde, Jarrad Dix, Pat Faulkner, Marianne Gadaleta, Ezra Spolding, Lisa Manners and Hilda Hillier.

Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness has been a major focus for our R-2 classes. A child’s phonological awareness is a strong predictor of long-term reading and spelling success and it can also predict future literacy performance. I was excited when I analysed the semester 2 results of the tests for Phonological Awareness demonstrated that children have made significant improvements in this area.

Support Programs

In 2015 it has been a very exciting year with the introduction of Mini-Lit. The results indicate that this program is valuable to assist our Year 1 and Year 2 students. The impressive results achieved in both the Multi-Lit and Rainbow Reading continue to demonstrate the importance of these programs assisting our Year 3-7 students. They will continue to play a significant role in 2016.

I would also like to say a big thank you to the hardworking teachers and to our wonderful ESO’s for their dedication and commitment and supporting all students especially our dyslexic and Autistic students.

Have a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year and I look forward to working with staff, parents and students again in the New Year.

Louise Richards, Special Education Coordinator - Benedict Campus
From the Business Manager

School Fees
We wish to advise that the College Board has approved a 3% Fee increase for next year. This increase is the lowest fee increase in more than sixteen years in acknowledgment of the difficult financial climate facing many families. Please note Direct Debit payments made through the College PaySmart payment system will automatically be updated from January 2016 to take into account the fee increase and any new sibling enrolments. I would like to remind parents that all school fees must be paid by the end of the school year unless you have negotiated a formal payment plan with the College. Parents are reminded that a 7% Administration Fee will be charged to your account from the 1 January 2016 on the balance outstanding at 31 December unless formal payment arrangement have been negotiated with the College as a result of financial hardship circumstances. If you do not respond to correspondence regarding fees follow up we will have no alternative but to place your debt with our Debt Collection agency. Any fees associated with debt collection will be added to your account. The collection of fees are essential to the overall success of the educational program at St Mark’s and therefore the College is required to ensure that the financial responsibilities of all families are met. Every effort will continue to be made to assist families in meeting their commitment to pay College fees.

Year 7 and 8 Bring Your Own Device Program (2016)
It has been decided that the new devices will be provided to students during Week 1 and 2 of Term 1 next year. This will ensure that all new software is loaded consistently and students are appropriately orientated to their new devices.

Campus Capital Developments
The capital developments around the College are all progressing very well. The Tech Studies Workshop redevelopment, Benedict Year 1/2 Classroom Upgrade and Administration refurbishment will all be completed and operational from the start of the new school year whilst the new Year 12 Centre is scheduled to be completed early in Term 1.

Dominic LaBasso, Business Manager

Music Tuition
Wendy Palmer is now taking enrolments for Piano, Guitar and Singing lessons for 2016. For further information, please contact Wendy on 86 32-2659 or 0439 164 899.

Interested in Playing Baseball?
Cats Baseball Club are looking for any 10 to 15 year olds who are interested in playing Baseball. If you want to do something fun this summer, come and have a try. Season is starting soon. Contact Scott Wardle on 0417 099 120 or Rowen Voumard on 0418 831 660 for more information.

Piano and Keyboard Lessons
Available at school. For more information please call Anne Hansen on 0429 866 242 or 86 36-2231.

Starclub - Free Planning Workshop
Strategic Planning for Sport/Recreation/Community Clubs and Associations.
Mid North Session - Monday 14 December at Melrose Memorial Bowling Club at 6.30pm
Yorke Peninsula Session - Wednesday 16 December at Wallaroo Sailing Club at 6.30pm
For more information phone 0488 101 783 or email starclub@pirie.sa.gov.au

Make A Wish - Design a 5 Point Star
You are invited to design a 5 point star to display at Meg’s Bookshop, 90 Ellen Street. Let your imagination go wild - size, colour, material, dimensions are all up to you. All creations need to be at Meg’s Bookshop by Thursday 10 December 2015. For more details please contact Margie on 86 32-1590 or sales@megsbooks.com.au

Port Football and Community Sporting Club
Open daily from 10.00am

Kye, Bella, Aslin and Sophie with their Christmas Cribs they made in class.
Pastoral Letter to the Christian Faithful of the Diocese of Port Pirie

“Ambassadors of Mercy”

The Jubilee Year 2015 – 2016

Dear Brothers & Sisters

Pope Francis has declared a Jubilee Year of Mercy to commence on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception this year, 8th December 2015, concluding on the Feast of Christ the King on the 21st November 2016.

What is a Jubilee Year? It goes back to the Book of Leviticus where a Jubilee Year of thanks and celebration to God was to be celebrated every fifty years. The Year began with a blast from a ram’s horn, in Hebrew Yobhel and hence our word “Jubilee”. In a Jubilee Year in ancient Israel, debts were to be forgiven, slaves released, fields allowed to go fallow and the people of Israel were to engage in times of worship and village celebration. It is not clear that all these observances were followed. In the year 1300 Pope Boniface VIII declared a Jubilee Year for the Church to take stock of itself, and focus on its meaning and mission. Jubilee Years were then meant to follow every twenty-five or fifty years, and that has happened, by and large. In recent years the time between Jubilee Years has varied. Since the time of Blessed Pope Paul VI Jubilee Years have been sixteen, nine, eight and seventeen years apart, and this one is now sixteen years since the Jubilee Year of 2000.

As is clear from so many of his utterances, Pope Francis wants the Church to come to grips with its need to proclaim the mercy of God to all peoples. The mystery of mercy, the Holy Father tells us, “is a well-spring of joy, serenity and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.”

The Holy Father prays that during this special time for the Church we might be ambassadors of mercy to our community, to our brothers and sisters. He encourages us to be people with zeal for the Lord’s mercy, rejoicing in the forgiveness of God for ourselves and for humanity which today is so much in need of hope and new beginnings. We come to know God and His infinite love for us, Pope Francis says, through Christ. And so we are called to be like Christ and to let Christ be in us.

Pope Francis wants a Church open to the poor, reconciling and inviting. He is passionate that so many people simply do not realise the love God has for them. As Saint John says in his Letter, “Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God’s children; for that is what we are”. How many in our world live without knowing that! Pope Francis talks of “a cascade of tenderness” of God’s mercy towards us. He is trying to break open the parable of the Prodigal Son with his Prodigal Father, the one who waited and waited and then ran to embrace the sinner.

A special diocesan committee has been working on preparing resources for us as a diocese to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Mercy. We are being urged to imitate the symbolism of the Holy Door. We are invited to pass through the Holy Door, symbolising that we leave the past and its personal failures behind, and walk through into a new phase of our lives. To live this Jubilee Year well will require us to renew ourselves, to reach out to others, to aspire to live at a deeper level of our spirituality, to look to see how we are modelling ourselves on the example of Christ.
The activities in our parishes should encourage special occasions, for moments that are spiritual and missionary and geared to others. We should try to allow the Word to be broken open in us as we study some Scripture, and meet in prayer, pray the rosary, spend time before the Blessed Sacrament.

May all the other people in our towns and regions see us as ambassadors of mercy, people given heart by the love of God for us, and wanting to share it with all.

Yours in Christ

+ Gregory O’Kelly SJ
Bishop of the Diocese of Port Pirie

2nd December 2015
2nd December 2015
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Memorandum to the Diocese

A Holy Door: What Does It Mean?

Dear Brothers & Sisters

The following information may be of help to people in the diocese concerning the Holy Door and the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

We Catholics are not reluctant to use the word “Holy”. We say it every day in Mass when we speak the words of adoration of the angels before the throne of God as they chant “Holy, Holy, Holy”. (Rev. 4:8) We also talk of Holy Water, the Holy Fire in the Easter Vigil, Holy Communion, Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday, Holy Pictures, the Holy Souls, a Holy Year – and now a Holy Door! In some ways this reflects our belief in the Incarnation, that all things have been restored in Christ. “All creation rightly gives You praise...” as we say in the Mass. Natural symbols can speak to us of the presence of God. The deeply spiritual priest-scientist, Fr Teilhard de Chardin, wrote a famous work, “The Hymn of the Universe”. All creation is singing God’s praise.

Hence Catholics are not loathe to see ordinary natural objects as reflecting the presence of God, and therefore Holy.

The practice of the opening of a “Holy Door” in Rome to mark a special year, apparently began late, when Pope Martin V ordered such a ceremony in 1423. The practice grew in later Jubilees, so that when the special Holy Door was opened in the Pope’s cathedral in Rome, other Holy Doors were opened in the various Roman basilicas. That will happen this year also, on the Third Sunday of Advent.

It is somewhat different this time in that Pope Francis has asked that every cathedral in the world, every Mother Church of a diocese, have its special Holy Door opening ceremony to mark the Jubilee Year of Mercy. In our diocese we want to spread that further, asking that each of our parishes looks at some way of marking the event of the Jubilee Year with the opening of the Holy Door in their parish church. We don’t need a new door to be knocked in! Just take one of the present doors and decorate it for the occasion.

We are asking all our schools to do the same at the beginning of the school year next February. The children can go through their own “Holy Door” to usher in a New Year, a Holy Year, and become “ambassadors of mercy”.

Diocese of Port Pirie
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The diocese will be distributing a suggested Prayer Service for this occasion. After the prayers are said and the blessing given and the Holy Water sprinkled, the door is opened and the priest leads his brothers and sisters into the church.

As Pope Francis says, “On that day, the Holy Door will become a door of mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God, who consoles, pardons, and instils hope. His hope is that the church of every diocese “will be directly involved in living out this Holy Year as an extraordinary moment of grace and spiritual renewal”. Thus the Jubilee will be celebrated both in Rome and in the Particular Churches of the world as a visible sign of the Churches universal communion”. The Jubilee Year concludes on the Feast of Christ the King, the 20th November 2016. On that day the Holy Door is sealed as we thank God for His mercy and entrust the life of the Church and the entire cosmos to the Kingship of Christ. The Pope’s desires for this Holy Year are expressed so strongly. “How much I desire that the Year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! May the balm of mercy which everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is always present in our midst”. Pope John Paul II had this reflection on the Holy Door. “To pass through that Door means to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord….it is a decision which resumes freedom to choose and also the courage to leave something behind, in the knowledge that what is gained is divine life”.

In the Gospel of Saint John Jesus says “I am the gate. Those who enter through me will be safe: they will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture….I am the gate of the sheepfold”. (John 10:8)

Various of our rituals begin at the church door. In some places that is where the priests or deacon welcomes the parents of a child to be baptised. The priest will often greet the bride and groom at the door of the church. Catechumens are greeted at the door in the Rite of Acceptance. And it is better practice followed in most churches that the priest will greet the coffin of the deceased at the door of a church to commence the funeral liturgy.

We have all had disgraceful moments in our lives, so let us leave them behind as we walk through the Holy Door in our church at this Jubilee Year, and move into the hope that we might minister God’s mercy and acceptance to all our brothers and sisters.

Yours in Christ

+ Gregory O’Kelly
Bishop of the Diocese of Port Pirie