



Acting Principal's Message

Dear Parents & Carers

As we continue with our Lenten preparations, I am reminded of our liturgy at the Whole School Assembly yesterday. Our Gospel focused on the time Jesus spent in the desert and was tested on many occasions, still His message was *"You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone"*. Worshipping God is to be examples of the message of God of love, compassion, forgiveness and mercy. Sometimes we too are tested by conflicts and misunderstandings with others, so for the next week I encourage everyone to take time to pause when we are upset by others and try to look at other's perspectives then live God's message especially of forgiveness and love.

Whole School Assembly

It was wonderful to meet with our whole school yesterday for the Assembly. Thank you to Year 6 for your wonderful presentation on the buddy program with Kindergarten. Your presentation celebrated the beautiful friendship between Kindergarten and their Year 6 buddies, it is a friendship that is long remembered and cherished. Congratulations also to all our athletes that we acknowledged yesterday, across many fields. Our next whole school assembly will be **Monday 8 April** at 2:30pm, when Year 5 will lead the presentation.

Parent/Teacher Interviews

Yesterday we had our first session of Parent/Teacher Interviews in the Hall. It was an excellent afternoon where parents/carers and teachers could meet to discuss goals for children. It was the first time we have had all the meetings in the Hall, and the feedback from parents last night was very positive, as all the interviews were together so parents did not have to travel between classes, and as all the teachers are doing interviews on the same days, parents/carers were able to book interviews for all their children on the same day. We look forward to the next session on Thursday evening from 3:30 – 6:00pm.

Parent Engagement Groups (PEG)

Thank you to the parents/carers that joined us last week for the first PEG of the year, the minutes from the two sessions will be sent out via Compass by the end of the week. At the PEG we discussed our school SIP and the focus for 2024. In the Newsletter you will find the SIP summary as a graphic. From the PEG, we are looking at parents/carers joining us to be a part of four subcommittees:

Dates to Remember

22ND MAR – YEAR 6 RETREAT

28TH MAR - HOLY THURSDAY

29TH MAR - GOOD FRIDAY

11TH APR - LAST DAY OF TERM 1

12TH APR - PUPIL FREE DAY

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- Fundraising
- Environment
- Engagement and Wellbeing
- Sport

These subcommittees will focus on specific goals, that may be achieved in a term or over the course of the year. Meetings will be held once per term, or until the goal for the subcommittee has been achieved. A major focus for the school this year, is to mark play spaces on the concreted areas such as handball, hopscotch etc., this has been budgeted for by the school. We are also engaged with two companies looking at the installation of shade sails. Depending on the number and size of the shade sails, this is likely to be over \$25,000 and so will be our focus of all fundraising this year (and perhaps 2025 as well). If you would like to be a part of one or more subcommittees, please email me on kaylene.maretich@mn.catholic.edu.au.

SchoolTV

One of the things I notice the most about our students, is the friendly and kind way they interact with their peers, staff and visitors. Sometimes, especially during play, the children can verbalise inappropriate comments that they may have seen on television, when watching sport or from older siblings, cousins etc. SchoolTV has a useful resource on how to work with your child to avoid derogatory language being used, you can view this via the link - https://newlambton.catholic.schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-respectful-language

SchoolTV is an excellent free resource that is available to all parents/carers via our school website, you can access this through the **Parent** tab on the school website. Periodically we will recommend resources in the Newsletter, that focus on any issues occurring at school.

Road Safety

A reminder for all parents/carers to ensure you obey the road rules, especially when picking up children in the afternoon. The roads around the school are very busy in the afternoon, so please allow extra travelling time. We continue to have some issues on Bridges Rd, where cars are queuing across the intersection resulting in safety concerns for pedestrians waiting at the traffic lights.

Easter Fundraiser

As we get closer to the Easter Season, we would like our community to consider families that may be separated from loved ones, due to illness or those that may face uncertainty. Each year, we focus on community outreach to Ronald McDonald House and St John's Villa, rather than holding an Easter Raffle.

Ronald McDonald House provides a "home away from home" for families whilst their children are treated at John Hunter Hospital. Additionally, Ronald McDonald House provides support for families who do not meet the criteria to reside at the house, but still need to travel significant distances each day to be with their child in hospital. The House is currently fully occupied, with 18 families currently in residence, some have been there for over 8-weeks. St John's Villa is an aged care facility, where are Year 5 students visit with Miss Soo in small groups each Wednesday. We will present hampers to Ronald McDonald House and St John's Villa, for their residents and staff, to bring some joy and hope, at a time that can be especially difficult.

We ask that the following items are donated, according to the year your child is in, by **Monday 25 March**. We will then prepare the hampers and deliver them in time for Easter, to the families and staff.

- Kindergarten & Year 1 – packs of **medium** sized hollow eggs
- Years 2 & 3 – **small** hollow Easter bunnies
- Year 4 – packs of **small solid** Easter eggs
- Year 5 – tea or coffee e.g. 10 packs of Twinings Tea, Herbal Teas, coffee sachets etc.
- Year 6 – packets of sweet biscuits

Kaylene Maretich
Acting Principal

Acting Assistant Principal's Message

Cybersafety

Our School is committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet. We want staff, students, parents and carers to create a school community that embraces the use of new technologies. At school, we promote the use of ICT to enhance learning and teach all of the students how to keep themselves safe online.

Young people today are immersed in digital technologies. They use the internet to socialise, study, exchange ideas and play. While online activity has many benefits, there are also risks.

As a school, we ensure that students are aware of issues such as cyber safety and digital citizenship. Students are shown how best to use the internet safely and to report immediately to teachers when they feel their safety is compromised.

An Australian website that has a vast amount of safety information and resources for families is the esafety Commissioner website www.esafety.gov.au

This website is produced and maintained by The Australian Government and has an enormous amount of resources for schools, students and parents. It is easy to navigate and has an interactive section that is excellent for students aged 5-17.

Mark Konik

Acting Assistant Principal

Religious Education

Thank You & Welcome – This is my first contribution to the Newsletter after being away for the first few weeks of the term as we were visiting my wife's family in Brazil. Thank you to everyone for the warm welcome back over the past 2 weeks. Whilst we had an amazing time with family and friends, it served as a stark reminder of how blessed we are in Australia to have so many of the societal structures in place to take care of people – especially the most vulnerable of society. This is something, as Australian citizens, we should all be aware of and never take for granted. The life (and all the benefits) we are fortunate to have in this country is the responsibility of all of us to maintain and care for. This Sunday's gospel message and the beautiful reflection upon it from Pope Francis below helps to remind us of where the true importance of life lies and our role as Christians to ensure that our relationship with God and others remains central to this life always. For those parents new to our community, this section of the Newsletter will contain all things connected to the Catholic Identity of our school including our Faith life and Religious Education. Enjoy!

Lent – The Third Sunday of Lent has just passed and, along with it, another beautiful reflection, written by Nick Brodie, about Pope Francis' call to all Christians to live as prophets of our time:

'Jesus' behaviour recounted in today's Gospel passage', Pope Francis says, 'exhorts us to live our life not in search of our own advantage and interests, but for the glory of God who is love.' The Pope suggests that Jesus' action in the Temple should be seen as being deliberately and provocatively prophetic. Jesus was not throwing a tantrum! Rather, He was making a point: something was awry in the way people understood and used the Temple. Hearts and behaviours needed to change.

For his 2024 Lenten message, Pope Francis chose to focus on the first of today's readings concerning God's self-revelation on Mount Sinai. The Pope notes that there was considerable resistance in the background of this great moment. Below the mountain there was what the Pope called a 'nostalgia for slavery that paralysed Israel in the desert and prevented it from moving forward.' Times change, and so must we all.

Given that Lent is 'a season of conversion, a time of freedom', the Pope encourages us Christians to refocus our attention on the needs of all. This is a season for 'communitarian decisions ... capable of altering the daily lives of individuals and entire neighbourhoods', he said. We should reflect on 'the ways we acquire goods, care for creation, and strive to include those who go unseen or are looked down upon.' We should ask ourselves, what Temple tables and transactions need overturning in our own time. As the Pope so powerfully says: 'Woe to us if our Christian penance were to resemble the kind of penance that so dismayed Jesus.'

Taken from: <https://www.liturgyhelp.com/calendar/date/2024Mar03/0/RefNickB>

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"Take all this out
of here and
stop turning my
Father's house
into a market."

John 2:16

Project Compassion – A great way we can enact the sentiments from Pope Francis above is to engage as a community to support Caritas and their yearly Project Compassion drive. At the end of last week, a Project Compassion giving box was sent home with the eldest child in each family. It would be great if you could have discussions around the dinner table with your children about the importance of giving to those in need and contribute, where possible, to this initiative. We will ask all families to send in any money prior to the end of term.



Important Upcoming Dates

The following contains important dates and events to the Catholic Identity of our school community. More information will be sent out closer to the dates:

- **Week 7: Catholic Community Week**
 - Monday 11th March – 9:30am Liturgy followed by Open Classrooms
- **Week 8:**
 - Friday 22nd March – Yr 6 Spirituality Retreat (*Glenrock Scout Camp - with Evis Heath*)
- **Week 9: Holy Week**
 - Sunday 24th March – Palm Sunday
 - Thursday 28th March – Holy Thursday: Stations of the Cross (*to take place throughout the day in the Main Hall*)
 - Friday 29th – Good Friday
 - Sunday 31st March – Easter Sunday
- **Week 10:**
 - Tuesday 2nd April – Easter Liturgy (*2:30pm in the Main Hall*)
 - Friday 5th April – Mission Day (*Caritas: Project Compassion*)

Luke Smith
Re Coordinator

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School Community News

School Medication

Please ensure that any changes to your child's medication is notified in writing and that you receive a reply from the office within 48 hours. If you don't hear from us please contact us immediately. We are in the process of updating our Administration of Medication procedures and this will be communicated to the school community in due course.

Volunteering

Throughout the year, we welcome all parents/carers to volunteer at the school. To volunteer, you must complete the volunteer's induction via the link <https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/families-communities/volunteers/>. This process can take up to 6 weeks, so you are encouraged to complete this early.

External Providers with the school

If your child receives services from external providers such as a speech pathologist, occupational therapist, or from another provider at school such as piano, chess or guitar, please ensure you complete the 'Application-access 3rd Party contractor' attached to this newsletter and return to the office as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Advertising in the Newsletter – If your business is interested in advertising in our newsletter, please contact the school via email - admin@newlambton.catholic.edu.au. We will then provide you more details such as cost and advertisement size requirements.

School Fees - The statements for the 2024 school fees have now been issued. There are several payment options however, Compass Pass is NOT our preferred method due to the large fees that Compass charge the school. Direct debit is an easy option, and these can be set up to be weekly, fortnightly or monthly. A form to do this is available from the office. Fees can also be paid via BPay, over the phone using a credit card or in person at the office. If you have a health care card or pension card you can apply for a concession on your fees. Please contact the office if you have not already done so. If you are experiencing financial hardship and require assistance, please contact the office.

Sport

We would like to congratulate **Mila M**, who will be representing St Therese's at the Polding Swimming Championships down at Homebush on 3rd April. We wish her the best on her swimming journey.



Reminder - Sports Day Term 1

- Kindergarten – Wednesday
- Year 1 – Tuesday (Weeks 1-6) then Thursday (Weeks 7-11)
- Year 2 – Thursday (Weeks 1-6) then Tuesday (Weeks 7-11)
- Year 3 – Tuesday (Weeks 1-4) then Thursday (Weeks 5-11)
- Year 4 – Wednesday
- Year 5 – Thursday (Weeks 1-4) then Tuesday (Weeks 5-11)
- 6N – Wednesday • 6W – Thursday • 6L – Tuesday

Canteen

Mon 11/3	Tues 12/3	Wed 13/3	Thurs 14/3	Fri 15/3
Diane Coyte	Kylie Marten	Cath Oakley	Anthony Hawes	Kristen Searl
	Odette Tonkins			Holly van Schalkwyk

Wellbeing- The Resilience Project

This week students in all classes across St Therese's begin 'The Resilience Project' lessons. The first key principle essential to building resilience in our students is 'Gratitude'.



Gratitude

Working on gratitude helps us to be thankful and appreciate what we have in our lives, rather than focusing on what we don't have or what we want. When we practise being grateful, we start to scan the world to look for positives – this only takes 21 days! Practising gratitude every day increases our levels of energy, and helps us to feel happier and more focused, determined and optimistic. It even helps us have better sleep, lowers levels of anxiety and depression and we are less likely to get sick. So many benefits – let's all try to be grateful for the things and people in our lives every day!

Whole Family Activity:
Gratitude Scavenger Hunt

- As a family create a scavenger hunt list of things that make you happy or you are grateful for, you can make your own list or use the examples below:
- Something that makes you happy
- Something you love to smell
- Something you enjoy looking at
- Something that is your favourite colour
- Something you like in nature
- Something that is useful for you
- Each member of the family uses the list and has to find as many things as they can.
- You can hunt for things inside or outside, or both. You can hunt for real things, or you can also do this using magazines or pictures from the internet.
- After a set amount of time hunting, come back together, have a look at what each person collected and let them explain why they are grateful for each item.

Family Habit Builder:
Every night at dinner, have each person talk about their favourite thing about that day.



1. Each lesson is designed to run for approximately 60 minutes and there are between 20 and 30 lessons per year level.
2. St Therese's are introducing the program in a structure that works best for our school. These lessons are aligned and integrated with our Personal Development curriculum and outcomes.
3. It is our hope that the themes covered in 'The Resilience Project' curriculum become an ongoing focus throughout the school.

Melissa Pyers

Primary Coordinator

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Library News



NSW Premier's Reading Challenge is now open and St Therese's is excited to be participating!

What is the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge?

The PRC is a statewide Challenge that encourages students to develop a love of reading for leisure and pleasure in students and enables them to experience quality literature. It is not a competition, but a challenge to encourage each student to read, to read more, and to read more widely.

All students K-2 will complete the challenge in class as part of their Literacy and Library lessons.

Students in Years 3 – 6 can register their interest and receive their unique login for the challenge by visiting the Library and adding their name to the signup sheet.

Read more about the challenge on our school website:

[Premier's Reading Challenge - St Therese's Primary School \(newlambton.catholic.edu.au\)](http://newlambton.catholic.edu.au)

Reading Session by Library Monitors for Infants



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March 6th 7th & 8th



INSTORE & ONLINE

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