The Brisbane hearing of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has focused on a Toowoomba Catholic school case study. The public hearing of the Royal Commission has received extensive media coverage. Archbishop Mark Coleridge and Executive Director of Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE), Pam Betts, have prepared a joint communique which will be posted to all families in the Archdiocese with children in BCE schools, to allay any concerns brought about by the saturation media coverage over the past week. These letters should arrive at parents’ homes in the near future. I provide an edited extract from the parent letter, below:

‘There has been extensive media coverage of the Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in recent times given the focus of the Commission on a case study from a Catholic school in the Diocese of Toowoomba. Brisbane Catholic Education does not have oversight of Catholic schools in that diocese, but the resurfacing of this case may again undermine the confidence of the broader community in the safety of students in Catholic schools generally.

The hearings uncovered further disturbing information about the way in which the Church has so poorly handled allegations of sexual abuse against children. We can only begin to imagine the suffering of those children and the impact on their families. We offer our most sincere apologies, again, for what occurred and reiterate our absolute determination to do all we can to ensure that children and young people are safe in our schools and that crimes like this do not happen again.

Please be assured that your school, along with all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, has in place clear policies and procedures for dealing with all allegations of sexual abuse, including those not related to a school setting. These policies and procedures are available to all parents and are published on the Brisbane Catholic Education website.

Parents will receive in the mail a letter from Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Archbishop of Brisbane and Pam Betts, Executive Director of Brisbane Catholic Education, to assure parents of our continued commitment to ensuring our Catholic schools are safe for your children. If you did not receive a copy of the letter, please contact your school office and they will arrange for a copy to be sent to you.’

Professional learning has continued to be a high priority for staff, with a recent highlight being a Sound Waves session on our school’s phonemic approach to the teaching and learning of spelling. As well, the large majority of staff were involved in a 3 hour twilight session yesterday, for their annual CPR accreditation.

Congratulations to Matthew Hoolahan (Year 6) and Jakob Rawlings (Year 7) on their recent selection in the U/12 Beenleigh District Rugby League Team and the U/12 Beenleigh District AFL Team, respectively.
Term 1 swimming concluded today and I congratulate all students in Year 2 to 7 who have been involved in this program over the past 4 weeks, for their efforts in maintaining strong focus on meeting the expectations of swim instructors and their teachers.

This month’s P&F Meeting occurs next Tuesday 11 March from 6.30pm. Again, an afternoon P&F Forum will precede the evening P&F Meeting. These forums, which are organised to allow a voice for those parents and friends of the school who experience evening demands, will be held in the Multi-Purpose Room from 2.00pm.

Please note that the first Gala Sports Day for the year will occur next Friday 14 March for students in Year 6 and 7. A letter with related information should have already arrived home for families with students in these year levels. Please contact the office for this information if necessary.

My thanks to those parents who were involved in organising and providing for today’s Tuckshop Day. Thank you also to those families who supported this day by ordering for their child/children. Profits from such days are re-invested into the school for the direct benefit of students.

This coming Saturday a significant safety issue will be addressed with the removal of the enormous gum tree adjacent to the Tobruk classroom block and above the Prep play area. It will be a full day’s work for the removal team that will ensure a safer school environment for all.

A reminder that Semester 1 Parent/Teacher Interviews will be held over the final two weeks of this term (with the exception of Year 5C - information to come) and that teaching staff will soon begin planning and distributing their items of correspondence to organise these important educational conversations.

A reminder also, that Prep enrolment interviews for the 2015 school year will commence this month. Children born, 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010, inclusive, are eligible for the 2015 Prep intake. Please note that government regulations allow zero flexibility regarding the afore mentioned eligibility dates.

Yesterday’s Ash Wednesday liturgy formally signalled the beginning of Lent and was a reminder to those in attendance of their humanity and mortality as they had ashes traced on their foreheads. The season of Lent provides the opportunity for us to image ourselves following Jesus into the desert, as detailed in the scriptures, before the commencement of His public ministry. We pray that, with God’s help, we might exhibit the faithfulness that Jesus did, in the wilderness, by also not succumbing to temptation in our Christian lives:

*God, our Father, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, especially during our Lenten observances.*

With Courage, Faith and Love

Stephen Johnson

**LENT – A time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving!**

Yesterday we celebrated a liturgy to mark the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. We are marked with the sign of the cross in ashes on our forehead to symbolise penitence and as a reminder of the grief Christians have for the suffering of Jesus.

Lent offers us all a very special opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and to deepen our commitment to a way of life, rooted in our baptism. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we’ve done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need. I spoke to the students at assembly and at the liturgy about making a Lenten promise. Like all commitments it is good to put that in writing and to have it on display so that you are accountable. Perhaps you and your child could discuss this aspect of their Lenten journey together and help them to be more prayerful, to be more generous or to make a sacrifice over the next forty days. You could make a poster for their bedroom or to put on a noticeboard or the fridge! Perhaps it might just become a habit that will carry on beyond Lent.

**SPORT-MATTHEW ARMSTRONG**

Morning Training Club

Morning Training Club has started again for 2014. The sessions will be running on a Monday and Wednesday morning from 7:45-8:15. These sessions will be general fitness and will include some cross country training. If your child would like to be involved and hasn’t received a form, then please inform their classroom teacher.

District Sport

Congratulations to Jakob Rawlings for making the Beenleigh District AFL side to play at the Regional Trials on Tuesday 22 April at Broadbeach AFC. Well done Jakob and keep up the good work on the field.
PC: Poni Nyarsuk  PF: Shea Mason  1C: Ethan Unsworth
1F: Tristan Torralba  2C: Milan Wellington  2F: Zac Utratny
3C: Lilly James  3F: Alicia Connor  4C: Colby Bale
4F: Mackenzie Robson  5C: Erik Balint  5F: Kye Perandis
6F: Kent McMahon  7C: Shaun Love
Golden Gnome: 1st–3C, 3F. 2nd–7C, 6F. 3rd–2C, 2F.

STUDENT OF THE WEEK

Dear Parents………………..about your Leonardo - MARY MCBRIDE

Last week we completed the modelling of grade seven crosses in clay. It was a busy few hours working through the process. Mrs Jan who has been sick for a few weeks and unable to come to school couldn’t resist the clay workshop. She sat and worked with a couple of students for a few hours and then was driven home again. Everyone was pleased to see her. We will complete some of the grade six crosses this week and finish the rest next week. The crosses will dry for a week or so and then we will start the under glazing. It is a long process but a rewarding one.

Some of the students have requested special embellishments for their crosses and we will supply most of these. However sometimes it is extra special to have family or personal mementos attached to the crosses. Examples of these might be holy medals or jewellery that belonged to a family member that is significant. I have asked children who have expressed a wish to do this to talk to Mum and Dad about it and get their approval before bringing anything in. Adornment can pull the cross together. It’s not the icing on the cake but it can breathe life into the cross.

A big thank you to Mrs Jan, Jo and Ellen Keiseker and Kerry Towerton for their help on Friday – We couldn’t have done it without you. Also, we thank Victoria Lin not only for her wonderful smile which gives us much joy but for the time she puts in maintaining our underglazes for the different clay units.

We are going to make our St Mary MacKillop lady beetles with grade one and two students this week while we are in clay mode. Traditionally we create lady beetles every year in honour of St Mary MacKillop and I always think that if Mary was looking down on the art room while the children were creating them she would be smiling the biggest smile.

Grade three students were introduced to figurative drawing on Friday using models. It is important that the models are still and the students chosen to be models were focussed and very professional. Life drawing is considered an essential exponent of an artist’s education. It is like training to an athlete, practising scales to a musician – life drawing is the artist’s exercise.

Some weeks we present prizes to the younger students who have produced excellent art. These students must also demonstrate good listening skills and generally a good attitude towards fellow students and their work.

Congratulations to those students who have received awards so far this term.
The Seasons for Growth Program is an Australian based program for children who are experiencing grief and loss in their lives. These losses can include the loss of a parent or significant other (e.g. grandparents, siblings, etc.) through death, separation or divorce. This program aims to educate children who are experiencing grief to understand that the reactions associated with their losses are normal. It also helps children to develop skills for coping, problem solving and decision-making and for building peer support networks thus aiding the restoration of self-confidence and self-esteem. The Seasons for Growth Program is a whole school Program catering for children in Years 2 to 7.

As Sr. Jenny will be on leave during Term 2, this program will not be starting until Term 3. Which year levels it will be offered to will be determined by parent response to the form at the bottom of this program outline. I will contact parents/caregivers to let them know which year level/s will be involved. Please place the signed permission form in an envelope marked for Sr. Jenny’s attention and return to the school office by the end of Term 1. I can be contacted every day at St Joseph’s if you wish to know more about this program.

Thank you

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PLEASE RETURN TO THE OFFICE: Attention: Sr. Jenny

PERMISSION FORM FOR THE SEASONS FOR GROWTH PROGRAM

Child’s Name……………………………………………………………………… Year Level…………………………
Grief Situation (e.g. Divorce, death)

I give permission for my child to attend this program
Parent Signature ………………………………………………………………………………….

BOOKCLUB - LESLEY SOLAR

At St Joseph's, we place one book club order per term. All orders placed, gain us free books for the school library! On the due date, orders are collated, a total is made available for the library to access free books, and then the order is placed. MARK THE DATE! Book club due back Fri 21st March. Term 1’s order will be distributed AFTER we come back from holidays, as sometimes there are items on back order. Happy reading! SPECIAL ORDER: For parents who would like to order Easter books for delivery before the holidays please have your order in by the 14 March and mark the order EASTER BOOKS BOOKCLUB ORDER.

ST JOSEPH’S FAMILY CAMPING WEEKEND

We’re going camping, AGAIN! Past and present, young and old, experienced and novice, everyone is welcome at the St Joseph’s Family Camping weekend. Come along and meet new families and make new friends, share a story and a laugh and have a great time. We are trying a new location this year, so bring the canoe, raft, fishing rod or boat and kick the feet up at what is sure to be a great weekend.

When? 21st-23rd March (Friday – Sunday)
Where? Lake Moogerah Caravan and Camping Ground. Address: 1 Muller Park Road, Moogerah QLD 4309
W: http://moogerah.com/ Phone:(07) 5463 0141
Cost? $24 per night (2 People). $7 per extra person on site per night. Payments made on arrival.
Bookings: Bookings through Josh O’Keeffe – jokeeffe@bne.catholic.edu.au or return the below form to the office. Communal gathering area and fire place will be available.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend for married couples. 13 – 15 June 2014 :
Santa Teresa Spirituality Centre, Ormiston (QLD)
Contact: Tamara and Scott Menteith, 07 4634 3559, stjmen@aapt.net.au Information website: www.wwme.org.au

Beenleigh Scout Group- Joey Scouts
Have a 6 & 7 year who loves fun and adventure?
6:30pm to 7:30pm Tuesdays. For more details call 0490 181 933