Welcome to Term 1, Week 5 at St Joseph's Tobruk!

Next Wednesday, 22 February, is Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Church season of Lent – a time of preparing for the joy of the resurrection of Jesus, celebrated at Easter. Traditionally, Lent is a time of fasting, prayer and almsgiving (giving to the poor). Through fasting we become more disciplined in ourselves and our eating habits, and empathise – even if it is only for a short period of time – with those who are poor and hungry. Through prayer we deepen our relationship with our God. Almsgiving is a practical way in which we can help those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

On Ash Wednesday the children from Years 4 to 7 will receive the ashes at 9.00am mass. Prep to Year 3 will have a liturgy in the Church starting at 11.45am, at which they will receive the ashes. When the sign of the cross is traced on our foreheads we are reminded that growing to be more like Jesus in our everyday lives often requires sacrifice. In reaching out to others for example we deny our own desires and wants, putting them aside for the good of another.

Project Compassion boxes will be placed in each classroom during Lent. Families are encouraged to donate through Project Compassion to Caritas Australia, a Catholic charity that assists people across the world and in Australia.

SHROVE TUESDAY

Why do we have ‘pancake Tuesday’ before the beginning of the Church season of Lent? It’s lovely to indulge occasionally, and if you like pancakes, maple syrup and ice cream like I do, pancake Tuesday is a real treat! Pancake or Shrove Tuesday however, is not just a feast up before taking on the tradition of fasting during the season of Lent. In the time of Jesus the harvested wheat of this rural community was ground into flour and stored in earthen jars in a pantry. Before the new harvest, the old flour was used up or ‘shriven’ (thrown out) so that it would not contaminate the new flour. Sometimes the old flour was infested with moths and their larvae, leaving that cobweb like substance through the flour. If the old flour was good, the people would use it up to bake breads and treats, to make way for the new flour. In our Christian tradition, the significance of Shrove Tuesday should not be lost in the feast of pancakes. On Shrove Tuesday we symbolically get rid of the old flour and make way for the new, that is, we prepare to empty ourselves of bad habits or life-destroying attitudes and values to make way for life-giving ones. Enjoy the fun of pancake Tuesday by all means, but remember the Christian significance of the day as well.
FATHER FORGIVE THEM...
Jesus forgave those who nailed him to the cross: “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” Pope John Paul II met with and forgave the man who shot him.

One of our core values at St Joseph’s is forgiveness or reconciliation. Reconciliation means to come back together again, to be united again. The act of forgiving from the heart allows people who are separated to come back together again.

In the gospel stories, Jesus stands with people who are poor, tax collectors, prostitutes, lepers – people condemned by their own people and unable to raise themselves out of the ditch. Jesus loves them – ‘your sins are forgiven’. Because they are forgiven, because they are loved, they have the chance to change or to become. Put simply, Jesus loved them into life! He accepted them as they were and met them face to face as people. He restored their self-respect or their dignity as people. Have you ever been loved into life or loved back to life again? It’s like letting go of a huge bag of garbage that you have been carrying around for some time. Suddenly, it’s not there anymore – it’s just gone! Life is changed.

True forgiveness doesn’t demand a debt to be paid. It is often harder for us to forgive ourselves or to accept another’s forgiveness. True sorrow – it’s more than just saying sorry!

Mary MacKillop writes:
“If we cannot excuse everything we can at least excuse the intention.” 4.11.1884
“Forgive from your heart anyone who has pained you.” 12.12 1890
“Help one another, and forgive and forget anything painful in the past.” 9.8.1881

PREP 2013 INTERVIEWS
The enrolment interview process for Prep 2013 will begin soon. Families must submit an enrolment application for their prep-aged children even if they have siblings at St Joseph’s already. A number of families were ‘caught out’ during last year’s process as they had not submitted an enrolment application. As always, the numbers are fairly tight for next year’s intake with 47 applications coming from both existing families and new Catholic families. So if you haven’t put in an application, please do so immediately. Applications are available at the office.

MORE ABOUT FUNDING OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Last week I included in the newsletter a table which compared funding in government schools and Catholic schools. Our Executive Director, Mr David Hutton, writes with clarity about the funding of Australian schools: “Unfortunately, some people use misleading funding figures which confuse the issue. Historically non-government schools are funded mostly by the Commonwealth government and state schools receive most of their funding from the state governments. There is much commentary which only refers to the Commonwealth component, and therefore gives a distorted and misleading picture.

The only fair way to compare government funding for the different school sectors is to add together both the Commonwealth and the state contributions. Data published by ACARA on the My School website clearly shows the level of total government funding provided to the average student in state schools in 2011 was $10,562, in Catholic schools $7,708 and in independent schools $6,211.

A review of funding for all schools is timely. I look forward to an informed discussion following the release of the Gonski report which hopefully will provide us with a fair and just way forward that adequately resources all students according to their need. Simplistic and misleading ‘us and them’ commentary will not serve the future of education in Australia.”

I hope that the true picture of how schools are funded is finally portrayed in the media. For some reason, no-one seems interested in communicating the truth!

BEFORE SCHOOL
Teachers are on duty from 8.20am at which time the children are directed to drop their bags at the classroom (or designated area) before moving to the oval for play. Children arriving before this time gather in the area between the staffroom and the hall. They are expected to be seated at all times. There is no play.

Children arriving before 8.00am should be booked into OSHC for their safety as no school supervision is provided.

Some families are, however, dropping children to school far too early. Teachers do not go on duty until 8.20am and it is dangerous to leave children unsupervised even if they are in the school grounds. It is also not fair to the families who do the right thing by the school and their children and who enrol their children into before school care. I can appreciate that the cost of living is going up and working families need to find ways of cutting back budgets but the safety of children is paramount and an area not worth compromising. If a child were to be taken from the school grounds, we would not even know that the child was not at school until the roll was taken at 8.45am. This might be at least an hour after parents left them in the school grounds. Even then we would most likely assume that the child was sick and therefore was kept away from school. The child could therefore be
missing for the whole day before authorities were alerted.

If you are dropping your child to school before 8.00am, I ask that you either book your child into before school care, leave for work later or make other arrangements with families from Joey's who might be able to assist you with the morning drop off.

**YEAR 7 LEADERSHIP DAY**
The Year 7's were beautifully behaved and great ambassadors for St Joseph’s Tobruk at the Gold Coast Catholic Schools Year 7 Leadership Day at Clear Island Waters last Wednesday 15 February. This backs up their magnificent behaviour and co-operation at camp last week. Congratulations to the children and their teachers.

**SWIMMING**
Please ensure that children come to school prepared for their swimming lessons. Currently, Years 5, 6 & 7 are enjoying swimming lessons. Children will need sunscreen, swim shirt and togs. Phone calls cannot be made to parents for forgotten swimming items. They walk to the pool in thongs.

**NAIL POLISH**
Children are not permitted to wear nail polish to school. Sometimes children forget and come to school with it on. When this happens they will be issued with a ‘uniform infringement notice’. Should a history of non-compliance occur, parents will be contacted and asked to remove the nail polish before the child is allowed into the classroom.

**MOTHER’S DAY**
We need a convenor for the Mother's Day stall for this year. If you want further information about what's involved, Lesley Solar would be able to fill you in. Please don't be shy in putting yourself forward! Mother’s Day itself is on Sunday 13 May, so the stall would usually be held on the Thursday and Friday before (10-11 May).

**PARENT SOUNDING BOARD**
Schools in the archdiocese take part in a review process over a five year period. Each year schools review particular dimensions of their school to evaluate how they are going, applaud achievement, discern where there is room for improvement and engage in renewal processes.

I would like to invite parents to act as a ‘sounding board’ offering your thoughts on the areas we are currently reviewing and to contribute to our goals for 2012.

Our first ‘sounding board’ for 2012 will take place in the hall on Thursday 01 March from 8.45am to 10.45am. All parents are most welcome to attend. For catering purposes and for us to know how many tables and chairs we need to put out for this occasion, please notify Bron in the office of your intention to participate. Should you be unavailable on this occasion, please join us when other ‘sounding board’ forums are convened throughout the year.

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**SUPPORT TEACHER INCLUSIVE EDUCATION-SUZANNE HALL**

parents often ask me how they can best support their child’s learning. Two important things a parent can do but are often overlooked are to do with sleeping and eating.

**Make sure your child gets enough sleep.** When your child sleeps well, they are more settled, happy and ready for school the next day. Getting enough sleep strengthens a child’s immune system and may even reduce the risk of infection and illness. Did you know that children aged 6-9 years need **10-11 hours sleep a night**? For more useful information: [http://raisingchildren.net.au/sleep/school_age_sleep.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/sleep/school_age_sleep.html)

**Make sure they are eating healthy choices of food.** When your child eats well, they will get the best possible nutrition for growth, development and learning. When children learn about and eat good food from an early age, they develop healthy habits for life; eg; when your child learns that water is the best thing to drink, rather than soft drink or poppers, they are on their way to developing a healthy habit for life. For more information: [http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/choosing_good_food.html/context/218](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/choosing_good_food.html/context/218)

There is an app for everything nowadays, and now there is a very useful one for healthy choices while you are shopping: **FoodSwitch – and it is free**. "As parents, we all want our kids to eat well. However, up until now, it hasn't been easy to get help in a simple way that lets you make informed food choices for your family. The best part of the FoodSwitch app is that it takes the guesswork out of shopping by arming Australians with options for healthier products to purchase.” - Nicole Livingstone, FoodSwitch ambassador, Olympian and mum
Hi everyone, our school has been offered a great opportunity to raise funds for our school. On Saturday February 25 the P&F will be running a sausage sizzle at the new Woolworths Holmview (on top of Eden's Landing), selling sausages and drinks. We will be there from 9am till 3pm. We know it's a weekend but there is a chance we could raise $1000 or more for our school. These funds will go directly to a project such as air conditioning the library or music room. If you can spare as little as an hour on the day to cook snags or sell cold cans of drink, your valuable time will be greatly appreciated personally by me. Please call or text me if you can help out on 0447 710 730.

Thank you for your time, have a lovely weekend.

COMMUNITY NEWS

CHEERFIT
Cheerfit- Cheerleading and Fitness is pleased to announce that recreational and competitive cheerleading classes are now being held at Beenleigh PCYC. Times: 4-5pm: Youth (11 and under) 5-6.30pm: Teens (12 - 18 years old) No experience is necessary. Qualified coach with 5 years experience. Nicole on: 0415775600 or nfrancillon@bigpond.com

ARIAS ANGELS
ARIA Angels is an exciting interactive music and arts program for children 0-5 years with parents, grandparents and caregivers. Dates: Sessions for Term 1 are weekly on Thursdays Feb 16 – March 29. Time: 9.00 am – 10.30 am Where: St. Matthew's Parish Centre, 180 Bryants Rd, Loganholme/Cornubia Cost: $5 per family. This donation helps cover the cost of handouts, art supplies and morning tea.

SEASONS FOR GROWTH PROGRAM - SCHOOL PASTORAL WORKER: SR JENNY SCARI
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 or separation. It also includes the loss of a parent or significant other through separation or divorce. This programme aims to educate children who are experiencing grief to assist them 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 Programme is a whole school Program catering for children who are experiencing grief in Years 2 to 7.

Sr Jenny will offer this program starting the week beginning 5th March. 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 will be involved. Please place the signed permission form in an envelope marked for Sr Jenny’s attention and return to the school office.

I can be contacted every day at St Joseph’s if you wish to know more about this program.

PLEASE RETURN TO THE OFFICE: Attention SR JENNY

PERMISSION FORM FOR THE SEASONS FOR GROWTH PROGRAM
Child’s Name __________________________________________ Year Level & Class _______________________

Grief Situation (e.g. Divorce, death) ________________________________________________________________

I give permission for my child to attend this program.

_________________________ __________________________
Parent Signature Date