Dear Parents/ Caregivers,

Last week was a great opportunity to enter into the school community through our Parent Information evening and our Welcome BBQ. I believe these were very important to setting up your child for a successful year. Thanks for your involvement.

Should there be a need throughout the year, please do not hesitate to contact either the classroom teacher, or me, should you have any concerns. Having good communication links is vital in all good schools. Please look for your copy of the newsletter each Tuesday.

**BBQ—Bunnings**

After a big week of school events, a fabulous group of staff, parents and friends ran a very successful BBQ day through Bunnings. Profits will assist the P and F in the support and work that they will do throughout the year. Congratulations and well done to all.

The first P and F meeting for the year, and it does involve the Annual General Meeting, is scheduled for Wednesday, 11th March at 6.00 pm. Please mark it in your calendar and I would encourage as many as possible to make it along to this meeting.

**Lent**

Ash Wednesday heralds the start of the Lenten season tomorrow. All classes will be involved in liturgies and details are on Mrs Lysaght’s RE page. I encourage you to enter this Lenten journey with your child. I commend the “Families Living God’s Mercy” sheet as a very worthwhile resource for you.

The time honoured traditions of prayer, fasting and almsgiving have been given an appropriate and challenging address, calling us to be all that we can be. Celebrate Lent as a family this year.

**Working Bee**

My apologies for any confusion from last week. A working bee is scheduled for Saturday, 28th February, 8.00—10.00 am to spruce up our school. Please join in this wonderful community building exercise—we need your help! Bring along your gardening tools!

**School Officer Position**

At the end of last year we farewelled Mrs Bortolussi as she retired. I have advertised for a suitably qualified person to fill that position. It is advertised through Catholic Jobs on line and closes on Friday this week. I look forward to the support that will come for your children and will announce the successful applicant in due course.

**Leadership Team conference**.

Mrs Ioannides, Mrs Lysaght and I will be out of the school from Wednesday afternoon for the rest of the week as we formulate this year’s Action Plan. (These plans are posted on the school web site and available for your perusal.) My thanks to Mrs Oudyn and Mr Everett for agreeing to take care of the school in our absence.

**Swimming**

Thanks for sending in the swimming permission notes. Teachers hold these and they are current for the year. This term, there are 3 swimming days for Years 1—6, beginning on the 19th and 20th February. All children in those year levels are involved.

**Clubs**

To support children and families, a number of clubs exist in the school. A good number have registered for the Homework Club on a Tuesday afternoon—thanks. A simple breakfast is available on Monday and Tuesday mornings from 8.00 am and for $1.00. It is available to all.

Lunchtime Club operates at school at lunch times for students needing/wanting extra support. Here social skills are taught as well as social support given.

**Smooth Running**

Thanks for your efforts to have a safe zone around the school. Please observe all traffic signs, use the crossing and have children into school on time.

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Thank you for supporting our school events

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**Student Awards**

For Resilience:

- PG: Laylah Hannover
- PW: Siobhan McCormack
- PB: Arul Croos

1G: Chris Mugisha
1W: Moses Dickson
1B: David Ngabo
2G: Selihom Wedenze Atefa
2W: Skye Laul
2B: Christina Tran
3G: Charli-An Pham
3W: Kevin Lam
3B: Lachlan Menefata
4G: Miracle Bathan
4W: Daisy Lola
5G: Chen Qiu
5W: Michael Fitzgerald
6G: Zack Wright
6W Maliqua Tenisio

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Please note: First school fees for the year are included with this newsletter.
Lent: A time of Grace to start afresh

This Wednesday we celebrate the start of the Church’s Season of Lent when we gather in the Church for Ash Wednesday. On this occasion we will be marked with a cross of ashes on our forehead as a reminder that we are beginning our journey through Lent and towards Easter. The ashes on our foreheads are not only a reminder of the ideals of this Lenten season but also our commitment to them.

The Church gives us Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of the time called Lent, which lasts for 40 days. 40 Days is a number with symbolic meaning. The Jews spent 40 years in the desert on their way to the Promised Land. Jesus spent 40 days and 40 nights fasting in the desert before beginning his ministry.

Lent is a time of preparation for Easter when Jesus will rise from the dead. During Lent we will see a difference in our Church as we say goodbye to the green colour of Ordinary Time and change to the purple of Lent. Lent ends on the evening of Holy Thursday. We then begin the Triduum, the most sacred three days of the year, lasting through Easter Sunday morning.

During Lent we try hard to focus on 3 elements: PRAYER, FASTING and ALMSGIVING. Generously giving money to Project Compassion and praying for those people who will receive our donations of help is one way we can actively participate in the Lenten expectations of Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving.

Date Claimers ...

This week marks the start of Lent. Our Ash Wednesday liturgies are in the Church at the following times:


This Friday, 20 February, 3G will lead us for our Assembly Prayer. Parents and friends are most welcome to join us in Mercy Hall at 8:40. NEXT Friday 4G will lead us in our Assembly Prayer.

We will begin our weekly Class liturgies with 4W and 1B on Thursday 5 March.

Project Compassion: Food for Life

Each year, Project Compassion runs during Lent starting on Ash Wednesday. Again this year we are asking people from St Mark’s to join with others across Australia to help raise money and offer hope to the millions of families who fight for justice, peace and survival every day.

The theme for Project Compassion 2015 is “Food for Life”. Food is essential for all life, yet many of the world’s poorest people do not have food security. That means they live from day-to-day, uncertain of how to afford or how to access their next meal. Without food, the rest of life is impossible to contemplate: how can you plan for the future or educate your children when you fear you will be hungry?

As Pope Francis says: “It is a well-known fact that current levels of production are sufficient, yet millions of people are still suffering and dying of starvation. This is truly scandalous.”

Project Compassion 2015 explores how Caritas Australia is helping the world’s poorest people establish sustainable food, walking with them as they free themselves from the burden of food insecurity and develop new, improved income streams for a better future.

Stories from Fiji, Niger, Indonesia, Peru, Nepal and Australia show how our supporters help people to grow and access food for life.

More information coming soon about how your family can support this worthwhile cause!! And please take some time to pray for those we support who are in need.

Virtue of the Week: Respect

What is Respect?

Being respectful is an attitude of honouring people and caring about their rights. Being respectful is reflected in the way we treat one another (& their belongings) and the way we speak. Being respectful includes self-respect. You protect your own rights, such as privacy and modesty. If anyone violates your rights, even if it is an elder, this must be stopped. Every woman, man and child was created by God, and we all deserve respect.

You are practising respect when you …

- Treat everyone the way you would like to be treated.
- Listen to the wisdom of elders.
- Look after your body and your rights.

Mrs Nikki Lysaght
Assistant Principal Religious Education
OPEN MORNING: SETON COLLEGE
Tuesday 3rd March starting at 9am
in the College Chapel with an Information Session
followed by a tour of the College.
The Open Morning will conclude at 10.30am

SETON COLLEGE, MT GRAVATT EAST, a Catholic Co-educational College, is now accepting enrolment applications from students wishing to attend the College in Year 7 2016 and 2017 (maximum Year 7 enrolment is 65 students).

Please visit the College website at http://www.seton.qld.edu.au or phone 3291 5333 to obtain an enrolment package.

Wildlife friendly school
St Mark’s is a “wildlife friendly” school. An information afternoon will be held on the 2nd of March at 3.15pm. All are welcome to attend in the Mercy Hall meeting room. The Brisbane City Council will be delivering a presentation.

There will be a butterfly garden on our school grounds!

District Sport Trials
Welcome to a new year of Sport at St Mark’s. Just a couple of reminders in regards to sport at St Mark’s. As we are a financial member of the Inala Sports Association, students are entitled to trial for district teams in the respective sports offered. It is generally for students turning 11 or 12 in 2015, although this can vary from sport to sport. While I know students who are suitable for most sports, there are, on occasions some sports that I am unaware students participate in. Listed are the sports students at St Mark’s are eligible to trial for:

- Swimming
- Cross Country
- Basketball
- Softball
- Netball
- Rugby Union
- AFL
- Tennis
- Rugby League
- Cricket
- Soccer
- Athletics
- Touch Football
- Volleyball

Should your child compete in any of these sports at a standard consistent with a district level, please let me know and I can pass on the relevant trial information.

We wish the eight students representing St Mark’s in the Inala District Swimming Carnival this Thursday all the best. Also a reminder, our two swimming preparation days for this year’s School Carnival are Thursday February 19 and Friday February 20 with the Whole School Carnival being held on Thursday February 26 at Dunlop Park Pool, Corinda.

TIRED OF FIGHTING WITH YOUR TEENAGER?
STRUGGLING TO DEAL WITH THEIR EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOUR?
COME TO A FREE 2-HOUR PARENTING SEMINAR!

Parents of teenagers aged 11 to 16 years are invited to take part in new research by attending a seminar based on the successful Teen Triple P: Positive Parenting Program.

Parents can choose to attend one of two seminars:
- Reducing Family Conflict
- Coping With Teenagers’ Emotions

As parents can only attend one seminar, please choose the topic that concerns you most.

Dates: Term 1 and 2, 2015
Venues: PCYC Bayside, Carindale, Everton Hills & Inala and UQ St Lucia

Learn to more effectively resolve conflict
- Learn to help your teenager cope with difficult emotions
- Teach your teen better problem-solving skills
- Improve family relationships
- Get support from a trained psychologist
- Meet other parents of teenagers

To find out more or register your interest:
W: https://exp.psy.uq.edu.au/parentingteens
E: parentingteens@uq.edu.au
P: 3365 7307

CYBER SAFETY TIP #1
Your children’s digital footprint is the mark they leave on the Internet. This mark may be made by posts, photos, videos, emails and comments made on games and forums. To protect their digital footprint, teach them to think before they post, not post anything they wouldn’t say, make sure profiles are set to private and only post appropriate pictures and videos.

Leesa and Therese
Teacher Librarians
Thank you for a successful BBQ
Thank you to the students, teachers & parents who helped. **Thank you to DJ SAM!**

Congratulations to Marah 3B. Her team won the Junior Tap Category, Diamond Level

St Mark’s Working Bee
Saturday 28th February 8AM—10AM
Please bring along a hat, garden gloves and gardening tools. Thank you for your support.

BUNNINGS BBQ A HIT!
Thank you to Simone, Rosie, Leo, Iosefo, Margaret, Anna, Ena, Oscar, Veronica, Mick, Liza, Mary & teachers!