Our Vision
Mercy Regional College serves a wide rural community which values growth and diversity in Catholic Education in the Mercy tradition.

Our Mission
In the Spirit of the Gospels we commit ourselves to the core values of community, inclusiveness, learning, care, justice and mercy, excellence and achievement.

Our Focus for 2009
Learning: Through the Mercy tradition we encourage our community to seek knowledge, to nurture curiosity and to love learning.

Welcome Back to Term 3
Welcome back for the commencement of Term Three. I trust that the holiday break enabled students and their families to spend some precious time together and that all students have returned with the enthusiasm and determination to tackle the second half of the year.

Staffing
Mrs. Danae Fraser commenced her maternity leave at the end of last term. We wish Danae all the very best for impending birth of her first child. We welcome back Mrs. Sarah Gellie who will replace Mrs. Fraser. We also welcome back Mr. Lachie Lee, Mrs. Jenny Phillips and Ms. Rebecca Rees after periods of leave and travel overseas. Mr. Kerin Glennen will be away for the first four weeks of Term 3. During this time Mrs. Margaret Leahy will be Acting Deputy Principal.

Year 9 Melbourne Camp
Since the decision to postpone the Year 9 Camp we have been endeavouring to find another date along with rescheduling the bookings that had been made for accommodation and activities that were part of the original program.

I am pleased to advise that the Year 9 Camp will now take place in Term 4 from Wednesday, 14th October to Friday, 16th October, 2009. A very similar program will be arranged for the three days to that of the original camp. I am very grateful to Mr Michael Clements who has done a lot of rescheduling to allow the camp to proceed.

While the various deposits and the cost of accommodation from the previous camp cannot be recovered, there will be no additional cost to families for the Camp. The payments that have been made along with the medical forms, behavioural contracts and consent forms completed last term will be used for this camp. However, if your child’s medical condition has changed please contact Mr Clements to make the necessary changes.

I trust that our Year 9 students will enjoy their time in the city and that the Camp will proceed with little cause for concern.

Ballarat Diocesan Schools Board
There are a number of bodies responsible for Catholic Education. At the federal level there is the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), at a state level, the Catholic Education of Victoria (CECV) operates within the Ballarat Diocese, the Ballarat Diocesan Schools Board (BDSB) which reports to the Bishop about Catholic Education.

The Ballarat Diocesan School Board (BDSB) was established by Bishop Peter Connors in December 2000. The Board advises the Bishop in relation to all matters pertaining to Catholic Education in the diocese and recommends policies for implementation of programs in appropriate areas.

The Board will strive to provide for the educational needs of the school in the diocese and instrumental in the formation of policies to meet such needs.

In particular the Board will:
- Be a model for Catholic leadership.
- Be responsible for the Diocesan Education Strategic Plan and the Annual Action Plan.
• Advocate for and promote Catholic education in the Diocese.
• Ensure the continuity and promotion of the Catholic identity of schools in the Diocese.
• Develop policies, protocols and guidelines on issues, operations and programs which have applications across the schools of the Diocese.
• Liaise with relevant government authorities and agencies and non-government organizations on behalf of school education in the Diocese.
• Liaise with other Diocesan agencies engaged in education, faith development and family/personal services.
• Initiate commission and monitor on-going research into school education.
• Provide mechanisms for consultation, co-operation and administration as may be considered necessary for the proper planning of Catholic education in the Diocese.

Next week, the Ballarat Diocesan Schools Board will meet for two days at Mercy Regional College and will also host a dinner at the College on Wednesday evening for the School Boards of Mercy Regional College, St Patrick’s School Camperdown, St Thomas’ School Terang and St Colman’s School, Mortlake, as well as the Catholic schools from the Colac area. The members of the Board are: Bishop Peter Connors, Fr. Adrian McInerney (Chairperson), Fr. Peter Sherman, Dr. Anne Hunt, Mr. Larry Burn, Dr. Liam Davison, Sr. Margaret Carmody, Mr. Peter Kerwan, Dr. Andrew Watson, Mrs. Jane Collins, Ms. Corrie Conway-Weel and Mrs. Jill Eales.

Congratulations

Last week I received notification from The Deputy Prime Minister, Ms Julia Gillard that Nicholas McConnell (Year 12, 2008) has been awarded a 2008 Australian Vocational Student Prize. The prize recognises high-achieving students who completed their Year 12 studies in 2008 while undertaking Vocational Education and Training in schools, or an Australian School-based Apprenticeship. In addition, the prize promotes the benefits of studying vocational education while at school and reflects the commitment of schools, training providers and employers to making vocational educational learning a valuable experience for students.

Since the inception of the Australian Vocational Student Prize in 2005 Mercy Regional College has had a student receive the award each year. This is a wonderful testament to our vocational education programs offered at Mercy.

Nick will receive a certificate and $2000. Congratulations Nick, on being awarded the 2008 Australian Vocational Student Prize!

Youth Allowance

Many of you will be aware that in the recent Federal Budget, it was announced that there would be changes to the Youth allowance criteria to gain independent status. These changes will have significant impact on our students and other students from the country who wish to pursue studies and by necessity are required to live away from home to do so. Previously, students were required to earn $19,500 in the preceding 18 months to qualify as independent and hence many defer studies for twelve months to qualify and make tertiary study more affordable. The changes appear to be that future students would need to work 30 hours per week for at least 18 months and this becomes effective from 1st January, 2010. This change will have an impact on two groups of students. The first is those presently doing a gap year and are working to qualify. They may no longer meet the guidelines and the second is our current students who had hoped to apply. Some might argue that this change discriminates against country students.

The changes to the Youth Allowance, as outlined above, have been referred to a Senate Inquiry into Rural and Regional Access to Secondary and Tertiary Education Opportunities. If you are interested, the website for the Senate Committee is: http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/rrat_ctte/rural_and_regional_education/index.htm

Mary MacKillop

It was interesting to note over the holidays that whilst en route to the G20 Summit Prime minister Kevin Rudd had an audience with the Pope and one agenda item was the canonisation of Mary MacKillop. This was very appropriate in this the 100th anniversary year of the death of Mary MacKillop, in Sydney, on the 8th August. To celebrate, the Sisters of St Joseph have produced a document, called “towards Canonisation Mary MacKillop 1842 – 1909”, in the hope and preparation of that event. A copy of this document has been ordered for each of our students. To conclude, I leave you with the Mary MacKillop prayer:

Most loving God,

We thank you for the example of Blessed Mary MacKillop,
Who in her living of the Gospel witnessed the human dignity of each person
She faced life's challenges with faith and courage
We pray through her intercession four our needs ..........
May her holiness soon be acknowledge by the universal Church.
We make this prayer through Jesus the Lord.

Amen

Along the Track

I have attached to this newsletter, for your interest, on page 6, a reflection title “The Encounter” written by Jim Quilinan from the Diocesan Catholic Education Office in Warragul. I hope you enjoy this reading.

Andrew Watson
PRINCIPAL
**Mercy Awards**

**VCE (Yr 11 & 12) Mercy Award**

[Image]

Michael Harney for organizing games for house points with Year 9 and 10’s.

**Middle School (Yr 9 & 10) Mercy Award**

Nicola Sharp for putting in a fantastic Week 1 of their community visiting program at Merinda Lodge last week.

**Junior School (Yr 7 & 8) Mercy Award**

[Image]

Matt O’Brien for showing great initiative whenever help is needed in and around the classroom.

**Ministry Retreat**

*Report by: Sharni Blake, Georgia Muir, Millicent Cabel*

The following report was delivered at the end of term assembly after 17 Year 11 and 12 students took part in an Edmund Rice Street Ministry Retreat.

The 24th to the 25th of June will be days that will live in our memories forever. Seventeen Year 11’s & 12’s accepted the opportunity to travel to Melbourne to help the disadvantaged people the forgotten people of society. The first night we split into groups to venture out into the very real scenarios that homeless people deal with every night. Confronted with people of different cultures, different views on the world and certainly different morals, I think it’s fair to say, on behalf of everyone, that we were extremely skeptical about the situation placed before us. Our worries were soon turned to excitement when we were introduced to the characters who ruled the streets. The soup trains gave out food packages while the ladies who went to Rosie’s handed out tea, coffee and Milo. It was an amazing eye-opener to see the people of the street and all joining together, with no judgment involved. For once, we saw them as equals, all up for a chat and very willing to let us in on their life stories which proved both sad and extremely inspirational. After two hours of speaking to these amazing people, we all took the journey back to South Yarra to reflect on our night. Stories were told of friendships made and people who left lasting impacts which we will honestly never forget. It was then straight to bed on the floor of a hall, with excited chatter for tomorrow’s outings echoing and filling the hall. After Margaret’s threats to prod us with her knitting needles, we all went to sleep, ready for the busy day ahead of us.

We woke early the next day, all with sore backs from sleeping on the hard floor but were surprisingly up and ready by the time Rish, our team leader, wanted to leave. Six different groups went off to different parts of Melbourne to learn ways in which the people of Melbourne are helping the less advantaged. One group ventured to The Asylum Seekers Resource Centre where they participated in cooking and running the moneyless shop, as well as being able to speak briefly to the individuals taking up residency there. Overall, the girls agreed that it proved to be rewarding and they were happy to help out.

Another group went to Interact learning centre. This placement helped adults with disabilities, both physical and mental, learn how to undertake basic everyday activities by being involved with outings and classes focused on the area of their personal requirements for development. Another group went to a school for the young disabled children, where they went to a farm to feed the animals with the children and give them some company along the way.

There were three nursing home placements. All three were founded by Religious Sisters and were aimed at housing the homeless who were now too old to look after themselves in boarding homes. Two out of the three nursing homes had many dementia patients, while the Prague house was aimed to house the mentally ill. Board games of all sorts were played, but Bingo proved to be a favourite with all three of the placements. Overall, the residents were all pleased to see us and were thankful for taking the time out of our lives to speak to them.

After the placements, we returned to South Yarra to reflect on our experiences. From discussing what we encountered it became evident that we had all gained insight, acceptance and understanding of the hardship endured by the disadvantaged in society. We really recommend that the current year 10 and year 11 students consider participating in the street retreat, as it is a worthwhile and truly fulfilling experience.

We would like to thank Mr. Danny Gordon for his patience and cheerful company as our driver and Ashlee Ludeman for her exceptional navigational skills.
Tuesday 28th July
- Board Meeting – 7.30pm

Wednesday 29th July
- Ballarat Diocesan Schools Board visit to MRC

Thursday 30th July
- Ballarat Diocesan Schools Board visit to MRC

Monday 3rd August
- Unit 3 Examination Results released
- PTFA Meeting McAuley Campus – 7.30pm
- Enrolment Interviews McAuley Campus: 3:30 - 5:30pm

Tuesday 4th August
- Enrolment Interviews O’Keeffe Campus 3:30 – 6:00pm

Wednesday 5th August
- Enrolment Interviews McAuley Campus: 3:30 - 5:30pm
- Year 10 Boys Retreat commences

Thursday 6th August
- Year 10 Boys Retreat concludes
- Year 10 Girls Retreat commences

Friday 7th August
- Year 10 Girls Retreat concludes

Thursday 13th August
- Twilight Theology @ McAuley Campus 4–6.00pm

Monday 17th August
- MID TERM BREAK – no classes

Tuesday 25th August
- Board Meeting – 7.30pm

Friday 28th August
- Frayne Speech Festival – Mt Lilydale Mercy College

Monday 31st August
- PTFA Meeting @ O’Keeffe Campus – 7.30pm

Friday 18th September
- Term 3 concludes at 2.10pm

From the Director of Teaching and Learning
Mrs Lisa Pope

Upcoming Career Days

24th - 26th July - The Herald Sun Careers Expo (10am - 4pm). Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
29th July - LaTrobe (Bundoora) Year 10 VCE Information evening (6.00-8.00pm) to register
www.latrobe.edu.au/vceexpo
1st August - Monash Open Day (Berwick, Gippsland, Parkville and Peninsula)
2nd August - Granadi School of Design Open Day (10.30-4.00pm)
2nd August - Monash Open Day (Caulfield and Clayton)
9th August - Australian College of Sports Therapy Open day (12-3pm) www.sportstherapy.edu.au
9th August - Deakin Waterfront and Warrnambool Campuses Geelong Open Day (10am - 3pm)
9th August - RMIT Open Day
9th August - William Angliss Open Day (10am to 4pm)
15th August - Holmesglen TAFE Open Day www.holmesglen.edu.au
16th August - ACU Open day - Melbourne
16th August - Deakin Warnambool Open Day (10am-2pm)
16th August - Open Day La Trobe: Bendigo
16th August - Open Day Photography Studies College Southbank www.psc.edu.au
16th August - Open Day Melbourne University (10am - 4pm) www.openday.unimelb.edu.au
16th August - Swinburne Open Day
17th August - Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts, Geelong 7.00pm (Mercure Hotel, Cnr Gherringap and Myers St, Geelong)
18th August - Monash Parent Information Sessions Ballarat 5.30pm (Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts, Howitt St, Ballarat)
23rd August - Deakin Burwood (10am - 4pm)
30th August - ACU Open Day Ballarat
30th August - University of Ballarat Open Day (10am - 3pm) www.ballarat.edu.au/openday
22nd September - Discover Deakin (all campuses) - Years 10,11,12 students - register on website www.deakin.edu.au/discover
24th September - Talk and Tour La Trobe: Bundoora
28th September - Discover Deakin (all campuses) - Years 10, 11, 12 students - register on website www.deakin.edu.au/discover

For more information on career links or University/TAFE links visit the College website http://www.mercy.vic.edu.au/careers.asp. For more information, please feel free to email the Careers teacher on info@mercy.vic.edu.au

For more Career Information refer to the college website www.mercy.vic.edu.au/careers.asp

Celebration of WYD08 First Anniversary

July 15th - 20th marks the first anniversary of World Youth Day in Sydney. To mark the occasion the Diocesan Youth Council has organised a celebration on Sunday August 9th, in St Patrick’s Cathedral Hall, commencing at 3.00pm. The afternoon will contain a reflection on WYD08 one year on, some preliminary information on WYD in Madrid, Spain in August 2011 and a catechesis session led by Bishop Peter. At the 5.00pm Mass in St Patrick’s Cathedral, members of the newly formed Diocesan Youth Council will be commissioned by the Bishop. The celebration will conclude with the sharing of a pizza meal in the Hall. All young people will be most welcome.

For more information, please feel free to email the Careers teacher on info@mercy.vic.edu.au
Volunteers Needed
If there are any parents who are able to assist in the canteen at the O'Keeffe Campus, Noorat, on a Monday, Thursday or Friday at lunchtime from 12.50pm - 1.20pm, could you please contact Maureen O'Loughlan at O'Keeffe on 5592 5353.
Sometime last year I read an article written by a regular visitor to a patient in a hospice for the dying. This hospice, the visitor wrote, was run by doctors and staff with a strong Catholic faith. I recall reading:

They undertook their work with genuine kindness and joy and that kindness and joy (and perhaps their faith) seemed to sustain the dying, and dying is easier if you think you have somewhere to go. But to me it seemed easier for everyone if the people caring for you believe it.

Sadly I think the author missed the point. Dying may or may not be easier if you think you have somewhere to go but rather the kindness and joy of those working in the hospice was the important point, not simply their belief in an afterlife. A few weeks before he was elected pope, Cardinal Ratzinger said at the funeral of Luigi Ghislanzoni, founder of the renewal movement known as Communion and Liberation, “Christianity is not an intellectual system, a collection of dogmas, or a moralism. Christianity is instead an encounter, a love story, an event.” Of course, Christianity entails dogmas and doctrines but faith is not simply a set of beliefs – dogmas and doctrines try to catalogue and describe God’s involvement in human history, God’s invitation to relationship. Faith is about how we live out our belief in God’s invitation to friendship. Christianity is a love story, an encounter with “the human face of God,” Jesus Christ. We find that face in the people around us. Our vocation or mission is to enable others to have that encounter – these faith-filled people at the hospice were living out their version of Pope Benedict’s ‘love story’.

That love story is being enacted around us every day. The author of this article experienced in a dramatic way the encounter with the human face of God in the lives of those in this hospice. Every day it is being enacted in families, in schools, in hospitals, on the streets, in homeless shelters, in workplaces – just about everywhere. This love story, this encounter is what baptism is all about. Firstly, Baptism recognises and formally responds to God’s call to friendship, to relationship. By baptism we respond to our belief that the desire for God is written in our human heart, because each one of us is created by God and for God. In Baptism we also acknowledge the faithful and constant love of God – that God never ceases to draw each person to himself. (CCC#2).

What does being created ‘for God’ mean? God never ceases to draw each of us because our life-time search for happiness and meaning in life is really a very deep seated search for God, it is part of our nature as human beings. That search is not a solitary journey but rather it is lived out in community. Faith needs a community of believers. Belief is made easier if those around believe. Theologians tell us that ‘context is everything’.

We know how to be believers and how to respond to God’s call when we are inside communities that help carry that for us. Communities within which most everyone seem to believe, when everyone seems to have the same set of moral values. Since everyone else is doing this, it probably makes sense.

That’s why, from a very early age, children need to be able to experience the faith of their parents. Baptism is also a commitment by parents to provide that context, that encouragement, that environment for faith to be ignited and to grow. It is a commitment to enable them to see faith in action. Baptism is about making a commitment to God’s invitation to relationship, to friendship – for children, parents make that commitment on their behalf.

By any measure, Baptism is an extraordinary gift. That is why Pope Benedict calls it an encounter, a love story. Baptism is not a single event, something that happens in a church on a particular Sunday. Like the first covenant of old with the Jewish people, by Baptism God enters into a continuing relationship, an agreement, a contract with us. And we with God.

Deep down, through Baptism we know we are loved. At Baptism we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit which marks the beginning of our spiritual journey in life. God walks with us on this journey, giving us a new direction, a new life in Jesus Christ. Baptism offers forgiveness of sins and thus we become better able to respond to God’s love and in turn to love other people and ourselves more fully.

Our Faith tells us that all of us born, made in God’s image and likeness, that we are blessed, that we are uniquely gifted by God. Baptism offers even more – we are reborn as children of God. Baptism sets us apart and offers us an extraordinary intimacy with God. We become brothers and sisters in a new family that includes Christians all over the world. At the same time it calls us into a deeper solidarity with others.

The grace we receive at Baptism, the gifts of the Holy Spirit we receive, help us throughout life to form relationships with others based on love, mutual respect and forgiveness.

So those people with the ‘strong Catholic faith’ in the hospice were living out their invitation to friendship with God – their baptismal call, making this love story real, providing a context, inviting friendship, fanning the flame of the desire for God in each of us. God never ceases to draw each person and that is done through the lives and example of people like you and I.

Regards
Jim Quillinan

Phone: 0401 933 023
Email: jquillinan@dcs.nsw.edu.au

Along the track

The Encounter

Diocesan Catholic Education Office PO Box 322 Warragul Vic 3820 Australia

2 June 2009
STRENGTHENING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS
Warrnambool & Portland Term 3 2009

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| Managing difficult behaviour in children - 1-2-3 Magic & Emotion Coaching | For parents of children aged 2-12 years
  • Manage difficult behaviour
  • Encourage good behaviour
  • Lessen parental feelings of frustration & stress
  • Help children to understand and better manage their emotions | Monday 3 & 10 Aug | 6pm-9pm       | Centacare Warrnambool |
| Managing difficult behaviour in children - 1-2-3 Magic & Emotion Coaching | For parents of children aged 2-12 years
  • Manage difficult behaviour
  • Encourage good behaviour
  • Lessen parental feelings of frustration & stress
  • Help children to understand and better manage their emotions | Thursday 6 & 13 Aug | 10.30am-1.30pm | Portland Library |
| Parenting Young Adolescents              | For parents of children aged 13-14 years
  • Adolescent development
  • Parenting traps
  • Connecting & Communicating
  • Setting boundaries | Thursday 20 & 27 Aug | 10am-1pm      | Centacare Warrnambool |

Enquiries and bookings contact
Madeleine or Carol on: 55593000
Costs:
Managing difficult behaviour in children - 1-2-3 Magic & Emotion Coaching $30.00
Parenting Young Adolescents $30.00
Concession available
Sorry no child care available

IT'S TRUE PUPPY LOVE FOR WARRNAMBOOL
Being a Seeing Eye Dog puppy carer is one of the most enjoyable ways to volunteer.

You get to experience the joy of looking after an adorable puppy without any of the associated costs and, at the same time, assist someone who is blind to live the life they choose.

For the first time ever, Seeing Eye Dogs Australia is urgently in need of loving homes for puppies in and around Warrnambool.

To find out more call 55602308 or visit www.seda.org.au today.
OPEN DAY
SUNDAY 9 AUGUST 10AM - 2PM

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Comfortable Student Accommodation is available, including meals, recreational facilities, and swimming pool.

DAMASCUS COLLEGE - "Tour of New Buildings"
Past students of Damascus College and each of our foundation schools; St Martin’s in the Pines, Sacred Heart College, St Paul’s Technical College and their families are invited to visit the Mt Clear campus to tour our new and refurbished buildings.
The day will begin at 2pm with a welcome and introduction followed by entertainment, tours and afternoon tea.

There will be an opportunity to meet with staff, students and Association members.

DATE: Sunday September 13th
TIME: 2 - 4 pm
COST: $5 for Devonshire Tea

For catering purposes please RSVP by 7th September. Phone: 5337 2382 or Email connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au<mailto:connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au>