From the Co-Principals

This is the final Marian News for the year and it captures a very busy last couple of weeks.

Advent Begins

We enter the period of Advent, a time of waiting and preparation for the birth of Christ. Fr Ron Rolheiser, the US theologian writes:

"Advent is meant to be a time of preparation for Christmas; but for many of us it is not exactly a time for the kind of preparation that enables Christ to be born more deeply in our lives. Instead our preparation for Christmas is mostly a time of making ready to celebrate with our families, friends, and colleagues.

The end result is that, like the biblical innkeepers who had no room for Mary and Joseph at the first Christmas, we generally arrive at Christmas with "no room at the inn", no space in our lives for a spiritual rebirth. Our hearts are good, we want Christmas to renew us spiritually, but our lives are too pressured, too full of activity and tiredness, for us to have any real energy to make Christmas a special time of spiritual renewal for ourselves. The spirit of Christmas is still in us, real, but lying like a neglected baby in the straw waiting to be picked up. And we do intend to pick up the baby, but simply never get around to it."

In the second reading at last Sunday's mass we were called to be ready, to wake up and live our lives in the light. In this busy and often chaotic time of the year let us look for ways that we can live in the light, bring some of the light of hope we hold in Christ’s birth to others, and in doing so make room for Christ to be re-born in our hearts.

YEAR 12 GRADUATION MASS AND DINNER

It is important to finish off a particular stage of life in a special way. The Year 12 students of 2016 were given a wonderful send-off on Monday night with the Graduation Mass and Dinner. The Mass, celebrated by Father Jude Pirotta, was a true testimony of the contribution of faith to these young women’s journey at Marian. Acknowledging our connection with Christ, St Brigid, Daniel Delany and the Brigidine tradition we celebrated this special ending in a spiritual manner. At the end of Mass all of the Year 12 students were presented to the congregation and they received their Graduation Certificate. We then moved off to Lakeside Receptions for the Graduation Dinner. Thank you to all staff who contributed to make the night a success and particularly Mary-Lou, Jenny Stafford and all the Senior Mentor teachers.

At the end of mass, the 2016 Lamp Bearers addressed the Congregation. They have been wonderfully inspiring role models for the community and Elisa Tohi left us with this wonderful reflection as part of her graduation speech:

"More than ever, we live in a world that has been plagued by political correctness; a world where many are persecuted for fighting for the truth or for simply having an opinion that is not held by the majority. Something that I’ve noticed in society today is that there is a lack of tolerance by groups and by individuals to accept others who have views that do not align with their own.

As we begin this new chapter in our lives, I hope that you will all continue to value the freedom of speech and respect the use of this right by others.

May we always have the courage to stand up and fight against what is wrong but also the Strength and the Kindness that is necessary to value each human being regardless of their views - Liberal or Conservative, which includes the strong traditions of the Catholic Church on which our school was built upon. And if there was any school in Melbourne or even in the whole of Australia where you could embrace people of different opinion, culture and religion on a daily basis, it would be Marian College. And for this I am truly grateful.

We wish the class of 2016 well as they journey into this new stage of their lives.

ANNUAL ART EXHIBITION AND MUSIC CONCERTS

We had a wonderful attendance at the Annual Art Exhibition, and visitors were treated to a visual feast of creativity, inspiration and dedication to process and hard work. The depth of student and staff talent was clearly on display, as was the development of ideas, skills and techniques within pieces of work and as students progress from Year 7 to Year 12.

continued....
From the Co-Principals (continued)

Gratitude and appreciation is extended to the Design Education Team who work tirelessly with students across the year and give of their time generously to support students to develop their work and their talents. As always Kathy Jurcic is a tremendous support, not just in helping to pull the exhibition together, but in her constant dedication and support of staff and students across the year.

This year we would like to particularly acknowledge Brigid Whelan who worked to curate the exhibition, working with staff and students to coordinate a very professional show. Congratulations to all involved.

The Exhibition was followed by the Co-Curricula Performing Arts concert, which was also very well attended by families, as was the Junior Performing Arts Showcase held this week. Over the course of a few years the complexity and length of the pieces that students are presenting has really developed. The concerts are a great expression of the depth of talent in the Performing Arts reflecting the dedication and hard work of both staff and students.

It was also a great pleasure to welcome back many ex-students on the night who spoke most glowingly about what Marian meant to them and the lasting impact that the quality teaching and Catholic values had on their lives post-school. The success of these young women, pursuing endeavours in many varied fields, is a testament to the work the staff at the College do each and every single day with our young people. We take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of all of the staff at the College in 2016, for their tireless endeavour in ensuring quality outcomes for all of the students at Marian.

FAREWELL FOR ANOTHER YEAR
We wish each student and her family a happy and holy Christmas. May the coming break offer an opportunity for respite and relaxation, a time to be with loved ones to enjoy those things that bring us life. We leave you with a final prayer and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

May the Christ child greet each of us with shining light, that we may spread his warm embrace and kindle the hope of Christmas in all whose lives remain in shadow. Come and be our strength O Lord, our hope and our salvation. Amen.

Rita Grima and Raymond Pisani - Co-Principals

Faith and Mission

In the Catholic/Christian Calendar Advent commenced on Sunday the 27th of November. It is a time of preparation, for ourselves and for the birth of the Christ child at Christmas. It is also a time to review our life and our actions towards others in the community. It is a time to reflect, or analyse our thoughts and actions, as we move towards being people that are more positive and life-giving.

In the final weeks of the school year, we have commenced the promotion of the Vinnie’s Christmas Appeal. Each homeroom has a shopping basket to fill with gifts or food that will help families truly enjoy the spirit of Christmas, a time of hope and love. These gifts will be bought forward as part of the procession at the beginning of the Thanksgiving Mass on the 7th of December.

The Thanksgiving Mass will provide the opportunity for the College Community to reflect over the year that was. For the last time we will focus on our theme for 2016, ‘A little mercy makes the world less cold and more just.’ Remembering that we talked at the beginning of the year about Pope Francis, the leader of the Catholic Church, being a religious leader who spoke about the need for people to be more focussed on mercy, a mercy given to all people, especially the weak and marginalised. We know that even a little change or a little assistance can make a big difference in someone else’s life. We have so much in our lives and some people have so little. It is important to think about the needs of not only ourselves but the larger community.

In 2017 there will be the celebration of 60 years of Marian College at Sunshine West. It will be a year of celebration of the College. May it truly be a year acknowledging the Strength and Kindness that has been not just the College motto but what epitomises the Brigidine Congregation and now Kildare Ministries.

This is my last Marian News as I leave at the conclusion of the school year to take on a new position at Nagle College. I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a year of many blessings.

Mary-Louise Towns - Assistant to the Co-Principal - Faith and Mission
**BIG DAY OUT**
Over the last week all of the students and staff have been preparing for BIG DAY OUT. They have watched a safety video from Funfields, gone over the expectations for the day, and clarified required clothing and footwear for each ride and activity.

The day has been organised and facilitated by the Year Level Leaders and should be a great way for us to celebrate the end of the 2016 school year.

It is the first time we have been to Funfields and if successful as a venue we will rotate yearly with Adventure Park, Geelong.

**LEADERSHIP PROCESS CONTINUES**
Over the last week Years 7-9 students have been submitting their forms to apply for a position of leadership in 2017. They have been preparing their speeches for each Year Level Group and the leaders will be announced before the end of the school year.

We have had a large number of girls put their hand up to to hold a leadership position in 2017 and this is very encouraging.

**LEADERSHIP RETREAT**
On Monday 28th and Tuesday 29th Mr. Pisani, Mr. Bratovic, and I spent two days with 18 of our Year 12 2017 School Leaders planning and devising goals for the year ahead. The girls worked diligently and cooperatively over the two days and left with three very clear goals for 2017.

These three goals are:
1. To ensure clear and consistent communication with all student leaders and students.
2. To improve the role of House Captains and establish an effective point system and ways for this to be published to the community.
3. To raise awareness about social justice groups and work towards unison between all of the groups and other student leaders.

With this in mind the Student Representative Council Leaders have created portfolios for their work in 2017.

**HOUSE SRC – TO WORK WITH HOUSE LEADERS TO ENHANCE THE HOUSE SYSTEM.**
Co-curricular SRC – to work with both the House SRC and House Leaders as well as other leaders to enhance the leadership structure in the school.

Sustainability SRC – to work with both the Sustainability Co-ordinator and sustainability group to make all making Marian College a more sustainable community.

Social Justice SRC – to work with the leaders of our social justice groups to identify and work on ways of bringing goal 3 to life.

The girls are to be complemented on the way in which they embraced their roles and it was such a pleasure to work with all of them. Keeping in mind that all of them had given up holiday time to come and work on our plans for 2017. It was a great experience.

With this being the last Marian for the year – can I wish all of our students and their families and very happy festive season and safe holiday and may we all remember the birth of a small child at Christmas who changed the world for the better for all of us.

We look forward to exciting things happening at Marian in 2017

*Kerrie Williams - Assistant to the Co-Principals – Student Wellbeing*

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**Resource List Pick Up - Incorrect date printed on forms**

*Parents please note that the Resource List and Art Kit pick up date, is Wednesday 25 of January.*

*There is a misprint in both of these forms which incorrectly state 20 January.*
ALT (ALTERNATIVE LEARNING TRACK) PROGRAM 2016

2016 was the first year for the Marian ALT Program. Designed to ensure that the College is able to support the learning needs of all students, the program allows identified gifted, talented and very high-performing students to collaborate with a mentor teacher to design their own Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) and work towards their selected individual goals. ALT classes take place on a fortnightly basis and these classes have offered a range of challenging enrichment and extension learning opportunities throughout the year.

The ALT girls completed their final class activity this week with a trip to Science Works. This concluded the STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) Unit that they have been involved with recently.

Before this they had the opportunity to participate in a Robotics Workshop offered by Quantum. The students were required to exercise problem-solving and team-working skills whilst designing, building and programming Lego robots. The robots were programmed to perform specific tasks using motors and sensors to solve problems on the Lego Challenge Map. Students applied their mathematical understandings, experimenting with speed, distance and measurement, whilst developing critical thinking skills and the ability to predict and draw conclusions. This was a fun and challenging way to engage in hands-on STEM education.

In the previous lesson, the girls completed a series of coding challenges (using block codes).

In another class, Mr Raymond Barry challenged the girls to think laterally with a series of problems completed under timed conditions. Earlier in the year Ms Kelly Deliopoulis and Mr Vito Milana explored visual literacies with the students.

Mr Milana also led a debating program with the girls. This was based on a request from the students, many of whom had indicated that public speaking and oral presentation were areas that they wished to develop, in their PLPs. They had the opportunity to put their skills into practice, taking on a Year 12 team in front of a packed lunchtime auditorium audience. The ALT girls, consisting of Hellen Nguyen, Nica Lao and Minh Mai, won the debate, to their great excitement, narrowly defeating the Year 12 Team. The Year 8s also took on a Year 7 Team in an ALT class debating challenge with Jessica Di Mieri, Charlene Custodio and Lina Vo performing strongly to outscore the highly-competitive Year 7 Team represented by Ramisha Rehan, Isabella Martinu and Himaja Wijesinghe.

The girls also participated in the Australian Future Problem-Solving Program in classes and a group of six students continued with this program and entered the national competition. These students were Jessica DiMieri, Hellen Nguyen, Minh Mai, Tuong-Vy Huynh, Jenna Nguyen and Hana Gautestad.

This competition helps students to learn how to think, not what to think. It challenges them to use their imagination in applying research and advanced thinking strategies to the resolution of future issues. The girls performed exceptionally well, competing against some of the highest performing students from some of the highest performing schools in Victoria. Congratulations to all of our inaugural ALT students on their achievements in 2016.

YEAR 9 EXAMINATIONS

Congratulations to the Year 9 students who sat their first formal examinations at Marian College last week. Staff members commended the students on their behaviour and responsible approach to these examinations. Many students’ conscientious efforts were rewarded with very good results. However, for some, a more consistent approach to regular revision and study will need to be developed to ensure improved results moving forward. Regardless, these examinations have provided valuable preparation for these students as they progress into the senior years of their schooling at Marian College.

SEMESTER REPORTS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

With examinations completed and junior students finishing off their last assessment tasks for the year, staff are finalising the Semester 2 Reports. These will be available for students in Years 7 to 11 on the SEQTA Engage Parent Portal on Friday 9 December.

Please take the time to read over these reports carefully and discuss them with your daughter. This information should be used to recognise progress, achievement, Identify areas for improvement and to set goals for 2017.

Follow-up academic performance interviews will be scheduled for students who have performed poorly in multiple subjects or examinations. We will also use the information in these reports to identify students who have excelled academically. Academic Excellence Certificates will be presented at the beginning of 2017.

SENIOR CERTIFICATES 2017

From 18 to 24 November, the current Year 10 and 11 students commenced their 2017 Senior Certificates Programs in either VCE or VCAL. Most students attended all of these classes and applied themselves conscientiously to take advantage of the headstart provided. Holiday home learning tasks have been set in all subjects and these can be accessed through SEQTA Learn and Engage. It is essential that all students complete these tasks prior to their first classes in 2017. As indicated in the VCE and VCAL Expectations Letters, this is a non-negotiable requirement and failure to complete set tasks will result in an interview with the Senior Certificates Panel, to discuss the student’s senior pathway at Marian College.

Jane Goddard & Paul Familiar - Assistants to the Co-Principals - Learning and Teaching
Performing Arts

In this last edition of Marian News for the year I’d like to say a huge thanks to all the students and staff who have contributed to the program over the course of the year.

We’ll be finishing with the Thanksgiving Mass-Year 7 to 9 Eucharist next week, seeing out the academic year in word and song.

We wish everyone a safe and festive holiday season.

Mari Eleanor - Co-ordinator

Community News

SECOND HAND UNIFORM ITEMS WANTED
It’s time for a spring clean! If you have any unwanted Marian College uniform items please bundle them up (clean of course) and drop them at student reception marked ATTENTION: JULIE

Please note we no longer sell items on consignment. We only accept donations.

Your generosity can help our families in need.

Julie Heaney

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Mercy in Action - Cambodia 2017

In March/April 2017, students and staff members from Mercy College Coburg, St Aloysius North Melbourne and Marian College Sunshine will take part in a house-building project in Cambodia.

From this.......

......to this!

$2000 covers the cost of a house, a water source and the balance goes to supporting families on the Tabitha Savings program. The impact of volunteer building teams on poor rural Cambodian families is life changing and it also provides volunteers with an experience of a lifetime.

We need your help so we can build houses for some of the poorest families in Cambodia. Even the smallest donation will be appreciated. Please go to http://tabithaaustralia.org.au/edonates/form and select the Mercy College, Marian Sunshine, St Aloysious Nth Melb housebuilding team to make a donation. You are also able to nominate an individual you are supporting. All money donated goes directly towards the house building program.