Dear Parents and Caregivers,

There are a few of us on staff who subscribe to the daily meditational readings of the Franciscan priest and author, Father Richard Rohr. Here’s a recent reading which I’d like to share with you:

‘Enlightenment is always somehow to see and touch the Big Mystery, the Big Pattern, or the Big Picture. Jesus called it the Kingdom or Reign of God; Buddha called it enlightenment. Both Buddhists and Hindus speak of nirvana. Philosophers might call it Truth. Most of us just call it love. There’s no answer, no problem-solving, simply awareness. You cannot not live in the presence of God. You are totally surrounded by God. St. Patrick said it well:

God beneath you,
God in front of you,
God behind you,
God above you,
God within you.

You cannot earn this God. You cannot prove yourself worthy of this God. Feeling God’s presence is simply a matter of awareness, of fully allowing and enjoying the present moment. There are moments when it happens naturally, when we are out of the way. Then life makes sense. Once I can see the Mystery here, and trust the Mystery even in this little piece of clay that I am, in this moment of time that I am—then I can also see it in you, and eventually in all things. That would be full enlightenment, “when God is all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Adapted from Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer, pp. 56-57

Experiencing ‘the big picture’ is to connect with the source of life, that which is beyond self and beyond, those we know by name or those who look, sound and live like us. It’s about recognising that we are all part of the same whole - God present in each of us and each of us present in God. Indeed it is a matter of getting out of our own way to see what is always there, right in front of us.

A teacher recently told me of a conversation she had with one of her students who was feeling very sorry for himself, lamenting his lack of friends. The teacher asked if he could think of anyone in a similar situation. He named three others immediately. The teacher then asked him to consider looking outside himself and his own situation and to make the first move to befriend others.

Becoming aware of the bigger picture means moving away from thoughts of ‘us’ and ‘them’ – away from, ‘I look after me and mine and the rest can look after themselves’; away from, ‘My concerns are more important than everyone else’s and I want them seen to, regardless of the cost to others’.

Coming into a community, in our case, a Catholic school community, we are absolutely called to recognise the big picture, the larger purposes of life and our shared humanity as members of God’s family. We are called to share what we have with those who have not, to contribute our time and talents in service of others and to build community, to uphold the dignity of each and every person and to draw people together. As an example of this, we are called to look out for each and every young person, not just our own – therein will lie our strength.

Two weeks ago we held our annual Parent Partnership Evening in which the major school goals, plans and projects for the year were shared. Each and every year, the various presenters speak to an audience that can be counted on one person’s fingers and toes. We ask ourselves, why this is the case when the class or year level meetings are well-attended. Perhaps, when the more obvious reasons are stripped away, the reason has something to do with the subject of this newsletter, namely, a focus that lies close to home over one that recognises the bigger picture in which those important individual stories are contained. We have become so time-poor that we fail to reach awareness that investment in the wellbeing and development of the community as a whole, strengthens the wellbeing and development of those closest to us.

Perhaps there are many parents reading this who might be able to provide support to the Parents and Friends this year. We meet the second Tuesday of the month, at 6.15 (this may change to 6.30 in the future) for about one hour to an hour and a half and I know Tim, Lauren, Kylie and Steve (P&F Executive) and Andrew and Michelle (Fair Convenors) would appreciate your active support this year. Throughout any given year, there are many opportunities to become involved in the wider life of the school and we look forward to welcoming you as you are able to join us.

Have a great week everyone. Glenda

School Board Spot

The School Board is comprised of members from the various stakeholder groups within the school community: Staff, Administration, Parish, P&F and parents. This year we welcome a number of new members who undertook training last year in the Shared Wisdom Model under which Catholic school pastoral boards operate across the State. We welcome Natalie Jarrott, Vanessa Portors (parent members), Stephen (P&F) and Tony Kelleher (staff) who join existing members Kellie Elder, Andrew Small, Father Joe, Judith Mellifont and Glenda Morgan.

We reiterate our sincere thanks to out-going members Donita Sullivan, Geoff Burchill (Chair), Michelle Brien and Nicole McMinn for their dedicated service over the past three or four years and look forward to working with the new Board throughout the year.

Our first meeting is this Thursday evening (23 Feb) 6.30-8pm in the staffroom.
Garden News
- It’s time for Rosella Jam!
The recent holidays have created an environment in the garden where our Rosella plants have thrived!! Over the next few weeks, one of the Grade 6 classes will be making Rosella Jam with our harvested fruits. It will be a great opportunity for the children to try something they may have never tasted before.

Additional to this, it is organic, home-made and straight from the plant! The Year 3’s, 5’s and Preps have been busy working their way through the green crop and turning it over back into the soil. They have been getting a wonderful education about Composting and Sustainability, setting up the school compost bins for the year ahead. We have already started planting new organic seedlings seeing as this time is one of the best growing seasons of the year. We should have some incredible crops by the end of Semester 1, just in time for our harvest festival.

We are also looking at creating a ‘Stella Garden Club’ for those students and parents that want to take part in the garden that haven’t had the chance. This will most likely run on a morning before school, as well as at lunchtimes on Tuesday when Di Harris is here for the program. If we get enough numbers in the club we can go ahead starting next week. If you are interested please contact Lynsey Martin at ljmartin@bne.catholic.edu.au. Keep checking the Garden Blurb for more updates!

Siena Catholic College Year 8 Enrolment for 2013
Families considering enrolling their child at Siena Catholic College in 2013 are invited to attend an Information Session at the College on either Sunday 11 March or Monday 12 March. From 3.00pm on the Sunday, families will have the opportunity to view the College facilities followed by an Information Session at 4:00pm. On the Monday evening, the Information Session will begin at 7.30pm. If you intend to attend one of these sessions, please contact the College Office either by email saippydowns@bne.catholic.edu.au or phone 5476 6100 to register – this is for catering purposes. College Principal, Mr Graeme Hight, and the Siena College Captains will speak to the Year 7 class at Stella Maris on Thursday 8 March and distribute enrolment packages.
Parents may wish to view the Siena website www.siena.qld.edu.au. Enrolment interviews will commence late Term 1 and extend into Term 2.

St John’s College, Nambour Year 8 2013 Enrolment Interviews
For your information:
• Members of the college leadership team will visit Stella Maris primary school on Thursday 28 February.
• Year 7 students will be offered enrolment packs for St John’s College on this day.
• A Parent Information Evening will be held on Wednesday 21 March at 7pm at St John’s College in the Multi-Purpose Centre.
• Enrolment interviews will be held from Thursday 19 April to Tuesday 24 April.

At St John’s College we provide quality education in an environment that nurtures children in their Catholic faith.

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Today is Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday when traditionally fast foods are used up in preparation for the fasting season of Lent. During Lent, we reflect on our lives, our choices and think about the wonderful gifts that God has given us. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lenten discipline for many Christian churches, traditionally a time of fasting and prayer. Many Catholic schools, including Stella Maris, teach students about the concept of Ash Wednesday and its importance in the Church and in the life of Christians all over the world in preparing well for the events leading up to and including Easter. Four of our senior students will accompany me to Stella Maris Church for Mass on Wednesday morning to receive the blest ashes to bring back to school and distribute to Staff and Students during a liturgy after lunch.

It is in the spirit of Prayerfulness, our Virtue of focus this fortnight, that we enter the season of Lent. We take time to be still, to reflect, and to listen to the truth deep in our hearts and respond in prayer. We behave with an awareness that we are always in the presence of the Creator and that all life is precious. Prayerfulness involves a relationship with a power greater than ourselves, one that loves us and knows us intimately. Prayer is a sacred conversation that opens us up to forgiveness, hope and renewed intentions. It is quiet reflection that cleanses the mirror of the soul. We listen and receive spiritual guidance. Praying in gratitude keeps us in the flow of grace, mindful that every act, decision and thought is meaningful.

The practice of Prayerfulness:

□ I spend sacred time each day;
□ I pray my innermost thoughts, hopes, needs and fears;
□ I trust, listen and watch for answers;
□ I continually purify my motives;
□ I have an attitude of gratitude;
□ I live with an awareness of Divine Presence.

“Call to me and I will answer you and show you great and hidden things that you have not known” (Jeremiah 33:3) (Adapted from The Virtues Project International)

During Lent, we give thanks for all that we have. We also think about the wonderful beauty of our country, parts of which have been ravaged by flood. We are called to reach out to others who are not faring well at this present time, both here and overseas. Lent is a time of goodwill towards others. It is a time to think about life and death, as well as reflect on life’s choices and possible life directions. Christian retreats may be organized in some parts of Australia for people to reflect on, learn, and share with others what they have learnt during this time of the year. Our Staff and Parent Lenten programmes are all part of this prayerful journey to Easter. There are also those who chose this time of the year to donate to charities or take part in charity events as a way to get close to God. At Stella Maris, we support Caritas Australia in raising funds for special projects to assist those overseas who have very little.

All families will receive their ‘Project Compassion’ boxes this week from ‘Caritas Australia’, so that you too can support the eradication of the world wide problem of poverty. These boxes can be returned to the school at the end of term prior to Easter. Receipts will be available if you wish from Caritas for donations of $2.00 and above. Please enter your name and details on the flap of the box if you want a tax receipt from Caritas. We will also conduct our Walkathon this year, with sponsorships also raising money for the school’s contribution to the Caritas’ Appeal. More information about this project next week.

I will finish with a prayer for Lent written by Paddy, a student at Holy Spirit School Bray Park.

Jesus, you spent forty days in the hot, dusty desert to get ready to do your Father’s work. Help us to get ready for Easter during the forty days of Lent. Help us to forgive others, to say ‘sorry’ and to make peace with everybody. Help us to say ‘yes’ to others so that we can follow you more closely. In this time of Lent give us generous hearts to become better people; more helpful people; more loving people. Amen. (Paddy, 2009)

God bless you this Lent. Judith.
QUOTE OF THE WEEK
“Music is the universal language of mankind.”
~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, ‘Outre-Mer’ ~

TIP OF THE WEEK - Keep a pencil with your music books and use it during home practice, lessons and rehearsals to mark gentle reminders on your music, such as accidentals and dynamics or to watch the conductor. We all have good memories, but the pencil never forgets!!

CLASSROOM MUSIC - YEAR 2 - Students have been introduced to playing recorders. This is a great introduction to instrumental music and a fabulous method of learning to play in an ensemble. Students will be learning “Tree Tops”, “Hot Cross Buns”, and “Merrily We Roll Along”.

TEN FACTS ABOUT SCHOOL MUSIC - Research shows that as few as 2 out of 10 government schools in Australia are able to offer their students an effective music education. This means that many Australian students are denied the many benefits that learning music at school can provide - things such as improved self-esteem, team skills, and even improvements in Maths and Reading. Find out more about music education in Australian schools. Here is the first fact about music education.

1. Music makes a contribution to kids’ development that no other subject can match— “Music education uniquely contributes to the emotional, physical, social and cognitive growth of all students.”

National Review of School Music Education, Australia, 2005

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC NEWS - Thank you to all students who have joined our many school vocal and instrumental ensembles. They are all starting to sound fantastic! Remember that participation slips are to be returned to the Music Room or office ASAP and you need to attend on time ever week or let your ensemble teacher know if you will be absent. ALL involved students are important members regardless of how large or small the group might be.

If you have queries regarding anything musical – please feel free to catch up with us before or after school, by contacting us in writing or via email.

Musically Yours,
Inez Durrer     Todd Wynyard
Classroom Music Specialist     Instrumental Music Coordinator
durrer@bne.catholic.edu.au     twynyard@bne.catholic.edu.au

DATE CLAIMER

Honesty is the best policy
Thank you to:
Tahlia McSwan, Sienna Coghlan, Emily Moro, Gabbie Gorham, Tyler Watkins

Principal’s Awards
23rd February 2012

Calendar of Events
February 22 5A Class Covenant Ceremony 9am in Class
2A Class Covenant Ceremony 2.30pm in Class
February 23 3D Class Covenant Ceremony 9.30am in Class
School Board 6.30 Staffroom
February 24 6A Class Covenant Ceremony 9am in Class
6D Class Covenant Ceremony 2.30pm in Class
March 11 P & F Welcome BBQ
March 30 Last Day Term 1
April 16 First Day Term 2
June 22 Last Day Term 2
July 9 First Day Term 3
July 26 Grandparents Day
September 21 Last Day Term 3

District Trials for Girls Softball will be held on the following dates at Cummumni Primary School from 3.30pm - 5pm. Junior Girls (Yr 6) - Wednesday 22nd February
See Mrs Till for a permission form and more information if you wish to attend.

Congratulations to Tiannah Maltman who made it through to the QLD Surf Life Saving Championships for flags and sprints.

Congratulations to Debela Savimaki for another outstanding performance at last weekend's QLD Amateur Athletics under 14 State Championships in Brisbane. 1st - 100 m. P.B. 12.24min & 1st - 200m. 24.63min

Mighty effort Tiannah and Debela!

Date Claimer

Tuckshop News
Week Ending 24 February  
K Scott, P Siddans, L Smith, T Stowe, K Teljega, L Teuthof, S Thompson, K Thompson, C Tonkes, P Vontas, L Wallace, K Walsh, K Watson, G Weare, J Williams, D Wright, A MacDonald, J Camp, O Robins, R Brady, C Morton, L England, T Godfrey,
SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

All helpers needing to complete Student Protection and Code of Conduct sign-offs are invited to come to the hall during the day (every hour on the hour between 9.00am—2.00pm) Tuesday 21 February and Wednesday 22 February where you will be able to go over the material, ask any questions and sign a declaration. These declarations are valid for 2 years so if you signed a declaration in 2011 you do not have to renew until 2013. The Guidance Counsellor will be in the Hall for both your convenience.

Children’s Vision

Good vision is important for your child’s educational, physical and social development and to help them reach their full learning potential. Many children continue to experience undetected and unnecessary vision problems and often they assume that how they see is normal.

It is up to us, their teachers and parents, to be able to recognise the signs of a vision problem, and to help children look after their eyes.

Recognising eye problems in children

Symptoms of eye problems include:

- complaints of blurred vision, headaches, or sore eyes
- delayed progress in reading ability
- a turned eye, red or watery eyes, and frequent blinking
- poor hand-eye coordination in sports
- losing their place or omitting words and skipping lines when reading

Children, especially young children, have no point of reference to know whether they are seeing properly or not. They just think everyone sees the same as they do. All children should have their vision and hearing checked at regular intervals, especially when they start school, when they move into grade four and before they go to high school. Making sure that our children are physically able to participate in activities is vital to give them the best opportunities to succeed. Along with healthy eating, exercise and good sleep, our senses need to be in optimum shape to navigate our everyday environment.

Christine Craig (Guidance Counsellor)
email:ccraig@bne.catholic.edu.au