S I N C E  penning  F e b r u a r y’s  a r t i c l e  for  Catholic Life a  n u m b e r of significant events have occurred around our Dio- cese. Without doubt the most important, and also most engaging, was the ordination of Bishop Patrick O’Regan. This event, held at the Bishop Phelan Stadium, Catholic Col- lege Sale, engaged some 1600 people. This num- ber included student and staff representation from every school in the dio- cese. A full report on this wonderful event is cov- ered elsewhere in Catholic Life but I think it is important to comment here, however briefly, on the fact that the experi- ence for the students in our schools was possibly for many, a once in a life- time opportunity to see at close quarters a very spe- cific ritual and liturgy, full of rich symbolism and deeply human inter- action. In a recent staff meeting at the Catholic Education Office, I presented to the staff some images from a final prof- ession liturgy I had at- tended for a young man who had joined a reli- gious order. I commented that, whilst I have attend- ed several of these over the years, there is one moment which always captures me emotionally. It is that moment when the person presenting for final profession prostrates himself. We of course saw this occur during the ordination of Bishop O’Regan and I was re- minded yet again of what that act really means. To me the sense of total sub- mission to the will of God and commitment to the service of the people of God, physically enact- ed in front of hundreds of people, signifies what it means to be counter cul- tural. It is to recognise what service really means. It typifies that term servant leadership, which is unfortunately used inappropriately many times in leadership theory. From a purely personal perspective, I invariably find the acts of genuflection and kneeling have much more meaning for me after witnessing the act of prostration.

A number of principals who attended the ceremo- ny with students from their schools commented on the richness of the dis- cussions with students which were held in the cars and buses taking them back to school. These students were all re- charged with taking back to their schools a memen- to of the event. I feel cer- tain there has been much processing of the experi- ence within our schools. A DVD of the occasion has been made available to every school in order to keep the occasion alive. Completely aside from the ordination of a Bish- op, Term 1 is always full and frenetic. One of the regular events at this time of the year is the induc- tion program for graduate teachers in the diocese. I always enjoy attending these meetings and listen- ing to and addressing the people who have chosen to make teaching in a Catholic school part of their life journey. Obvi- ously we would like to keep them and have them grow and develop in the profession of teaching, but the reality is many do not stay for more than about five years. Howev- er, we take every oppor- tunity to make their time with us fulfilling and challenging; encouraging them to always put stu- dents at the forefront of their thinking. The induc- tion program operates at a number of levels, aiming to assist these new, young teachers to survive the first few frightening weeks; providing them with names and contacts and tips for accessing in- formation and asking for assistance. One of the things I encourage, whenever speaking to this par- ticular group, is the impor- tance of being reflec- tive; that teaching, whilst requiring certain skills and competencies in the outside world, also re- quires a teacher to think, feel and reflect about the inner workings of their own person; to live the experience of teaching not just conduct a series of classes. I always re- mind them of one of my favourite quotes – Teach- ers affect eternity (Aristotle).

From The Director…

Maria Kirkwood
Director
Catholic Education
Office Diocese of Sale

Marist-Sion College Warragul - St Marcellin Prayer Tables

RELIGIOUS Education classrooms at Marist- Sion College Warragul are now home to a new set of prayer tables, de- signed and made by the Product Design and Technology classes of the College. Commissioned by the Religious Educa- tion Learning Area, the tables were designed to look aesthetically pleasing and to function as a centrepiece for prayer in the classrooms, the chap- el and the staffroom. Technology teachers Peter Coghlan and Luke Dicker and their students took great pride in de- signing seven new tables and organising their con- struction. The tables were influ- enced by the original ta- ble built by Marcellin Champagnat in L’Her- mitage, the house for the early Marist Brothers in Lavalla, France. The de- sign for each echoes the style of the Marcellin ta- ble. The installation of the prayer tables at this College has been a great way for staff to empha- sise the early history of the Marist Brothers and tell the story of Marcellin’s own table. It is a tangible reminder for the students, as they gather around their classroom table for prayer, that the table which Marcellin and his Brothers made for their first home was built because they needed a place around which they could gather. We are able to explain to our stu- dents that, just as every- one was welcome at Mar- cellin’s table, we too make room at our own table for all people, from all walks of life.
ST PETER’S College Cranbourne, have celebrated the opening of a new purpose built ‘Trade Skills Centre’. Mrs Marlene Jorgensen, Deputy Principal Teaching and Learning, states, “The College’s aim is to be able to offer an array of courses that both St Peter’s College students and students from other schools in our region may choose from, giving them a pathway that suits their individual learning style. All pathways are equally valid and are designed to develop in students a love of learning and fulfilment of their full potential”. The newly opened Centre allows courses to be opened up to students from other schools and colleges within the region. This has proven very popular with those who wish to pursue a career in the Electrical or Engineering Industry.

As a Catholic College, St Peter’s is focused on the development of the whole child. Traditionally there has been a strong focus on preparing students for success in VCE studies (Victorian Certificate of Education). Mr Tim Hogan, Principal, states “While this pathway is suitable for many of our students, examination of our exit data has revealed that not all students are suited to this academic direction. In response, we at St Peter’s College have embarked on a program to expand the delivery of Vocational Courses available for our students”. He goes on to say “Through this expansion we are able to offer alternative and more appropriate pathways to individually cater for our students’ interest and skills”. For some years now Certificate II in Building and Construction has been offered at the College. This continues in 2015, attracting both male and female students in the 2015 cohort. Female students have come from both St Peter’s College and Koo Wee Rup Secondary College. Deputy Principal Teaching and Learning, Mrs Marlene Jorgensen, tells us “It is wonderful to see the girls participate in non-traditional trades and highlights the benefits of Co-educational schooling”.

In 2014, a Federal Government Grant enabled the development at St Peter’s College West Campus of our newly opened Trades Skills Centre. This has allowed the College to offer (in 2015) an expanded Curriculum, including Certificate II in Engineering and Certificate II in Electro-technology.

Mrs Jorgensen states, “We are very happy to have secured the highly qualified teaching skills of Mr Rupert Cranswick. Mr Cranswick will deliver these courses at our College while continuing his role at Toyota, training apprentices in these same Certificates. The delivery of current industry knowledge is a tremendous bonus for our students”.

St Peter’s College Trades Skills Centre Courses are open to students from other Schools and Colleges and have proven very popular with those who wish to pursue a career in the Electrical or Engineering Industry.

The College also delivers, for Year 12 Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) students, a Certificate II in Business. Through these studies students are able to demonstrate competency in a ‘Work Related Skills’ subject when seeking employment for the first time. St Peter’s College staff involved in our Teaching and Learning Vision team, are continuously reviewing further Vocational Education & Training (VET) course options with an anticipated addition of Certificate II in Sport and Recreation in 2016.

St Gabriel’s Traralgon - 2015 National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence

ON Friday 20th March 2015, St Gabriel’s Primary School Traralgon, participated in the fifth annual National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence. The school was one of over 1300 schools across the nation that took part in a nationwide movement to ‘take a stand together’ against bullying and violence on this National Day. The message of Harmony Day is everyone belongs. It’s a day to celebrate Australia’s diversity – a day of cultural respect for everyone who calls Australia home.

The children were invited to wear orange on the day which is the national colour that represents our action opposing bullying. They were given a wristband each which declares their support for a place which is against bullying.

During the day the children participated in various activities, in multiple age groups, that promote Harmony and Peace. Some of the activities included: drawing, quilting, reading, viewing, roleplaying and participating in many more experiences which highlight our theme. Each group created a motto representing a positive message for Harmony and Peace. By the end of the day, a PowerPoint of the celebrations was posted on the schools intranet where all classes will be able to watch and share on Monday. This day also gave the school the chance to promote our anti-bullying initiatives and strategies that counter bullying. St Gabriel’s is a CASSE school which stands for "Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment" and this state very clearly we are against bullying and all for harmony.
At St Mary’s Primary School Yarram, students and teachers have created a place where the culture of learning is evident across the school community. All students and staff have participated in dialogue that has created a shared learning focus across the school and the students are encouraged to be independent and confident learners.

**Religious Education**

How do we make our children understand the key teachings of Jesus in their lives? We want our students to understand the key teachings and qualities of Jesus and be able to see that they are relevant to them and the world that they live in. We want our students to be able to find evidence of these key teachings of Jesus in the Bible and the units of work that are covered during their time at our school. How can we make this real for the children who we teach in our school?

We decided, with the gentle guidance from our Principal, Jodie Ware, that we first needed an action plan.

**Step One:** List the key teachings of Jesus encountered in the Gospels.

**Step Two:** Choose one of these key teachings to focus on.

**Step Three:** Look at the units of work covered in Term One to find a relationship between the chosen key teaching and the mandated Doctrine in the unit of work.

**Step Four:** Now it is action time!!!!

The Religious Education unit of work chosen was that of Creation. Through this unit of work we chose to focus on Respect: Respect for Me, Respect for Others and Respect for Our World.

**What is our action?**

An ‘Aussie of the month’ award is to go to someone who shows Respect.

Reading from Ephesians 2:4-10 “We are God’s work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it.”

**How are we special?**

How can we look after ourselves?

**How can we care for others and our world?**

**Teaching and Learning**

We decided to create a display that reminded the children of these values and the common language used around the school each day. Being a small school means that we do need to work collaboratively and recognise the great work and the students learning at school. As a staff we discussed how we could create a visual learning wall that celebrates the work of our students. This needed to display the learning that was occurring from Grade Prep-6.

Staff developed learning statements and students created goals for themselves to meet throughout the school term. This was for all of the school community to see and students began to display work around these goals. Parents commented on the learning wall, “It’s great to see students’ work on show” and “It shows the whole school is working together”. The learning wall demonstrated to the teachers and students that they should be proud of their achievements at St Mary’s Yarram.

Principal Jodie Ware has worked with staff to plan and provide evidence of teaching and learning at St Mary’s, Yarram. A whole school approach is important for the students, parents and teachers to identify learning at school and to continually improve and evolve.

**Languages Program at St Thomas the Apostle Primary School**

Although only just over 12 months old, St Thomas the Apostle Primary School, Cranbourne East, is well on the way to developing a very strong Languages (Japanese) program in all year levels (Prep – 6).

Many of our students and their families come from different countries and cultures. In fact many students come to school with the ability to understand two or three languages.

This experience has reinforced the belief that having English as an Additional Language is definitely not a disadvantage. Rather, in a world that is becoming increasingly globalised, being monolingual is and will be a distinct disadvantage. When asked, “Why do we study Japanese?” Gilu (a Year 4 student), answered, “So we can communicate with our brothers and sisters in Asia.”

The study of languages, and in this case Japanese, plays a big role in achieving the goal of creating “active and informed citizens” and provides opportunities for the students to gain cultural, linguistic and intellectual advantages, including the increased development of cognitive skills. Arya, a Year 5 student, explained that when she first came to Australia and had to learn English, “It made my brain work harder.”

At St Thomas the Apostle Primary School we are beginning to implement “ACTLAN” methodology which mimics the way we learn to speak our native language.

ACTLAN encourages the use of sign language, gesture and body language. The school’s Languages teacher, Sensei Brady, has organised many signs to be displayed around the school in English and using the Hiragana and Romaji alphabets in Japanese.

This simple strategy has stimulated considerable discussion and comment amongst the whole learning community including the parents and staff as well as the students. Even at this early stage in the school’s life, (St Thomas the Apostle Primary School opened last year in January), the children’s increased willingness to speak in their parent’s language at school has been quite noticeable.

**St Mary’s Yarram - Building a Learning Community**

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NAGLE COLLEGE Bairnsdale, Year 7 students have recently attended a Transition Camp held at Lake Tyers. The Year 7 camp has been developed to assist students make a successful transition from primary to secondary school, providing the opportunity to get to know each other and interact with their peers in a relaxed environment. The activities are designed to provide the students with an educational experience they may not have previously encountered and to encourage students to develop responsibility and initiative that they are prepared to accept.

These camps are based at the Lake Tyers Camp Park and the students attend over a period of three days and two nights with two groups attending each camp. Over a two week period seven groups of Year 7 students took part in the full range of activities on offer.

Mindfulness at St James Nar Nar Goon

THIS year St James Primary School was very keen to empower students with ‘Mindfulness’ tools. There are many interpretations of Mindfulness, but we are focusing on the process that provides a sense of clarity, calm and contentment. There are many unpredictable benefits that can be gained also. Some students naturally lead to prayer whilst others just enjoy the benefits of slowing down and allowing themselves to ‘just be’.

Our learning theme of ‘Building Independent and Responsible Learners’ speaks clearly to our community and we’ve decided that we need to give students the tools to take charge of their learning. Before we attempt to engage in the rigors of learning, it stands to reason that we need to be proactively ready for learning.

We began by looking at some YouTube videos that demonstrated some Mindfulness practices in schools around the world. Lots of research has gone into this area of learning, particularly with regard to what we know about the brain and neural connections. It will be very interesting for us to track our students and monitor the changes in behaviour over the coming months and years.

Even now, at this early stage of the implementation, we are hearing students articulate the benefits of Mindfulness in their school life. Below are some of the student’s thoughts…

“We need to relax to have better thoughts”.

“Mindfulness is good because we need to make more space in our head for more thinking”. I like starting the day feeling calm”.

We have begun with some common understandings around our Mindfulness experiences. Students like to begin and end a Mindfulness session punctuated with a distinctive sound. You’ll see in one of the pictures that a set of chimes is used for the junior classes to be prompted by. Our approach is to spend a designated number of minutes, building up stamina along the way, in silence. There is some preparation, but generally speaking we do not ‘narrate’ the experience. Children are left to be with their own thoughts. Breathing is an important focus.

Classes are experimenting with different times to engage in Mindfulness. Some students are seeing the benefits of beginning the day with this, whilst others are trying the end of the day. These are the sorts of parameters we’d like to ‘play’ with to see what works for us. In the end, we are giving our students tools that empower and we’d like them to help decide on what works.

Nagle College Bairnsdale - Year 7 Transition Camp

― Jemma.

― Shelby.

― Charlie.

― Nina.

― Georgia.