From the Principal

Our Lenten Challenge

The season of Lent is upon us. That time when Catholics are called to reflection and renewal in our relationships with God and one another. It has been said that getting into the spirit of Lent is about getting into the Holy Spirit, or more appropriately, allowing the Holy Spirit to ‘get into us’.

Scripture during the period of Lent has a strong focus on Jesus; his life, his message and his revealing of God’s love for each of us. Bishop David Walker of Broken Bay writes that Jesus is the model of how to respond to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

“Jesus is the encounter with God: the visibility, availability and tangibility of God’s approach to us and our response to God’s approach. In Jesus the whole mystery of God is revealed to us. The teaching of Jesus provides us with how to live as a child of God; and how to embody that love in our life and share it with others.”

It may be that being open to the story of Jesus and the promptings of the Holy Spirit this Lent will enable us to truly deepen our relationship with God and lead us to be Christ like with others. How to do this is beautifully expressed in an extract from our Franciscan prayer:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Prayer

Forgiving God, may we use the time of Lent to grow closer to the faith you call us to so that we might be best prepared to proclaim the joy of Easter

International Women’s Day

Saturday, 8 March is International Women’s Day.

• Who are the women in your life for whom you are most grateful?
• Who are the women in the world most in need of our compassion?

Each of us would no doubt be able to recall the influence of one or more women in our lives – those women who have loved, inspired or challenged us to be all that we can be. Perhaps we did not know them so well but were influenced by the way they made a difference in some way to the world. Equally we recognise that many women in Australia and across the world are denied their full dignity and potential due to limited opportunities and circumstances which are often unjust and beyond their control. This Saturday we are invited to show both gratitude and compassion. I encourage all within the Ave Maria College community to acknowledge and celebrate the strength and beauty of women close to us and also to learn more about the plight of women who in their own way have much to teach us about the strength, beauty and spirit of women.

On Thursday morning Ms Joanne Fastuca and I were joined by College Captain Ashleigh Coshan and Vice College Captain, Laura O’Gorman at the International Women’s Day Breakfast hosted by the Moonee Valley City Council. The theme was “Inspiring Change”. All young women at Ave Maria College have both a call and a capacity to inspire change in their world.
Deputy Principal

Following on from our last Newsletter, I wish to advise that the Learning and Teaching Review has now completed Stage 2 of the process. A range of models for the structure of a five-period day were presented to staff and students, and feedback was received. The table below represents the timings and order of each day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.40am to 8.56am</td>
<td>Homeroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.58am to 10.02am</td>
<td>Period 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.04am to 11.08am</td>
<td>Period 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.08am to 11.28am</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.28am to 12.32pm</td>
<td>Period 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.34pm to 1.38pm</td>
<td>Period 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.38pm to 2.21pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.21pm to 3.25pm</td>
<td>Period 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These bell times will operate each day of the 10 day cycle. The exception is Day 8 where the students will be, as they currently are, dismissed at lunchtime.

Please note also the 8.40am start where currently it is 8.42am.

The College gave very careful consideration to this sequence and timing, particularly in relation to the main breaks. We will monitor and review the structure throughout 2015 with any further recommendations to be implemented in 2016.

Stages 3 and 4 of the review have now commenced. These stages include a review of the core and elective study offerings and the number of periods allocated to each. These stages will have a significant impact on learning outcomes for our students and are a major component of the review project. Extensive consultation will take place with all members of the College community and we encourage all parents and students to look out for forthcoming invitations to provide feedback around our key questions.

If you would like to know more about the Learning and Teaching Review, please feel free to email me at phillip.tascone@avemaria.vic.edu.au

Phillip Tascone
Deputy Principal

Head of School
Years 10 - 12

At our VCE Awards Assembly a fortnight ago we marked the fine work and academic achievements of the class of 2013. In my opening address to that assembly I spoke of the importance of not making excuses for failing to achieve; not blaming outside influences. As we move into one of the busiest times in the VCE calendar, I thought it appropriate to give the transcript of that speech here.

Today we recognize those who have achieved fantastic results, and I’d like to consider how they have. It’s quite easy to slip into excuse mode when we, or those around us, don’t achieve: I wasn’t read to enough as a child; the literacy extension programs at my pre-school, or kinder, or primary school, or high school weren’t robust enough; I didn’t get the ‘good’ teacher; my class wasn’t very bright; I wasn’t played Mozart in the womb.

I reject these excuses. They may be factors in achievement, they may be reasons, but they’re not excuses. Students, people generally, who achieve do so not because they didn’t face any challenges, but in spite of the challenges they faced.

Happily, the young people in front of us today have also rejected these excuses and have instead turned their energy to what they can achieve, rather than harping about the reason that they can’t. I congratulate them whole-heartedly on their achievements.

I’d encourage all of our students, not only those in Years 10-12 to look not to the reasons that they find something difficult, but to the possible solutions and ways to overcome that difficulty. This applies in their friendships as much as their school work, and if cultivated such an attitude will hold them in good stead for their lives outside of the Vida Street gate.

Michael Horne
Head of School Years 10 - 12

Parent Portal Communication
Families are asked to check the Parent Portal for the current update of the College’s Standard Collection Notice. The Privacy Policy and Collection Notices have been updated in line with the new Australian Privacy Principles.

Allan Thompson
Business Manager

Save the Date
Timor-Leste Benefit Ball Saturday, 9 August at 7.00pm. More details to follow.
Jessica Hall
Year 7 Level Team Leader
Head of School
Years 7 - 9

If your ACTIONS inspire others to DREAM more, LEARN more, DO more and become more, you are a LEADER – John Quincy Adams

Last week I wrote about some of the challenges faced by parents and teachers in their work supporting young people as they develop independence. At the time of writing, we were in the process of finalising the student leaders for 2014. So, to continue the theme of pushing oneself to step out of the comfort zone, I congratulate all students who took up the opportunity to apply for a leadership position. It was heartening to see that in many cases there were more applicants than positions available. Whilst this inevitably sees some students miss out on a formal position, it is encouraging to know that many students are willing to make a commitment to representing their peers and having direct input into many of the decisions that impact on daily school life. This is truly an example of living out our College theme, especially goodness matters.

In a similar vein, I was overwhelmed with the maturity, professionalism and leadership capacity demonstrated by the students short listed for the group interviews for Year Level Captain. The application process for Year Level Captain is quite rigorous, particularly the final group interview stage. The calibre of students who applied was exceptional, and indicates the capacity of students to push themselves, particularly given that many students were first time applicants and aspirant leaders. At the Year Level Assemblies held on Monday this week, the Year Level Captains, Homeroom Ambassadors and Faith and Social Justice Captains were officially presented to their respective year levels and they received their badges. The Year 7s are the only year level yet to complete this process, but will have their leaders finalised soon after returning from Camp.

Congratulations to all involved in the Student Leadership process, a full list of the 2014 Student Leaders is included in this newsletter.

Joanna Hammer
Head of School Years 7 - 9

Mission Action Day
Sponsorship forms were distributed this week. The closing date for sponsorship money to be collected is Tuesday, 29 April 2014.

Faith and Religious Education

We marked the beginning of Lent with a service including distribution of the ashes. During Lent, we are reminded of our Christian duty to care of those in need. When Jesus said, “The poor are always with you”, it is a reminder that there are always opportunities for us to live our faith. At Ave Maria College we have a system where each year level has a dedicated charity. They are:

Year 12: Caritas
Year 11: Australian Catholic Religious Against the Trafficking of Humans (ACRATH)
Year 10: St Maria Mazzarello School, Venilale, Timor-Leste (East Timor)
Year 9: St Vincent de Paul
Year 8: Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project
Year 7: Samaritan’s Purse

Throughout the course of the year, each year level will raise funds and awareness about their charity. Ella McNicol, Year 12 reflects on a recent visit by Caritas:

The Year 12’s have been given the opportunity this year to support Caritas Australia by raising funds and awareness. On the 19 February the cohort was given the opportunity to listen to a volunteer from Caritas speak of their 20-year journey with the charity. This was important to us all because it truly reminded us of why we should support such a worthy cause. Caritas helps oppressed and impoverished people to rediscover their dignity by taking greater control over their lives and overcoming their circumstances. As empowered women we feel a sense of duty towards those who are downtrodden and oppressed. Supporting Caritas as our charity this year is the first step towards achieving this goal.

Mission Action Day will occur on Friday, 4 April. Like last year, this will entail a walkathon, beginning at the College, around a circuit of the Maribyrnong River. Your daughter received her consent and sponsorship forms this week. This year our funds will go to the St Maria Mazzarello school in Venilale, Timor-Leste. Education of young women is an important factor in the development of countries such as Timor-Leste. Our funds will go towards ensuring that they have running water for more of the day (currently only at night) and that the sisters are able to pay a just wage to their teachers.

Patrick Jurd
Director of Faith and Religious Education
Student Wellbeing

Social-emotional development in teenagers

During the lifespan of a child, their personality is continually evolving towards a much richer understanding of themselves as individuals, as they continue to journey through cognitive growth and encounter multiple social interactions they form their own self-concept, which is the individual's perception of their own competence. Based on this premise children build their self-esteem, which is the overall emotional evaluation of their self-worth.

Children begin to form social identities, where they learn to recognise their own personal traits and their enduring qualities that they bring as social units. They build their sense of self based on inherited characteristics combined with the social feedback they receive from their different environments. Feedback, whether verbal or non-verbal has an impact on the child's perception and sculpts their self-concept.

The way individuals interact with people creates the “looking-glass effect”, from where we form our sense of self; as we tend to reflect the evaluation of significant people in our lives, echoed in our behaviours. We can only view ourselves indirectly through the viewing of others.

It is in the interaction between the perception of oneself and the social comparisons that young people evaluate and determine their self-worth. Self-perception across the lifespan evolves and becomes gradually multidimensional starting during mid-school years (third - fourth grade) through to adolescence, becoming more crucial during this last phase. Research has shown that children rate over five main categories:

- Academic competence (how smart they feel at school tasks)
- Social acceptance (being liked or disliked)
- Behavioural conduct (staying in or out of trouble)
- Sports competence (being good or not at sports)
- Physical appearance (feeling good looking or not)

To be continued........

Faye Evans
Student Counsellor

Pathways News

Career News

ADFA Information Night at the Defence Force Recruiting Centre in Melbourne.

Date: Wednesday, 12 March 2014
Time: 6.00pm – 7.00pm
Location: 501 Swanston Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Meeting Place: Level 14 Reception area

There are limited positions available for this session so reservations are essential. Please email CPTVIC@dfr.com.au to book a seat.

Work Experience
Opportunities in 2014

VicRoads Work Experience placements give students the opportunity to experience the relationship between school studies and the world of work. Students can apply for a one week or two week placement. Students can contact workexperience@roads.vic.gov.au for program specific enquiries. Alternatively log on to the link below to find out more and/or to register - http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/Home/Employment/WorkExperienceForSecondarySchoolStudents.htm

Australian Catholic University (ACU) is introducing the following new courses for 2015:

Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (Birth-5) A four year course aimed at students dedicated to a career teaching in a birth to five setting. The pre-requisites VCE subjects are: Units 1 and 2 – General Mathematics or Mathematical Methods (either). Units 3 and 4 – a study score of at least 30 in English (EAL) or 25 in any other English.

Bachelor of Information Technology/Bachelor of Business Administration. This four year course combines IT/IS and business skills and learning to develop rounded IT/IS professionals. The pre-requisites VCE subjects are: Units 3 and 4 – a study score of at least 30 in English (EAL) or 25 in any other English. Visit http://www.acu.edu.au/ to find out more

Year 10 students are reminded that their Work Experience Arrangement forms should be completed and handed in by the end of Term One. Year 12 students are reminded to organise their interviews with Ms Aliaga this term.

Parents and students are reminded that the Careers and Pathways page on AveSpace is updated on a weekly basis and includes weekly newsletters and announcements.

Helen Aliaga
Pathways Coordinator