Dear Parents

Almost out of habit we think of Lent as a time to “give up something”, to do “some penance” and of course self-denial is undoubtedly good for both body and soul. However, Lent can well be a time for very positive action and self-denial can be achieved by the way we express ourselves to other people, and the attention we give to our own self development.

When St Paul was writing to the early Church he encouraged the First Christians to act positively:

“... those who give lovingly and freely of themselves and their gifts to others, will discover that there is no end to God’s riches. There will be empty spaces now and then when it appears that the springs have dried up. God’s grace, however, is eternally sufficient, and he will fill up those places in our lives that were drained dry by our giving to others. And to our surprise we will discover that what we receive from God in response to our giving and sharing with our fellow persons, is far greater than that which we gave away.”

Somewhere in Australia each year, bushfires burn out vast areas of forest; often they are a painful experience for people who perhaps lose their houses and other possessions. However, all the “junk” that had accumulated and helped to fuel the fire has gone and in time the wonders of new growth will be quite marvellous to behold. Maybe we can take advantage of Lent and clean out the “junk” in our own lives and so celebrate the new life of Easter in a very personal way.

Similarly, every so often boat owners have to pull their boats out of the water and get to work on the barnacles and sea life that have encrusted themselves onto the boat’s hull. When cleared of this growth, the boat reveals the true beauty of its shape and purpose and is much better at doing what it was made for.

When the fog of self-interest lifts from our life, the importance of family members and close friends takes on a much sharper focus. We are ever so more capable of positive actions towards those people who share their love with us.

“Thoughtfulness is the beginning of great sanctity. If you learn this art of being thoughtful, you will become more and more Christ-like, for his heart was meek, and he always thought of others. Our life, to be beautiful, must be full of thoughts for others. Jesus went about doing good. Our Lady did nothing else in Cana but thought of the needs of others and made their needs know to Jesus.” Mother Theresa

Wishing you every blessing for the week ahead.

Danuta Haka
**Religious Education News**

**Children’s Liturgy of the Word**

Children’s Liturgy of the Word takes place every Sunday during 10 am Mass throughout the term. All primary aged children are warmly invited to attend.

**Whole School Mass—time change to 10.00 am**

Our next whole school mass will be on Friday 11 April at 10.00 am in the Church. All are welcome to attend.

**Altar Servers urgently needed for all Easter ceremonies**

If you are able to assist with any altar serving over the period from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, please contact the Parish office on 9639 0598.

**First Communion Preparation 2014**

Invitation to Enrol - First Communion Preparation 2014 Registration evenings for First Communion will be held on Monday 5th May and Tuesday 6th May at 7.30 pm in St Michael’s Church. For children who have completed the sacrament of Reconciliation at a Church other than St Michael’s Baulkham Hills, a copy of the child’s baptismal certificate will need to be provided at the time of registration. Please note there is a cost of $20 payable at registration.

**Stations of the Cross Play**

The next Rehearsal will be - 9.30 am Sat 5th April.

**Parish News**

**Mass change due to the end of Daylight Savings**

Daylight Savings ends at 3.00am on Sunday, 6th April. Our Saturday Vigil Mass will revert to 5.30pm as from Saturday, 12th April.

**10 Ways to Strengthen Your Marriage**

Monday 7 April 7.30pm till 9.30pm at the Marian Centre - St Bernadette’s Parish 367 Old Northern Rd Castle Hill. Presented by Ann O’Brien - Marriage and Family Counsellor and Educator and Director of Marriage Support and Specialist Services for CatholicCare Social Services. Ann will present 10 strategies that can strengthen your marriage and relationships - with time for questions and discussion. No charge but bookings essential. Ring 02 9933 0222 to reserve your place.

**Holy Thursday Choir**

The Choir will sing for the Holy Thursday Mass on 17 April at 7.30 pm. Everyone very welcome to join. Rehearsals commence on Monday 31 March 7.30 pm in the Church. Further enquiries please ring Lise Rider on 0412 125 821.

**St Michael’s Playgroup**

Vacancies exist in the Tuesday group at 9 am and the Friday group at 9.30 am (after school assembly). New mums and dads welcome. The current age range for children is from 4 months to 3 years, but parents with younger or older children are welcome. Please phone Christine Bauer, Play Group Enrolment Officer on 0412 175 661 or Michelle 0415 385 353, for further information. Come along and have some fun.

**SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAM**

The social skill for next week is: **Caring**

Showing concern and thoughtfulness to others.

**Student of the Week**

**Term 1 Week 10**

**CAKE STALL—YEAR 5**

- During Lent we have been learning about Caritas Australia and the wonderful work they do in helping the poor. We talked about ways we could help and decided to have a cake stall to raise money. The money we raise will be sent to Caritas Australia so they can continue to help and improve the lives of people who are not as lucky as we are.
- The cake stall will be held at recess next Wednesday, 9th April. Cakes and other items will be sold for 50¢—$1.00.
- Please support our cake stall and help us to help Caritas.
- Thank you.

**Year 5**

**2015—ENROLLING NOW**

Enrolment packages for Kindergarten 2015 can be collected from the school office from 10 March—20 May 2014.

School Open Morning for 2015 Enrolments is:

Thursday 10 April from 9.30 am to 11.00 am.

Please contact the school office on 9639 0518 for further information.
**DATES TO REMEMBER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri 4 Apr</td>
<td>P&amp;F—Locks &amp; Socks Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 7 Apr</td>
<td>Yr 4 Project based learning in the Hall—Parent viewing 3.15-3.45 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue 8 Apr</td>
<td>Classes 5Yellow and KGreen attend Parish Mass at 9.15 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 9 Apr</td>
<td>Classes KRed and 5Blue attend Parish Mass at 9.15 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 9 Apr</td>
<td>Year 5 cake stall—Caritas</td>
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<td>Wed 9 Apr</td>
<td>NSWPSA Swimming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu 10 Apr</td>
<td>Classes 3Blue and 3Red attend Parish Mass at 9.15 am</td>
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<td>Thu 10 Apr</td>
<td>Student and Citizen of the Term Awards — 2.30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu 10 Apr</td>
<td>P&amp;F—Family Disco Night 5-9 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 11 Apr</td>
<td>Whole School Mass 10.00 am (NEW TIME) End of Term 1 Concludes 3.10 pm</td>
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**School holidays Mon 14 April—Fri 25 April**

| Mon 21 Apr-Sun 4 May | Parent/Teacher/Student Online bookings Open—Monday 21 April Close—Sunday 4 May |
| Thu 24 Apr           | Uniform shop open—10 am to 12 noon                                      |
| Mon 28 Apr           | Term 2 Commences—Staff/Students                                         |
| Tue 29 Apr           | Year 5 excursion to Gilroy College to watch dress rehearsal of “Hairspray” - 10.00 am—1.00 pm |
| Fri 2 May             | Spirit of Africa Drumming Incursion—K-6                               |
| Tue 6 May             | Diocesan Cross Country                                                 |
| Thu 8 May             | Year 6 Debating Round 1 vs St Bernadettes                              |
| Fri 9 May             | Mother’s Day Non-Eucharistic Liturgy at 10.15 am in the Church         |
| Mon 12 May            | Changeover to Winter Uniform                                            |
| Tue 13 May            | Naplan Testing Years 3 & 5—Language and Writing                        |
| Wed 14 May            | Naplan Testing Years 3 & 5—Reading                                     |
| Wed 14 May            | Year 6 Reconciliation                                                  |
| Thu 15 May            | Naplan Testing Years 3 & 5—Numeracy                                    |
| Thu 15 May            | Year 2 Maritime Museum—2Blue, 2Red                                     |
| Fri 16 May            | Year 2 Maritime Museum—2Green, 2Yellow                                 |
| Fri 16 May            | Year 5 Bathurst Excursion                                               |
| Fri 16 May            | Year 1 Non-Eucharistic Liturgy at 10.15 am in the Church               |
| Tue 20 May            | Years 3-6 ICAS Computer Skills                                         |
| Tue 20 May            | Boys soccer gala day                                                   |

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**St Michael’s Leaders at ‘The National Young Leaders Day Conference 2014 . . .**

On a splendid Monday morning twenty school leaders accompanied by Mrs Maka, Mr Ison and Mr Francis went to the Entertainment Centre to hear other accomplished leaders talk about Leadership.

The compere for the day was James Murray, an enthusiastic and energetic guy. He helped make light of the day with his Scottish accent and a simple show of how to do ‘Tai Chi’. The leaders will demonstrate a simple form of this martial art on stage at assembly.

The welcome address from Mike Martin outlined the general theme for the conference.

I am somebody

He talked about empathy and how this quality was so important for a leader to have and use in their interactions with others.

He concluded with another great idea, ‘Nothing great, cool or long lasting ever starts out that way’

Next, The Hon Bob Carr, a former Premier of NSW and minister for Foreign Affairs spoke to the students about having doubts when you might be called upon to get things done. He advice was, when you have doubt, ‘just tell yourself that you can do it’. He emphatically encouraged students to support their teachers in the process of their learning.

After enjoying recess, the audience had an emotional plea from a 16 year old to become an ‘organ donor’.

Coen Ashton who has ‘cystic fibrosis’ and has spent more time in hospital than outside it, narrated his story to an audience that listened in awe.

His message of ‘live life’ was loud and clear. He also advised his listeners to give themselves ‘little goals’ which will eventually help them to achieve their ‘main goal’.

The loudest cheer was the students’ favourite, Andy Griffiths. Not only did he share his intellectual ability and humour, he also had a rich piece of advice for the 6000 in the auditorium. He told his listeners to, ‘Fill their heads with reading books, because that was the key to EVERYTHING’.

We heard Ita Buttrose, the last speaker for the day, for a very brief moment because we had to catch the bus to return. She told her listeners how, as a girl, she was able to be a leader among her peers. In her time, as a young girl, education for girls was not important but she was able to lead the way through her dedication for what she stood for.

The day was a very fruitful one for the students. They gained plenty of insight into leadership and how to cope with responsibility.

George Francis
Classroom Teacher for 6 Green
Family Disco Night

Thursday 10th April
5pm - 9pm
RSVP Monday 7th April for
$15.00 family tickets

PRE-PURCHASE $15.00 for family ticket (2 adults and 3 children) tickets at the door $20.00 per family. Additional tickets $5 each.

Please return to the office in an envelope marked Family Disco Night, by Monday 7th April - at latest please.

Child's Name:______________________________________________Class:______________No of people attending:_____________________

Email address:______________________________________________________________

Total enclosed $______________________ □Cash or □Cheque payable to "St Michael's P&F" please.

HELPERS NEEDED!

We are sending out a call for helpers for the Family Disco on Thursday 10th April!
The Disco is from 5pm to 9pm and we also have set-up from 3.30pm and pack-up to 10.30pm.
If you can assist for 1 hour on the night, we'd be very appreciative.
Please contact Lyndal Pascoe lyndal017@yahoo.com.au
- Thank You -
We enjoyed the visit from a town planner from the council community.

When I do Religion I care about Jesus.

We have enjoyed are:

1. Yellow have been working very hard this term. Things we have enjoyed are:
   - Sienna Flaviano: When I do Religion I care about Jesus.
   - Harrison Habib: I like number busting.
   - Tayla Harris: I like to do art and make nice pictures.
   - Mitchell O'Brien: I enjoy reading groups because it is interesting.
   - Jay Puglisi: I like doing craft because it is lots of different things.
   - Sophie Terlikar: I like learning ‘take away’.

As part of our HSIE unit this term, the children in Year 4 have been working on a Project Based learning task, identifying and designing a new development for our local community.

We enjoyed the visit from a town planner from the council and we are very excited about the Mayor coming to look at our work next week.

The children’s work will be displayed in the Hall and parents are most welcome to visit the Hall next Monday or Tuesday afternoon between 3.15-3.45 pm to see our exciting projects.

Year 4 Teachers

NAPLAN DATES—Term 2

A Letter to Parents from the Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) went home last week to parents in Years 3 and 5.

The NAPLAN tests will be conducted on:

- **Tuesday 13 May:** Language Conventions (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) and Writing.
- **Wednesday 14 May:** Reading
- **Thursday 15 May:** Numeracy (Number, Algebra, function and pattern; Chance and data; Measurement and Space).

The NAPLAN tests will be conducted on:

- **Tuesday 20 May:** Science
- **Wednesday 21 May:** English
- **Thursday 22 May:** Mathematics
- **Monday 26 May:** History
- **Tuesday 27 May:** Geography
- **Wednesday 28 May:** English
- **Thursday 29 May:** Mathematics
- **Monday 2 June:** Language Conventions (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar)
- **Tuesday 3 June:** Reading
- **Wednesday 4 June:** Numeracy (Number, Algebra, function and pattern; Chance and data; Measurement and Space)
- **Thursday 5 June:** Science
- **Monday 9 June:** History
- **Tuesday 10 June:** Geography
- **Wednesday 11 June:** English
- **Thursday 12 June:** Mathematics
- **Monday 16 June:** Language Conventions (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar)
- **Tuesday 17 June:** Reading
- **Wednesday 18 June:** Numeracy (Number, Algebra, function and pattern; Chance and data; Measurement and Space)
- **Thursday 19 June:** Science

Next term during Week 2 (5-9 May) we will be conducting Parent/Teacher/Student interviews. The purpose of these interviews is to open the eyes of students to their own learning and to help them take personal responsibility for their progress.

In preparing for the Parent/Teacher/Student interviews, students see how their strengths, weaknesses and behaviour can affect them as learners thus allowing them to take more responsibility for and control over their achievement in school. These interviews are an experience that can improve the communication patterns of both students and parents. In these interviews, students learn how to reflect on their learning, evaluate their progress and communicate this information to their parents. Parents learn how to listen to their children, how to encourage growth and how to best help their children with specific problems.

**Booking Your Parent/Teacher/Student Interview**

During the holidays you will be given the opportunity to book your interview online. The 3 step procedure allows you to choose the teachers and times you require in a more efficient manner. A note will be sent home next week with all the details of how to book. The Bookings will be open during the holidays from Monday 21 April.
POLICY: HOMEWORK

1. Rationale

At St Michael’s home work must be meaningful, relevant to 21st Century learning and meet individual needs.

Homework involves “tasks assigned to students by school teachers that are meant to be carried out during non-school hours” (Cooper, 1989, p.7, in Hattie, “Visible Learning”).

1.1. We believe that the most important home work of all is family living:
   1.1.1. Lots and lots of family conversation – story telling, jokes, discussions about everything under the sun.
   1.1.2. Sharing bed time stories with mum/dad reading to the children.
   1.1.3. Independent reading in bed before lights go out.
   1.1.4. Family games, life skills activities, counting and hobbies.
   1.1.5. Meaningful interactive use of technology.
   1.1.6. Selective viewing of TV shows and discussion of these.
   1.1.7. Outings to all kinds of places of social, historic and natural interest.
   1.1.8. The kinds of imaginative play that comes naturally to children of all ages.
   1.1.9. Regular visits to the local library.

Such activities encourage and help children become better learners and happier human beings.

1.2. We believe that whilst school homework is a valuable aid, it is not the most important aspect of a child’s education. Homework is useful when it allows for the following aims to be met.

2. Aims

2.1. For children to be given the chance to consolidate what has been learnt at school.
2.2. For homework activities to be set to allow for the fact that children learn and work at different rates and have different needs.
2.3. To increase a child’s confidence and enjoyment in learning.
2.4. To give parents opportunities to encourage, express approval and, in general, relate positively to their child/children.
2.5. For children to develop productive long-term habits of learning and planning.
2.6. To reinforce reading as an essential component for all primary school children.
2.7. To ensure that homework activities are structured so that children and their parents understand what is expected.
2.8. To ensure that homework is not a source of worry or frustration for the child, teacher or parent.
2.9. To ensure that written work is set at an appropriate level that meets the age and stage of each individual child.
2.10. To ensure that homework activities given are relevant to 21st Century learning incorporating literacy and numeracy and interactive use of technology such as websites and podcasts, where appropriate.

3. Implementation

3.1. All children (Kindergarten to Year 6) are expected to read each night. Reading homework set should be from a range of genres.
3.2. Levelled reading is to be set at a level that enables a child to consolidate their reading ability and confidence level. No emphasis is placed on racing through the levels or staying on a level that is too easy.
3.3. Children in Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 are given regular reading homework and should be reading for 15-20 minutes daily. This includes the child reading aloud to an adult and being read to by an adult. We actively encourage the practice of ‘reading together’ – that is adult and child together. Any extra homework given should take no longer than 15 minutes. Structured and/or imaginative play should be actively encouraged.
3.4. Homework is given regularly to Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. It is not always of the written kind. Reading homework is given each week. Along with reading it may include spelling, carrying out an experiment, finding answers to problems posed at school or working on a current theme or project that requires the appropriate use of a computer.
3.5. Homework will not necessarily be the same for every child in the class. Just as children are taught in group situations in the classroom according to their capabilities, then their homework will be set with this in mind.
3.6. Children in Years 3 and 4 spend approximately 20-30 minutes daily on set homework and children in Years 5 and 6 between 30-40 minutes. This will include time for reading.
3.7. Homework should not be a source of worry or frustration for the child, teacher or parent. Children are encouraged to complete the assigned work to the best of their ability and seek the teacher’s help with any difficulties.
3.8. Set homework should be acknowledged by the teacher.
3.9. Parents can be of great help to their children by showing interest in their activities and listening to their reading and by being supportive and patient. Homework is of little value if it is completed by the parent or is not supervised. Please help and encourage, but allow your child to do his/her own work. Please sign homework. If for any reason the child is unable to do homework, the parent is to acknowledge this by a written note.
3.10. Homework is not given when families choose to take holidays during term time – our recommendation is for the child to read daily and keep a journal while away. Homework is not given when children are sick and therefore away from school.
3.11. Each class teacher in a grade should work together to produce homework to ensure that there is consistency across all four classes.
3.12. If children do not complete their homework a note is made in their diary.

4. Evaluation

An evaluation to take place annually.
CatholicCare

SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO ARE SEPARATED OR DIVORCED

The Solo Parent Ministry is now taking registrations for their next Post-Separation Recovery Program (commencing on May 14th). This is an excellent 7 week program to assist you work through many of the issues that you face as you negotiate your way through the loss, pain and challenges following the break-down of your marriage relationship. It will be held at Blacktown from 7.30 pm – 9.45 pm for 7 consecutive Wednesdays. Cost $80.00.

Registration:

sologparentministry@ccss.org.au
or
Phone. 99330205.

FREE fun program for kids to become fitter

Go4Fun

Do you have children 7 to 13 years old?
Are you worried about their weight?
Go4Fun runs for 10 weeks during school terms. Sessions are run twice a week for two hours after school.

Registrations for the next school term are now open!
Don’t miss out!

1800 780 900
www.go4fun.com.au