ASH WEDNESDAY

May the Spirit who guided Jesus to a life of self-sacrifice, self-giving and love inspire us to follow in his footsteps. Lord send us your Spirit to help us walk the journey of Lent with honesty, faithfulness, generosity and love. Help us to renew our belief in you and to show this by our efforts to talk with you in prayer, to turn away from sin and to care for those in need.

Amen

Dear Parents, Carers, Staff, Students and Friends,

Ash Wednesday – marks the beginning of our Lenten journey. Lent offers us all a very special opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and to deepen our commitment to a way of life, rooted in our baptism. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we’ve done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need.

Most students have adjusted to their new classroom surroundings very easily, for some it can be a little harder. This is part of the normal cycle and it is important that we all continue to stress the positives and also reassure anyone that is having a few struggles that this is normal. Conversely some students maybe flying now and experience some anxieties down the track. Again we have seen this before and it is part of the normal process. If you as parents/carers have any concerns please contact your child’s teacher or myself so that we can work with you. If you are unsure about anything—ask.

Thanks for a great week!
God bless you ☺

Jo-Anne

IMPORTANT DATES

FEBRUARY

Sun 22nd Sacramental Program commitment mass @ 10.30am
Mon 23rd & Tues 24th Pupil Free Days
Wed 25th School Council @ 7.30pm
Fri 27th CRT Induction session @ 9.30am

MARCH

Mon 2nd Athletics Sports @ Pedrina Park
Wed 4th Gr 5/6 Parliament Excursion
Fri 6th Division Swimming @ Portland
Mon 9th Public Holiday
Tues 10th PSG meetings
P&P Parent lunch
Wed 11th – Fri 13th Gr 5/6 Camp @ Melbourne
Fri 13th Regional Swimming
Mon 16th – Tues 17th Learning Conversations

Tues 24th – Thurs 26th Sacrament of Reconciliation
Tues 24th ACMA Cybersafety presentations
Thurs 26th Division Athletics
Fri 27th Last day of Term 1

APRIL
PUPIL FREE DAYS
A reminder that students are not to attend school on Monday 23rd and Tuesday 24th February (next week) as staff will be attending a professional learning program.

School Rules
All students are expected to follow our three main school rules:

Respect your school
Do your best
Help others to succeed

School Mass
- Thank you for your support of our mass to mark the beginning of another school year held last weekend with our Parish Community. The celebration was a prayerful way to start our year and share Eucharist with those who will walk with us through the journey of the year ahead.
- Thanks to Kerry Stevens and the Parish team for planning and organising our celebration and to all who assisted with the liturgy.

Skoolbag App
Our Skoolbag app is available for download to Apple and android devices! Search for ‘St Mary’s Hamilton’ in your app store. This app is another way you can keep in touch with events, activities and information from school in order to support your children’s learning. If you would like more information or require assistance with this tool please contact the Office.

Learning Conversations
Thanks to the families who have let us know that they have a preferred day and time frame for Learning Conversations. An appointment slip will be sent home to all families on Tuesday 10th March.

Sacramental Program
The Introduction to the Sacraments evening held last night was a very positive meeting which hopefully has provided support for those families journeying through the Sacrament Program this year. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will take place in the last week of this term.

Visitors during the school day
If you visit the school at any time between 8.55am and 3.15pm you must report to the office!

A few reminders!
- Making it a bit clearer and more concise this week in the hope the information is better understood!
- **Students should not arrive at school before 8.30am.**
  - Cars are not to park in the drop off/pick up area.
  - Take care and look over your right shoulder before pulling out from the pick up/drop off area and be aware of other vehicles
  - Students are not to walk behind parked vehicles at any time

Centacare Programs
We are very fortunate to have Centacare running two programs at our school next term.
1-2-3 Magic and Emotional Coaching aims to create a more peaceful household, less arguing and fewer angry moments. This program will be held at St Mary’s on **Thursday 16th April, 23rd April and 30th April from 10.30am – 12.30pm** and is free of charge!! There are a few spaces left – please contact Jo-Anne or Centacare (details on attached flyer) if you are interested or require further information.

Raising Teens is a program specifically for parents who have young people in Years 6, 7, 8 & 9. This program is also free of charge and will be held on **Thursday 30th March 1.30 – 3.00pm** at St Mary’s.

PROJECT COMPASSION
We celebrated Mass with our parish community on Wednesday. **ASH WEDNESDAY** is when we are marked with the sign of the cross on our foreheads in ash. This was a wonderful celebration and a great way to start our Lenten Journey.

LENT lasts for forty days and concludes on Holy Thursday when we begin the celebrations of Holy Week in readiness for our Risen Lord. In our lives we strive to be like Jesus, living out the Good News. So, during Lent we try and make a concerted effort to pray, to strive to live simply (perhaps giving up something that we enjoy or take for granted) and to go quietly and humbly ‘out of our way’ (like the Good Samaritan) to do good deeds for others.

We may find this challenging at times. When it does become a challenge let us remember our God gave up His son for us. And that it is Jesus’ resurrection on **EASTER SUNDAY** that we celebrate.

At St. Mary’s, one way we encourage our students to think of others before themselves, during LENT, is to contribute to Project Compassion, a mission run by Caritas Australia which is the Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development. Each child was given a small box to take home on Wednesday. This is their Project Compassion Box. Please place it prominently in your home and encourage the students to contribute what money they can to Project Compassion by placing coins in their box. Then return the Project Compassion...
Box, with the money inside, to school. This year, all Project Compassion Boxes are due back to school no later than Wednesday, 15th April 2015. (Week 1, Term 2).

Remembering Jesus’ message love one another as I have loved you’ and that we aim to work together as a team for all, we encourage you and your family to support your students in this endeavour, so that those in need can have ‘FOOD FOR LIFE’.

THE WORD ON THE LEARNING STREET!

Prep
Hi everyone,
A short week next week! Next week’s new letter is “D” and our new word will be “and”. Great to hear from the kids that they are practising their Golden words.

3/4
Shrove Tuesday
On Shrove Tuesday my whole class went outside to burn the ashes for Ash Wednesday. Before we burnt the ashes some of the class said a prayer. After that each one of us put a palm on the fire. Then we talked about what people did on Shrove Tuesday many years ago and how they covered themselves in ashes.

In the afternoon we went outside again to have pancake relays and eat the pancakes Mrs. Schurmann made for us.

Macey Bowie Gr 3.

5/6
“I am liking that our learning is more open and we get to move around” Saskia Schaap
“I am looking forward to Sports Day and we have been practising High Jump, Hurdles and Shot Put in PE” Eliza Armstrong

Library News
This year, ten Grade Five students applied for and have accepted the position of Library Monitor.

Their applications varied in presentation, highlighting their skills and talents with a touch of humour. These students have already commenced their duties and have proved themselves worthy of this role in our school and I look forward to working with them throughout the year.

Our Library Monitors for this year are Sophie Trotter, Edward de Salis, Saskia Schaap, Lily Annett, Eliza Armstrong, Eliza Sobey, Amalie Rowe, Travis Foster, Lani Gallagher and Charlotte Murphy.

These students will be acknowledged, for their willingness and commitment to undertake this role in our school, for this year, at our school assembly on Friday, 6th March 2015 and a warm invitation is extended to their family and friends to attend this assembly. Congratulations to our 2015 Library Monitors!

FAMILY FEE ASSISTANCE:

The Education Maintenance Allowance is no longer funded by the Government. However the Ballarat Diocese has maintained their commitment to continue the Family Fee Assistance Scheme. The scheme offers a tuition fee concession to families who hold a current Centrelink or Veteran Affairs concession card. Please note that students who are holders of Health Care Cards are not eligible. Families who qualify for the scheme will pay $520 per annum for primary school tuition fees. The discounted fee covers tuition and capital fees only. It does not cover additional charges such as camps, student fees, and excursions. An application form needs to be completed and are available at the office. These forms, plus a copy of your current Centrelink card, must be received by Wednesday 25th February, 2015. If during the year your circumstances change and you become eligible for Centrelink, please come and discuss this with Helen.

Although a family may be eligible to receive a fee discount, families may choose not to apply for the fee discount and pay the full school fee

The Sport Catch Up with Miss Couchman.

Together Everyone Achieves More! Please read ahead to find out the T.E.A.M CHANGE for ATHLETICS DAY!

St Mary’s Athletics – Monday 2nd March

For Athletics Day this year we would love for you to move around and watch your child/children participate. We will have a teacher based at each event and we asking for helpers to assist move each age group around on the day. All we ask for is some assistance at the event you are watching, for example you may need to help bring the shot puts back or hold a measuring tape at the long jump, but you will get to watch your aspiring athlete compete at each event. Please see the attached Athletics Day Program to help you plan your day.

If you are able to attend and cheer on your child/children please fill in the attached slip to indicate which time you are available and who you will be able to assist. Please return it to school by Friday 27th February. If you are willing to assist for the 7am set-up or be based at a specific event or the running track throughout the day please indicate this on the slip. We are looking forward to a brilliant day which brings our school community together!

District Tennis

Well done to Bailey Mason and Sam Crawford who competed in the Hamilton District Tennis Championships on Thursday. The boys both won a match each and came back with big smiles on their faces! Thank you to their parents for organising their participation in this event. The boys will give us a run down on their day next week.

Grade 3/4 Hockey Clinic

The two Grade 3/4 classes will be participating in a hockey clinic being run by Hockey Victoria at school on Friday 27th February from 11.30-1.30 as part of the Hockey Victoria Road Show. Please ensure your child in Grade 3/4 wears their sports uniform on this day. I hope they enjoy this fun hockey experience!

Saturday Morning Netball

The St Mary’s Superstars had a fantastic first game against North Hamilton. There were many intercepts and turn overs to be had in the game. We displayed excellent defensive skills and superb attacking skills, against a much taller and stronger team. Many goals were scored and team work was in abundance. We did go down by a few goals, but I am very
excited to watch our young team improve as the season goes on! We play our second game this Saturday at 9.30am. Come on down to watch the St Mary’s Superstars shooting towards brilliance!

AFL Player Clinic
Thank you to the families who let me know they wish to attend the 10.45am AFL Player Clinic with Essendon on Tuesday 24th February at Melville Oval. You will be joining in with many other school groups on the day, so please ensure you stay with your child/children throughout the clinic as you are attending on a pupil free day for St Mary’s. I hope you have an amazing time! Enjoy the opportunity to participate in skills with the players attending on the day.

I’m looking forward to a wonderful year of sport at St Mary’s. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any sport related queries at school or email me at ecouchman001@smhamilton.catholic.edu.au

Thank you in advance for your terrific support this year!  
Miss Couchman ☺

Relay for Life
This year we are entering a school team in the Cancer Council’s Relay For Life being held from Friday 20th March to Saturday 21st March. Teams of people will start walking around the Hamilton Recreational Reserve on King Street on Friday night at 6.25pm and will continue walking through the night until Saturday lunch time at 12.30pm. Relay For Life is a fun and moving overnight experience that raises vital funds for the Cancer Council’s research, prevention, information and support services. Relay is a chance for our community to recognise and celebrate much loved family members and friends who are cancer survivors, patients or carers. It also offers an opportunity to honour and remember loved ones lost to cancer and to raise money to help save more lives. We will be having a purple themed casual clothes day and a purple themed cupcake day leading up to and after Relay for Life at school, so please watch this space, be involved and support in any way you can. If you, your children or family wish to walk a few laps with us we would truly love your support, please contact Miss Couchman (ecouchman001@smhamilton.catholic.edu.au) to indicate your interest or simply turn up on the night to join us.

Parents and Friends
Our first meeting for the year was held on Wednesday evening with great discussion on ideas for the year ahead. One of the many changes for the P&F this year is to encourage other parents and friends to volunteer to help out with an activity.

The first event for the year will be a lunch for parents with the opportunity to especially welcome new families. If you think that organising a venue, RSVP list etc for this activity is something you could assist with please let Jo-Anne know and she will be happy to assist with the invitations etc. This might be something you could do with another parent! The tentative date for this lunch is Tuesday 10th March but can be changed to suit the organisers.

The Annual General Meeting for the P&F is scheduled for Tuesday 21st April starting at 7.00pm.

Expo News!
The first meeting for the Expo Committee also occurred this week with a focus on evaluating each part of the day. The Committee would like your feedback so that we can work to make the day even better. Please see the feedback form attached to this newsletter.

The next Expo Committee meeting is Monday 16th March.

Easter Raffle
It is almost Easter time and we will be having a raffle again this year. This is not a fundraiser but a fun activity that all the children love. Half of the money received from the tickets will purchase the prizes and the other half goes to Project Compassion. Each family is being sent a book of 5 tickets to sell at $1.00 each. Extra books are available at the office. The prizes, usually between 30 and 40, will be drawn on Friday 27th March (last day of term 1). Please have your tickets returned to school by Friday 30th March.

Canteen Roster term 1
25/2/15  Jen Taylor
4/3/15   Cathy Ferguson
11/3/15  Jen Taylor
18/3/15  Michelle Ferey
25/3/15  Jen Taylor

Parish News

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We are selling ICYP OLES. Every Friday afternoon until the end of term for $1.00 each! 1.40pm in the courtyard. WHY?
To raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation! Harry Armstrong is shaving his mop of hair in March to support his mate Olly Francis (who is currently suffering from Leukaemia 🙏🏻) All proceeds will be given to Harry so he can reach his goal of $2000.00 ($860 so far). Both Harry and Olly are past students of St. Mary’s and we are proud to support them both. Any other financial donations are MOST WELCOME and can be dropped into the office (Marked World’s Greatest Shave) or passed on to Lisa Cleaver before and after school on Fridays. If you need a receipt, please make sure your name is on the envelope. Thank you for your support.

ENROLMENTS OPEN FOR 2016
Monivae invites potential 2016 Year 7 students and their families to visit Monivae College.
Open Days
Tuesday, 24th February 9:30am.  
Thursday, 26th February 7:00pm.
Sunday, 15th March 2:00pm.
Spent the Day at Monivae
Tuesday, 24th March.
For more information contact Lisa Mails on (03) 5551 1245 or via lmails@monivae.vic.edu.au