Next week is Ash Wednesday. As we begin our Lenten journey, we pray for the humility to walk back into the open arms of God. Jesus teaches us to give, pray, and fast in secret, and in this way show that we are followers of Jesus.

Give. How can I give joyfully, and not reluctantly or out of self-righteousness? Can I look into the eyes of my sister or brother living in poverty, seeking to understand their hopes and struggles, and give generously to bring healing?

Pray. How can I create space to pray to God? Can I close the door on the world, away from the hustle and bustle, to rekindle my relationship with God? Can I make time every day to do this, trusting that God’s grace will bring light to my life and to those around me?

Fast. How can I give up some of the things I normally indulge in to create more space for God? Can I give up chocolate or wine, complaining or arguing; and instead try to grow in love, peace, and kindness for my neighbours near and far?

Loving God, we pray that we may grow closer to your son, our Lord Jesus, and share our love with our sisters and brothers who are most vulnerable. Amen.

Dear Parents, Carers, Staff, Students and Friends,

We have been very saddened this week as we have shared our thoughts and prayers for Tily Jacobson (Prep) after her mum passed away on Wednesday. Danielle was a happy presence in our school as she dropped off and collected her precious Tily each day. She was always smiling and eager for a chat! Please continue to pray for Steven, Tily, Bentley, Zeehan and their extended family as they journey a very difficult and sad path. The funeral for Danielle will be held on Thursday 10.00am at St Mary’s Church.

The students have written some honest and beautiful messages to Tily. You should all be very proud of the gentleness and compassion your children have expressed.

Please see the letter which was sent home with students on Thursday for information about how you can help us to support the Jacobson family.

Thanks for a great week! God bless you! ☺

Jo-Anne

IMPORTANT DATES

FEBRUARY
Mon 27th Learning Conversations

MARCH
Wed 1st Ash Wednesday mass @ 10.00am
Learning Conversations
Fri 3rd Athletics Day
Mon 6th Caritas Leaders day – Gr 5/6s
Wed 8th Division swimming
Thurs 9th Gr 3/4 mass @ 10.00am
Fri 10th P/1/2 mass @ 10.00am – new date

Mon 13th Public holiday
Thurs 16th District athletics
Fri 17th Learning Walk 9.30 – 10.30am
PSG meetings

April
Tues 18th Start of term 2
Advance notice:
- Mon 24th April  Pupil free day
- Fri 12th May    Mother’s Day High Tea
- Fri 21st July   Grandparents’ Day
- Tues 25th July  School photos
- Fri 1st Sept    Fathers & Footy Day

Attachments:
- Australian Catholics magazine

School Rules
This year we continue with our three main school rules:

Respect your school
Do your best
Help others to succeed

During our day, and in all that we do, we try to remember these rules and make choices that support our expectation to ‘treat others the way you would like to be treated’.

Ash Wednesday
On Wednesday 1st March staff and students will attend Ash Wednesday mass at the Church at 10.00am. Preps and their parents/carers are welcome to come along on their rest day.

Skoolbag App
Our Skoolbag app is available for download to Apple and android devices! This app is another way you can inform us of your Childs absence and keep in touch with events, activities and information from school in order to support your children’s learning. Simply search for ‘st mary’s hamilton’ in your app store. If you would like more information or require assistance with this tool please contact the Office.

Learning Conversations
Our Learning Conversations (Parent/Teacher Interviews) are scheduled for next Monday 27th February and Wednesday 1st March.
Appointment slips have been sent home.
- This is an opportunity to have a discussion between parents, teachers and students relating to your child’s learning so far this year. It will also be a time to share learning directions and the results of Literacy and Numeracy testing conducted so far.

• Please bring your son/daughter along to their appointment time so he or she can be involved in the conversation.
• Fifteen minutes has been set aside for your conversation. If you wish to take some of this time for a chat without your child present please indicate this to the teacher at the start of your time.
• It is vital that you are punctual to these meetings to ensure that we can run the afternoons as smoothly as possible.

Consent Forms
Thanks to those families who have returned their Consent Forms, Family Summary Reports and Bus forms to the office. Parental Consent Forms were posted to you during the holidays – yellow paper! Family Summary Reports and green Bus Forms were also included in the mail out. Spare forms are available from the Office.

Please return these forms to school ASAP if you haven’t already done so!

Visitors during the school day
It is great to see parents and carers visit school during the day to support the learning programs in the classrooms. Our Visitors Policy, which is implemented to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of our school community, requires anyone coming into the school to report to the office on arrival and sign in before moving into the learning spaces.

- Parents and carers are not permitted to enter the learning area or the playground without following the correct procedure.
- If the Office is unattended please do not wander past without completing the visitors book.
- If you need to drop something off to your child during the day please leave the items at the office for staff to deliver at an appropriate time.
- Parents waiting to collect their children at the end of the day are asked not to wait in the Learning Street as this distracts students and hinders teachers in preparing students for dismissal.
Thanks for your co-operation and support of this policy.

International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS) 2017
ICAS provides an opportunity for all students in Years 3 to 12 to gain a measure of their own achievement in an external testing situation.
The tests are an excellent preparation for national tests and the student report is useful for highlighting your child’s strengths and weaknesses.
All students receive a certificate and an individual student report indicating which questions they
answered correctly and their score compared with the rest of the students tested. The certificate and individual student report are also suitable for your child to include in a portfolio. The entry fee per student and dates of competitions are as follows:

- Digital Technologies - May 23 ($8.80)
- Science – May 30 ($8.80)
- Writing – during the week of June 12 to 16 ($18.70)
- Spelling - June 14 ($12.10)
- English – August 1 ($8.80)
- Mathematics - August 15 ($8.80)
- All competitions ($66.00)

If you are interested in your child participating in these assessments please collect an entry form from the Office. Entries together with fees are due by Thursday March 23. Late entries will not be accepted.

We hope to see many students taking on these challenges once again this year.

If you have any queries about ICAS please contact me.

Chris Minney

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 Friday 24th February, 2017. If you know of any Catholic families with children who have not received their sacraments of initiation, then please ask them to contact the Parish Office or call Noreen McLeish on 0438531651 if you have any questions re the sacraments.

Information, including all dates, are on the website. www.stmaryshamilton.org.au

2017 Sacramental Program
The Sacramental program is for everyone who wishes to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion, and so complete their initiation into the Church, which began at Baptism. This invitation goes out to anyone who may have delayed having their child/ren Baptised and now wish to present them for Baptism, as the first sacrament of the initiation process. If you have any questions re the sacraments.

Assemblies are held every second Friday starting at 2.40pm.
Our next assembly will be Friday 10th March. All welcome!

Parents and Friends

UNIFORM SHOP
Opening times:
Every second Monday 3.15 – 3.45pm
Monday 6th March
Purchases can be made by attending the Uniform Shop or by placing an order with payment at the front office. EFTPOS available.
Canteen Roster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/3/17</td>
<td>Jen Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/3/17</td>
<td>NO CANTEEN- Monivae sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/3/17</td>
<td>Volunteer required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/3/17</td>
<td>Volunteer required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/3/17</td>
<td>Volunteer required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that if there are no parent volunteers there will be no lunch orders available on that day. If you would like to volunteer please put your name on the roster at the front office. We urgently need some new faces on our roster for our canteen to continue. Jen Taylor is more than happy to show you the ropes for your first time.

**LINK UP!**

Thank you to those parents who have already generously provided food for our freezer:
- lasagne, quiche, cakes, slices,
- sausage rolls, soup, casseroles …

Food needs to be clearly labelled and dated in disposable containers. You can place it in the freezer in the multi-purpose room yourself, leave at the office or with Terrielynn or Jo-Anne.

For more information, offers of assistance or to let us know of families who need assistance please call the office.

**Bus travellers**

Thank you to all those country bus passengers who have registered with PTV for their travel. If you travel on a town bus you **DO NOT** have to register with PTV. You **DO** however have to make sure you **have money** with you to pay the bus fare or you may be refused travel. All country bus travellers require a bus pass to travel on a different bus to their usual one or if you do not normally travel on a bus and you are going to use the bus for a one off trip. To obtain a bus pass please contact our school office with the details of which bus and days you require the pass and we will be able to issue you a pass.

**Zooper Dooper Sales**

Every Friday Keely and I will be selling Zooper Doopers for $1 out the front of the 5/6 classrooms. We are raising the money to go towards the Animal Rescue & Re-Homing Centre which is on Bothwell Road Hamilton. If you would like to find out more go to the Wildlife Victoria website.

**Prep reminder**

A reminder to all prep parents to please send in a family photo for Monday. Photos can be scanned if you would like your photo returned.

**Pastoral Care**

Hello again, this week I will share more of the Andrew Fuller “Depression proofing your kids” article, I hope you find it of interest.

**Lower the amount of stress**

Try to identify some of the major sources of stress in your life and develop systems to deal with them. If you can’t avoid the stressful situations at least develop a de-compression strategy. This is a way of winding ourselves down after being revved up. Going for a walk, doing some exercise and being active are some of the best ways.

**Find some good friends**

Friends are a treasure. Along with family, having a few good friends that we can talk things over with enriches our lives and protects us in difficult times.

**Eat healthily**

What we eat changes our moods. For example, countries that eat low levels of fish have higher levels of depression. Fish contains a fatty acid known as EPA, which is lacking in those with depression. Fatty acids are also found in flaxseed, walnuts and chia seeds and are good fats.

These are the good fats so if you are hesitant about eating them don’t be. Whole grain oats have been shown to help with depression as they have folic acid and B vitamins and helps with a slow release of energy versus the crash and burn of blood sugar levels that can happen. Foods high in selenium which is found in meat, fish and cereal grains has also been shown to decrease symptoms of depression. Leafy greens have magnesium in them which helps with depression and helps with sleep patterns.

If you have any concerns please contact me on: 0400 994 032 or see your GP.

Lisa will be available to speak with any parents and carers who are feeling that they need to talk to someone after a difficult week. Catch up with her at the Athletics sports day next Friday or come in for a cuppa on Friday 10th March at 2.00pm.

Kind regards Lisa Gonnet
School Pastoral Care Worker.
### The Sport Catch Up

#### School Athletics – Friday 3rd March
How exciting! Athletics Day is next Friday!! We are in need of a tandem trailer for the day, it needs to be available for Miss Couchman to collect on Thursday night and use all day Friday. If you have one that we could borrow, we would be immensely grateful! Please let Miss Couchman know if you can help out.

Please make sure you:
• Have lots of fun!
• Try your best!
• Show good sportsmanship!

Please make sure you wear:
• Full Sports Uniform with your house coloured t-shirt.
• Sunscreen (More will be available on the day for re-application.)

Please make sure you pack:
• Enough nutritious food for the whole day (play lunch, lunch and snacks.)
• Enough water for the whole day.
• School hat.

Please make sure you arrive at school on time. We will be getting on the buses no later than 9.10am. If you wish to take your child home at the completion of the sports, you must notify their homeroom teacher at Pedrina Park and have your child marked off their list.

#### District Tennis - Lauren Borgmeyer
On Friday the 17th of February I represented St Mary’s in the District Tennis in Hamilton. There were 8 girls and 8 boys. I played against all the girls and won two matches. I was in three tiebreaks and lost them all. I won against a girl four-love. I would like to encourage others to play tennis.

Well done Lauren, we are very proud of you and wish you all the best in your future tennis endeavours!

#### Hockey Clinic - Wednesday 22nd February
Grade 1-4 students had a wonderful time at the hockey clinic held at school on Wednesday! Thank you to Eliza from Hockey Victoria for running a fun and active program with our students again this year. Also thank you to her Monivae helpers Eleanor, Jemma, Cody and Sam.

#### Division Swimming - Wednesday 8th March
Division Swimming is being held on Wednesday 8th March at AquaZone in Warrnambool. We will have 10 swimmers competing! Notes went home with these students today.

#### Saturday Netball
Wow!! What a game!! The St Mary’s Swifts had an amazing win on the weekend! 25-5 was the final score! The passages of play down the court were terrific to watch! Chloe Jones hardly allowed any passes into the opposition scoring third, she was intercepting and deflecting like a champion! Klay Collins also outplayed her opponent and took some cracking intercepts! Sophie Button played close on her opposition, virtually shutting them out of the game. Jasmine Young was incredible at making space on the court, allowing open passes down the court. Ellen White dominated in the goal circle, shooting many goals to add to the St Mary’s Swifts unbelievable win! Libby Fox also had a tremendous game in the goal ring, her ability and skill to secure a closer shot is wonderful to watch. Libby Rentsch’s fantastic movement on the court and incredible long range shooting were superb! Caitlin and Molly once again teamed up in the mid-court and worked hard to also be a passing option. Our defensive game continues to be our key strength, but last weekend proved our attacking skills are rapidly improving, as is our footwork! Well done Swifts on a terrific game!

Miss Couchman & Miss Forrest 😊
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>12 &amp; Over</th>
<th>11 years</th>
<th>10 years</th>
<th>9 years</th>
<th>Gr 2</th>
<th>Gr 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4 x 100m Relay</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>High Jump</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>400m</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30-2.00</td>
<td>Discus</td>
<td>Long Jump</td>
<td><em>80m Hurdles</em></td>
<td>100m</td>
<td>High Jump</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00-1.30</td>
<td><em>80m Hurdles</em></td>
<td><em>80m Hurdles</em></td>
<td>Long Jump</td>
<td>100m</td>
<td>Shot Put</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30-1.00</td>
<td>68cm</td>
<td>68cm</td>
<td>100m</td>
<td>100m</td>
<td>Discus</td>
<td>400m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00-12.30</td>
<td>11.00-11.30</td>
<td>11.00-10.30</td>
<td>10.30-10.00</td>
<td>9.30-10.00</td>
<td>80cm</td>
<td>80cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00-11.00</td>
<td>10.00-11.00</td>
<td>10.00-11.00</td>
<td>10.00-11.00</td>
<td>10.00-11.00</td>
<td>10.00-11.00</td>
<td>10.00-11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.30-10.00</td>
<td>9.30-10.00</td>
<td>9.30-10.00</td>
<td>9.30-10.00</td>
<td>9.30-10.00</td>
<td>9.30-10.00</td>
<td>9.30-10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *80m Hurdles* and *80m* indicate different events or distances. Breaks are indicated by "Break."