Mary is both mother and model for Pope Francis.
“IT IS FROM MARY THAT THE CHURCH LEARNS TRUE DISCIPLESHIP.”

God chose Mary, “a simple maid of Nazareth—not someone who lived in a place amid power and riches or one who had done extraordinary things.” God chose someone open to him, someone to “put her trust in him, even without understanding everything”. The pope recommended that people ask themselves: “Do I let myself be surprised by God, as Mary was, or do I remain caught up in my own safety zone…, taking refuge in my own projects and plans? Do I truly let God into my life?”

Congratulations to Roy Lawler, Mikayla Telfer and Patrick McLaren who received the sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist on Saturday night. Bishop William Wright spoke to the children and all gathered in St Anne’s Church about each of the sacraments being a visible sign to us of the wonderful gifts God has already given us. He spoke beautifully about each person taking the opportunity of allowing God to be present in relationship with them. He spoke about the gifts the Holy Spirit gives when we live our lives this way. Courage was the stand out gift the Bishop spoke about and then seeing the world with wonder and awe as a result. We then celebrated with a supper with the parishioners of St Anne’s in the MacKillop Room. A special “Thank you” to Anne Marie Peebles and Paige Farrow, for using their own time and talents to help the parents to prepare their children for this special stage in their Christian journey.

We remember in our prayers the Magner family as John, Patrick and Tia’s grandfather is seriously ill. We pray that the family is comforted by the love of God through the kind actions of those around them.

State Action Plan for Literacy and Numeracy K-2 (SAP) has been running in our K-2 class for 25 weeks now. Last Friday, Anne Marie Peebles (State Action Plan Lead Teacher) and I had an opportunity to discuss the progress in Literacy and Numeracy learning in the Infants years with other SAP school leaders. The data collected by our teachers is showing very good growth of all students in the infants years and the data is being used effectively to target teaching for students so that all students’ learning is maximised. Some of the great things happening at St Joseph’s Merriwa to raise the level of Literacy and Numeracy include:

- Creation of a collaborative teaching team where student assessment data can be collected, analysed and areas of need targeted by the three classroom teachers together. (Infants with SAP funding)
- Creation of fluid learning groups within the classroom where students are moved for specific targeted teaching as needed.
- Use of Learning Support Assistant in the Literacy and Numeracy teaching times so that the teachers can work with small groups to target specific areas of need.
- Uninterrupted Literacy and Numeracy teaching times across the whole school. Keeping the Main thing the Main thing.
- Parent assisted reading groups where parents are given specific reading tasks to complete with an individual student or small group of students targeting their needs at that point in time.
- Focussed use of the LEXIA computer based Literacy skills program with students requiring additional support in class. The school has also purchased the program for all students to use at home. The work done at home is monitored by our teachers and if areas of weakness are flagged by the program the teachers follow up with it at school.
- Competition participation to make English and Maths skills relevant and real. These competitions include school and regional based public speaking competition, spelling bees and maths mentals bees and school, regional and diocesan level debating competition for Stage 3 children. There is also a regionally based Mathematics competition that all Stage 3 students compete in as well as the opportunity for high achieving Stage 2 students.
- Delivery of quality Professional Development to all teachers across the school to keep teachers abreast of the current science around teaching Literacy and Numeracy.
- The appointment of Paige Farrow as Maths champion at St Joseph’s. This means that Paige attends many specialised Maths PD days and brings her learning back and trains the rest of us. This has been a very good model to work with.
- Delivery of parent training as the need arises eg “How to teach your child to read”
- The appointment of additional Learning Support Teacher hours to focus on designing and implementation of targeted programs for students with learning difficulties.

Parents can be part of this great focus. There is something for everyone! Some ideas to start with:
1. Be a reading helper at school.
2. Be a reading helper with your child at home.
3. Encourage your child to prepare for the spelling bees (the school challenge is next week)
4. Discuss the value of learning with your child. Help them to see the wider world that learning opens up for them. In the words of the wonderful Dr Seuss - The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.
Next week is Book Week and we look forward to celebrating books with a magic show at school on Thursday. All welcome. The Thursday pre-schoolers will be joining with us. There is no book parade this week but the students will still be celebrating the short listed books in their library lessons. We will join the community on Friday for the annual Little Sprouts day. This fabulous day encourages everyone in the community to get involved in reading and help our youngest community members to experience the joy and wonder of books. Thank you to the Merriwa Central School for continuing to host this fabulous day.

Congratulations to the Stage 3 students who entered the “Mayor for a Day” writing competition run by the Upper Hunter Shire Council. Darcy Moore has won first prize for our school and Tia Manger and Damian Jamieson won 2nd and 3rd places respectively. This is an example of writing with a meaningful purpose. Thank you Miss Foran for your effort to engage the students in such worthwhile learning experiences.

Thank you to Ranger Binks and Mrs Tash Taaffe for visiting our school during Local Government Week and teaching the students about the importance of microchipping their dogs. The students now have a great understanding of the process involved.

The ASPIRE Program has once again reached out to the students at St Joseph’s Merriwa to assist us in giving them the best opportunities for developing Creative Arts skills of Dance, Drama and Singing. Lauren the dance teacher and Anna the drama and singing teacher had absolutely every student up and moving last week. All students have improved their skills so much and they are very excited about showcasing these skills for you on Concert night on 9th September. This year’s theme is “Australia – A journey through time”.

The Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music Quintet will entertain our students this Wednesday at 2pm in the MacKillop Room. Our students will be the audience in a 45 minute recital performed by masters of the bassoon, French horn, flute, clarinet and saxophone. Please feel very welcome to join us for this exciting event. This recital complements the Creative Arts – Music curriculum.

Transition program for new kinder students 2016 is well under way and I am very pleased with the response so far. All the students have settled into their new classroom environment very well. This program has been a very successful one over the past years as it assists the new students to practice skills associated with “big school”. They learn to be a little more independent, follow instructions, carry their own bag, open their lunch boxes and so on. The program also enables the teachers to identify areas which may need extra support before next year and once at school. The senior students love forming a new relationship with their buddies and enjoy helping them settle into the school environment. There have been two very useful parent sessions held on the morning of Transition, so far. The first was on the Curriculum in the first years and what parents can expect Kinder learning to look like and some hints on what they can be doing at home now. The second session was on Emotional Wellbeing and Social Skills. This session focussed on what we do at school to assist students to become resilient and to form relationships with others, and what families can do at home as primary educators of their child. The remaining sessions will focus on Learning Literacy and Learning Numeracy. It is very important that from Transition onwards parents work in partnership with the school in the education of the students. When schools and parents work together there is a greater opportunity for each student to reach their potential.

The next transition day will be held on Thursday 27th August.

Parents and Friends Meetings offer an ideal opportunity to develop partnerships between parents and the school. We now have added a 15 minute segment each meeting called “Parents in Partnership”. This session aims to cover topics of interest to parents. So far this year we have had sessions on “staying safe on the internet” and “A–E reporting” and “Teaching children to read”. What would you like this term? We will have the NAPLAN information meeting when all results are out to parents.

St Joseph’s Fete and Campdraft committee had its final meeting for the year recently. A report was prepared for the last P&F meeting. I would like to say congratulations to the parent community for making this the most successful fundraiser and social event to date. Thank you especially to all committee members who did an awesome job. At the meeting, Megan Moore - inaugural committee treasurer, Steven Ninness inaugural committee chairman and Tanya Ninness, inaugural ABCRA rep, vacated their positions for the upcoming year. I extend my
deep gratitude to Steven, Megan and Tanya for the brilliant job they have done so far. You have helped to establish an event that is highly professional, financially viable and highly regarded across the district and beyond. Thanks to Natalie Hourn, De Paterson and Peter Holland who have agreed to continue in their positions for next year. It is wonderful when a committee has a mix of old and new members within. Please look on our P&F notice board, located on the new library verandah, for the ABCRA write up on the day.

Merriwa Horse Sports was a very well attended event last week. St Joseph’s had 12 riders participating on the day. Thank you to team manager Mrs Samantha Kerr and parents for assisting on the day to ensure all children could compete in a safe environment. Mrs Kerr has reported that the students displayed great sportsmanship throughout the day and were noted as having very good manners. Mrs Kerr was also impressed with the level of improvement in riding skills of our students over the months since our last Horse Sports event. Well done!

Helen Whale

AWARDS

Congratulations to the following award winners:

Kindergarten
Emma McLaren - for ‘having a go’ when writing new words
Jeremy Hopkins - for great detail in his illustrations
Alana Telfer – for great input in our Transport Information Report
Archie Constable – for assisting others in their learning

1/2
Nate Brown – for an improved effort in completing his work
Emily Barwick – for great Religion work on building her friendship with God and others
Pia Henderson – for consistently apply herself to all learning activities
Aidan Hunt – for demonstrating a fantastic understanding of Jesus’ parables
Toby Jamieson – for responding to a range of texts in our Literacy Focus

3/4
Mia Morgan- for always working hard to develop her maths skills
Riley Melmeth- for a great use of personification in his poem about the environment
Darcy Taaffe- for her excellent use mental strategies to multiply a one-digit number by a multiple of 10
Patrick McLaren- for showing persistence in all activities

5/6
Patrick Magner- for his creative self-portrait inspired by Margaret Olley’s “Portrait in the Mirror”.
Rhys Turner- for his fantastic effort in calculating perimeter and area.
Tia Magner- for superb responses in Comprehension activities.
Darcy Moore- for exemplary use of the Order of Operations in Mathematics

Playground Champion-
Patrick McLaren- for always playing fairly in footy

Principal’s Awards:
Fiona Tomy:- for confident contributions to classroom discussions
Cody Bates:- for showing great coping skills in dealing with school life with a broken leg. Cody has found new ways to participate in almost every activity without putting his leg at risk. He has been positive and inspirational to us all.
Madelaine Thrift, Amy Redgate, Olivia Collins, Helena Parker, Ella Beaven, Alana Telfer, Darcy Taaffe, Molly Beaven, Lula Peebles, Roy Lawler: nominated as being students who display very good social skills on the playground, welcoming others to join in their play.
Over the weekend three of the students from our school received the Sacraments of First Communion (receiving the Body of Jesus) and Confirmation (receiving the Holy Spirit). Congratulations to Mikayla Telfer, Roy Lawler and Patrick McLaren. These students, with their parents, have been preparing for the last couple of months coming together outside school hours to learn about the Sacraments of Initiation.

The Sacramental Program is a parish based program. Unlike when many of us received our sacraments we did it as a whole class. Now it is the parents’ responsibility to make the decision when they feel their child is ready to receive the Sacraments. From the time a child is baptised the parents take the responsibility of bringing their child up with the faith and this is a continuation of that process. The school supports this process and as was the case this year and in previous years the sacramental team is made up of teachers from the school and the parents. Children are usually in Year 3 or 4. It is important to note that for children to receive the Sacraments they do not need to come to our school as it is open to the whole Catholic community. Next year the program will run again if you have any questions please speak to me.

Anne Marie Peebles
REC

We are pleased to announce that Skoolbag is now available for Windows Phones running version 8.1 of Windows, and Windows devices running Windows 8.1 or 10 (eg Surface tablet, Laptop, PC etc).

This makes the app even more accessible then before, with the ability to receive messages directly to a PC, Laptop, or Surface Tablet running Windows 8.1 or 10.

To install Skoolbag on your Windows device, look up “Skoolbag” in the Windows Store, and install it. Once installed you can search for “st josephs merriwa”, and pin it to your Windows Home screen.
OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Samaritan’s Purse is a non-profit, Christian organisation providing emergency relief and development assistance to suffering people around the world. Samaritan’s Purse is meeting the physical needs of victims of war, poverty, natural disaster, disease and famine with the aim of demonstrating God’s love and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. The aid and assistance are given without regard to the race, creed, gender, religion, or ethnicity of the beneficiaries. For over 35 years, Samaritan’s Purse as an international relief agency, has done its utmost to follow Christ’s command by going to the aid of the world’s poor, sick, and suffering. They reach out to hurting people in countries around the world with food, medicine, and other assistance in the Name of Jesus Christ. The work in Australia and New Zealand has been running since 1995.

The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) gives a clear picture of God’s desire for us to help those in desperate need wherever we find them. After describing how the Samaritan rescued a hurting man whom others had passed by, Jesus told His hearers, “Go and do likewise.”

Samaritan’s Purse form part of the larger international network, but focus on our immediate Southeast Asian and Pacific neighbours, including Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and the Solomon Islands as well as to Indigenous Australians in the Kimberleys and Northern Territory.

Most people know about Samaritan’s Purse because of Operation Christmas Child – a project that has reached over 77 million children in 130 countries with Christmas gift since 1990. What many do not realise is how these gifts enable our local partners (who deliver the shoe boxes) to connect with families and communities, build relationships, discover and meet other needs in these communities.

St Joseph’s Merriwa once again will be part of the Operation Christmas Child. We are asking the children to bring in something small which can be placed in a shoe box. Items should be in new condition.

The gift ideas for these boxes are:

**SOMETHING TO LOVE**
- Teddy bear, doll, soft toy, etc.

**SOMETHING FOR SCHOOL**
- Exercise book, pencil case, pens, pencils, colouring pencils, sharpener, eraser, chalk, etc.

**SOMETHING TO WEAR**
- T-shirt, shorts, underwear, cap, beanie, sandals, thongs, etc.

**SOMETHING TO PLAY WITH**
- Tennis ball, cars, skipping rope, marbles, musical instrument, yo-yo, slinky, finger puppets, wind up torch, etc. (No battery operated items)

**SOMETHING FOR PERSONAL HYGIENE**
- Soap and face washer, toothbrush, hairbrush, comb, hair-clips, scrunchies, etc. (No toothpaste)

**SOMETHING SPECIAL**
- Carry bag, sunglasses, bangles, necklaces, craft kits, stickers, note paper or photo of yourself.

**THE BOXES WILL BE COLLECTED on Friday 18th September**
EMERGENCY SERVICES OPEN DAY

Incorporating all emergency services:
- Rural Fire Service
- Volunteer Rescue Association
- State Emergency Service
- Police
- Ambulance
- Fire & Rescue NSW

Saturday 5th September
10am—2pm
Cnr Bettington & Marquet Sts
Merriwa

- Barbecue lunch available
- Ambulances to explore
- Fire trucks to climb
- Photo opportunities for the kids

Have you ever had thoughts of joining the emergency services?
Come along and find out what volunteering can mean for you and your community
**St. Joseph's P&F Association**

P&F meetings for 2015 will be held on the second Monday of each month at 4.30pm in the MacKillop Room.

**Next meeting - Monday 14th September 2015**

If you would like to add an item to the agenda to be discussed at the meeting, please contact Kim Holland on 0422 035576 or email kimholland1369@gmail.com by the Monday of the week preceding the meeting.

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**THANK YOU . . .**

to the Lawler & Magner families who gave up some valuable time to clean the Aberdeen Bus recently.

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**CANTEEN ROSTER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 Aug</td>
<td>No Canteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Aug</td>
<td>Helpers needed</td>
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</table>

Please contact Mel Bates on 0417 060381 if you are able to help with canteen this term.

**BUS ROSTER**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Family</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22/23 Aug</td>
<td>Martin family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/30 Aug</td>
<td>McLaren family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6 Sep</td>
<td>Melmeth family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/13 Sep</td>
<td>Morgan family</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**Enrolments for the 2016 school year are being taken now. Please tell your friends and relatives!!**

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**Scholastic Book Club**

A new issue of Scholastic Book Club catalogues will be sent home later this week. As usual, there is a great range of books suitable for all ages.

Orders and payment are due in by next Friday 28th August. Remember, you can also place your order online using the LOOP system - instructions are on the catalogues.

Thank you for continuing to support our school and encouraging your children to enhance their literacy through the wonderful world of books. Commission earned through your purchases is put towards new resources and books for our library.

Melissa & Sally Coordinators.