On the last day of Term One, after Fr. Savino lead us through the Stations of the Cross, we held our End of Term 1 Assembly at the St Brigid’s Campus. Occasions such as this are an excellent opportunity for me to address our student community, to raise issues with them and to further challenge them to strive to achieve their full potential in their school life. On this occasion, the question I posed to them was as follows. At the quarter way mark of our 2016 academic year, are you satisfied with what you have achieved at the end of Term One? Of course, to this question there would be a myriad of different answers from our student body for a variety of reasons.

The reason I mention this, is in relation to our Parent Teacher Interview Evening that was held last week and was very well attended by many families. I hope the feedback from teachers and also the self reflection from students, will help students and their families set realistic and achievable goals for the rest of the year. That partnership between parents, students and teachers in gaining the most out of the school year is critical to what we do as a school.

A highlight of our school year is the celebration of Simonds Day which this year will be held on Friday 6 May. I think that many of you would be aware that Simonds Catholic College was established in 1996, as an amalgamation of Cathedral College in East Melbourne and St Mary’s Boys Regional College in West Melbourne. Simonds Catholic College is named after Archbishop Justin Simonds who himself made a lasting contribution to Catholic education in Australia, where his talents and abilities were recognised for beyond the confines of the Catholic Church.

I am sure Archbishop Justin Simonds would be very impressed with the way in which our school has developed over the past twenty years, and the school culture that has also been established in this time. It has been very pleasing to observe more and more students becoming further involved in the co-curricular life of the college that, in turn, will further enhance our school culture.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Peter Riordan
Principal | Simonds Catholic College

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Prayer For Solitude

May you recognize in life the presence, power, and light of your soul.

May you realize that you are never alone, that your soul in its brightness and belonging connects you intimately with the rhythm of the universe.

May you have respect for your individuality and difference.

May you realize that the shape of your soul is unique, that you have a special destiny here, that behind the façade of your life there is something beautiful and eternal happening.

May you learn to see yourself With the same delight Pride, and expectation With which God sees you in every moment.

John O’Donohue
Right across Victoria parents just like you consistently report that Catholic values, beliefs and morals are the prime motivator for choosing a Catholic school. However, I feel obliged to reassure you that our schools are also doing wonderful things academically.

Why is it necessary? Last week *The Age* newspaper published an article centred on so-called ‘research’ comparing 2015 Catholic and government school Year 12 results, which included a ‘warning’ that ‘parents should not be mislead’ when considering the academic outcomes of public and private schools.

This report either deliberately or ignorantly ignored several critical factors surrounding student performance.

The best way to truly assess school performance is to investigate the progression of individual students based on their specific circumstances – not though simplistic, single year, school-level comparisons.

The most definitive study of this nature – published in the *Australian Journal of Education* last year – confirmed that Catholic and independent schools in Victoria ‘add value’ to student performance relative to government schools.

According to the study, Year 12 students in Victoria Catholic schools will achieve an ATAR six to eight points higher than that of students in the government schools. This applies to students at the bottom end of the ATAR range, to the very top performers and everyone in between.

The study analysed the best available data on student performance over four years. For the first time, the relationship between the actual Year 9 NAPLAN and year 12 VCE results of more than 40,000 Victorian students was tracked to measure performance.

The other major difference between this and other statistical findings – the reason this study is so definitive – is that University of Melbourne researcher Dr Gary Marks took full account of all known factors affecting student performance, including socioeconomic background and prior achievement.

As the leader of 493 Catholic schools in Victoria I was quick to respond to *The Age*, pointing out that several crucial elements were missing in its article and totally refuting the suggestion that Catholic education did not represent academic value for money.

Unfortunately – just like on other occasions when we have tried to highlight Dr Mark’s report – the paper could not find the space to print in my response.

Mr S Elder | Executive Director

**School Fees**

If you have not received your fee statement please contact the school and ask for Danny O’Malley or Cindy Tran. We are able to offer different methods of payment and payment plans to suit your particular circumstances. School fees are a critical component of the school’s financial viability and our capacity to provide your son with a quality education. For those that have not yet entered payment arrangements we ask that you contact the school to discuss payment plans.

**Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)**

Are you a concession card holder? There is $225 State Government financial assistance available for eligible students aimed at ensuring all students can take part in school trips and sporting activities. Families holding a valid concession card are eligible to apply. A special consideration category also exists. Please be advised that Simonds Catholic College will contact you directly to discuss a mutually agreeable payment plan if no agreement is in place by mid May.

Parents or legal guardians are required to submit a new CSEF application form each year. Application forms are available at the main reception office. When the $225 is received from the Victorian Government it will be credited against your school fees. If you have any queries, require an application form or assistance in completing the application please contact reception at the College.

Mr D O’Malley | Business Manager
The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) 2016 for Years 7 and 9 students will be held in a few weeks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 10 May</td>
<td>Language Conventions (spelling, grammar &amp; punctuation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11 May</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 12 May</td>
<td>Numeracy (calculator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numeracy (non-calculator)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the tests provide information for students, parents, teachers and principals which can be used to improve student achievement. All students are expected to participate in the NAPLAN tests. Exemptions may be granted to students with significant intellectual disabilities and to students who have been learning English for less than one year.

Later in the year you will receive your son’s personal NAPLAN report. The report will describe your son’s particular skills in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and Numeracy. The report will also show how your child performed in relation to national minimum standards. These describe the minimum acceptable standards for students across Australia.

I am confident that the information you receive as a result of your son’s participation in the NAPLAN tests will be valuable in helping you to assess your child’s progress in literacy and numeracy.

For more information about the tests, please visit the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au or the NAP website at www.nap.edu.au

Mrs H Koutoulogenis  
Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching) | Head of St Mary’s Campus

End of Semester Examinations | Years 7-10

Exams are an important part of the assessment program at Simonds. They provide an opportunity for students to apply knowledge and skills that have been developed throughout the semester in a formal setting and practise exam sitting techniques.

The dates for the exam periods are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Start Date to End Date</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yr 10</td>
<td>Monday 6 June to Thursday 9 June</td>
<td>English, Maths, Science, Humanities, RE, LOTE, VCE subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yr 9</td>
<td>Monday 6 June to Wednesday 8 June</td>
<td>English, Maths, Science, Humanities, LOTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yr 8</td>
<td>Monday 6 June to Tuesday 7 June</td>
<td>English, Maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yr 7</td>
<td>Monday 6 June to Tuesday 7 June</td>
<td>English, Maths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are advised that they should be undertaking regular, ongoing review and consolidation of their learning. Year 7 and 8 students will sit for exams only in English and Maths as a means of giving them a more gradual introduction to the experience. Year 10 students studying a VCE subject will have exams for this unit in line with the Year 11s. To support students as they prepare for examinations, a Study Guide will be made available later this term. This will include a complete examination schedule.

Friday 10 June is a Correction and Report Writing day for teachers. There are no classes and students will only be required at school if they have unfinished assessments.

Mrs H Koutoulogenis  
Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching) | Head of St Mary’s Campus
“Write like a Sumerian” - Ancient History; Units 1 and 2

The Unit 1 and 2 Ancient History Students have dug deep into the archives of history and spent their days pondering the beginnings of modern civilisation. Over the last week, our exploration of the past has turned from the theoretical academics to the practical applications of our knowledge of Cuneiform.

Cuneiform is a system of writing first developed by the Sumerians of Mesopotamia between 3500-3000BCE. It is considered the most significant of the many cultural contributions of Sumerians to modern civilisation and the greatest from the city of Uruk.

But! In order to correctly and faithfully reproduce Cuneiform, we first needed to take a crash course in linguistics and phonics. For several lessons, we concentrated on learning about the differences between letter sounds in the English language using things called diacritical markings. We also had to discern the difference between ‘translation’ and ‘transliteration’ between languages before we could put any of our newly gained knowledge into practice.

The transliteration of one modern language to another ancient or dead language is a tough ask for any University level student studying Cuneiform full-time, but the Simonds boys outdid themselves with this challenge! Transliterating the phonetics of their own names from English into Cuneiform, they then practised their glyphing technique by creating beautifully decorated paper Steles. Once they had completed their Stele (or commemorative stone) it was time for us all to get our hands dirty. We manipulated the clay into a smooth surfaced tablet, then used a specially-shaped balsa wood stylus to produce the wedge and line shapes used in each of the Cuneiform glyphs. The tablets look great!

In the coming weeks, we will be studying the ‘Epic of Gilgamesh’, a text written entirely in Cuneiform on giant, but now fragmented clay tablets in approximately 2000BCE. Luckily enough, we will get to study the poem in a modern English translation rather than the original Sumerian!

Our class would like to extend a special ‘thank you’ to Mr Nikolaidis for the perfect lengths of balsa wood off-cuts. They worked brilliantly, as did the boys.

Miss R Hands | Ancient History Teacher and Humanities Faculty Manager

Congratulations to Thien Huynh from Year 11 for being selected to represent Victoria in the Victorian U 17 Indoor Cricket Team.
Student Wellbeing Camp

Eight of our ten Student Wellbeing Team members attended a camp at Jan Juc on the weekend of 17-19th April. They were accompanied by Mrs. Salvina Noonan, Year 12 Coordinator and Mr. Pascal Rohan, Coordinator Student Wellbeing/Counsellor. The boys engaged in three personal development sessions as well as two planning sessions. The planning sessions yielded a “statement of parameter” and “associated works” (as below).

Statement of Parameter

At Simonds Catholic College, the Student Wellbeing Team understands “wellbeing” to mean that your happiness is achievable with a fighting spirit, and the encouragement of supportive people.

Associated Works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Members responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fortnightly videos</td>
<td>Providing visuals that show how happiness is achieved through resilience</td>
<td>Harry and Finn in conjunction with IT staff member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per week, lunch sporting activity</td>
<td>Fosters support through sporting teammanship</td>
<td>Members on both campuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAP (Simonds Wellbeing After-school Program). Thursdays 3.15-5pm</td>
<td>Providing a regular time and space where students can enjoy their afternoon individually or in groups</td>
<td>Minimum 2 members each campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12 pastoral care intros, once per week</td>
<td>Presenting information designed to assist students make beneficial choices individually or collectively</td>
<td>St. B’s team members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Year 7 bullying presentation (2 pc periods term 3 and wristbands) | When people work together to reduce the incidence of bullying, it makes for a happier experience of school | St. M’s team members }

Parents of African Heritage

On Wednesday 18 May, from 7pm-8.30pm, Simonds Catholic College is hosting an evening for parents/carers of African heritage.

The evening will be conducted by our own students of African background. It will include some light refreshments, cultural entertainment, a live student panel interviewed about their experiences of being parented and a video featuring students from years 7-12, talking about parenting.

Our aim is to provide a good, solid insight into boys’ experience of parenting. The evening is intended to be informative, fun, thought-provoking and even challenging.
We would like ALL parents of African heritage at this evening. The students are conducting the evening (supported by staff) and it would be wonderful if parents could come along in good number to support these boys and also, their sons.

Parents will shortly receive a letter of invitation passed on by their sons. All parents are required to respond to the invitation (whether they are able to attend the evening or not) and return their response to school via their son. Each return slip will be collected and marked as returned.

**Simonds Wellbeing After-hours Program (SWAP)**

**Thursdays 3.15pm-5pm**

On both campuses, beginning on Thursday 5th May, students who wish to remain at school from 3.15pm, anytime up till 5pm will be offered the opportunity to do so. During this time, they will be able to do homework, play quiet games or simply remain with friends and talk. Hot chocolate will be available at St. Mary’s at 50 cents and green tea at St. Brigid’s 50 cents. Supervisors at St. Mary’s will be Pascal Rohan and at least one member of the Student Wellbeing Team, and at St. Brigid’s, Mrs Salvina Noonan and at least one member of the Student Wellbeing Team.

Mr P Rohan  |  Coordinator Student Wellbeing / Counsellor

**Face of Winter Appeal**

Students and staff are busy collecting non-perishable goods for the “Face of Winter Appeal.”

“As a community, we have a social responsibility towards those in need both within and beyond our school community.” CEM 2015

During the weeks leading up to Simonds Day, students in each class put their faith into action by supporting those people in need of non-perishable food and warm clothing. Encouraged by their Homeroom Teachers and Social Justice Leaders, classes from both the St Mary’s Campus and St Brigid’s Campus are collecting goods for the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Fitzroy North. The collection will be taken up at the Simonds Day Mass during the Offertory Procession. After Mass the food and clothing will be collected by St Vincent de Paul for distribution in the Fitzroy North area.

Thank you to all staff and students who have generously contributed to the “Face of Winter Appeal.” We encourage each student to bring at least one item or more if possible for the Simonds Day “Face of Winter Appeal.” Through the generosity of Simonds Community we continue to protect the rights of those people in need and follow Saint Mary MacKillop’s motto for life:

“Never see a need without doing something about it.”

Ms M Krall  |  Religious Education Coordinator
Blue’s Excursion to Parliament House
Scholarships Available for 2017

Scholarships available for Year 7 and Year 9, 2017

Year 7 Testing: Saturday May 28th
Year 9 Testing: Saturday June 18th

Applicants please register online at
www.aloysius.vic.edu.au

St Aloysius College, 31 Curran Street, North Melbourne

$1000 FREE KIDS DENTAL* WITH THE CHILD DENTAL BENEFITS SCHEDULE!

Great news, the Child Dental Benefits Schedule continues in 2016! The Commonwealth Government dental scheme provides eligible children with a $1000 free kids dental benefit* on selected dental services within a 2 year calendar period.

In 2014 and 2015 many families were surprised that they were eligible for the free $1000 benefit*. To gain access to benefits, children must be eligible for Medicare, must be between 2 and 17 years of age for at least 1 day of the calendar year with the child or parent, guardian or carer receiving Family Tax Benefit Part A or another relevant government payment.

Not sure if you’re kids are eligible? Contact your local Pacific Smiles Dental Centre, have your Medicare card ready and they can easily check to see if your kids are eligible or have remaining benefits from 2014.

Information provided by Pacific Smiles Dental: visit pacificsmilesdental.com.au for further information.

*Free when services covered by the Commonwealth Government’s Child Dental Benefits Schedule are bulk billed by participating dentists for treatments provided to eligible patients.