Dear Parents,

At the recent College Assembly, presentations were made to our top VCE students of 2011. Arak Musa and Nhat Dang received their medallions and cheques at the assembly. They spoke to students about their experiences of Year 12 and gave advice to this year’s class. John Nguyen was unable to attend the assembly due to university commitments and received his awards on a later visit to Simonds.

We are pleased that many former students have visited our St Brigid’s campus this year to share with teachers their experiences of tertiary study.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL - Mr Bernard McFarlane

Applications to join the College Board for 2012-13

The College Board invites parents to nominate themselves as a

PARENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE SIMONDS CATHOLIC COLLEGE BOARD

There are currently vacancies available. In particular, we are looking to have parent representatives from a cross-section of our school community which is quite diverse.

If you are interested in nominating for the College Board please contact the college secretary at the campus your son attends.

Applications close on 30 March.

- There are a minimum of two vacancies for a position as a Parent Representative
- Appointments are for 2 years
- Meetings are held twice each term on a day and time suitable to all members. During last year meetings were held on Thursday evenings 6:30 – 8:30 pm
- Further information about the College Board may be obtained from Mrs Bertoncello, Mr Croughan or any of the current members of the Board.
My name is Dominic Scholtes the senior school captain. I, as a leader of our Simonds community, am here this morning to say that this year will be a great year for our school. I look forward to seeing the success and development that will come from this year and would like to remind everyone that we all have some hard-work ahead of us. I will strive to be the best possible leader and person that I can be this year, and ask you to do the same. Together as a student community we will be able to achieve great things if we put the work and effort in. Remember this; People don’t expect you to be better than anybody else. But People believe you to be better than you ever thought you could be. Push your own limits and try for success. Give everything you partake in this year your all and don’t leave with any regrets. If you do these things you will see the success at the end of the year and will be able to reap the rewards.

I ask everyone this year to push their limits and try and get out of their comfort zones at least once a week. School is an important time in everyone’s lives and we are lucky that we live in a great country where everyone has an opportunity to get an education. In knowing this we must not take this opportunity for granted and use our skills and individual talents to be the best people we can be. We are also very lucky that we are all at Simonds. My past six years at Simonds Catholic College has been a wonderful experience and I have been privileged with the opportunity of attending such a great school. I want everyone to feel as welcome in our school as I did the first time I walked through those gates.

Our student leadership team has some great ideas for the coming year and we hope to make an impact in not only our school, but our whole community. Feel free at any time if you have a problem or a suggestion to take this up with myself or your own year level leaders. We represent you and will do our best to act upon your behalf.

So on behalf of all the leaders of Simonds I want to encourage everybody this year to do their best at everything they work on throughout the year. I know that this year so much can be achieved and that we will strive as a school to move forward in our learning and community.

I would like to leave you with a snippet of a great poem, Oh, the Places You'll Go!, by Dr Seuss:

Congratulations! Today is your day. You're off to Great Places! You're off and away!

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care. About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there." With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet, you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.

And you may not find any you'll want to go down. In that case, of course, you'll head straight out of town. It's opener there in the wide open air.

Out there things can happen and frequently do to people as brainy and footsy as you.

And when things start to happen, don't worry. Don't stew. Just go right along. You'll start happening too.

Dominic Scholtes - School Captain
On Tuesday 6 March, the Simonds College School Leaders from both St Brigid’s and St Mary’s attended the annual “Conversation with the Archbishop”. We decided to send our Middle School Leaders, Raimus Precilla, Bryan Talagtag and Sean Reynolds, to gain experience of representing our school along with our Senior School Leaders, Dominic Scholtes and Luke Reynolds.

On arrival, we were placed into groups with other Catholic school representatives to discuss what we could do as leaders within our own school to improve our spirituality and faith. The Archdiocese of Melbourne has nominated a “Year of Grace” which will begin six weeks after Pentecost and last into next year. The aim to make our local faith stronger would be the main focus. Whichever religion that we follow, we should respect each other’s beliefs and continue to grow through sharing each other’s experiences. Overall, it was a great day for us to witness. We learnt a lot from the Archbishop, especially when he said, “There will be times when you question your beliefs but God has love for you and you have love for him.”

Raimus Precilla – Middle School Captain

'I walked in there with the question; what is our role in life and God’s plan? I walked out of there not with answers but with a clearer understanding from Archbishop Hart’s wisdom, and I am sure that I wasn’t the only one who felt this way'

Bryan Talagtag – Middle School Vice-Captain

Mrs R Noble - Religious Education Coordinator

On 24 February, Dominic Scholtes and Sean Reynolds represented St Brigid’s and Thanuja Silva and Vu Trinh represented St Mary’s at the annual Just Leadership Day for senior secondary school leaders. The day was organised by Caritas – the second largest AID organisation in the world after the Red Cross. The Caritas ethos is built around the striving for human dignity for all people and a social justice movement which can bring about change to the massive inequalities currently existing in the world.

The day was an interactive one whereby our boys mixed with leaders from other Catholic schools from around Melbourne. Fernand Pires was an inspirational speaker who told the story of Timor Leste and the suffering incurred by his people. He also stressed that donating money was admirable but that was not the crux of what “solidarity” was about. Giving money helps the donor to feel good and the people who are to receive the money are basically viewed as victims.

Fernando spoke about questioning unjust structures in the world and of eliminating the causes of poverty with compassion and a sense of responsibility. Solidarity in the Catholic Church means that there is an equal relationship with both parties - the wealthy and those who are deprived. The wealthy have the power to enact the changes which will benefit those who have been crippled by poverty and displacement.

Vu Trinh, the St Mary’s Social Justice Captain, was very moved by the day and had the following to say: “I learnt so much from Fernando Pires who has taught me that it is not about contributing by giving money so much but the focus is about commitment and responsibility for others. I learnt that it is about being in a team and working together to achieve what may seem impossible is the key message of social justice. The saying which was repeated for us to know was, “IF YOU WANT PEACE, WORK FOR JUSTICE”.

Mrs R Noble - Religious Education Coordinator
Simonds Swimming Carnival: Monday 26 March @Oak Park Pool

All boys are expected to participate in this whole school carnival to be held at the Oak Park Swimming Pool. There will be a variety of events for both swimmers and non-swimmers. If your son is unable to participate, he is required to bring a note to Mr Veal (Years 7-10) or Mr Croughan (Year 11), by Thursday 22 March. Your son will be required to attend the carnival and assist with the organisation on the day. A small canteen will be available at the centre, although boys are encouraged to bring their own food and drinks.

Boys may wear their sports clothes to school for the carnival. We advise that boys should wear a hat and bring sunscreen. There will also be sunscreen available from teachers. Boys are also encouraged to wear something that identifies their team colour.

Buses will leave West Melbourne immediately after morning homeroom 8:45 am and return at approximately 3:00-3:15 pm. Year 11 students will also leave from West Melbourne where they will assemble in the General Purpose Room. Boys wishing to travel home directly from Oak Park are to bring a note by Thursday, to facilitate the booking of the correct number of buses for the return trip.

It will be a disappointing day if many boys are absent. Please ensure your son participates as a competitor or a helper. These school carnivals are excellent ways to promote a strong school spirit and we want your son to be a part of this. Parents are most welcome to attend the swimming carnival which will start at 9:30 am. Any volunteer helpers, for all or part of the day, would be greatly appreciated.

Mr C Veal – Sports Master

Book talk – from the Librarian’s desk

Miss, do you have a copy of the ‘The Hunger Games?’ Every day eager students pose that question to me. Last year, the most popular books were those in the Cherub series by Robert Muchamore and while these are still very much in demand, the Hunger games series is definitely the series to be seen reading in 2012, especially with the imminent release of the movie. There are 3 titles in this brilliant and terrifying series - The hunger games, Catching fire and, Mockingjay and the Library has several copies of each. Students can reserve a copy at the Circulation desk.

National Year of Reading

This year libraries will be partnering with all people and organizations who share a passion for reading to help people discover and rediscover the magic of books in order to turn Australia into a nation of readers and ensure a reading culture in every home. With nearly half our population struggling without the literacy skills to meet the most basic demands of everyday life, this is a timely initiative. For information about this project and NYR programs you can visit the site at http://www.love2read.org.au

As part of our activities in the NYR all students in Years 7 & 8 will be taking part in the Premiers’ Reading Challenge. Students in Years 9 & 10 are also invited to take up the Challenge to read a minimum of 15 books from the beginning of the year to 10 September. Consent forms are available at the Circulation Desk. Please encourage and support your sons in this endeavour. Happy reading!

Mrs J Dymond – Librarian

Global Homework Program 2012- Get “AHEAD” with your Homework!

The Centre, in partnership with North Melbourne Library, runs a FREE homework tutoring program for secondary students. (Years 7-12)

When Tuesday 4:00-6:00 pm
Where Level 1, North Melbourne Library
Call the library to find out more 9328 112