

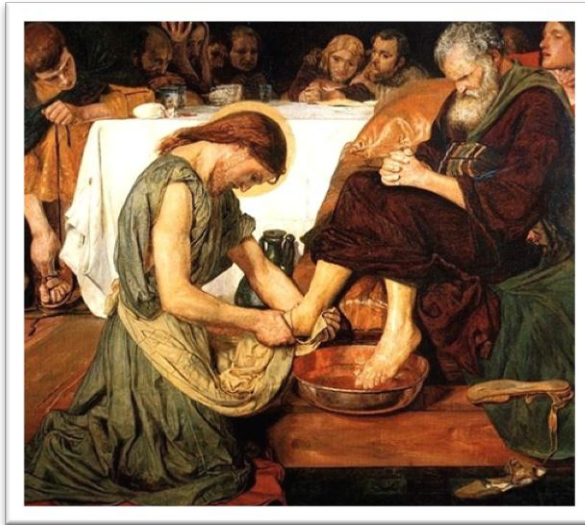
NEWSLETTER

No. 2 Date 05/03/2014 Week 6 Term 1

Dear St Thomas Aquinas Families,

On Monday we came together as a school community to commission our Student Representative Council for 2014. Through this ceremony we continue an important tradition at St Thomas Aquinas as the light of student leadership is passed on to a new group of leaders. Our new student leaders have been chosen by their peers for their personal gifts and also for displaying characteristics which typify good leadership.

As Christians we look to the person of Jesus Christ as our ultimate role model of the loving servant leader. In our school library space are 3 art prints that give us insights into what servant leadership means – An image of St Mary Mackillop by the Tasmanian artist Camelita Clohesy, Leonardo da Vinci's painting of Mary, Mother of Jesus at the Annunciation and the third is one by the Artist Ford Maddox Brown of Jesus washing His disciples feet.



The painting is set in the Upper Room, where Jesus and the disciples have gathered for the Last Supper - a day before his crucifixion. Jesus gets up from the table, takes a towel, and wraps it around His waist and begins to wash the disciples' feet. The act of foot washing in Jesus' day was carried out by the most menial of servants. Normally the host would not do this washing themselves as it was regarded as a very demeaning task.

Jesus was an extraordinary teacher – he taught by using astonishing language, but he also taught through his example. Jesus wanted to show his love for His disciples; but more than this, he is modelling a lesson they really needed to learn, a lesson in humility and servant leadership.

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In Jesus' eyes, a position of leadership is simply a place of service. Serving God by serving others. Position and privilege are not times for arrogance and boasting, but are opportunities for service. Jesus, the greatest person in the room, took up the basin and towel to model service in the most loving, humble and gracious way.

May we all be inspired to take up the opportunity to lead like Jesus did in our daily lives - with humility, honesty, wisdom, faith, love and courage. We also pray that we all do our best daily to live out Jesus' commandment and our school motto of "Love One Another".

Until next time,

Congratulations to our SRC 2014 Members:

Rosato

Sergio Rosato
Principal

Mollie Bauerhuit
Mya Buchtmann
Gabriel Esquivel
Tyler Frost

Thomas Gawthorne
Corey Hutchings
Jack Murphy
Mitchell Owen

Zoe Peters
Anna Porter
Grace Sato
Steffani Sroczyński

Lent – Ash Wednesday

Today we began our Lenten journey for 2014 by receiving the Ashes with a most reverent, prayerful and beautiful liturgy. The ashes with which we were marked on Ash Wednesday symbolise our beginning and our ending and challenge us to translate our intentions and prayers into real deeds of love, faith and generosity during this 40 day period.



The clear direction that Jesus gives us through Lent is that our lives will have periods of struggle, desolation and challenge. It is during these times of personal struggle and desolation that God is closest to us.

The Lenten period provides us a great opportunity to renew and deepen our relationship with God by stripping away some of the clutter in our spiritual lives. We can do this by emulating the example of Christ - by fasting, giving and praying. Jesus also tells us that giving, praying and fasting should not be self-seeking or boastful, but rather motivated by love. Ultimately it is through doing these things that we can turn back to God.

love one another



ST THOMAS AQUINAS NEWS

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Father Paul Slyney
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Stormbirds Training For Teachers

On Monday 24 February, staff undertook training in the Stormbirds program. The program is a small group program based on the belief that change, loss and grief are a normal and natural part of life. Stormbirds supports young people in understanding and managing changes they experience as a result of natural disasters. The program is delivered over four sessions – **1.** Change, a Natural Part of Life, **2.** Feelings and Responses, **3.** Memories and Support and **4.** Reconnecting. The training day was facilitated by the Good Grief organisation who have developed both the Stormbirds program and

the Seasons for Life program. We anticipate being able to deliver the program to small groups of children over the course of the year.

Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU)

Our school goal is to improve learning for all students. This entails utilising both qualitative and quantitative data to make informed judgments about the next steps in the individual progress of students. As educators this means continually looking at ways to refine and improve our practice. Encompassing all of this methodology is the critical need for teachers to know and educate each student as unique learners.

For the past few years our professional learning has been on improving numeracy as well as maintaining a constant focus on the teaching of literacy. Last year our school embarked on a project called Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU). The EMU Project is a research-based intervention program developed by senior lecturer in education at the Australian Catholic University, Dr Ann Gervasoni. The program draws upon learning from Dr Gervasoni's involvement in the Early Numeracy Research Project, a three-year research initiative commissioned by the Victorian Department of Education to develop a comprehensive program for improving numeracy levels in schools.

Assessment and data analysis is a key focus of the EMU program, which introduces a diagnostic assessment tool for schools to use, the Mathematical Assessment Interview (MAI). The MAI is a 30-40 minute one-on-one interview administered by each class teacher that features a number of numeracy-based activities. Their teachers are currently conducting the administration of the MAI on all students K-6. The data from the MAI will help teachers identify exactly where the students are at and where they need to go. The project will also entail significant professional development of all teachers. This professional development will look intently at effective strategies to progress student learning in numeracy.



Catholic Schools Creative Arts Expo

Later in the year our school will participate in this combined schools extravaganza staged at the Joan Sutherland Centre for 2 nights – 8 and 9 September. Our students will be part of a combined schools choir and also perform a school item based on the theme of "Journey".

Catholic Schools Week

Catholic schools enrol about 20 per cent of Australian school students. St Thomas Aquinas Springwood is one of 615 Catholic Primary and Secondary schools across NSW and the ACT, providing quality education in a faith-centred environment.

Catholic schools teach the same curriculum as government schools and expectations of achievement and conduct are high, with a strong focus on the individual, a broad curriculum caters for a wide range of interests and abilities. Catholic schools offer highly qualified and professional teachers who cater to the diverse learning needs of our students.

Catholic Schools Week (CSW) 2014 will be held from 9 to 15 March and will involve the communities of all Catholic primary and secondary schools across NSW and the ACT.

Anzac Day March and Wreath-laying

Our school has been invited to participate in the Springwood March and Wreath-laying Commemoration on Friday 25 April commencing at 10.30am from the Fire Station. This year this day takes place during the Term holidays. St Thomas Aquinas has a proud tradition of participating in this event. A note will be sent home before the end of term as a further reminder.

Grandparents Day 2014

Please note that Grandparents Day this year will take place on Thursday 7 August 2014. All Grandparents and Grandparent figures are very welcome to join the students and staff for this very special celebration.

Drama and Literacy Program

Our Year 5 & 6 classes together with their teachers have recommenced working with our professional actor, Lucinda Armour each Tuesday. These workshops will culminate in a student performance based on a literature book to take place later in the year. We are most fortunate to have been selected for this initiative by the Catholic Education Office Parramatta through the Captivate program. Research shows that rich learning opportunities such as integrating drama and literacy can have a profound effect on student engagement and learning.

St Thomas Aquinas

PRIMARY SCHOOL SPRINGWOOD

A Catholic school committed to providing a comprehensive academic and extra curricular education

- St Thomas Aquinas Primary School has an experienced actor who works with our teachers and their classes to develop students' literacy through drama. Tuesday, March 11 from 10.30am to 12.30pm our families and other people have an opportunity to see the teaching of drama.
- Wednesday, March 12 all families and people in the local area in the school can visit classrooms at 11am after a welcome morning tea. Also a School Assembly at 12.30pm.
- Now accepting enrolments for 2015. Open day tours for families will be held in May. Please contact the enrolment secretary on 4754-2554.

NO STUDENT WILL BE REFUSED ENROLMENT BECAUSE OF A FAMILY'S GENUINE INABILITY TO PAY



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Swimming 2014

Last week students from our school competed in both the Zone and Diocesan Swimming Carnivals respectively. From the 30 students who competed at Zone the following students were selected for Diocesan: **Molly Jones, Daniel Kime, Matthew Hill, Olivia De La Harpe and Samuel Jamnicky**. All STA students competed to the best of their ability and as a result, **Daniel Kime** has gained selection to compete in the Inter-Diocesan Swimming Carnival, held later this term. We congratulate all our

swimmers on their fantastic efforts and especially to Daniel to whom we wish every success at Inter-Diocesan. Well done to you all!

Student Sporting Success

Congratulations to Owen Harris (6L) on being selected to play in the USA in July this year with the Under 11 Australian Futsal Team. Owen also played for Western Sydney in the National Club Championships in January. Well done Owen!



Italian Forum

This year during many of our Italian lessons we will be using an online interactive computer program to enhance the children's language learning. The site has been developed by the Victorian government for a variety of languages and is totally free for anyone to use. If you are interested in using the program at home, the site address is www.education.vic.gov.au/languagesonline

Jenni Wurf, Italian Teacher

STA Autumn Fair 2014 – We Need Your Help

As previously mentioned our Autumn Fair will take place on Saturday 3 May 2014. This event is wonderful opportunity to come together as a community in a spirit of joy and friendship. The event is also a major fundraiser for our school helping us to purchase valuable learning resources for our students. Last year our funds enabled the purchase of 20 new MacBook Pros and the installation of 11 short-throw data projects and associated audio equipment. Our dedicated Autumn Fair coordinating team comprising Holly Murphy, Kim Down and Sonya Leehy are working with our skilful stall coordinators to put on the best event possible – one that showcases our school to the wider community. Soon stall coordinators will be communicating how you can assist on the day to make sure each stall is suitably staffed and that the workload is evenly shared.



Thank you to all those who have already donated items for the Autumn Fair. These items help us keep our expenses to a minimum and ultimately help us in maximizing our effort. Remember items can still be donated (even from past week's schedules) – please hand these in at the school office or simply place them inside the hall. More news about our AF2014 will be communicated shortly. For further news and communications about our Autumn Fair, log onto our new Facebook Page - "St Thomas Aquinas Primary School Autumn Fair".

Autumn Fair Craft Group

The St Thomas Aquinas craft group have now commenced for 2014. Over the term the group will be busy making items in preparation for our Autumn Fair in Term 2. They meet **each Friday** in **Sr Monica's room** from **9.05am to 11.05am**. All welcome!



Available at STA – My School Lunch Box

My School Lunch Box exists to ensure kids receive the healthiest, freshest lunches in the most convenient way.

- Healthiest food for each child
- Made fresh each day from the finest ingredients
- No preservatives, colours or flavours
- Convenient process for parents
- Kids aren't carrying cash
- Delivery is free
- No volunteers needed



Families can order online for next day delivery at school – Check out the great menu and very reasonable prices at: <http://www.myschoollunchbox.com.au>

My School Lunchbox also supports "Youth Off the Streets", a not-for-profit organisation funding programs to benefit disadvantaged children. Founded by Father Chris Riley in 1991, the organisation has assisted more than 10,000 disadvantaged young Australians. This is achieved through the distribution of food, allocation of opportunities, the ensuring of their safety and generous amounts of love. **My School Lunchbox donates \$1 from every Muffin purchased to Youth Off The Streets program.** During 2013 \$367 was raised for Youth Off The Streets from My School Lunchbox purchases through St Thomas Aquinas School families. Raeline and John Gale, our local suppliers, wish to thank all our families for their wonderful support.

School Band News

Our STA school band commenced in 2012. The band comprising of students in Years 4-6 consists of the following instruments: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone and trumpet. From modest beginnings our band members, although at different levels, are developing a sense of melody and musicianship. This year members of the band will be part of 2 ensemble groups. The group who were regular guests of the St Columba's Concert Band will be continuing and expanding their experience this year. As well as this the school, together with the Catholic Education Office's Captivate Program, has secured the services of the St Columba's music teacher, Emma Nicholson on a weekly basis at STA. This Friday our more experienced ensemble group will be travelling to St Michael's Baulkham Hills to join with other students across the Diocese for a combined concert band rehearsal. This should be a fantastic experience for these students as they continue to develop and hone their craft.

Love one another





Cuppa & Chat

Parents are invited to our Cuppa & Chat Mornings held each Monday from 9.05am in The Bishop Manning Learning Centre (hall). Join with other families in a convivial setting as well being able to catch up with Sister Monica, Mrs Llewellyn and Mr Rosato.

Punctuality

We ask families to appreciate that the morning learning session particularly between 9.05am and 11.05am is important in the context of the school day. This period is prime instructional time for teachers and is often where important learning takes place. Please be mindful of student punctuality and its effect on learning.

School Attendance

Consistent attendance is vital in maintaining continuity in a child's education. If your child has to be absent from school due to sickness or pressing family circumstances, you are required to inform the school and state a reason for your child's absence. Families should send a note to the school on the child's return to school from leave. The teacher then records this note in the class roll. The class roll is a legal register of student attendance for the year. If your child is unwell for a number of days (2 days or more) please notify the school by phone to inform of this situation. It is always necessary to send a note on the child's return to school.

The student school attendance legislation permits Principals to grant leave for short periods relating to family travel. Families are required to make requests for such leave by writing to the Principal. Amazingly, if a child is absent from school for 8 days each term for the extent of their 7 years of Primary School they would have missed an entire year of school!

No Parking Zones

Parents/Carers are reminded NOT TO PARK along the school side of College Drive. Some people have been using this area to park during the busiest time of the day ie afternoon pick-up, causing lengthy delays and traffic congestion which affects families from both St Columba's College and St Thomas Aquinas. We ask that all drivers please respect the shared use of the roads and car park around the school to the benefit and safety of all. Thank you for your support.

PARISH NEWS

Searching for the Divine – a Parish Faith Opportunity

Searching for the Divine is a series of five parish-based talks which will be held at the St Thomas Aquinas Parish Pastoral Centre on Tuesday evenings 7.30pm – 9.00pm during Lent. Each evening will feature a presentation that leads to discussion. **March 11: Belief and Practices** – a Way to Talk About What We Do and Say; **March 13: Jesus 101** – Introduction to the Catholic Experience; **March 25: Prayer** – Being at Home with God; **April 1: Exploring the Word of God**; **April 8: The Church Experience of God** – Changes Through the Ages.

St Thomas Aquinas Youth Group

The STA Youth Group will next meet on **Sunday 16 March at the 5.00pm Mass**, followed by activities from 6.00-8.30pm. This week's activities are based around "Building Pressure": Work with your team to build a tower, make a bridge and cross a river (tools include marshmallows, human bodies and elastic bands). Bring a plate of food and a drink to share. For more information contact Ruth Val on 4754 1051 or 0405 634 240 or email: youthsta@internode.on.net

DIARY DATES

2014 TERM 1 Week 7 Catholic Schools Week	Monday 10 March	9.05am Cuppa & Chat 3.40pm Leadership Meeting
	11	10.30 – 12.30 Open Drama Sessions 3.40pm Staff Meeting
	12	8.30am Staff Briefing 9.20am Parish Mass – Years 4 & 5 attending 11.00am Morning Tea for visitors 11.30am Open Classrooms 12.30pm Assembly for Catholic Schools Week
	13	8.30am Staff Prayer
	14	
Week 8	Monday 17 March	St Patrick's Day 9.05am Cuppa & Chat 12.30pm Assembly – 3M presenting 3.40pm Leadership Meeting
	18	Paul Kelly Cup (AFL) 3.40pm Staff Meeting
	19	8.30am Staff Briefing 9.20am Parish Mass – Year 2 attending & K6A
	20	8.30am Staff Prayer Author Visit
	21	11.30am NSW Speaker of the House visit

Sent Home Recently:

- Autumn Fair News No. 3 (gold)
- Senior Ensemble Band Captivate Permission note – selected students
- Ash Wednesday Liturgy Invitation (lilac)

love one another

