

# NEWSLETTER

No. 2 Date 08/03/13 Week 6 Term 1

Dear St Thomas Aquinas Families,

All schools in our Diocese have an overarching objective to improve learning and teaching for all students. This entails utilising both qualitative and quantitative data to make informed judgements 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 holistically – spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally & aesthetically.

For the past 3 years our professional learning has been on improving numeracy as well as maintaining a constant focus on the teaching of literacy. This year as part of this emphasis on numeracy our school has 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 new assessment tool for schools to use, the Mathematical Assessment Interview (MAI). The MAI is a 30-minute one-on-one conversation between teacher and student that features a number of numeracy-based activities. Data from these assessments is used by teachers to pinpoint a student's progress in Mathematics.

The MAI has been conducted on all Year 1 students by their teachers and we hope to extend this to Year 2 students later in the year. 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 Kindergarten to Year 6. This professional development will look intently at effective strategies to progress student learning. A school appointed lead teacher, a trained specialist teacher and a teacher educator from the Catholic Education Office will facilitate this professional learning.

We look forward to this project over the coming years in order to better support learning and teaching in numeracy for our children in this school.

Until next time,

*Rosato*

Sergio Rosato  
Principal



## Autumn Fair

Thank you again to all who attended the recent Autumn Fair Meeting. **A repeat of this meeting will occur on Tuesday 12 March after cuppa and chat.** Thank you also for your generosity in donating items for the Fair. Please refer to the Autumn Fair Bulletins for updates as we approach our Fair day on Saturday 4 May. It is wonderful to see such generosity and enthusiasm emerging from so many.

A special note of gratitude goes to the people who have already indicated interest in volunteering to be part of a stall or area. Please remember that each stall and area requires volunteers to make them function. The Event Coordinating team of Holly Murphy, Sonya Leehy and Kim Down are most interested to involve you to make the Fair great. It is, after all, through this combined effort that our Autumn Fair will succeed – so get involved, as we need you!

A letter to each family will be sent home shortly looking at other ways you may be able to support the cause through your business or other contacts.

*Love one another*



## ST THOMAS AQUINAS NEWS

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Springwood 2777  
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w: [www.staspringwood.catholic.edu.au](http://www.staspringwood.catholic.edu.au)

Parish Priest:  
Father Paul Slyney  
p: 02 4754 1052

## FROM THE REC (Religious Education Coordinator)

### Lent

Often during Lent we ask our children to give something up. Children often declare, chocolate, game consoles, sweets etc. Is this really a great act of penance? Thinking more deeply about God is what Lent is about. I like to devote the Lenten period to seeking out and indulging in God's presence and this Lent I encourage our families of St Thomas Aquinas to do the same.

Lent doesn't always mean forbidding ourselves some pleasure. It can be an opportunity to seek the pleasure of God's presence.

#### Here are 4 things to take up this Lent:

- **Get outdoors:** One of the simplest and most immediate ways for me to get a sense of God's presence is to go outside and look for it. Do the same with your children. It is an opportunity to connect with the presence of the One who created it all and be thankful.
- **Spend time with others:** Another place where you're sure to find God is in others, specifically those who are or should be the recipients of our generosity and compassion. Love your neighbour! Our neighbour is anyone we encounter; we are all creatures of the creator and we are to love all of mankind as Jesus has taught.
- **Pray:** During Lent pray more often with your children. It's never wrong to pray about anything. Relish in that moment before bedtime in reading a Gospel Story or Parable with your children. Prayer always turns us closer to God and that is what Lent is all about—finding greater opportunities to bring the Divine into our daily lives. During Lent and always, God is present. Nearby. Listening. Longing to respond. Allow time to pray with your children.
- **See the answers:** Lent is a time to consciously acknowledge and appreciate life's daily miracles. The miracles of dirt, getting children ready for school on time, autumn leaves falling to the ground and answered prayers. May your prayers be answered this Lent as we join together in the presence of God.

**Upcoming Celebrations** – 13/3/13 Year 3 attending Parish Mass. God Bless. **Mr Coley White**

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### The Sacrament of Confirmation

If your child has received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion and is 10-11yrs of age, I invite you to be part of the Preparation Program for Confirmation. The first compulsory Parent Meeting is on 3 April 2013 at 7.00pm at St Thomas Aquinas Church Springwood. Confirmation will take place on 13 June 2013. **Father Paul, Parish Priest**

### General Strategies for Homework

Some of the strategies below may be of assistance when supporting your child in their mathematics homework.

- ❖ **Short and Sweet:** Shorter, more frequent sessions of homework minimise the risk of your child losing concentration. Practising a task over a number of days will help to reinforce the concept, so try 10-15 minutes of homework each day rather than one hour, once a week.
- ❖ **A Friendly Place:** Create an environment that is consistent, quiet, comfortable and well-lit, with plenty of space for both you and your child to work together.
- ❖ **The Right Stuff:** Make sure your child has all the necessary equipment before starting. Some handy things to have include highlighters (to emphasise important parts of the homework or examples), eraser (so that mistakes can easily be corrected and there is no mess of scribbling out), sharpener (so that writing is clear and easy to read), lined scrap paper (with relevant sized lines and plenty of space for working out and examples).

More Strategies will be included in upcoming Newsletters. The following website may also be a helpful alternative for parents who wish their child to practise basic mathematics online: <http://www.math.com> – go to "Homework Help" for a range of explanations on a variety of maths skills.

### Quality Catholic Schooling Survey

All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Parramatta will again be participating in the Quality Catholic Schooling (QCS) survey in 2013. QCS will provide feedback from students, staff and parents about our school's culture, relationships and learning community and will assist us to focus our efforts for improvement by building on our successes to date.

In the next fortnight all staff, approximately 50 students from Years 5 and 6, and 60 randomly-selected parents identified by the Catholic Education Office will be asked to complete a survey. Staff and students will complete the survey online at school. Parents will be sent home a paper survey, but will also be able to complete the survey online if preferred. The survey will take about 20-30 minutes to complete.

If you are selected to complete the survey, I would encourage your participation as this will help our school to identify our strengths and areas for further development.

### Diocesan Commissioning Ceremony and Education Mass 2013

Last night a number of teachers from our school joined colleagues from across our Diocese at the annual Education Mass celebrated by Bishop Anthony Fisher and Priests of the Diocese. The Mass is a celebration that reminds us that as a community we are linked to other communities and part of a greater movement.

During the evening a number of newly appointed principals and Early Career Teachers were formally commissioned into their vocation. We warmly congratulate Mrs Beth Carroll who was commissioned by Bishop Anthony into the Diocese.

## ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

### Student Awards

**Congratulations** to the following students, who received Merit Awards at this week's School Assembly. Well done on your efforts everyone - keep up the good work!



Isaac Bailey	Immogen Dunlop	Isabelle Leet	Mitchell Owen
Emma Brickwood	Gabriel Esquivel	Chiara Major	Nathan Press
Lucy Brown	Charli Goodway	Shyelo Malim-Martinez	William Richardson
Cameron Cassidy	Holly Goodway	Eliza Manners	Isabella Stewart
Sophie Clink	Mia Grodzicki	Ricky Martinello	Jorja Teuma
Tia Cross	Charlotte Harris	Emily McMaster	William Turner
Patrick Dawson	William Hinchliff	Madison Micallef	Kane Walton
Olivia De La Harpe	Jacob Hodges	Andrew Moran	Alfie Williamson
Annalise Della-Libera	William Hurley	Cameron Morris	Hayden Willingham
Britney Dorman	Jack Hutchings	Gela Moss	Andrew Young
Addison Down	Brianna Leehy	Paige Noonan-Michels	Goran Zunic

### Love One Another Awards

Congratulations to Thomas and Oliver Rizzuti (both in 4/3C) and also to Millie Ticehurst (KM) who received Love One Another Awards recently at our School Assembly for living out the school motto. Well done to you all.



### Diocesan Swimming Success

Congratulations to Jenna Jones and Daniel Kime on their selection to the Diocesan Swimming Team. Jenna & Daniel will soon be competing at the NSW Catholic Primary Schools Trials on Friday 22 March at SOPAC Homebush. All the best to them both!

### Assessment for Learning in the Early Years

At the beginning of each year teachers assess their students so that they may meet the needs of all the students. Kindergarten and Year 1 teachers have been granted release time by the Catholic Education Office to complete some Assessment for Learning tasks. These assessment screeners will enable teachers to better meet individual student needs in a more precise manner. Recently our Kindergarten teachers conduct this EYA assessment with their students – our Year 1 students will be assessed in literacy starting next week.



### School Band

There has been an overwhelming response to this musical initiative. This will commence next Tuesday with the music teacher from St Columba's, Mrs Emma Nicolson. The school has invested a considerable amount of money to purchase instruments for the students in the band. We are hoping that the vast majority of students will have their instruments by next Tuesday.

### Autumn Fair Craft Group

A reminder that our craft group will be held each Friday morning at the school leading up to our Autumn Fair on 4 May, for any interested parents/grandparents/caregivers who would like to work on items to be sold at the Mothers' Day Stall or Craft Stall. The group meets at 9.15am in the Hall (Please sign-in at the office). So come along, enjoy a chat and cuppa while being creative! We look forward to seeing many of you there.



### School Student Banking

We ask that parents please ensure that all details on **student bankbook deposit vouchers** are filled out properly before sending to school. Please also check that enclosed money is correct with amount stated on voucher with **no foreign coins** included. The school is unable to process student deposits if any of the above problems are encountered and the bankbook and money will be returned. Thank you for your attention to this matter. **Deborah Lawrence, Finance Secretary**

### Student Excursion Medical Forms

These forms were sent home to all families earlier this week for parents to check, update and return to school. Thank you to all those who have already returned their forms. We ask that all forms be returned to school as soon as possible. Thank you. **Office Staff**

### Hawkesbury Road Project Meeting

This week I attended a special meeting instigated by the NSW Rural Fire Service and the Catholic Education Commission to assist school principals in decision-making processes in the event of an imminent bushfire. Other school principals, SES, Police, RFS and government officials, also attended the forum hosted at the Winmalee Rural Fire Station. It was a purposeful and most useful workshop to assist our school community in the event of a major bushfire or emergency. **Sergio Rosato**

### Springwood Foundation Day – 23 March 2013

As has been customary in previous years St Thomas Aquinas will be participating in the Foundation Day parade along the main street of Springwood. In addition to this our senior choir have been invited to perform in a ceremony on the day in the Springwood Civic Centre to mark its final closure before work commences on the new Springwood Community Centre. More information about these events will be sent home shortly.



## School Peace Prayer

Each day, before recess, students and staff at our school recite the School Peace Prayer – the Prayer of St Francis:

*Lord  
 Make me a gentle person,  
 Who brings your peace to other people.  
 Where people are sad,  
 Let me bring joy.  
 Where people are lonely,  
 Let me bring friendship.  
 Where people are hurtful,  
 Let me bring forgiveness.  
 For it is in giving that we receive,  
 And it is in service to others  
 That we become more like Christ.*

AMEN

## DIARY DATES

<b>2013 TERM 1 Week 7</b>	<b>Monday 11 March</b>	<b>12.30pm Assembly – SRC Induction</b> 3.40pm Leadership Meeting
	<b>12</b>	9.05am Cuppa and Chat 3.40pm Staff Meeting
	<b>13</b>	8.30am Staff Briefing 9.30am Parish Mass – Year 3 attending
	<b>14</b>	8.30am Staff Prayer
	<b>15</b>	
<b>Week 8 Catholic Schools Week</b>	<b>Monday 18</b>	10.20am Visit to Year 6 by Delma Horam & Phil Stewart (St Columba's) 12.30pm Assembly 3.40pm Leadership Meeting
	<b>19</b>	9.05am Cuppa and Chat Diocesan AFL Competition – Stages 2 & 3 3.40pm Staff Meeting
	<b>20</b>	8.30am Staff Briefing 9.30am Parish Mass – Year 6 attending
	<b>21</b>	8.30am Staff Prayer
	<b>22</b>	<b>Autumn Fair Mufti Day – note to come</b>
<b>Springwood Foundation Day</b>	<b>Saturday 23 March</b>	<b>Choir Performance – note to come</b> <b>Participation in Parade – note to come</b>
<b>Week 9 HOLY WEEK</b>	<b>Monday 25</b>	Palm Sunday Liturgy
	<b>26</b>	Last Supper Liturgy
	<b>27</b>	Stations of the Cross The Crucifixion Liturgy
	<b>28</b>	Waiting at the Tomb
	<b>29</b>	<b>Good Friday – Public Holiday</b>

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**Stepping Beyond: Support for Those Separated or Divorced:** On the last Tuesday of each month CatholicCare Solo Parent Ministry invites those who have been separated or divorced to an evening for sharing and support. The emphasis is on personal development, growth and goals for a hope-filled future. Shared personal experiences are prompted by the questions: "How well are you stepping beyond? What do you want to step beyond? What are you currently stepping beyond? What is stopping you from stepping beyond? What have you learned as you keep stepping beyond?" Venue: CCSS centre 51-59 Allawah Street, Blacktown. Time: 7.30pm-9.30pm. Cost: \$5.00. Registration: [soloparentministry@ccss.org.au](mailto:soloparentministry@ccss.org.au) or phone 9933 0205.

**Blue Mountains BMX Club Come 'n' Try Day: This Sunday 10 March at Ferris Lane, Lawson** (off Wilson Street behind the sports oval). Registration: 1.30pm. Activities: 2.00pm-3.00pm. Cost: FREE. The entire family can participate – any age, gender and riding ability. The Blue Mountains BMX Club is more than just a sporting club, we are a community of friends who encourage and support one another. Come and find out about our club, enjoy keeping fit and make new friends. There will be a free sausage sizzle and BMX promo bags containing BMX goodies. **Bring your bike, a full-face helmet and gloves. Wear long pants and long sleeves.** The club has some protective equipment to borrow. Bells, reflectors and stands must be removed - we can do this on the day for you! For further details phone Myles on 0407 434 276 or Graham on 0414 399 323 or visit the website on Google: Blue Mountains BMX Club, Email: [lisaandmiles@bigpond.com](mailto:lisaandmiles@bigpond.com) or Facebook: Blue Mountains BMX Club.

**Rainbow Pre-school Vacancies:** Rainbow Pre-School, 53 Singles Ridge Road, Winmalee has a few places available for 2013 for children who are 3-5 years of age from 8.00am to 3.30pm weekdays. For more information please phone Joan on 4754 4910 or go to [www.rainbowpreschoolwinmalee.com](http://www.rainbowpreschoolwinmalee.com). Child Care Benefit available.

### Sent Home Recently:

- Autumn Fair note – No. 2
- School Attendance note
- Confirmation note to Year 6
- Honour Guard note re Ann Cook's Funeral to Year 6 (mauve)



Scan with your smartphone or tablet for more information.

[www.stspringwood.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stspringwood.catholic.edu.au)

*love one another*