News
Edition 2 February 2016
Dear members of the Avila community,

As we endeavor to show evidence that we are **Inspiring today for tomorrow**, there have been many events and activities these past two weeks that have reflected this new statement of commitment for our college. The last of our parent evenings was held last week where parents had the opportunity to meet staff directly involved in their daughters’ academic and pastoral care this year as well as hear about the specific programs of discovery learning that provide opportunities for engaged learning beyond the classroom. Last Friday night we came together for one of the gala events on the school calendar – the Year 12 Formal. The students and staff all looked glamorous and I would particularly like to acknowledge the exemplary behavior of all students who attended the night. It is wonderful that we can come together like this and enjoy a social evening together. Thanks in particular go to our VCAL students, so capably led by Jenny Dunn, VCAL Co-ordinator who organized the night.

It was wonderful to see many Year 7 students and their families gather for the Welcome Picnic, hosted by the Parents and Friends Association, on Friday 12 February. I thank members of the PFA who attended this event, our Year 12 student leaders, our musicians and staff who supported this event. This year the weather was certainly on our side. Our Year 7 students have been very busy these past two weeks and they are urged to continue trying the vast array of extra curricular opportunities that Avila College provides for students. These activities also provide a wonderful opportunity to not only meet students from other year levels but also to engage with students who share a common passion or area of interest.

On Thursday 18 February our college community gathered for our Opening School Eucharist and we were pleased to have Fr Martin Tanti sdb as our celebrant. Joining us were many parents and family members, staff and students from Presentation College Windsor, Star of the Sea College, St John’s College and Mazenod College. We also appreciated the support from Presentation Sisters, Members of the College Board and PFA, Anna Burke MP, Michael Gidley MLA and Councillor Stefanie Perri Mayor from the City of Monash. A celebration like this does not come together without much planning and preparation and I would particularly like to thank Renee Fleeton, Director of Faith and Mission (now on maternity leave) and Roxane Lascaris, Music Co-ordinator for their respective efforts in bringing this celebration together as well as the many staff and students who helped with music, singing, reading and all the behind the scenes preparation. Events like our Opening of the School Year Eucharist bring our faith-filled community closer together and provide a way of enriching our students in our religious traditions.

I was fortunate to attend a Nagle Education Alliance of Australia (NEAA) meeting in Sydney recently, which included participation in part of the Plenary Council Meeting of the Presentation Sisters of Australia. Our discussions with the Sisters provided an opportunity for us to share with them the recent success of the NEAA as well as dialogue with them as to where we could partner in the future with a broader range of events and activities. Later this year Avila will be hosting the NEAA student conference where we will welcome students who attend Presentation Secondary Schools from all over Australia.

With blessings to everyone in this year of Mercy,

Louise Gunther

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Cover image: Year 7 students celebrate the 50th anniversary of Project Compassion
FAITH AND MISSION

We have had a busy start to the year, which is not unusual for a school this size.

During Week 1 Avila College celebrated the success of the students from 2015. The opening prayer was superbly led by our new School Captain and Vice-Captains, who have approached their leadership roles with maturity. This assembly allowed the community an opportunity to share in the achievements of a large number of students who graduated in 2015. Each of the students present had a plan for their future, taking them towards making their mark on the world. We pray for them all and wish them blessings for their journey.

At the end of this first week all of our Year 7 students gathered for their first Reflection Day at the Don Bosco Retreat Centre in Lysterfield. It was a brilliant day with students being introduced to our patron Saint Teresa of Avila and the founder of the Presentation Sisters, Nano Nagle. A fabulous rendition of the school song was sung during the Eucharist. Stories were shared, friendships were formed and together RE staff, Rachel Janssen (school counsellor) and Catherine Spurritt (Year Level Co-ordinator) led sessions that support the faith development of our students. Many thanks to the efforts of these staff who showed our students how we can live as Gospel people.

Week 2 saw the season of Lent begin; it is a time where we are asked to reflect on our lives. We recognise that we do not always act well but if we take the time to slow down and spend some time contemplating then we see change is possible. We can use this Lenten season as a reminder that we are called to follow Christ and live the Gospels faithfully. May this time be used to prepare for the joyous celebration of Easter and the Resurrection of Christ our Lord.

Student Leaders, supported by a member of staff, hosted a special Ash Wednesday service in House groups. Students also spent time taking photos to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Project Compassion. Each homeroom group will be involved in raising funds and awareness to “Learn more, create change”. This year’s theme goes a long way to bring thousands of Australians together in solidarity with the world’s poor to help end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity.
During Week 3 we gathered for our Opening School Eucharist, which is a celebration of all that we hold as central to the very being of our College. We joined together as one to ask for God’s blessing on the year and our College Student Leaders. This year’s celebration outlined how our community works together to bring about God’s Kingdom and to be co-creators of a world of love and acceptance of all. During this celebration we blessed and commissioned the Senior Student Leaders, they were joined by staff, who presented candles to each young lady as a reminder they are called to be a Light of Christ in the world.

During the service students were encouraged to participate and be involved at school since it leads to a rich and rewarding life. The prayer of every member of staff is that the girls do their best and enjoy what they do, that they become a light to the world. Those present were reminded they are never alone, from the gospel Fr Martin said: “Knock, and the door will be opened to you.” This Gospel reading in Matthew 7: 7 – 12 provides a series of ethical guidelines and offers an example of how we can participate in earnest prayer. What you ask shall be given to you, provided you ask what is agreeable to God’s will: the spiritual blessings which you seek, in this way, you shall find: and the door of mercy and salvation, at which you knock, shall certainly be opened to you.

In this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis calls us to conversion in our own lives so that we can be and bring the face of God’s mercy to the world. WE are the visible signs of God’s mercy and compassion at work in the world, remembering that even the smallest of actions can have the largest impact on the lives of those around us.

Be inspired and allow God’s Spirit to move our community to a deeper, richer knowing and practice of our faith.

God Bless.

Renee Fleeton
Director of Faith and Mission
LEARNING AND TEACHING

It was great to see so many parents at the year level information nights held over the past few weeks. The move to continuous online reporting was explained to parents at each session. Use of the Parent Access Module (PAM) is integral to the reporting process at Avila. To access PAM login information such as individual user name and password, parents may need to ask their daughters to show them the link on Simon. Once parents have their own login details, they can return to PAM via the College website link any time. Any parents who are unsure about how to access PAM, should contact the IT Help Desk at the college.

Madeleine Franken
Deputy Principal Learning and Teaching

PASTORAL NEWS

Celebrating Failure As Well As Success

It might sound odd but it is probably as important to celebrate failure as much as it is success. In a world where everyone gets a prize for just turning up and challenges are often removed rather than overcome, it is vital for parents and educators to help our young people cope with failure and, most significantly, what to do after it is experienced.

"Failing well is a skill. Letting girls do it gives them critical practice coping with a negative experience. It also gives them the opportunity to develop a kind of confidence and resilience that can only be forged in times of challenge," writes author Rachel Simmons. However, numerous studies have found that girls in particular struggle with handling failure well.

Studies have found that girls are more affected by failure than boys because girls, especially intelligent girls, are prone to believe that it's talent, not practice, that leads to success -- in other words, that failure is a result of lack of ability. One factor affecting girls related to failure is "stereotype threat." If she fails in an area that girls are stereotypically not considered to be good at -- science or math, for example -- rather than consider a poor test result to be a correctible issue that could be improved by further study, it may simply confirm her belief that particular area is not for girls and add to her self-doubt about her competency in the subject.

On average, girls are also more likely to give up in a stressful academic situation when they are not met with immediate success. They are also more sensitive to how feedback and praise is given to them. One study found that praising young students for fixed traits and abilities, like being 'smart' or 'nice,' undermined intrinsic motivation for girls, but not boys.

Alternatively, praising effort ('You worked really hard on that') over ability has consistently been proven to motivate all young people, and especially girls.

Ultimately, girls need educators and parents to challenge stereotype threat, reminding them that ability can always be improved with effort, and that who they are will not determine where they end up. Girls need to have the space to experience failure and not be rescued by adults -- a practice which sends young people the message that they are incompetent and incapable. Our Discovery Learning program gives our students a wonderful chance to be independent and not look for adults to intervene.

We need to remind all children, and girls in particular, that the only way to improve is lots and lots of practice -- or, to put it another way, to fail lots and lots of times -- this will help ingrain the understanding that failure is only the end of the line if they don't try again.

Raising Resilient Teenagers: A Free Online Program for Parents

Researchers at Monash University and the University of Melbourne are pleased to offer parents of students aged 12 to 15 a free online parenting program designed to empower parents to make sense of adolescence and parent their teenager with confidence. This program provides strategies for parents to raise a resilient teenager, which are supported by research evidence and international experts in the field. It is based on Parenting Guidelines that were published in partnership with beyondblue and have been accessed by thousands of parents internationally, many of whom have found them very useful.

If you are a parent or guardian of a child aged 12 to 15, you may be eligible to participate in a free trial of the program. After completing a survey, you will receive your parenting program, comprising of either a personalised feedback report and interactive online modules, or a set of five factsheets about parenting adolescents. Participation will take a few hours of yours and your child’s time over 12 months. Both you and your child will be reimbursed for your time.

To sign up for a free trial of this program, please visit: www.partnersinparenting.net.au

If you have any specific queries about the program, please do not hesitate to contact the Partners in Parenting team via email, med-partnersinparenting@monash.edu or phone, (03) 9905 1250.

The Pastoral Team
Raising Resilient Teenagers

FREE online program empowering parents to make sense of adolescence and parent their teenager more confidently.

We are inviting parents and their teenagers to take part in a trial of a new online parenting program designed to provide parents with strategies to manage the challenges of adolescence and stay connected with their teenager.

What’s involved?

• You will be allocated to one of two groups, to receive either:

  1) An individually-tailored, interactive online parenting program that will give you practical strategies you can use to parent your teenager more confidently;

  OR

  2) An information package of 5 weekly factsheets about adolescent development and well-being.

• We will give you a 5-minute call once a week until you have completed your allocated program.

• We will ask both you and your teenager (if they agree to take part) to complete some online surveys, at the beginning, and after 3 and 12 months.

In total over 12 months, your participation will take a few hours of yours and your child’s time. To say thank you, both you and your child will be reimbursed with e-gift vouchers.

How do I find out more?
To find out more, or to register to participate, please go to www.partnersinparenting.net.au
For further details, you can contact the researchers at med-partnersinparenting@monash.edu or on (03) 9905 1250

This research has been approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee.
PFA REPORT

First 2016 PFA Meeting

All Avila parents are welcome to attend the first PFA meeting for the year, which will be held from 7pm on Wednesday 24 February in the Gathering Space (on the left after the Main Entrance).

I know everyone leads very busy lives but if you can spare an hour or so it would be great if you could join us for the meeting. We understand you may not have the time to attend all meetings but you may be able to help with certain projects when your schedule permits.

Year 7 Welcome Picnic

Thank you to those families who came along to the Year 7 Welcome Picnic on Friday 12 February. The weather was very kind and families new to Avila enjoyed meeting each other. My thanks go to the senior students who organised activities and games and the talented Avila musicians who kept us entertained. It was a lovely night and a great introduction to the welcoming and friendly Avila community.

Year Level Representatives

Thank you to the following parents who have been nominated as 2016 Year Level Representatives. They will be organising two social events throughout the year so stay tuned for details.

Verity Coates  Joe Di Fede  Sheriza Garnett
Peter Willoughby  Sylvia Cooper  Jenny Satya Graha
Diane Carey  Carmela Cuda
Connie Mogg  Priscilla Mkunadze

Save the Date

Wednesday 4 May

All Year 12 parents will soon be invited to a social evening featuring guest speaker Dr Richard Chambers who is a registered Psychologist and Mindfulness Consultant at Monash University. The ‘Year 12 Survival Kit’ evening has been organised by the Year 12 Level Reps, Connie Mogg and Priscilla Mkunadze and it will be held at a venue in Ashburton. It will provide Year 12 parents with strategies for helping their daughter through her final year of schooling. More details will follow and bookings will be via the college website.

Thursday 5 May

Although it seems a long way off, Mothers Day will be here before we know it. The PFA will be hosting a Mothers Day Breakfast for students and their mothers at the college from 7.30 to 8.30am on Thursday 5 May so please reserve this date in your diary. Bookings will open soon via the trybooking system on the college website.

IGA Community Benefits Scheme

Next time you are shopping at IGA/Richies Mount Waverley, be sure to use your Community Benefits Card. IGA donate a portion of sales back to community groups which can be significant over time. If you already have a card make sure you have nominated Avila College as the community group or if you don’t already have one it only takes a moment to set up, just ask at the check out. Thanks for your support.

Kind regards,

Wasana Fernando
PFA President
PATHWAYS AND CAREER NEWS

FREE Parent Webinar– Don’t Miss OUT
The Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV) is offering a range of FREE Parent Programs to all parents with secondary school children. Funded by the Department of Education and Training, all members should take advantage of these free programs and resources.

Don’t miss this fantastic opportunity to hear from Mr Ivan Neville from the federal Department of Employment. He is currently the Branch Manager, Labour Market Research and Analysis Branch and has responsibility for the analysis of the contemporary Australian labour market and identification of current and future demand for skills and jobs. Ivan will discuss:

- Top Growth Industries
- Employer skill needs
- Employment growth areas

This webinar offers parents an insight into jobs growth and demand over the next five years. The information provided will be relevant to all parents and may assist you when helping your children with their subject and course choices. Parents with children in transition and adult children seeking work will benefit from the information provided at the webinar.

Event Date and Time:
Tue, 19/04/2016 - 7:00pm to 8:00pm
Term: Term 2
Location: Online
Topic: Where are all the jobs going to be in 2025? - Register Here

Inside Monash Seminar Series
Get the inside story of what it’s really like to study at Monash. You’ll hear from current students, past students and academics. It’s the best 90 minutes you could spend researching your course. Bring along your parents too!
Register now: http://www.monash.edu.au/inside-monash/
All seminars will run from 6:30 – 8:00pm
Wednesday 9 March - Business and Economics
Thursday 10 March - Science
Tuesday 15 March - Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
See web site for topics April - September.

University of Melbourne - Explore the University
VET and Agricultural Science Open Day
Werribee, Victoria. Saturday 19 March 2016
See: http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/explore/events for details of Focus on…. seminars in May.

Resource for students - VCE Survival Guide:
A free 36 page guide to help students achieve the best possible marks in the VCE. The Survival Guide includes great advice about goal setting, managing stress and procrastination, higher-level time management skills, the most effective learning techniques, planning study timetables and more…
Download from here
A copy of the VCE Survival guide has been placed on Avila’s Careers Guidance site on the “Useful links and resources” page.

Agriculture Courses at Melbourne Polytechnic
Did you know that Melbourne Polytechnic (formerly NMIT) offer certificate to degree level courses in Agriculture and Agronomy? All courses are delivered at Yan Yean on Melbourne Polytechnic’s 600 hectare farm, giving students access to a fully operational farm where practical lessons re-enforce the learning. Subjects range from driving tractors and other farm machinery, fencing, handling animals (culminating in showing steers at the Royal Melbourne Show in September), to crop establishment, grazing management. Courses start soon.
More information? call 03 92698926, email agriculture@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au or check out our web page http://www.melbournepolytechnic.edu.au/study-areas/earth-sciences/agriculture-land-management/
All students have been emailed the latest Career News newsletter which includes information about:

- Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT)
- Avoid a Work Experience Wreckage!
- Science & Information Technology at Victoria University
- 2016 Go4IT Work Experience Program
- Tuckwell Scholarship – Australian National University
- Medical Program Update for Bond University
- U.S. College Fair – Studying in the USA

A copy of the Newsletter is available on Avila’s Careers Guidance site (see link on Simon).

Jenny Dunn - Pathways Co-ordinator
Email: jdunn@avilacollege.vic.edu.au

Geraldine McKenna - Careers Counsellor
Email: gmckenna@avilacollege.vic.edu.au

**SPORT NEWS**

If there is one thing Avila girls are known for its their hard work and persistence. After battling early morning swim trainings twice a week for the past term and once a week last term, the day had finally come for the girls to show off their new techniques and to shine. Last Friday, 12 February, one bus full of very excited girls, along with 3 very dedicated coaches headed off to compete in the annual Genezzano Centenary swim meet against Siena, Sacre Coeur and Genazzano.

All girls put in an amazing effort and should be congratulated for the swims that they achieved on the day. Special mention should also go out to those that placed first on the day- Carla Di Gregorio, Lucy Searle and Georgia Abbott and to Katelin Gudzoska who placed first in multiple events!

The results were finally announced, after a tiring evening of racing and Avila had placed 4th by only a few points!

SCSA, our final and biggest meet is just around the corner, to be held on Wednesday 23 March. The girls continue to prepare and wait in anticipation for the day to finally arrive. The girls are to be commended on their continuing hard work at training and dedication to the team.

Good luck for the rest of the season!

_Tim Ross_
Sports Co-ordinator