Dear Parents, Friends, Staff and Students,

“Let us pray well and never get weary of doing what is good”

Catherine McAuley

The enrolment process for Year 7, 2016 is well underway, with a large number of families attending our Open Night and Enrolment Information evening on Tuesday 17th March. I would like to thank all staff and students who made the night such a success. Students were display assistants, performers and tour guides. Mercy Square was buzzing with parents, prospective Year 7 students for 2016 and our current students and staff.

We were blessed with perfect weather and the evening was a great success due to the generosity of our amazing staff, students and parents. Thank you to Mrs Jacqui Hamilton who organised the day and to the staff, 200 plus students and members of the P & F who gave up their Tuesday evening to work and promote our school. Feedback from parents centred very much on how impressed they were with Catherine McAuley girls’ talent, confidence and warm, friendly approach.

Catherine McAuley Westmead has had more enrolment applications than places to offer and so it is essential that any family wishing to apply for a place in 2016 submits the completed application form to the school office no later than Friday 27th March 2015, which is the closing date for the first round of applications to be considered for Year 7, 2016.

The school offers places according to the CEO Enrolment Policy, accessible at www.parra.catholic.edu.au. In accordance with this policy, preference is given to students in our local parishes, to siblings and to Catholic students in other schools. This preference applies to applications which are received by the closing date. Applications received after this date, go into the 2nd round of interviews and offers, and in the past, very few places have been available in the 2nd round. If you are intending to apply for a place in 2016, and you have not already submitted your application, please do so as soon as possible, to avoid disappointment.

Interviews for places in 2016 will take place at the school on Wednesday 29th April. Please keep this date free so that you can attend the interview with your daughter, at the time allocated to you.

Next Sunday the church celebrates Palm Sunday. This day marks the beginning of Holy Week, the most sacred week in the church’s calendar. In this holy time, let us walk with Jesus and with all who suffer injustice, degradation and violence, praying both for ourselves and others, that the joy of the resurrection may bring justice, healing and hope in our lives and in the world. McAuley students will take part in the Palm Sunday March and Mass at Parramatta Cathedral at 6:00pm next Sunday.

Regards

Ms Laetitia Richmond
Principal
As we are now in the final weeks of Term 1, students have completed or are finalising the requirements of their first assessment task for Religious Education. Earlier in the week, the Year 12 students completed the half yearly examination for Studies of Religion. This assessment task will prepare them for the demands of the externally written Trial Higher School Certificate examination and the Higher School Certificate examination papers which they will be completing later in the year. We wish our Year 12 all the best for their remaining exams.

Students in Years 7 to 10 have been allocated class time to assist them with the completion of their assessment tasks. Your daughter/s should be using her school diary to ensure good time management. Using class time wisely and good planning will enable your daughter/s to complete the requirements of each assessment task. The Religious Education teachers have spent time with each class, discussing the nature of each task.

As mentioned earlier, we are now in the closing weeks of Term 1. For some people there is great anticipation about the upcoming school holidays. Perhaps you may be going away, catching up with friends or going to the Royal Easter Show. Last Sunday, the Catholic Church showed her anticipation for the nearness of Easter. The sombre purple vestments were replaced with rose coloured vestments for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Laetare Sunday. We reflect upon our Lenten preparations (prayer, fasting and almsgiving). It is quite timely to ponder where is God in my life at this point of my Lenten journey.

I recently heard the story about the Dominican theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx, who very early in his formation felt a close proximity to God when praying the Office of the Church at two o’clock in the morning. When he expressed his views to his father, the reply was that this was a long established habit in the Schillebeeckx family. As parents of thirteen children, Edward’s mother and father had spent many hours awake with babies and small children in the middle of the night, and they used this opportunity for prayer.

While our search for God may not be in the middle of the night, it is important for us to remember that we are people of hope and joy. This hope and joy comes from God, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (Jn 3: 16). Jesus humbled himself to live a human life, and we particularly remember this during the events of the Easter Triduum. When we weave the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy into our everyday lives, we share that hope and joy with those people we encounter.

This weekend, six students from Year 10 will be representing Catherine McAuley at the Encounter Student Leadership Program. This is a new initiative from Catholic Youth Parramatta and we have been selected as one of the five pilot schools. The program will be held over three Saturdays and the first session is titled ‘Knowing the Great Story of Jesus Christ’. We look forward to their sharing with us about this program. The upcoming Palm Sunday Youth Celebration is particularly something which should be considered by our older students. Please see the flyer which is included in this newsletter for more details. I would be most happy to answer any questions which you may have regarding this event.

Last Friday, we held our first Reflection Day for 2015. Year 10 students travelled to St Patrick’s Cathedral Parramatta and we were fortunate to be able to work with the NET Team. The theme for the day was Road Trip, which was quite timely as the students begin to plan their final years of schooling. The day allowed the students the opportunity to ponder life’s big questions, including where is God in my life. The NET Team has only recently formed together and were greatly impressed with the enthusiasm and energy of our Year 10 Students. We attended Mass and were very warmly welcomed by the Dean of the Cathedral Father Robert Bossini. The students are to be congratulated on making a day such a success.

Ms Genevieve Banks
Religious Education Coordinator

Harvesting food for life

Cristian’s community in rural Peru has always lived a traditional life, with simple diets and crops dependent on rainfall. Until recently, 33-year-old Cristian had to travel one kilometre to access running water.

With the help of Caritas Huacho, Cristian and 14 other young farmers have introduced running water and irrigation to their remote Andean village. They now grow and harvest a wide variety of high-value, sustainable crops, which provide them all with a secure income and a wide variety of food.

Your donation to Project Compassion 2015 helps farmers in Peru secure a food source and income that benefits their families and communities for life.

www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion 1800 024 413
Pastoral Care

Personal Safety
The school has been asked by Parramatta Police to remind students to be aware of their personal safety travelling to and from school. The following tips provided by Senior Constable Dusan Dakic, School Liaison Officer, were addressed by Ms Richmond at last week’s School Assembly:

- not wearing head phones whilst walking, especially crossing the road
- walking in well lit areas
- being aware of who is around them, even on public transport
- being aware of who to contact if they feel uneasy

When travelling on public transport after normal school hours the advice is to sit near the bus driver or travel in the guard’s carriage on the train.

Good News Story
One morning last week a Year 8 student left her excursion bag at the bus stop on her way to school. The student contacted her parents and her sister went to look for the bag. The Year 8 student thought her bag was gone and replacing the items would have caused some concern to the family.

Antonia, Year 10, picked the excursion bag up from Constitution Hill on her way to school and handed it in to the front office. As the Year 8 student had her name on the bag Miss Sharon Brincat, Year 8 Coordinator, was able to return the bag to the student. Miss Brincat stated the smile on the student’s face was priceless.

This is a real example of Mercy in Action. Antonia had done the ordinary, extraordinarily well.

Uniform Blitz
It is unfortunate that some students are not wearing their uniform correctly. We are having a uniform blitz and teachers will not be accepting excuses for why the correct uniform and grooming is not in place for every student. Teachers are specifically focusing on correct sports shoes that must be worn whenever the school sports uniform is worn. Also socks for sport and with the school uniform must be short white ankle socks with turn over tops. The first button of the school blouse is to be done up. If you are unsure of the Uniform and Grooming requirements please refer to the School Diary page 147 & 148.

Meningococcal Australia
Meningococcal Australia is conducting a campaign to raise awareness of meningococcal disease in secondary schools in the Parramatta area.

The facts:
- Meningococcal disease can kill within 24 hours of the first symptoms
- Teenagers and young adults aged 15 - 25 are in the high risk group
- Meningococcal disease can be stopped if treated early enough with a simple dose of intravenous antibiotics administered by the doctor or hospital

As we approach the danger season of winter and early spring a short information video can be accessed from: www.meningococcal.org.au

Ms Debbie Grigson
Assistant Principal
(Pastoral Care/Administration)
Our school is busy fundraising for Project Compassion with lots of different and inventive fundraisers taking place.

Our Year 9 Clare students, along with their teacher **Ms Gai Mellier**, sold snow cones at lunch earlier in the month whilst our Mercedes student leaders, and House Patron **Mr Paul Marks**, ran a sausage sizzle. Year 10 Coolock organised a hair braiding stall and on Thursday this week Year 10 Veritas sold cupcakes. On Friday this week Year 9 Caritas and **Mrs Suzanne Bain** will be selling spiders and ice cream. Year 8 Coolock are holding a guessing competition with students able to guess the number of lollies in the jar.

Next week Year 8 Mercedes will be selling everything chocolate at their ‘Death By Chocolate’ stall with items available for a donation of between 50c to $2. Also next week Year 11 Ryan will be selling Lebanese pizzas with oregano, cheese and oregano/cheese pizzas for sale. Students need to pre order their pizza which are being sold for between $4 – $6.

All money raised during Lent for Project Compassion will go to Caritas.

**MAG Students Attend Talk on Social Justice**

On Thursday 5th March, a few of the Year 10 MAG leaders, along with the Year 11 and 12 Social Justice Leaders, attended a talk at Our Lady of Mercy College. **Fr Aloysious Mowe**, Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service Australia, prepared a talk for us and other Mercy schools where we were able to share ideas about current social justice issues. We were encouraged to consider a more accurate perception of refugees and the real issues they face. The talk was very eye opening as we heard that over 10,000 Sudanese people are dying of hunger and their government is only able to deliver all those people approximately 32 food baskets in a month. The MAG team were really intrigued by this figure because we take the basic necessities for granted each day. People in Sudan are longing to eat a small slice to pita bread to help feed their families, whereas Australians have unlimited access to shopping centres where we can purchase food and water at reasonable prices.

The upsetting thing to have heard is that if someone from Sudan wanted to come to Australia for the chance at a better life, they can’t. It is impossible for a Sudanese person to be granted a visa to Australia because Australia has closed the gates to all refugees and consequently they’ll be sent to Easter Island. The government pays over $10, 000 each year for them to be sent away, so is this really beneficial to the Australian government?

Together we can spread global awareness regarding refugees by simply just talking about this issue with others. Most Australians are unaware about the poverty on the other side of the world because we are so comfortable in our daily lives.

**Fr Aloysious Mowe** concluded his talk with, “How can we dare to go to sleep at night knowing that there are people on the other side of the world dying? We have the power to help them but we chose not to because we know it’ll mean sacrificing something for us!”

**Jasmine Szanto**
Year 10 MAG Leader
**Student Leader's Report**

The leadership team would like to congratulate all the girls who participated in the 2015 School Swimming Carnival. The atmosphere of the day was fantastic! We extend a special thank you to all the girls who ‘Ticked it Off’ and swam on the day.

On Friday 6th March Ms Grigson, Ms Richmond, Ms Kempys and the school leadership team went to Parramatta Leagues Club to celebrate International Women’s Day. It was a very empowering experience. The girls were very fortunate to hear guest speakers talk about equality amongst the sexes. These speakers reminded everyone the importance of equality for women all over the world.

Finally, we would like to wish everybody sitting exams and completing assignments in the upcoming weeks the best of luck. Remember to try your hardest, study heaps and complete lots of practice questions.

*Student Leaders*

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**Staff and Student News**

**The Big Day In - An IT Day at UTS**

Five students from Year 11 attended an IT Day at the University of Technology Sydney last week. Year 11 student Emma Seaman has written a report below:

The best thing about the IT Day at UTS was we were able to talk to different companies and got to explore the different aspects of IT, from the talk about business and technology by Ryan Fahey from Woolworths to the use of computers in making films by Luke Emrose from Animal Logic. It was great to hear about the different careers and pathways that are available. It was also very interesting to hear from Lawrence Crumpton from Microsoft about what is to come in the future concerning computers. This made us realise the endless possibilities a career in technology has to offer.

One of the presenters talked about the myths about careers in IT, which included “It’s all about the Math” or “There aren’t many girls in technology” or even “Outsourcing - limited local opportunities”. This made me realise that there are many different career options available that I was not aware of before.

I would like to explore the area of film in animation and effects as I enjoy creating and using software to present an idea. However I also enjoy software development and I would like to explore design in applications and websites.

Thank you to Mrs Green for organising our attendance at this very worthwhile day.

*Emma Seaman*

Year 11

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Year 11 students who attended the UTS IT Day.
Year 9 students thoroughly enjoyed their pastoral care day on Tuesday 10th March led by Mr Chris Doyle from Karis Ministries. Over three periods the students had the opportunity to come together as a year group with lots of singing, dancing and reflection as they worked through the theme for the day ‘Being True To Yourself’.

Year 9 student Sagun Bakshi has written the following report:

On the morning of 10th March, Year 9 went to the Morley Centre for our eagerly awaited pastoral care day. Mr Chris Doyle led the day and showed us the importance of maintaining a positive attitude, especially for those times when school can be tough. He reminded us that as a year group we can all relate to others in our grade even if we don’t normally interact with particular students. By sharing his life experiences with us he taught us the importance of having a good and healthy relationship with both our family and peers.

We had the opportunity to join together and participate in many activities which reminded us that we are surrounded by a friendly environment, consisting of peers and teachers and that we shouldn’t forget that we have support when we require it.

The day was a wonderful bonding session for our whole year and a great chance to stop and reflect upon what we have. Year 9 would like to thank Mr Doyle for making the day such an enjoyable and memorable one.

Sagun Bakshi
Year 9

On Monday 9th March, the Year 12 Music students visited the Opera House to attend the annual Encore Showcase. The Encore Showcase provides current music students, teachers and the general public the opportunity to see and hear the exemplary works presented for the 2014 Higher School Certificate Music examinations.

The performances were amazingly diverse. Featuring solo and ensemble works ranging from classics to jazz and contemporary music, there is something for everyone. We all thoroughly enjoyed this experience as it taught us the fundamentals needed to achieve a band 6 in our Music courses, as well as being able to enjoy all the performances themselves. It was a fantastic experience, and something I would recommend to future students, as it is very encouraging.

Isabella Losco
Year 12
Reflections of a Year 11 Student on Her Time at McAuley

On Tuesday night this week our school held our Year 7 2016 Enrolment Information Night. Over 300 people attended and listened to presentations from our School Principal and School Leadership Team. Our visitors also listened to brief speeches from three Year 7 students, Mia Leonardo, Tracyla Chehade and Alysha Sinclair and Year 11 student Annalise Awkar.

All our students spoke wonderfully with the Year 7 students speaking for one minute on what have been the biggest challenges for them in Year 7 and how they have found their first term at high school. Our Year 11 student, Annalise, spoke about her time at McAuley and how much she has enjoyed the opportunities the school has presented to her. Her speech was very well received and parents commented afterwards on it. Here is a copy of her speech:

When I was first asked to present a speech, my immediate thought was “how am I going to fit everything in, in only 2 minutes?” This school has offered a lifetimes’ worth of conversation, yet I only have two minutes, so let’s see how I go…

I am currently the Assistant Social Justice Leader and collectively in the past four years at McAuley I have been involved in over 20 different groups and teams, ranging from sporting teams to public speaking teams, from the student representative council to Mercy in Action group, from IT Support to Student Alliance… I can honestly say, I have absolutely loved every moment of it.

The opportunities offered here at Catherine McAuley are anything but limited. This school, under the guidance of the mercy spirit, offers facilities and experiences that allow your daughters and the whole student body, to grow and develop into Mercy women. These opportunities assist us in figuring out who we truly are.

This evening, I’m stripping back to the basics. What I personally love about McAuley would definitely have to be the atmosphere - the way in which you walk through the playground and witness the laughter and happiness. Witness the eagerness of students to learn, the excitement of the teachers to teach, but most importantly, the relationships built at McAuley.

At the end of the day it is how we as community come together. I can proudly say that we are one big family. Here at McAuley there is mutual respect for every member. How is one meant to co-operate with a teacher or a peer if there is no respect between them?

There are people who teach for a living, and then there are others who live through teaching. The staff here at Catherine McAuley are priceless. Coming from a student, we can tell when a teacher truly cares. I am very blessed to say that I have received the best of teachers throughout the years. Teachers who have not only taught, but guided, inspired and encouraged me to be the best that I can be.

Through the values of mercy, justice, excellence, integrity, courage and hospitality, this school creates a group of women prepared for the future. These mercy values are practiced daily at McAuley, under the guidance of Catherine McAuley herself. These values are ones that will remain with me as I leave high school, values that will be guidelines in which I will fulfill my life.

I love every detail about this school - the extra-curricular opportunities, the friendship, the teachers, the mercy tradition, the Friday morning mass, and of course the education. But teamwork, family, support – that is what means the most to us.

This school has offered me so much, more than I ever imagined a high school could. I love this place dearly and I can never thank the teachers of Catherine McAuley enough. I could never offer my full gratitude towards everything this school has given me. I am proud to call myself a McAuley girl, and I wouldn’t have it any other way.

ATTENTION YEAR 7 PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Winter uniforms will be ready for collection / purchase on
Wednesday 1st April and Thursday 2nd April
between the hours of 8:00am - 12:30pm

The Uniform Shop will also be opened on
Thursday 16th April and Friday 17th April
between the hours of 8:30am - 12:00pm and 12:30pm - 2:30pm.

Mrs Amanda Delialioglu
Uniform Shop Manager
9849 9134
Year 7 2016 Enrolments

The closing date for the first round of applications for Year 7 2016 will close on FRIDAY 27TH MARCH.

If you wish to be considered for the first round your application must be lodged by this date.

Enrolment packs are available on the school website www.mcauley.nsw.edu.au or by contacting School Reception on 9849 9100.

Don't Miss Out

The Drama Club performance is fast approaching with shows on

Monday 30th March 6:30pm
and
Tuesday 31st March 4:00pm & 6:30pm

Tickets will be sold at School Reception in the week leading up to the performance.

Baulkham Hills Football Club

Under 16 Girls are looking for players. If you are 14 or 15 years old and have been pondering paying football (soccer), you can contact Melissa ASAP on 0403 804 446 for details. Absolute beginners are welcome.

Year 7 Parent / Teacher Interviews will be held on

Wednesday, 1st April
3:45pm - 7:45pm
BM Building - Level 2
Join us for Holy Week 2015

Sunday 29th March
- Starts 5pm at Parramatta Town Hall
- Blessing of the Palms
- Street Procession through Parramatta CBD
- Mass in St Patrick’s Cathedral
- Launch of Parramatta’s Pilgrimage to Krakow WYD 2016 & BBQ Dinner

Palm Sunday Procession & Youth Mass

Friday 3rd April
- Starts 10pm at St Patrick’s Church, 51 Allawah Street, Blacktown
- Walking overnight to parishes at Seven Hills, Toongabbie, Wentworthville & Westmead
- Ends sunrise at St Patrick’s Cathedral Precinct, Parramatta

Good Friday Walk

For More Information & to Register:

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