Prayer

May we use the season of Advent to become more aware of the blessings in our lives. We make this prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.

The Divine Image

To Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
All pray in their distress
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love and Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.

William Blake

Examination Period and Preparation for 2016

This week and next students undertake end of year exams and, at the senior end, begin classes for their 2016 course of study. I commend all girls on the manner in which they have entered into this assessment period and have been pleased with their commitment to their 2016 classes. Congratulations to all. I also thank staff who have entered into the heightened demands of assessment, reporting, alternative programs and induction classes with their usual professionalism and good grace.

Volunteers

Next Monday evening, it will be a real pleasure to acknowledge and thank the many generous volunteers within our community. I thank all parents and friends of the College who give so that our girls can enjoy the benefits of good sustenance and friendly service. I thank Mary Calthorpe for consistently providing great leadership for our volunteers and her ongoing commitment to such a busy role. Thanks also to Veronica...
Term Dates 2015
Term 1 - Monday, 2 February - Friday, 27 March
Term 2 - Monday, 13 April - Friday, 26 June
Term 3 - Monday, 13 July - Friday, 18 September
Term 4 - Monday, 5 October - Friday, 4 December

Maloney and Maree Hynes for their great work earlier this year when Mary was on leave. We look forward to acknowledging all volunteers with thanks next week.

End of Year Communication
Over the coming weeks, all families will receive further correspondence from the College outlining important information for the end of year and more specifically for 2016. Despite the elusiveness of time at this point in the year, I ask all parents to set aside an opportunity to become familiar with important updates for the coming year.

Peace,
Elizabeth Hanney
Principal

Deputy Principal Leadership & Learning
I have written previously about an important process for teaching staff in their work at Ave Maria College. This is called the Objectives for Improvement Plan (OIP) and essentially it takes teachers through an ongoing, evidence based reflective process. We are currently at a key step of OIP whereby teachers are asked to write a reflection on their own learning throughout the year based on the feedback they have sought from students, peers and parents. At the start of the year, teachers are asked to choose three objectives as their focus and as the year progresses, seek feedback on how they are travelling; modifying their practice accordingly. At this end of the journey, teachers are asked to reflect on three questions for each objective.

- Based on the data, what have you learned about your performance in meeting your chosen objective?
- What changed in your teaching practice in response to the feedback?
- What are the opportunities for improvement in your teaching practice?

We are currently in the process of meeting with each teacher to discuss their reflections and learnings. It is very clear in conversations that our teachers are genuinely engaging in this process and expressing a desire to improve not only their teaching practice but also the use of this tool as a means of doing so. It is also clear that our students are collaborating with us in this process. Their feedback, together with that of parents and peers, is vital in assisting our learning as educators. We are conscious of the risk of over-surveying students, however we are not seeing any evidence of student fatigue in this. In fact quite the opposite! Students are engaging quite genuinely in providing teachers with their feedback. Now in our fourth year of the OIP it is amazing to reflect on how far we've come with this. Feedback on our teaching practice is now a given at Ave and understood to be a vital part of the College’s growth and improvement. We thank all students and parents for your part in this learning process.

Phillip Tascone
Deputy Principal Leadership & Learning

Head of School Years 10-12
Year 10 and 11 End of Year
This week sees the end of the school year for our Year 10 and 11 students, as they finish their VCE Commencement Week classes, receive feedback on their end of year exams, and celebrate together all that 2015 held for them.

Year 10 and 11 Final Assembly and Mass
One of the most enjoyable parts of this final week is the shared celebration on Thursday of our final Year 10 and 11 Assembly and final Mass. My thanks are owed particularly to the Year 10 and 11 student leaders for their reflections on 2015 and their photo tributes to the year. A special thank you to all parents who are joining us to celebrate Mass, too. You are very welcome and we appreciate your presence.

Year 12 2016 Parent Information Night
And with this end of year also comes a beginning, as Year 10 and 11 students turn their heads and minds towards 2016 and the next step towards their VCE and secondary school completion. An important part of this shift happened last Monday night for our incoming Year 12 cohort. It is a special moment when a cohort begin to see themselves as one group of students, rather than an assortment of teenage cabals. Year 12 2016 have had their first Year 12 classes, received the details and paperwork for their Retreat at the beginning of the year, and will very soon have their heads down and studying.

In the meantime (probably an inappropriate word given the feasts of family and food to come), I wish all of our families and particularly our Year 10 and 11 students, a restful and peaceful holiday to come.

And with our graduating class of 2015 and the soon-to-be-holidaying Year 10s and 11s, I likewise write my last words as a

Message from Moonee Valley City Council Traffic Management
Parents are reminded to slow down and obey all speed limits when dropping off and picking up children in Vida Street and the surrounding area.
Head of School here at Ave Maria College. It seems a long time (and embarrassingly it is) since I fronted my first class as a graduate teacher in late January of 2005. The College has changed in many ways, in almost all of them for the better, in the 11 years since I began teaching here. I leave the school with every confidence in its future direction and expert leadership, in its loving and talented staff, and in the potential and promise of its fun, funny, and always caring students. It has been a joy to grow and learn as part of this growing and flourishing community, and I leave with the advice that we all pause occasionally to see its goodness, to recognize the privilege of being part of a school community like this one. And finally to know that, like all of our graduates, we each leave better for knowing the goodness and grace of Ave Maria College.

Learning Leader

The road ahead for Year 12 2016

VCE Commencement Week has begun and the current Year 11 students have been introduced to their VCE courses with a buzz in the air, and the Year 12 2016 student body, excited about a new and fresh start after a week of examinations.

At the recent Year 12 2016 Parent Information Night, we welcomed the Class of 2016 and their parents to hear from members of staff about VCE procedures, examinations, ATAR scores, careers and pathways, SACs, positive study habits, time management skills and of course, how important it is to, in this the pre-season, mentally prepare for the hard work ahead.

Tania Stangherlin, Year 12 2016 Year Level Team Leader, delivered an inspiring analogy of Year 12 using her experience as an HPE teacher and sports enthusiast, to compare the experience of Year 12 to training for a sport.

Here are a few of her thoughts to the students:

- The pre-season phase is now! Train hard, take it seriously and give yourself the best chance to make the team.
- The competition phase – otherwise known as the ‘school year’. In Year 12, just like in a sporting event, what you do leading up to the final stretch will determine your level of success. An athlete would never turn up on Grand Final day expecting to be picked for the team having done nothing all year, and nor should they. I’ve heard many students say that they will just study really hard for their exams and that should be enough. And my question is ‘how?’ With the completion of a successful competition phase, you will almost guarantee yourself a spot on the grand final team.
- Sufficient sleep is similar to saving your documents. If we remove the USB before everything has been transferred over, we could lose some of our work, and this is what happens to our long term memory when our sleep is interrupted, or cut short.
- Training - Each individual must make a commitment to understanding and implementing her most effective home study routine. Have a plan, stay on track, avoid distractions and go hard!
- Finally, a successful performance requires good coaching and support staff throughout the year. Be guided by a team (parents, family, teachers, friends) of people working together to make your Year 12 experience as enjoyable as possible.

Good luck to the Year 12 2016 students as they begin their marathon. It’s not a sprint. Less than 365 days to go!

Debra Coyne
Learning Leader

Faith and Religious Education

Fr Minh will be the celebrant for the Year 10-11 final Mass on Thursday, 26 November as they give thanks for all of the blessings and the learning of this year.

There will be a People’s Climate March on Friday, 27 November, beginning at 5.30pm in Federation Square, which is supported by the Archdiocesan Office for Justice and Peace. It is one of many similar marches in Australian cities as participants walk alongside millions of people in hundreds of major cities around the world. By coming together it is
demonstrating that our political leaders are out of step with the Australian community and the rest of the world. The march is being held because we want our leaders to listen to our communities and help us build a brighter and fairer future for all.

In the light of recent events in Paris, Beirut and elsewhere, I share this with you:

“So God created humankind in his image” (Gen 1:27)

“Whoever kills an innocent person it is as if they have killed all of humanity” (Qu’ran 5:32)

Thus, if you live in Paris
Or Beirut
Or Damascus
Or Baghdad
Each person has dignity - No hierarchy

A death in Paris
Or Beirut
Or Damascus
Or Baghdad is to be grieved
Part of God’s image is lost
And we are all
Diminished

There is so much anger
So much hatred
What should our response be?

To follow Jesus, Francis of Assisi and many others:
Peace, Love
Pardon, Faith
Hope, Light
Joy

Patrick Jurd
Director of Faith and Religious Education

You get to build loving relationships. Life becomes meaningful. And when there’s a gap between what you want and what you’ve got, painful feelings like this one will show up. Which option do you choose?”

This question confronts people with the human condition: if we are going to love and care, then we are going to feel pain. Almost all people will choose Option B. Even though the pain can feel overwhelming when we lose someone close, it is better than not feeling that love in the first place. If someone close to you is grieving the loss of a loved one, there are some simple ways you can help:

- Let them know you care – even if you don’t know what to say or do, but that you can be there for them
- Listen – simply being available to hear their story when they are ready to talk can help
- Ask them how you can help – do not assume what they will need, but do offer help
- Let them know its okay to share their grief –encourage them to not feel alone
- Keep in contact – be available, check-in, keep them included in activities, and give them the option to contact you
- Look out for signs that they are not coping – this includes signs of suicidal thoughts, self-harm, getting stuck in their grief, or giving up on life.

Get them help –connect them with information, resources or professional help.

The choice to feel is what generates empathy, compassion and connection to humanity. I hope we never stop choosing Option B.

Sue Hall
Student Counsellor

**Student Counsellor**

**The Choice to Feel**

I have recently helped a couple of students deal with the pain of losing someone close to them. In both cases it was the loss of a grandparent. I ask them a very powerful question, inspired by the work of Russ Harris: “Suppose I could give you a choice. Option A: you never have to feel this painful feeling ever again – ever. But it means you lose all capacity to love and care. You care about nothing and no one. Nothing matters. No one matters. Life becomes meaningless because you don’t care about anything whatsoever. Option B: You get to love and care. People matter to you. Life matters. You care about what you do, and what happens. You care about friends and family.

**Important Dates Term 4 2015**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, 27 November</td>
<td>Year 7 2016 Orientation Day</td>
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<td>(Peer Support Leaders to attend)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, 30 November</td>
<td>Assessment and Reporting Day</td>
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<td>(Student free day)</td>
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<td>Friday, 4 December</td>
<td>Year 7-9 End of Year Mass</td>
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<td>Students finish at 1.38pm</td>
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<td>Tuesday, 22 December</td>
<td>Administration Closes</td>
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<td>Friday, 29 January</td>
<td>Years 7 and 12 Return</td>
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<td>Monday, 1 February</td>
<td>All students Return</td>
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