A PRAYER FOR LENTEN GRACE

Loving God,
During the season of Lent, bring me closer to you.
Prepare a place in my home and heart for silence and solitude, so that I may re-discover the grace of a prayer-full life.
Help me to fast from those things that threaten the well-being of body and soul and remind me of the grace of simplicity.
Enlarge my heart so that I give to those in need and, in so doing, re-discover the grace of gratitude and generosity.
May this season be a grace-filled time to rekindle my love for and faith in you.

Amen
FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Sacramental Evening
Last Tuesday evening we held our combined Sacramental Evening for all parents of students receiving Sacraments this year. Our speaker for the evening was Michael Yore. Michael’s knowledge and personal experiences were the basis for a very reflective and stimulating evening. His gentleness and deep faith was very evident as he led the group into an understanding that as Sacramental People we can find God in the everyday. As he put it, “among the pots and pans”. I have been given much positive feedback on the evening. I sincerely thank all the parents and teachers who attended and consider this a true indication of how supportive you are of your children. I would also like to thank Mrs McCarthy, our Religious Education Leader, for organizing the evening for our community.

Parent Information Evenings
Just a gentle reminder that next Tuesday February 23 and Wednesday February 24 there will be Parent Information Evenings. Preps and Year 3/4 sessions will begin at 7.00am and Year 1/2 and Year 5/6 sessions will begin at 7.30pm. All sessions will start off in the Library as a whole level and then parents will be invited to visit their child’s classroom to hear specific information related to their child’s class. These sessions were very successful last year and we have decided to offer them in the same format this year. If any parents wish to speak to any member of the Leadership Team or the Principal then there will be an opportunity to do so after their session has concluded.

Parent/Teacher/Child Conferences
This year we are making a slight adjustment to the way we conduct our first opportunity for parents and teachers to meet. In the past this opportunity has enabled parents to pass on important personal information to the teacher and take the time to meet one another. Whilst we believe this is still important, we also believe that it is an opportunity for children to become involved and have input into their learning. Therefore this year we are inviting the students to take part in the interview and renaming it conference so that the focus becomes the student and their learning. Staff have spent many hours testing and analyzing data to ascertain the students’ learning needs. Therefore, these conferences will be an opportunity for teachers, parents and students to discuss the learning goals for each individual student for the year. We have also increased the time to 15 minutes per interview to enable this to happen better. We hope that all parents will be able to take advantage of this important opportunity and attend on either Tuesday March 8 or Wednesday March 9. Please look out for information on booking a time as it will be advertised at a time closer to the event. As usual, the students will be remaining at school until 3.15pm unless parents wish to collect them earlier. Obviously, those parents attending the afternoon sessions will need to collect their child prior to the interview time. We are always endeavoring to improve learning outcomes for our students and we hope this is another step in that direction.

Entrance and Exit Doors
As many parents are now aware, as a safety measure and to ensure we maximize learning time, we have had to make some necessary changes to the doors that both parents and students use to enter and exit the school. To ensure the smooth running of our Administration Area we request that students and parents do not enter via the front office doors, unless you have official office business. At the moment it is necessary to keep these doors locked, while we all become familiar with the changed procedures.

Meditation
Meditation begins every morning at 8.45am where the whole school is engaged in prayer time. As a Catholic School, we value this time as a way of connecting ourselves to God and preparing ourselves for the learning which takes place over the day. We welcome parents to join us at this time, as has happened in the past. However, given the new safety measures in place, parents are required to wear a Visitor’s Badge whenever on the premises – just as our teaching staff wear their badges. Therefore, any parent wishing to enter the school for meditation is asked to go to the Office, which is open at 8.30am, and sign in and receive their badge. This will enable you to follow your child’s class and join them for meditation and remain to assist in the class if you wish.

Availability of Teachers
Parents have also expressed a concern with regard to the availability of staff. Staff are always happy to speak with parents and make themselves available as much as practical. However, all teachers and other staff are involved in meetings every Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon. Our meetings commence promptly after school and it is accepted protocol that teachers are punctual. Therefore, we encourage you to either make an appointment to speak with them on the other days, or to catch up with them via email or phone. Staff have also decided to make themselves briefly available to parents in the morning by coming out on yard a few minutes before the music begins. Please be reasonable as this is not a ‘meeting time’ but an opportunity for a quick catch-up where necessary. If important issues need to be addressed, then an appointment time must be set up. Thank you for your support.

Wet Weather
In the case of wet weather, as was the case this morning, all students are to go directly to their classrooms where the teachers will be expecting them. Classrooms will be open at 8.35am. Parents are reminded to respect our new “Visitors Badge” expectations even at this time. Thank you again.

Education Board
Early next week some grade levels will be receiving a letter inviting nominations for our Education Board to replace members who retired at the end of the year due to completing their tenure. The objective of the Education Board is to give parents a voice in the school and to make recommendations to the Parish Priest and Principal. The Board includes a representative from every year level. Please consider your availability and support for this as we request new members for 2016.
Mobile Phones
Students who bring mobile phones to school are to hand them to their teachers for safe-keeping or keep them in their bags, turned off. In which case, we take no responsibility if they go missing. Either way, we expect the students to take responsibility for their phone, both in the use of them and care of them.

School Photos
As you are aware our school photos will be taken on Thursday March 3. It would be appreciated if all students are present and wearing their correct summer uniform. Payment is to be made online, however if you do not have access to online payments then it would also be appreciated if the student photo envelopes are returned by Wednesday March 2. The family photo envelopes are available from the School Office.

School Closure
Next Friday February 26, there will be a school closure day to enable staff to update their qualifications in First Aid. This is a government requirement of all staff in schools. Our school will be closed on those days, so please make arrangements for the supervision of your children.

Open Day, Wednesday March 16, 2016
The main purpose of the Open Day is to provide prospective Prep parents with an opportunity to visit our school. However if you are an existing parent and would like to tour the school, you are welcome to join a tour. Tours will be available at 9.30am, 11.30am, 2.30pm and 6.00pm.

Parents’ Committee
Following the communication to you about the folding of the P&F Committee, I am delighted to inform you that we have had interest from various members of the school community to explore ways to ensure that this does not happen. I am very grateful to those mums who have put their names down at the office indicating their interest, and to the parents who have been communicating with me via email trying to gather support from the school community. Hopefully, we will all meet very soon to discuss our next course of action. We welcome everyone who would like to contribute to this committee in any way. Please look out for further information.

Class Representatives 2016
All families would have received a letter regarding the proposal to begin this initiative at St Damian’s School in 2016. Again, I am very grateful to those mums who have put in countless hours to develop the protocols around this new initiative. I especially wish to acknowledge the work put in by Deb Braidwood, Loraine Dramis and Clementine Prisc who have researched and spoken to other schools who have this initiative already in place and who have spent much time to put this initiative together. Again, many things would not be possible, without the wonderful support of our school community. I thank these ladies very sincerely, and I urge parents to review the letter sent home and to consider becoming a classroom rep for 2016. This is a wonderful way to build community in our school.

Staff Commissioning Mass and Welcome to all our new families
On Sunday February 28, Father Vincent will commission the staff and welcome all who are new to our school and parish community. We hope that everyone will join us for Mass at 10.00am on this day.

Jubilee Year
2016 is a very special year for St Damian’s. We are celebrating our Golden Jubilee Year, 50 years of service to our Catholic community. This is a major occasion for our Parish and School and we have been working very hard to ensure that we mark this occasion in a fitting manner. Many special events have been planned. We hope that our families will support each of these events through your attendance and support.

Development of 24 Units on Settlement Road
Yesterday I had a visit from a very concerned neighbour regarding the proposed development of 24 units built as a 3 level building with some provision for resident carparking underneath. This has major implications for our school and church. Settlement Road, as we all know, is an extremely busy and narrow street. Once building commences it will cause major disruptions to the flow of traffic. This in turn will create huge difficulties for you the parents as you try to access both entrances to the school and church. The pedestrian crossing across Settlement Road will also be impacted as trucks try to get in and out of the site, causing a possible danger to road users and pedestrians. Once the building has been completed and units are sold, there will be an increase of traffic due to the number of extra cars coming out of these dwellings. Parking in our school grounds may also be affected as the new neighbours possibly try to use our carpark for extra cars or visitors cars. This may impact on night time meetings and Mass times. We are not certain who the target market will be but it could be student accommodation due to the proximity to Latrobe. This could also create other issues. I will be putting in an objection to council siting the various reasons as outlined above and also citing the change in the environment due to the higher density living being proposed in this suburb. Let us not forget that development will also probably be proposed for the site where the carwash was located. If you wish to add your name to the petition to not grant the planning permit for this development, you are invited to do so at the school office. Hopefully, if we get enough signatures we may be able to present a strong voice to Council. Thank you for your support once again.

Prayer
Almighty and Everlasting God, You have given the human race Jesus Christ, our Saviour as a model of humility. He fulfilled Your Will by becoming Man and giving His life on the cross. Help us to bear witness to You by following His example. Make us worthy to share in His Resurrection. We ask this through Our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son.
Amen

Have a great week,
**SAINT DAMIANS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**FAITH NEWS**

**Sacramental Sashes**
Reconciliation sashes and orders for new sashes are due in by next Thursday February 25. If you already have a sash please send it in a zip-lock bag with $6 enclosed. If you are ordering a new sash the cost is $17, this cost includes a Baptism symbol as well as a Reconciliation symbol.

Confirmation sashes and orders for new sashes are due in by Thursday March 24. If you already have a sash please send it in a zip-lock bag with $6 enclosed. If you are ordering a new sash the cost is $29, this cost includes a Baptism symbol, Reconciliation symbol, Eucharist symbol and Confirmation symbol.

**Reminder for Sacrament Bookings**
Bookings have now opened for Confirmation and Eucharist. The website is www.schoolinterviews.com and the relevant booking codes are below – just in case you have misplaced the letter. Please be advised that Saturday August 20 and Sunday August 21 are now fully booked for Eucharist.

Confirmation booking code: LBWEE
Eucharist booking code: T986R

**Sacramental Evening with Michael Yore**
Thank you to the many parents who attended our Sacramental Evening on Tuesday. Michael was an engaging speaker who invited us to find God ‘amongst the pots and pans’ of our own homes. He encouraged us to be in the present moment and to engage with our children as sacramental people.

**Term One Masses**
Today we celebrated our Opening School Mass as a community. Father Vincent spoke about how amazing it is that our minds can hold so much information and how incredible it is that our hearts can expand and expand to make room for all of our loved ones. He encouraged all of us to ‘use our minds and hearts to learn, to love and to care for one another’. Father Vincent will be celebrating a Staff Commissioning and Prep Welcome Mass on Sunday February 28 at 10:00am. At this Mass the staff of St Damian’s will be commissioned and preps welcomed to the community. The staff will say a prayer together and preps will be invited to stand on the altar so the parish can make them welcome. All families are warmly invited to attend.

Aoife Mc Carthy
Religious Education Leader

**WHOLE School Assembly Monday February 22**
At our whole school assembly next week we will have a special ceremony to commission our school FIRE Carrier leaders. Mr. Colin Brooks MP will be present along with special guests from ACM (Aboriginal Catholic Ministry)
Parents and family members are warmly invited to attend this special assembly

**ICT NEWS**

This week each family will receive the Privacy Policy, Standard Collection Notice and the User Code of Conduct for 2016. We ask that you read these documents and complete the relevant information. Please return the completed Standard Collection Notice and User Code of Conduct to your child’s classroom teacher by Monday the 22nd February. If you require any further information please contact Jenny Rubira or Cris Brewer.

Cris Brewer
ICT Leader
Parent Class Assistant workshops in Literacy for Years 3-6

Assisting in the Literacy program in your child’s class is a positive and rewarding experience which allows you to observe current teaching practices and assist the class teacher and the students with their learning. This year once again we will offer a one and a half hour workshop for parents who would like to make a commitment to helping in the year 3-6 classes. Please note that if you have completed the junior training, you will be required to completed this workshop as content is different. Two session times will be offered for your convenience.

Wednesday March 9, 9:00-10:30
Tuesday of March 15, 9:00-10:30

You will be working with small groups of students while the teacher works with other groups. Your help is required on a regular basis, (weekly or fortnightly). Please note that toddlers are not permitted to accompany you. Both teachers and students benefit enormously having one or more adults in the room. Your support in the room ensures that the teacher can remain on task while the teacher is teaching.

All parent helpers are required by law to hold a current ‘Working with children’ card. These are easy to arrange. Forms are available from the post office. You are still welcome to do the training while waiting for the paper work to come through.

If you are keen to assist please indicate which time suits you and return the reply slip to school with your child by Friday February 26.

Yours sincerely

Mattie Dragonetti
Senior Literacy Leader

I (please print full name)………………………………………………………………… will be attending the Parent Helpers workshop.

My child/children are in ……………………. (class)

My contact phone number is……………………………………………………………………

Please indicate preferred times (circle one)

Tuesday 8th March Wednesday 15th March

ST DAMIAN’S CATHOLIC PARISH - 2016 LENTEN TIMETABLE

LENTEN PRAYER MEETINGS: With Pastorelle Sisters

*Wednesday Evenings: 7.30pm – 8.30pm in Dunlop Room, (17th, 24th February; 2nd, 9th, 16th & 23rd March) *except 3 March in Briglia Room

STATIONS OF THE CROSS:
Friday Evenings: 7.30-8.00pm (12th, 19th & 26th February; 11th, 18th, & 25th March – with Legion of Mary)

INDIVIDUAL RECONCILIATION (1st Rite):
Saturday evenings 5.00 – 5.30pm (Before Vigil Mass)

Friday 4th March during Holy Hour

WEEKDAY MASS TIME:
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday: 9.15am
Happy Birthday

to the following students who will celebrate their birthday:

FEBRUARY
18th
Matthew 3/4G
Luca 3/4J
Archer 1/2T
Alannah 5/6SC
19th
Tracy 1/2M
Chiara 5/6M
Madison 5/6C
Marco 3/4L
Avneet 3/4L
Oliver 3/4SZ
20th
Grace PrepB
22nd
Samantha 5/6S
23rd
Mannix 5/6M
24th
Isabella 5/6C

UNIFORM SHOP
WINTER UNIFORMS
Orders are now being taken for the winter uniform. Please place your orders soon as possible as second term is approaching quickly. Winter tunics for girls are a special order and only one order per season is placed. Manufacture of tunics takes approximately four weeks. Please place orders NO LATER THAN FRIDAY MARCH 11. Orders may be made in person on Friday mornings between 9—10am, or via the office message bin.

Thank you
Moira

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB
Orders are due back by Friday February 26. No late orders will be accepted. Please make sure you include your child’s name and class and that the correct money is enclosed.

STUDENT FREE DAY
FRIDAY FEBRUARY 26
(STAFF FIRST AID TRAINING)

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER
The school newsletter is available to access through the School Website, via email and our school app. A hard copy of the newsletter is not automatically distributed to each family. If you cannot access the newsletter by email, the school app or website and a hard copy is required, can you please send a note to your eldest child’s classroom teacher and a copy will be sent home each week. At the back of the newsletter you will find information on how to download and access the school app.
TERM ONE, DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FEBRUARY
Friday 19th Year 6 Interschool Sports
          Year 1-4 Hockey Clinics
Monday 22nd School Assembly, Reflection 5/6S, FIRE Carrier Commissioning
Tuesday 23rd Year Prep—Two information evening, 7:00pm—8:00pm
Wednesday 24th Year Three—Six information evening, 7:00pm—8:00pm
          BDSSA Swimming Carnival at Watermarc
Friday 26th Student Free Day, Staff First Aid Training
Sunday 28th Staff Commissioning and Welcoming of New Families Mass. 10:00am

MARCH
Thursday 3rd School Photos. Students to be in full summer uniform
          Parent Helper Training, 9:00am—10:00am in the Library
Friday 4th Year 6 Interschool Sports
Saturday 5th Reconciliation Presentation Mass, 5:30pm
Sunday 6th Reconciliation Presentation Mass, 10:00am
Monday 7th School Assembly, Reflection 5/6M
Tuesday 8th Parent/Teacher/Child Conferences, 2:00pm—8:00pm
Wednesday 9th Parent/Teacher/Child Conferences, 3:30pm—5:30pm
Thursday 10th Parent helpers Training, 9:00am—10:00am in the Library
Friday 11th Year 6 Interschool Sports
Monday 14th Labour Day Public Holiday
Tuesday 15th Preps commence full time
Wednesday 16th St Damian’s Open Day
Thursday 17th Parent helper Training, 9:00am—10:00am in the Library
Friday 18th Year 6 Interschool Sports
Saturday 19th P&F BBQ at Bunnings Thomastown
Monday 21st School Assembly, Reflection 5/6KW
Tuesday 22nd Sacrament of Reconciliation, 7:30pm
Thursday 24th Last Day of Term 1, students dismissed at 1:30pm

APRIL
Monday 11th Students return for Term 2
Enrolments for Year 7, 2016 in Catholic Schools
A reminder that if you are enrolling your child into a Catholic Secondary College in 2017, enrolments close on Friday February 26. Any queries should be made directly to the College concerned.

DANCE, HIP HOP, ACRO, LYRICAL TAP & SINGING
ALL AGES - Toddlers - Adults

ENROL NOW!
Visit www.dancestreet.com.au for NEW timetable
RACHEL DUNNE FUGA (D.F.T.A) – Principal
Former Australian Champion 25 years of teaching expertise

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