ASH WEDNESDAY, LENT AND THE PARISH SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

As we received the Ashes for Lent last Wednesday, our attention turns toward our own relationship with God. Please take time to read our Lenten Faith Information Sheet to inform and inspire. In the broader life of the Church, Lent is a time of preparing new candidates for receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and the Eucharist. Over the weekend, Father Peter worked with many candidates who were commissioned at the masses on Saturday and Sunday. The Hobart Diocesan Guidelines state that Sacramental preparation is required to be family centered, parish based and school supported. In this way, people who are being welcomed into the faith have support at each level in their community. If there are any parents or students interested in receiving the Sacraments, please contact Father Peter O’Loughlin, Parish Priest, at bel.lincathparish@bigpond.com or at the Parish Office number on 6245 0501. Any student who wishes to find out more can ask their Religious Education teacher, or myself at any time, for further information.

CARITAS: PROJECT COMPASSION 2014

The season of Lent began with Ash Wednesday on March 5th. It also marks the beginning of the annual Caritas Australia Project Compassion appeal. This year’s Project Compassion stories are about our desire for a full and beautiful life within the surroundings of home. Not just a house to live in, but a life filled with certainty, free from the burden of poverty with access to food, water, education, healthcare and shelter. Donations to Project Compassion allow Caritas Australia, the Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development, to work towards this creation of a more just and fair world for whole communities.

Project Compassion, Week 1, brings you the story of Maristely
An advocacy program in São Paulo, Brazil, enables favela (city slum) residents to gain legal deeds for their land, as well as securing access to basic services. A youth empowerment program is enabling young people from the favelas, like Maristely, to work for justice so that peace, rather than violence, rules the streets where they live. Your donation to Caritas Australia’s Project Compassion provides young people like Maristely with the opportunity to become leaders for justice.

Project Compassion, Week 2, brings you the story of Deng
For Deng in South Sudan, the cycle of poverty and disability was made worse with the civil war, which led him and his family to flee their village and live in the bush for many years. Deng and his family are rebuilding their lives through their participation in a Caritas Australia food security program. Your donation to Project Compassion can help individuals like Deng to rebuild their lives post-conflict.

This year, there will be Project Compassion boxes in each Home Room, at the Canteen, for students to contribute to the work of Caritas. You can also donate online via the website at www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion. Our major school-based fundraising event will be the MacKillop Idol on Friday 11th April.

MACKILLOP IDOL: THE CALL!

Do you have talent? Have you got the voice? That x or y factor? It’s time to get the band together, polish off that stand-up comedy act, miming, juggling, dancing, singing, performing, synchronised basket weaving. Mac Idol wants you! Who can beat Brooke and Zoe? Register with Mr Sean Priest now to be in it!

YEAR 8 RETREATS

Year 8 Retreats will happen next Monday 24th and Tuesday 25th March. The famous Greek philosopher, Socrates, once boldly stated that, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” We are unable to grow towards a better understanding of our true nature unless we take time to examine and reflect upon our lives. At MacKillop Catholic College, the Retreat programme strives to help students appreciate the need for time out and reflection if they are to grow spiritually and personally. The Year 8 Retreats explore the theme of identity, challenging students to reflect upon how they view their world. Students will also begin to reflect upon the role they are growing into as young men and women.

Organisation of Retreats: Monday 24th March: 8 Red, 8 White Tuesday 25th March: 8 Blue, 8 Green, 8 Gold

Students will be bussed to the venue, and are not allowed to be dropped off at or picked up from the day by parents or friends. Sport uniform is to be worn and students are to bring pencil cases, morning tea and a water bottle in their bags.

Students are given the opportunity to have a shared bought lunch of fish and chips. Students will choose a group of between 3 – 6 lunch buddies. All students will need to bring a small amount of money on the day ($5) for fish and chips, and lunch will be ordered on the morning of the Retreat. Students with food allergies can bring a packed lunch for the day. Our Retreat Team looks forward to facilitating an excellent day for your sons and daughters.
What is Lent?

Lent is a 40 day season of preparation before Easter. It is a time where we are asked to reflect on our lives and on our relationship with God and others. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and finishes during Easter week. The forty days are symbolic of the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert.

*Lenten Fast Facts*

* The Liturgical color for Lent is purple.
* During Lent we are asked to support the work of Caritas through our contributions to Project Compassion.
* We do not say the “Alleluia” verse in Masses during Lent

The Three Aspects of Lent

**PRAYER:** During Lent, we are asked to try to find time in our busy lives to stop, reflect and pray.

- **FASTING:** In the past, Catholics were expected to abstain or give up meat every Friday during Lent. Now, there are only two days when this is required: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The whole idea of fasting and making sacrifices or “giving things up” is a way to try to simplify our lives a little and to discover what truly matters.

- **ALMSGIVING:** During Lent we “give alms” or donate money to those in need. One way schools do this is through Project Compassion. Each classroom has a Project Compassion box where students can support children in other countries, perhaps by giving up some of their own coins. Families could also have a Project Compassion box at home to remind them of their commitment to those less fortunate.

Living Lent in your family - some suggestions:

* Pray as a family - at mealtimes, at bedtime.
* Place a candle/cross on the table or in a special place in your home.
* Encourage your children to “give up” something or to help others.
* Contribute as a family to Project Compassion or other charities.

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Faith Information Sheet 1, 19th March, 2014. For more information, please contact Mrs Linda Pollard, Director of Ministry, on 6245 0099 or Fr Peter O'Loughlin, Parish Priest, Bellerive, on 6245 0501.