

Catholic Education

Today



MELBOURNE
ARCHDIOCESE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Working
together

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Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor

Lord, when we listen with your ears we hear:
the bush grown more silent,
the birdsong less vibrant,
the stream's sluggish ripple.
Have mercy and open our ears.

Lord, when we look with your eyes we see:
the soil depleted,
the sky smudged,
the oceans rubbished and the great currents slowed.
Have mercy and help us to see.

Send your Spirit upon us Lord to renew our sight,
to restore our hearing,
and to reclaim your reign of justice for all people
and peace for creation.

Amen

*Excerpt taken from Prayer Card: Cry of the Earth,
Cry of the Poor from the Australian Catholic Bishops
Conference (2021)*



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views and discussion designed for parents.

Editorial

Term 4 brings to an end another challenging
year for Catholic education, and for our state
and nation more broadly.

Our principals, teachers and other school staff have
again overcome the challenges presented by the
COVID-19 pandemic and continued to deliver a high-
quality Catholic education.

I am grateful for their resilience and dedication, and
thank each of them for their hard work through the
year educating, nurturing, protecting and supporting
each child and young person in our schools.

None of this would have been possible without
you. On behalf of Catholic education and principals,
teachers and school staff across the Archdiocese,
thank you for your support over the last year.

I would also like to offer my congratulations to our
Year 12 students, who have recently completed their
exams. As they move into the next phase of their
journey, whether in further study or the workplace,
we look forward to watching these young people
become active leaders and contributors to our society.

The easing of restrictions over the last two months
has seen our Catholic learning communities regain
their vibrancy, as their classrooms and hallways once
again echo with the sounds of study, laughter, debate
and discussion.

They are sounds of hope and, with the promise
of fewer restrictions ahead of us, they fill us with
anticipatory delight for what lies ahead.

St John the Baptist felt that same sense of
anticipation in the weeks leading up to Jesus' birth,
which we will soon celebrate.

Advent is from the Latin word *adventus* or 'coming'.
It is a season of preparation, as we get ready for
the birth of Jesus, and of hope, peace, love and
joy. By reminding us of what Christ called us to be –
'a bright and shining light' in this world – Advent fills
us with a renewed purpose to live a life characterised
by all that is beautiful, good and true.

I wish everyone in our schools a merry Christmas and
happy New Year. To the students leaving our schools,
I wish them every success as they move on to further
study and into the workforce. We hope that we have
provided them with the tools to make a thoughtful
and faith-filled contribution to society.

Next year, *Catholic Education Today* will come to you
in a new format via your inbox. We look forward to
celebrating more stories, advice and insights from our
vibrant community of schools. ✦

Be the light

Our schools offer many opportunities to live out the Catholic values of compassion, love, justice and service. The many student volunteers who participate in social justice and outreach programs find that being of service to others and to the community are important aspects of living out their schools' motto and vision.

Students from two secondary colleges, **Avila College**, **Mount Waverley**, and **Mazenod College**, **Mulgrave**, explain why they choose to serve.

At Avila College, students are called to follow in the footsteps of St Teresa of Avila and Nano Nagle, to be hands and feet of Christ, to 'be the light' and to minister to others in our community.

'My proudest achievement was cutting my hair to be made into a wig for cancer patients that had lost their own hair due to chemotherapy', said Monica. 'In the process I raised \$3,000 for the Variety Hair with Heart foundation.'

For Amelia, singing and performing music at residential aged care facilities are as important to her as they are to the audience. 'For me, volunteering is an eye-opening experience and the smiles on the faces of the residents are so heartwarming.'

Ebony, who volunteers with a local environment club, recognises that volunteering isn't always an easy option but it brings its own rewards. 'At times it can be challenging, but it is such an important thing to do, and I love making a difference in the community and to our environment.'

At Mazenod College, students attempt to follow St Eugene de Mazenod's example of standing with and serving the most abandoned in our community and beyond.

Rosies Oblate Youth Mission is an outreach program for the homeless in Melbourne, with a focus on being 'friends on the street' every Wednesday and Friday night around Flinders Street. Rosies offers people a comfortable and safe environment in which they belong.

Students at the college look forward to being in Year 12 so that they can volunteer at Rosies. All Year 12



“ I love making a difference in the community and to our environment. ”

students are offered the opportunity to be part of the mission by adding themselves to a volunteer roster for Friday evenings throughout the year.

'Volunteering gives me a sense of fulfillment that I am contributing to something that is bigger than me and that I am helping others who are less fortunate than I am', said James. 'Volunteering at Rosies is a great way that we can practise the lessons taught to us at every weekly Mass and in every Religious Education class.'

'It's really all about perspective and about building connections with others which is really fulfilling', said Anthony. 'Ensuring that every person feels valued, seen and loved is something that we may often take for granted.'



Working together

As a child's 'first and most important educators' (John Paul II), parents are essential partners in ensuring our students receive a high-quality Catholic education. By supervising homework, answering questions and guiding the application of new skills, in prayer and with wisdom, through witness and by the example of lifelong learning, parents ensure Catholic schools can give every student the best education possible.

“Parents make contributions to the life of a parish and school community through volunteering, attending school events and working with teachers.”

Alongside this important work, parents make contributions to the life of a parish and school community through volunteering, attending school events and working with teachers.

Across the Archdiocese, parents are also putting up their hands to join the new School Advisory Councils that are being created for Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) schools.

School Advisory Councils are advisory bodies that will begin their work in all MACS schools in 2022 as part of the MACS governance framework. Tailored to each unique school community, they will provide a forum for consultation and participation for parish and school communities, ensuring that schools are accountable for the decisions they make.

As Archbishop Peter A Comensoli said, these School Advisory Councils 'are avenues for parents to contribute to their children's school and build up one another'.

The important responsibilities that School Advisory Councils will assume include:

- providing advice to the school principal
- having representation on principal appointment panels
- providing advice around school improvement plans, master plans and school budgets
- working towards the strategy, vision and education aims of the school.

By serving on a School Advisory Council, members of the parish and school communities will be making an important contribution to their school's strategic, educational, financial and spiritual development.



Role of the School Advisory Council

(excerpt from *Working Together in Mission: Charter for parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne*)

As an advisory body, the school advisory council develops processes of consultation that are an important expression of the educational relationship that exists between parents, schools, parishes and the wider parish community to support all students in the enhancement of their outcomes.

MACS will provide support to school advisory councils such as policy guidance and templates for their work, but will not be responsible for their activities, utilising principles of subsidiarity and solidarity.

Key responsibilities:

- School advisory councils are an important vehicle for consultation between parish, school and parents.
- They do not share in governance responsibilities, but act as a connection point between the wider school community and school leaders.
- They are an important point of liaison with parish pastoral councils.
- Through this forum, parent representatives share their wisdom with, and offer support to, principals and the strategic interests of the school according to their terms of reference.

“Volunteering as a member of a School Advisory Council is my way of turning up for my children.”

Given these important responsibilities, MACS has produced a range of supporting materials to help parents thinking of nominating for a School Advisory Council to understand the role and what will be expected.

These documents include the *Working Together in Mission* charter – developed in partnership with stakeholders – and the *School Advisory Council Manual*. They are an invaluable guide to making a contribution through participation in a School Advisory Council.

These documents, along with more information on School Advisory Councils, including [a video](https://governance.melbourne) from Archbishop Peter, are available on the website <https://governance.melbourne>.

If you are interested in joining a School Advisory Council, please contact your child's school. ✝



Matthew Williams, parent and member of a School Advisory Council, St Macartan's School, Mornington



I am privileged to have been a member of the School Advisory Council of St Macartan's School on the beautiful Mornington Peninsula, for the past two years.

Why did I volunteer to be part of this team? I say team, because being part of a School Advisory Council is to be part of a team. A key team in the life of a school. Each team member has their own education or community experiences, and unique skill sets that they bring to the council. With a consistent thread, that all members have a shared common goal of what is best for the students. It is this last point that especially drew me to volunteer as a School Advisory Council member.

To have an active parent voice in the story of my children's school and a voice in what is best for the education of young people in my community. I believe that 'turning up' is a key part of being a parent. I enjoy turning up in my own time to attend School Advisory Council meetings, building relationships and friendships with other members of my children's school community.

Volunteering as a member of a School Advisory Council is my way of turning up for my children, highlighting to them that I believe that their education is important.



Transitioning from primary to secondary school

Over the past two years, Victorian students have demonstrated their resilience and ability to adapt to new challenges with remote learning.

But there are other challenges our students face that are almost as old as schools themselves – and one of the most important of these is the transition from primary to secondary education.

This transition, when students move from Year 6 in primary school to Year 7 in secondary, generally involves moving to a new school. Year 7 students are very much the ‘new kids on the block’ and this often takes some time to adjust and get used to.

It’s a transition that marks the start of a period of growth, personal development and learning that sees children become teenagers making subject decisions that will influence their further education and careers; one parents play a crucial role in navigating.

It is beneficial if parents prepare their children when transitioning to what is a very different environment, both in terms of the curriculum and how the school and classrooms are structured and managed.

Unlike primary school where children spend most of their time with one teacher in the one room, in secondary school students will have different teachers for particular subjects and will be expected to move around the school.

Cultivating good study habits and being willing to engage with your child about what they are learning are helpful, as is taking part in school events like parent-teacher interviews and school fetes.

One of the most important and beneficial things parents can provide for their children is a worthwhile, productive and enjoyable school experience. While there are many influences that will impact on a student’s journey, one of the key factors is the various transition stages. As such, it is important parents assist their children by engaging with their child’s school or future school to find out what arrangements are in place. +



Marian College, Sunshine West, employs a number of strategies to inform and assist both parents and students in the transition from Year 6 to the first year of secondary school.

As detailed by Vicky Casey, the school’s Community Development Officer, these include:

- an interview with prospective students and their parents
- a school tour
- the school’s Transition Officer speaking at local primary schools
- a Year 7 orientation day for students beginning the following year.

The school’s rationale for adopting such strategies is to ‘create an initial positive relationship with students and families and to minimise the level of apprehension that they may have’, said Ms Casey. It is also seen as important ‘to build community partnerships’ and ‘to engage families as active partners in their daughters’ education’.

“Cultivating good study habits and being willing to engage with your child about what they are learning are helpful.”



Strong communication, regular connection

Kylie Power is deputy principal of **Iona College Geelong, Charlemont**, which opened in 2020 and now has Year 7 and 8 students, growing towards Year 12 each year. Her role is a broad one with a strong focus on wellbeing, as she has taken a lead role guiding her school community safely through the COVID-19 pandemic.



What is the general approach to student wellbeing at the college?

At Iona College, we have staff who are passionate about student wellbeing and understand that wellbeing is everybody's responsibility. It is not a standalone curriculum, but an embedded whole-school commitment to the promotion of the wellbeing of staff, students and the wider Iona community.

The curriculum is a vital part of what we offer in the wellbeing space, but only a small part of what we do to support students at Iona. We aim to embed wellbeing into our culture and into all learning domains. We aim to enhance academic improvement and want our students to be ready to change the world!

How have families responded to remote learning?

Our families have been very supportive during the pandemic and remote learning. Staff remained calm despite so many new demands, and as a result the students and parents remained calm too.

We pride ourselves on working in partnership with our parents and, by keeping our regular communication open, it has allowed them to feel connected even when we physically couldn't be together.

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Wellbeing is everybody's responsibility.

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How have wellbeing initiatives supported current and incoming students?

Building a positive culture from the ground up is an exciting endeavour. There is no doubt that the pandemic has forced us to be decisive in our decisions, often meaning we must pivot and change direction or focus with short notice. I think this has allowed our principal, Damian McKew, and myself to think deeply about the type of school we want to create. While the staff and students were working from home, we were able to dedicate time to think about our plan in new and creative ways.

The students have been amazing. They truly are adaptable and resilient. I have been very proud of our connections, strong relationships and the fun we have been able to have while they were learning remotely. Strong communication and regular connection have allowed them to transition from primary school to secondary school, and from remote to onsite learning with minimal fuss. +



#theSTEMproblem project

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) and Monash University are teaming up to further unlock the power of problem-based approaches to learning for students.

A collaborative project – #theSTEMproblem – is aimed at building teacher capacity to create challenging, authentic and exciting STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) learning opportunities for their students.

The project, which commenced earlier this year, will combine the expertise of MACS teachers with university academics to draw together key principles for successful problem-based learning models, and ultimately deliver a best practice teaching framework that can be shared across all schools.

'This is an extremely exciting project for Catholic education', MACS Acting Executive Director, Dr Paul Sharkey said.

'Our schools and teachers are already highly skilled and invested in problem-solving approaches to learning. However, by combining the expertise of Monash University with that of our teachers, this project will further build capability in this critical area of teaching practice.'

Dr Sharkey said the project will explore and discover optimal classroom environments that develop learners' capabilities to seek and respond to challenges, think critically and creatively, and work collaboratively – all central to future personal and professional success, and effective citizenship in the modern world.

'By explicitly focusing on further enhancing the quality of STEM learning and teaching across our system, the project aligns with our strategic intent to support the full flourishing of all learners.'



‘Problem-based learning also fits well with our Catholic school ethos. Addressing authentic problems situated in issues of justice is a great motivator for our students, and STEM projects are great vehicles for engaging with the various social and environmental issues faced by the community and the planet.

‘Importantly, this work supports our response to Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, along with this year’s Australian Catholic Bishops Conference social justice statement, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, supporting the *Laudato Si’* Goals and challenging future generations to live sustainably’, Dr Sharkey said.

Teachers from five Catholic primary schools and six secondary colleges in the Archdiocese have opted to participate in #theSTEMproblem project.

Learning and Teaching Leader at **St Peter’s School, Epping**, Melissa Gatt, is looking forward to working with colleagues and academics on the project.

‘STEM should be for every student, in every classroom, every day’, she said. ‘As teaching practitioners, it is vital we continuously work to optimise the way we approach curriculum and problem-based learning. Within a STEM lens is certainly a powerful way to do so.

‘A problem-based approach is not just “another thing or fad” in education. It consistently takes students beyond just the subject matter knowledge and content, and challenges them to tackle real-world problems using skills and capabilities – to really “be” an engineer or a scientist, for example.

‘Problem-solving approaches also provide an authentic context for developing critical and creative thinking, as well as teamwork and collaboration skills, and opportunities for each student to bring their diverse strengths and ideas.

‘It is deeply rich learning, including “celebrating”, reflecting on and reviewing when a solution fails or doesn’t live up to expectations’, Ms Gatt said.

Teacher Colin Chapman from **Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Braybrook**, says the project partners are also conscious of the challenges of engaging underprivileged students and those from diverse backgrounds, such as refugees.

‘This diversity challenges us as practitioners to develop skills in understanding what authentic tasks mean to different cohorts of students’, he said.

The teachers will work collaboratively with Monash University academics to develop and share expertise as they co-construct a shared understanding of best practice teaching and learning approaches.

The project will produce evidence-informed exemplars of powerful, problem-based learning practice in STEM education (Years 5–10), which will also help develop a common teacher professional language and shared understanding.

Funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Research Council, the collaborative phase of the project commenced in mid-September.

Queensland counterparts Brisbane Catholic Education and The University of Queensland are also participating in the project. ✦



STEM should be for every student, in every classroom, every day.



Participating Catholic schools

Primary:

- Clairvaux Catholic School, Belmont
- St Fidelis’ School, Moreland
- St Jude the Apostle School, Scoresby
- St Paul the Apostle, Doreen
- St Peter’s School, Epping

Secondary:

- Avila College, Mount Waverley
- Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Braybrook
- Kolbe Catholic College, Greenvale Lakes
- St Columba’s College, Essendon
- St Monica’s College, Epping
- Thomas Carr College, Tarneit

World Teachers Day

World Teachers Day, developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is an annual celebration of the teaching profession. While internationally the day is held on 5 October, in Australia it is marked on the last Friday of October.



This year, UNESCO's theme for World Teachers Day was 'Teachers at the heart of education recovery', in recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and teachers.

In Victoria, the past two years have been challenging and have seen our teachers show incredible resilience, flexibility and innovation during extended periods of remote learning, all the while supporting our students, from our youngest in Foundation to our Year 12 students sitting exams and preparing to complete their education.

The Victorian Department of Education and Training notes that: 'This year, Victorian teachers have continued to show their resilience, leadership and adaptability throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers have adapted their learning environments, supported their students and school communities, and continue to share their knowledge with students across the state.'

'World Teachers Day 2021 is an opportunity to celebrate the teachers who are making, or have made, an impact on our lives.'

Students from a number of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) schools were keen to express their gratitude to their teachers for all their support this year with a [video message](#).

Orlando Tsui,
Year 8 student,
**Aquinas College,
Ringwood**



World Teachers Day is a day to recognise and celebrate the incredible contributions teachers have made not just here in Victoria, but around the world. Our teachers help us to learn and guide us through our time at school, which has been particularly challenging for our whole community during the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning.

For me, my teachers' leadership and encouragement have positively influenced my growth as one of our college's student leaders. Teachers at Aquinas College have nurtured my leadership skills by believing in me and supporting my ideas and work. They have inspired me to be a leader who listens, understands and who is a good role model to others.

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They have inspired me to be a leader who listens, understands and who is a good role model to others.

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Parent leadership in Catholic learning communities

Catholic School Parents Victoria (CSPV) members are dedicated parent leaders who contribute their time and perspective to their school communities, and who also want to make a difference for all families across Victoria. They recognise that parent contribution to education is essential and has been for 200 years of Catholic education in Australia.

Without parent leadership in Catholic communities, many of our schools wouldn't be thriving as they are today. The many volunteers who put their hand up to help with events, fundraising, community building and supporting school leaders and their vision, through school boards and advisory councils, have made a difference in the communities they have served.

CSPV members share what it means for them to be a leader in their school communities:

I have always been an active member of my daughter's school communities – at both primary and secondary level. It has been a great way to stay connected to the school, support their learning and contribute to discussions and opportunities.

This active leadership has provided a range of wonderful learning opportunities and personal development. These skills have allowed me to make a valuable contribution.

Being a parent representative on the school board has been one of the most fulfilling jobs that I have volunteered to do. Being involved with the decision makers of the school has given me an insight into the goals the school aims to achieve.

By Catholic School
Parents Victoria



It has been a great way to stay connected to the school, support their learning and contribute to discussions and opportunities.



Attending the various meetings has given me confidence in the school management and it also provides me with clarification to some of the questions that, as a parent, I would like to know. For example, understanding the various sources of help that students can obtain, the way the curriculum is taught, the vision of the school, the use of funds, etc.

Schools are very special places and when working in partnership with families they provide even richer opportunities for our students. CSPV encourages parents to take an active leadership role in your school – whatever that looks like for you, and to walk alongside teachers and the school community to support all students and their learning.

CSPV supports and advocates for parent engagement in learning and parent leadership in Catholic communities, offering leadership opportunities for parent representatives and sitting council members to make a difference at a school, system, state and national level.

Visit cspv.catholic.edu.au for more information. †

How informed are you when it comes to supporting your child's learning?

Catholic School Parents Victoria are a team of passionate parents of children in primary and secondary Catholic schools. As volunteer delegates we contribute parent perspective in education at a system, state and national level under the pillars of Parent Engagement and Parent Leadership in:



We achieve this through establishing relationships with critical partners in education, sourcing parent feedback via school representatives and CSPV parent forums, writing submissions for government and other bodies.

CSPV promotes Catholic education, parent engagement and parent leadership through forums and workshops, committees and policy development groups as well as communication with parents and schools.

CSPV invite you to subscribe to our newsletter, follow our Facebook page, visit our website or enquire about becoming a council delegate so you can be more informed to support children through Catholic education.

Visit www.cspv.catholic.edu.au/join-us
or contact our Executive Officer on 03 9267 0458.



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ENCOUNTERING THE SACRED THROUGH

Spiritual conversation and prayer

Catholic schools actively cultivate a sense of the sacredness of each day, where God is present, ready to meet us in ordinary moments. The *Encountering the Sacred* initiative from Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) is supporting schools to cultivate openness to encounter and a sense of the sacred through Catholic prayer practices.

Across the Archdiocese of Melbourne, schools are exploring what it means to be strong and vibrant in prayer life, in relationship with God and in Catholic identity. In this edition, we look at how **Mount St Joseph Girls' College, Altona**, is embedding spiritual conversation and prayer at the school.

Supporting authentic prayer life is a vital way to strengthen the Catholic identity and mission of our schools, ensuring prayer is relevant, authentic and meaningful. One way to support a culture of prayer is to focus on the formation of staff and students. To this end, Mount Saint Joseph Girls' College has made this a key priority for the school.

Director of Catholic Identity, Andrea Grant, said, 'Our goal [was] to deepen the practice of spiritual conversation and prayer with the Stewardship Team (senior leadership), with the hope of building spiritual literacy.'

'We are seeking to grow and embed our practices of staff formation, starting with the most senior leaders. Our hope is that this will then expand across the staff and ultimately the students, embedding support structures in the school to allow time and space for spirituality and prayer.'

ESSENCE

JAZMIN, YEAR 12

CAROLINE CHISHOLM CATHOLIC COLLEGE, BRAYBROOK

“ Supporting authentic prayer life is a vital way to strengthen the Catholic identity and mission of our schools. ”



This goal is an important aspect of building a culture of prayer at the school, so the team is tracking evidence of success to affirm a shift in practice. Ms Grant said, 'Our evidence to date is entirely qualitative ... Nonetheless, the experiences have been profound and have offered a different experience of prayer from what the Stewardship Team usually shares.'

'There are varying degrees of experience with formation in prayer within the team and yet all team members appear to be growing in willingness to share and engage with the process.'

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools, the community's desire to keep this project alive is testimony to their commitment to the importance of prayer and prayer life.

To further enhance their work in building a culture of prayer, Ms Grant and her team are discerning their next steps: 'There is a clear sense that as a Stewardship Team we must continue engaging in formation together ... our plan is also to extend the model to other leadership teams in the college, so the question is: what might that look like?' ✝



Olympics at St Paul's

The Olympic spirit filled **St Paul's School, Coburg**, when Prep to Year 2 staff and students held their own version of the games in August. 'The Olympic Games have been an excellent opportunity for our younger students to demonstrate and refine their learning of the event, as well as celebrate its excitement and spirit', principal Maria Mercuri said.

'They all demonstrated great sportsmanship and came dressed in the colours of the country they chose to represent.'



Reading time with the principal

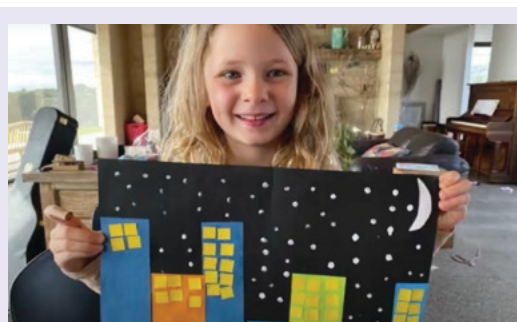
For half an hour each night during lockdown, students at **Our Lady of Perpetual Succour School, Surrey Hills**, had a special online story time with principal Annie Engellenner.

'The children are taken beyond the chaos of the world outside and given the opportunity to journey to a new land, enjoy an exciting adventure, build their imagination, and develop vital language and listening skills', said Annie, stressing how invaluable routines can be when times are unpredictable.'

2021 Telstra ARIA Music Teacher Award

Zoë Barry, a music teacher at **Sacred Heart School, Fitzroy**, was announced the winner of the 2021 Telstra ARIA (Australian Recording Industry Association) Music Teacher Award.

Zoë leads the school's Harmony in Strings program to empower her students and build confidence in music. The growth in music at the school has seen the student instrumentalists performing at conferences and festivals, as well as with professional musicians.'



Celebrating families at Our Lady of Fatima

Support from families to students during remote learning was the focus of the Family Week assembly at **Our Lady of Fatima School, Rosebud**. Students shared photos to accompany a special poem which celebrated the challenges and opportunities of remote learning.

'Family Week was a way of letting our students know that their teachers and families are all behind them', said principal Patrika Rowley. 'Our Catholic community has come together to support every learner during this time.'



Olyroo hero

He didn't make it to the Olympic podium, but there was much cheering for Australia's soccer captain Thomas Deng, a former student of **Catholic Regional College, St Albans**, and **Catholic Regional College, Sydenham**, and South Sudanese refugee. 'We are very proud of Thomas', said Catholic Regional College, St Albans, principal Christina Utri.

'He is a terrific young man, a wonderful role model ... always humble and unassuming, and a natural leader who is doing great things on and off the pitch.'



Mini Vinnies make a difference

The Mini Vinnies social justice group at **St Brigid's School, Gisborne**, made a difference for the local community and inspired even younger students to do the same.

Following the Feast of the Sacred Heart Mass, the school held its yearly collection of non-perishable goods to support vulnerable families in the local community. The school community donated almost 500 items of food, as well as making financial donations which allowed the Mini Vinnies to purchase more goods. +

Buon appetito

Students at **St Macartan's School, Mornington**, found a delicious way to develop their Italian skills, with Year 3 and 4 classes using produce from the school's garden and eggs from its chickens to make their own Italian food.

'The children greet me in Italian and, being a Catholic school, we say grace and make the sign of the cross before eating', Languages and Kitchen Garden teacher, Kelly Ruffell said. The project was featured in Italian language newspaper *Il Globo*. +



Junior Lord Mayor

Students from Catholic schools dominated Melbourne's Junior Lord Mayor competition, with four of the five finalists coming from the sector: Amelia Hemphill and Isla Carpenter from **Genazzano FCJ College, Kew**; Alexia Kritikides from **Loreto Mandeville Hall, Toorak**; and Joel Crothers from **St Mark's School, Dingley**.

'This is a wonderful leadership opportunity for Joel, and a great example to all of our students and aspiring leaders', said St Mark's School principal Debbie Darvell. +



The future is bright for Emma

Mater Christi College, Belgrave, Year 12 student and captain Emma Gerber has a bright future ahead of her after becoming one of only 20 students awarded the Hansen Scholarship for her University of Melbourne undergraduate studies beginning in 2022.

'This scholarship is a wonderful acknowledgment', said Emma. 'It's great to be recognised in this way, but it's also a tribute to the teachers, as well as my family and friends who have supported me.' +

Future Leaders Awards

Thomas Carr College, Tarneit, Year 12 student, Shane Nicole Villegas, has become one of only seven students nationally to win a Future Leaders Future Justice Award for leadership and initiative on intergenerational equity.

Shane Nicole helped establish the Vinnies Conference at Thomas Carr College and has worked with the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Missionary Society of St Paul and the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry. Two students from **St Columba's College, Essendon**, were also recognised: Annalise Donnelly and Lara Yildiz. +



Three cheers for learning support officers

While most of us were learning from home during lockdown, learning support officers (LSOs) were providing a valuable service so that all students could continue to thrive.

At **Holy Family School, Mount Waverley**, the LSOs were on site every day, working with students with more complex learning needs. 'The support of our learning support staff is unique and incredible', principal Julie David said. Australian Teacher Aide Appreciation Week was celebrated at the end of August. ✦



Art prize winners

Young artists from **Christ the Priest Catholic Primary School, Caroline Springs**, have captured a People's Choice Award in the Zart Art National Student Art Prize 2021. Over 4,000 students participated in the competition to create an artwork using the theme 'Our Celebration of Australia'.

The students' artwork, *Our Community at Caroline Springs*, won the People's Choice Award for Primary Students (Years 4 to 6) earning a \$250 voucher for art supplies. ✦



Teacher Aide of the Year finalist

Julie Buick, an education support officer at **Kolbe Catholic College, Greenvale Lakes**, was the Victorian finalist in this year's Australian Teacher Aide of the Year Awards.

Nominated by the college's Learning Support Coordinator, Jane Wenlock, Julie was one of eight finalists from across the country. According to Jane, 'Julie is a valuable member of their team, who works with some of their most vulnerable students. She has a true love of assisting those students who find learning very difficult'. ✦

New school's signs of faith

At **Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Mickleham**, the signs and symbols of our Catholic faith being incorporated into the buildings has provided a very special moment.

'When the cross appeared as part of the junior building, it was clear to all of us that we're building something very special here', said Mark Miatello, foundation principal. 'During uncertain times, this has been a beacon of light for all of the students and their families who will be part of this school in just a few months.' ✦



A new look for St Lawrence of Brindisi

St Lawrence of Brindisi Catholic Primary School, Weir Views, unveiled its logo ahead of the first students beginning next year. 'Our logo was developed following significant consultation with our parent and parish community, and reflects their aspirations and vision for our school', said foundation principal Bill Hill.

'The colour represents creativity, wisdom and peace, which will be critical principles in the culture of our school.' ✦



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