



MOTHER TERESA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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NEWSLETTER

11th December 2023,

*"In loving one another through our works,
we bring an increase of grace and a growth in divine love." - Mother Teresa*

To All In Our Learning Community,

The frenzy associated with Christmas has certainly begun. Finding a parking spot in shopping centres is becoming a great challenge and making a reservation for a quick catch up before Christmas is near impossible. A number of local homes are aglow with Christmas lights, reindeers and the odd inflatable Santa. In some homes including my own I am sure you will find a nativity scene. Our family nativity scene is from the Willow Tree collection, it has traditional figures and we setup it up in the same spot each year. When the madness of Christmas is over we carefully pack it away in the polystyrene packaging ensuring no pieces are broken.

In recent days I have been confronted by my own lack of mindfulness as I pass by the nativity scene in our home. This has been brought about by the reflections and actions of Lutheran pastor, Rev. Dr. Munthher Ishaq. While I am attuned to the horrors of war and innocent loss of life in Gaza I had not reflected on the connection to Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus we are to celebrate in just over 10 days' time. The following reflection is from Munthher Ishaq and the image from his Church.

The Art and Theology blog, sharing contemporary religious artworks states, 'Away in a manger is the customary place for baby Jesus to lay, but this year, the nativity scene at a church in the occupied West Bank placed a figure of baby Jesus laying in the rubble'. Lutheran pastor, Rev Dr. Munthher Ishaq says:



Crèche, December 2023, Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church, Bethlehem. Photo: Munthher Isaac.

"Christmas celebrations are cancelled this year, for it's impossible to celebrate Christmas when our people in Gaza are going through a genocide. Usually it's Jesus in the manger, surrounded by the shepherds, surrounded by the holy family, Joseph and Mary, and the Magi who came from the East. Here we want to say that it's as if they are looking for Jesus in the midst of rubble.

We wanted to send a message to the world, a message that while the whole world is celebrating Christmas in festive ways, here in Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, where Christmas originated from this is what Christmas looks like for us.

Christmas is the solidarity of God with those who are oppressed, with those who are suffering, and if Jesus is to be born again this time, this year he will be born in Gaza under the rubble in solidarity with the people of Gaza. Our hope is in our faith. Our hope is in our resilience. So while Christmas celebrations are cancelled, Christmas prayers are not cancelled. And maybe when we look at the image of Jesus under the rubble, we see a light of hope and life coming out of destruction, light coming out of death."

It is indeed my hope that as a Catholic Dialogue School we are open to see the life that can come from destruction and death, a hope that is made visible through the life death and resurrection celebrated at Easter time. There is of course no Easter without the birth of Jesus and his life death and resurrection. What's your thinking?

Today marks my final newsletter as principal of the Mother Teresa learning community. As we enter the Christmas season I extend my blessing to all families and thank you for your ongoing support of our learning community.

Every blessing & farewell

Chris

This Week's Happenings

Monday 11th December

Tuesday 12th December

Professional Learning – School Organisation

Wednesday 13th December

End of Year Mass 12.30pm

Professional Learning – School Organisation

Thursday 14th December

Year 5/6 Bowling Excursion & Pizza lunch

Friday 15th December

Whole School Prayer 1.00pm

Term 4 Concludes at 1.30pm

End of Year Whole School Mass

Our End of Year whole school Mass will take place this **Wednesday 13th December at 12.30pm** at Mother Teresa Primary School. All welcome.

At our End of Year Whole School Mass we will take the opportunity to farewell Mr Reed. Light refreshments will follow the Mass. For catering purpose please indicate if you are attending via the Audri App – “*RSVP for light refreshments*”.

Farewell

We will farewell the following staff at the end of 2023:

Miss Sajantha Santhiapillai who is jointing the St Damian’s learning community,
Mr. Michael Richardson who is joining the St Robert’s learning community, and
Mr Reed who is joining the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.

We wish these staff well as they leave us and thank them for their contribution to our learning community during their time with us.

2024 Books Packs, Fees and Levies

Book Packs

A flier regarding Book Packs for 2024 has been distributed. Please refer to our webpage if you have misplaced yours. <https://www.motherteresa.catholic.edu.au/enrolment-information/fees-levies/> The take-home book boxes are no longer available through the Bookpack and will need to be purchased through the school. They are \$10.

School Fees & Levies 2024

The family school fee in 2024 is \$1,722 (concession applies to eligible families). The levy per student will remain at \$ 312

Please note the student levy is payable by Friday 9th February, 2024. Prepayments of this levy can be made prior to this date.

Year 5/ 6 Camp 2024

The Year 5/ 6 camp will take place at Lady Northcote Camp Bacchus Marsh in Term 2
Wednesday 15th May – Friday 17th May. The cost of the camp is \$454.

Concessional School Fee

Families who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply for a fee concession:

- Any family of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage
- Any family holding a HCC and eligible for CSEF
- Any family holding a DVA Gold Card
- Any family identified as refugees and holding an ImmiCard

A letter was forwarded to families who have previously been eligible for a concessional fee. If you could return this application form to be considered for the concession fee we will begin the administration process next week and early 2024.

Reports 2023

The Semester two reports for 2024 will be uploaded Thursday 14th December. *Please note* that reports *cannot be accessed on mobile phones*, they are accessible via laptop or desktop computer.

2024 School Year

Start Dates

Our school year will begin on different days depending on your child’s year level. Please note when your child is to return to school.

Tuesday 30th January 2024 - Years 1, 3 & 5 children to come to school for the day.

Year 1, 3 & 5 children are required to attend school in their full summer school uniform and to bring their brain food, morning tea and lunch and all stationary to school this day.

This includes books, pens, pencils, glue sticks, book box, two boxes of tissues, art smock and headphones.

This will be a normal school day for the children. They will have their photo taken and engage in a number of literacy and numeracy tasks. School will begin at 8.50am and conclude at 3.30pm.

Wednesday 31st January 2024 - Years 2, 4 & 6 children to come to school for the day.

Year 2, 4 & 6 children are required to attend school in their full summer school uniform and to bring their brain food, morning tea and lunch and all stationary to school this day.

This includes books, pens, pencils, glue sticks, book box, two boxes of tissues, art smock and headphones.

This will be a normal school day for the children. They will have their photo taken and engage in a number of literacy and numeracy tasks. School will begin at 8.50am and conclude at 3.30pm.

Thursday 1st February 2024 - All children Foundation to Year 6 at school

Foundation children will commence school at 8.50am if they have siblings at school and 9.50am if they are new to our community.

Foundation to Year 6 children at school today

School Absences

Children are required to attend school each day unless they are unwell. Please note the school is required to report on unapproved absences from school. If your child is absent please contact the school via the Audri App or phone to report their absence indicating the reason for the absence.

Non-attendance on beginning of school days is a formal absence from school.

Learning Spaces 2024

Schools across all sectors of education are facing staff shortages. Unfortunately Mother Teresa School like other schools in the area has experienced shortages throughout the 2023 school year. We are currently working to cover classes and the provision of specialist programs. Updates will be provided as the staff for 2024 is finalised. This process is an ongoing one and will continue over the summer break. Families will receive an email via their allocated email address with learning space updates.

Sacramental Celebrations 2024

Preparations are underway for the celebration of sacraments in 2024. Children in Year 2, 3 & 5 received a note asking parents to indicate if they would like their child to celebrate Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation in 2024.

Catholic children in Year 3 can receive Reconciliation.

Catholic children in Year 4 can receive First Eucharist.

Catholic children from the Roman Catholic rite can receive Confirmation from Year 6. Our Eastern rite Catholic children (e.g. Chaldean, Syro-Malabar, and Maronite) have already received Confirmation or Chrismation at Baptism.

Reconciliation (First Confession) Year 3

This celebration occurs in term 1 and will involve

- Reconciliation Parent & Child workshop at Mother Teresa PS – **Wednesday 28th March, 7pm 2024**
- Reconciliation Sign Up and Presentation Weekend - **Weekend of March 10th and 11th 2024**
- Celebration of First Reconciliation at Our Lady's Church – **Thursday 14th March 2024, 7pm**

First Eucharist (Communion) Year 4

- Eucharist Parent & Child workshop at Mother Teresa PS – **Tuesday 7th of May, 2024**
- Eucharist Sign Up and Presentation Weekend - **Weekend of 20th and 21st May, 2024**
- 1st Eucharist Celebration for children from Mother Teresa PS at Our Lady's Parish Church – **Sunday 16th June, 2024 2pm**

Confirmation Year 6

- Confirmation Parent & Child workshop at Mother Teresa PS – **Wednesday 31st July, 2024, 7pm**
- Confirmation Sign Up and Presentation Weekend - **Weekend of 10th and 11th August, 2024**

- Confirmation Celebration, Our Lady's Parish Church – **Sunday 18th August, 2024 (Time to be confirmed)**

Parents & Friends News

The Parents and Friends group supports the building of our learning community through numerous social and fundraising events.

Christmas Raffle

Our Parents and Friends are organising a Christmas Raffle. Tickets are \$1 each and will be forwarded tomorrow. The raffle will be drawn after our whole school prayer on Friday. Prizes are now on display and include:

- A Pro Scooter & Helmet
- Instant photo kit
- Derwent pencil set
- Lego classic pack
- Vivofit Jr. 3 Kids fitness tracker

Term One Dates 2024

Monday 29 th January	Staff return
Tuesday 30 th January	Children in Year 1, 3 & 5 attend school
Wednesday 31 st January	Children in Year 2, 4 & 6 attend school
Thursday 1 st February	Foundation children begin school
	All children at school
Wednesday 7 th February	Foundation children rest day
Wednesday 14 th February	Foundation children rest day
	Ash Wednesday Mass
Friday 23 rd February	School Closure Day
	No school for children this day
Saturday 9 th & Sunday 10 th March	Reconciliation Sign Up Weekend
Thursday 14 th March	Reconciliation Celebration 7pm Our Lady's Church
Tuesday 26 th March	Term One ends for children 3.30pm
Wednesday 27 th March	Professional Learning Day – staff day
Thursday 28 th March	Holy Thursday
Monday 15 th April	Term Two begins 8.50am

The following dates are correct at the time of printing. Please read the newsletter each week and note the weekly happenings.