Dear Parents and all in the McAuley Community,

**Advent.** Advent calls us to be counter-cultural in the practice of our faith. While the world around us is consumed by frenzied preparations for the summer holidays and frenetic shopping for the customary gift exchange at Christmas-time, we Christians, instead of speeding up and running faster and feverishly buying, are encouraged to slow down, and to focus on the things that really matter. Not easy to do, but Advent calls us to practise waiting and hoping. Christians of all people should be people of hope, quietly confident that God does not desert us even in the most desperate, shameful or painful situations. Hope doesn’t necessarily come naturally. We have to work on it. Just as we have to practise our faith and love, we also need to practise hope. So many things in our life can sorely challenge us, cause us to lose heart and dent our hopefulness – a friend dying from cancer, a child killed in an accident, a failed business project, a broken relationship, a friend’s betrayal. So, when we look back with the eyes of faith on our own individual lives, despite the difficulties and sorrows encountered along the way, we should strive to see God at work in our lives, accompanying us, holding us, leading us to new life, even when it didn’t seem to be so at the time. Adapted from *The Majellan: Anne Hunt © Redemptorists 2014*

**Vinnies Hampers.** The spirit of outreach is very evident amongst our students as they work in their Homerooms to collect much-needed items for the Christmas Hampers which the local St Vincent de Paul group can then distribute to the needy families in our community. Thank you in anticipation of your generosity.

**Staff changes.** This year, we farewell two long-serving stalwarts of McAuley Catholic College. Mr Greg Laforest retires after 29 years, having commenced at St Mary’s College in 1986. In recent times he has been Careers Adviser and previously was Maths Co-Ordinator for many years. Mrs Sue Neil retires after 13 years in TAS and VET, including times as Senior Co-Ordinator. Also, Ms Martha Whelton has been with us on exchange from Canada, so she returns home after 12 months here and Mr Matt Jenkins finishes his part-time contract. Ms Rose Nupponen has been a Teacher Aide here for three years and retires at the end of this year. All these people have given remarkable service to our College and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged. Also, Mr Brian Elvery and Mr Rob Imeson will be on leave for all 2015 and Ms Grace McGirr, our current Leader of Pedagogy has been seconded to the CSO for two years. Ms McGirr has provided pivotal leadership and guidance in our quest for excellence in learning and teaching so we are very grateful for that. We wish her well in her new role but we look forward to her return.

**Arrangements for the end of the year.**

- The End-of-Year Liturgy and Awards will occur on Tuesday 16th December at 9.30 am in our Hall. All parents, carers and supporters of the College are welcome to attend.
- Activities have been planned for Monday, Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday. Students have been signing up for these over the last few days and the program is diverse and interesting. A big thanks to Mr Isaac Day, who is co-ordinating and planning this. All staff are involved in this great opportunity for our students.

**Website for 2015 school year dates.** Check the website, but students in Years 7, 11 and 12 return on Thursday 29th January, while students in Years 8, 9 and 10 return on Friday 30th January.

**Congratulations** to the Creative Arts teachers for the very strong commendation they received in the Registration and Accreditation (R&A) process, announced this past week. Each and every KLA or ‘department’ in the College has to go through this very rigorous R&A process every five years to ensure we comply with State and Federal standards for schools. The Creative Arts department of Ms Fran McHugh, Mr Tony Ellis, Mrs Marita Cummins, Ms Sarah Nicholls and Mr Mark Conaghan not only satisfied but exceeded the standards required so congratulations.

**Last Tuesday’s Social.** Another great success! The students enjoyed themselves and behaved well. Thanks to the P&F for selling refreshments.
**Excursions and Events.** The busy times continued this past week with a Student Leadership day as well as a House Reward day for McCarthy House, who won the House Points competition. Thank you to the many staff involved not only in the events – but also by covering classes back at school.

**Reports.** These will be posted next week. In general, the reports show impressive work from all our students.

**Laptops.** Since the finish of the DER program in 2013, most parents either have bought or are planning to buy a laptop for their child. This is a complex issue and parents are encouraged to read the updated information letter posted on the website and access the relevant forms and links. We are very committed to using laptops in the school as a tool for learning in the 21st Century, but we realise some families may not be able to afford the options presented. **Please talk to the Principal if you need assistance.** Also, I did indicate to some parents that we would try to facilitate pre-Christmas orders so the big man in the red suit could assist with delivery, but due to warranty and supply issues, that will not be possible. Sorry! For details and procedures to order a school laptop for your child, please see the website.

**Reminders.** More details have been in recent newsletters, but a quick summary...

- **Footwear.** Our uniform requires traditional school shoes which are black, polishable leather and lace-up. Sports uniform includes solid, conventional joggers only and the light-weight canvas ‘Vans’, ‘Volleys’ or ‘DCs’ are not safe and are NOT PERMITTED. Please note that leather ‘Vans’, which are now on the market, are not permitted either.
- **Second Hand Uniform Sales.** If you would like to buy or sell your 2nd hand MCC uniforms please contact Maree on 0412 693 743. Only uniforms in good order and condition will be accepted for resale.
- **Fees.** The College and the Parish have a lot of outstanding debt from Tuition fees and Subject/Resource fees at this time. Please attend to these urgently. Parish Tuition fees and Subject Resource fees can be paid in various ways such as BPAY or EFT.
- **Enrolment of Year 6 students.** Any parents who have not submitted an enrolment application for their Year 6 son or daughter for next year should do so urgently. There are still some places available in each of the year groups.
- **Students Leaving:** The parents/carers of students not returning to McAuley Catholic College next year are asked to notify the College, in writing, as soon as possible.

**Christmas Masses.** These are listed in the newsletter and I encourage all parents to lead by example and take time from busy lives this Christmas to attend the local Parish Church to thank God for the many blessings we have and to immerse ourselves in the true message of Christmas.

I take this opportunity to wish you all a holy and peaceful Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year. Enjoy the holiday break.

Leon Walsh
Principal

**ACTIVITIES WEEK**
Thank you to Mr Isaac Day for his organisation of Activities Week and to the staff who supervised individual activities.

**ADVENT AND SCHOOL HOLIDAYS**
At the end of 2014 it is time to say thank you to our whole school community for another wonderful year. As we finish the year and prepare for Christmas and the holidays don’t lose sight of the season of Advent, a time of hope, renewal and preparation.

Year 11 students should allocate some time to their study in the coming Christmas / summer break, ensuring they are up to date, revising the material already covered, completing work allocated for the holidays and reading ahead.

Thank, you to all the families of McAuley Catholic College for your support this year. I wish you all a peaceful, safe and happy Christmas and we will see you all at the end of January 2015, ready for a new school year.

Kate Thomson
Deputy Principal

**RELIGION NEWSLETTER**
On behalf of all of the staff in the Religious Education Department I would like to wish all students, staff and their families a very happy and holy Christmas and an enjoyable and safe New Year.

I would also like to thank all of the staff for the enormous amount of work they have done and the assistance they have given me on so many occasions.

It is with some sadness that we farewell Ms Whelton who returns to Canada next year. Her dedication and hard work has been greatly appreciated by all. We also farewell Ms McGirr who has worked very closely with RE staff and who has been an exceptional teacher in the department. We wish her well in her new role with the Catholic Schools Office School Evangelisation and Catechesis Services team and hope she is able to visit the College often in her new role.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all Year 8 students on their achievement in the State-wide RE tests held earlier this term. 104 students sat for the exam and all students should have received their certificates by now. Recipients of High Distinctions (8 students) and Distinctions (25 students) were presented with their certificates on Tuesday at assembly.

Special congratulations to the following students who received High Distinctions:

- Chrislyn Shaji
- Emily Gough
- Samuel Page
- Samantha Goodwin
- Cameron Dehnert
- Harry Hayes
- Luke Solomon
- William Almond

Rose Cureton

Merry Christmas
From Grace McGirr – Leader of Pedagogy

I will not be returning to McAuley Catholic College in 2015 due to a secondment to the Catholic Schools Office. I will be based in Lismore as a Teacher Educator and move between the six secondary colleges at the Northern end of the Lismore Diocese.

Before leaving, I want to sincerely thank the members of the McAuley Catholic College community (parents, staff and students) for all the exciting educational opportunities which I have been given whilst working at MCC since 2009. Some of the special moments for me have been the masses and liturgies, retreats, debating competitions, public speaking events, Enrichment camps and a range of exceptional classroom experiences when teaching students or working with staff as the Leader of Pedagogy. I have been blessed to work with a range of students who have exhibited diverse gifts and I have been humbled by the trust they have placed in me as their teacher.

Special thanks to all the parents and past students who have sent me their best wishes and have shown real loyalty and appreciation towards me over the years. A student asked me, “Why would you want to leave this great school?” I had to agree. McAuley Catholic College is a wonderful College and we can be proud of the way our College caters for the spiritual, educational, emotional, social and cultural needs of all students.

Best wishes to all for Christmas and farewell.

I leave you with this quotation from Plato about education. It encapsulates one aspect of my educational philosophy.

_Do not train children to learning by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each._

Plato

TECHNOLOGY TIMBER

This year, some of our Technology Timber students and Industrial Technology Timber students entered the Jacaranda Woodwork display. This display was organised by the Northern Rivers Woodworkers Groups and held at the South Grafton Ex-Serviceman Club during Jacaranda week. The students were very successful with many receiving cash Prizes for their project entries. The students were Brock Woods 1st Prize, Matthew Lambert Highly commended, Yasmeen Walker Highly commended, Cooper Woods Highly commended, Timothy Stanmore High Commended. McAuley Catholic College was awarded the most successful school and received a cheque for $500 to be spent in the Wood Workshop.

Craig Perring

MCCARTHY BEACH REWARDS DAY

Tuesday, 2nd of December, McCarthy House took the day off from classes and spent the day at the beach as a reward for winning the House Competition for 2014. A relaxing and fun day was had by all who attended. While Minnie Water didn’t turn on a sunny day for us we weren’t deterred. As the saying goes, “a bad day at the beach is better than a good day at work”.

Thanks to all the McCarthy students for their attendance and impeccable behaviour. Thanks also to the staff who attended including Craig Perring, Brian Elvery, Sandra Bartholomew, Sarah Nicoll, Vicki Marsh and Isaac Day. Thanks also to our 2014 captains Ashlee Comerford and Brandon Crocker who couldn’t be there on the day but led us to victory.

Isaac Day

COLLEGE SOCIAL

The last Social for the year was held on Tuesday of Week 9. The theme was Christmas and many students looked very festive. The Christmas dance off was great fun, particularly teacher dancer Kath_ry_am_. Many thanks to the Student Leadership Group, the P and F for manning the tuckshop, the staff for supervising and Rhys Commerford for the great music.

Mark Bellamy and Anthea Kinny, Year 8 & Year 7 Coordinators

CLARENCE VALLEY EQUESTRANS CHALLENGE

Students from McAuley competed in the Clarence Valley Equestrian Challenge at Hawthorn Park on the 29th and 30th November. Congratulations for the outstanding riding Olivia Beggs, Emily Hayes, Harry Hayes, Bella Jennings, Keiarna Hicks, Tara Kelly, Mimi Scheafer, Elly Shipman and Thomas Morgan.

Orders for laptops must be placed by Friday 6th February 2015. See website for details.
THREE MOBS, ONE RIVER
Our Year 8 Visual Arts and Year 9 Food Technology students recently had the privilege of a visit from Three Moobs One River.

Three Moobs One River brings our indigenous community leaders into our schools. The award winning project aims to develop understanding through the authentic sharing of experiences.

Mr Ron Heron, a Yaegl elder and anthropologist, has recently been awarded a degree as a Doctor of Letters from Macquarie University. He talked about his collection of aboriginal art, explaining the cultural significance of the stories to our students. He also encouraged our students to develop their interests and aim high in their educational pursuits. Mr Michael Randall gave an informative talk on bush tucker with our food technology classes.

Our students thoroughly enjoyed the visits and gained a new perspective through the real experiences of our presenters. We look forward to more visits with Three Moobs One River, and have already started planning visits for 2015.

The 5th Wave
by Rick Yancey

After the 1st wave, only darkness remains. After the 2nd, only the lucky escape. And after the 3rd, only the unlucky survive. After the 4th wave, only one rule applies: trust no one.

Now, it’s the dawn of the 5th wave, and on a lonely stretch of highway, Cassie runs from Them. The beings who only look human, who roam the countryside killing anyone they see. Who have scattered Earth’s last survivors. To stay alone is to stay alive, Cassie believes, until she meets Evan Walker.

Beguiling and mysterious, Evan Walker may be Cassie’s only hope for rescuing her brother—or even saving herself. But Cassie must choose: between trust and despair, between defiance and surrender, between life and death. To give up or to get up.

MASS TIMES
St. Mary’s - Grafton
Saturday Vigil 6pm
Sunday Mass 8am

St. Patrick’s - South Grafton
Saturday Vigil 6pm
Sunday Mass 9.30am

Cowper
Sunday
8am Mass

Copmanhurst
First and third Sunday of month at 10am

SECOND HAND UNIFORM SALES
This has been set up to provide 2nd hand uniforms to McAuley Catholic College students. If you would like to buy or sell your 2nd hand McAuley uniforms please contact Maree on 0412 693 743. Only uniforms in good order and condition will be accepted for resale.

Clarence Valley Parish
Christmas Mass Times 2014

Christmas Eve 24th December
St. Mary’s Grafton 5pm
St. Patrick’s South Grafton 6pm
St. John of the Cross Copmanhurst 7pm

Christmas Day 25th December
Mary Immaculate Cowper 8am
St. Mary’s Grafton 8am
St. Patrick’s South Grafton 9.30am