Dear Parents and all in the McAuley Community,

Advent. Advent is a great time to look at our relationship with our God and the person of Jesus. What priority does he get in our lives? I share with you a small piece from ‘The Summit’. ‘Waiting is the dominant activity of Advent. It is difficult for modern humans to spend time waiting. We are so used to technology making things happen almost instantly and tend to become frustrated at being made to wait. But the waiting of Advent is an active waiting, not a frittering away of time. It is a waiting spent in preparation and reflection’. No doubt, the challenge for us is to make the time to slow down so we can reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

Some Words from Catherine McAuley: ‘It is for God we serve the poor and not for thanks.’ from The Little Book of Catherine of Dublin.

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 Mrs Ana Chevalier (part-time Maths, Science) and wish her well in her full time appointment at St Joseph’s College, Banora Point. Mrs Joy Grills, who has worked with our Additional Needs students for many years, has decided to retire and we thank her for many years of faithful service. Mr Kealy Day, our first Youth Ministry Officer heads off to University and we wish him well. Ms Jasmine Organ will spend 2016 on Teacher Exchange in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada. Mrs Sue Neil retires (again), but we hope to entice her back occasionally. Ms Sarah Johnson will be leaving after helping us out this term as a Science teacher and Mr Phil Kelly finishes after a year of managing our support program Let’s Get It Together. These staff have all contributed greatly to this wonderful school. And I guess you may have heard that I am retiring. Thank you for the many cards and good wishes. The Assembly farewell this past week was very special, as was the function last Monday afternoon. Thank you to the many staff and students who contributed to the events including the Year 11 Hospitality class who did an excellent job catering for the function (and thank you Mrs Bartholomew, Ms Organ and Ms Norton); the many students who found voice and inspiration with the ‘flash-mob’ sequence in Assembly (thank you Ms McHugh, the Student Leadership Team and all students) and the very kind words which have been spoken and written in the last few days. Thank you to the Student Leadership Team for the generous gift of a Ticketek voucher, which will be ideal for a Collingwood game next year. I have no doubt that Ms Thomson was co-ordinating all this ‘behind my back’, along with some other staff. I am privileged to have worked in such a wonderful school and I am very humbled and considerably overwhelmed by the generosity of spirit displayed. Also, thank you to the parents, carers and grandparents who have attended functions and written notes and cards. Your support and affirmation have been appreciated.

Arrangements for the end of the year.

The End-of-Year Liturgy and Awards will occur on Tuesday 15th December in our Hall. All parents are welcome to attend.

Activities have been planned for Monday, Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday. Students have been signing up for these over the last week and the program is diverse and interesting. A big thanks to Mr Isaac Day, who is co-ordinating and planning this.

The start of next year. At the start of 2016, Year 7 return on Thursday 28th January. The next day, Friday 29th January, all other Year groups return to school. The uniform shop will be open during January. See our website for updates and details.

Reports. These will be posted very soon. In general, the reports show impressive work from all our students. Please contact the College for further information.

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Unpaid Fees. Sadly, some students will be excluded from high-cost End-of-Year activities and some reports will not be available to those families where accounts are outstanding and no contact has been made with the Principal or Bursar. I have stressed many times the sentiment contained in our policy: “This College takes seriously the Catholic Church’s commitment to help those in need and will steadfastly support those enduring financial hardship, either long-term or short-term, but it has also, an obligation to exercise wise stewardship over its limited resources and therefore must discern between those genuinely needing support and those seeking to gain an advantage from the generosity of others.” So please, if you are unable to pay accounts please contact us so we can support you.

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 your local Church to thank God for the many blessings we have and to immerse ourselves in the true message of Christmas. It needs only a casual glance at any nightly news

Laptop purchases. If you wish to purchase a business standard laptop (Option 1 on the Laptop Information sheet on the website) for your son or daughter through our usual supplier, Somerville Group, there will be a link from our website to their portal. It will be open from Wednesday 6th January to Friday 29th January. Families wishing to purchase their own laptop (Option 2 on the same page on the website) from any retail outlet, please check the specifications and requirements listed on our website. Just a reminder that 6 hours battery life (therefore not too big a screen) is a basic and absolute necessity because chargers cannot be brought to school. It is hoped that all students in Year 7 will have their own laptop by the start of Week 5 in Term 1.

Uniform Reminder. Please remember (or check up on) our requirements for uniform, especially footwear – as you prepare for next year. Our uniform requires traditional school shoes which are black, polished leather, lace-up with a heel. Sports uniform includes solid, conventional joggers ONLY. It is essential that you remember that any brands of fashion or surf shoe with a flat sole and no distinct heel (such as Vans, Globes, Kustom, Volleys and many others) – whether canvas or leather - are NOT PERMITTED.

Whooping Cough. Please be aware of the symptoms for this illness, because a student in the school has been diagnosed recently. Details are available at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/PublicHealth/Infectious/whoopingcough/index.asp

Excursions and Events. Busy times continue! Mercy House won the House competition this year and so won a ‘day in the sun’ at Minnie Waters, as reward for their efforts. Students returned from the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Adelaide inspired by the event. Several then headed off to the Kairos Retreat. Our new Student Leadership Team met for a day to develop their skills and plan for next year. In amongst all this, many other activities and events occurred. Year 10 managed a week of Work Experience, which still forms a valuable part of our program. It gives students the chance to experience work places and often allows them to confirm their intention to seek employment in that field. Conversely, some students find out that their intended career direction is not suitable for them, an equally valid outcome for Work Experience. Thank you to the many staff who have contributed – and continue to contribute to the vast range of activities in the College. These experiences are so enriching for our students. continued over column

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.

Yearbook. Any more sponsors for our Yearbook? Time is running out! We are seeking sponsorship of the Yearbook to make the cost more affordable. Families willing to sponsor a page can do so for $25.00, while any business owners able to help can purchase a quarter-page advert for $50.00. For details contact the College Office on mccgraf@lism.catholic.edu.au.

I take this opportunity to wish you all a holy and peaceful Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year. Enjoy the holiday break and best wishes for 2016.

Leon Walsh
Principal

YEAR 7.1 AND 7.3
Year 7.1 and 7.3 have spent 2 weeks making a model of our solar system including the sun and planets. We have been busy painting, paper macheing and glueing while listening to Christmas carols.

Sara Johnson

YEAR 8
Year 8 involved in a fruit cake mining activity. Students become miners and must consider environmental and social impacts of their mining activity. Fines are given for breaches of environmental conditions and students must rehabilitate their mining site after completion of mining. 'Minerals ' of value are sultanas, orange rind and cherries.

Sara Johnson
Farewell to Leon Walsh

The main focus of my article this week is my farewell to Mr Leon Walsh. We have taken various opportunities to farewell Leon over the last few weeks and more are coming. On Monday evening the staff, parent and parish community farewelled Leon at an evening event on the “Deck of H Block”, creatively decorated in black and white bunting, balloons and accessories - representing Leon’s beloved Collingwood team, and beautifully catered for by the Year 11 Hospitality class.

Leon arrived at MCC in 2009 as our Acting Principal, from his position of Assistant Principal at SJPC, Coffs Harbour. Leon was obviously a well respected and admired member of the SJPC community, as many staff from SJPC would ask about Leon - and they still do - and would speak of how fortunate we were to have him. So for 7 years Leon has led our College with dedication and vision. He can pride himself on the building projects he has initiated and seen completed. These include the language centre (L block), the “Sports Science” centre (H block) and the wonderful Hall / multipurpose centre, the renovation of the oval, the addition of T9 for metalwork classes, the remodelling of the canteen, the newly opened Mercy Reflection Garden and the installation of over 400 solar panels. All of this infrastructure work is ultimately for the benefit of the students. The students have always been the focus for Leon.

Leon has promoted a culture of learning in the College and has held our hands as many programs and changes have been implemented and promoted - CLF, Australian Curriculum, Professional Learning Teams, DER, BER, Cycles of Improvement to name but a few. He is well known for adopting mottos and mantras - “The standard you walk past is the standard you accept” and “Learning is not optional at this school”. Leon has promoted the College within the local community and built strong ties between the educational institutions in the Clarence Valley through the CVIEF.

I thank Leon on behalf of the College community for all he has done for McAuley Catholic College. He has a prominent place in the history of McAuley and is and will be admired for his strong sense of justice, his deep faith and his dedication and commitment to education, his family, his Church and his favourite AFL team - Collingwood. I wish him well in his retirement from McAuley and from teaching after 45 years! Well done, Congratulations and God Bless.

Christmas Liturgy and Prizegiving

As 2015 comes to an end it is time to say thankyou to our whole school community for another wonderful year. We will finish on a high note with our Christmas Liturgy and Award Presentation on Tuesday 15th December at 9.30am. Congratulations to all the students who will be receiving awards, especially those recognised in the Special Award section who have gone above and beyond in the various areas of recognition. I look forward to seeing parents, grandparents, carers and friends at our special ceremony.

A huge and heartfelt thankyou to the students and families who have supported the Vinnies Christmas Appeal this year.

It has been embraced by the whole school community and the 28 baskets will be presented in our Christmas liturgy. This kind act of giving will mean that needy people in our community will have a better Christmas and it reassures us that our message of compassion is real. Year 12 results Congratulations to all our Year 12 students who will receive their HSC results this week. If students need assistance with University applications and decision making they can email Mr Rod Paton.

Other issues

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.

If you are purchasing uniform items please check the uniform requirements especially regarding shoes:

- Black leather, polished, lace up shoes with a heel – for all students
- Sports shoes are to be joggers with proper support – NOT CANVAS shoes.

Also, a reminder that if students are getting piercings in the holidays they will be asked to remove any pieces that do not comply with the school rules. The school does not allow facial piercings (nose, tongue, chin, eyebrow piercings) As to ear piercings - students are allowed to wear one earring per ear (these being a small stud or sleeper).

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. 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 2016, ready for a new school year.

Kate Thomson, Deputy Principal
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL
On Wednesday, 2nd of December nine students from McAuley Catholic College departed from the St Mary’s Parish. Under the expert guidance of Parish Priest Father Bing Monteguedo and Youth Ministry Officer Kealy Day we pulled out of the carpark oozing with anticipation. One bus trip and one flight later (with quite a bit of hacky sack in between) we arrived at the doorstep of Adelaide. We got our room keys, dumped our gear and then it was time to hit the city for dinner. After mere minutes of walking we saw a couple physically fighting in the street. Luckily the police were right there to intervene quickly. Safe to say it was at this moment that I realised we were no longer in sleepy Grafton. After our first tram experience into the city (there would be many more to come) we arrived at Rundle Mall. From there we were sent off with a partner to find dinner in the city by ourselves. This was another moment of realisation. This wasn't like any school trip I had attended previously, freedom was at an all time high. Although I did get confused about the actual level of freedom on one particular occasion, however that's another story.

On the second day we had a meeting with all the students from Lismore Diocese and on that note I should also mention we were travelling with other members of Grafton Parish including two of Mr Burton’s sons. After the gathering of the Diocese we headed to the Australian Catholic Youth Festival hosted at the Adelaide Convention Centre. The Festival ran from the 3rd to the 5th and was similar to any music festival in the way that there were many “acts” operating at once and you could choose to see which acts interest you. The acts could be anything from music, talks or activities. The talks included chastity talks, faith talks, motivational speeches and dealing with adversity. In addition, every morning and afternoon we would have a plenary which all 3000 participants would attend. It was much like a mini world youth day for Australians only. This continued for three days until it was time to take the plane home via Melbourne. I would like to thank everyone who was involved in the organisation and care during the event and I think I speak for all participants in saying it was an unrivaled experience in which I learnt a lot.

Luke Solomon

DUKE OF EDINBURGH
2015 has seen the introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh’s award at MCC. It has proven to be very successful, with 18 students enrolled in the program and several bronze award already completed.

Students have participated in bush camps in the Gibraltar and Yuraygir National Parks, a day walk to The Gorge and a bike riding expedition to Cows with Guns. They have also undertaken community service, learned new skills and undertaken physical activity.

In 2016 is shaping up to be another exciting year. Two canoe camps are already organised for Term 1 and 2 of our students have recently started their silver awards.

An information session will be held early in term 1 for any students who might be interested in joining. Students must be 14 years of age to start their bronze award.

Candice Savell

The year is nearly at an end we in the Mercy Library are very proud of all of our achievements over the last 6 months in the library. All the shelving in the fiction area has been reconfigured to provide easier access and more room. I wish to thank Terry Byrnes and the TAS department and Lew Molloy for all their help.

The massive job of putting all the fiction novels into twenty genre categories, such as fantasy, war, relationships is about halfway through. We hope to finish it sometime in Term 1 in 2016. My assistant, Julie Power, has worked tirelessly in relabelling, recovering and changing each book in the computer system and I am most indebted to her.

We have a lovely Christmas tree in the library and under it are gifts for students who have returned all their books.

We have big plans for the Mercy Library in 2016 and both myself and Julie wish everyone a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mark Bellamy

CAREERS
Eighteen McAuley College students took the wonderful opportunity to explore what lies ahead for them in their career path by joining 160 other north coast students in visiting Queensland Tertiary Institutions recently. All aspects of university life at Southern Cross, Griffith, Queensland, Bond and Queensland University of Technology were covered. The students gained a great understanding of the requirements of the courses they are aiming towards so it gives them a focus for their studies in Year 12.

Rod Paton

YEAR 10 WORK EXPERIENCE
Year 10 recently completed the first stage of their career pathway by participating in their chosen field of work. The many reports I have received commended the students on their enthusiasm, conduct and professional manner they displayed throughout the week. It was also very pleasing to hear of the offers of work students have received following the week. Congratulations to Year 10 for their effort.

Rod Paton
CLARENCE VALLEY PARISH
CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Christmas Eve:
5.00pm St Mary's Church Grafton
6.00pm St Patrick’s Church South Grafton
7.00pm St John of the Cross Copmanhurst

Christmas Day:
8.00am St Mary’s Church Grafton
9.00am St Patrick’s South Grafton
8.00am Mary Immaculate Cowper

Reconciliation Times:
Mon 21st: 8.30am - 9.30am St Mary’s Grafton
5.00pm - 6.00pm St Mary’s Grafton

Tues 22nd: 9.30am - 10.30am St Patrick’s South Grafton

Wed 23rd: 8.30am - 9.30am St Mary’s Grafton
5.30pm - 6.30pm St Mary’s Grafton
5.00pm - 6.00pm St Patrick’s South Grafton

Thurs 24th: 8.30am - 9.30am St Patrick’s South Grafton

Happy Birthday

Emily Goodall, Zachary Clark, Cayde Hayman, Isabella Samuel, Bianca Asper, Madison Boxall, Benjamin Shipman, Ethan Cahill, Emma Hall, Misty Acton, Liam Casson, Makenzy Chard, Kara Francis.

MASS TIMES

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Cowper
Sunday 8am Mass

Copmanhurst
First and third Sunday of the month at 10am
Whooping Cough (Pertussis) Alert  

26/11/2015

There has been a recent confirmed case of whooping cough (pertussis) in a member of the Catherine McAuley Catholic College community at Grafton.

Whooping cough caught at school can spread to any other members at home. Coughing spreads the infection to others nearby. Whooping cough can be especially dangerous for babies.

Whooping cough starts like a cold and progresses to bouts of coughing that can last for many weeks. Older children may just have a cough that is persistent and is worse at night. The infection may also occur in fully-vaccinated children.

What should people sick with pertussis do?

- Pertussis is readily spread from an infected person to others by coughing and sneezing. If left untreated, it can be spread for up to three (3) weeks after the start of the infected person’s cough.

   Do not attend work, school or a childcare facility if you or any household members:

   - Have a cough as described above. Please see your doctor.
   - Are being tested for whooping cough by your doctor and waiting for test results.
   - Are being treated with antibiotics for whooping cough for at least five (5) days after starting the medicine

Keep coughing children away from babies.

Whooping cough vaccines give good protection against infection but immunity fades. If your school-aged child has younger siblings, it’s a good idea to check that they are up to date with their vaccines.

For further advice, please call the Public Health Unit 1300 066 055 or NSW Health website


Farewell
Mr. Walsh