



Website : www.stjohns-hamilton.school.nz

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November 2009

Issue No. 13

Dear Parents, Caregivers, students, friends and supporters of the College

The following reflection on Christmas comes from an article by Jim Quillinan past co-ordinator of leadership Development at the Catholic Education Office of the Diocese of Sale, Victoria.

Bringing Bethlehem to Life

Luke writes a wonderful account of the birth of Christ, wonderful in the true sense of the word. It is a story full of joy and simplicity, yet it is also a story of mystery, awe and revelation. It is a story about extraordinary love. In fact, it literally puts flesh on God's love. Gospels are carefully, scrupulously written documents. There are not extraneous details, no wasted words, no irrelevant details. Every detail of this story contains a message.

When Jesus was born, shepherds were keeping watch in the night. Out of curiosity they walk away from their flocks (a pretty risky thing to do) to see the birth of a baby in a cave. They joined three mysterious wise men from the East who had come to see the same event. What led them there – a star? A vision? Over the years there have been many theories as to who the wise men from the East were, from where they had come and why they have been included in this story? Why were the shepherds led by a star or by the message of an angel, the traditional Hebrew explanation of a vision or dream? The point is rather that they are being led into mystery, the mystery of God.

How do we explain the very idea of the Incarnation – that God takes on human flesh?
How do we explain this love story of unconditional love?
How do we understand that we are loved so much?
Do we allow ourselves to be led into the mystery of God?
Why wise men or kings as they are sometimes called?
Why shepherds? Luke's is a story about the inclusivity of God's love.

God simply is 'love' (1 Jn 4:8 and 16), properly translated 'agape' or love which is purely other-directed, love which seeks no return. That is perhaps the greatest insight that the Christian tradition has to offer. In this simple story we are witnessing God's absolute self gift to everyone. Matthew takes this insight a step further when he calls on us to take on in our own lives the example of this inclusive love : Be children of your father in heaven who makes the sun shine on the wicked as well as the good and send rain to fall on the just as well as the unjust (Mtt5:45).

As we quickly move towards the end of the school year I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our parents, caregivers and supporters of the College for all the work that has been done during the year. As I said at the Senior Prizegiving I am very aware of the combined effort required to provide all of the opportunities available to our young men each year. My thanks go to you all.

Thank you to the large number of parents who were able to attend Senior Leavers' Mass and Prizegiving on Tuesday 10th November at the Cathedral. This was another fine occasion where we could acknowledge our high achievers and award winners.

NCEA Exams

We wish all of our senior students every success with their exams and trust that the results which come out in mid-January will be positive and provide great incentive for the 2010 year.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

We have been delighted to hear of the success of different students who have gained significant Scholarships. They are:

Kelson Tu'akoi and Mosese Karalus have been awarded Auckland University Chancellor's Top Maori and Pacific Scholarships. These scholarships cover the fees of the first three years of their degree, accommodation for the first year and mentoring during their study. Both young men are intending to study Medicine. The value of these scholarships is \$35 000 each, very significant scholarships indeed!

Ericson Pascua (intending to study Food & Hospitality at Wintech) and **Thomas Walters** (intending to study Engineering at Waikato University) have been awarded David Johnstone Memorial Scholarships. These scholarships are worth \$5000 each for next year.

Credit Union Scholarships : Congratulations to **Cameron Hughes** and **David Harris** who have each been awarded Credit Union Scholarship of \$2,000 each. Cameron and David have also been awarded Auckland University Senior Faculty Junior Science Awards of \$1,000 to go towards tuition fees.

Well done to all of these young men!

STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Our congratulations go to:

Mr Drew Tierney who has completed his Masters in Educational Leadership through the University of Waikato.

We also congratulate Drew on being selected as the Official Starter at the World Rowing Championships which will be held at Lake Karapiro in 2010. This is a wonderful testimony to his commitment to this activity and reflects the high regard in which he is held in the sport.

Mr Theo Van der Nest on the completion of his Masters in Religious Education through the Australian Catholic University.

Well done to both staff members! It is a testimony to their ability, commitment and hard work that they have been able to achieve these landmarks while still maintaining such a high level of teaching within the College.

END OF YEAR ARRANGEMENTS

Following the Junior Exams the students in Years 9 & 10 continue with their class work until the last week of the term. From Monday 7th December until Thursday 10th December we will have our Year 9 & 10 activity programme. This involves Year 10 students in the Camp programme & Year 9 students in a school based activity programme.

On **Friday, 11th December**, starting at **10.30am** we will have the **Final Junior Assembly** and **Prizegiving**. After this, students will be issued their reports and the College Yearbook and will then be dismissed for the Christmas holiday break.

Our best wishes go to all families in our community for a safe, relaxing, enjoyable and Blessed Christmas break. We look forward to the new challenges that 2010 will bring.

Lateness in the Morning

Presence is one of the Marist Pillars. School starts with Form time. Form time is a time when students receive the notices for the day. It is also a time to meet with the Form Teacher who may need to communicate with your son regarding other matters. It is an opportunity to fill out the diary. The warning bell goes at 8:40am and students are expected to be in Form time by 8:45am. If your boy does not go to Form time he will be considered absent for that time. Persistent lateness will earn an after school detention to make up the missed time.

Please support St John's by ensuring your son arrives at school ready to learn on time. Please also support us in enforcing punctuality by ensuring your boy can get home from any after school detentions.

Uniform

Full summer uniform is the only uniform which should be worn. Socks are not part of the summer uniform. Black or brown sandals with backstraps are a compulsory part of the uniform. Once again there will be a consequence for students who cannot meet our uniform expectations.

Absences

Should you know in advance that your boy will be away from school please contact us so we can let his teachers know.

When your boy is going to be absent for the day, please contact us to let us know. Please enter a note in the boy's diary on his return to school.

**St John's College
Junior Prizegiving
Friday, 11 December 2009**

All parents/whanau/caregivers are welcome to attend the final event for the 2009 School Year.

The prizegiving will be held in our school gym and commences at 10:30am.

It will probably last about an hour.

Students then receive their reports and are free to start their holiday break.

Documents Day

Senior students in particular are reminded that **Wednesday, 2nd of December is Documents Day** which is when they need to return any library or school texts they may still have in their possession back to the school. After this day, if texts are not returned, the school reserves the right to charge students' families for the cost of these unreturned texts as they may be officially considered missing.

Please do your bit to make sure the school has all its resources back so that students following behind you are not disadvantaged.

Please return ALL books for ALL subjects

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MATHEMATICS INITIATIVE

The Mathematics Staff of St John's College would like to announce a fabulous new initiative to be introduced into our mathematics teaching programs next year. Until the end of this year we have been granted free access for all of our year 9 and 10 students in the use of a fabulous online teaching & learning resource at www.MathsBuddy.co.nz. The eventual cost, if we find that the program serves our purposes well, will be \$30 per student, less than the cost of a 1 hour tutoring session for each student, for a 12-month subscription and 24/7 access. We believe this to be fantastic value!

Some of the features that this program has are;

- More than 800 full lessons each covering a separate concept, with a voice over and numerous examples of varying difficulty. Every lesson has a pause and rewind facility to help students grasp concepts at their own pace.
- Every lesson has an accompanying printable summary and worksheet to consolidate the concept, with full worked solutions provided also.
- A student's ongoing use and progress in the program is stored for theirs and their teacher's perusal at any time.
- The program can be accessed from any internet ready site, not just at school.
- The entire Level 4 to Level 8 program is available to every student, not just their particular year group or course.
- Parents may register to get weekly updates on their child's program use and progress, by clicking on the 'Parents area' tab within their child's account.
- Many more features will also be made available on-line over coming months, including a bank of nearly 40,000 interactive questions linked to the curriculum outcomes.

Given that the program covers most of the concepts that we teach, and as good as this resource is, the school wish to make it clear that it was never intended by its creators to replace the wonderful work that our mathematics teaching staff already do. This program is best used as a support/supplement to the classroom teaching/learning experience.

All students have been issued with their unique logins and passwords by their maths teacher, and are encouraged to use this resource as directed by their own teacher.

I encourage all parents to access the site www.mathsbuddy.co.nz with their sons login and password and see for themselves the value of the program.

W Tennent
HOF Mathematics

LEARNING SUPPORT DEPT.

End of year update 2009

Towards the end of term three the year 9 and year 10 students were re-tested for reading and comprehension using asTTle (Assessment tool for teaching and learning). This is an assessment developed by the University of Auckland for the Ministry of Education and adds to the information gathered by teachers during the year to assist them in developing programmes that are best suited to their students.

As a means of supporting students to understand what they need to improve in order to achieve their potential for NCEA level 1, I have discussed the individual report with each Year 10 student. They have identified three or four goals to improve literacy and one strategy for each goal that they can do across subject areas. These goals have been written in their homework diaries.

At the beginning of Year 11, the students will be re-issued with the goals that they have set so that they begin the year clearly understanding some of the skills that they can work on.

Please talk about these goals with your son, as your support will be one of the key factors in his success next year.

Shirley Gardner
Learning Support

FROM THE COUNSELLORS :

As we near the end of the year, many of us begin to reflect on what's going well in our lives, and where there's improvement needed. It's a healthy practice to reflect and evaluate our priorities from time to time. Here are a few tidbits of common wisdom to reflect upon:

Health:

1. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a beggar!
2. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants, and eat less food that is manufactured.
3. Live with the 3 E's: Energy, Enthusiasm, and Empathy.
4. Make time for prayer.
5. Play more games.
6. Take at least a 20 minute walk every day, and while you walk, think of the positive things in your life.

Personality:

1. Don't compare your life to others'. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
2. Don't take yourself so seriously: no one else does!
3. Dream more while you're awake.
4. Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
5. No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.

Community:

1. Each day give something good to others.
2. Spend time with people over the age of 70, and under the age of 6.
3. What other people think of you is none of your business.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your family and friends will. Stay in touch.

Life:

1. Do the right thing.
2. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
3. Get rid of anything that isn't useful or beautiful.
4. When you wake up each morning, thank God that you're alive!

Have a happy, safe, relaxed holiday. God Bless each of you this Christmas season!

OLD BOYS : 2009 GRADUATIONS FROM WAIKATO UNIVERSITY



Camp programme for Year 10 and Junior Activities Week Year 9.

Junior Activity Week for both Year 9 & 10 students is fast approaching and the pressure is now on the camp leaders and me to finalise numbers and gather in the last of the money that is owed by students for these activities.

Please be aware that EOTC (Education outside the classroom) is actually a compulsory part of a student's education and that Activities Week constitutes the bulk of our EOTC input at St John's. If students were not on camps, they would be expected to be at school during this week and so students should have no reason not to attend, short of a medical issue. **You need to contact the school immediately if you cannot allow your son to attend Activity Week.**

St John's would really appreciate your support and assistance in making sure that your son has everything sorted before Activity Week begins. We offer an excellent range of camps which are consistently well-run, safe and provide memorable experiences for our young men for the rest of their lives. The continuation of this depends upon costs being met in a timely fashion and students being given clearance from you to attend. We cannot legally take students outside the school grounds without your permission. **I urge you to make it a top priority to ensure that your son is organised to attend Activity Week. Please ensure your son has returned his permission slip to his camp leader and that any outstanding costs have been paid in full before Monday 7th December or (for Year 10s) whenever your son's camp leader has specified.** Please feel free to contact myself or the school office if you would like to make an alternative financial arrangement - we can accommodate most requests.



Finally, for parents of Year 10 students, there will be a **camp briefing on Thursday 26th of November at 6:30pm at the College** for those of you who may be particularly interested to know what your son will be getting up to while away on his camp experience. I will explain the importance of EOTC for the school curriculum and our students and then allow the camp leaders to speak about each of their camps individually and answer any questions or concerns you may have about them. If you could please give a brief indication of your intent to attend to the email address or phone number below, that would be much appreciated.

Thank you for your support in helping make your son's Activity Week run successfully this year.

Andy Howells (EOTC Co-ordinator)

ahowell@stjohns-hamilton.school.nz

(07) 856 7091 (ask for English Dept.)

SPORTS



KARATE

Congratulations to James Grace who is ranked in the top 16 in the world in the 14-15yr age group at the World Karate Federation Championships in Morocco.



TENNIS

Our junior A team is currently leading the interschool competition, with our B team fourth, they play each other this week on Wednesday. Coaching is available for students, either one on one sessions, or group, costs depend on the number of students per session, see Keegan if you have not registered but are still interested.

Beach Volleyball at St John's College

Since beginning my teaching career in 2001 it has been a passion of mine to introduce Beach Volleyball into schools and promote the sport. Beach Volleyball is not only a great sport to watch but brilliant to play. No matter what the score seems to be you are always in the game and anything can happen. The environmental conditions play a huge part with the sun in your eyes, wind directions changing rapidly and the sand slowing down your movement across the court.



Becoming a Dean at St John's College and having to run After-school detentions enabled me to begin the project of upgrading the existing sand pit which was unusable. Initially it seemed that it would take forever as students dug out the existing sand and further excavated the area. We struck a minor set back hitting clay about 100mm deep. To get the depth required for the sand we really needed about 250-300mm of sand so the court outline was then to be boxed and raise the height of the sand.

With the assistance of the Physical Education Department successfully gaining \$1700 to make the Volleyball court usable again via budget requests and with the help from the schools PTFA who supported the project allocating \$800 to fill the short fall as the sand was more expensive than initially anticipated.

The upgrade was a success and is now being regularly during lessons, Break Times, and for special events.

At the beginning of Term 4 I started an inter-school Beach Volleyball competition which has been a huge success. 12 teams entered the two division competition, a competitive grade and a social grade. 4 teams from Hillcrest High School entered along with 5 St John's College staff teams and 3 student teams. The competitive grade was for Pairs who either regularly play or have a high skill level and the social grade was designed for teams of 4 to enjoy and socialise. *Hilly* consisting of Malwyn Papalii and Keanu White eventually won the pairs going through the competition unbeaten. And the Oarsome Foursome won their final in the social grade beating 3 Men & A Boy involving staff members from SJC.

Now that the sport and competition has been introduced to the College and been very successful I believe the court will be utilised regularly and further competitions and events will be organised and run. I am already in the process of organising a competition for Term 1 next year.

I like to make special thanks to Jason Robinson and his support for the court, Reg Brooks & Paul Retter with their continual help and guidance, Ray Scott, the PTFA, and Canterbury Sportswear for their donated prizes.

Hayden Miller
Assistant HOF Health &
Physical Education



NOTICES

SCHOOL UNIFORM SALE : LAST DAYS

Available from Student Services Centre

School Polos – all sizes \$20.00

School Jerseys – all sizes \$65.00

From **DECEMBER** all uniform can be purchased from **Teamwear/Canterbury**
(cnr of Tristram and Rostrevor Streets)

REMINDER : Leavers Dinner
Thursday, 3rd December 2009 : 6:30 pm
at Vilagrad Winery

PRE-ORDER -- FIREWOOD SALE
Support the combined St John's-Sacred Heart Schools
Concert Band Trip to Australia in 2010

Trailer load delivered : \$75

Small truck load delivered : \$120

Bags of Pinecones : \$5

Phone (Verstappen 07-871.9556

(Lamb 07-856.6471



COLLEGE BLAZERS

Reminder to Students who have a College Blazer at home. - Please return Blazers to the College as soon as possible.

HOMESTAY FAMILIES NEEDED FOR 2010

We are looking for caring families to host some of our new international students who will arrive in February. You can host for a short time or for the whole year. A generous weekly payment is given. The student needs to have his own room and be treated as a member of your family. We have new students from Thailand, China and Japan. Please contact the school for more details.

Mr Donald Stark
Dean of International Students
dstark@stjohns-hamilton.school.nz Phone 856 7091

The Science Dep't would appreciate it if families could collect the following items, for our department, over the summer break :

Ice cream containers

Old towels

Old sheets

Yogurt pottles

Ice cream sticks

Jars with lids

Supermarket bags

Textbook Returns

Please return all School textbooks asap. **Reminder : Documents day is Wednesday, 2nd Dec.** Accounts will be sent out for unreturned texts.

The school office is open until 17 Dec for textbooks to be dropped off.



Newsletter – November 2009

Email: ptfa@stjohns-hamilton.school.nz

Dear Parents and caregivers,

The year is quickly drawing to a close with our senior students now into their NCEA exams. We wish them well.

The Leavers Dinner

The Yr 13s will finish with a fabulous Leavers Dinner at Vilagrads on Thursday the 3rd of December. Invitations for this event were sent out in early November. If you are still wanting to attend, please contact the school office by **Friday 27rd November** at the latest.

PTFA Funds

At the last meeting, it was decided to distribute the excess funds in the PTFA account to support curriculum areas where the purchase of a specific item would be beneficial to a programme/study area. To this end we were able to support:

- A DVD camera for the English Department
- A portion of funds toward furniture for the library

We have also supported the following two areas of the school this year with funding:

- The school production Return to the Forbidden Planet
- Building of the Beach Volleyball Court

We trust that these items will be put to good use in the coming years for the benefit of our boys.

End of year Thank you Function

We are inviting our committee members, helpers, teachers, and school support staff to join us in a celebration of the years' work. We will be having a wine and cheese on Thursday December 10th, from 4-6pm in the school staffroom. This is a great opportunity to get together with our school community and allows the PTFA to thank everyone for their support during the year. We look forward to seeing you there.

2010

We are looking forward to another great year at St Johns and will be joining for our first PTFA committee meeting on February 3rd after the Welcome BBQ. We will then be joining together for our AGM on February 18th.

We are always looking for new committee and helpers list members. The time commitment is a few hours a month for the committee and a few baking commitments a year for the helpers list. If you are no longer available for the committee or the helpers list for next year please contact Donna Meehan at bdmee@xtra.co.nz so that we may endeavor to keep our lists up to date.

Quiz Night 2010

We look forward to our fundraiser for 2010 School Days. Our Quiz Night committee will be advertising soon requesting donations to support this event.

Once again I would like to thank all the committee member, helpers list and school support staff who have assisted the PTFA in 2009. We have had a very busy year supporting our school with highlights including the combined SJC/SHGC school Production, Report Evenings, the Chanel Shield and the Anniversary Weekend afternoon tea. It is a privilege to assist St John's in these events and enables us as parents and caregivers to give back to the school that gives our boys so much. I encourage all parents and caregivers to join our committee that serves our school community while providing friendship and fellowship for its' members.

Best Wishes for a safe and happy holiday season and summer break

**Ellen Petersen
PTFA Chairperson**

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dear Parents

As we near the end of this school year, the Board of Trustees and the Principal have been looking forward to 2010 to chart our direction for the year ahead. In this newsletter I will outline a number of specific things the college plans to work on in 2010 as we seek to stay true to our aim of challenging students to strive for excellence and enabling them to reach their potential. We aim to have a number of clearly focussed targets that will guide ongoing improvement in teaching and learning.

The specific focus areas in 2010 are our special character, improving academic achievement, supporting professional development, and staying in touch with our parent and parish community. They are listed below:

1. We aim to continue the strong Marist tradition with a particular focus in 2010 on Family Spirit. This means the college will be working to strengthen the sense of family within the school and will work to strengthen the links with parents and the parish community. We look forward to your support in this.
2. St John's does well in supporting students to achieve in NCEA Level 1, and in 2010 there will be a particular focus on working to lift achievement in NCEA Levels 2 and 3. We will review our teaching programmes and give specific attention to ensuring a good foundation is laid in Years 9, 10 and 11 for achievement in Years 12 and 13 by, for example, addressing problems around literacy at an early stage. We will also aim to identify at risk students early on and provide targeted programmes for them, but most of all we will aim to ensure that challenging and engaging courses are provided to all students.
3. St John's College has a significant number of Maori and Pasifika students and there will be a focus on raising the academic achievement of these young men. There will be a focus on attendance and ensuring appropriate support is provided to lift achievement.
4. Students learn well when they are taught by capable teachers and next year we will continue the focus on professional development and improving teaching and learning in the classroom, especially in terms of the particular needs of an all boys' school. We want to be a school of 'best practice' in boys' education. We aim to be a college that supports our teaching staff to continue to grow and develop as professionals.
5. We will also give attention to improving the way we stay in touch with you and with the wider community. This will help reach the goal of 'Family Spirit' and, as St John's College has a good story to tell, help us to share news about the successes of students at St John's.

Next year there will be elections to the Board of Trustees. These will be held in early 2010. If you are interested in standing or would like further information about what is involved, please do contact me or the Principal. It is an interesting, worthwhile role, and it provides an opportunity to be involved in the life of the college in a meaningful way.

St John's is setting high goals and is working hard to achieve them. Reaching those goals is never something the College can do without strong parental and community support. To those who have made a contribution as a volunteer helper at St John's this year, please accept the sincere thanks of the Board of Trustees. We are all in this together and we look forward to working with you to ensure ongoing success at St John's in 2010.

Best wishes

Patrick Barrett
(BOARD CHAIR)

November 2009