Fire and Ashes

"So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting and in sackcloth and ashes... "O Lord... we have sinned and done wrong... we have not sought You” Daniel 9: 3,13

Today, Wednesday 9th March is 'Ash Wednesday' in the Christian Calendar. However, if you Google "Ash Wednesday", there are as many references to the Ash Wednesday bushfires that so tragically struck Victoria on Wednesday 16 February 1983 as there are to the Christian festival of the same name! These fires burned a total of around 210,000 hectares, with 2,080 homes destroyed and 47 lives lost. Such fires not only reduce everything to black ash, but lead to a sober reflection on all that has been lost and destroyed, and to what we hold dear and important in life.

Similarly, Ash Wednesday for Christians marks the beginning of Lent as a time of more sober reflection on what was lost and destroyed between mankind and God back when sin entered our world and on what are the important things in life.

Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of placing ashes on the forehead – usually in the sign of the cross, as a sign of repentance and of our need for God. This custom was introduced by Pope Gregory I, who was Bishop of Rome from to 590 A.D. to 604 A.D. It reminds us that 'repentance' is so important to accessing God’s wonderful gift of life. Repentance means to change direction – to allow God to turn us from enemies into friends. That is a big change of direction in anyone’s life!

Sometimes it can seem like the ‘fires’ of life level us into ashes. Yet, as new growth shoots on what looks to be totally dead burned trees, so too new life has come out of what looked like the failure of God’s Son dying an inglorious death on a cross! As Jesus rose from the grave, so too all can have hope that new life is possible. It’s worth some ‘sober’ yet joyful reflection both today on Ash Wednesday and in the coming days of Lent!

Dear Parents,

Every fortnight we hold a whole school Assembly on a Monday afternoon prior to the end of school. Over the years it has developed (and been encouraged) that the students lead this time for the school community. This week's Assembly reflected the confidence and enthusiasm of students right across the year levels. Ably led this week by Alicia Barron and Tom Rooney (SRC reps for their classes) there were reports on the yr.4 camp, the yr. 3 excursion, the visit by the army, a Courier Cup report and a House Captain report. All the students were comfortable in speaking in front of 360 of their peers. It is exciting to be able to offer the students these sorts of activities where they can be risk-takers and grow through the experience. It is all part of a well balanced program that is offered at St. Michael's. May you have a blessed week,

Mr. Glenn Schultz, Spiritual Life Director, St Michael’s Lutheran Church

Prayer suggestions:
- We thank God for the opportunities and programs that we offer the students so that they can develop into well balanced individuals.
- We ask God to continue to be with the people of Christchurch as they begin to rebuild their lives.
- We thank God for the men and women who serve the country in the armed forces protecting our land and people.

Also pray for the following families:

Clinton, Compton, Conlay, Conolly, Cook, Cooper & Cox

Shane
**Myschool Website**

As you would be aware version 2 of this website was launched last week. There is range of information on this site which provides you with a ‘snapshot’ of the school. In discussions with many of you, I know that you are aware that any school is more than testing results; it is also the culture, the community, the teaching and learning process and the environment in which the students learn and play. NAPLAN results don’t tell the full story and should not be used in isolation; they are a snapshot of performance over time and are designed to assist teachers to celebrate successes and help improve the learning program for the students. Perhaps what intrigued me the most on this site was the comparison of financial data (again not an exhaustive indicator). Once again whilst there are aspects of this data that have been challenged, it appears that on a dollar for dollar basis St. Michael’s offers extremely good value in the education of students. Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss any aspect of the data published on this site.  

Mr. Paterson.

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**Enrolments 2012 (and 2013)**

We are in the process of ensuring all enrolments are up to date for the next two years. Any children beginning in Reception in 2012 should be recorded on file with a ‘Confirmation of Enrolment’ form (you would have paid a $150 deposit at the time). If you have not lodged (or received) this form for 2012, could you please contact the office as a matter of urgency – this would be especially applicable to families new to the school this year. Secondly we are about to begin sibling enrolment for 2013. Could you please ensure that you have lodged an ‘Application for Enrolment’ form if you have a child to begin in this year. Each child needs to have a separate form. Thankyou.

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**In Sympathy**

We remember the Norton family (Mackenzie yr.7) as they mourn the loss of Steven’s father last week. May God provide them with comfort during this time.

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**Family Night**

A huge family night will be held on Saturday 9th April for all St. Michael’s families.  
Beginning at 6.00pm the P. & F. will hold a brief AGM, incorporating a Bible presentation to every Reception child (this will be given to them by their buddies). This activity will then be followed by a family bush dance. Held for the first time last year, it was a huge success and more fun is expected this year. Funds raised on the evening will go towards this year’s Pedal Prix team. A BBQ and limited bar facilities will be available on the evening. Further information will be provided in the coming weeks but all families are encouraged to come and join us for the entire evening.

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**Email Addresses**

In the last two newsletters we have asked for a preferred email address for each family so that we can begin the process of emailing school correspondence (beginning with financial). If this address has not been supplied we will use the mother’s address as the default.

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**Flag Raising**

Last week we were visited by Gunner Madden from the Woodside army base who spoke to several of the classes on correct etiquette when dealing with flags. After sharing that the army are known as the protectors of the flag, he went on to explain how to hold a flag, how to raise it, how to treat it and how to dispose of it when it is old. It was a very interesting talk and the students learnt quite a lot.

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**Canteen Helpers 2011**

**Term 1 Week 7**

**Monday:** 14th March  
NO CANTEEN – Public Holiday

**Wednesday:** 16th March  
Tanya Jeffries
Middle School Meeting
Could you please return the forms that were distributed last week re the meeting being held on Thursday 24th (7:30pm).

Courier Cup
Last Thursday 3rd of March The St Michael’s Swimming team competed at the 2011 Courier Cup swimming carnival held at Mountain Pool, Mt Barker. After a cool start to the morning the weather cleared and our swimmers put in a solid performance. A special mention must go to Brock Jeffries who came 1st in breaststroke and back stroke and 2nd in freestyle. Matilda Kell and Taylor Grivell also swam very well both receiving 2nd place finishes. A huge thanks must go to Mrs Mahomet for the role she played in training and getting the swimmers ready for their heats. Also to those parents who helped out on the day with marshalling and time keeping. Thanks for the support.

KO Cricket
Due to the huge amounts of rain Hahndorf received on Tuesday morning the cricket match against Eastern Fleurieu was cancelled. It will now be played tomorrow. Fingers crossed the weather is kind and the pitch dries up.

Coles Sport For Schools
In second week of this term the sports shed opened with an abundance of new equipment due to the vouchers the school community donated for the Coles sport for schools program. This equipment has been well received by the students and we are seeing a more active play yard at recess and lunch. Thanks to all those that donated their shopping vouchers.

Curriculum Matters
George Walker was director general of the International Baccalaureate (IB) from 1999 to December 2005. In a recent IB position paper, East is East and West is West (International Baccalaureate Organization 2010), he wrote about the IB learner profile, questioning how international its perspective is. The learner profile provides a clear and explicit statement of what is expected of students, teachers and school administrators in terms of learning. The paper argues at length that the attributes of the learner profile are largely associated with Western values, and questions whether they are appropriate for Asian cultures. If you would like to hear more about that, please email me and I will pass on a copy of the paper. As part of his argument, and what interested me most, was the way he sorted and classified the learner profile attributes under the following three headings:

The active participation of the learner
IB learners strive to be: Inquirers … Communicators … Risk-takers … They are encouraged to show independence in learning; express ideas and information confidently; exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively; approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought.

The personal responsibility of the learner
IB learners strive to be: Thinkers … Knowledgeable … Balanced … Reflective … They are encouraged to develop their natural curiosity; develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines; take responsibility for their own actions; be able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations; be brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

The moral development of the learner
IB learners strive to be: Principled … Caring … Open-minded … They are encouraged to act with integrity and honesty; show empathy, compassion and respect; be open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities.

It challenged me to think again about the learner profile and question why Walker chose active participation, personal responsibility and moral development as his categories. They are important attributes of a learner, emphasising the active role we expect children to take in their learning, in comparison with the approach where the teacher is the fount of all knowledge, filling up the ‘empty vessels’ before them.

John Dow
PYP Coordinator
From the Year 1 M Class
(Ms Marshall)
Over the last couple of weeks the children have engaged in many different literacy games to enhance their sight word and sound knowledge. We have used the computers as well to play some sight word and number games. Here are a few of the games that we have played.

From the Community Carer
Tegan Howard
Lessons I Learned From my Parents #4

Look after your family, it’s the only one you’ve got.

Growing up, my family was my biggest cheer squad, my greatest support, and the first place I would turn if I needed help. They knew everything about me, and loved me anyway. My dad was my hero and my best friend, my mum was my favourite shopping partner and my confidant, and my brother was my playmate and my closest ally. Friends came and went, but my family were always by my side. I loved my family purely because they were my family, and I was (and still am) fiercely loyal to them. I knew from a young age that they were my family, and we all had to take care of each other, because we were going to be a family forever, so we had better get good at it!

We face so many pressures and demands during the day, and often they work their way into our families as well. When this happens, our family stops becoming a safe haven and becomes a time bomb waiting to explode. Often we give our “leftovers” to our family: whatever energy and time we have left over at the end of the day after we have given it out to everyone else.

However, I think our family deserves, and needs, the best of us, because as Princess Diana said: Family is the most important thing in the world”.

You are the only parents your children will have. Be the best you can for them. Your children will have their siblings as their siblings for life. Teach them to respect, care for, nurture and protect each other. You will always be a family. Don’t take it for granted, it is the most precious gift you have been given.

Family challenge for the week: Tell each member of your family three things you appreciate about them, and thank them for being a valuable member of your family!