The Healing Touch

A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean'. Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing, he said. Be clean!' (Mark 1:40-41)

If you are sick you might stay home until you get better. You might take something to make you feel better or you might end up going to the doctor. If it is something more serious then you might visit a specialist and require some surgery or other treatment. We have processes in place to help us get better.

A big part of Jesus’ ministry was about making people feel better. Once word got around, lots of people came to him with their sicknesses and diseases and Jesus used his power to heal them.

But there was more to the healing ministry of Jesus than just taking people’s physical problem away. Think of the verse above with Jesus and the leper. This leper would have been forced to live away from people because of his skin disease. The first thing Jesus did, BEFORE he took the leprosy away, was to reach out and touch him! I imagine this would have meant as much to this man as the healing that followed.

Jesus reaches out to touch us in the midst of whatever pain and struggles we are facing. Knowing that Jesus is willing to help us and be with us can bring us great healing.

Dear Jesus, thank you for the ways that you reach into my life to embrace my hurts. Help me to trust in you for help. Amen.

Dear Parents,

A new year brings with it the need to set up routines, place parameters and expectations, build new relationships. These are some of the reasons that this week's parent information nights are held. I trust that you have taken (or will take) the opportunity to attend these sessions so that you can gain a clearer understanding of what will occur in your child’s class this year. I believe it is vitally important that open communication occurs between school and home and I trust that these sessions have been the first step in this process.

God bless,

Shane

Prayer suggestions:

- Whilst we thank God for the rain that will once again replenish the Murray we ask God to be with those affected families in Qld and NSW who now face a major clean-up task.
- We thank God for the joys of the first week of school. May He continue to walk beside us as we settle into routines.
- We thank God for the comfort, love and support our families and friends offer us.

Also pray for the following families:

Zumbo, Zander, Wuttke, Wright, Winspear, Winn, Wilson, Paterson
Dogs
Please be aware that dogs are not allowed on the school ground. Permission can be sought from the class teacher if the dog is the object of 'sharing' time. Thankyou in for your cooperation with this. Mr. Paterson

Forms
Thankyou to those families who have managed to find the time to complete and return the forms that were distributed last week. If you have not yet returned these could you please do so as a matter of urgency. Thanks.

Fiji News
As many of you know we have a sister school relationship with the International School, Nadi. Last year we were fortunate to welcome during the year a visit from their staff and also some students. Due to flooding during this last week the school has only started their new school year this week (about two weeks late). A group of 12 of our students will be visiting Nadi at the end of this month.

Fiji Need Your Help
We have a collection of 11 boxes of new books to help our Nadi sister school. Two years ago, the school lost all of their books in floods. While floods in recent weeks have affected the school, they aren't at the high levels recorded previously. The books have free transport to Fiji from a warehouse in Melbourne. Does anyone have contacts that could get these boxes to Melbourne? Please contact Jayne in the library if you have any ideas.

Mandatory Reporting Training
If you or another adult in your extended family wish to assist in the school it is essential that two requirements are met. These have been described in detail several times since the start of the year. Two further training sessions for this will take place next Wednesday (15th) at 9:00am and 2:30pm in the meeting room above the library. Mr. Paterson

Congratulations
Congratulations are extended to the Roberts/Trengove Family (Harper Rec N) on the birth of Indigo weighing in at 4.260kg (9lb 3oz) on the 29th of January, 2012. May God continue to bless Jeremy and Jane as they welcome their little girl into their family.

School Attendance
a. School begins at 8:50am., at which time teachers mark the roll. Any students who are not present at this time are marked as late. It is important that students are at school ready to start the day at this time. We do understand there are the proverbial 'bad' mornings but these should be minimal. Lateness is recorded on the school reports.
b. Appointments: During the day students may need to attend appointments for a variety of reasons. All students are to be signed in and out at the front office by parents (or responsible adult) when this occurs.
c. Absences: The school has an absence line which can be used out of school hours to leave a message. It is law for parents to inform the school of absences and why. If notice is not given you will be contacted seeking reasons for the absence.
d. Holidays: If you are planning holidays (or an extended period away from school) during school time, there are certain requirements (under law) which need to be fulfilled
   - The school is to be informed in writing (letter or email) of any planned holidays (or absences) of more than five days and less than four weeks.
   - Any planned holidays (or absences) longer than four weeks require the completion of a prescribed form from DECS. These are available on request. Please ensure you allow a month or so for this form to be processed.

Canteen Helpers 2012 Term 1 Week 3
Monday: 13th February
Kylie Mansfield & Mel O'Sullivan

Wednesday: 15th February
Narelle Schaefer & Peta Byrne

Friday: 17th February
Mel O'Sullivan & Peta Byrne
Home Work Survey Findings

The homework grid was introduced at St Michael’s in 2011 for Years 2 to 7. An information session was held at the start of 2010 at the parent information evenings and many parents took the opportunity to hear about the rationale behind the changes. Later in Term 1, parent feedback on the life skills component of the grid was requested. After a period of implementation, a feedback survey was offered to all school families via Survey Monkey during Term 4. It was completed by 95 out of a possible 173 respondents (55%). Thank you to all parents who took the time to complete the grid. There was a range of comments in support of the grid, and those that provided constructive criticism about particular aspects of the grid. All responses have been read and have been given careful consideration.

The results are summarised as follows.

Between 82 and 96% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:
- I am pleased with the homework grid initiative implemented at St Michael’s.
- My children are more willing to complete homework using the homework grid.
- There is a balance between academic, physical and creative activities, and ‘family life’ and life skills.

Two other questions were asked with room for a written response. Some comments were:

Q: What are the strengths of this approach to homework?
- As my children are involved with sport and creative activities outside school, this framework acknowledges the effort they are putting in to their overall education.
- Love the fortnight time frame. If you have a really busy week you are able to schedule the homework into your circumstances.
- We were asked to show our child’s homework to a SPELD Psychologist as she was being assessed for learning difficulties earlier in the year, and the Psychologist told us that it was one of the best homework approaches she has seen in all her years of practice. Very pleasing to hear!

With this support from the school community, St Michael’s will continue using the homework grid for students in Year 2 to 7. In addition, the issues raised above of: feedback from teachers, the inclusion of spelling and mathematics, setting work to be completed on particular nights, and the amount of work set, will be discussed with the teaching staff and monitored over the year.

Please contact me if you would like to provide further feedback about homework or any other aspect of the curriculum at St Michael’s.

John Dow
Deputy Principal/ PYP coordinator

Q: Is there anything else you would like to say about the homework grid?
- Would like to see more feedback from some teachers on the completed tasks from students.
- I would like to see more variety in the grid. Most weeks there are 1 or 2 grids that are the same and they tend to just do that one or two without thinking about it because they have the same answer from the week before.
- I think the grid is a good concept but needs to be revised as to what is put in it. I would like to see the spelling words coming home to be done like they used to be (on a grid to be completed each night). I would also like to see math work coming home.
- Teachers need to stop assigning particular tasks to particular nights or not allowing multiple tasks to be completed on the same day as this defeats the purpose.

School Crossing Monitors 2012 - Term 1 Week 3

AM: Claudia Doecke, Tianna Faulkner & Maddie Johnston
PM: Tom Hill, Rohan Magrath & Maddie Scholz
Library Update
Library borrowing has commenced for 2012. All students are asked to have a library bag to protect borrowed books on their journey home. Please ensure that your child has one. Books are borrowed for up to two weeks and can be returned at any time to the return slot, at lunch time on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday or during borrowing time.

Scholastic Book Club & Koorong Kids
Book Club information for these two groups is sent home at least once a term. If you wish to purchase items, you are asked to return the order form with correct money to the office by the due date advertised in the newsletter. Last week’s scholastic orders are due in by next Wednesday the 15th. You are under no obligation to purchase items but when you do, the school is given the opportunity to purchase materials through a percentage of sales. Orders usually arrive back in school for distribution within 2 weeks. Scholastic are holding a Book Sale on Feb 24 and 25, at their warehouse in Norwood. If you are interested, please see the poster outside the library. Koorong Kids orders are due by the 15th March using a similar system of rewards for the school.

Scholastic Book Club Co-Ordinator
We are seeking a volunteer parent to take on the role of collating, ordering and distributing Scholastic Orders. This requires someone to be available for ½ a day to collate and order and ½ a day for distribution. Orders are usually placed twice a term. If you think you can assist, please see Mrs Zadow in the library for further details.

From the Community Carer
Tegan Howard

SAVE THE DATE!!
Friday 9 March is our Family Fun Night. This is a night not to be missed! We have a huge range of fun activities for both kids and parents. It is a great opportunity to meet new families, catch up and hang out with good friends, and be a part of this great school community. There will be food stalls, face painting and lots of games for the kids, competitions and crazy activities for the older kids, and a special surprise competition for the adults (I’m not going to ruin the fun and tell you what it is, so you better just come along and find out for yourself!). So go and grab your diary and block out Friday 9 March, 5:30-8pm. We would love to see you all there!!