Dear Parents and Friends of St Anthony’s

Some years ago a magazine challenged its young readers to submit short poems that dealt with the topic, “Nature”. One entry that drew some acclaim for the manner in which it interpreted “short”, was a poem titled “Fleas” which stated, rather simply, that “Adam had ‘em.” Perhaps the author was bringing together a problem that his dog was experiencing and a saying that parents used to defend their own experiences of life: “That’s been around since Adam was a boy”.

Less easy to offer an explanation about is an even shorter poem which states “I, why?” This poem, probably, has been uttered by millions of people, each using their own particular words as they probe the mystery of who they are. One such person was Jesus, who on the last night of His life knelt amongst the olive trees and agonized over the prospect of what lay ahead of Him. He almost begged His Father, “All things are possible, take, if You will, this cup from me. Nevertheless, not My will but Your will be done.” Luke 22:42

A second person to publicly confront the purpose of his existence was St Paul who, as Saul of Tarsus, was a devout Jew and a Pharisee. He could not believe it when he heard that people were saying that a crucified carpenter was the Messiah whom God had sent to save the world, because it was so at variance with what he had expected the Messiah to be. Saul had expected the Messiah to come like another David figure, with a sword in his hand to wipe out the enemies of Israel and establish Jerusalem as the new Rome.

So, he set out to destroy the believers of this heresy. After witnessing the execution of Stephen, the first Christian Martyr, he was on his way to Damascus, when he had a life altering experience, described as a blinding light that knocked him off his horse. He had encountered something outside of himself that caused him to reorganize his life almost entirely. He spent a number of years working through what had occurred and then set out to preach the “crucified carpenter” to the nations around Israel. His preaching condemned such things as greed, lust, anger, slander, disrespect, lying and racial divisions and extolled the virtues of compassion, kindness, patience, forgiveness, love, peace and gratitude. Colossians 3:1-17.

The well known author, C.S. Lewis, once wrote, “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen; not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” Maybe this Lent we can devote our attention to ponder the “I, why?” of our existence by using our Christian heritage to help us to see more clearly the purpose of our life.

In a culture addicted to self-indulgence, can we do as Christ and St Paul did and serve others with our time, energy, money; can we be agents for reconciliation between estranged family members; can we listen to and understand those who are different to us; can we, in our workaholic culture, take time out to pray for ourselves, for others in our life, for others who are not in our life but are in wars and droughts and oppression somewhere in our world; can we, as St Paul did, take time out, use the forty days of Lent to make adjustments to our way of life, to be more obviously Christian in the way we give expression to our “I, why?”

“Spirit of God within me,
Help me this Lent to grow in gratitude for my life.
Help me to reveal the face of Christ,
to other people as they enter into my life.

Amen.”

Peace and Best Wishes

Welcome to Week 5. The past five weeks have been a very busy time for our school community. Our students have been considerably patient and settled considering the amount of rain over the past weeks restricting their play time and access to Area C. The majority of grades have completed the Mathematical Assessment Interview (MAI), Early Years Assessment (EYA) and planned assessment at the beginning of the academic year. Well done to all and thank you to the teachers for their commitment to our students.

Many events have happened so far this year:
• A successful swimming carnival. Thank you to the teachers and parents for their organisation and assistance. A group of students are attending the Diocesan Swimming Carnival on Friday. Miss Renee Small will be attending the carnival to support the students and assist with the organisation of the day.
• The Beginning of the School Year Mass was well attended and orientated our school leaders into their leadership role for 2012. It was a very emotional and proud experience for the mums and dads.

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• The Beginning of the School Year Mass was well attended and orientated our school leaders into their leadership role for 2012. It was a very emotional and proud experience for the mums and dads.
• Mrs Brownlow and Mrs Knox visited the Year 5 students to present information on the Parish group – Prayer Force 1. I am very keen to support Prayer Force 1 and encourage parents to support their child by promoting their participation in the group.
• Pancake Tuesday was well attended and I heard the food was very scrumptious. St Anthony’s is so lucky to have wonderful parents who give of their time and talent to cater for such a community-building event.
• The first School Community Group meeting for 2012 was held on the 20th February. Unfortunately there was only a small representation of the parent community. I thank the parents who did attend the meeting, however, I believe that more parents should make the commitment to attend the meetings and support the School Community Group Executive with their work to support all students and staff in our school.

It is a great opportunity to discuss matters in relation to your children. I wish to advise an outcome from the meeting was that the Infant students K – 2 would be included in the rotations of Area C in Term 2.
• A special thank you to Miss Renee Small and Mrs Elizabeth Heness for supporting the students who attended the Cumberland Zone Swimming Carnival last Thursday.
• Last Wednesday the St Anthony’s School community participated in the Ash Wednesday Liturgical celebrations. Primary students attended the Parish Church and infant students participated in the liturgy at school. I wish to acknowledge the wonderful work that Mr Robert Barden and the Religious Team do to make the liturgies prayerful and spiritual.
• Last week the Parramatta Eels team visited with the Year 6 students presenting a video and talk session. A number of students were able to obtain autographs during the session.

• The school leadership team continues to work with teachers on improving the learning and teaching at St Anthony’s. Mrs Digwood is working with a Teacher Educator, Mrs Tammy Roosen, on building teacher capacity by modelling mathematical learning and teaching experiences to cater to the needs of all students. Over the last two years the Numeracy school goals have focussed on working with teachers on mathematical strategies to enhance student learning, including Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 4. In 2012 the learning focus will be extended to Years 5 & 3. I also wish to advise that Miss Elizabeth Younes will be attending the EMU course to become a Numeracy Leader.
• Yesterday Mrs Patricia Charlton and myself attended a workshop on the Quality Catholic School Survey. A letter regarding the survey was sent home with students on the 13th February. More information has been included in this newsletter.
• The Meet and Greet meetings were well attended and a great opportunity for you to share your child’s story. If you have not taken the opportunity to meet with the teachers, I encourage you to contact your child’s teacher to make an appointment.

God Bless

Cheryl Brown
Principal

St Anthony’s School
Newsletter

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Last Wednesday, our school, in unity with our fellow parishioners and the universal Church, celebrated the beginning of the season of Lent.

The season of Lent is a forty-day long period of preparation for the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter time. The period of forty days reminds us of the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness before beginning his public ministry and was faced with temptation.

Many people at this time of year make the final preparations for their initiation into the Catholic Church. We offer our prayerful support, and by witnessing their commitment to their faith, we are challenged to renew ours as well. We do this through the traditional penitential practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In this way, we live by the words spoken as our foreheads were marked with ashes last Wednesday: “repent, and believe in the Gospel.”

Thank you to all those who contributed to the preparation and celebration of our Ash Wednesday Mass at the Church and our Celebration of the Word at school.

Over the coming weeks, our Monday assembly will include a short prayer service to mark the passing of the weeks of the Lenten season. Different grades will take responsibility leading these services. Thank you to the students in Year 4 who lead the prayer on Monday.

Project Compassion

Last Wednesday, a Project Compassion box was distributed to each family which can be used at home. Project Compassion is an annual initiative that is very well supported across Australia. We hope that at St Anthony’s, we too can play our part in making the world a fairer and more hope-filled place for all. As a school we will engage in some activities to raise our awareness of the needs of the poor during Lent. Students will be encouraged to join in our orange-themed mufti day to celebrate Harmony Day on 21 March.

Staff will play their part in supporting Project Compassion with a Soup Lunch Day and a Fish and Chips Friday, which will hopefully be a positive and enjoyable way for us to raise awareness and much-needed funds.

If you do intend to return your Project Compassion box to school to make your donation, please remember that boxes can be returned during week 9 of the term (26 – 30 March).

Sacramental Process for Children Already Baptised

Over the last couple of weeks, I have had the opportunity to meet with Fr Paul, Mary Cook (Parish Pastoral Associate) and Kristen Borg (Parish Sacramental Process) to discuss the preparation and celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation this year. Students who celebrated First Reconciliation in 2011 are now encouraged to celebrate First Communion this year. Those who celebrated First
Communion are now encouraged to prepare for and celebrate Confirmation.

In the coming weeks, the parish will distribute the latest dates and details for the sacraments this year. Please take note of these as there are some changes from dates that were distributed in 2011.

Upcoming Dates
Sat Mar 3  Men’s Breakfast at Parish Hall 7am
Fri Mar 9  Parish Mass – Yrs 1, 3 & 6, 9.30am
Fri Mar 16  Parish Mass – Yr 2 & 4, 9.30am
Tues Mar 20  Prayer at Assembly, Feast of St Patrick
Wed Mar 21  Prayer at Assembly, Feast of St Joseph
Kind Regards
Robert Barden
Religious Education Coordinator

LITERACY NEWS

We have had a great start to the year with lots of exciting literacy activities happening in all classrooms. I have seen many wonderful stories being read or listened to, and some fabulous writing samples. I hope your child shares these great experiences with you when he or she comes home. Congratulations to all the children who participated in the Executive Director’s Reading Challenge during. A special congratulations goes to Jasmine Sarkis in Year 3 who was the lucky winner of an I-pod touch.

Louise Korni
Literacy Coordinator

MY SCHOOL WEBSITE – www.myschool.edu.au/

The MySchool website went live last week for the 2011 Naplan Results. I wish to advise that our school’s results have greatly improved over the past two years.

In 2009, the Year 3 students were at or slightly above state average on all scales (Literacy, Reading, Spelling, Grammar, Writing and Numeracy) and by the time these students were tested again (two years later) in 2011 as Year 5 students they have improved by ‘significantly more than the mean two year learning gain’. If we were to present this as a figure we would say they improved by over 123% in Literacy, 120% in Grammar, 142% in Spelling, 121% in Numeracy, 109% in Reading and 129% in Writing. At St Anthony’s we continue with our school goals to further improve in all areas of the school curriculum. Naplan is only one part of the Assessment regime, however, the data is valuable information. All staff are engaged in the analysis of the Naplan data to provide a challenging and supportive curriculum for all students.

WHAT’S HAPPENING AT ST ANTHONY’S

New Resources
Last week the ‘Earn and Learn ’ resources arrived at St Anthony’s.

Beginning of Year Assessment
Our Kindergarten and Year One teachers have been extremely busy since the beginning of term implementing the Early Years Assessment. Research has demonstrated that “The assessment of all children by their teachers at school entry and regularly during the early years of schooling is of critical importance to the teaching of reading, and in particular, to identify children who are at risk of not making adequate progress.” The literacy and numeracy tools that have been administered give the teachers an opportunity to understand a child’s beliefs, attitudes, strengths, thinking processes and skills. Teachers use assessment instruments to individually interview students, and learn about how students think, and what they know. Student assessment in the early years has significant benefits for schools including:
• Informing planning of learning/teaching opportunities fort K/Yr 1 students
• Identifying vulnerable students for targeted early intervention (reading recovery intervention and extending mathematical understanding program)

In the Parramatta Diocese the assessment tools used are the Literacy Early Years Assessment (EYA), Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement and Numeracy Mathematics Assessment Interview (MAI) and Oral Language Assessment. A big thank you to our teachers and younger students for all your hard work.

Kind Regards
Patricia Charlton
Assistant Principal

STUDENT OF THE WEEK 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KG</th>
<th>Elizabeth Sarkis</th>
<th>KW</th>
<th>Aluel Deng</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1G</td>
<td>Blake Murray</td>
<td>1W</td>
<td>Clare Tran</td>
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<tr>
<td>2G</td>
<td>Elia Ashor</td>
<td>2W</td>
<td>Alex Jacobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3G</td>
<td>Renata Busic</td>
<td>3W</td>
<td>Paige Cunneen</td>
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<tr>
<td>4G</td>
<td>Eleora Augustine</td>
<td>4W</td>
<td>Brad Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5G</td>
<td>Alanan Guerrero</td>
<td>5W</td>
<td>Tiana Nakat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6G</td>
<td>Caladen Temmo</td>
<td>6W</td>
<td>Jake McFadden</td>
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This list will be published again in next week’s newsletter with a photo of the children.

St Anthony’s School
Newsletter
Catherine McAuley Westmead holds a number of School Open mornings throughout the year. There will be an Open Morning specifically for Year 7 2013 enrolments on Wednesday 14th March 2012. This morning will give interested parents and students the opportunity to tour our school on a normal school day. You will be able to view our school grounds and facilities, go into classrooms and see them in action and meet our students and teachers.

To book places for a school tour on one of these tour mornings please contact our School Reception on 9849 9100.

There will also be a Year 7 2013 Enrolment Information Evening on Monday, 19th March from 6:30 – 7:30pm. This evening will provide further information on the school and the enrolment process. Completed enrolment forms may be lodged at this meeting. Prior to the presentations there will be a further opportunity to tour the school with school tours running at 5:30pm and 5:45pm.

Please RSVP for the Year 7 Enrolment Information Evening by phoning the School Reception.

**CALENDAR UPDATE**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>2 Mar</td>
<td>Clean Up Australia Day school activity&lt;br&gt;Diocesan Swimming Carnival Mt Druitt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>4 Mar</td>
<td>Clean Up Australia Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>12 Mar</td>
<td>Year 2 Incursion&lt;br&gt;QCS Survey will be sent home to random parents&lt;br&gt;12-23 Mar&lt;br&gt;Timeline to complete QCS Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>13 Mar</td>
<td>Years 5 &amp; 6 complete QCS Survey online</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>16 Mar</td>
<td>Years 4 &amp; 6 Parent Night Out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>19 Mar</td>
<td>School Community Group Meeting 7.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>21 Mar</td>
<td>Harmony Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>22 Mar</td>
<td>Education Mass for all Diocesan Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>23 Mar</td>
<td>Pupil Free Day – Staff Development Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>26 Mar</td>
<td>St Anthony’s School Athletics Carnival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>31 Mar</td>
<td>St Anthony’s Open Day – 2013 enrolments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>2 Apr</td>
<td>Spring Fair Meeting 7.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>4 Apr</td>
<td>Easter Hat Parade 9.30am&lt;br&gt;School Community Group Easter Egg Raffle – all day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs</td>
<td>5 Apr</td>
<td>Holy Thursday Easter Liturgy&lt;br&gt;Last Day of Term 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>23 Apr</td>
<td>Term 2 return to school</td>
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Please note that a new price list (purple form) went home on Monday.

**CAI**