Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had a wonderful start to the year, each day reflecting on a different aspect of our 5 Ways of Being.

On Monday we spoke about ‘Be welcoming’. I read the story Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley to the school and we talked in classes about why it is so wonderful that we are all different from each other. We welcome difference.

Yesterday we spoke about ‘Be respectful’. We reflected that the simplest way of being respectful is to use manner with everyone we meet.

Today we have talked about ‘Be safe’. We talked about making sure we have our hats, using safe hands and safe feet with each other and being in the right place at the right time and on the right task.

During the next few days we will explore ‘Be responsible’ and ‘Be the best you can be’.

Welcome
I would like to welcome many new families to our school. Welcome to all of our Kindergarten students who are enjoying a rest day today.

Welcome also to our other new students from Year 1 to Year 6. It is a joy to have you join us in our journey.

Congratulations
Matthew Foster, our Violin tutor, had a baby boy over the holiday period. We offer our sincerest congratulations to him and his family and wish them well as they settle into a new family arrangement.

Open House
We will hold an Open House & BBQ next Thursday evening, 11 February. Parents are invited to come into the school/classroom with their child between 5.00pm and 6.30pm to meet the teacher, see the learning environment, collect information about class operations for the year and share a sausage sizzle with other families.

While the classrooms will be open for the duration of this time, teachers will run a few brief sessions for parents to come if they wish to hear directly from them. Please see the note that is coming home today with more information.

Thank you to the Parents and Friends who have provided the free sausages for the occasion.

Year of Mercy

As a part of the Year of Mercy across the Catholic Church our school theme this year is:

Let Mercy live here

We have chosen these words to inspire us to action and to highlight that Mercy is a way of life for all those who are Disciples of Christ. Our students will learn about some of the Works of Mercy and how they can live these in their daily lives.

Class Parent Representatives
Each year a parent or two volunteer to be the Class Representative. It is a very simple but crucial role that helps parents to connect with each other and assists in building a supportive school community. A note will come home today to invite parents to volunteer to be that person. Please use the tear off slip to nominate or email the Front Office (Office.StBenedicts@cg.catholic.edu.au) to let us know of your interest. Someone will then be in contact with you.

Student and Family Information Update
We have also sent home today a record of the information we have about your child on our system at school. Please take the time to look it over and be sure that the information is correct, particularly all contact details for carers, parents and emergency contacts. With the information updated we can
communicate with you directly and quickly should the need arise. Please return the signed form, with or without any amendments by **Monday 15th February**.

**Student Health and Medical Information**
Those students who have specific medical and health needs that are important for us to know about or assist in the management of will also receive a new set of forms for our records. It is important that these are kept up to date each year. While we recognise that for these families this can be ‘form overload’ at this time of year we very much appreciate knowing that we have the latest management plans and information to help ensure your child is well cared for and safe at school. If your child was at St Benedict’s for school photos in 2015 we are happy to attach our copy of this photo to the form.

**Catholic Schools Soccer Carnival 2016**
We are the hosts of this event at the end of this term. A meeting of the committee will be held at **5.00pm** next **Tuesday 9th February** in the School Library. If you are a committee member or just interested in helping in any capacity with its organisation then you are most welcome to attend. Every child in the school will benefit from the funds raised for years to come. If there is only one contribution you make to fundraising in our school during the next few years then this is the one.

I am looking forward to a wonderful year ahead, continuing to celebrate the achievements of our students and our partnerships with families.

Matthew Garton
Principal

**CATHOLIC COMMUNITY LIFE**

**Changes in liturgy times**
Gathering together to pray and celebrate our life together in Christ is important in our community. This year we will continue to celebrate Mass together once each month at 10.00am on a Friday unless there is a specific feast day to be celebrated. All other liturgies will be celebrated in the hall directly after morning assembly to allow parents to more easily join us. The calendar on the school website will remain current with all of the dates and times of our community liturgical celebrations.

**FIRST FRIDAY MASS**
Our First Friday Mass for February will be this Friday, 5 February at 10:00am. It will be our Opening School Mass for 2016. Year Six Leaders will be blessed and receive their badges during this Mass. All members of our school community are warmly invited to join us in celebrating this Eucharistic liturgy. Parents are welcome to join staff in the Library after Mass for morning tea.

**ASH WEDNESDAY**
Lent begins early this year and as such Ash Wednesday is next week, 10 February. Mass will be at 10:00am at St Benedict’s church. All students K-6 will participate in this liturgical celebration and receive ashes for the start of our Lenten journey. Families are most welcome to join with us for this mass. As a day of fasting and reflection there will be no morning tea afterwards.

**Year of Mercy**
As we take part in this Jubilee Year of Mercy we will regularly pause to reflect on God’s everlasting mercy and where we can see God’s face of mercy in our world. The following reflection came across my email during the holidays:

And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness." And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God.… Luke 13: 11-13

Holy Scripture and our Christian tradition offer us many rich words to describe the mystery of God. Like each facet of the most beautiful diamond, words such as loving kindness, justice, peace, faithfulness and mercy offer us brilliant glimpses into the nature and mystery of God. Gospel stories have the same purpose and many could be used to demonstrate the mercy of God. The Gospel story above may not be well-known to some as it is not included in the Cycles of Readings for Sundays in Year C; yet it offers us powerful insights into how the mercy of God works, and its effects on our lives.
Some years ago I had a back spasm which left me bent over unable to straighten up for some time. This has led me to try to imagine what life would be like for this woman, being ‘weighed down’ for 18 years. Her vision and in fact her whole perspective on life would be dramatically altered – reduced, impoverished, depleted. To relate to others when she could only see their feet and legs would be frustrating and isolating. Imagine the scene: Jesus, busy in the synagogue, can’t help but notice this woman who stands out in a crowd. He calls out to her and invites her into relationship.... I wonder how she would have felt after so many years of awkward attempts at relating. But in her rigid state, still hopeful of having her burden lifted after 18 years, she responds to his call. I can see Jesus tenderly bending over towards her so that he could meet her at her level... eye to eye....where she was. He too must become bent double to make eye contact with her...to relate. Imagine that moment of encounter; and with Jesus’ words of invitation, imagine the muscles of her whole body loosening, relaxing and then straining, hoping, seeking a new and better kind of life. Jesus’ presence, his words and his touch opened this woman to a whole new vision of life: a life of wholeness, uprightness, wonder and new possibilities. I can imagine her dancing with joy at her experience of freedom and release. From this story, we see Christ, as Mercy, always looking out for the downtrodden and prepared to offer them healing at all levels in the interaction. From the woman, we are reminded to remain hopeful when life weighs heavily on us and to be open to responding to ‘life’ whenever and wherever the invitation is made. God comes to us disguised as our life. Christ was alive when the world began, yet I myself have seen him with my own eyes and listened to him speak. I have touched him with my own hands. He is God’s message of life. 1 John 1:1

For your reflection:
• When has Mercy invited me to ‘new life’?
• What form did Mercy take?
• What did you hear, see, feel?
• What was the effect?
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Meaghan Younger
Religious Education Coordinator

SCHOOL FEES INFORMATION
SYSTEMIC SCHOOL FAMILY ORDER
A letter will be sent home today requesting information on the placement of students in the Catholic Systemic School system so CEO Tuition and Building Fund fees can be accurately applied to each student on our school financial system. Please fill in this information and return it to the Front Office by Monday, 8 February 2016.

INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOL FEES
A brief explanation of each of the fees/levies for 2016 School Fees will be sent home today with the Direct Debit Increment Payments breakdown for those parents who would like to set up Direct Debit payment system. Please note that in the per week breakdown the Direct Debit Payment does not include $90.00 for Resource Levy or $65 for Excursion Levy which will be included in Term 1 School Fees being sent out next week.

CANTEEN NEWS
ROSTER
FRIDAY, 5 FEBRUARY Need Volunteers
MONDAY, 8 FEBRUARY Need Volunteers

The new Summer Canteen Menu for 2016 and a Roster Sheet for volunteers on the Canteen will be sent home today. The Canteen is open every Monday and Friday for Recess and Lunch. For the Canteen to be run successfully we need parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles to volunteer to help on either a Monday or Friday. There is a split roster system, 9.00am to 11.30am and 11.30am to 2.00pm. Please fill in the Roster Sheet and return it to the Front Office as soon as possible. Thanking you in anticipation.

Nancy Lyons, Canteen Manager

Lost and Found Items

Found: A necklace has been found in the playground. If you are missing a necklace please come to the Front Office.
**Action Buses**

All school bus services are now available on the ACTION website: action.act.gov.au.

MyWay cards can be topped up automatically using the handy autoload service, online, over the phone on 13 17 10.

New fares came into effect on 2nd January 2016. Cash fares are $2.30 and MyWay fares are $1.13.

School bus services are only available to school students. Parents with younger children may apply to travel on these services for a few weeks to help their child get used to bus travel.

**VOLIN TUTORING**

Violin lessons are available at St Benedict’s with Mr Matthew Foster. For more information please call – 0431683980 or visit the following website: www.mfviolin.com

**GKR**

Karate: Set achievable fitness goals for 2016

No contracts: pay as you go

Family specials

Children who train in karate are less likely to be bullied and school work and class behaviour can improve due to karate’s disciplined and respectful training.

Classes continue during school holidays

- Build confidence
- Improve fitness
- Gain self discipline
- Learn self defence

Southside classes in:
- Calwell
- Conder
- Gowrie
- Kambah
- Narrabundah
- Isabella Plains
- Waramanga
- Weston
- Woden

Classes: northside Canberra, Queanbeyan, Gungahlin, Yass

contact Wendy 0406 375 091
wendy.gkr@gmail.com

Fitness with purpose: Learn self defense

**BRILLIANT FOOTBALL**

**Term 1 Program**

- 10-week high quality technical development
- Inclusive environment – everyone is welcome
- Football Federation Australia curriculum
- For boys and girls age 7 to 12
- Age-appropriate skill development

6 February to 10 April (with school term)

Location: The Mint Oval - Deakin

Sessions run every Saturday & Sunday morning

Register for 2 sessions per week and get 30% off

Don’t miss out on this amazing value!

brilliantfootball.com.au

**Piano - Keyboard Lessons 2016**

The study of music has many benefits such as:
- Increasing confidence
- Building self esteem
- Fostering creativity

Bellchambers Music School invites enquiries, & enrolments commencing Term 1

Beth Moores is the teacher, continuing on from 2015

Fees are $33.00 per ½ hour lesson, payable by the term in advance – so generally $330.00 per term. If you enrol part way through the term you pay only for the balance of the term. Term 1 Monday is only an 8 week term due to pubic holidays. Term 1 Thursday is a 9 week term as we commence in week 2 at the beginning of the year.

Please contact Bellchambers Music School on 6281 6270 stating that you are interested in tuition at St Benedict’s Bellchambers Music School

Celebrating providing 33 years of music tuition to the Canberra Community

**COMMUNITY NEWS**

Nurturing personal and academic growth from Kindergarten to Year 6