



From the Principal

Volume 17 Issue 12
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The Companion

Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends of Xavier College,

Some many years ago when Pope John Paul II went to Lima, Peru, he was met by a massive crowd of two million people. Instead of the usual greetings from the President and the Cardinal, two people from a shantytown stepped up to the microphone. As the huge crowd went quiet, they began to speak to the Pope: "Holy Father, we are hungry, we are sick, we lack work, our children die before their time. Yet, Holy Father, we believe in the God of life. And we hunger for bread."

Before the hushed crowd, the Pope replied in his best Spanish: "You tell me you hunger for bread. You tell me you hunger for God. I want this hunger for God to remain; I want your hunger for bread to be satisfied." The Pope then turned to the generals and the wealthy politicians gathered there and said very bluntly: *"I won't simply say share what you have. I will say give it back! Give it back; it belongs to the poor!"*

The highlight of the Pope's visit to any country was the celebration of an open-air Mass. Of the Mass or celebration of the Eucharist, the Pope wrote: *"In the Eucharist we have Jesus, we have His sacrifice, we have His resurrection, we have the gift of the Holy Spirit and His love of the Father. In the humble signs of bread and wine changed into His Body and Blood, Christ walks beside us as our strength and our food for the journey, and enables us to become witnesses of hope."*

In modern language, Christ says to us at every Mass: "Here I am, poured out in love for you. Take Me; I'm one with you." St Augustine, in 413AD, wrote that the Mass was about three things: *goodness, unity and charity*. Augustine taught that if we were not better people working for unity and loving each other once we are away from the Eucharist, then the Mass would fail to achieve its purpose.

The God who comes to us at every Eucharist as real food, is the same God who asks: "When I was hungry, did you feed me?" Just as God feeds us, so we too should feed each other. Like the Pope in Peru, we should link the reception of the bread of life in the Eucharist at Mass with the giving of bread away from the Mass. In other words is the Eucharist for Sundays only or does the Eucharist live on through the *actions and deeds of our daily lives?* Do we support our *indigenous brothers and sisters, the lost and the refugees* through our actions and deeds???

As we watch our children receive Communion for the first time, we are thrilled by the beauty and simplicity of their belief in Who it is they are receiving. However, as we progress through life, the routine of Mass and the Eucharist can dull our spiritual senses. Mass might have lost its relevance for us and so we might no longer attend; unfortunately, there is no magic formula to guard against such a situation occurring.

For the Mass and the Eucharist to be life-giving for us as Christian people, we need to give them our total attention. Our hearts and minds need to be fully open to Christ living in us, to us assuming the mind of Christ and taking Christ's values with us into our daily lives. Then, the Eucharist can change us into people who are good, unifying and loving; then, Christ can walk beside us as our strength and our food for the journey and enable us to become witnesses of hope, like Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

As we celebrate the Feast of our only Australian Saint (August 8th), – Mary of the Cross MacKillop, we can like the Sisters of St Joseph have a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the Eucharist as source and summit for all we need and all we do!

The words of the Josephite Constitutions remind us of our legacy: "God's compassionate love for people, the Eucharist as source and summit, and the mystery of the Cross provide for us, as they did for Mary MacKillop, a context for our service of others." (*Constitutions of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart*, #5)

"The Eucharist is central to our lives. It gives expression to our unity and reconciles us to one another. From it we draw strength and courage to give ourselves in service of others. We celebrate Eucharist daily where possible." (*A Future and a Hope: Constitutions of the Australian and New Zealand Federation of the Sisters of St Joseph*, 20)

"Today we commit ourselves to you as we recognise your presence in every person we meet and reach out to the **suffering and the poor**." (*Prayer of the Associates of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart*).

For the greater good

Michael Pate



From the Assistant Principal

A very important question that every individual in a Catholic community should ask themselves is, "Why do I choose to be in a Catholic community?"

The excerpt in the website <http://www.catholicaustralia.com.au/church-in-australia/the-catholic-community>

Catholics are a community, a body made up of many different people, united by a common bond of love. Because of the enduring strength of this bond, and the life-long commitment it implies, one of the best ways of describing the Catholic Church is that it is like a family.

Yet, really, at its heart, the Church is a community of people travelling together through life. Like every human family, we have our ups and downs, our good times and bad. We have a heritage from which our values and behaviour codes have come. We have our special times of celebration, as well as the mundane activities of day-to-day life. What is different about this family-like bond, however, is that it is not based on race or blood but on a spiritual bond of faith.

As you know, family is important, community is important and faith is important!

I have really noticed during the last few mornings that Winter has definitely begun. Although we have had a number of beautiful sunny days the early mornings have been zero degrees in Llandilo. Even though it is cold in our physical environment I think this prayer expresses the sense of warmth and safety we can find in a supportive community:

*Let us huddle together at this time,
our community a place of warmth in our lives
as we share the flame of hope and connection.
Let us allow the frost of isolation and bitterness to melt away
as we open ourselves to a sense of peace and spirit.
We extend our thoughts to all those who are cold,
lacking shelter or love to keep them warm.
Let us wrap our prayers around them and each other like scarves,
and wish each other safe journeys through the storm.
May we be insulated from fear as the earth is insulated by the snow,
And, like bulbs, may we continue to grow and open inside, despite the cold,
Ready for the spring, to stretch and grow towards justice.*

Amen

(Adapted from <http://www.revkatewilkinson.com/prayers/winter.html>)

Some Important Reminders...

Please monitor your child's use of technology at home. It is always a good idea to have a look at the different types of data they have on their phone, laptop etc.

- Please regularly have a look at your child's workbooks/folders for each subject. It can really initiate a conversation about what they are currently learning.
- We are so very fortunate to have a college so well supported by our community that there are no enrolment vacancies. This means that we have almost 1100 students and 120 staff entering and leaving each day. It is very important for the safety of all that we all adhere to the traffic rules and signs.
- If your child does not feel well at school, please encourage them to go to the front office and speak to the office staff. The office staff will make contact with you if required.
- Please be aware that if you come to the front office to pick up your child without notice, there will be a delay. This practice should only occur in an emergency.
- Thank you for ensuring that your child arrives at school by 8.30am.

If you have a question or a concern regarding the education of your child please make contact with their Homegroup teacher. It is always better to ask rather than wait.

Thank you for your continued support,

Patrick Finnerty



Xavier College is holding its annual **WALKATHON** on **Friday 11th September 2015**.

The WALKATHON is the school's major fundraising event and all the funds raised go straight back into resources for our students. Students have been issued their sponsorship cards so now it's time to get out there and gather donations.

Every \$10 raised earns merit points for the student's colour house.

From the Director of Mission and Formation

Year 11 Retreat August 12th-14th

A feature of our Religious Education curriculum at Xavier College is our Retreat programme. There is little doubt that retreats represent one of the most explicit and effective expressions of Catholic school culture and belief.

The retreat experience focuses on the development of reflective awareness, a sense of belonging and connectedness, an appreciation of the need for reconciliation, a deep respect for the value of personal story and a search for religious meaning. While this sounds very challenging, the impact and influence of retreats on a student's personal spiritual journey is affirming. It is an enriching life experience.

Next *Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, August 12th to 14th*, the Year 11 students will be experiencing their retreat at Port Hacking. We wish them a great and worthwhile time.

Kellie Robinson

Director of Mission and Formation

From the Director of Learning and Pedagogy

I recently read an article by eminent educationalist Professor John Hattie on self-transforming schools. Professor Hattie writes:

A self-transforming school calls the shots on how it will achieve transformation, seeks support from any source and may network with any number of schools or other learning institutions without weakening its commitment to the values to which it aspires. Such schools focus on ... 'student centred learning', they knowledgeably implement a responsive and rich curriculum, and they use evidence to know about and plan for student learning. (AEL Journal, Vol.37 No.1 Term 1 2015)

This is the journey we have undertaken at Xavier College. Over the past two years we have been engaged in developing student centred learning strategies informed by a range of data, both quantitative and qualitative, and engaged in research and Professional reading to enhance our understanding of student learning and stay abreast of current educational developments. Following is an outline of the whole school practices used at Xavier and some of the ways we are implementing a "responsive and rich curriculum".

Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

Learning intentions are the driver of the lesson. When these are visible to students, by writing them on the board, students are clear on the purpose of the lesson. Similarly, success criteria provide students with a concrete checklist of what they need to do to be successful in each lesson and for each activity.

Reflective Writing

As explained in the last edition of *The Companion*, reflective writing is a way for students (and adults) to embed their learning, reflect on their progress and determine ways of improving. The reflective writing questions Xavier students respond to in each lesson are a strategy for developing self-motivation and commitment to improvement. Committing ideas and reflections to paper creates ownership and obligation to implementing the strategies identified.

iRead

Reading is a fundamental skill required for learning. Accessing a secondary school curriculum requires a minimum reading age of 10. Each year a number of our students are identified as having a reading age less

than 10. The implementation of Professor Kay Lowe's iRead programme has been a powerful and successful strategy for not only improving student reading skills but also the development of individual student's confidence when reading. Many of our iRead students can't wait for their reading session and are now choosing books independently and reading fluently for up to 20 minutes.

100-hour Stage 5 Electives

The introduction of 100-hour electives in 2016 will enable Stage 5 students to experience a broader range of elective choices. Although Stage 5 electives are not a prerequisite for the study of a course in Stage 6, the broader experience may aid students in their decision making for senior study.

Fundamentals of English

At Xavier we are committed to student improvement and have identified writing as an area for further development. Fundamentals of English is a 1 Unit Board Developed Course designed to aid students in the development of their writing skills and support them in the study of their 2 Unit English course. From 2016, students studying Standard English, who are not studying Mathematics Extension, will complete the Fundamentals of English course.

Studies of Religion 2 Unit

Studies of Religion (SOR), unlike Catholic Studies Stage 4 – 6, does not focus on Catholicism, but is the study of the history, practices and traditions of world religions. It is an academic course that can count favourably toward an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) calculation. As of 2016, all English Advanced students, except those studying Mathematics or English Extension, will study SOR 2 Unit, for at least the Preliminary Course. This course will enhance the academic focus of their pattern of study and, consequentially, their achievement.

Non-ATAR Course Options

When the Government increased the leaving age to 17, it became necessary for us to ensure we offered a substantial course of study to students who are not considering attending university as a post-school option; but, instead, wish to move straight into the workforce, attain an apprenticeship or study at TAFE. To meet the needs of these students Xavier College offers a variety of TVET courses, non-ATAR subjects, and mainstream subjects with TAFE competency training and an optional HSC examination. In this way, the aforementioned students can choose a pattern of study that does not require the completion of an HSC examination but provides certificates of attainment recognised by TAFE NSW.

Teacher Professional Learning

Students are not the only learners in the school. At Xavier we foster a culture of life-long learning within our teachers, as well as our students. Teachers are regularly engaged in a variety of professional learning opportunities. Once a fortnight, and for a whole day once a term, teachers engage in professional learning in whole practices. On the alternate weeks, they collaborate in faculties to develop rich curriculum and share best practice teaching and learning strategies. In addition to these school based professional learning opportunities, teachers attend workshops and conferences, complete online courses and enrol in further study.

As you can see, at Xavier we are committed to improving our practices to ensure every Xavier student learns. We take seriously your entrusting us with the education and wellbeing of your child, and see it as a privilege to develop them as life-long learners and informed, educated citizens.

Many blessings,

Alyssa Roach

School Fees

Term 3 school fees notices have been posted and are due on *Monday, 17th August 2015*. If you have not received your Term 3 fees notice, please contact the College.

A significant amount of school fees remain overdue. If you are on a payment arrangement with the College it must be kept up to date otherwise the arrangement may be broken and all outstanding fees will become due within seven days.

If you are experiencing genuine financial hardship, please contact Steve Hackett on 02 4777 0924 or email shackett@parra.catholic.edu.au to discuss. All discussions are confidential.

The timely payment of school fees is encouraged and appreciated. It allows the College to meet its commitments for our students. Please help us in this regard.

Steve Hackett
School Fees Officer

From the Student Counsellor

Promoting 'HOPE' in teens

Think about how your teenager might respond to the following statements:

- * I think I am doing pretty well
- * I can think of many things in life that are important to me
- * I am doing just as well as other kids my age
- * When I have a problem I can come up with lots of ways to solve it
- * I think the things I have done in the past will help me in the future
- * Even when others want to quit, I can find ways to solve the problem



Chances are that a teen who is resilient will respond affirmatively to these items whereas a teen who is struggling is more likely to say 'no' rather than 'yes'.

These items are from the Children's Hope Scale, designed to assess the hopefulness of children and teens. In terms of resilience and wellbeing, hope is a critically important predictor of how our youth are going. Hope is the belief that a person has that they can find ways to achieve their goals and to motivate themselves to use these pathways. Hope theory suggests that we need three things to actually have 'hope':

1. Goals - something we are aiming to achieve in the future
2. Pathways - at least one way (hopefully more than one) that we might achieve those goals
3. Agency - the belief that we can actually make things happen in order to reach the goal

Hope vs Optimism

Hope differs from optimism in important ways. Optimism is the belief that good things will happen in the future, the idea that the glass is half full. Hope is about taking that optimism, making it goal-oriented and then taking the steps to make things happen.

While optimism is great for boosting wellbeing and can act as a useful tool for inoculating against depression, it seems that hope does it better. This may be because hope is about action, whereas optimism is about a positive mindset.

Why Hope?

Having high hope seems to correlate with higher levels of personal wellbeing, life satisfaction and even academic and athletic achievement and success. Relationships appear to be better for those who are hopeful individuals, perhaps because they try to make things happen if things are not working out well. Those with low hope are less likely to act and, therefore, less likely to move towards a goal or change in circumstance.

However, like other positive psychology interventions, the idea of using hope as a strategy is not a silver bullet. Some data indicates that increasing hope through interventions may not reduce psychological distress, while other studies show only modest improvement in psychological wellbeing. Therefore, it is important to ensure that those with psychological distress or mental illness receive traditional psychotherapeutic interventions.

How to help Hope.

For those who are not psychologically distressed but would like to be more hopeful and positive about the future, these three ideas may be helpful:

1. Speak to teens about their possible futures and have them imagine their potential selves and help them create visions of various pathways to take them to their best possible future self.
2. Ask them what they are looking forward to.
3. When they're stuck, rather than giving an answer, ask them, "What do you think is the next best thing to do?" or "How have you overcome something like this before?"

Like gratitude, using strengths, being optimistic, building relationships, or other positive psychology interventions, being hopeful is not guaranteed to fix everyone or everything. However, for some youth, it can be the key to helping them develop a vision, create a pathway and work like crazy (with you as an adult to guide them and keep them accountable) to move towards a better, more fulfilling and happier future.

This has been adapted from an article by Dr Justin Coulson, a parenting researcher, speaker and author, which is available at www.generationnext.com.au. Find Dr Coulson at happyfamilies.com.au

Margaret Trevena
School Counsellor/Psychologist

Save the date!

**JAZZ in the
PAS**

**TUESDAY
August 18th**





Kirinari Outdoor Space

Some thoughts and feelings about the outdoor space from Kirinari students:



I feel happy because I like jumping.

I like jumping and it's fun to share it with the whole school.

I like the trampoline.

I feel happy when I'm jumping. It's fun when we use the space with other Xavier College students.

I like the teepee, it's awesome! And the tramp.

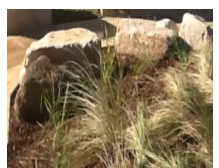
I like to jump on the trampoline.

I like the water pump.

The tepee is nice for eating our recess and lunch. I feel excited and happy.

I like the water pump and playing bowling outside.

The trampoline is good for bouncing. I like jumping on the trampoline.



Student Representative Council Report

Over the past fortnight the SRC has run a barbecue which has raised \$289 for charity.

Around forty students and teachers will be participating in the Winter Sleepout this Friday night, August 7th. Also, coming up next Tuesday, August 11th, Campion House are having a crazy laces day. Both these events are being held to contribute to the awareness of and to fundraise for the Youth Off the Streets initiative.

Thank you to the SRC members and staff involved in Campion House for their enthusiastic efforts towards their chosen initiatives, and good luck to everyone participating in the sleepout.

Amy Hliounakis

Year 11 Student Representative Councillor
Cumberland House



YOUTH OFF
THE STREETS'
sleepout





Important Dates for 2015

Term 3

For dates of more Xavier College Upcoming Events go to
<http://www.xavierllandilo.catholic.edu.au/upcoming-events#>

<i>Monday, 10th August</i>	<i>Trial HSC</i>
<i>Tuesday, 11th August</i>	<i>#laceitup fundraising day Year 9 Commerce excursion</i>
<i>Wednesday, 12th August to Friday, 14th August</i>	<i>Year 11 Retreat</i>
<i>Wednesday, 12th August</i>	<i>HSC Practical Exam—Dance</i>
<i>Thursday, 13th August</i>	<i>CAPTIVATE's Got Talent</i>
<i>Friday, 14th August</i>	<i>PDSSSC Dance Competition</i>
<i>Monday, 17th August</i>	<i>Year 10 RE Literacy Online Assessment NSWCCC Knockout Football</i>
<i>Tuesday, 18th August</i>	<i>Jazz in the PAS 6.30pm NSWCCC Netball Championships</i>
<i>Wednesday, 19th August</i>	<i>PDSSSC Athletics Carnival</i>
<i>Thursday, 20th August</i>	<i>House Spirit Day</i>
<i>Friday, 21st August</i>	<i>Catechist Mass, Winston Hills</i>

**XAVIER UNIFORM SHOP
AND
SECOND HAND SHOP**

**OPENING HOURS
THURSDAYS ONLY
8.00am - 4.00pm**

REMINDER TO PARENTS

Parents are asked to notify the College if your child will not be attending school.

Phone: 4777 0900



Community News...



TWO - PART SEMINAR

Understanding Family Law

PRESENTED BY:

Beth Jarman

Lawyer—Accredited Family Law Specialist

WEDNESDAY 22ND JULY - SESSION 1

Overview of the Family Law Act with Focus on Separation and divorce.

- Parenting Plans
- Best Interests of children
- Family Dispute Resolution
- Family violence
- Role of Independent Children's Lawyers
- Timetables under the Family Law Act
- Timetables within the Family Court
- Consent Orders.

WEDNESDAY 12TH AUGUST - SESSION 2

Overview of the Family Law Act with Focus on Property

- What constitutes or determines Property
- Application of the Act in de facto or same sex relationships
- Requirement for Pre-action Procedures
- Spouse Maintenance
- Timetables under the Family Law Act
- Timetables within the Family Court

DATES

Session 1 Wed. 22nd July 2015

Session 2 Wed. 12th August 2015

TIME:

7:30 pm—9:30 pm

VENUE:

Diocesan Assembly Centre
1-5 Marion St, Blacktown

COST:

\$ 7.00 per session

FURTHER INFORMATION/BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

Contact: Solo Parent Services 9933 0205

Email

soloparentservices@ccss.org.au