From The Principal

Last week the Principals of the 40 EREA schools across Australia gathered together, providing an opportunity to compare the way we do things in our schools and to learn from each other and the guest presenters. I'd like to share some of some of their thoughts and ideas with you.

One of the guest speakers was Patrick McCluskey, a Canadian journalist with a particular focus on education who works in the United States. Patrick confronted us with issues arising from our school identity, secular governmental influences in our schools and church governance, at the same time challenging us to reflect on the notion of what makes a school and its leaders truly Catholic. Much of what he had to say was based on the experience of spending a year in a Catholic High school in Harlem, an experience that led to his book titled "The Street Stops Here."

It is likely that Government funding for Catholic schools will be a key issue in both the Federal and State elections next year. We will provide families with information about this as it becomes available but at this time it was valuable to consider a perspective of the relationship between Government and Catholic school systems in other countries, as we determine what is reasonable in our own context.

Senator Christine Milne MHR, Deputy Leader of the Greens in the Federal parliament, addressed the conference and posed some challenging questions about the legacy our generation will leave for our children. She believes that environmental action, particularly in relation to climate change, is an imperative. She also suggests that we are likely to be the first generation whose children's lives will not be better than our own. A core question raised in her address was: "are we a species worth saving?"

Our biblical mandate that charges humanity as steward of the planet with responsibility for our environment, as well as each other, resonates with this. Christine's presentation made me wonder if we need to seek ways to be more environmentally responsible at St Bernard's in the way we operate, particularly in our curriculum content and in our expectations of our students.

It also prompted me to ask whether we are challenging boys enough to develop skills in "being" rather than "doing" (after all we are "human beings") and reminded me of the importance of encouraging in our students a truly Christian perspective. Our students live in a secular world where consuming is promoted as an economic responsibility and means of fulfilment. Therefore, we must constantly help them to see that consumerism forces us to value things and use people while Christianity encourages us to value people and use things.

The final message from Christine was to challenge the concept of liberty, equality and fraternity as the basis of modern society. She presented a compelling argument that when liberty takes precedence, unsustainable capitalism results and when equality takes precedence, unsustainable socialism results. She contends that sustainable existence on the planet requires an emphasis on fraternity, an understanding that is totally compatible with a contemporary understanding of the Gospels in action.

Congratulations to those students involved in the Maribyrnong 150 event overnight. We will provide more details in the next newsletter.

Congratulations also to all our Debaters who have represented the College in such outstanding fashion at recent events. The Intermediate ACC Debating Team, comprising Anthony Gagliano, Jack Triner, Frank Spanti, James Kendall, Shahiru Fernando and Nathan Ratnam, won the Intermediate competition, whilst David Baldi and his A Grade team made it through to the Victorian playoffs. David himself was awarded the prestigious Swannie award for the best speaker in his age group, a tremendous achievement made even more meritorious by the fact that he also was awarded it last year. Well done to David and all the debaters as well as their very proud coach, Robyn Sullivan.

Best wishes
Tony Paatsch

Edmund Rice Network News/Justice Issues:

"We want happiness, the happiness that comes from within — inexpensive, isn't it? A happiness and peace that nobody can destroy, steal, or take away. This inner peace is most precious. The basis of inner peace is love and compassion." His Holiness the Dalai Lama

I do not know the exact difference between love and compassion. In Sanskrit, there is the word karuna; and in Tibetan, there are two words, inji and chamba. Chamba means a desire to have happiness, whereas karuna and inji mean the desire to overcome suffering.

Genuine compassion does not depend upon whether the other is nice to me; it is based on the realisation and acceptance that the other is also a central being and has the right to be happy and overcome suffering, irrespective of his or her attitude to me. Even an enemy who is harming me is a central being and has every right to overcome suffering, to achieve happiness.

Genuine compassion is a sense of concern for everyone. Compassion is not pity; it is based on respect for the other's rights and a recognition that the other is just like myself.

The rewards of practicing compassion go first to the practitioner. I believe it is very important to understand this; otherwise, we will believe that compassion benefits the other and has nothing for us.

A compassionate attitude helps you communicate easily with fellow human beings and other central beings. As a result, you make more genuine friends; the atmosphere is more positive, which gives you inner strength. This inner strength helps you voluntarily concern yourself with others, instead of just thinking about your own self.

Scientific research has shown that those individuals who often use words such as me, I, and mine face a greater risk of a heart attack. If one always thinks of oneself, one's thinking becomes very narrow; even a small problem appears very significant and unbearable. When we think of others, our minds widen, and within that large space, even big personal problems may appear insignificant. This, according to me, makes all the difference.

As one develops a sense of concern, of compassion for others, one's mind broadens or widens. At that point, an individual's problems and suffering appear very small.

The capacity for compassion that one has for others is the measuring rod for one's own mental state, and compassion develops an inner strength. It is unnecessary to see the results of our acts of compassion. In some cases, our sense of compassion may not be appreciated. Many people have the impression that the practice of love, compassion, and forgiveness is of benefit to others, but will serve no specific purpose to one's own self. I think that is wrong. These positive emotions will immediately help one's own mental state.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Parent & Board News

Ladies and Friends Auxiliary

The 'Mothers of Old Boys' Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, September 2, 2009 in The Pavilion commencing with pre lunch sherries at 11.30am.
Essendon Station
The Victorian Transit Police are very concerned about the increasing number of incidents of theft and violence that have occurred recently at Essendon station. A reminder to all boys that Essendon station is out of bounds for St Bernard’s students and anyone found loitering will be given a Saturday detention. (It should be noted that boys who have no other option for transportation can receive a pass from their Campus Director.) The police will be blitzing the station in the coming weeks and will be forwarding names to Mr Scully.

Nick Scully, Campus Director

Re-enrolment for 2010.
A reminder to all parents that payment and re-enrolment forms for 2010 are due in by Friday, September 4. Payment of $340 and form need to be returned to Accounts Office by this date with a late fee of $20 for any/form payment not received at this time. Thanking you in anticipation of your co-operation.

John Nocci, Registrar

Year 12 Important Dates
Year 12 students have been given a notice with all the important College dates for them, leading up to 2009 VCE Exams. These dates have also been placed on the College website so please take the time to become familiar with the events, particularly where an RSVP is required, or a payment deadline.

All Year 12 families will have received a letter informing them of the upcoming Parent/Son Evening in the College Auditorium on September 9 at 7:30pm. A reminder that every family needs to be represented at this meeting.

Students have been given a reservation form for the Valete Dinner. They need to organise tables of their friends and parents and submit the names of those on their table to the Year Level Co-ordinators. When planning tables, please be aware that this function is for Year 12 students and their parents, only. Extended family members may attend the Graduation Mass.

Carol Iannazzo & Chris Knauf, Year 12 Co-ordinators

CYBER SAVY – A Parent’s Guide To Promoting Responsible Internet Use - Wednesday 2nd September, 7:30pm
St. Bernard’s, with the support of the Parent and Friend’s Association, will be running a workshop that addresses questions about what your sons are doing online and how it may impact on their wellbeing. Tena Panizza, a psychologist and cyber expert, will explain various strategies that students and parents can put into place to reduce the risks of bullying as well as explore the issues surrounding privacy and security. If you are attending you should have already registered via the slip provided with the most recent newsletter, however, if you have not but still would like to please ring the front office immediately to let us know how many will be attending. Current numbers dictate the workshop will be held in the College Boardroom, underneath the Front Office in the Administration Building (Building 1).

St Bernard’s College Wins U/15 Victorian Volleyball Championship
St Bernard’s College recently won a Gold medal at the 2009 Victorian Schools Volleyball Championships in the Under 15 Boys Honours Division, the highest possible level of competition at the state championships. They defeated Eltham College in straight sets 25:22, 27:25, 25:22.

Their coach, Simon D’Ortenzio, is an Old Boy of the College and has coached the team for the last 2 years, taking them from absolute beginners in Year 7 to state champions in 2 years.

Simon stated that “it was a true team effort, everyone contributed valuable to the win and it is a result of the teams commitment to training and desire to play volleyball at the highest level. The boys thoroughly deserve this win and as their coach I could not be more proud of them”.

Captain Joseph Yigit was the star of the entire tournament, with the opposition unable to stop both his powerful spikes on the front court and an equally effective jump serve. Alex Ielo dominated the net blocking many of the opposition’s attacks whilst Tom “Ninja” Pham flew around the court to skilfully set up the team’s attack.

Back Row: Raywin Diaz, Joseph Yigit, Alex Ielo, Anthony Williams, Front row: Tom Pham, Dan Allison, Mark Sampson, Troy Brown, Coach: Simon D’Ortenzio

Other good results were achieved the U/17 team, which finished third in the state and the U/14 Boys team achieved fourth in the state.

Congratulations and well done to all involved.

Michael Dolan

ACC DVD Highlights
Please return the form at the bottom of this newsletter to Mr Brown with your payment if you would like to purchase either or both of the ACC Athletic DVDs for 2009.

Gerard Brown

MUSIC NEWS
The Keys to Success Project
The ‘Keys to Success’ project brochure is now available on the College website. We encourage all who are, and have been associated with, the College to sponsor funds towards this project, which will culminate in the purchase of a baby grand piano for the College Auditorium. We seek sponsorship of $150 per key for the piano (88 keys) and those who contribute will be recognised on a plaque commemorating the funding & purchase of the piano. The Friends of Music Committee at the College look forward to further contributions.

Spring Concert
The SBC Spring Concert will be held in the Last week of Term 3, Tuesday September 15 at 7:30pm in the College Auditorium. All the College Bands and Ensembles are gearing-up for this important showcase so we encourage you to get along. Tickets will be sold at the door at a cost of only $5 per individual and $15 per family.

Private Music Lessons
This is a timely reminder to those enrolled in private music lessons that all students enrolled in 2009 will be automatically enrolled in 2010. Notice in writing is required at the beginning of Term 4, 2009 to effectively cease music lessons at the end of this year.

Carmelo Puglisi, Director of Music

SBOArts Productions bring you the Bee!
The St Bernard’s Old Collegians Arts Productions will premiere its debut show “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” in October this year. The show centres around a fictional spelling bee set in Putnam Valley Middle School, where 6 quirky adolescents compete in a Bee run by 3 equally quirky grown-ups and features a cast and crew of former students from St Bernard’s and St Columba’s. Stay tuned for further details.

Name: ________________________________________

☐ ACC Athletics Highlight Package (Presentation night DVD) $5.00
☐ ACC Athletics – Full track event DVD $5.00

Please note: if you are buying both DVDs the cost will be only $8.00