From The Principal
Welcome back to all families for Term Four. I hope that the break provided the opportunity for rest and rejuvenation. This term is of differing lengths for each year level and there are a variety of functions for parents as the end of the year approaches. The College website calendar lists all functions relevant to your son this term and I encourage you to attend as many of these as possible.

Throughout this term, we will be preparing to extend our use of communication technology to correspond with families in 2010. From the start of next year we will use SMS technology to communicate with families regarding student attendance. Text messages are an efficient and effective way for you to inform us of student absences and for us to let you know if your son is not at school.

We will also be delivering the fortnightly newsletter electronically from the start of 2010. We believe that this will improve our ability to provide accurate and timely information to families and increase use of the College website.

If each of these changes is to operate effectively, we will need to ensure that we have accurate mobile phone numbers and email addresses. You will be contacted in the coming weeks and asked to either provide or update this information.

Another change that we are confident will improve our ability to communicate with families is the relocation of all reception facilities to the main reception area on the upper floor of the Administration Building. The Strand Office will be closed from this week and all communication with the Strand, including collection of ill students and enquiries will be handled from the main reception area.

The Clairvaux Office will remain open for Term Four, closing when Clairvaux students finish for the year. All services for senior students will be provided from the main reception area after this time.

Volunteer parents are the lifeblood of the College. I would like to invite all parent volunteers to a dinner in the Pavilion on Wednesday October 28 from 6pm. I hope that those involved in the canteen, sports coaching, Parents and Friends Association, Ladies Auxiliary, Friends of Music, the production or in any other voluntary capacity at the College this year will be able to join us in an acknowledgement of their invaluable contribution. Please RSVP to Sharon Grass or Mandy Curtain on 92891136 before Friday October 23 to assist with catering.

The Federal Government "Education Revolution" together with the GFC Stimulus Package has seen the expenditure of vast sums on educational infrastructure. We were disappointed to miss out on our application for funding for a Senior Science Centre but grateful that we have received funding to refurbish the Margaret Carey Building and provide additional computers for students.

However, not all of the "Education Revolution" is about infrastructure. The Federal Government is committed to developing and implementing a National Curriculum that will have an impact on St Bernard’s. It is also committed to "transparency" for all schools to allow "informed choice for parents". This commitment will be met by publishing a range of data about each school to enable comparison with "like schools".

A real concern is that this will result in the production of "League Tables" where schools are ranked according to academic outcomes without adequate recognition of the context of schools. Most Educationalists concur that publishing League Tables does not improve educational outcomes across the board but simply creates a division between schools perceived as successful and those not so successful. This has certainly been the case in Britain where League Tables have operated for some years.

A recent article in The Age quoted adolescent psychologist Michael Carr-Gregg who claimed that young people engaged in street crime are spiritual anorexics who have a hole in their soul and believe in nothing. He suggested the behavior of these young people might be changed through structured and regular activities that give a sense of purpose and belonging. He went on to mention religion (or lack thereof) as a factor and the importance of schools in changing communities through their work with young people.

At St Bernard’s we certainly provide the structure, activity, sense of purpose and belonging along with a religious grounding. I reflected after reading this article that while I am confident we provide an environment that strongly works to mitigate the production of "spiritual anorexics", I’m not sure that this could easily be discerned through examination of comparative data on a Federal Government website.

Congratulations to the senior student council members who were elected by their peers. Particular congratulations to 2010 College Captain Tom Lynch and Deputy Captains Andrew Ireland (Ministry), Tom Steel (Arts) and Tom Chrystie (Sport).

Best wishes
Tony Paatsch

Edmund Rice Network News/Justice

Issues:

BISHOPS ENCOURAGE YOUTH COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

In a statement for this year’s Social Justice Sunday the Bishops of Australia have pledged their support for young people's commitment to social justice, reasserting last year's World Youth Day central theme of witnessing through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The statement notes "Jesus was vitally concerned with what divided society and caused human impoverishment. He challenged many of the norms and social structures that oppressed, alienated or undermined the dignity of people. His ministry to establish the Kingdom of God was certainly concerned with personal conversion but also with liberating people from unjust structures" and points out that "We share in the ministry of Jesus because we too have been anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit and are called to be his witnesses. We are all really responsible for each other and must work for social conditions that allow individuals and families to meet their needs and realise their full potential."

The challenge presented by the Pope to young people during World Youth Day is repeated. "What will you leave to the next generation? What difference will you make? “ although it also notes that this challenge is directed not just to young people but to all people of faith and to all Australians.

The statement addresses several particular issues, including the plight of Indigenous youth, those excluded from employment, the issue of mental health and the prevention of abuse; concerns for the environment, global justice and development. It is available for download at the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website.

General News

Whole School Awards and Final Year 12 Assembly
Date: 16 October 2009
Time: 9.30am – 11.30am
Venue: College Gymnasium

Due to limited seating family members of award winners, who are invited, will receive tickets for reserved seating. If other parents would like to attend they should reserve tickets by emailing bwallace@sbc.vic.edu.au stating numbers and names of attendees.
Academic Awards

Academic Awards for students in Years 7-10 will be distributed on Thursday December 10 at evening assemblies. Each student receiving an award will be advised by letter on Monday December 7 and are expected to attend the presentation to accept their award. Requests for approval to not attend must be submitted in writing to the Campus Director. In addition to Distinctions, Merits will also be awarded at Years 7-9, with the Dux and Edmund Rice Encouragement Awards also being presented.

Academic Awards for students in Years 11-12 will be presented at a full school assembly on Wednesday February 10 at 10am. The Dux and Golden Jubilee winner as well as the Dux of Years 7-10 will be presented at this assembly.

ThinkUKnow – Internet Safety and Security presentation

On Wednesday November 11 at 7:30pm St. Bernard's College will be hosting a presentation given by the Australian Federal Police covering the following topics: online grooming, cyber-bullying, inappropriate content and e-security. This is a fantastic opportunity for you to learn more about how your sons have fun online, how you can help them to stay in control on the net and how to report a problem. Visit the ThinkUKnow Australia website at www.thinkuknow.org.au. Details on how to register for this presentation will be given in the next newsletter meanwhile pencil this date in your diary.

Art Exhibition and Film Premier Night - Tuesday October 13

The Visual Arts Department and students of St Bernard's extend an invitation to all parents, students and staff to celebrate the creative talents of the graduating Studio art, Visual Communication, Design and Media students. Works of excellence from all levels will be on display with awards presented for outstanding art works on opening night. The opening begins at 6.30pm in the gallery (O'Brien Hall) finishing at 8.30pm, with films will be screened from 7.30pm in the auditorium. Refreshments will be provided. The Gallery itself will be open to the public from 3:00pm to 4:00pm Wednesday October 14 and Thursday October 15.

Daly River Immersion 2009

In the last week of Term 3, Brendan Douglas, Mark Rayson and Anthony Chapman (SJC Geelong) accompanied a group of boys on an amazing trip to the Northern Territory to take part in an immersion program.

After a day seeing the sights of Darwin, we made our way in the trusty rented Landcruisers 3 hours southwest to Nauiyu, a small aboriginal community that would be our base for the next week. It was here that we met our local indigenous guides, who would show us and teach us about this beautiful part of the country. With our guides having traditional access to land that we would otherwise be unable to be on, we were able to see and experience areas that very few people are privileged to.

Over the following days, we fished for barramundi in a variety of spectacular locations, swam at glorious waterfalls that will never be found in a tourism guide, searched for (and found) crocodile eggs and other native food sources, were told dreamtime stories before falling asleep under the brightest of stars and most importantly learnt so much about our indigenous culture – from past to present.

We all felt extremely lucky throughout the week to be doing, seeing and experiencing all that we were. At times we couldn't have felt more off the beaten track. It was a truly magical experience to see a side of our great country and indigenous people that so few get to. This immersion will be offered again in 2010 and I can't recommend it enough to anyone who might be interested.

Mark Rayson

MUSIC NEWS

Music Lessons 2010

As the year draws to a close the Music Administration Team are preparing student projections for 2010. As part of this process, students currently undertaking private music lessons will be automatically re-enrolled into music lessons in 2010. Students not wishing to participate in music lessons in 2010 are asked to submit written notification from a parent by November 6, 2009. Students in year 8 undertaking shared lessons are reminded that they will automatically move to individual lessons as of the start of year 9.

Band and Ensemble Lessons 2010

A new initiative will be trialled in 2010 whereby Strand students can gain tutorial in a band or ensemble of 3 to 4 members. Tutorials will be aimed at training groups in effective group rehearsal technique & skill proficiency and may suit some students who currently are not involved in the College music program. Strand students or their parents are encouraged to contact me if interested or have further questions.

Students and Parents are advised of these important dates pertaining to the Music Program:

- Semester 2 Soiree: Thursday October 15, 7:30pm
- VCE Solo Performance Showcase: Sunday October 18, 1pm at The Victorian - 123 Beaconsfield Parade, Albert Park
- Friends of Music Meeting: Tuesday October 20, 7:30pm, Room 302
- Junior Band Western Region Trip: November 17 & 18
- Piano Concert: Tuesday November 24, 7:30pm, Room 302
- Year 7 Concert: November 26, 7:30pm

Carmelo Puglisi, Director of Music

Philippine Book Drive

Do you have any children's fiction books lying around the house and not being used? If so the Student Council is organising a collection of these books to be sent to the diocesan schools of Kabankalan in the Philippines where Br John Moody is assisting. The students speak a dialect and are required to study Filipino and English, so the need for reading English is extremely important. We are looking for Children's Fiction books in the age range of 5 year olds up to 15 year olds but please NO TEXT BOOKS. A box will be placed outside reception for these books to be placed in.

In addition to the collection of used books, Student Council, in association with the library, will be hosting a bookseller in the third week of this term (beginning October 19) for students to bring money in and purchase a new book to add to the collection. More specific details will be in the daily bulletin closer to the date. All used and new books will be sent to the Philippines before Christmas so please support this worthy cause.

Student Council.

Rudely Interrupted Visit

On the September 16 St Bernard's students David Fornaro, Anthony LaStrina, Christian Dariol of the music group DNA and Joshua Romeo and Luke Smith of Year 11, had the opportunity to perform with the world-renowned band 'Rudely Interrupted' when they visited the College.

The group, is one of Australia's truly unique indie rock acts, with 5 out of the 6 members sharing a range of both physical and intellectual disabilities (Blindness, Deafness, Aspersgers, Autism and Down Syndrome) but most importantly, a common interest in self expression through music. Their achievements, both personal and professional, to date are extraordinary. The band have toured the world playing soldout shows in NYC, Toronto, Bristol, Manchester and London leaving all who see the band perform amazed and inspired. They have met celebrities such as Tom Cruise and recently returned from a tour where they were invited to perform for the UN.

Rohan Brooks, the group's founder and lead guitarist, believes that music can break down barriers not only for the musicians in the group but for all those who hear their unique sound. He has shown that anyone can have access to music and challenges everyone to see the individual and not their disability. And as can be seen with Rudely Interrupted, their music does indeed speak for itself.

Rudely Interrupted have many exciting shows planned for 2009 as well as a debut album "Tragedy of the Commons" due for release in early December.