Key Dates
Friday 25 October
Presentation Evening, Perth Concert
Hall 7.00pm
Tuesday 29 October
P & F Meeting 6.30pm
Wednesday 30 October
7.1 RE Mass
Friday 1 November
WACE Exams Commence
ACC Para Sport Day
Wednesday 6 November
7.2 RE Mass
Thursday 7 November
Year 11 Final Mass

Principal’s Report

“Love is not patronizing and charity isn’t about pity, it is about love. Charity and love are the same – with charity you give love, so don’t just give money but reach out your hand instead.” (Mother Teresa)

I love this story. There was a nun who assisted with home visits to elderly people. Unfortunately, on one occasion, her car ran out of petrol. Fortunately, she had just passed a petrol station to which she could walk and get enough petrol to start the car and then drive it back to the station. Regrettably, the only container she could find in her car was a bedpan that she was taking to an elderly person. So, with bedpan in hand, she went to the station, got some petrol and returned to the car. As she was pouring the petrol into the tank, two men walked by. One of them turned to the other and said, “Now, that’s what I call faith.”

So often in Religious Education classes, young people ask why we should believe this or why we should just accept that that belief is true. It is not always easy to convince them that faith is not concerned with proof and this is because faith is of the heart as well as of the mind. When we have faith we believe in the invisible. If faith can be proved or verified with certainty, it ceases to be faith. Sometimes we might stand with dream in hand on the edge of a decision as to whether or not we believe beyond certainty. We might simply have to take a leap of faith. We pray that God’s Spirit within them will assist our young people to be people of faith and that other people will come to know God through the faith in their lives.

This edition of Sorelle will be posted on the website before our Presentation Evening. I have no doubt that if you attend the celebration of our students’ achievements during 2013 you will be impressed with the quality of the performances and the sense of joy that the girls have when they share in each other’s wins and accolades. It has been an outstanding year with so many highs for the girls. Of course behind the girls are committed teachers and very generous and supportive parents.

Insight from Catherine McAuley:

*What an ineffable consolation to serve Christ Himself, in the person of the poor, and to walk in the very same path He trod!*
**Working at Mercy**

Pope Francis calls us to love one another more fully

The words of Pope Francis’ first interview received worldwide attention from the media and marked a milestone in Francis’ papacy.

The overwhelming love that underscored so much of what Pope Francis said, was inspiring. He had spoken with the sort of honesty and charity that encourages the larger church to do the same. His description of the church as a “home of all,” and his urging not to reduce it “to a nest protecting our mediocrity,” serves as a call for each of us to look truthfully at how well we welcome others, and how much we think of ourselves.

Francis’ pastoral nature is clear, his desire to see people first—“individual persons, one at a time.” He is, it seems, intent on making sure we know that his role, the role of the papacy, is not one in which he directs an anonymous church from on high, but one that allows him to journey alongside each of us toward Christ. He will not let us forget that he is one of us, a sinner. Nor will he let us forget that we, along with him, are redeemed through God’s mercy.

How do we accompany others in mercy, a quality difficult to define and even more difficult to live authentically?

The answer, perhaps, can be found in a wonderfully invented word from Pope Francis: mercy-ing. In turning the noun into a verb, a sentiment into an action, Francis calls us not only to have mercy or to show mercy, but to *embody* mercy. The word emphasizes the active element of mercy, as a force that binds us, compels us, and enables us to love one another more fully.

This call for mercy-ing is at once a call for humility and a call to greatness. It pushes us to live out the extraordinary Gospel message, to acknowledge the dignity of our fellow travelers on this journey, and the reality of our own faults. It is a call to look toward Christ and then look inward before we respond to others. It is a call to allow ourselves to be moved, to proceed deliberately, with compassion alongside our corrections. In short, mercy-ing is a call to listen to one another with love. It allows us to realize the power of words, clearly and lovingly spoken. And of the Word, humbly lived.

*Adapted from Kerry Weber is the managing editor of America*

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For those of you with daughters about to sit their WACE exams, you will probably be very conscious of treading eggshells at the moment. This time will pass and we just hope our young women reap the benefits of all the hard work and study they have put in over the past months. The girls will be very much in our prayers.

For all our other students, this term is a crucial one for them to ensure that they complete the year with as high a level of excellence as possible. Over the next weeks parents could be encouraging an established homework routine. It is not easy when many working parents do not get home until after 6pm. Much homework takes the form of weekly or fortnightly schedules so there is more flexibility around when the work gets done. All the more important for there to be careful planning.

It has also been interesting watching the development of our 2014 timetable and seeing the choices that girls have made for their courses. I believe it is important to encourage students not to take the easy option. The writer Michael Foley says “difficulty has become repugnant because it denies entitlement, disenchanters potential, limits mobility and flexibility, delays gratification and demands responsibility, commitment, attention and thought”. A mouthful I know, but important for us to reflect on. We often join together, parents and teachers, in a conspiracy of good intentions to support self-esteem. However, have we now gone too far? When we say ‘It’s okay. Not everyone can be good at Maths or English or Chinese’ – are we actually de-motivating our students and giving them permission not to push themselves or strive to overcome difficulty? Food for thought.

One of the downsides of the information age is we’re bombarded with bad news. We’re preoccupied with staying safe. But we need risk. Without it, dreams would never make it into reality. Problems aren’t barriers, they’re challenges to be solved. We need to be encouraging our young women to discover their strengths and provide them with the support they need to be successful as people, not just as workers.

On Wednesday this week we honoured the achievements and school spirit of the Graduating Class of 2013. What an amazing group of young women. They exited Mercedes College with dignity and respect and it was wonderful to feel the bonds and friendships amongst them as the rest of the College paid tribute to them and celebrated their achievements. The Graduation Mass in the Cathedral was a deeply spiritual gathering, acknowledging the gifts and talents of these young women. Thank you to all the families who joined the girls in Catherine’s Garden to say farewell and thank you to another group of young Mercy women who will no doubt go on to make a difference in the world.

**Resiliency Robbers #4 (Michael Carr-Gregg)**

Let kids give in too easily

Resilient learners link success with effort. They don’t give up because they don’t like a teacher or when confronted with multi-step or more complex activities. Similarly they don’t bail out of a sporting team halfway through the season because the team is not winning or they are not enjoying it. Encourage kids to complete what they have started even if the results aren’t perfect.

Peace and best wishes.

*Sheena Barber, Principal*
Pastoral Care News

Year 9/10 Learning Community
Year 9 - Ms Callie Steven

Thank you all for welcoming me into the role of Acting Year 9 Coordinator in Term Four as Mrs Sherrin Adams takes her well-deserved long service leave. Comments by both parents and the students have made me realise what a special group of Year 9 students that we have. This feeling of gratitude and blessing has been emphasised as I spent much of my holidays in India, and at times the contrast between what we have and what others do not was stark indeed.

While there, I was lucky enough to visit a school for the lower castes, including some orphans, in Bodhgaya. They were overjoyed by the simple gifts of pencils, notebooks, soccer balls and badminton set that we brought. They take many lessons in English, and were excited to hear about Australia. Many of these students are very lucky to receive an education at all to try and break the poverty cycle, and all of them were thankful to be there. It made me think that at times, we take what we have for granted; that we forget how important education is. But more than that, it made me see anew the awareness that we do have.

Activities like Face to Faith and Mercy Day help to raise awareness of situations like this and to challenge our students to do something about it. Without fail, our students rise to the challenge and help others. They also generally behave in a caring manner towards each other. However, there are still some instances of uncaring behaviour that mar this group. There are also instances where students flout school rules regarding uniform and homework. I would ask all parents to be vigilant about this and make sure that students don’t go on ‘holidays’ early. Skirt length in particular is an issue at the moment as many girls seem to have grown over winter. Please check your daughters dress and make sure that it touches her knees.

Thank you all again, and I hope that we have a happy and productive term, maximising the opportunities that education gives us.

Year 11/12 Learning Community
Year 11 - Mrs Marianne Morphett

The Prefect Council for 2014 was commissioned at the opening Mass of the term and the girls shared a special morning tea with their families to celebrate. Thank you to the staff and parents who helped to make this a reflective and memorable occasion. During the week the election for the positions of Head Girl and Deputy Head Girl took place followed by an interview process. These prestigious positions will to be announced on Presentation Evening.

The girls are coming to the end of the academic year and are close to finalising their assessment program. The timetable for the examinations has been distributed, with the exams due to commence in a few weeks. It is important that the girls continue to work diligently and to allocate some of their study time to revision. The planning of events such as the Ball can be a source of distraction to them, and they need to remain focused on their academic achievement.

We look forward to celebrating the talents and successes of the girls on Presentation Evening later this week.

Year 12 - Mrs Bernadette Dell

The end of the girls’ time as students at Mercedes College has been full of excitement and a degree of sadness at saying goodbye to such a lively and appreciative group of young women. The Graduation Ceremony on Wednesday night was an uplifting and dignified end to their school careers and we look forward to reports of their continued success in coming years. The school assembly, earlier in the day, gave their younger peers and all the staff the opportunity to acknowledge the great contribution the girls have made during their time in our community, especially this year when so many girls led co-curricular activities.

Many of the Year group now face their final exams and they have been thoroughly prepared. Their teachers have provided detailed feedback on each girl’s performance in the exams held at the end of Semester 2. Revision sessions have been very productive and many students have taken full advantage of the opportunity to clarify their understanding of areas that were stumbling blocks in the school exams. Their teachers have also explained ways in which the girls can access further assistance, if required. We wish them well in these final, challenging exams, and anticipate that there will be some excellent results in the Class of 2013.
English - Mrs Catherine O’Toole, HOLA English
Year 8 English and Year 10 English Extended students were fortunate to enjoy a visit from the touring troupe Poetry in Action on Tuesday 15 October. The morning started with the Year 10 group enjoying a moving exploration of the war poetry of Wilfred Owen. The sophisticated and sometimes wry interpretation of Owen’s works clarified students’ understanding of his words and their relevance to our world today. This was followed by the light-hearted ‘Poetry at Play’ for the Year 8 students; a performance that demystified poetry and showcased basic poetic techniques such as assonance, alliteration, rhyme and rhythm. This was a truly vibrant and entertaining show and the girls thoroughly enjoyed its fun element. Many students have requested a return visit next year.

The Year 7 students also enjoyed a visit from leading Australian poet and author Stephen Herrick (seen below) on Thursday 24 October. Stephen spoke to the girls about his life and his poetry. It was a very interesting morning.

“GenZ” Competition - Mrs Bernadette Dell
The Year 12 Stage 1 English class entered a number of opinion pieces in the recent "GenZ" competition conducted by The West Australian newspaper. The competition required students to submit their views on an issue of concern to young people today. Two of our students were amongst the twelve best entries in the competition.

Olivia Haines, who wrote on the need for long term and complex solutions to homelessness, and Ella Varga, who wrote about youth 'addiction' to social media, produced our winning entries. They have won cash prizes and will be involved in the planning of a special youth supplement to be printed in October. Mercedes College had the largest number of finalists of any school in the state. Also short-listed were Meb Woldegiorgis and Renae Mosley. The girls all produced work that attracted considerable praise from the professional writers who judged the students’ writing. We congratulate all our entrants on their hard work and skill.
General News

Habits of Mind Quote
“Laugh at yourself first, before anyone else can.” (Elsa Maxwell)

Enrolments
Interviews for enrolments for Year 7 – 2016 are being conducted early 2014 for sisters of current and past Mercedes students. If you have forgotten to enrol your younger daughter, please contact Mrs Lamb on 9323 1340 for an application form.

Future Problem Solving Program (FPSP) - Mrs Kristie Sadowski
During the holidays four Year 9 students competed in the National Final for the Future Problem Solving Program Australia. This year the FPSP Final was held in Perth and took place over three consecutive days. The team of Annabel Haizer, Catherine O'Donoghue, Catherine Eaton and Isabella Rossaro were selected to compete in the Final because of their high quality Global Issues Problem Solving skills. The competition involved the top thinking students in our country. Our team performed well and showed excellent collaborative skills, performance skills and critical thinking. I congratulate the girls on their efforts.

Left: Year 9 Future Problem Solving students who competed in the National Final; Right: Mrs Sonya Roberts and Jaia Bourgeois-Brookes were among the staff and students who helped revitalise the Vertical Garden.

Making Mercedes Greener
Vertical Garden update - Jaia Bourgeois-Brookes (9.3)
On Monday, 14 October numerous members of the college community, including staff and students, helped to revitalise the vertical garden. The garden is an ongoing Making Mercedes Greener project that aims to teach the girls about sustainability and to provide fresh herbs for the College kitchens. The helpers had to remove old plants and plant new seedlings into the special pots from the vertical garden, these pots were then returned to the vertical garden. We planted some marigold plants to assist with pest control and replaced some of the basil, coriander, mint, parsley, rocket and thyme. It was hard work but the helpers did it with smiles on their faces and a little dirt on their hands.

Opti-Minds - Ms Callie Steven
We are the champions!
In our first time ever in competing in the Opti-Minds competition, Mercedes College won the National award in the Social Sciences Division 2 category.

This is a magnificent achievement and the team of Brianna Bitt, Tiana Casey, Sarah Patman, Roisin Nash, Elisabeth Shaw, Sarah Coutinho and Anna Duong were roundly applauded by all of the judges. They particularly received commendations for how well they worked together as a team, always including the ideas of all and never dismissing someone’s comments. In this way the team is a great example to the student body as a whole; they came together at the end of Term 2 from three different year groups, not really knowing each other. They became a team where everyone was equal, everyone was willing to share the load and everyone’s ideas were valid and valuable. Because of this, they created creative and intelligent solutions to all problems that they were given.

Special mention was given by the WA Director of Opti-Minds to our Team Captain, Roisin Nash, on the mature and intelligent way that she showed leadership during the WA training session before the competition itself. Well done to all the girls; you did us proud!
Noticeboard

**Behaviour Tonics - Practical Parenting Courses available.** For more information visit [www.behaviortonics.com.au](http://www.behaviortonics.com.au), email info@behaviortonics.com.au or call (08) 9382 1182

**Master Mind Australia - Academic Pathways - January Jump Start Program.** Revision program aimed to prepare students for 2014. Courses will be conducted at Christ Church Grammar School, Hale School and Willetton Senior High School. For more information visit the [www.mastermindaustralia.com.au](http://www.mastermindaustralia.com.au) or call Dr Robert Hall on 9486 1377.

**Wembley Bright Blue - Friday 8 November,** $7 per child / Junior Disco (Kindy to Year 4), 5.30pm - 6.30pm / Senior Disco (Year 4 to Year 10), 7.00pm - 9.00pm. For more information contact Senior Constable Rita Di Stefano on 0438 743 643 or email rita.distefano@police.wa.gov.au / Amy.Page2@police.wa.gov.au.