Dear Parents and Friends of St Clare’s

First Day of Term 3, Monday, 18 July, will be a pupil free day

It was a great pleasure to look out over our school assembly this morning and see the great number of students and staff who had taken the opportunity to wear a beanie in support of brain cancer research. The gathering was organised by the Year 12 leadership group. Funds were raised for the Mark Hughes Foundation which is working to find a cure for brain cancer. Students donated a gold coin for the privilege of wearing a beanie at school and purchased cupcakes from a large display outside the TTC.

Year 12 student, Ashley Doorey, spoke very movingly and with great dignity about losing her mother to brain cancer and the effect her passing had on family and friends. She noted that brain cancer kills thousands of Australians every year and that the effect of the illness touches many more people then we will ever know. At the time of writing the students had raised $1,254 for cancer research.

The annual St Vincent de Paul blanket drive and the inner city immersion experience in Sydney also featured at the assembly. School Captain, Thomas Dormor, Vice Captain, Casey Griffiths, and Natalie Webster spoke about how something as simple as helping someone stay warm can be a great gift. Students who visited Newcastle and Sydney as part of last holiday’s immersion program spoke about how the simple kindness of listening to someone who is usually ignored by those around them can be transforming for the listener and the speaker.

I was really proud of the way in which the student leaders planned, organised and coordinated the assembly and fundraising ventures. Our young people have fine values which they are able to articulate and apply in front of their peers. Their example to the students, staff and visitors who attended the assembly was first class.
It was a pleasure to be able to acknowledge age champions and congratulate Kendall House on its win in the St Clare’s athletics carnival. The joy in competing and doing well was shared by the school community as students from Under 12 to Under 17 were acclaimed for their athletic prowess and awarded medals to mark the occasion.

Year 7 are continuing to collect cans for local charities. The goods collected will be handed over to those in need before the holidays. At the moment, the Year 7 pastoral groups have collected 12 boxes of tinned products (soup, spaghetti, baked beans, tuna, asparagus, salmon, and peaches).

Daniel Kouwenhoven, Connor McPhillips, Lachlan Oliver and Cameron Weir

Next Monday St Clare’s will host the Year 6 students from our Catholic Primary Schools in Gloucester, Bulahdelah, Wingham, Forster and Taree to a Year 6 Leadership Day. Members of our Year 12 leadership group will lead a discussion about being a leader and leadership with the Year 6 students, many of whom will be joining us in Year 7 in 2017. Our Year 11 Sports Coaching class is also heavily involved, having responsibility for group challenges and sporting events throughout the day. My thanks to each of the Primary School Principals, St Clare’s Assistant Principal, Mr Phil Gibney, Sports Coaching teacher, Karen McCann and SRC Coordinator, Jane Polson for their involvement in the day. Special thanks to Mr Lee Sullivan Year 6 teacher at St Joseph’s, Gloucester who organises guest speakers and puts the day together.

A little further into our newsletter you will find an article by Fr Frank Brennan SJ. It presents an alternate, and challenging, view of what Australians should consider before voting and reflects some ideas that do not receive much coverage in our media. It may be of interest to some.

God Bless

Principal

P & F – NEXT MEETING, WEDNESDAY, 3 AUGUST 2016 6 PM ST JOSEPH’S PRIMARY SCHOOL, WINGHAM
PRAYERS: Please pray for those who are currently experiencing health difficulties and continue to pray for community members experiencing challenges, pain, sickness and grief in their lives at this time.

CHAPLAINCY/PASTORAL CARE: A reminder to all that the school has a Chaplain. Please feel free to contact our Chaplain, Deacon Vince Ryan, through the school office if he can be of assistance to you or any member of our whole school community.

VINNIES WINTER BLANKET APPEAL: As our weather becomes cooler our students are keen to support those from our wider communities in need of warm blankets. The appeal has commenced this week, so please consider supporting this wonderful and practical initiative.

You can send in blankets that you don’t need or support your child’s PC class financially so that they can pool their funds to buy new blankets. The other option is for you to purchase new blankets – it is a generous gift for those who feel the cold.

The appeal will run over the winter months so please feel free to send in blankets even as winter ends. I’m happy to receive blankets during the summer months!!

Thank you
Deacon Vince

Mass Times

Our Lady of the Rosary, Taree
75 Albert St, Taree
Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm
Sunday Mass: 9:30 am

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Wingham
8 Farquhar Street, Wingham
Sunday: 8:30 am

St Bernadette’s, Krambach
Bucketts Way, Krambach
Saturday: 6:30 pm
Sunday: 9 am
(Mass is celebrated on alternate weekends – please speak to Deacon Vince or Mrs Denise Ryan at school for information on which weekend mass will be celebrated)

Our Lady Star of the Sea, Harrington
Pilot St, Harrington
Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm
(1st, 3rd and 5th Saturdays in each month)
Saturday Liturgy of the Word and Communion: 6:00 pm
(2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month)

St Therese's, Lansdowne
Cundle Rd, Lansdowne
Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm
(2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month)

Our Lady of Fatima, Old Bar
20 Hall St, Old Bar,
Sunday Mass: 7:30 am

St Patrick's, Cundletown
River St, Cundletown
Sunday Mass: 6:00 pm

Forster-Tuncurry Catholic Parish
Holy Name of Jesus Parish Church, Forster
33 Lake Street, Forster
Sunday Mass: 9:00 am

St Mary, Star of the Sea Church, Tuncurry
15 Peel Street, Tuncurry
Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm
Sunday Mass: 7:00 am
PRAYER POINT - 26 JUNE: 13TH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME
2ND READING: GALATIANS 5:1. 13-18

“When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.

My brothers, you were called, as you know, to liberty; but be careful, or this liberty will provide an opening for self-indulgence. Serve one another, rather, in works of love, since the whole of the Law is summarised in a single command: Love your neighbour as yourself. If you go snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, you had better watch or you will destroy the whole community.

Let me put it like this: if you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger of yielding to self-indulgence, since self-indulgence is the opposite of the Spirit, the Spirit is totally against such a thing, and it is precisely because the two are so opposed that you do not always carry out your good intentions. If you are led by the Spirit, no law can touch you.”

The word of the Lord.

Have a great week
Denise Ryan, Ministry Coordinator

FATHER ON A MISSION OF MERCY IN A MOTOR HOME
Published: 10 June 2016

For the past 12 weeks, Fr Richard Shortall SJ has been travelling in a second-hand motor home to rural parishes in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle that have no resident priest, reports the Catholic News Service.

A shiny white motor home stationed on the grounds of churches throughout the diocese has become a beacon of hope and mercy among local communities.

Open church doors and a large banner planted in church front yards proclaim, "Missionary of Mercy here this week!" also have been the cause of much curiosity.

Each Saturday, Fr Shortall parks beside a church, connects to the electricity and water and makes himself at home for seven days. It's not a large motor home, but he says it has everything he needs for his travels and ministry during the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Fr Shortall is one of more than 1000 priests, and one of two Australians, who were accepted by Pope Francis to be a missionary of mercy during the Jubilee Year.
He said he was inspired to step forward after reading the Pope's words in *Misericordiae Vultus* (The Face of Mercy) instituting the year: "I intend to send out missionaries of mercy. They will be a sign of the Church's maternal solicitude for the people of God, enabling them to enter the profound richness of this mystery so fundamental to the faith."

Fr Shortall told Catholic News Service: "As soon as I read that, I felt this call. Yes, I want to be one of those missionaries of mercy."

Having worked with the people of the diocese since 2013 and understanding the particular hurts felt by many of them over news about clergy sexual abuse, he felt called to offer his services.

"I had no idea how I'd do it or what was involved in being one of these missionaries of mercy, but when I shared this desire with Teresa Brierley, a vice chancellor at the diocese, her eyes lit up. She said, 'Don't worry, I know how.'"

Ms Brierley has long wanted a priest to travel to remote communities without a resident priest. With the approval of Maitland-Newcastle Bishop William Wright and Jesuit Father Brian McCoy, provincial of the Australian Jesuits, Fr Shortall is making her wish possible.

Photo: Fr Richard Shortall, a missionary of mercy for the Holy Year, prays at St Patrick and St Brigid Church in Cooranbong

**FR RICHARD'S PROGRAMME IN CUNDERLINGTON, WINGHAM & OLD BAR:**

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<th>Date</th>
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<td><strong>CUNDERLINGTON</strong></td>
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<td>Mercy Conversation with Srs Lyn and Maureen</td>
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<td>Mass, Conversations with Fr Richard</td>
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<td>Reconciliation, Supper</td>
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<td>Mon 4th Jul -</td>
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<td>Guided Prayer for Healing &amp; Mercy</td>
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### Wingham

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<td>Tues 12th July</td>
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<td>Mercy Conversation with Srs Lyn and Maureen</td>
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<td>Sun 17th July</td>
<td>8.30am</td>
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<td>Mon 18th July - Thurs 21st July</td>
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<td>Mass with students Conversations with Fr Richard Reconciliation</td>
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<td>Thurs 21st July</td>
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<td>Guided Prayer for Healing &amp; Mercy Supper</td>
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<td>Fri 22nd July</td>
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<td>Mass, Lunch with Community</td>
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### OLD BAR

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<td>Sun 10th July</td>
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<td>Mon 11th July - Fri 15th July</td>
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<td>Thurs 14th July</td>
<td>7.00pm</td>
<td>Guided Prayer for Healing &amp; Mercy Supper</td>
<td>Linda &amp; Mike Norris 65574060</td>
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Missionary of Mercy
Fr Richard Shortall SJ
Northern Pastoral Region

The Church of Maitland-Newcastle celebrates the Year of Mercy in its 150th year of service, worship and mission, and it looks with hope to the continuation of its journey in faith and love.

In this year Pope Francis invites us to contemplate the face of mercy that we will be merciful like God.

In his letter announcing the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis reflects on the need for some priests to take on a more significant role in extending God's mercy to the people. He is naming these priests Missionaries of Mercy who are called to be the face of God's mercy, going out to meet people where they are, listening to their stories and offering them the love and forgiveness of God, however that may be appropriate. (MV n. 18)

In response to the Pope's call Bishop Bill invited Fr Richard Shortall SJ, to take on this ministry in our diocese. Many know Fr Richard from his retreat ministry around the parishes over the last two years. Fr Richard travelled to Rome to be commissioned by Pope Francis on Ash Wednesday and upon his return was commissioned by Bishop Bill for his mission of mercy.

Fr Richard will travel around the diocese, in a motorhome, focusing on those Churches where there is no longer a resident priest, as well as other significant places where mercy is sought and given. He will spend time in each place and will be available to all people who seek mercy, a listening ear and forgiveness.

Time permitting Bishop Bill may also take up this mission of mercy from time to time throughout the year.

The schedule for Fr. Richard's pilgrimage around the diocese is available on the diocesan website – www.mn.catholic.org.au

PRE EVENT

Mercy Conversation - Understanding Pope Francis' Vision for the Jubilee of Mercy

To assist people to understand Pope Francis' vision for the Year of Mercy and to prepare for Fr Richard's visit, the staff of the Tenison Woods Education Centre (TWEC) will break open Pope Francis' inspiring letter on the Year of Mercy, Misericordiae Vultus.

The motorhome (Fr Richard's home on wheels) will be located at each church for the duration of his stay.

The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which …must penetrate the heart and mind of every person. The Church must pattern her behaviour after the Son of God who went out to everyone without exception (MV n.12-13)

Contact our Missionary of Mercy on:
Phone – 0448 292 523
Email – MOM@mn.catholic.org.au
FROM THE SENIOR SCHOOL:
RYDA Day - 21st June 2016
All students from Year 11, and six teachers, travelled to the Taree Racecourse on Tuesday for the Annual RYDA Day run by the local Rotary Club. This involved Rotarians, Lyons Club, Police and Driving Instructors.

What is RYDA?
Rotary Youth Driver Awareness Limited (RYDA) is an initiative of Rotary International. RYDA is a voluntary organisation that has developed a program to help educate young people about Road Safety as they approach the period in their life when they start driving a car and ride as a passenger in a car driven by one of their peers.

RYDA’s Mission

- To provide first quality road safety information to youth
- To help ensure that when young people commence driving they have had the best road safety education possible.

The Program targets 16-18 year old students

- This is the time most young people are starting to think about driving so their interest levels are high
- Once young people leave school they are not available as a group to receive such education
- Research shows that once young drivers start driving they are less receptive to safety messages because they have an unfounded belief in their own competency - so the window of opportunity is quite narrow.
- Schools have a duty to deliver this information in the Senior High School, but find it almost impossible to resource an expert program, with experienced professionals who have had experience at the "coal face"
- This best practice program means that the content and delivery meets criteria established by expert authorities (approved by RYDA) including the Department of Transport and the Department of Education and Training.

We were divided into three groups for the day and attended six sessions:

1. Speed and stopping distance (braking demonstration)
2. Hazards and Distractions
3. Genevieve’s Story
4. Rights and Responsibilities (a session by the Police)
5. After the Crash (personal stories from victims of serious accidents)
6. Personality Test

The students were confronted by several issues and situations. The day was an excellent and informative one especially with regard to Driver (and passenger) awareness and safety.

It is wonderful to think that such a program exists for our young drivers.
Thank you to all the students for your excellent behaviour, and a special thank you to the teachers (Mrs Busby, Ms Posadas, Mrs Dunn, Mr Donovan and Mr Collier) who gave up the whole day to be with the students.

I hope that everyone will now be in a better position to make wise and sensible choices as they begin their driving years.

Declan Moon (being assisted by Snr Constable Dave Russell) having difficulty driving with the special High Range Alcohol Goggles on

CCC Cross Country
Congratulations to Reece Minett, Daniel Sewell and Sam Mudford who proudly represented St Clare’s at the recent CCC Cross Country Championships. Well done boys!

A reminder to everyone about the need to remain focused in classes as we approach the end of the term. You are all reminded that even if you are thinking about discontinuing a subject at the end of next term, you must complete your Preliminary course in the subjects you are now doing. You cannot, under any circumstances, do work from another subject whilst in that class. You must still complete all the work necessary for that class until it is discontinued.
The students have been reminded about the need to be respectful to each other and to their teachers, especially casual staff. There are many people who are unwell at the moment, both staff and students. We need to help each other, not make it difficult for everyone.

Year 11, please make sure that you get plenty of sleep, especially during these winter months where colds and flu are rampant.

If you are struggling in a subject, you need to come and see either your teacher or me to get some help. Do not leave it until you are getting into trouble for not doing your work.

Keep being positive about yourself and the choices you make.

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”

Harriet Tubman

Karen McCann, Year 11 Student Coordinator

CAREERS CORNER

Year 12 Careers Holiday Work - What you need to do to be on track for a stress free Term 3.

Ensure you use time at university open days, Careers Tertiary Day at Chatham High to gain information that will assist you with the task below.

Research and complete your options:

University

- **UNE Direct Early Entry** – work out your three choices, name of course and course code – this is not part of your UAC application
- **UAC Application** – continue to develop your *Excel* list of possible courses: name of course, university and last year’s cut off – UAC has 9 choices but your list can be longer as this is only a preliminary list
- **SRS** – indicate what universities you are applying for that participates in this program
- **Sydney University E12** – if you are applying, this must be your first choice
- **University of Technology** – if you are applying, this must be your first choice
- **Scholarships** – research all scholarships for courses for which you are applying
- **Southern Cross University** – *STAR* program – two choices they must also be choices on UAC application
- **Early Entry Wollongong University** – what courses am I interested in applying for?
- **Interstate Universities** – research options

**Equity Scholarships**

- Am I eligible? Information is on the UAC site
Educational Disadvantage scheme EAS
• Am I eligible?
• Do I have all supporting documents – Information on UAC website

Subject bonus points
• Explore your options – book in Careers Office

Additional entry information and schemes
• For universities you intend to apply to check websites for bonus points, flexible entry schemes.

TAFE
• Using TAFE NSW and North Coast Institute of TAFE websites develop a list of courses you are interested in
• Research scholarships – Smart and Skill

Upcoming events
29 July  Manning-Great Lakes Careers Market (Chatham High School 11 am - noon) (Years 11 & 12) with Year 10 students attending ONLY if accompanied by a parent

Karen McCann, Acting Careers Adviser

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

“We had no choice other than to leave because it was not safe for our children. We left everything – our clothes, our furniture, even our food.”

Nafa Jihad, 40, father and Iraqi refugee

Monday marked 65th anniversary of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Almost six years after World War II had ended the UN General Assembly defined the term ‘refugee’ and outlined the rights of the displaced, as well as the legal obligations of countries to protect them.

Now, on the 20th of June each year, tens of thousands of people from around the globe come together in celebration and reflection - applauding the contribution of refugees, and recognising the extreme hardships of those who are forced to flee their home in fear of violence and persecution.

With the publicity of World Refugee Day, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) encouraged everyone to show their solidarity for the 65.3 million people who have been displaced worldwide. We can help the mothers, fathers and children of this terrible humanitarian crisis through donation, through encouraging our leaders to view the results of their actions and to take heed of the effects that their policies are wreaking on real people, and by keeping in mind the suffering of these people on Election Day.
Another small but potentially significant gesture that individuals can make to better the lives of refugees during the worst global refugee crisis since World War II is to sign the #WithRefugees petition. The High Commissioner for Refugees will deliver this document to the UN headquarters in New York before of the General Assembly on the 19th of September. This petition asks governments to:

- Ensure every refugee child gets an education.
- Ensure every refugee family has somewhere safe to live.
- Ensure every refugee can work or learn new skills to make a positive contribution to their community.

Will you stand #WithRefugees? Find this petition at: [http://www.unhcr.org/refugeeday/](http://www.unhcr.org/refugeeday/)

“We felt maybe it’s our turn to die. But we didn’t want to die. So we made up our minds to leave.”

*Sahar, 25, Syrian refugee in Lebanon*

Australians desperately need to look beyond the politics of fear and the dehumanising rhetoric that surrounds this issue, and instead open our hearts and realise that refugees are ordinary people – just like you and me. They are human beings, having to leave everything they have ever known, their homes, their friends, their family and their safety.

86% of the world’s refugees are hosted by developing countries. In 2015 the number of visas allocated to refugees compared to Australia’s overall migration was the lowest it has been in over 20 years (3.2%). Australia is the only OECD country where the first option for children seeking asylum is detention.

These are shameful statistics.

I will conclude with an excerpt from a poem called ‘Home’, by Warsan Shire, a Kenyan born Somali poet.

No one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
You only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well

You have to understand,
that no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land


In Horgos, Serbia, a mother and her three children walk along a road towards a railway line that will lead them to Hungary. © UNHCR/A.McConnell

*Article written by Declan Moylan, for The Human Rights Group*
MATHS WORKSHOP - Mathematics Workshop provides the opportunity for every student to obtain assistance and support in improving their understanding of mathematics. Four mathematics teachers are available each week to explain the concepts you are finding difficult or give assistance to enable you to complete your homework, assignments or any work that you may have missed due to absence from class.

WHEN IS IT ON? Wednesday lunchtime - every week.

WHERE? Room 10
We hope to see you there!

Mrs Julie Rowsell- Mathematics Coordinator
LEAVE NOTES & STUDENT MESSAGES: It would be appreciated if parents/guardians would send in a written note if their child needs to leave early for appointments etc. Notes should be handed in at the front office in the morning before roll call. If parents/guardians need to notify their child of a change of afternoon arrangements, it is necessary to phone the school prior to 2:25 pm (End of Lunch – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday) or prior to 1:55 pm (End of Lunch – Thursday Sport) as it is often difficult to locate students if their last lesson is a PE Prac or there has been a room change. Students cannot be collected from the school during school hours by anyone other than a parent or guardian without written permission. Thank you.

LATE NOTES: Lateness to school is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained to the school the same way as other forms of absence. Arriving Late for school requires a handwritten note from a parent/carer or a phone call from a parent/carer or the absence is recorded as an unexplained partial absence. Thank you.

SCHOOL CLINIC: Students are reminded that if they are unwell whilst at school they are to advise their teacher who will then send them to the Front Office. If necessary, the office staff will contact a parent while the student waits in the Clinic. Students are not to contact parents on their mobile phones as this leaves teachers and office staff unaware of the situation and is also in breach of the school policy – use of mobile phones. Thank you.

COMING EVENTS - 2016

Term 2

Week 10 Thursday 30/6 ♦ NAIDOC Day Assembly
♦ University of Newcastle School Visit – Year 12
Friday 1/7 ♦ Last Day of Term 2
Term 3

Week 1
Monday 18/7 ♦ Pupil Free Day
Tuesday 19/7 ♦ First Day for students for Term 3
Wednesday 20/7 ♦ Year 10/11 Parent/Teacher Interviews

Week 2
Monday 25/7 ♦ Students from Kobe Kaisei arrive
Tuesday 26/7 ♦ Year 10/11 Parent/Teacher Interviews
Friday 29/7 ♦ Taree Careers Expo – Chatham High School
♦ Horsesports - Taree

Week 3
Sunday 31/7 ♦ Year 9 Snowy Excursion Departs
Monday 1/8 ♦ Trial HSC Examinations commence
Wednesday 3/8 ♦ P & F Meeting – 6 pm (St Joseph’s Primary School, Wingham)
Thursday 4/8 ♦ Kobe Kaisei students depart St Clare’s
Friday 5/8 ♦ Year 9 Snowy Excursion Returns

Week 4
Friday 12/8 ♦ St Clare’s Feast Day Celebrations

Week 5
Monday 15/8 ♦ Trial HSC Examinations conclude
♦ CCC Netball Championships - Penrith
18/8 ♦ Years 7 – 9 Parent/Teacher Interviews
♦ Dio Athletics

Week 6
Thursday 26/8 ♦ Year 7 Vaccination – 3rd dose

Week 7
Wednesday 31/8 ♦ P & F Meeting – 6 pm

Week 10
Thursday 22/9 ♦ Year 12 Farewell Assembly
Friday 23/9 ♦ Year 12 Graduation Mass
♦ Last Day of Term 3

Term 4

Week 1 Thursday 13/10 ♦ HSC Written Examinations commence

Week 3 Wednesday 26/10 ♦ P & F Meeting – 6 pm

Week 4 Friday 4/11 ♦ HSC Written Examinations conclude

Week 5 Monday 7/11 ♦ Year 9 & 10 Yearly Examinations commence
Friday 11/11 ♦ Graduation Evening

Week 6 Friday 18/11 ♦ Year 9 & 10 Yearly Examinations conclude

Week 7 Monday 21/11 ♦ Year 7 & 8 Yearly Examinations commence
Wednesday 23/11 ♦ P & F Meeting – 6 pm
Friday 25/11 ♦ Year 7 & 8 Yearly Examinations conclude

Week 10 Thursday 15/12 ♦ HSC Results released
Friday 16/12 ♦ ATAR Results released
On a Mission of Mercy: Evangelising Parishes

1–3 September 2016

The Concourse
Chatswood, Sydney, Australia

Registrations Now Open!

Keynote Speakers

Cardinal Donald Wuerl (Washington)
Bishop Nicholas Hudson (Westminster)
Dr Susan Timoney (Washington) and
Dr Timoney’s visit to Australia is hosted and sponsored by the Archdiocese of Melbourne

Mr Daniel Ang (Australia)

For more information
proclaim2016@dbb.org.au  Natalie Moutia (02) 9847 0504

www.proclaimconference.com.au
THE MORAL CONUNDRUM OF CASTING A VOTE ON 2 JULY:

Frank Brennan | 9 June 2016 - According to the latest News poll, 15 per cent of voters are planning to vote for the minor parties or for an independent candidate. Support for the Greens is running at ten per cent. The leaders of the major parties are worried.

Malcolm Turnbull is warning, ‘A vote for the Greens, independents, risks the chaos and instability that we saw in the years of the Julia Gillard government. The only way to be sure that there will be a stable federal government commitment to a national economic plan that will deliver stronger economic growth and more and better jobs is to vote for the Coalition.’

The changes to the Senate voting system made just before the election and the double dissolution of the Parliament have been aimed at reducing the political influence of independents and the minor parties. Understandably, the government is arguing that the difficult economic times ahead will require government to make and implement difficult decisions, and this in turn will require the Senate not to be dysfunctional or unduly obstructionist.

But our government ministers are not just economic managers, and our parliament does not concern itself only with taxation and economic development.

Sadly, the major political parties have forfeited any claim to govern in their own right because they have caused such disillusionment among so many voters about other policy issues with strong moral overtones. Justifiably many voters think they could not trust the Coalition or the Labor Party to implement a fair and coherent asylum and refugee policy or to address the challenge of climate change with the required urgency.

Any voter impressed with Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si' or inspired by his visits to asylum seekers on the islands of Lampedusa and Lesbos could not blithely vote for either of the major parties, without first determining how to place some continuing political and moral pressure on them.

Consider the voter of good conscience who is committed to equity, jobs and growth for all Australians, but who is also concerned about the situation of the asylum seekers and proven refugees being held on Nauru and Manus Island.

Neither the Labor Party nor the Coalition during this election campaign is prepared to suggest any realistic solution. They are not prepared to welcome, accept or even discuss New Zealand's offer to take up to 150 refugees a year from these places. The major parties have made a judgment about the majority of voters. They think most voters are so indifferent to these voiceless and faceless victims of Australia's tough border protection policy that it is best to offer no solution whatever to their plight.

The voter of good conscience could decide that no party deserves to govern in their own right if they are not prepared to offer any solution to this problem which Australia created and which remains in part our responsibility. Malcolm Turnbull says we can't afford to be misty-eyed about these people being held on Nauru and Manus Island. Being misty eyed can be a problem for the clear sighted, but it's better than being willfully blind as both Turnbull and Bill Shorten are being on this issue.
The Australian Catholic Bishops have urged voters to consider 'a vote for the voiceless'. They say they have issued their very modest election manifesto 'not in order to push an ideological line or simply to defend the Church's interests but to give a voice to the voiceless and make their faces seen'. The first of the voiceless and faceless groups commended for our attention by the bishops are 'refugees and asylum seekers who are often seen as a problem to be solved rather than as human beings in need of our help'.

Returning to work after his five-month absence due to illness, Archbishop Anthony Fisher was interviewed by Tess Livingstone, Cardinal Pell's erstwhile biographer. She reported in *The Australian* that Fisher 'was uncomfortable with aspects of the major parties' asylum seeker policies, especially offshore detention'. He did not endorse the approach of any particular party or politician. He did take 'aim at the Greens' support for the removal of religious "exemptions" to anti-discrimination laws'.

But Fisher did not go anywhere near as far as his predecessor Pell who urged voters in 2010 'to examine the policies of the Greens on their website and judge for themselves how thoroughly anti-Christian they are'. Some of the Greens' policies are far more Christian than those of the major parties. But then again, they can afford to be, because they are not seeking to form government in our increasingly secular pluralist democracy.

A voter wanting one of the major parties to form government while being mistrustful of their capacity to make a moral decision about the plight of asylum seekers would be very sensible to cast a vote in such a way as to ensure that the new government does not govern in its own right by being assured automatic passage of all its legislation through both houses of parliament once the legislation has been approved by the party room. The party rooms of the major parties are now prejudiced closed chambers when it comes to the interests of the voiceless.

Exposing legislation to open scrutiny in a parliament not controlled by the government and requiring the government to barter economic gains for the moral entitlements of the voiceless will be the only way to obtain morally sound laws and policies. Parliamentary pressure needs to be placed on any new government wanting to provide equity, jobs and growth; so that it will also do more to resolve the plight of asylum seekers and to be more attentive to the urgent requirements of the environment subject to the depredations of climate change.

None of the parties likely to form government after the election has an asylum policy which is acceptable. I urge people of goodwill when casting their vote to consider the desirability of a parliament which is not readily controlled by the government of the day, and which therefore might make the new government enact a more humane policy. I encourage people to cast a vote for a member of senators (whether members of the major parties or not) who have a commitment to reviewing the existing government policy, providing a more humane outcome both for those presently being held on Nauru and Manus Island as well as for those waiting in the Australian community without adequate work and welfare rights.

I would hope that we could all then start the long term cooperative work needed to increase our humanitarian migration quota and to develop a regional solution with neighbouring countries assisted by the good offices of UNHCR, while accepting even with a heavy heart and conscientious reservation that the boats will be stopped. We need to negotiate the ethical dividend for stopping the boats. I am not opposed to equity, jobs and growth for all Australians.
But I think that is only part the story, and I want my vote to count in relation to the whole story of Australia's place in the world.

For starters, I want any new Australian government to empty the camps on Nauru and Manus Island in a timely and dignified manner. And I know a vote straight down the ticket for Turnbull or Shorten won't do that.

Frank Brennan SJ is professor of law at Australian Catholic University and adjunct professor at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. He was recently interviewed, alongside Amanda Vanstone, on the question of whether 'Australia's asylum seeker policy too harsh too soft or have we got it right', by the ABC's Emma Alberici.
7 STRANGERS INVESTIGATE THE GREATEST PARANORMAL MYSTERY IN THE WORLD

APPARITION HILL

From the acclaimed director *The Triumph* comes a powerful new film that chronicles the incredible journey of 7 strangers who embark across the globe to investigate one of the greatest mysteries of the modern era. *Apparition Hill* is an emotionally charged “cinematic pilgrimage” to the little-known village of Medjugorje nestled along the Croatian-Bosnia-Herzegovina borders. The feature-length documentary is being shown in select theaters through our Grassroots Partnership Program. Discover the shared miracle as two atheists, a skeptic, two terminally ill patients, a widower, and a recovering addict learn about life ... and what comes after it.

WHEN: Sunday 24th July, 2016
WHERE: Fays Twin Cinema, Taree

START TIME: 11:15am
COST: $10 w/proceeds to cancer research

TICKETS TAREE: (02) 6552 1084 - Taree Catholic Parish Office

TICKETS FORSTER TUNCURRY: 0407 006 666

Visit www.apparitionhill.tv
or follow us on Facebook
facebook.com/apparitionhillmovie
JULY 2016 SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM
AT THE HUNTER WETLANDS CENTRE

Bush Skills Level 1
For 7 to 10 years
Tuesday 5th & Thursday 14 July
Cost: $20 per child
Make (and eat) a damper, build a bush shelter. Enjoy a bush walk and learn basic survival skills. Meet our resident reptiles.

Bush Skills Level 2
For 10 to 13 years
Tuesday 5th & Thursday 14 July
Cost: $20 per child
Make (and eat) a jam twisty. Learn to throw a rescue rope and tie knots to build bush furniture and a ballista. Enjoy a reptile encounter.

Turtle Time
For 4 to 8 years
Wednesday 6th & 13th July
Cost: $20 per child
Meet the wetlands resident turtles. Enjoy turtle craft and snack and go turtle spotting around the wetlands. Includes a reptile encounter.

For all the above activities - Bookings Essential  Ph: 4951 6466

Sand Art Fun
Drop in between 10.00am - 12 noon
Monday 4th & Tuesday 12 July
Cost: $5 per child
Use coloured sand to make an animal picture.

Wetlands Explorer
For 4 to 12 years
Available any time during the school holidays. Cost: Free
Collect your map and follow the trail. Answer the questions and become a Wetlands Explorer. Go into the draw for a weekly prize.

Bring the family to the Hunter Wetlands Centre
A fun, environmentally friendly learning experience!
Open 9am to 4pm

Entry
$2 per primary-school age child (special school holiday rate). $5 general entry.

Activities
• Wetlands Explorer (for 4 to 12 years) available any time during school holidays.
• Watch the Magpie Goose Feeding at 10.30 am & 2.30pm.
• Try Dipnetting from the jetty.
• Playtime at Discovery Playground.
• Check out the creatures in the tanks in the Visitor Centre.
• Tank Talk - Children can learn about reptile behaviour and care. They can handle some of the reptiles from the tanks in the Visitor Centre. Check at front desk for times.
• Café - meals, snacks, ice creams, drinks.
• Shop - affordable gifts for children & adults.