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2013 saw two of our Catholic schools celebrate 75 year anniversaries. Both schools have a proud history, but are as up-to-date as any other school around!

On November 13, the community of Sacred Heart Catholic School in Geeveston celebrated the school’s anniversary with enthusiasm.

In February 1938, the first community of Sisters of St Joseph, Sisters M Eustelle, M Marcellus and M Angus, came to the town. At first they stayed at the Franklin Convent and travelled the nine miles to Geeveston each day in a trap driven by Mr F B Hill and drawn by his faithful 23 year old horse, Clusky.

Initially, lessons were held in the church building with the sisters teaching down one end and the music teacher taking lessons down the other end. Gradually facilities were improved.

Many children have passed through the school since then and gone on to make their mark on our community. Today the school has beautiful modern buildings and a dedicated staff of lay people. It continues to provide quality education and a focus on Catholic values for children in the Huon Valley from Southport to Mountain River.

Current Parish Priest of the Huon Valley, Fr Greg Barker, celebrated Mass at the school on Wednesday November 13. As well as the presence of the school community, there were parents, friends, old scholars, Sisters of St Joseph and past teachers and staff. After Mass there was lunch and a sharing of memorabilia and stories.

The following day there were more celebrations with open school before 6 pm Mass at Sacred Heart Church, Newstead, and then supper.

Congratulations to everyone who made the events so memorable. We hope to cover the opening of the time capsule – 25 years in the future – at the Centenary!!!!

The other party was at St Thomas More’s Catholic School in the Launceston suburb of Newstead. The school was named after the eleventh Lord Chancellor to Henry VIII, Thomas More, who stood up for God and his Catholic faith, even to his death. There are links to Mary MacKillop (now known as St Mary of the Cross) and Fr Julian Tenison Woods through the Sisters of St Joseph who founded the school 75 years ago. The current sisters, who live in the Emmanuel Centre nearby, are still great supporters and friends of the school.

The celebrations for the 75th Anniversary ran over two days.

Friday, November 29, saw an Open Day at the school with memorabilia on display, a sausage sizzle and Devonshire tea, planting of a tree and burying of a time capsule, and – most impressively – a play and concert by the students. The play had been specially written and took the form of a ‘This is Your Life’ spoof on the life of Mary MacKillop. It was both informative and hilarious and a credit to the young actors. The various school choirs that followed the play were sensitive and sounded delightful with their harmonic presentations. The parents, friends and old scholars were entertained very well!

May there be many more years of loving, caring, sharing and learning in this picturesque setting among the trees.

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from the director

As we begin the 2014 school year, our Catholic school communities can take inspiration from Pope Francis, who writes in his first major original text, Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Good News), about authentic Catholic education in the information age:

We are living in an information-driven society which bombards us indiscriminately with data – all treated as being of equal importance – and which leads to remarkable superficiality in the area of moral discernment. In response, we need to provide an education which teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values (64).

The Pope also writes about how the subjects taught through the curriculum can be “taken up into the proclamation of the Gospel message”, and become “tools of evangelisation; water is changed into wine”, to become “instruments of the Spirit for enlightening and renewing the world” (132).

Everything we do, learn and teach in our schools can be a vehicle for discovering and announcing the Good News of Jesus, who lived and taught a Way that can positively affect each human heart and mind, a Way that can contribute towards creating a society enlightened by what is best for human development, for our communities and our planet. Pope Francis knows how necessary that message is for the world, and how contrary it can be to accepted ways of thinking, where self-interest, self-importance and self-indulgence can be allowed to dominate, creating division, bullying, disrespect, war, ecological devastation, injustice, emptiness and even despair. The Pope’s own visible commitment to Christ’s humility, love and compassion are well known, as are his joy and tenderness. He was nominated Time Magazine’s Person of the Year for 2013, because of the impact his lifestyle and teaching are having on the world. May the sunshine of his wisdom sing in our hearts and shine into our schools and families. May we take courage and follow his example as we relate to our young people, opening up with them the treasures of deep and rich learning ... developing each day the knowledge, understanding and skills that are essential for meaningful and fruitful living in this digital age.

ringing out over Richmond

According to Parish Priest Fr Terry Rush, the relationship between St John's Catholic School and St John’s Church in Richmond is an exemplar for other communities to emulate!

One aspect of this is the school fair held every two years; another is the presence of Fr Terry at school events and yet another the ringing of the Angelus bells every school day.

There is a roster of Grade Six students who recite the Angelus prayer in pairs at the Church at twelve noon. The bells ring out across the town and paddocks in a way reminiscent of the famous 1857 painting of Jean-Francois Millet. As the prayer is recited each day, a total of 18 peals ring out to remind the students and the wider community of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary and her role in the Incarnation of Jesus: “The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit ...”

Our photo shows students Lili and Lilly taking their turn to ring the bell and say the prayer.
dance fever has hit!

The Dancefever program is run throughout southern Tasmania to promote fitness, build confidence and develop positive relationships between boys and girls. The culmination of several weeks' work was seen at the Derwent Entertainment Centre in December as students from St Therese's, Sacred Heart (Geeveston), Holy Rosary, Corpus Christi and Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Schools took part in the Dancefever Challenge.

It was fun!

Teachers took part too and one Principal is now known as ‘Lord of the Dance’ after winning the foxtrot competition.

Bare branches on the tree
I hear the whisper come to me
Raindrops glisten peacefully
Creepy is the world to me
Hearing sounds everywhere

The shapes of trees start to scare me
Running blindly through the air
Eerie shadows are everywhere
Escaping from this world, I flee
Safety home my legs carry me.
banding together

A huge combined Concert and Awards Evening was held at St Patrick’s College in November. It featured students from all Catholic Schools in Launceston: St Patrick’s, Sacred Heart, St Finn Barr’s, Larmenier, St Anthony’s and St Thomas More’s. 2013 was the eleventh year the concert has been held and it was amazing to see the development from Primary foundation bands to Senior College band. It was a great night of musical entertainment led by the amazing Miss Fiona Mowat. (Pictured below with Mayor Albert van Zetten)

A Life of a Tree
by Mikeelee, St Patrick's Catholic School, Latrobe.

Leaves are falling to the ground, falling and crushing without a sound.
The wind blows me all about, no one around to hear me shout.

People come and people go,
I love to watch the children grow
My branches have served as many things
Homes for birds and children’s swings

My life as a tree seems a mystery,
Among my branches lies a history.
A deep rooted story of joy and sorrow.
Who knows what I might witness tomorrow.
parading through Launceston

As Christmas approached, the Parents and Friends at St Finn Barr’s Catholic School in Invermay wondered if they should just rest on their laurels, or have a float in the Christmas parade. They decided to invite everyone to be involved and make it part of the send off for P & F President Rachael Loone, who had been strongly involved with the P & F for twenty years as each of her children moved through the school. (Her youngest was in Grade Six in 2013.) What a send-off it was!

The theme was Past, Present and Future. An array of well dressed ‘Sisters’, a group of students in today’s uniform and a group dressed to show their personal hopes for the future; at the centre, of course, the Nativity.

The pictures say it all!

by Lynne Seaton, St Finn Barr’s.

St Patrick’s College Prospect also made their mark in the parade with a very sophisticated entry of dancers from past, present and future.

Advent pageant tells the whole story

On the day before the Christmas Parade in Launceston Jesus was the focus as hundreds of primary children walked purposefully through the streets of central Launceston to re-enact the journey of Mary and Joseph looking for an inn at Bethlehem. The Advent Pageant is an interactive way for children to learn the true story of Christmas amidst the pervading secular messages of consumerism.

Children and staff from Sacred Heart Catholic School walked from their school down to Princes Square where they joined children from six other schools for some entertainment and talks before they commenced the big walk together. The procession accompanied ‘Mary’ and ‘Joseph’ as they knocked on shop doors asking for a bed for the night. Sadly there was ‘no room at the inn’.

Students dressed as angels, shepherds, kings ... even cows and sheep! Shoppers stared in wonderment as the procession wound its way down Charles Street, then through the Mall and back along St John Street to the Square where ‘Jesus’ was born. There followed much music and celebration.
Over the last three years, Marist has obtained funding to conduct Cultural Awareness Camps that have been made available to ALL students. This year, students from Grades Ten and Eleven, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, went to Larapuna on the far North-East at Eddystone Point. This parcel of land was returned to the Tasmanian Aboriginal People in 2012 after being previously leased by the community for the last few years. Larapuna prior to the 1830s was a rich hunting area and traditional territory of the North Eastern tribes. The land and sea provided such a plethora of food that the groups in the area were quite sedentary, with evidence of hut depressions still evident today. The significance of the site was not lost on the students attending the camp who showed great respect and appreciation for the site.

Students helped in the cleaning, weeding and preservation of some colonial graves on the site as well as some general maintenance on the three colonial homesteads at Larapuna.

In addition to the community service, students were exposed to some traditional Tasmanian crafts, ‘Coming into Being’ stories and bush tucker.

As the chef, Sharon Dennis from Riaununa, UTAS, put on a smorgasbord of foods, both well-known and unusual, and was delighted when the students tried, tested and went back for more. Students were given options to try a wide variety including octopus, abalone, mutton bird, leatherwood honeycomb, pig face and wattle seeds.

Under Auntie Patsy and Auntie Nettie’s guidance, students became proficient in making small rope out of native swamp reeds with the rope then being used in shaping and decorating bull kelp into bowls. Some students chose to use the rope and bull kelp in other ways with some threading the reeds with kelp and shells to make beautiful decorative necklaces and bracelets, and others recycling offcuts of kelp to make wind chimes.

Interesting conversations came when the students were given the opportunity to ask questions that concerned them. Having Sharon Dennis, Auntie Patsy and Auntie Nettie available to answer such questions was a privilege and one for which the students were grateful.

Educational experiences such as these help dispel myths, promote greater acceptance and pave the way towards reconciliation and understanding.
**Dominic beauties**

A few of the impressive arrivals at Dominic College Grade Ten Formal held at Wrest Point Casino on Monday, December 2.

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**Well done Niam!**

Dominic College Glenorchy has a new boys’ vice-captain Niam Askey-Doran who swept up a record seven Year 9 Subject Awards in the Awards Ceremony at the end of 2013 as well as the Cerritelli Award for academic success. Niam, pictured here with Fr Frank Bertagnolli, won awards in Religious Education, Mathematics, Mathematics Methods – Foundation TQA2, Science, Physical Science, Humanities, Robotics and Game Making.

Niam is a genuine all-rounder who represented the College in Futsal, was a state finalist in the Australian Brain Bee Competition and performed as a guest ‘Wiggle’ at the K-2 disco.

“Niam is an outstanding student,” said Principal Ms Beth Gilligan. “He defines leadership and service to others.”

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