



# St Agnes Catholic High School

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St AgnesRootyHill



[www.stagnesrootyhill.edu.au](http://www.stagnesrootyhill.edu.au)

to truth through love

## Diary Dates

### 26 August

Yr 9 (B1-4) RE Excursion

### 28 August

Yr 7 Brainstorm Incursion

### 31 August

Yr 9-10/2016 Subject  
Selection Presentation

### 31 August - 6 Sept

National Literacy &  
Numeracy Week

### 4 September

St Agnes Day & Walkathon

### 9 September

Yr 10 Aline Reflection Day

### 10 September

Yr 10 Bline Reflection Day

### 11 September

NSWCCC Athletics Carnival

### 11 September

Yr 8 Brainstorm

### 16 September

Archaeological Dig Excursion

Yr 9 Aline Matilda Excursion

### 18 September

Term 3 Concludes

### 6 October

Term 4 Commences

20 August 2015

Dear Parents

"How to Survive Your Teenager" is a common enough title for a book; what's not so common is the authorship: "By Hundreds of Still Sane Parents"! Maybe the multitude of authors suggests that parenting is not a "reliable science" and that there are no certain actions that will always produce a certain result. From family to family and situation to situation, there are too many variables and what might work for some families and some situations at a given time, might not work on another occasion when it comes to "Surviving Your Teenager".

The following contents of a note supposedly sent to a teacher by a parent, suggest that teenagers have their own strong opinions about how their life should be: "The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents." Quite often this difference of opinion can raise the potential for conflict; however, there are some principles that can be applied to most circumstances.

Even though it's not something we admit too often, parents are not perfect. We, too, have strong emotions like our teenager, but the advantage we have is maturity and the developed ability to control our emotions. If we are able to take our emotional responses out of the conversation with our teenager, we can respond to what our teenager is saying rather than how it makes us feel. We can always go out and "kick the cat" later. If we do "lose it" during the conversation, we need to be able to apologise. This will teach our teenager that "mistakes" happen and that we respect them enough to admit that there was a mistake; doing this, will model appropriate behaviour for when they make their next mistake. We are showing them how to own their behaviour.

One of the best tools for having a good rapport with our teenager is to have active listening skills. When we stop what we are doing, look directly at our teenager, give our full attention and truly listen to what is being said, we send the message that they are important and so have our undivided attention. This sets the atmosphere where we both want to talk and convey our thoughts to one another. During the conversation, we need to show that we respect a different point of view and not to try to win the conversation as if it was a debate when one wins and one loses.

During the conversation we can show our engagement by saying, "This sounds important to you" and "I'm interested in what you are saying". Understanding words from us remind them of the love and care we have for them, even though we might not be agreeing with what they are saying. If, in the end, we have to "agree to disagree" we need to be careful not to put further conversation on the topic at risk by saying something like, "Don't come to me if you get into a mess!"

Some wit once said, "If you are supposed to learn from your mistakes, why do some people have more than one child?" Our teenagers, too, are supposed to learn from their mistakes and, on occasion, we need to be able to come up with a strong "No!" and even support it with "Because I said so!" Because we are the parents, we do have the final say. Our teenager knows this and will trust and respect us for showing our authority when the need arises. It can be a terrible moment for our teenager to realise that "No!" is a complete sentence. Good luck. Keep your finger on your temperature control.

*"Jesus, you invited us to learn from you because you were 'gentle and humble of heart'. May your peace and gentleness be in our minds and hearts as we 'parent' our children. Amen."*

Peace and Best Wishes,

Peter Brogan  
Principal

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## *From the Assistant Principal - Mr Peter Regan*

*"Love one another.  
As I have loved you,  
so you must love one another.  
By this all will know that  
you are my disciples,  
if you love one another."  
Jn13:34,35*

One thing we all long for is to belong in some way or another to a family. Families may take many different forms, but the essential ingredient for creating a family is love. Pope Francis tells us that mission is a question of love, or in other words, mission means creating family. Throughout the remainder of the term we have the opportunity to at school and at home to challenge ourselves to commit to building a better future for the whole world family as we unite in Jesus' call to "Love one another as I have loved you".



### A Few Reminders...

As we travel to and from school please be mindful of our surroundings and safety of all members of our community.

I have included a few tips to remember as we commute between home and school.

- Stay alert, and keep iPods turned off, so you can hear what's going on around you
- Make sure that you never walk away from parents or friends without telling them first
- Avoid talking to people you don't know especially when parents are not around
- If you think someone is following you cross the road or go to a place with lots of people around, like a bus stop or shop
- When travelling by bus try to use bus stops on busy roads
- Keep mobile phones and other valuables out of sight
- Encourage your child to speak up if they feel they might be in danger.

It is important that students arrive to school by 8.10 am. Homeroom begins at 8.15 am sharp and your assistance in meeting this requirement is greatly appreciated. If your child is late to school they require a note from home explaining their lateness.

Be very safe around the front of the school when dropping your son/daughter off each morning and afternoon. The police have been witnessing some unsafe practices over the past month and will be patrolling the areas around the front of the school in future weeks. They will issue fines to drivers who break the rules. Please be aware of the signage at the front of the school.

Please do not enter the school grounds to drop off students of a morning. As there is no turning bay at the top of the driveway, it is unsafe when reversing when a number of cars and students are present. Please drop your child in the designated zones on the street.

If you have any concerns with your son's / daughter's education please contact me either by email [pregan@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:pregan@parra.catholic.edu.au) or phone 8882 0701.

*Peter Regan*  
**Assistant Principal**

a diverse  
community  
learning  
together

### Years 9 & 10 – 2016 Elective Subject Selections

On Monday 31 August, Years 8 & 9 students will be choosing two Elective subjects for Years 9/2016 & 10/2016 respectively. Students will receive informative talks from various Teaching & Learning Coordinators before having time to think about which Electives they plan to study in 2016.

For Year 8 students this is an important time, since they begin to make choices as to their educational pathways, while for Year 9 students, they too, are given the choice whether they wish to continue with their current Electives or try new ones.

The Subject Selection process will once again be completed online through the schools Moodle Portal. Students will need to complete the following steps:

1. Login to the Moodle site ([bit.ly/stagnes](http://bit.ly/stagnes))
2. For Year 8 students click Stage 4 and for Year 9 students click Stage 5.
3. Select the Subject Selection course.
4. Proceed to select the 2016 Subject Selections.
5. Download and read the 2016 Curriculum Handbook.
6. Select the 2016 Subject Selection Questionnaire and complete all fields as shown below.
7. Ensure that the Submit Questionnaire button is clicked once complete.

Students have until **Monday 7 September** to complete this process.

Any late submissions may result in students missing out on their first preferences.

There is no guarantee that all courses offered will run in 2016, with student selections determining which ones will be delivered.

Early in Term 4, students will be notified via Moodle of the elective courses they have been placed in.

Laurence De Martin

Teaching & Learning Coordinator: Curriculum



**Year 9 2016 Subject Selections**

You must select three preferences from both Elective Line A & B subjects. To view the 2016 Curriculum Booklet [click here](#).

+1

Enter your First Name

+2

Enter your Last Name

+3

Select your Homeroom.

Choose... ▾

+4

Elective [Line A](#) Subject Selection 1st Preference

Choose... ▾

+5

Elective [Line A](#) Subject Selection 2nd Preference

Choose... ▾

+6

Elective [Line A](#) Subject Selection 3rd Preference

Choose... ▾

+7

Elective [Line B](#) Subject Selection 1st Preference

Choose... ▾

+8

Elective [Line B](#) Subject Selection 2nd Preference

Choose... ▾

+9

Elective [Line B](#) Subject Selection 3rd Preference

Choose... ▾

Submit questionnaire

The more we look to the traditions of the Franciscans we are finding a rich history and many celebrations. As part of the tradition of St Agnes Catholic High School we are passing these traditions that have been in existence for over 800 years. This week I thought I should inform the wider St Agnes community of some of the celebrations of Franciscan Saints in the month of August.

### **Saint Clare of Assisi**

On August 11 we share with Franciscans world wide, the Feast of St Clare. Most of what I know of Clare I have learned through Clare's daughters, our sisters, the Poor Clares. I think that is a great compliment that after eight centuries, the Poor Clares still reflect what Clare wrote in the Second Letter to Agnes: "Always be conscious of your beginnings." This is as true for us today as when it was written.

Clare's beginning was to choose to leave her "comfortable life" and follow the mendicant life of Francis. Yet, when she approached Francis, he did not see her becoming a mendicant, as were the friars. Could he not envision a new way for women to minister like he and the friars or did he see a greater need for prayer? Clare brought Francis' vision to another level of spirituality and commitment to the Gospel way of life.

Francis said that he did not seek brothers but was given us by God. He probably thought similarly about beginnings of Clare and her sisters as she discerned her calling from God. Clare and Francis both trusted completely in God. In their rules, both embraced a singular way of life: Observing the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Did Francis see in Clare the contemplative life he sought for himself in his early discernment of God's will? Francis and Clare both knew the importance of prayer for the Church and the world, to praise God and petition for God's guidance and grace in our world. This need hasn't changed.

In our world today, some see the contemplative life as "doing nothing," but we know better. Through Clare's letters, we see she engaged the world. Her monastic life was not simple passivity. When her monastery was attacked, Clare responded in an unexpected way — with her faith in the Eucharist.

Clare teaches us to pray, to be engaged with the world, and to find Gospel or faith responses to today's issues and problems. She challenges us to "always be conscious of your beginnings" and to live "observing the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

### **Saint Maximilian Kolbe**

Another Saint that we as Franciscans celebrate their feast days is Maximilian Kolbe, August 14, a humble man who gave his life for that of others. I include a brief outline of his life.

Maximilian was born in 1894 in and became a Franciscan. He contracted tuberculosis and, though he recovered, he remained frail all his life. Before his ordination as a priest, Maximilian founded the Immaculata Movement devoted to Our Lady. After receiving a doctorate in theology, he spread the Movement through a magazine entitled "The Knight of the Immaculata" and helped form a community of 800 men, the largest in the world.

Maximilian went to Japan where he built a comparable monastery and then on to India where he furthered the Movement. In 1936 he returned home because of ill health. After the Nazi invasion in 1939, he was imprisoned and released for a time. But in 1941 he was arrested again and sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz.

On July 31, 1941, in reprisal for one prisoner's escape, ten men were chosen to die. Father Kolbe offered himself in place of a young husband and father. And he was the last to die, enduring two weeks of starvation, thirst, and neglect. He was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1982.

The numbers of individuals joining the Franciscan orders is diminishing and as such those around now are growing older. Here at St Agnes, we see that it is part of our heritage and tradition to ensure that we pass on the teachings of the Franciscans.

Peace and all good

*Julie Atkins*

*Religious Education Coordinator*

### **September Feast Days**

Feast of St Bonaventure  
September 11

Feast of the stigmatization  
of St Francis of Assisi  
September 17





## Holy Day of Obligation - The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary! - 15 August 2015

### One of the Four Marian Dogmas

- A dogma is a teaching of the Church that is realised as divine revelation that is infallible (infallible, meaning unerring; perfectly true).
- The dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary proclaims the truth of faith that the mother of Jesus, Mother of God, was assumed into Heaven, body and soul.
- According to tradition, Mary died before being assumed into Heaven. Whether she died of a natural death, according to the Catholic tradition, or she fell into deep sleep, according to the Orthodox tradition, Catholics are not bound to believe either. The faithful of the Catholic Church are required only to believe that the Blessed Virgin was assumed into Heaven.

### East and West Christianity

- Both the Eastern and Western, Catholic and Orthodox Christians believe in this dogma. In the Eastern tradition, this is commonly called the 'Dormition of the Theotokos' - The falling asleep of the Mother of God.

### Holy Day of Obligation

- All Catholics are obliged to go to mass on this day as it is a holy day of obligation. This is simply an expectation that the faithful shows their veneration to the Blessed Mother, as God's perfect creation and the hope that God fulfils His promises. This is a duty of love that we owe to Mary our mother, and God our Father. Just like our giving thanks to our parents on their birthdays or mothers or fathers day, out of love for them.

### Prayer

By Pope Pius XII

*O Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God and Mother of men.  
We believe with all the fervour of our faith in your triumphal  
Assumption, both in body and soul, into heaven, where you are  
acclaimed as Queen by all the choirs of angels and all the legions of  
saints; and we unite with them to praise and bless the Lord who has  
exalted you above all other pure creatures, and to offer you the tribute  
of our devotion and our love.*

*We know that your gaze, which on earth watched over the humble and  
suffering humanity of Jesus, is filled in heaven with the vision of that  
Humanity glorified, and with the vision of Uncreated Wisdom; and that  
the joy of your soul in the direct contemplation of the adorable Trinity  
causes your heart to throb with overwhelming tenderness.*

*And we, poor sinners, whose body weighs down the flight of the soul,  
beg you to purify our hearts, so that, while we remain here below, we  
may learn to see God, and God alone, in the beauties of His creatures.*

*We trust that your merciful eyes may deign to glance down upon our  
miseries and our sorrows, upon our struggles and our weaknesses;  
that your countenance may smile upon our joys and our victories; that  
you may hear the voice of Jesus saying to you of each one of us, as  
He once said to you of His beloved disciple: behold thy son.*





## ITVET

Students investigated the relationship between a toy cars speed and various ramp inclinations. Through the measurements taken they created spreadsheets and calculated the average speed of the car and drew graphs to show how the speed of the car changed with the height of the ramp. The students enjoyed using spreadsheets through practical means during their ITVet lesson.

Usman Khan  
ITVet Teacher

*And we who call upon you as our Mother, like John, take you as the guide, strength, and consolation of our mortal life.*

*We are inspired by the certainty that your eyes which wept over the earth, watered by the Blood of Jesus, are yet turned toward this world, held in the clutch of wars, persecutions, and oppression of the just and the weak.*

*And from the shadows of this vale of tears, we seek in your heavenly assistance and tender mercy comfort for our aching hearts and help in the trials of the Church and of our fatherland.*

*We believe, finally, that in the glory where you reign, clothed with the sun and crowned with the stars, you are, after Jesus, the joy and gladness of all the angels and of all the saints.*

*And from this earth, over which we tread as pilgrims, comforted by our faith in the future resurrection, we look to you, our life, our sweetness, and our hope; draw us onward with the sweetness of your voice, that one day, after our exile, you may show us Jesus, the blessed Fruit of your womb, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.*

*Amen.*

Patrick Madigan

Religious Education Teacher

## 'Insanity'2K15' Disco

On 6 August, St Agnes held 'INSANITY 2K15' disco. The event, which was organised by the Year 10 Events Leadership Team, was held from 6pm to 9pm in the San Damiano Centre.

In usual Agnes tradition, the night was one to remember, with students showcasing St Agnes' vibrant and enthusiastic culture.

Ms Ibrahim kindly organised the DJ so students were able to dance to various music genres, including RnB and EDM.

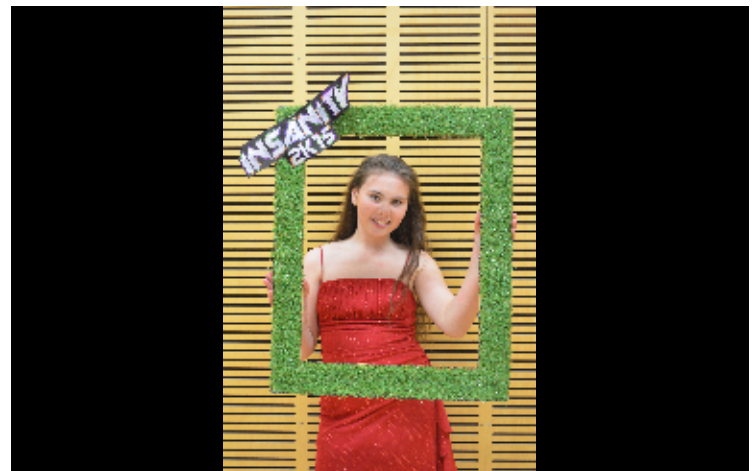
A large amount of students attended the night, as well as, many of the schools teachers. It was clear Mr Chavez, the organiser, enjoyed the night. Students were provided with a bag of chips and a soft drink of their choice on the night.

When the event finally ended, as a result of the adrenaline felt during the three-hour event, students wanted an encore .

The disco was definitely a night to remember, and one that undoubtedly impacted on those who attended.

Media/Communications Team

[Click to view slideshow](#)



## MANVET

Students are preparing to make 3D propellers for their 'Boat' they are manufacturing in their MANVet class. Keiran, from CEO, demonstrated what results the 3D machine will produce. We look forward to seeing the final product.

Damien McGuire  
MANVet Teacher

## A PRINCIPAL'S VIEW

BY BRIONY SCOTT

MY OFFICE IS an eclectic mix of cast-off furniture, books, ancient gaslights and modern technology. As parents enter, often with their daughters trailing behind, they initially appear startled as they try to make sense of the strange scene in front of them. It is, after all, the sum total of nine different principals who have run an all-girls school with a history spanning well over a century. Principals in this room have grappled with women's suffrage, world wars and family feuds, increasing educational expectations and the changing roles of women in society. From the turn of the 20th century till now, we have dealt with the timeless joys and challenges of raising young women.

Schools are the most wonderfully complex ecosystems, a melting pot of human nature, hormones, mixed agendas, and young people trying to make sense of their journey. Few students travel through 13 years of schooling without issues and challenges emerging. It is normal to have good times and bad. They will discover interests, develop passions, have fights, get hurt, learn to forgive, move on and hopefully, if all goes well, grow up balanced, well-educated young women. While this journey is simple it is also complex, and as one of the sole remaining community hubs, if not the only one, parents gravitate to schools for community, connection, and friendship. They also connect with schools when unsure or needing some advice.

Every era has its issues and ours is no exception. But the issues are not always what they seem. Young women today are often portrayed as challenging, unable to cope with stress, prone to 'depression' and emotional issues. As I write this, newspaper articles surround me with headlines such as 'The perils and pitfalls of raising girls', 'It has never been harder to raise a daughter' and 'The problem of raising "good girls"'. Teenage girls are regularly portrayed as fragile, vulnerable to crippling bouts of anxiety and depression, eating disorders, self-harm, and narcissistic obsessions. The overwhelming message is that to grow up female, without dysfunction, is almost impossible.

It is this uniform acceptance of the belief that girls are struggling as a gender that often renders many parents helpless and quick to despair when life doesn't go to plan.

And life won't go to plan for most of us. For a start, our plans and dreams are perfect and idealised and romantic, while life is not. Girls will be sad. They'll get hurt by their friends' gossip, and think that no one loves them or understands. Many will go through a period of using extreme language, and adopt an unhelpful binary way of thinking. Nearly all will feel lonely when excluded, and despair when parents argue. Some will sleep with boys they shouldn't sleep with, drink alcohol they shouldn't consume, and engage in high-risk behaviour when we wish they wouldn't.

But contrary to popular belief, this is not true of the vast majority of girls, and certainly not true for any girl all of the time. Most girls will grow up beautifully, and learn about courage, strength and resilience along the way. They will learn to comfort themselves when they're sad, stand up when they want to sulk, persist when they fail, delay gratification for worthwhile goals and develop the courage to protect those who are without voice. For every anonymous phone call I receive from a community member complaining that my girls haven't offered their seats on the bus, I would have twenty examples of unsolicited acts of service, compassion, kindness and care. And my experience is not reserved to young girls in any particular educational sector. In Australia at this time, the majority of our young women are, without doubt, amongst the best educated women in history, engaging and developing in areas of expertise of which previous generations could only dream. They are young women growing up, learning about courage and strength, what it means to be brave and to give things a go. They are inspiring and interesting, thoughtful, and funny. They're quicker to say sorry than their adult counterparts, and gutsy when it comes to trying something new. As a generation, their sense of social justice is extraordinary, sustained and refined by their use of technology, and access to wider world.

As a principal though, I know that when things don't go well, it can be heartbreaking. I listen to the very real concerns and fears of parents for their daughters, slowly and carefully untangling what is happening. Our girls are not immune to grief, abuse, illness or death. Whatever the situation, we work out if there is a problem that requires medical or psychological intervention,







or some form of additional support.

Normally though, the greatest issues involve dealing with the typical ups and downs of growing up. The situations are not always easy, nor straightforward, and they can be tough but they are not situations requiring therapy or medication.

In the years that I have been a principal, it is abundantly clear to me that families are doing a magnificent job but they do so in the face of cultural expectations that would lead them to think otherwise. There is a social and cultural normalising of the belief that raising girls is an almost impossible task. Along with this comes a presumption that when anything does go wrong for girls, it must be because they are depressed, mentally fragile, and/or prone to anxiety. Such a view, apart from being inherently presumptuous, trivialises those young women (and men) who genuinely struggle with their mental health, and pathologises what is fundamentally, a normal developmental path. It does an extraordinary disservice to young women who are simply navigating the road to adulthood.

BUT YOU WOULDN'T believe this if you were to accept the cultural quagmire surrounding young women.

Martin Seligman, a famous American psychologist, tracks the increased rate of depression across society generally and women in particular. He argues the exponential growth in 'mental health issues' is neither biological nor evolutionary. It is all happening far too quickly to be solely a result of better education and diagnosis. Instead, the rapid escalation of depression, particularly in women where the onset of the first bout of severe depression is now around fourteen, is the product of cultural forces where such behaviours are learned and expected.

Fourteen brings this debate into my territory. This is about Year 8 or Year 9. And I can tell you that while there is a wide range of personalities and characters around this age, a fourteen-year-old also relies very heavily on others to determine what is 'normal', what is expected of her about who she can be, and how she can behave. And what they (and their parents) read are articles that assume raising girls is an unfathomable task. And like I did, they may join their local gym, only to be confronted with eight television screens. One showing *The Simpsons* in a relentless loop, six covering different men's sporting events, and one showing women gyrating to loud pulsing music, presumably designed to inspire us all to greater sexual awareness. The message to sixteen-year-olds is palpably clear.

In our post-modern culture, it is acceptable to believe that truth is a relative concept. No one will give absolute answers, or set concrete boundaries, or say enough is enough, particularly with our young women. And I understand this. Who would be brave enough to challenge a girl claiming to be anxious or question the feelings generated by hurtful friends, or even the desire to self-harm? These feelings and thoughts are real and need to be respected as such. It is what happens from this point that I challenge. With the best of intentions, we feed and foster thoughts as if they were king. We listen carefully and respond to emotions as if they are real and unquestionable. Thoughts and emotions are not seen as clues but as facts. Our children are taught to be thinkers only so far as they follow a thought, or a feeling, wherever it may go. Yet as David Foster Wallace states 'learning how to think really means learning how to exercise some control over how and what you think. It means being conscious and aware enough to choose what you pay attention to and to choose how you construct meaning from experience. 'When we blindly follow our thoughts, we allow other forces, usually cultural, to interpret and to create the narrative. Yet our girls, if taught how to truly think, can create a more positive narrative than our culture can offer.

The cultural schema that girls are fundamentally prone to psychological weakness or emotional vulnerability is everywhere and so accepted that it is increasingly difficult to argue against something that may not technically exist. And the impact of these expectations is marked.

In the 1960s Rosenthal and Jacobson conducted what is now considered to be a somewhat unethical educational experiment. They randomly mixed students between two classes, and then told the teachers that the classes were effectively streamed. The students who were believed to be brighter performed better than those who were classified as 'normal'. Expectations influence outcomes.

So what are we expecting of our young women? Typically we expect that our girls are psychologically vulnerable and prone to emotional weakness. Medical history is littered with examples of unexplained symptoms or feelings in women being attributed to a psychological weakness or some form of genetic gender-based predisposition. Such prejudices continue to exist. I had one articulate and competent sixteen-year-old girl who went to a hand doctor to treat aching pains in both wrists, pain that had flared up relatively quickly and was strong enough to stop her writing for her examinations. She was a naturally stable, relaxed child, prone to laughter, brightly painted nails and a desire to do well in Modern History. The doctor was gentle and kind, yet confidently dogmatic as he explained that the MRIs had shown nothing but not to worry, these



things happen to 'girls of her age' and it was undoubtedly stress related. It will pass. In the absence of physical evidence to the contrary, the doctor assumed a psychological trigger, reflecting a strong social bias towards attributing unexplained physical ailments to a psychological state.

What do you do at sixteen when the default assumption is that you cannot cope, that your physical pain is psychological, that your sadness is probably depression, and cutting or self-harming is an unpleasant but not uncommon way to cope with your emotions?

You begin to believe it.

SOMEONE WILL RAISE our daughters. Someone will be whispering in their ear about who they can be and what they can do. Someone will role model how to behave, what is 'normal', what is acceptable. Someone will give them the language to use when they need to make sense of their world. And if not us, then other forces and other people will do it for us. They will do it with great authority and with great confidence. And they may be right, but they may also be deeply and profoundly wrong.

Young people, by virtue of their age, are too ready to believe what they think and to believe what they feel. They need to be taught to question both their feelings and their thoughts. Not everything they feel should be taken as gospel. Not every thought is productive or helpful. To challenge both thoughts and feelings is not to question their validity but to help keep them in perspective. By challenging the cultural paradigm that women are inherently 'weak' and instructing our girls in the rightful place of thoughts and feelings in constructing their own narrative, they are less likely to fall victim to the stereotype of the 'difficult' girl.

Anyone who works in schools will recognise the fine line I walk with defining this argument. I have seen young women go through extraordinary pain, or crippling depression, or have to face situations that are profoundly and utterly unfair and usually well beyond their control. I know life is tough. I'm not arguing or turning a blind eye to the cruelties of life, or to the language that articulates depression, or mental illness. As a teacher, I constantly walk with families as they navigate the tough times, and I will stand in the background and cheer when they go through the good. This is life.

What I will not indulge is the assumption that young women are not capable of dealing with the good and the bad in life. I see no evidence that they are inherently weaker, or psychologically vulnerable, by virtue of being female. To assume they are has two implications. First, it denies women their rightful place in society as fully contributing adults by assuming they are inherently weaker, following whims of emotion and thought, and second, it does an extraordinary disservice to the small percentage of women who are genuinely struggling with mental health concerns.

And for those who do struggle with mental illness, I have been privileged to witness some of the best examples of extraordinary courage, great character, and impressive resilience. These women may have challenges but they are rarely weak. Mental health and physical health are interrelated domains of adolescent development but they are not characteristics of gender. This blurring of character and health, and this subsequent lowering of expectations for all women, is a self-fulfilling and damning prophecy.

There is nothing inherently wrong with our girls as a gender. On the whole, they are growing up beautifully, despite the predictions of doom and gloom that abound. There are challenges to be sure but alarmist generalisations about an entire gender are not helpful to parents or their daughters. As a principal, I will do all I can to educate them so they can create their own story, making sense of the good and bad along the way. Like generations of principals before me, I will always have high expectations of those in my care. I know that young women, when expected to be so, can be strong and courageous and wise and compassionate. Corporately we challenge the cultural belief that to grow up female is inherently fraught with dangers. All of us need extra support from time to time but this generation of young women are all we would hope they would be, and more. Our girls are strong and doing well, and with strong women standing by, helping to craft a narrative of hope, the future is in great hands.

### ***A Winter Prayer***

*Let us huddle together  
this morning.*

*Our community is a  
place of warmth in our  
lives as we share the  
flame of hope and  
connection.*

*Let us allow the frost of  
isolation and bitterness  
to melt away as we open  
ourselves to a sense of  
peace and spirit.*

*We extend our thoughts  
to all those who are  
cold, lacking shelter or  
love to keep them warm.*

*Let us wrap our prayers  
around them and each  
other like scarves, and  
wish each other safe  
journeys through the  
storm.*

*May we be insulated  
from fear as the earth is  
insulated by the snow.*

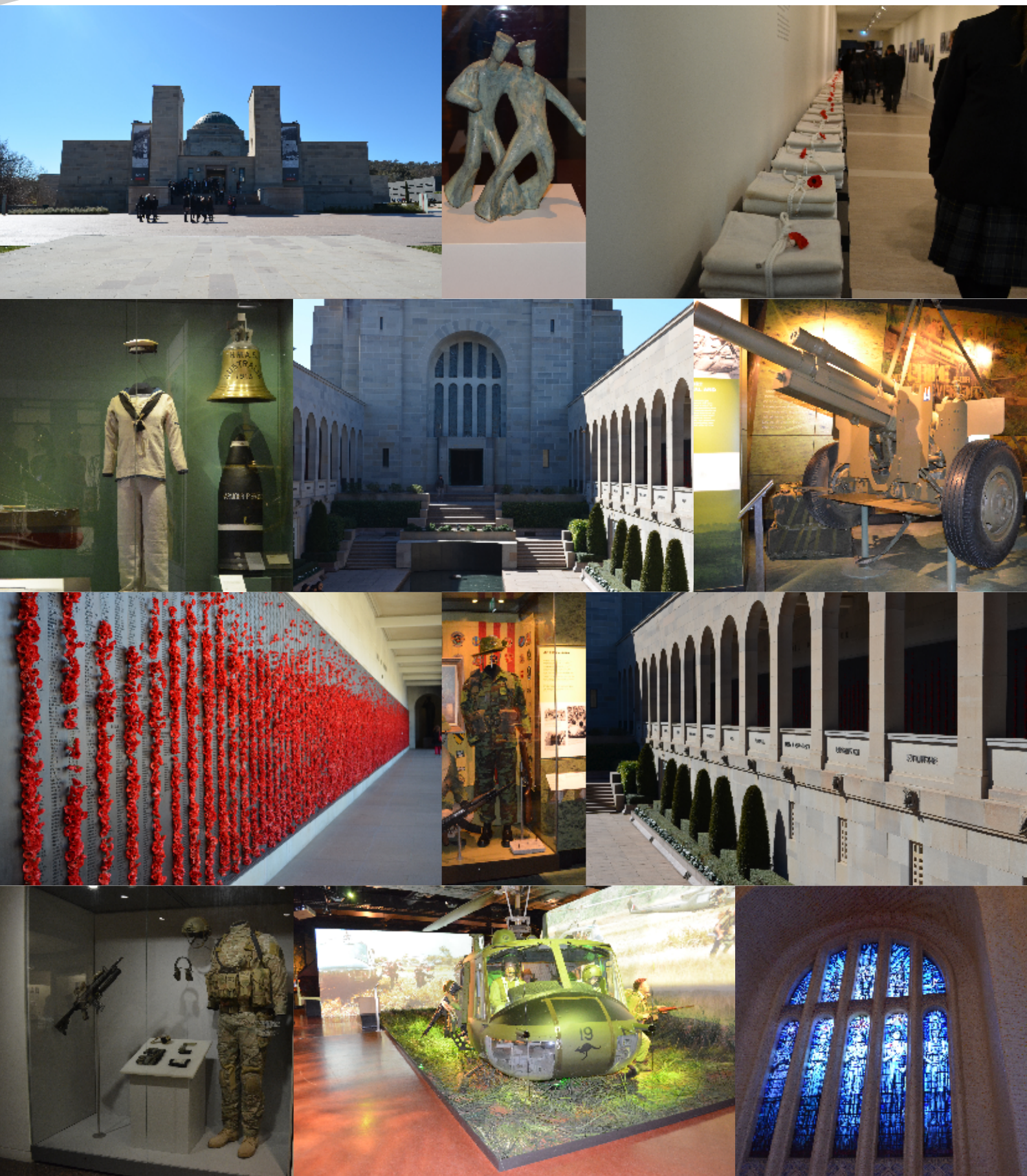
*And, like bulbs, may we  
continue to grow and  
open inside, despite the  
cold, ready for the  
spring, to stretch and  
grow towards justice.  
Amen*

## **CANTEEN VOLUNTEERS WANTED**

**Contact Diane Clifton on 8882 0709**



*Year 9 visited the War Memorial in Canberra*





## OUR PARISH SCHOOLS

**St Aidan's Primary**  
1-5 Adelaide Street  
Rooty Hill  
ph: 9625 3181  
fax: 9625 5612

**Sacred Heart Primary**  
23 Nelson Street  
Mount Druitt South  
ph: 9625 8733  
fax: 9832 2258

**Holy Family**  
Weber Crescent  
Emerton  
ph: 9628 9232  
fax: 9628 9589

**St John Vianney's Primary**  
17 Cameron Street  
Doonside  
ph: 9831 1817  
fax: 9831 6430

## From the Bishops & Catholic Education Office

### Notre Dame Open Day: 29 August

Experience this 5 star national Catholic university in the heart of Sydney. Check out The University of Notre Dame's courses, meet academic staff and current students, enjoy entertainment and take a tour of the Broadway Campus. Saturday 29 August from 9am-3pm. Personalise your Open Day at: [www.notredame.edu.au/openday](http://www.notredame.edu.au/openday)

### Migrant & Refugee Sunday: 30 August

This year marks the 101st anniversary of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The theme is 'Church without frontiers, Mother to all' as outlined by Pope Francis in his message for Migrant and Refugee Day. It also coincides with Migrant and Refugee Week, which runs from 24-30 August. The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office has prepared a resource kit that is available for download at: [www.acmro.org.au](http://www.acmro.org.au)

### Vocation Discernment Afternoon: 30 August

All young men who feel God might be calling them to the priesthood are invited to the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta's Vocation Discernment Afternoon. The afternoon starts at 2pm and concludes with a shared meal at 6pm. Holy Spirit Seminary is at 31-33 Allen Street, Harris Park. To find out more about priesthood in the Diocese of Parramatta contact the Director of Priestly Vocations, Fr Warren Edwards, tel 0409 172 700 or send an email to: [vocations@parra.catholic.org.au](mailto:vocations@parra.catholic.org.au)

### World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation: 1 September

Pope Francis has instituted the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, which will be celebrated annually in line with the Orthodox Church's day for the protection of the environment. The Holy Father said Christians want to make their special contribution to safeguarding creation, but to do that they must rediscover the spiritual foundations of their approach to earthly realities, beginning with an acknowledgment that "the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature" but lived in communion with all worldly realities.

### Gospel Concert 'Spirit of Joy': 5 September

Gospel Concert 'Spirit of Joy' is presented in association with the Sydney Sacred Music Festival. It will be held on Saturday 5 September 2015 from 3pm-5.30pm at Mt Schoenstatt Spirituality Centre. It aims to bring together people of all religious traditions to feel the joy of God, through spiritually uplifting/upbeat music and song. Tickets: \$12 adults, \$8 school-age children, \$35 family – two adults with up to four school-age children, children under five free. Bookings <http://www.trybooking.com/144537> For further information please contact Ann-Maree Timmings tel (02) 4773 8338 ext 236 or send an email to [manager@schoenstatt.org.au](mailto:manager@schoenstatt.org.au)

a diverse  
community  
learning  
together

*We need your help...*

PLEASE  
DONATE



## FOOD BANK DRIVE

There are many families in our area who are struggling to put food on the table. Holy Family Parish & Jesuit Social Services, Emerton provide low cost food to low income families in our community.

In support of 'Ignite' Food Store & Co-op, St Agnes is holding a Can/Jar Food Drive which they make available to families who need assistance.

Donating food items or parcels is a great way of helping out our community and can make a huge difference to an individual or family.

**Please donate cans or jars of food and place them in the boxes in the student office.**



## OUR PARISHES

**St Aidan's**  
9 Adelaide Street  
Rooty Hill  
ph: 925 8404

**Sacred Heart**  
23 Nelson Street  
Mount Druitt South  
ph: 9625 8847

**Holy Family**  
254 Luxford Road  
Emerton  
ph: 9628 7272

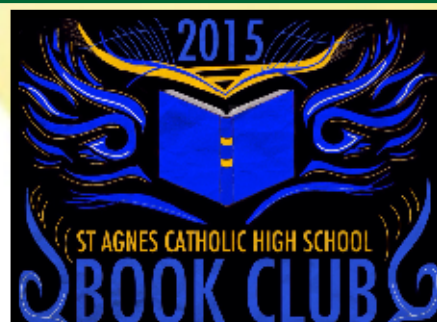
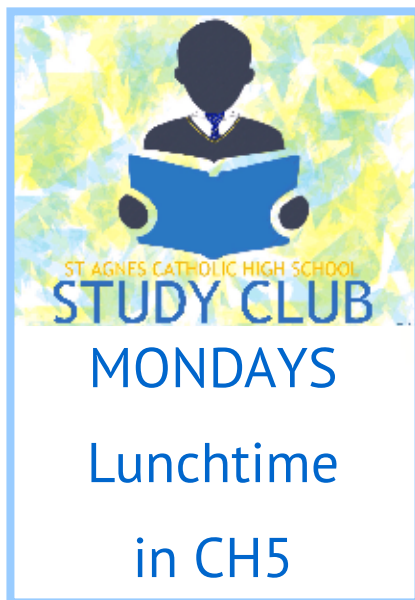
**St John Vianney's**  
17 Cameron Street  
Doonside  
ph: 9622 3426



### 2015 SCHOOL FEES ARE NOW DUE

If you are currently on a payment plan please continue to make payments as per your arrangement. If you have not received a statement, or are experiencing financial difficulty, please contact Mrs Lorraine Bailey on 8882 0706.

Fees can be paid by cash, cheque, credit card, BPAY or POST Billpay.



When: Wednesdays Lunchtime  
Where: South Wing of the library  
Why: to read quietly or to discuss texts with our library staff

