

19 June 2020

Principal Update

Term 2, 2020, will be long remembered for COVID 19, online learning, social distancing, no sport, and then recession, rising unemployment, and the Black Lives Matter movement and what that means for our Australian context. It is easy to imagine how overwhelming this whole scenario is. The challenge has been trying to establish any routine and that has been really difficult as the environment has definitely changed in so many ways.

There is no doubt that learning and teaching has changed after the experience of this term. Accommodation for different learning styles and contexts needs to be considered as part of our reflection. How we best target the individual needs of students? In the future there will be students who will need a range of learning platforms and intervention that will be online and more traditional. During term three we will be asking students and parents for further feedback seeking thoughts around learning options and other potential developments to better support students.

reGEN

In the past week the College Leadership has been meeting to determine the next phase of the reGEN program. This program is linked with our Direction Pillars and will become more familiar with the launch of reGEN at each campus and the commencement of the reGEN Leadership Team meetings that will include members from the different College partners, SRC representatives, staff members and hopefully a parent representative. The intention of the program is to ensure that sustainability and stewardship are at the core of all the Pillars and every partnership is familiar with the policy and whole school expectations that are associated with the program. reGEN has had significant interest with a range of partners and organisations.

iGEN

There are some very sad Year 10 students as we close Semester One. Our iGEN students and the residents at Bethlehem have finished the program experiencing a very turbulent time that impacted the possibility of continued direct contact, but did little to temper the enthusiasm of all included and comprehensively justified all of the benefits that we thought would result. When you hear the feedback and witness the connection it is heart-warming and shows what potential this program has. Our partnership with Mercy Health and the Australian Catholic University will only flourish and expand after this pilot. The participants are feedback and the ACU study will only consolidate the anecdotal evidence to this point. At the moment we are still making arrangements so the cohort from this semester can maintain contact through the rest of the year.

Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

Information from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is still filtering through and we now have some further exam and result dates announced. These dates will change how the end of the year looks significantly so we recommend that students and parents keep abreast of the changes and we will continue to make changes so that the Year 12s are supported and they have a positive experience within whatever constraints or changes that take place between now and the end of the year... and it is the end of the year.

Refugee Week

This week we celebrate our new arrivals and refugees who enrich our College community and the wider community with their culture and enthusiasm. Our Mercy values of justice, respect, courage, compassion, hospitality and service are never more poignant than when we extend our invitation and support to the various communities that are integral to our community. Catherine McAuley was adamant that it is our duty to be inclusive and support those who are the margins and need our support and care.

Last year I attended a Mercy Conference where the following message resonated with so many who attended.

Do not fear offending anyone. Speak as your mind directs and always act with more courage when the “mammon of unrighteousness” is in question. *Catherine McAuley*

We presently live in an unprecedented time of disquiet. Educationally, politically, socially and ecclesiastically, the old ways, voices and paradigms are shifting, disintegrating, being challenged and changed. Yet, as Christians, firm in hope, we believe that the hushed Spirit of God remains, speaking to us through the ‘signs of the times’ – speaking to us and through us in the silence and silenced.

Giving voice to:

The silent Cry of the Merciful Spirit of God in our Times
The silent Cry of the Poor and Afflicted
The silent Cry of the Earth
The silent Cry of the Faithful
The silent Cry and Questions of our own hearts, minds and spirits

Catherine McAuley agitated on behalf of those who are silenced or afraid to be heard. Recently Bendigo Community Health and the local Police have been working together in supporting and providing outreach to the refugees in our community. The link to the [Coronavirus Bendigo Refugee Resources Hub](#) provides some of the great work, and also highlights how the whole community can help in supporting those who are vulnerable to challenge racism, prejudice, discrimination and bias. It takes courage to stop someone and challenge them, we see that with Black Lives Matter movement and the perennial struggle of our Indigenous communities throughout the country where ignorance has created an exclusive culture causing stigma and alienation in their own country where many feel they are not seen or heard.

It is our role to hear the Cry.

A Moment for Grace

A Prayer for Refugees

God of our Wandering Ancestors,

Long have we known
That your heart is with the refugee:
That you were born into time
In a family of refugees
Fleeing violence in their homeland,
Who then gathered up their hungry child
And fled into alien country.

Their cry, your cry, resounds through the ages:
“Will you let me in?”

Give us hearts that break open
When our brothers and sisters turn to us with that same cry.
Then surely all these things will follow:
Ears will no longer turn deaf to their voices.
Eyes will see a moment for grace instead of a threat.
Tongues will not be silenced but will instead advocate.
And hands will reach out—
working for peace in their homeland, working for justice in the lands
where they seek safe haven.

Lord, protect all refugees in their travels.
May they find a friend in me
And so make me worthy
Of the refuge I have found in you.

AMEN

Mr Brian Turner, Principal