

St Gerard's Newsletter

Term 1, Week 10 01 April 2026



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



**The Thirteenth Station:
JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS.**

Loving God,

*As we journey through this Holy Week,
help us to walk closely with Jesus.*

*In His moments of joy, may we be grateful.
In His suffering, may we show compassion.
In His sacrifice, may we learn to give of
ourselves.*

*Teach us to be people of kindness, forgiveness,
and hope.*

*May we carry the message of Your love
into our homes, our classrooms, and our
community.*

*And as we look toward Easter,
fill our hearts with the promise of new life and
joy.*

Amen.



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Families,

Here we are at the end of Term 1 and in the middle of one of the most important time periods of our faith, Holy Week and Easter.

Reflecting back over the term it has been one where we have provided various opportunities to educate and develop our children both in and out of the classroom.

The term started with **Give Me 5 Week** that included our **family activity night**. Our **3 Way Conversations** brought together our families, students and teachers to establish the best ways to support the learning of our children. **Before School Reading in the Library on Wednesday mornings and Before School Skipping on Thursday mornings** continued to be well attended. Our **Year 6 Leadership badges and hats** are being worn proudly and those wearing them are having a positive impact on our school. Our **Year 3 and 5 children participated in the annual NAPLAN assessments** and we celebrated all the cultures we are so fortunate to have here at St Gerard's through our **Harmony Day activities**.

From a faith perspective, we had a number of children join members of the **Parish Legion of Mary** in the church to **pray the Rosary** at certain lunchtimes. **Year 3 children celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation** for the first time and we actively participated in **whole school and level masses** including our **Beginning of School Year and the parish Ash Wednesday mass**. Some of our **Year 6 Leaders attended a special mass at St Patrick's Cathedral to celebrate the Feast Day of St Patrick and Catholic Education Week**.

Yesterday, families attended our **Passion Presentation in the Parish Hall**. The presentation by our children of the **significant events of Holy Week** which are foundation aspects of our faith was spiritual and prayerful. **I would like to thank Mrs Stack for coordinating the presentation and our staff and children for their efforts**.

Health and fitness wise, we had our **after school AUSKICK/ SUPERKICK** clinics which were again well attended. Our **Whole School Athletics Carnival** was a highlight with plenty of athletic talent and school spirit on display. We had a number of **Ride/ Walk to School Days** which are always well supported and a great way to start a day of learning. **Subway Lunch Days** are always popular and something our children really look forward to.

We also had **3 Open Days** to show what we offer here at St Gerard's and it was wonderful to meet so many prospective families.

We are always looking for ways to have families involved in the learning opportunities we provide for our children. If there are any adults that would like to help us either in the classroom, for specific events (such as excursions or cooking) or whole school activities, you are always most welcome. **Please note that as part of our Child Safety Policies and Procedures all helpers require a Working With Children Check and need to have come to a Volunteer Induction Session**. Please contact me via principal@sgdandenongnth.catholic.edu.au, Seesaw or in person so we can arrange a time.

I would like to draw your attention to an **important date for Term 2**. We have a **School Closure Day planned which allows for Professional Development in the area of Literacy on Friday 1 May (the second Friday of Term 2)**. I appreciate that School Closure days can be challenging for families. OSHC will run a full day program if they have sufficient numbers which may be an option. Please contact Marina (OSHC Coordinator) if you would like further information.

Lastly, a reminder that **Term 2 starts on Monday 20 April**.

Have a Happy and Holy Easter and a wonderful holiday.

Paul Cowan
PRINCIPAL

Religious - Passion Play



Religious - Passion Play



Religious

Key Dates

Sacraments 2026

First Communion:

- Sunday, 14th June, 2026, First Communion, 10:30am

Confirmation:

- Saturday, 16th May, 2026 Confirmation, 5:30pm

ANZAC DAY Badges

ANZAC Day badges will be on sale at school starting next week and will continue to be available each day up until ANZAC Day on 25th April.

Badges are \$2 each and bracelets are \$3. All proceeds help support veterans and honour the soldiers who have served our country.

Students who would like to purchase a badge or bracelet are encouraged to bring some money to school.



Fourth Week of Lent

Joshua 5:9–12 | Ps 33:2–7. R. v.9 | 2 Corinthians 5:17–21 | Luke 15:1–3. 11–32

One of the most beautiful expressions in the Bible comes from the prophet Ezekiel (Ezk 11:19). 'Thus says the Lord, I will take their hearts of stone and give them hearts of flesh.' It is a call to be tender and compassionate.

You would need a heart of stone not to be affected by the stories we encounter today. Most of us have heard the story of the two sons in today's Gospel over and over. The brilliance of the way Jesus tells stories is that it still gets under our skin. Here are two young men who think they can live on their own terms. One has a sense of entitlement and demands his share of his father's estate which he then squanders. He is finally prepared to eat humble pie and find his way home. The other son has a different sense of entitlement. He believes that his hard work and reliability should provide him with a greater share of his father's love. At different times in our life, we can relate more to one or other of these people. Jesus implies that they are both blind to the way God's love works and that they both need to grow. They have both been dead and now must come to life.

The story we encounter this week is also deeply moving. Irene, aged 25, lives in the Kongolo region in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Her father was killed during a war and Irene lived with her mother on very meagre resources, often going hungry for extended periods of time. Irene first became pregnant as a teenager and later had to raise her two children on her own, with the support of her mother. As a single mother, it was challenging for Irene to care for her two sons without a stable income.

Irene's life changed after she participated in the Youth Capacity Strengthening program, run by Caritas Australia's partner, Caritas Kongolo. Through the program, she undertook training in sewing and livestock farming, enabling her to generate income to support her family.

Our second reading today reminds us that we are 'ambassadors for Christ.' St Paul says, 'for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation.' Let us all be part of building that new creation, setting the world to rights as best we can. Our part is to reach out in compassion and love to heal the wounds of the whole human family. Let us all *Unite Against Poverty* as pilgrims of hope in this Year of Jubilee.



Prayer

We pray for those driven away from their homes by violence, persecution or poverty, especially women. May our hearts be open to do all we can to rebuild the lives of others through supporting Caritas Australia and the work of Project Compassion. May we be instruments of God's peace and pilgrims of hope.

Amen

Religious News

An Invitation to Bring Mary Home

We invite families to take the Our Lady statue into their home for a week as a special way to deepen family prayer time. Each family will receive a brochure with simple instructions for praying the Rosary, as well as a set of rosary beads. If you would like to take the Our Lady statue home, please let Mrs Stack know.



Lunchtime Rosary

The Legion of Mary Group is teaming up with the school to lead Rosary prayer sessions during lunch breaks. These will take place during the first lunch on Tuesdays in Weeks 4 and 8 of each term.



Altar Servers

Altar Server practice resumed on Wednesday 29 January and will continue every Thursday evening at 5:30 pm at St Gerard's Church. To be eligible to serve, children must have received their First Communion.

This is a wonderful opportunity for young members of our parish to take part in the liturgy and learn the responsibilities of altar service.

For further information about practice times or eligibility, please contact the parish office on **9792 4422**.

Reading before School



READ WITH ME!



Just 10~15 Minutes a Day Makes a Lifelong Difference



Why Reading Together Matters



Builds Strong Brains

- Improves concentration and memory
- Develops imagination and creativity
- Strengthens thinking skills



Grows Literacy Skills

- Expands vocabulary
- Improves spelling and writing
- Builds fluency and comprehension
- Increases confidence



Strengthens Relationships

- Creates special one-on-one time
- Encourages meaningful conversations
- Helps children feel supported and valued



Broadens Understanding

- Develops empathy
- Introduces new ideas and cultures
- Helps children understand the world



How You Can Help at Home

- ✓ Set a regular reading time each day
- ✓ Take turns reading aloud
- ✓ Ask questions about the story
- ✓ Praise effort, not just accuracy
- ✓ Make reading enjoyable
- ✓ Let your child see you reading too



Remember

- You don't need to be a teacher to make a difference.
- Your time, encouragement and interest matter most.

“Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.”

Reading before School

Reading Before School Raffle Winners



Reading Before School Prize Winners!



Important Notes

Medical Plans And Asthma Plans

This is a friendly reminder to provide the school with updated medical and asthma plans for 2024. If your child has asthma or requires other medications, please ensure that Ventolin, a spacer, and any necessary medications are supplied on the first day back to the school office.

All medications will be stored in individually labeled bags in the school office for safekeeping.

Term 1, 2026 Dates

April

- 1st End of Term 1 at 3.30pm

May

- 1st School Closure Day - Literacy



ST GERARD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

SERVICE CONTACT:
0402 192 685 (Marina) | sg@ylv.com.au

SERVICE HOURS

Before School Care
6:45AM – 8:45AM

After School Care
3:30PM – 6:30PM

Pupil-Free Day
7:00AM – 6:00PM

COST

\$30/\$35
PERMANENT/CASUAL

\$35/\$40
PERMANENT/CASUAL

\$83

fees effective 02 Mar 2026

ylv.com.au

Any families who hold a current Health Care Card are asked to please provide a copy to the school office.

This will ensure you receive the MACS Concession on your school fees.

Please note, this must be a valid Centrelink Health Care Card. Private health insurance cards or Medicare cards are not eligible.

Please call Marina for further information: 0402 192 685

Important Information



Happy Birthday to all who have celebrated and will celebrate their birthdays, this week and over the school holidays.

- ARYAN Yr 4
- DHANVIN Yr 5
- JACOB FOUNDATION
- NINA Yr 1
- LEO Yr 4
- ZAYDEN FOUNDATION
- ANJALI Yr 6



COMMUNITY NOTICE

- *Every Day Counts* - Primary School Attendance Information
- Springvale Indoor Sports - Indoor Soccer
- Mazenod College - Open Day Information

Chicken Eggs For Sale



- St Gerard's would like to offer families the opportunity to purchase delicious organic eggs laid by our resident flock of chickens.
- You can purchase these eggs from the school office at a cost of **\$8** per dozen.
- All proceeds from the sale of the eggs will go towards purchasing food for our feathered friends.
- Please message [Nicole Fernandez](#) via Seesaw if you would like to purchase some eggs.