



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



ST GERARD'S SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

Term 1, Week 8

21 March 2025

Celebrating Mass at our Mother Church, St Patrick's Cathedral during the Jubilee Year with our Spirituality Leaders, Social Justice Leaders and School Leaders.



Dear God,

*We at St Gerard's Primary believe that Christ is
in the Heart of All.*

*As with our role model, St Patrick, we pray that
Christ will be with us, within us, behind us,
beside us and before us.*

*Through our actions of love and kindness may
everyone in our Community come to know that
Christ is the Heartbeat of our School.*

*May everyone in our School Feel welcomed, loved,
accepted safe and inspire to learn for the
Greater Good of our World.*

St Patrick...pray for us

St Mary MacKillop...Pray of us

Amen



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<https://www.facebook.com/stgerardsps>

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Families,

We are getting into the final few weeks of Term 1 with this being the end of Week 8! Many aspects of our faith were celebrated and highlighted across this week along with other opportunities.

We acknowledged the **Feast of St Patrick** with everyone encouraged to wear 'a touch of green' on Monday. Melbourne has a special connection with this saint as our Cathedral is named after him and the large number of Irish Catholics that established the early church in Australia.

On Wednesday we had the last gathering for the term with the **Parish Legion of Mary** which saw a number of children join this group to **pray the Rosary together**. This is another way to strengthen our link with the parish and live out our faith. I would like to thank the children that attended these gatherings and Mrs O'Brien and Mrs J for accompanying them. There will be more opportunities in Term 2 for children to participate.

Last night (Thursday) some of our **Year 3 children celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time**. This is a significant step in a person's faith journey and the first sacrament we as a school community get to share with these children and their families, which is such a privilege. I would like to **thank Fr Shanthaiah for his ongoing support of our children and the school, Mrs O'Brien for her leadership and coordination of this sacrament and Ms Sonno, Mrs Wilson, Mrs Govic and Ms Leonardi for their work with the children in the classroom and at their Reflection Day** which was held on Monday. The children were congratulated by the school at Assembly today (Friday), shared their reflections and received their certificates.

The last of our **AUSKICK sessions was postponed due to the weather. This session will now take place next Thursday**. A flyer for one of the local AFL clubs North Dandenong MASALA is in this newsletter. If your child is interested in playing AFL it might be worth investigating what this club has to offer.

We had 9 of our **Year 6 Leaders attend a special mass today at St Patrick's Cathedral**. This is a significant event which is part of **Catholic Education Week** and it was wonderful to be able to send representatives from our school. I would like to **thank Mrs O'Brien and Mrs Zelic for accompanying our leaders**. From all reports this was a great experience and these leaders represented our school with distinction.

Also today we had our latest **Ride / Walk to School Day** to recognise **National Ride to School Day**. It is encouraging to see so many families support these days as well as walking and riding to school on a regular basis.

Lastly, a further reminder that **families are more than welcome to come and be part of our Monday Morning Meditation which starts at 8.55am and our Whole School Assembly on Friday afternoons at 2.50pm. Both of these weekly events take place in the PAC.**

Have a great weekend and God bless.

Paul Cowan
PRINCIPAL

Religious News

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, also known as Penance or Confession, is a way for Catholics to express sorrow for their sins and receive forgiveness from God through a priest, helping them to grow in their relationship with Jesus.

Congratulations to all of our students who participated, sharing the act of contrition and prayer of sorrow, to reconcile themselves with God in front of family and friends last night.



Religious News

Key Dates

Reconciliation

Years 5/6O & 5/6T: Thursday, 27th March at 10:15am

Other Important Dates for Religion

31st March onwards:	<i>The Passion Gallery Walk</i> for student and family participation
4th April:	Parishioners and Family invited to attend <i>The Passion Gallery Walk</i> after Mass
17th April:	Holy Thursday
18th April:	Good Friday Day of Fast and Abstinence
19th April:	Holy Saturday
20th April:	Easter Sunday

Altar Servers

Altar service practice will resume on Thursday, February 13th, and will take place every Thursday evening at 5:30 pm in St. Gerard's Church. To be eligible for service, individuals must have completed their First Communion. This provides a wonderful opportunity for young members of the Church to participate in the liturgy and take on the responsibilities associated with altar service. For any inquiries regarding altar service practice or eligibility, please feel free to contact the parish office at 97924422.



Religious News



Project Compassion

Caritas Australia's yearly Lenten campaign unites countless Australians in the global fight against poverty, championing justice, and upholding dignity. On Ash Wednesday, Project Compassion Boxes were handed out to every class, each assigned a specific fundraising target for the Lenten season.

The class that achieves the highest fundraising amount will enjoy a well-deserved free dress day as a reward! Stay informed about each class's progress in fundraising efforts through regular updates provided by the Social Justice Leadership Team during school assemblies.

Second Week of Lent



Genesis 15:5–12. 17–18 | Ps 26:1. 7–9. 13–14. R. v.1 | Philippians 3:17 – 4:1 | Luke 9:28–36

Today's Gospel brings us a wonderful moment in the education of Jesus's friends.

Jesus was always trying to teach them about the mystery of life, and we can take heart from the fact that they were often slow learners. Peter, James and John see Jesus transfigured on the top of a mountain. But the vision doesn't last long. Peter, always practical, wants to build tents so they can stay in the moment. But no, the journey to Calvary lies ahead where they will see Jesus disfigured. Eventually, they will put it together that transfiguration and disfigurement are two sides of the same coin.

This week, Caritas Australia's Project Compassion shares another story of education. We visit a primary school in Samoa with 400 students and 11 teachers. Until 2023, the school had no reliable access to fresh water. At times, teachers had to fetch water from neighbouring families, and this took considerable time out of the day and limited classes. It also meant that each class had a single bucket of drinking water for everyone to share. Thanks to your generosity, this has now changed.

Education can continue uninterrupted. You might even say, that thanks to those who support Project Compassion, disfigured lives have been transfigured.

Samoa may seem a long way away but let us think for a moment of some of the words Jesus said on the night before he died. He prayed 'may they all be one.' We see the high price of division and conflict in so many places. People face each other with such hostility. As we *Unite Against Poverty*, we are slowly creating the solution. Our actions are teaching the world to see possibilities more than problems. Just as his friends saw Jesus in a brilliant new light, so too must we see the whole human family with its true dignity.



Prayer

We pray for all those whose access to food and water is insecure. May the whole human family respond generously in creating lasting justice in the distribution of life's necessities. May we respond to opportunities such as those presented by Project Compassion this Lent to *Unite Against Poverty*. May we all be one. Amen

Photo: Toefuata'iga (13) fills up her water bottle from a Samoan primary school's water tank. Credit: Caritas Australia.

projectcompassion.org.au

Religious News

An Invitation to Bring Mary Home

An Invitation to Bring Mary Home: A Week of Family Spiritual Connection

We extend an invitation to families to bring the Our Lady statue into their homes for a week, enhancing their family prayer experience. A brochure containing instructions for engaging in rosary prayer, along with sets of rosary beads, will be provided. If you are interested in taking the Our Lady statue home, please let Mrs. O'Brien know.



This week the statue of Mother Mary is visiting the home of **Mia Varghese from year 1/2.**

Please remember if you are interested to take Mother Mary home to fill in a form and hand it over to your classroom teacher.

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.



The Passion Gallery Walk

We're excited to invite families to experience *The Passion Gallery Walk* starting March 31st. Each class will contribute two artworks inspired by their assigned Stations of the Cross, reflecting on The Passion.

Details:

When: From March 31st
Where: PAC - The Passion Gallery Walk

Join us for this reflective journey as we share this meaningful time together. Stay tuned for more details!

Easter Gallery Walk

Families are invited to follow up on *The Passion Gallery Walk* by viewing the Resurrection artwork, which will be displayed after Easter.

Reading Before School

ST GERARD'S
PRIMARY SCHOOL



READING BEFORE SCHOOL

EVERY WEDNESDAY 8:30 AM

Join Mrs O'Brien in the
library for some quiet
reading time with a good
book and receive a
Reading Before School
raffle ticket.



Reading Before School



Reading Before School



Reading Challenge

Victorian Premiers Reading Challenge

Students have been sent home with their login and passwords for the Victorian Premiers Reading Challenge.

Please follow the steps below:

1. Visit <https://vprc.eduweb.vic.gov.au/home>
2. Select student
3. Then select VPRC login see below

4. Finally type in the username and passcode.

Please record the names of the books your child/ren are reading.

Happy Reading Children!!!



School coordinator or student

Sign In

Home based readers and early childhood participants

Register For the Challenge

Challenge Booklist

Search Booklist

Wellbeing

How does exercise affect mental health and wellbeing?



Physical activity promotes many aspects of child and adolescent development, including social and emotional skills, as well as physical development of motor skills.

It also supports mental wellbeing. We know that high levels of inactivity can lead to a greater risk of both physical and mental health problems.

Physical activity:

- can increase levels of serotonin and endorphins; the neurotransmitters involved in regulating and improving mood
- promotes sleep – which also helps regulate moods, increase energy levels and improve memory and learning
- increases the connections between the brain neurons, which improves memory and learning capacity
- pumps blood to the brain to boost mood, concentration and alertness
- promotes relaxation by reducing skeletal muscle tension
- provides children and young people with an outlet for excess energy and frustration, which relieves tension
- provides an opportunity for children and young to socialise and meet new people, reducing loneliness and isolation
- improves motor and cognitive skills, which boosts self-esteem
- distracts children and young people from negative thoughts.

These benefits also serve to improve classroom behaviour and promote a more positive learning environment.



St Gerard's Celebrates Harmony Day

This year, St Gerard's will celebrate Harmony Day on **Friday, 28th March**, a special day to honor the diverse cultures within our school community.

The day will begin with a Paraliturgy and a Harmony Day Parade, followed by fun activities that help students learn about different cultures.

We invite parents and family members to get involved! If you'd like to share your culture and assist with activities, please speak to Mrs. Fernandez.

Let's come together to celebrate unity and diversity at St Gerard's!

Wellbeing



Australian Government

HARMONY WEEK



Harmony Day

When: Friday 28th March 2025

Where: St Gerard's P.S.

What: Fill your lunchbox with food from your culture wear clothing related to your cultural background or wear something orange



EVERYONE BELONGS
www.harmony.gov.au

Wellbeing

National Ride to School Day

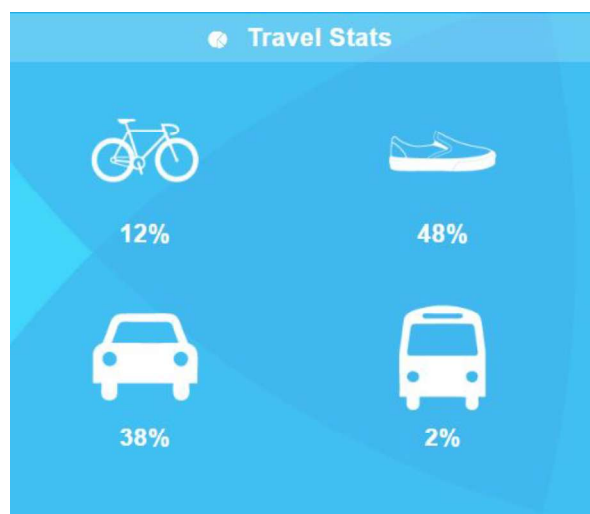
A big thank you to all the families who participated in National Ride to School Day on Friday 21st March. Congratulations to 3/4W who had the most students walking, scooting and riding to school!!

Well done to:

1st place-3/4W with 77% riding, scooting or walking

2nd place-1/2FB and Foundation B with 70% riding, scooting or walking

3rd place-5/6T with 60% riding, scooting or walking



Important Dates / Info

March

- 26th Reading before school in the library from 8:30am
- 27th Year 5/6 Reconciliation
- 31st *The Passion Gallery Walk* starts

April

- 1st Reading before school in the library from 8:30am
- 2nd - 4th Year 5/6 Camp - CYC The Island
- 4th *The Passion Gallery Walk* finishes
- **4th End of Term 1, school finishes at 3.30pm**



NORTH DANDNENONG MASALA JFC

FRIDAY 14TH MARCH, 5:00PM - 6:00PM
LOIS TWOHIG RESERVE, DANDENONG NORTH
AUSKICK - UNDER 13S
BOYS & GIRLS
FREE
REGISTER NOW VIA QR CODE!



OPEN DAY

SATURDAY 22 MARCH 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

At St John's, we nurture students academically, spiritually, and empower them to lead with confidence, serve with compassion, and succeed in an ever-changing world.

- Faith-Based Curriculum
- Academic Excellence & Innovation
- Thriving Arts & Sports Programs
- Supportive Community

Explore our facilities, and discover how our students are empowered for life beyond school.



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.

Pick-up From After-School

Parents are asked to please be prompt when picking up your child/ren after-school. If a ride is not here when school concludes, the student may be sent to aftercare instead of the office. Please remember school aftercare does have a cost involved and time will begin accruing at the end of the school day. If a student's ride has run into an unexpected delay, please call the main office to let them know.



Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

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Mazenod advantage.

mazenod.vic.edu.au

Book a tour →

Bookings essential

2025 Open Day: Wednesday 5th March
2025 Tours: 1st May / 24th Jul / 5th Aug / 16th Oct
Year 7/2027 Applications Close Friday 15th August 2025

Please note the following changes in relation to uniform purchases for St Gerard's Primary School:

Uniforms can now be purchased in the following ways:

Option 1 - Online Order

Access to our Online Ordering System

1. www.aplusschoolwear.com.au
2. Go to **SHOP ONLINE NOW** (red box)
3. Select your school
4. Uniform listing with images will appear.

Select items you are wishing to purchase:

Style
Size
Colour
Quantity

Add items to bag

5. Once all items are added to bag, proceed to checkout.
6. Select delivery options
 - a. Pick up from school (free) in comments section please enter your child's name and class
 - b. Pick up from A Plus Schoolwear (free)
 - c. Postal address (delivery charges will apply)
7. Either checkout as guest, returning customer or create a new account.

Orders placed by Sunday will be delivered to the school the following Thursday

Option 2 - Fill out the order form and leave it at the school office.

Orders received by Friday will be delivered to the school the following Thursday

RETURNS

Can be given to the school office **AFTER** contacting AGS and will be either exchanged or refunded by A Plus School wear.

Should you have any queries regarding the above, please contact A Plus Schoolwear

0354 9345 or email info@agsprints.com.au



OSHC IMPORTANT UPDATE

📢 Important Fee Update – Effective March 24, 2025 📢

Dear Parents & Guardians,
To continue providing high-quality care and professional staff, Youth Leadership Victoria will be adjusting OSHC fees.

New Fees:

- ✅ Before School Care: Casual \$25 | Permanent \$20
- ✅ After School Care: Casual \$30 | Permanent \$25
- ✅ Vacation Care/Pupil Free Day: \$72.50

We appreciate your support and understanding.

For any questions, please contact **Rita Strachan** 0412 958 601.

Thank you for being part of our OSHC community! 🎉

Notice Board



Happy Birthday to all who have celebrated and will celebrate their birthdays, this week including this weekend and January.

- Harper Foundation



- *Every Day Counts* - Primary School Attendance Information
- Ukraine Support Fund
- Springvale Indoor Sports - Indoor Soccer
- North Dandenong MASALA Junior Football club (AFL)
- Mazenod College Open Day & School Tours Info
- St John's Regional College - Open Day Information
- Softball School Holiday Program



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.