



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools



ST GERARD'S SCHOOL

# NEWSLETTER

Term 1, Week 9

28 March 2025



We are one but we are many and from all the lands of earth we come!!  
Celebrating Harmony Day at St Gerard's!

## The Jubilee Prayer

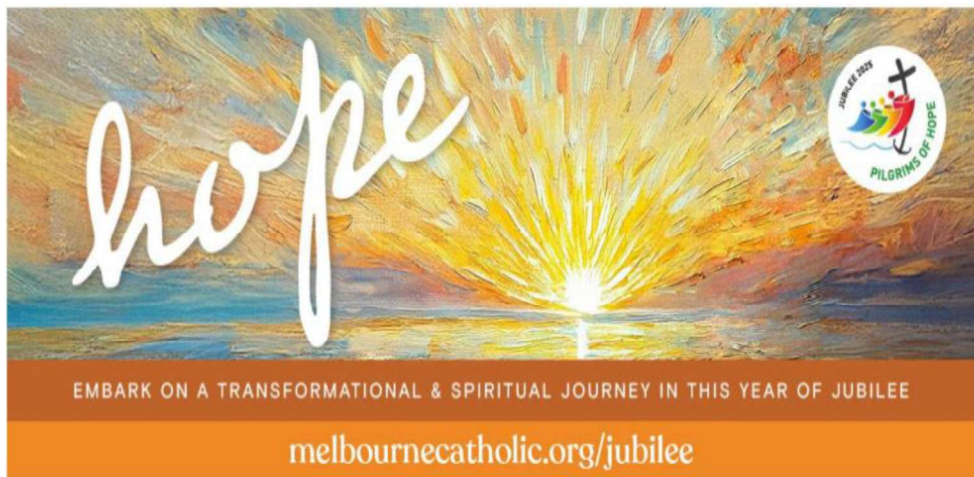
Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever.

Amen

Francis



@st.gerards3175

Principal - Mr Paul Cowan  
principal@sgdandenongnth.catholic.edu.au  
71 Gladstone Road, Dandenong North 3175



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



# PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Families,

Today (Friday) was **Harmony Day** at our school. This is always a fantastic celebration of all the cultures we have that make up our school community and allows us to **learn from each other through the sharing of our backgrounds, traditions and stories**. I would like to **thank Ms Fernandez for leadership and coordination of this event and for the staff and children for entering into the spirit of the occasion**. Appreciating and valuing the cultures is something we do every day, however specific days can really enhance our understanding and awareness of all that we have here at St Gerard's.

The last of our **AUSKICK sessions** occurred on Thursday afternoon as it **was postponed due to the weather last week**. This has again proved to be a popular after school activity. 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 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@sgdandenongninth.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@sgdandenongninth.catholic.edu.au) , Seesaw or in person so we can arrange a time.

Looking to **next week**, families are invited to come and **visit our Passion Gallery Walk which will be set up in the PAC**. These pieces have been created by our children and **depict the Stations of The Cross**, which are foundation aspects of our faith. I look forward to seeing families and parishioners visiting throughout the week.

Next week we also have our Year 5/6 Camp from Wednesday 2 - Friday 4 April at CYC *The Island* (Phillip Island). School Camp allows our children to have experiences outside the 'normal' school offerings and is a great way to develop new skills and build relationships. I am sure there will be plenty of highlights and stories to be shared on Friday afternoon when we return!

I would like to draw to your attention some **important dates for Term 2**. We have 2 School Closure Days planned which allows for Professional Development and dispenses Time in Lieu that our staff have accrued. Due to the availability of Professional Development activities, advice from Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) and public holidays, we will be having school closure days on **Monday 28 April and Friday 6 June**.

**The first week of Term 2 starts on Tuesday 22 April and with the ANZAC Day public holiday on Thursday 25 April the first week is a 3 day week**. We then have the first of our School Closure days the following Monday 28 April. 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.

I am asking families to **please park in the designated parking bays** when dropping off and picking up their children. I have had a number of requests to send a reminder as we are seeing an increase in people parking in other areas which creates blockages, frustration and safety concerns. The safety of our children and the school community is something we all need to be mindful of and actively participate in. I thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

Lastly, a reminder that **Term 1 finishes next Friday 4 April at 3.30pm**.

Have a great weekend and God bless.

Paul Cowan  
PRINCIPAL

# Religious News

## Key Dates

### 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.

## Third Week of Lent

Exodus 3:1–8. 13–15 | Ps 102:1–4. 6–8. 11. R. v.8 | 1 Corinthians 10:1–6, 10–12 | Luke 13:1–9

Sometimes you hear Indigenous people refer to Jesus as a 'person of Country'. What might this mean?

It is hard to imagine the Gospels without the connection of Jesus to the sea, the river, the desert, the fields and the mountain. His teaching often featured seeds and birds and sheep and corn. In today's Gospel, we hear the parable of the fig tree. The impatient person wants to cut it down. A wiser person is prepared to work with nature by putting manure on the tree and looking after it. This is a story of growth. God is creative. God is patient with us. God gives us another chance. He journeys with us on our pilgrimage of hope.

This week, Project Compassion brings us the story of Lam, a young man from rural Vietnam. Lam's disability made his upbringing difficult. Sometimes people look at those with disability a little like the fig tree. They judge them and dismiss them.

Through the I-SHINE program, supported by Caritas Australia's partner in Vietnam, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Lam was able to pursue his dreams and become more independent. He enrolled in a six-month IT Technician training course in Da Nang that not only equipped him with professional skills but also rekindled his social connections and confidence. Lam's dedication during the training paid off as he launched a freelance graphic design business from his home. Today, he is a successful graphic designer, serving clients locally and internationally and earning a stable income every month. He has a creative life.

In today's reading, Moses is in the wilderness, a place of surprising possibilities. Like the Australian landscape, the wilderness in Scripture is subtle; it is a place of encounter with God. Moses thinks he is having a regular day in the family business, looking after his father-in-law's sheep. But a voice comes from a bush that is blazing without being burnt up. The voice tells Moses to take off his shoes because 'the place on which you stand is holy ground.' This is the beginning of the freedom story of his people, the start of their journey out of captivity. May we *Unite Against Poverty* as we create a better world for all God's people.



### Prayer

We pray for anyone who lives with disability, especially people who are stigmatised in any way. May we do all we can to support their flourishing as truly equal participants in the human family. May our work this Lent with Project Compassion help to create greater justice. Amen

Photo: Lam is working as a freelance Graphic Designer from his home in Quang Nam, Vietnam. Credit: Caritas Australia

[projectcompassion.org.au](http://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.



## 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

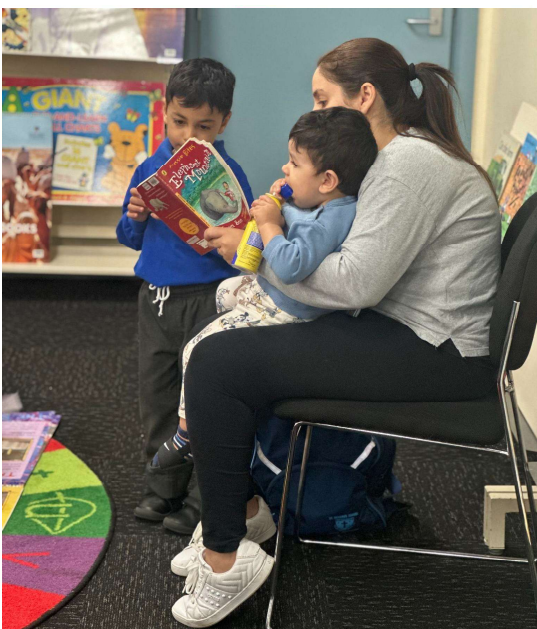
## EVERY WEDNESDAY 8:30 AM

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 are nutrition and mental health linked?

**Healthy eating helps children and young people cope more effectively with stress, better manage their emotions and get a good sleep – all of which assist learning.**

Most research about nutrition and mental health has focused on adults. We know that good nutrition is associated with better mental health outcomes, whereas a poor diet is associated with a greater risk of depression and anxiety. However, emerging research that focuses on children and young people has also found a relationship between unhealthy diets and poorer mental health outcomes.

Poor nutrition has been associated with:

- externalising behaviour (such as hyperactivity, aggression, disobedience)
- symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- poor concentration and tiredness, which interfere with learning
- immune system function, which is also linked to mental health
- delayed brain development – high-fat, high-sugar diets can affect proteins in the body that are important for brain development
- iron deficiency, which has been linked to cognitive function impairments associated with learning and memory
- nutrient deficiencies, which have been associated with mental health conditions including depression and anxiety (we know that fruits and vegetables, grains, fish, lean red meats and olive oils are rich in important nutrients such as folate, magnesium, vitamins and zinc which all impact on body and brain functions, including mood regulation).



# HARMONY DAY

On Friday, 28th March, St Gerard's School celebrated Harmony Day with a wonderful display of cultural diversity and unity. The day began with a Paraliturgy, followed by a vibrant parade where students proudly represented their countries. It was a fantastic sight to see so many nationalities celebrated across our school community.

Following the parade, students enjoyed class picnics in their classrooms, where they shared and talked about traditional foods from their respective cultures. The day was filled with exciting activities, allowing students to learn about various global traditions. They had the chance to try their hand at writing in Chinese, explored famous cultural science inventors, crafted Maasai necklaces from Kenya, and learned how to make parathas from India.

Our students also experienced what it might be like to be in Italy during Carnevale by making their own masks. They discovered the significance of lanterns in many Asian countries and learned how to play traditional games like hopscotch. The day continued with Australian bush dancing, the Polish heel-toe polka, and a lively Punjabi dance from India, bringing a range of global rhythms to life.

A huge thank you to our amazing staff who made this event possible, providing students with the chance to experience the richness of the world's cultures in a fun and engaging way. Harmony Day was truly a celebration of the 39 cultures that make up our school community.

We are proud of our diverse and inclusive environment, and it was wonderful to see our students embrace the beauty of cultural exchange. Take a look at some of the fun we had on this special day!





# HARMONY DAY

Loving God,

you have created each us in your image and likeness and so we are different expressions of your love. Help us to appreciate each other's difference so that we create in our community, understanding, peace and harmony. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus your Son in whose Spirit we are all one.

Amen.





# Important Dates / Info

## March

- 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**

## Term 2 - Important Dates

### April

- **22nd April (Tuesday) - Term 2 starts**
- 25th ANZAC Day public holiday
- 28th School Closure Day - Time in Lieu acquittal

### June

- School Closure Day - Staff Professional Learning - Religious Education



**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!**



# 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](https://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](http://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.**

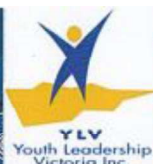
**Orders received by Friday will be delivered to the school the following Thursday**

**RETURNS**

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

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

0354 8345 or email [info@agsprints.com.au](mailto: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.

- **Maleah** Yr 4
- **Nichola** Yr 1
- **Lenny** 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.