Dear Parents & Friends of St. Mary's,

In this last week of the school year and with Christmas day just around the corner… I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all families for their contributions throughout 2016, especially those who have helped out at the school in any way. A very special farewell is extended to those staff, students and families who are leaving us at the end of the year.

At this time of the year we celebrate many wonderful events and achievements, all in the spirit of cooperation and support! On behalf of Fr. Ashkar, the College Board and Staff, may I extend to every member of St. Mary’s College community a happy and holy Christmas, hoping that the new year brings much joy and promise.

And let’s hope it is a safe holiday for everyone!

Final End of Year Gathering

Tomorrow at 2.30pm the primary students and staff will gather one final time for a singalong with the College Choir and a Christmas play performed by the Preps. Come along and join us.

Final Report Wrap-up

A final reminder to parents and students that reports not yet collected may be done so from the College Office no later than Monday 19th December (3.00pm).

Sad News

Last Tuesday Mrs Lynn Bullen received the news that her mother had passed away. Please keep Lynn and her family in your prayers during this sad time.

On Wednesday, we also received the news of the passing of Mrs Gail Davey. Gail was a long term employee of St. Mary’s as the Librarian. Rest in peace.
This week all families should have received an email correspondence regarding the change to the format of Pupil Free Days from 2017. Please contact the College if you didn’t receive this important correspondence. Including the first day of the school calendar year, the Pupil Free Days for 2017 will be:

- Monday 30th January
- Friday 24th February
- Tuesday 13th June
- Friday 18th August

Before collecting their reports students need to ensure that they have returned all library books and resources. Parents are also requested to confirm that payments of fees have been finalized and lap top payments are up to date. This request is being made to ensure that the College is able to prepare and plan for 2017. If you have any concerns about fees or lap top payments please contact College Business Manager Mrs Meryl Connell no later than tomorrow, Friday 16th December. Thank you.

Next Sunday celebrates the fourth Sunday of Advent …

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness, we wait in hope.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, ‘Come Lord Jesus!’ (Henri Nouwen)
With Christmas now fast approaching, and this being our first together here, I wish to take this opportunity to wish you the best for this season and for the New Year to come. As I said in my greeting letter, it is with great joy to tell you how pleased I am to be here in Seymour. I am convinced that there is so much good here and so many blessings awaiting us all. We all have a role to play in bringing these blessings alive in both our own lives and those around us. Especially in this time of Christmas as I see the joy in your children’s faces, the hope of things to come in their eyes, I pray with you that together we can make this all happen. Together, we can live and move towards recognising all the things God is offering us and with which he is blessing us. God wants us to grow into the wonderful people we know we can be.

This Christmas, make it special by not only celebrating the day with family, friends and presents, but also with coming and praying with us to give praise and honour to the God who took on our human nature and was born for us that we may all be saved. May the peace, joy and love of this time reign in your hearts and homes.

Christmas is a Holy Day of Obligation - Christmas, like any Sunday, is a Holy Day of Obligation binding under mortal sin. Attendance at the Vigil Mass fulfills that obligation. The key theme of Christmas is of darkness giving way to light which breaks through the darkness.

God bless and keep you; may he shine his face upon you and keep you in his peace.

Fy Eugene Ashkar (and of course Fonzie)
FEE AND LEVY PACKAGE 2017

Dear Parents

In previous years, I have sent a Fee and Levy Package home to families by post at the end of January.

With the aim of giving families a clearer understanding of their fee obligations for next year, I have instead emailed the packages to those families with an email address before the end of the year. If you did not receive the information, please contact the College so that we can post it to you.

Please note that the package contains at least one form (the Payment Instalment Form) which needs to be completed and returned to the College in the new year. Again, please contact the College if you require a hard copy of any of the forms. I urge all parents to take the time to read the contents of the package and if they have any concerns or questions please contact me. Fee statements will be generated and sent home in February.

REMINDER: P-6 have their Stationery Requirements levied and provided in the classrooms. The secondary student Stationery List was listed in issue no. 38 of The Marian and has been uploaded to the College website site (follow the news & Events Tab, ‘The Marian’ then click on the more button).

Mrs Meryl Connell

ICT

St Mary’s College has an ongoing commitment to grow learning capacity with contemporary technology. Consequently, we have a number of surplus white 2009 Macbook Laptops for sale for $120 each.

They each have a newly installed operating system as if you were buying it from a shop.

All parts have been tested and they work. They do have cosmetic dents, cracks and/or marks, and all come with chargers.

Please note that as they will no longer be school owned laptops we don’t have the capacity to offer any technical support for them.

Some of these laptops will be ready on Monday, but most will be ready at the start of next year.

If you are interested in one of these laptops then please email me on david.carter@smseymour.catholic.edu.au.

David Carter – ICT Co-ordinator
This week, as we enter the final week of Advent, we take time to pause and reflect on this special season.

Advent is a time of waiting and hoping, of peace, joy and love. It is a wonderful way to enter the Christmas season, as we prepare to welcome the Son of God, Saviour of the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to our amazing community - staff, families and students. In any one year, we have such a wide variety of Religious and community events and this year was no exception. For all these events to take place, it requires a team of people to help make it all happen.

Thank you to Mrs Rochelle Gough, our Religious Education Leader. Rochelle is the inspiration for the beautiful liturgies, Masses and prayers we have throughout the year. She has led us in the Sacramental meetings and Reflection days, which make up such a major part of our Religious Education program.

Thank you to Mr Brian O’Dwyer, Mrs Tanya Oakley and Mrs Jennine Brock who are the other members of the Community Team. It is because of all their hard work, along with Rochelle’s, that we are able to have all of our community events, such as Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, fundraising activities, Feast days and so much more.

Thank you to our amazing Parents and Friends Association and all of our parents. I really enjoy working with the P&F and all the parents who give of their time so generously to help our school. Karen Glen has been a wonderful President and along with Barb Canty (Secretary) and Louisa Munro (Treasurer) we look forward to another wonderful year in 2017.

Thank you to our Year 10 Leaders and SRC members. Mrs Jennine Brock led the SRC so well all year and they were responsible for many fundraising efforts, including the Samaritans Purse and the St Vincent de Paul appeals. The Year 10 Leaders, led by our College Captains, Isabel MacDonald and Joshua Boyer, were a wonderful group of students to work with on a daily basis. Along with all the Year 10’s, I wish them every success in their new schools in 2017.

Along with the RE/Community team, we extend our very best wishes to the following staff – Mrs Maree Findlay, Ms Heather McCall, Mr Daniel Evans, Mrs Barb Radford and Mrs Carol Gurnett, who will not be at St Mary’s next year as they pursue different paths and adventures. We thank them for all their help and support over their time at St Mary’s. We will see Mrs Rachel Leben back at St Mary’s next year when we need a replacement teacher so we are saying ‘see you next year’ to Rachel!

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a Safe and Happy Christmas. I look forward to working with you all again in 2017.

Travel safely and Merry Christmas!!

Mrs Catherine Evans
catherine.evans@smseymour.catholic.edu.au

The Jesse Tree helps tell the story of the Bible from Creation to the Christmas story. It shows the people and events leading up to the birth of Jesus.

Pictured here is Brielle Hammond (SP-G) with her Jesse Tree.
I would like to take this opportunity to thank all families for providing that essential love and support to your children throughout this school year. I wish each member of our welcoming school community a safe and merry Christmas and look forward to another action packed 2017 school year.

Christmas is certainly one period of time in our busy year that we can stop and concentrate our energies on each of our families.

HAPPY FAMILIES

Happy families seem to share some of the same elements. Not every family can achieve these, but working towards them can make family life happier.

In a happy family people tend to:
- love each other and show it
- like and respect each other
- communicate honestly and openly with each other
- spend time together
- solve problems together
- get through bad times together
- be willing to find ways to get on better together

“Gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas.” ~ Peg Bracken

“Instead of being a time of unusual behaviour, Christmas is perhaps the only time in the year when people can obey their natural impulses and express their true sentiments without feeling self-conscious and, perhaps, foolish. Christmas, in short, is about the only chance a man has to be himself.” ~ Francis C. Farley

On behalf of the Wellbeing Team, thank you and Merry Christmas.

If any parent has any concerns relating to the wellbeing of their child please contact me by phone or email: sean.obrien@smseymour.catholic.edu.au.

Mr Sean O’Brien
Congratulations to all students on your successes in learning during 2016. Thanks to all the parents and carers for your continued support, and to the staff for getting all of us ‘over the line’ at the end of the year!

A special mention to all the award winners, you truly deserve to be recognised for the hard work, dedication and resilience you have displayed in order to have achieved success.

The Curriculum Team have done a huge amount of paperwork in order to fully implement the Victorian Curriculum on day one next year. Learning overviews for all year levels will again be ready early next year. The opportunity for you to ‘Meet and Greet’ your child’s classroom teacher will be held in week 2 of the year.

To finish the year of learning I have done a ‘Vox Pop Poll’ with some year six students. Here are their comments as they reflect on the year. They were asked to tell me about your proudest achievement in learning for 2016.

Noah “Being able to have a conversation in Indonesian”

Bella “The work I have achieved in maths this year”

Tenisha “Continuing to learn to play the guitar”

Courtney “Learning more about the history of our country in Inquiry”

Harvey “I have been able to improve my story writing”

Hugh “The work I did on learning about Howard Florey and how he contributed to the world”

Jonty “Learning how to play badminton – I’d never tried it before”

Best wishes for a safe and Happy Christmas and a lovely holiday!

Mrs Christine Buhler
A big THANK YOU to students, staff and parents for another fantastic year at St Mary’s.

I look forward to teaching in the New Year. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Neil Lemmon  
Music Teacher