Dear Parents and Guardians and other members of the Parish Community,

Happy Easter!

This is such an important Feast in the Church’s life that we celebrate Easter for 6 weeks! I bet the Easter eggs have long gone in most homes by then! The Easter message that Christians celebrate lasts longer than the chocolate. Jesus has taught us that hope in God defeats the darkness and misery of the very worst of human situations. Let us be filled with hope and serve God in every part of our daily lives.

Last weekend the Church here at St Elizabeth’s went through a bit of a change. Some of you who celebrate in your own language community churches may not have seen the change. The altar has been moved to the top of the steps in the area that the school has used as a multi-purpose area. So all the seats have been arranged in a block facing what was the back of the church. I do hope you will come in and have a look at the new arrangement. The church will be set up in this arrangement for 4 weeks so that everyone can think about whether it is right for our community or not.

I do not want to prejudice your minds before you see it but I must say that I was surprised by my own reaction to the new arrangement. I had thought that it would be great to have the altar clearly visible and to have a more traditional way of placing the seats. However, in sitting there in prayer for a few minutes the other day, I found myself longing for a return to the old way. I missed the richness of the little chapels which remind me of the complexities of our faith and the particular groups within our faith community that have identified certain practices as their own favourite ways of praying.

I also noticed that the height of the ceiling above the altar did not inspire my heart in prayer in the same way that it did with the altar placed under the big glass windows. If you think about the design of cathedrals or beautiful churches that you have seen and worshipped in,
you will probably have noticed that the architect places great emphasis on the height and shape of the roof. It might have a dome shape or a vault but it draws your eye to the space above the altar which I think is helpful when you are talking and listening to God.

Our church here at St Elizabeth’s does have a problem with the placement of the altar in that it does not stand out as the central point in the church. I think we can find simple ways to handle this, perhaps by building a curved screen behind it. Moving it to the top of the steps certainly does make the altar highly visible but it also removes the table from the heart of the community. If this is our table to which we bring the work of human hands to Eucharist, I think the table needs to stay amongst the people. In the old layout, the altar table was set amongst the community, not above it.

I also miss the colour and richness of the windows when I sit with my back to them. The windows add a dimension to the liturgy that has been used by the church through the centuries. Art is a way of helping us to appreciate what is happening in our lives and a way of enriching our lives. Art can also help us to move our minds from the humdrum to the spiritual. Facing a blank wall does not inspire, comfort or attract me. I know that if the new arrangement was to become permanent, we could paint the back wall or commission an art work, but we already have a place where those elements are present.

Too many problems in our church history have come from the use of power of those in ministry. The priesthood, as Pope Francis has reminded us, is about service. Rather than elevate the priest’s chair to a ‘throne’ situation, I personally think it is more appropriate to have our priests seated amongst us. Leading from within the community rather than leading from a place above and beyond the community.

Many of you will have your own ideas and thoughts about the change and perhaps you totally disagree with me. That is perfectly fine but we do need to know what you think! I encourage all of you to email me, talk to me or contact me in any way that you can so that I can give the parish some feedback about the change to the church layout. I am sure that it will be a lively topic for discussion at the next Parish Council Meeting. If you see Fr Tad and want to give him your thoughts, he is most interested to hear them. He is interested in everyone’s opinion. This is our church and he wants to make sure our voices are heard before a decision is made to permanently seek to change the layout of the church.

GONSKI FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

You would no doubt have heard the announcement from the Prime Minister that she wants a new deal on school funding. Ms Gillard’s government is offering an extra $9.4 billion from the State and Commonwealth money boxes. Although based on the Gonski Report, this offer does not deliver all that Gonski recommended. How did Catholic schools go? Well, based on the first reading of the announcement, we did not do very well. We currently receive 17% of the funding going to all schools from both Federal and State Government funding. The $1.4 billion promised is only 10% of the funding we currently get. This means a significant difference in funding to our schools.

Our Director wrote to Ms Gillard on the day of the announcement pointing this out to her and she responded by assuring the Director that the proposed indexation arrangements would bring the funding to the same rate that we currently get.

A big concern for Catholic schools is that as yet there has been no agreement on Capital Funding. Catholic education systems rely on Capital Funding to build new schools and in Victoria we have 12 new schools waiting to hear if they have the funds to begin building. Without a formal commitment to Capital Funding, Catholic schools may have to reconsider their program of building new schools to service the growth areas. It would be a real tragedy for the many families who have moved to new estates in rapidly developing areas on the basis of a Catholic School being built in the next few years. They may find themselves in the position of having to choose a Government school when they have planned and prepared as a community over several years to build a new Catholic school.

The Prime Minister has given the states a couple of months to look at the implications and to discuss their contribution. It will be an interesting few months especially as we are leading up to an election in September. I will keep you up to date with developments as they occur.
HELP!

We are trying to create a cubby house construction play area at the back of the school. If you have any planks of wood or light weight pallets that you can spare, please let us know. We might be able to get a volunteer to collect them. They are only useful if they have no nails that stick out!

Christine Ash
Principal
"Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks for the risen Lord, Alleluia, Alleluia, give praise to His name."

Welcome back to this second term as we joyfully celebrate this Easter Season. We began this new term with all levels developing units of work that focus on the Easter story and the centrality of the Easter event for all who name themselves as Christian. This is who we are; each week as we proclaim our Creed we affirm our belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are an Easter people who live in the joy and hope of the promise of a new resurrected life with the Lord.

In this week’s Gospel, there are two notions that need to be taken on faith as they are presented in the passage where Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd. The first mystery is that those who are given the gift of faith to hear the invitation Jesus presents, will follow him. The second mystery involves the unbreakable bond that exists between the Shepherd and the person who hears the invitation. Once a person responds to the invitation, he or she belongs to God forever.

Our culture has changed since the days of our parents and grandparents when just about anyone dropped in at any time. We now call ahead and make arrangements for our children to visit friends. In comparing our own day to 50 years ago, we begin to really appreciate the invitation of Jesus to follow him, just as we are, anytime of the day or night. Where would we be if we had to call ahead to see if Jesus was available?

During the next week, reach out to a family in your neighborhood by inviting them over for some ‘informal’ fun and food. Dig out board games and snacks as you welcome them spontaneously. Keep in mind that this is how Jesus reaches out to us and let your neighbors experience God’s love through your hospitality.

Keep smiling!

Elisabetta Salierno
Catholic Identity Coordinator (CIC)
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**SACRAMENTAL NEWS:**

**First Communion:**

Our sacramental focus throughout this Easter season will be on the Sacrament of First Communion. There will be many letters regarding your child’s sacrament, so please keep an eye on yellow forms coming each week!

This week I sent home the date for your child’s sacrament and the Parent Activity / Preparation evening night. I will also be sending home a letter regarding the First Eucharist Activity Day on **Friday 10th May.** Please complete the permission form and return to me ASAP! I also encourage any parents who are available to help to please make the effort in supporting the day; without your support the day is not the same!

Please mark the dates on your calendar **NOW.** Unfortunately, I am not able to change the dates as each weekend is full.

**Confirmation Candidates:**

Thank you to the many families who have taken up the challenge to be regularly participating at the mass here at St Elizabeth’s. If you have not yet returned your form for the Easter masses, it is not too late!

“Happiness is not a station to arrive at, but a manner of traveling”

Margaret Lee Runbeck
ENCOURAGING ‘GOOD’ BEHAVIOR IN YOUR CHILDREN

1. **Children do as you do.** Your child watches you to get clues on how to behave in the world. You’re his/her role model, so use your own behaviour to guide her. What you do is often much more important than what you say. If you want your child to say ‘please’, say it yourself. If you don’t want your child to raise her voice, speak quietly and gently yourself.

2. **Show your child how you feel.** Tell him/her honestly how his/her behaviour affects you. This will help him/her see his/her own feelings in yours, like a mirror. This is called empathy. By the age of three, children can show real empathy. So you might say, ‘I’m getting upset because there is so much noise I can’t talk on the phone’. When you start the sentence with ‘I’, it gives your child the chance to see things from your perspective.

3. **Catch him/her being ‘good’**. This simply means that when your child is behaving in a way you like, you can give him/her some positive feedback. For example, ‘Wow, you are playing so nicely. I really like the way you are keeping all the blocks on the table’. This works better than waiting for the blocks to come crashing to the floor before you take notice and bark, ‘Hey, stop that’. Try to say six positive comments (praise and encouragement) for every negative comment (criticisms and reprimands). The 6:1 ratio keeps things in balance. Remember that if children have a choice only between no attention or negative attention, they will seek out negative attention.

4. **Get down to your child’s level**. Kneeling or squatting down next to children is a very powerful tool for communicating positively with them. Getting close allows you to tune in to what they might be feeling or thinking. It also helps them focus on what you are saying or asking for. If you are close to your child and have his/her attention, there is no need to make him/her look at you.

5. **I hear you.** Active listening is another tool for helping young children cope with their emotions. They tend to get frustrated a lot, especially if they can’t express themselves well enough verbally. When you repeat back to them what you think they might be feeling, it helps to relieve some of their tension. It also makes them feel respected and comforted.

6. **Keep promises**. Stick to agreements. When you follow through on your promises, good or bad, your child learns to trust and respect you. So when you promise to go for a walk after he/she picks up his/her toys, make sure you have your walking shoes handy. When you say you will leave the library if he/she doesn’t stop running around, be prepared to leave straight away. No need to make a fuss about it — the more matter of fact, the better. This helps your child feel more secure, because it creates a consistent and predictable environment.

7. **Reduce temptation**. Your glasses look like so much fun to play with — it’s hard for children to remember not to touch. Reduce the chance for innocent but costly exploration by keeping that stuff out of sight.

8. **Choose your battles**. Before you get involved in anything your child is doing — especially to say ‘no’ or ‘stop’ — ask yourself if it really matters. By keeping instructions, requests and negative feedback to a minimum, you create less opportunity for conflict and bad feelings.

9. **Whining: be strong**. Kids don’t want to be annoying. By giving in when they’re whining for something, we train them to do it more — even if we don’t mean to. ‘No’ means ‘no’, not maybe, so don’t say it unless you mean it. If you say ‘no’ and then give in, children will whine even more the next time, hoping to get lucky again.

10. **Keep it simple and positive**. If you can give clear instructions in simple terms, your child will know what is expected of him/her. (‘Please hold my hand when we cross the road.’) Stating things in a positive way gets their heads thinking in the right direction. For example, ‘Please shut the gate’ is better than ‘Don’t leave the gate open’.

11. **Responsibility and consequences**. As children get older, you can give them more responsibility for their own behaviour. You can also give them the chance to experience the natural consequences of that behaviour. You don’t have to be the bad guy all the time. For example, if your child forgot to put his/her lunch box in his/her bag, he/she will go hungry at lunch time. It is his/her hunger and his/her consequence. It won’t hurt him/her to go hungry just that one time. Sometimes, with the best intentions, we do so much for our children that we don’t allow them to learn for themselves. At other times you need to provide consequences for unacceptable or dangerous behaviour. For these times, it is best to ensure that you have explained the consequences and that your children have agreed to them in advance.

12. **Say it once and move on**. It is surprising how much your child is listening even though he might not have the social maturity to tell you. Nagging and criticising is boring for you and doesn’t work. Your child will just end up tuning you out and wonder why you get more upset. If you want to give him one last chance to cooperate, remind him of the consequences for not cooperating. Then start counting to three.

13. **Make your child feel important**. Children love it when they can contribute to the family. Start introducing some simple chores or things that he/she can do to play his/her own important part in helping the household. This will make him/her feel important and he/she’ll take pride in helping out. If you can give your child lots of practice doing a chore, he/she will get better at it and will keep trying harder. Safe chores help children feel responsible, build their self-esteem and help you out too.

14. **Prepare for challenging situations**. There are times when looking after your child and doing things you need to do will be tricky. If you think about these challenging situations in advance, you can plan around your child’s needs. Give him a five-minute warning before you need him to change activities. Talk to him/her about why you need him/her cooperation. Then he/she is prepared for what you expect.

15. **Maintain a sense of humour**. Another way of diffusing tension and possible conflict is to use humour and fun. You can pretend to become the menacing tickle monster or make animal noises. But humour at your child’s expense won’t help. Young children are easily hurt by parental ‘teasing’. Humour that has you both laughing is great.
Learning and Teaching ...

HELPING WITH MATHEMATICS

There are lots of things you can do in your everyday life to help your child with developing their skills in mathematics. The great news is that I’m sure you’re already doing lots of them!

**NUMBER SENSE**

Get your youngster used to thinking about numbers and what they mean.

- **Have him count objects regularly.**
  How many computers are in the library?
  How many books are in his room?
  How many vegetables are in your dinner?

- **Give directions involving numbers**
  Examples: “Please put three plates on the table.”
  “Take four steps to get into bed.”

- **Ask your child to count to 10 by finding numbers around the house.**
  Examples: “1” on a clock, “2” on a remote control, “3” on a board game spinner, and so on.

**SKIP COUNTING**

2, 4, 6, 8...Learning to “skip count” will help your child count faster and with more confidence.

- While walking up the block, have him read the house numbers. Point out how they increase by 2.

- Ask him to number 20 craft sticks (1–20) and lay them down side by side. If he removes every other one and says the numbers that remain, he will have counted by 2s!

- Encourage him to count to 50 while bouncing a ball. He can swing his leg over the ball on every 5th number (5, 10, 15) to get the rhythm of counting by 5’s.

Rebecca Gage
Learning and Teaching Leader
gagere@sedandenongnth.catholic.edu.au
On the last day of Term 1 our boy’s softball team played in a semi-final against Mt. Hira College. After a slow start, the team rallied in the top of the 4th innings to take the lead.

Unfortunately time ran out and the scores at the end of the 3rd innings had to stand. We were defeated 7-9. It was a great result considering we were all novices at the beginning of the year. Thank you to Mrs. Hatley-Smith and Ms. Kovacich for their coaching this year.

On Friday the 3rd of May our annual Intra-School Cross Country will be held at Barry Powell Reserve. Students will compete for their houses and are encouraged to wear their colours. The event will run from 9.00 a.m till 10.55 a.m. and start with the 9/10 year old girls.

Parents are most welcome to come along and cheer our students on. A water bottle is a must for this event!

Yours in Sport
Dean Andrew
Sports Teacher

You Can Do It ...

Candice from 2HL is our ‘You Can Do It’ Star!!

This year we welcomed a new member into our class. Her name is Candice. Candice is our ‘You Can Do It’ star this week as she has been a wonderful learner in our classroom, working hard to learn new school and classroom routines. Everyday Candice enters our classroom with a huge smile ready to start her learning. Candice always works hard to complete her work, making sure it is always presented beautifully.
Community News:~ St Elizabeth’s Debutante Ball.

After organising the Deb ball for over 15 years, the current committee is stepping down. If you would like the Deb ball to continue a new committee is needed. Anyone interested please contact Cheryl at the Parish Office Tuesday—Friday 9am—3pm.

The new committee would be welcome to come and help out at this year’s Deb ball to gain an insight to enable them to run it next year.

Can you open your heart & home to a child today?

Berry Street is looking for families like yours who can provide emergency, respite, short and long term care for vulnerable children.

If you have room in your heart and home for a child then we want to speak with you.

Call today to discuss about becoming a foster carer on 1800 U FOSTER (1800 836 753) or visit www.berrystreet.org.au

MENTAL ARITHMETIC WITH ABACUS PROGRAM

An amazing program is now available to interested parents with children from Prep to Year 6 where students can learn mental and manual arithmetic with abacus. Abacus is a “Whole Brain Development” program with a proven concept that can improve arithmetic skills and also enhances the mental abilities like concentration, observation, visualization, imagination and memory.

Tuition Fees: $16.00 per session (1 hour per session)
Abacus set plus 2 exercise books: $30
Venue: Ferntree Gully
Time: After School Hours and Saturday

Please contact Choon Lim at GCM Abacus Method:-
Mobile: 0431 166 364 After hours: 03-97580731
Email: choonbaelim@yahoo.com

Learn Guitar at St Elizabeth’s

- Small group lessons for 30 minutes during school hours
- $16.50 per lesson (group of 3)
- Enrolment forms at school office or contact Choon

Mobile: 0431 166 364
After hours: 03 9778 0731
Email: choonbaelim@yahoo.com
Dear Parents,

We are registered to participate in the Woolworths Earn & Learn program. Through this program we will be able to get new educational resources for our school – and all we need you to do is shop for your groceries at Woolworths.

From Monday 8th April to Sunday 9th June, we are collecting Woolworths Earn & Learn Points. You will get one Woolworths Earn & Learn Point for every $10 spent (excluding liquor, tobacco and gift cards). Place the Woolworths Earn & Learn Points onto a Woolworths Earn & Learn Points Sheet and when it’s complete, the Points Sheet can be dropped into the Collection Box here at the school, in the Church foyer or at your local store. Below is a few of the items we chose from the 2012 Earn & Learn program with our points.

Upcoming events include:
Thursday 9th May, Mothers Day Stall.
Thursday 29th August, Fathers day Stall

Victorian Premiers Reading Challenge is still open.
Enrolment forms are available from the school office or the LRC.
Congratulations to those students who have already completed the challenge.
MONDAYS
5.30 – 6.30pm

PARTY YOURSELF INTO SHAPE

THE LATIN-INSPIRED, EASY TO FOLLOW, CALORIE-BURNING, DANCE-FITNESS PARTY. FEEL THE MUSIC AND LET LOOSE.

St Elizabeth’s Primary School
Performing Arts Centre, 111 Bakers Road, North Dandenong
Mondays, 5.30-6.30pm (closed school holidays)
Adults: $7
Children: $5 ($3 if accompanied by paying adult)

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