Dear Parents, Students, Staff and Friends of the Magdalene Community,

Last week we celebrated the Opening School Mass and High Achievers Ceremony. The Mass, officiated by Fr Michael, was a fitting way to begin the year, to come together as a community and to acknowledge God’s presence in our midst. Mass was followed by the High Achievers Ceremony. The students present at the High Achievers Ceremony, each achieved a Band 6 result in the HSC and/or an ATAR over 90. They are certainly a fine example of dedication to the students and the wider Magdalene community.

During the High Achievers Ceremony the 2015 Dux, Luke Papandrea, expressed some reflections on his journey to the Higher School Certificate. I thank Luke for sharing his thoughts with us and encourage students to take note of his advice:

“After six years at Magdalene, I’ve found that going to school is pretty much the same as going to the gym, and it’s not just because you start off small and end up a lot bigger. Both the gym and school offer tough challenges and it’s sometimes hard to stay focused and push yourself further. When working out, some people are motivated by the perfect beach body and that gets them through the session, but at school it can be sometimes more difficult to see a clear goal. Now I know it’s a huge cliché to set goals, but I found that it was really helpful. To give you a quick idea of how my goal setting worked, I started off very broad, as:

- I would like to drive an Audi R8 when I’m older.
- And I thought to myself, this means I’m going to need a good job and work hard.
- But if I’m going to be working long hours I should do something I enjoy.
- Well I’m a bit of a computer nerd, so software engineering sounds great,
- Which means at school I should choose subjects that relate
- And of course, I need to do well in each of my subjects to get the marks and drive that beautiful car.

This won’t work for everyone, as we all have different interests and ideas about the future. But having a simple plan of where you want to end up, makes the road getting there a lot easier. Going back to the gym analogy, the question, “how much do you lift?” is like asking, “hey, what mark did you get?” and much like going to the gym, the time spent training or studying, will determine what you achieve. You can’t expect to instantly bench 90kg without training, nor should you expect to get 90% without studying.

Another thing that I found very helpful was trying not to stress, get angry or frustrated. When these emotions took over, information wouldn’t sink in and it made me just not want to study. Trying to stick it out just made things worse, so I would just take a small break, by having a kit-kat, or a coffee, or watching an episode of friends. The 20 minutes you spend “destressifying”, means you can study for longer and with it being more beneficial.

When working out, there are those people who can help you reach your potential. At school, your teachers are your personal trainers, and if you listen to their advice, you will definitely be much better off. Friends are those who spot you, lending a hand when things get tough. And family are your cheer squad, that helps you do more than you thought was possible. I certainly would not have achieved as much without these people in my life.

Strong minds, gentle hearts
Finally I would like to end with a quote from a wise man of our generation: “Don’t let your dreams be dreams, yesterday you said tomorrow, so just do it”.

Well done Luke!

Last Tuesday the first meeting of the Parents and Friends Association and the Parent Consultation Committee was conducted. The Parents and Friends have been most supportive of the school and have endorsed the purchase of a school bus. This is in addition to the construction of a shade cloth structure, which is in the process of obtaining engineers specifications.

Following the Parents and Friends Association Meeting, the Parent Consultation Committee viewed the Annual School Improvement Plan. The 2016 directions were explained and input was invited for future directions. A copy of the priorities is included in this newsletter.

This week we began the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday ceremonies. As Catholics we are reminded that Lent is a time to reflect, repent, pray and reach out to others, traditionally expressed as “Prayer Penance and Alms giving”. Lent thus is an opportunity to bear witness to our Christian faith and carry on the work of Christ during and beyond the Lenten season. One way of being truly committed to the practical aspect of “Alms giving” is to contribute to Caritas. The Caritas Lenten theme in 2016 is “Learning More Creating Change.” We can make a difference to others across our world. This Lent let us all learn more about the plight of those less fortunate than ourselves. In doing so, let us commit to bringing about change.

God Bless

Mr John Lo Cascio
Principal

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Parents and other motorists are reminded of the importance of road and traffic safety around the school at all times.

♦ All traffic leaving school between 7.45am & 8.30am and 2.30pm & 3.30pm should turn left only out of the school gate.
♦ No students should cross Narellan Road except at designated crossings.
♦ Parents should not drop students off either in the staff or student car park.
♦ All motorists should observe signage on the roadway and in the car park.

All measures are in place to ensure the safety of students, other pedestrians and motorists.
Thank you for your co-operation in the interests of safety.
When we hear stories of the Prophet Isaiah, we don’t often realise he was a well-bred young man, with every advantage in life, destined to serve in the Royal Court and aiming for a life of culture, luxury and power – that was until he had a religious experience of God calling him to something deeper and he knew his life could never be the same again! He became a changed person, giving up his privileged life to become a fiery prophet for God.

Remember how Moses, from being an overseer of Hebrew slaves in Egypt, was called by God to lead those very slaves to freedom; his life was turned upside-down. Zaccheus, the tax collector from Jericho, upon meeting Jesus, was changed from being a cheat to becoming an honest man, and it cost him.

The successful Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, upon encountering the Risen Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, became Paul, Christ’s formidable apostle to the Gentiles. And then, in the Gospel today we hear the same theme: three young men, two brothers and a friend are fishing. Their lives could have continued, as was the plan for Isaiah, but they too, all of a sudden, have a religious experience: the large catch of fish at the behest of the stranger on the shore, tells them that they are in the presence of something more. They immediately protest their sinfulness – they are afraid. The merciful Jesus says to them, “Do not be afraid.” Henceforth, they would no longer just catch fish, they were to catch people for God.

You and I are challenged by the main thrust of all this. If we are really alive, there must be movement – we can’t stop still. We can’t turn back the clock. To stay as we are is to miss out on the life that God offers us. We need to grow, which means we have to outgrow the past and the present and move into a generous future, a noble, a holy, even an heroic future, however uncertain that future may be. And it will cost us – but the fringe benefits are out of this world!

Every year, with the season of Lent upon us, you and I are challenged to answer Christ’s call to live God’s way of life better than we did the year before. Don’t be put off when I call God’s way of life our “spiritual life”. It is quite realistic, it’s robust, it’s very challenging and, while the spiritual life is for everyone, it’s not for the faint-hearted as Isaiah, Paul and Peter found out.

How do you or I know if we are a spiritual person or not? How can we tell? Well, let me give you some sensible, practical indicators to show whether you and I are – or are not – spiritual people.

Firstly, we are spiritual people if we have the capacity for transcendence and a sense of harmony. Simply put, it means that we are aware that
there's something more to life than what meets the eye and we are wonderfully suspicious that something more, beyond this material world, is going on. This is in contradiction to secular proponents whose words and actions say quite loudly that there is no God, no life after death, no ultimate purpose or meaning to life, what you see is what you get, full stop. But, not so the spiritual person. He or she sniffs hidden presences. They sense something in every flower, in beauty, in art, in friendship, in kindness, something that hints at something more to life. In fact, such things hint at someone more. They also sense a harmony. It can happen sometimes while praying or perhaps coming upon a stunning sunset or having your child fall asleep in your lap. All for the moment is well, and for the moment we are pulled into something higher, something quite gracious.

Many have been converted because, although they were successful in their careers, they felt something was missing and they felt a mystery beckoning them. In Dostoevsky's novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, the priest's brother, who had left the faith and returned during his illness, is dying. Dostoevsky has him say, "Yes, there was such a glory of God all about me: birds, trees, meadows, sky; only I lived in shame and disowned it all and did not notice the beauty and glory." The spiritual person notices.

Secondly, we are spiritual people if we have developed a sense of vocation. This means, for example, that such people tend to see what they do, not just as a job, but as a calling. For them, marriage has a spiritual significance. Spiritual people feel that they are a part of a higher purpose; that their life, however unfamous, counts — that they were put here for a reason. They have a "purpose driven life", to quote the title of Rick Warren's book.

As Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman prayed:

*God has created me to do him some definite service.*
*He has committed some work to me,*
*which he has not committed to another.*
*I have my mission...*
*I am a link in a chain,*
*a bond of connection between persons.*
*He has not created me for naught,*
*I shall do good; I shall do his work,*
*I shall be an angel of peace,*
*a preacher of truth in my own place...*  

Thirdly, we are spiritual people if we also use spiritual resources to solve problems. Of course, we use all of the wonderful natural resources there are and we turn to people whose skills can help us. But we also turn to prayer; we seek solitude or perhaps talk things over with a spiritual director. A spiritual person tries to put life into a larger context.

Finally and practically, we are spiritual people if we do decent things all the time. It's as simple as that. We engage in honourable and virtuous behaviour. We actually show forgiveness, we express gratitude, we display compassion, and we are a generous donor to worthwhile causes.

During Lent, Project Compassion is our self-sacrificing outreach to people in need. Because our faith becomes an integral part of our life, we bring our religion to all aspects of our life. We are honest and always try to tell the truth, and occasionally, we might even be heroic. Our outreach to the poor becomes an act of mercy. Our humanity is where the reality of our faith lives.

While spiritual people close to God are aware of their sins and moral failings, they are more aware that Jesus is our Saviour, rich in mercy and forgiveness. In this Year of Mercy, we ought to get into the habit of regularly approaching the Sacrament of God's mercy and reconciliation. Pope Francis said, "God's mercy is a spring that will never run dry."

Lent is a program of spiritual exercises of prayer, fasting and almsgiving to strengthen us to help us grow in our spiritual life and open us up to receive God's mercy so that you and I will become merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful.

Have a blessed Lent and Easter.

Most Rev Peter W Ingham DD
Bishop of Wollongong
SHROVE TUESDAY
ASH WEDNESDAY
OPENING SCHOOL MASS
OPENING SCHOOL MASS
We were very proud to welcome back our Year 12, 2015 High Achievers. The DUX, Luke Papandrea attended with a number of students who achieved over 90 and students who received a Band 6 in one or more subjects. The following students received a Band 6, Benjamin Brown, Simone Brown, Samantha Coupe, Jessica Cunningham, Alex Di Federico, Caitlin Fitzgerald, Frank Gerada, Anna Kelly, Madeline McGreal, Kacee McNally, Bianca Messina, Luke Papandrea, Isabella Paparo, Ricardo Rahme, Matthew Said, Holly Silm, Emily Sutherland, Madeleine Taylor, Isabella Tenaglia and Celene Watson.
Magdalene Catholic High School
Annual Improvement Plan
2016


**Overarching Priorities 2013 - 2017**

**Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education.**

1.1. The school will have a strong commitment to and understanding of the vision and mission of Magdalene Catholic High School.

**Key Area 2: Students and Their Learning**

2.1 Relevant criteria and assessment and evaluation data will be used consistently to track, monitor and review student progress and to inform the teaching and learning cycle.

2.2. A whole school approach to literacy and numeracy will be in place to ensure that all students can access the curriculum at an appropriate level.

**Key Area 3: Pedagogy**

3.1. Students will be provided with a range of differentiated assessment opportunities that assess their learning in authentic ways and allow them to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and potential as learners. This information will be used to improve both teaching and learning across the school.
Whole School Priority Improvement / Review Areas

2016

Key Area 1: Catholic Life and Religious Education

By the end of 2017, Magdalene Catholic High School will be a school where all members of the school community will understand, appreciate and celebrate the school’s Catholic identity.

To achieve the above the school will focus on the following priorities in 2016:

1.2.2. The school fosters collaboration with priests and parishes which contributes significantly to the life of the local Church and is of direct benefit to students.

Key Area 3: Pedagogy

By the end of 2017, Magdalene Catholic High School will be a school where student learning is a collective responsibility, enriched by a dynamic curriculum enhanced by effective pedagogical practice.

To achieve the above the school will focus on the following priorities in 2016:

3.2.2. The school provides a rigorous curriculum and programs which include high expectations for student learning which enable them to develop the knowledge and skills required for the next phase of their learning and progression. School programs are collaboratively planned and continuously evaluated, and reflect a whole-school student-centred approach.

3.2.3. Effective processes and practices ensure that students’ learning needs are identified and met through appropriate intervention. Student progress is monitored, tracked, regularly reviewed and appropriately communicated. Well targeted resources support an inclusive learning environment that fosters innovative and positive opportunities for learning.

3.4.2. The school’s teaching programs are dynamic working documents which contextualise learning and respond directly to students’ varied needs. They are explicitly linked to and integrate all components of the syllabus that inform the teaching/learning cycle. The school engages in a regular review and improvement process, which involves evaluation and modification of teaching programs, ensuring the ongoing effectiveness of student learning.

Whole School Priority Review Areas

2016

Key Area 4: Human Resources Leadership and Management

4.5 Overall compliance with legislation and other requirements.

Key Area 5: Resources, Finance and Facilities

5.2 Use of resources and space
The Merit Award System

The Celebration of Excellence Award Scheme includes the presentation of Class Awards, Coordinator Awards, Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

The initial award is the Achievement award that can be awarded to students by any staff member for class work, improvement in learning, assessment results, sustained work ethic, commitment to learning, service to others, involvement in extra curricula activities and promoting school spirit. Students are awarded a coordinator award once they have received 3 achievement awards. A student can then work towards a Principal’s Bronze, Silver and Gold award.

- **Principal’s Gold Award**: 3 Silver Awards
- **Principal’s Silver Award**: 3 Bronze Awards (one of the Coordinator’s awards must be for school spirit)
- **Principal’s Bronze Award**: 3 Coordinator Awards

---

**KLA Coordinator Award**

*Commitment to excellence* = 3 achievement awards in the one KLA. For eg 3 HSIE Awards = HSIE KLA Award

**Year Coordinator Award for Commitment to learning**: 3 achievement awards in multiple subjects.

**Year Coordinator Award for School Spirit**: 3 achievement awards for community involvement and service.

---

**Achievement Award**

*Subject Teachers* can award students for:
- sustained work ethic
- improved learning and taking responsibility for own learning
- exam and assessment results
- assisting peers with their learning
- overall commitment to learning.

*Pastoral Teachers* can award students for:
- 3 merit notices per week
- random acts of kindness
- Contributing to faith and liturgy
- uniform
- improved organisation

*Supervisory Teachers* can award students for:
- Tuesday Sport
- Uniform
- extra curricula activities
- Social Justice involvement
- Community service
- Creative and Performing Arts Involvement
- Leadership and school Spirit.
YEAR 7 iPad

The year 7 BYOD iPad Technology program aims to support all students in improving student engagement, participation and achievement. iPads are a powerful tool for collaboration, active participation, critical thinking, innovation and discovery. They allow students to personalise their learning to suit their individual needs, abilities and interests.

Although most students have used computers and other pieces of technology in the classroom practically since they started school, the iPad is a learning tool unlike any other they have used in the past. In order for our students to get the most from the device all year 7 students will be participating in a two-day training course (Monday 15th and Tuesday 16th of February).

Students will be involved in practical hands on activities that will help them develop the knowledge and skills to engage with their school work and to become active learners. The two days will cover some of the areas listed below:

- Online Safety and digital footprint
- Managing iPad and Apps
- GAFE (Google Apps For Education)
- Google Classroom
- Time management and organisational skills (email, calendars and file management)
- Using the Library (importance of reading, borrowing, research skills, ebooks and printing)
- Photography and Video editing in an educational environment
- Assessment work (creating files, backing up, managing documents and electronic submission)

Why is it important to stay safe online?

Most students are ‘connected’ via laptops, mobile phones, tablets or personal computer. The potential for the Internet to be a valuable and a fun resource for education, entertainment, making friends, keeping in touch is huge. But when you use the Internet, you could be at risk of illegal activity or abuse - be it bullying, fraud or something more serious. Unlike seeing someone face to face, on the net, people aren’t always what they first seem. The YouTube link below shows how Australian teenagers and young children are accessing the Internet. [https://goo.gl/Iwr66K](https://goo.gl/Iwr66K)

In the same way you learn about safety when you leave the house, it is important to learn how to stay safe online. These are skills that will stay with students for life. The first part of our two-day training course will involve a presentation about online safety and digital footprints by the Police Youth Liaison Officer attached to the Camden Local Area Command.

For more information on eSafety visit the Office of the Children’s eSafety Commissioner. [https://www.esafety.gov.au/](https://www.esafety.gov.au/)
Year 7 students enjoy sport with Mater Dei students

This year Magdalene and Mater Dei have ventured into an immersion program whereby Mater Dei Students are integrated into our community to experience a mainstream school. The program is in its developing stages and for the moment Mater Dei will be joining us for sport.

Each week 13 Year 7 students from Mater Dei join our Magdalene Students for sport at All Sports. All students have a great time interacting on the sporting field. It is wonderful to see that there are no social barriers on the field and the great sportsmanship qualities of all of the students.

This program is proving to be just as beneficial for Magdalene Students as it is for the students of Mater Dei.
PARENTS AND FRIENDS NEWS

This year's first meeting of the Parents and Friends Association was held on Tuesday 9 February. It was great to see some new faces along with those returning from last year. We heard from Ms Franciscus and Year 12 students about the reciprocal visit by St Patrick's school, Brewarrina, as part of the Brewarrina Immersion Program. The P&F was impressed by their commitment and passion and approved financial support for this outstanding program. Well done Ms Franciscus and students. The students will also be undertaking fundraising activity to support the program, your support of these fundraising initiatives will be greatly appreciated.

The P&F also approved funding of $133,000 for a 25 seat school bus, and agreed to provide approximately $75,000 in funding for the installation of shade sails. The P&F also agreed to seek further information on the proposed purchase of a laser cutter. The P&F decided not to proceed with the proposed electronic sign at the front of the school.

The school will be holding the Open Day on 14 March, if you are able to assist on the day, please contact the P&F via the P&F email. It is the P&F's role to keep the masses fed and watered, so BBQ masters are most welcome to apply.

Our next P&F meeting will be held on Tuesday week 3, Term 2. All parents, friends and teachers are welcome to attend. Based on the last meeting we have a big year ahead and appreciate any support you can give. If you have any questions about the P&F, you can contact us at mchs.pandf@gmail.com.

David Cornett
Parents and Friends Association

Congratulations Maddison Smith

Maddison Smith was recognised this week at the NSW CCC Blues Awards for her outstanding achievements in Softball.

Maddison represented Wollongong, NSW and was part of the winning NSW team at the Pacific School Games.

She was named in the All Australian Team as catcher.

We congratulate her on her outstanding achievements.

MATHS PUZZLE

Maths Puzzle #2

“What day do you go back to school, John?” asked his grandmother one day.

"Well," John replied, "Nine days ago, the day before yesterday was three weeks before the second day of term."

If John had this conversation on a Sunday, what day of the week did he start school?

Answer to Maths Puzzle #1 to follow!!!
February

15 Monday Year 7 Ipad Training
16 Tuesday Year 7 Ipad Training
22 Monday Year 10 Information Evening
24 Wednesday Year 7 Parent Welcome 6pm - 8pm.

March

7 – 11 Monday– Friday Catholic Schools Week
9 Wednesday Year 7 Vaccinations Visit 1
11 Friday Twilight Retreat Seniors Year 7 Reflection day
14 Monday Year 7 Enrolment 2017 Open Day Tours: 3pm - 6.30pm Year 7 Enrolment 2017 Information Evening 7.00pm

LOST PROPERTY

We continually have a large number of lost property items sent to the front office. If your child is missing any uniform items or other items please send them to the office to check the Lost Property tubs which are located on the verandah outside of the student entrance to the Administration office.