

For reflection:

Love does no wrong to a neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13.10

A truth which cannot be lived lovingly is dead.

Immanuel Jacobs OSB



Featuring in this issue are the ministries of:

Presentation Family Centre
Marian College Ararat

The Ministries to be featured in the next newsletter are:

Wellsprings for Women
Kilbreda College

Please submit articles or photos of interest by Monday 16th November to mlang@brigidineministrycentre.org.au. **The last Kildare Ministries Newsletter for 2015 will be sent out on 27th November.**

A few days ago I was watching footage of asylum seeker families taking the Arctic route to safety, Syrians making their way to Russia then cycling across the border into Norway, where the overwhelming majority of the Norwegian people offer them welcome. Reports say this Arctic road stays open, even in winter. One can imagine the Arctic route will become increasingly popular as the desperate need for safety continues. We cannot imagine the suffering the travellers endure as winter approaches.

Europe puts Australia to shame in their treatment of asylum seekers. We hope and pray the recent visit to Canberra by our country's religious leaders, including Brigidine and Presentation Leaders, will result in significant changes to our current inhumane policies.



A current Madonna.
The source of this picture is unknown.
It is an Iraqi woman in a Turkish camp.

In part, the Statement of the Leaders reads:

We, the religious leaders of Australia are desperately concerned for our sisters and brothers on Nauru and Manus Island. We join our voices with those of thousands of other individuals and groups who are concerned about the injustices being perpetrated in our names... And this is in stark contrast to the way the people of Europe rescued and welcomed tens and hundreds of thousands of people who arrived by boat on their shores...

As a direct result of the Canberra visit it is reported that "A number of politicians will work with religious leaders on creating a new, humane asylum seeker policy, after conceding that public opinion on the issue has shifted." We firmly support a commitment to new and humane policy.

All ministries in Kildare Ministries are willing participants in offering hospitality and support to asylum seeker families. We know from experience that creating ties across cultures enriches our communities. The real and authentic quality of our ministries is measured by the extent to which we have solidarity with those who have the least.

In this issue we focus on **Presentation Family Centre Balnarring**, a place of great welcome, respite and recreation for families and individuals in difficult circumstances, and on **Marian College Ararat** where the 'unseen human factors' make a difference in the lives of all in the community. We have some deeply reflective words about the pilgrimage experience from Kylie Morrissey (St Joseph's, Echuca). Pilgrim participants report it was a great and memorable experience. Our thanks to the great organisation of Marguerite, Anne, Erica and Linda. As one pilgrim said: "they deserve a big pat on the back!"

Maree Marsh csb
Co-Chair Trustee
Kildare Ministries



Presentation Family Centre



Reception, Grevillea, Acacia & Ti Tree Cottages

The Presentation Family Centre (PFC) continues to provide respite and recreation for struggling families. Since opening in 1989, PFC has provided accommodation and support to tens of thousands of guests who might be struggling in some way, shape or form. They may be experiencing financial disadvantage, intellectual / physical disability, terminal illness, and mental health difficulties; or need respite from everyday life. PFC is set in a beautiful and peaceful location by the sea. The successful running of the project relies upon a small team of part time staff for the delivery of day to day operations, who give

consistent friendly support to visiting guests. There are two residential Presentation Sisters at the Centre, one of whom provides invaluable pastoral care to vulnerable visitors and the other takes care of the 'Wilderness' Project.

PFC consists of 6 self-catering cottages, an Activity Shed for communal programs; an outdoor play area, and an all-weather sports surface.

PFC volunteers are the humble and unassuming people behind the scenes contributing their time and expertise to the project. They come from all ages and backgrounds and help out by working with children, maintaining the cottages, surrounding gardens, fundraising or participating on the Board of Management.

A recent successful grant application has enabled PFC to purchase a motorised vehicle to transport guests with a physical disability around the site, thereby facilitating their engagement in communal activities and programs. Ti Tree Cottage has recently been renovated to provide bathroom facilities for physical disability. It also has wheelchair access into the cottage, a wheelchair friendly bedroom, kitchen and communal area.



Motorised Vehicle to transport guests with a physical disability

Regular School Holiday Programs are delivered four times a year for our visiting families. These programs not only provide rich enjoyment for each and every member of the family but also give parents and carers the opportunity to take a break whilst the children participate in activities.

The following is a small excerpt from the most recent **Spring School Holiday Program Report:**



Simon Says "Let's get to know each other"

'Our spring school holiday program was blessed with beautiful weather giving families plenty of opportunity to explore the local area and celebrate spending time together. As always, the activities gave parents a chance to relax while their children happily joined group activities, making new friends whilst learning a little about each other and our beautiful environment.

*Our first session for the holiday program was wonderfully successful. It was a relatively peaceful affair where the children were really able to **explore their talents and those of others**. Some real bonds were formed within the group which was most satisfying to witness. The natural surrounds provided the perfect background given that the weather was so beautiful.*

'Artsy Adventures' followed for the second session. The local community art project "I Dream" presented in collaboration with Balnarring Village Common and Mornington Peninsula Shire gave children the chance to express their hopes for their holidays through simple printed flags.

The flags were displayed as part of the Balnarring Community Flower Show at the Balnarring Community Sustainability Fair, Emu Plains October 10.



Cultural Diversity is embraced at PFC: everyone is welcome.

***Card making** was a highlight of the session with all children engaged in making colourful cards using a variety of festive materials. The Christmassy theme continued with the decoration of Photo frames using buttons. As always – the children loved free cardboard construction with lots of marvelous creations made by the end of the session.*

*The program finished up with our **big pancake breakfast**; sharing a hearty breakfast and some fun group games was the perfect way to finish up the week's activities."*

The Presentation Family Centre also welcomes facilitated programs such as residential weekend Meditation Retreats, Health and Well Being workshops and residential art therapy programs delivered by referral agencies. In addition, three recent successful grant applications have underpinned the planning of educational cookery workshops for our guests to be delivered in 2017.

For referrals and bookings please contact presentationfamilycentre@bigpond.com
Ishiti Griffiths—Operations Manager



The rolling acres of 'Wilderness' upon which PFC rests provides a place of healing for all those who visit.



Marian College Ararat

A Culture of Learning

Kent D Peterson, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, perhaps said it best when he describes how the ‘unseen human factors of a school affect the day-to day practice and behaviors’ within a school” He goes on to describe a positive culture as one where there is a “...set of values that supports professional development of teachers, a sense of responsibility for student learning, and a positive, caring atmosphere” (Cromwell, 2002, p.15)

At Marian College Ararat we are on a journey to improving student and staff expectations, standards and outcomes for all. But we know that to improve the Culture of Learning within our College, staff need to believe that all students can learn, and that what we do **‘Makes a Difference’**.



Over the last two years as a whole staff (the Leadership team, Middle leaders, teachers and support staff) we have travelled our own professional development journey with researchers such as John Hattie and Richard DuFour, to build a strong culture of collegiality and collaboration to improve students learning at Marian College. The clear message for staff has been

that what we do and how we do it makes a difference. From Hattie’s research (Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing impact on learning ,2011) it was about understanding that there is strong research to support how we go about improving what we do as teachers, and being more reflective of our strategies and practice in the classroom. “From the research we can see that 95-98% of what teachers do is positive – but we need more than that. There is almost always some evidence to prove that something has improved learning – the key question to ask is to what extent has learning improved. It is about making things that have the most significant impact on the learning visible. It is about making our expectations and standards of behavior explicit. And, it is about each member of our community taking responsibility for the learning.

We began this year inviting educational speaker Brendan Spillane to the College to challenge, motivate and encourage all staff to be actively involved in our journey towards improved outcomes for all students. Our mantra for the year became **‘Take Up the OAR’** – OAR being the acronym for **Ownership, Acceptance and Responsibility**. To do this required a degree of trust between all staff: to be open to peer observations; to be open to discussions about learning and teaching; and to embrace strategies for improvement. Using the framework of Dylan William’s ‘Formative Engagement’, teachers and support staff were allocated to cross-curriculum teams to discuss and reflect on the teaching and learning in the classroom. These teams also form the partnerships for peer observations.

Our journey is still in its infancy but there is positive feedback to date from staff about feeling re-energised in their teaching and finding greater direction from William’s framework. Students too report an improvement this year in the school’s increased focus on high expectation and strategies and processes to improve academic standards, expectations, feedback and follow up for students at all levels. We know improvement takes time and the benefits of what we do now will filter through as each year level progresses. But the signs are very encouraging and there is positivity among staff and students.



Marian College Ararat

Attention to High Expectations for all Students

We know that attention to individual needs has implications for any school. It is about developing pathways to



excite, motivate and engage all students, in a supportive environment where students can work both to their strengths and beyond their comfort zone. The first step in setting high expectations for all was to develop a set of agreed Learning Statements to be accepted and embraced by all staff. The second step was to develop a list of common, non-negotiable standards for all classes. Regardless of the course undertaken by students and the individual nature of their pathway through the school, certain expectations and standard are echoed across the college.

For the Applied Learning students in VCAL and VET studies, working cooperatively and respectfully to achieve their goals is as vital as the mood and attitude in the VCE classes. This was evident for the VCAL students in Automotive who recently completed Push Carts using design and safety skills. These carts were then given to each of the primary schools in Ararat to compete in the local Gateway Festival Push Cart race. This is a wonderful example of how students interact across year levels, schools and within our local community to achieve great results.



While the techniques and tools may differ between the various subject areas, the principles remain the same. If you cannot follow through and take ownership and responsibility for your own learning as either the teacher or the student then work remains incomplete. This does not mean first attempts are perfect or even right – but the learning from this, the willingness to persevere and see feedback as the steps to improvement make all the difference.

In the VCE and lower year level classes, the message is the same. We learn most when things are not that easy for us and we step outside our comfort zone.

We begin now developing a common language and singular multi-level process for dealing with Student Behaviour Support across the college, with plans to introduce new procedures in 2016. The intention here is to provide greater consistency and more focused student support across the college for dealing with inappropriate behaviours' and disruptions to the learning. The language and process we adopt uses a questioning process that is designed to respect the dignity of each individual involved and to nurture positive relationships between staff and students and students and their peers. It is about providing opportunities for students to think about their behaviour in relation to the acceptable standards of the classroom or yard, and to help them to build the skills necessary to be successful in the classroom. It is also about respecting the rights of others to learn and the teacher's right to teach in a positive, engaging, challenging space. This process should build further on our Culture of Learning across the college.

It is an exciting time for the college, but one we know will take the efforts, energies and shared values for all staff and students – to make a difference at Marian College Ararat.

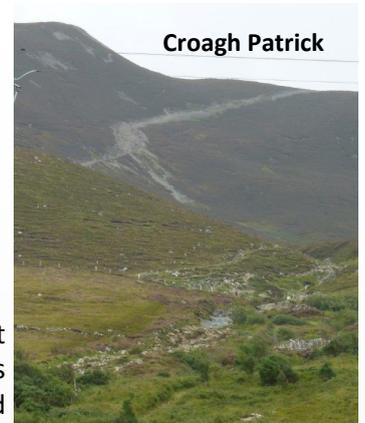
Carmel Barker
Principal



Kildare Ministries Pilgrimage to Ireland

19th Sept—3rd October 2015

**A tourist sees ruins
A pilgrim sees foundations
A tourist sees rocks
A pilgrim sees the stories they tell**



Croagh Patrick

Reflection by Ms Kylie Morrissey
St Joseph's College, Echuca

What interested me...

My interest in the Pilgrimage to Ireland was stirred by a desire to know more about the Brigidine heritage of my school. When I first started working at St Joseph's College in Echuca in 2013 I recall Marguerite Buckley's workshop that introduced the new staff to our charism. I remember how she spoke of the pre-Christian story and of Brigit the Goddess, which I found rather new and somewhat confronting. So when an opportunity arose to travel to Ireland in 2015 and have some of those musings clarified it was with an open heart and mind that I gathered up my hopes and expectations and willingly joined the pilgrimage.

What moved me...

The pilgrimage in its entirety was a moving experience. Everyday I encountered a breath-taking landscape and was overwhelmed by the stories and the charisma of the men and women who shared them. The arduous task of climbing **Croagh Patrick** was certainly a **highlight of the pilgrimage**. It was the most physically challenging task I have ever conquered. My muscles burned as a small group of pilgrim-come-mountaineers scaled the terrain to the summit - a notable 762 metres above sea level! Upon reflection, however, it was not the summit that was the pinnacle of that experience, but rather, the spirituality conveyed through the **'open hand and kind word'** that was shared as we struggled along together.

What changed me...

I have been changed by the warmth and hospitality that was shared as we travelled across Ireland. Every person we met offered a joyful and heartfelt welcome and it has served me as a timely reminder about how I can be truly present to those I interact with. Being 'time-poor' will no longer suffice as an excuse.

Learning of the words and deeds of **St Brigid, Nano Nagle** and **Daniel Delany** as their stories were woven together was transformational. Developing an understanding of their early lives and making connections between these and the values and mission of Kildare Ministries has enriched the work I do. I've been reminded to seek out God at work in the lives of my colleagues, parents and students. The pilgrimage has even re-energised my singing of the St Joseph's College song, **'Strength and Kindness!'**

What will I take home...

Upon returning home I have been inspired to take a long and loving look around me and to be grateful for the many blessings that are so easily taken for granted. I learned from the many wonderful Irish people that I met to shake hands a little firmer, maintain eye contact a little longer and to smile a little wider. Like the men in the story of **The Road to Emmaus** who spoke of, whilst unknowingly, travelling alongside Jesus, it takes time and contemplation to really appreciate the journey for what it truly was. **Three weeks on, I conclude that my heart truly burned while we travelled along the road, for God was surely among us.**



Pilgrims from St Joseph's

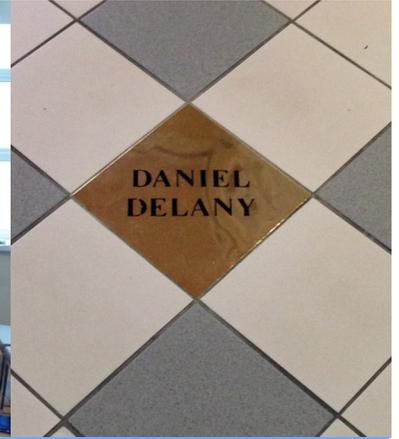


Walking the arduous mountain



Kildare Ministries Pilgrimage to Ireland

19th Sept—3rd October 2015



Kildare Ministries Pilgrimage to Ireland

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The Planting of the Oak Tree at Solas Bhride



The planting of a tree for the prosperity and sustainability of Kildare Ministries, on behalf of us all, was ceremoniously performed by three pilgrim Trustees - Rosemary Copeland, Kathy McEvoy and Vicki Ward.



All present felt the embrace and support of Brigidine sisters at Solas Bhride and honoured that the Kildare Ministries tree would be part of the Oak Orchard in the gardens of this new place.



Around The Traps:-



Congratulations to **Wellsprings for Women Inc:**

21 years ago **Wellsprings for Women** opened its doors for just 4 hours a day. On the 28th August 2015, they were a finalist for the **Victorian Community Training Provider of the Year Award** and won. The award was presented by the Adult, Community and Further Education Group. A fantastic night was had by all. It is great to see how such a small centre was able to perform so well against other such comparatively well funded organisations.

Veronica Hassett
Manager



Wellsprings for Women Inc. Fundraising Dinner, Friday 23rd October



Kildare Ministries

Calendar of Events

October &
November
2015



Date	Event
22 Oct	KEM Board Meeting
29 & 30 Oct	KM Trustees Meeting at Kildare College, SA
30 Oct	KM Members' Council Meeting
15th Nov	Pilgrimage De-brief Lunch
19th Nov	RE & Faith Leaders Network Meeting KM Finance Committee Meeting
21st Nov	Presentation Day
26th Nov	KEM Board meeting
28th Nov	KM Combined Meeting of Trustees with Chairs of Boards, Managers of Works and Principals of School Followed by Dinner
30 Nov	KM Trustees Meeting