



## Principal's Message Transcript – 26 February 2021 Newsletter

Good afternoon to all parents and members of the Loreto Normanhurst community. It's lovely to be with you once more as we head towards the end of Week 5 of Term 1. Since we were last together, we've entered the Season of Lent; a season of course, as all seasons are, of change. In particular, this liturgical season really allows us to think of the changing of heart we want to have, the change of attitude and of mind. It's something that we've been contemplating quite a bit this week as the days have unfolded, taking from the words of St Paul's letter to the Ephesians: don't let the sun go down on your anger. We've been really contemplating on that need for an open heart, and the great gift of forgiveness that we can extend one another to ensure that the sun doesn't go down on our anger and that we can build a better world through our relationships - in the small and in the large. I pray that the season is one of great open heart for you and your families.

There's been a lot happening since we were last together. Very soon we will be welcoming back our Year 12 girls from their retreat; their final Senior Retreat as they head into their final year of schooling. A beautiful opportunity for them to retreat - literally, as it would suggest - to press pause, let their spirits catch up with their bodies right in the middle week of first term, a big term for all of our girls but Year 12 in particular, and to allow that reconsidering of where they're at in their lives as they continue to walk the path ahead. And I know from all I'm hearing and seeing from the staff at the various retreats that we've been running, that the girls have truly entered into it with that spirit of open heart and open mind.

And of course, the Year 5 and 6 girls - you may hear them as I'm talking to you - will be hopping off the bus very soon from the Great Aussie Bush Camp that the Primary School has been on for the last three days. Some rainy weather yesterday but a glorious day to end it today and we know again from all accounts that it's been a wonderful couple of days of activity, and lots of excitement and building of friendships and really creating that sense of community and belonging in which they can thrive in the Primary School. I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to all staff on behalf of parents and students for enabling these beautiful opportunities for our girls.

Last time I was with you I mentioned and congratulated Annika Shankar of Year 12, who took out the Lion's Youth of the Year Quest in Public Speaking for St Ives. And since then, Michelle Hoffman of Year 11 was celebrated as the winner of the Lion's Youth of the Year Quest Public Speaking in Hornsby, and Erin Longney of Year 12 also took out the very



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same award in the Berowra division. She was the overall winner actually and so Erin will move through to Regionals next week. We congratulate Annika, Michelle and Erin for those achievements and for finding their voice and speaking it through the beautiful art of oratory and, to Erin, for representing our region in the next couple of weeks. We wish you well, Erin, and it sounds like a fascinating area that she's looking at and hopefully we'll all be able to hear her speech soon.

Next week, of course, we all move into that whole notion of finding your voice and speaking it and really encouraging our girls to find it within; expressing voice, opinion, the art of rhetoric, the exchanging of ideas and the different ways in which we can do it. It will come alive next week in what is our Supergirl Week, the sixth or seventh year of Supergirl Week here at Loreto Normanhurst. The girls are really encouraged through exchanging ideas, guest speakers and various activities initiated by the SRC to find that power, and to really accept that we don't have to wait until adulthood to find our opportunity to influence. That's why I'm coming to you today, from our very own Supergirl - Mary Ward, of course, who is ever so stridently moving forward and reminds us always of that unique and beautiful quality that can be found in all people. Particularly, the way in which women and young girls can come to find it is something that we will look at and focus on next week in Supergirl Week.

So I know Year 9 are getting ready in that theme in English - I just happened to be in the library looking at all the book displays - to take on that unit of 'Women Speak Up' and looking at authorship and various ways in which through writing women have spoken up.

Our Year 10 girls have really stepped into that theme yesterday with their Pastoral Day, a full day focused on their Pastoral program and curriculum. It was the launch of the 'Walk the Talk' program and we're really pleased this year to be partnering with a local women's shelter with our Year 10 girls. They're really going to dedicate themselves this year in support of that local women's shelter. The rest of the day for Year 10 yesterday was spent with Mr Brett Sanders and our Pastoral Care team exploring ideas around rights, responsibilities, healthy and safe relationships and really looking to embed that in the work that they're doing across their full Pastoral program this year in Year 10.

I was just speaking to Mr McGee, he is packing up the bus getting ready for departure on Sunday when a group of Year 10 girls will be heading off for our annual Loreto Rural Partnership program. We partner with local Catholic schools and local communities in our rural area - in Coolah, in Dunedoo and from this year also in Gulgong. I wish to thank all families and schools in those areas who were welcoming us for their hospitality, knowing also that our girls and our staff have prepared quite a bit for how they can contribute in a



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reciprocal way to the wonderful experience of learning, through exchanging time and experiencing each other's ways of being. So we wish those girls heading off to the Rural Partnership program in either Coolah, Dunedoo or Gulgong all the very best and again thanks to our committed and dedicated staff for giving their time away from family to enable these opportunities.

And then by Friday, Year 10 would ordinarily take part in Mary Ward Connect, a program that's been running across our Loreto schools for over 10 years now I believe. Instead this year because we can't travel interstate, we're going to explore and strengthen the wonderful network that exists within our country across Loreto schools. We're going to explore and strengthen that network through Mary Ward Connect in a virtual way. So Year 10 will be involved in that next Friday. No doubt you will hear a lot more about that.

And in the spirit and theme of all that is International Women's Day, we will get there on the 8th of March! And if you haven't already, I encourage you to consider the invitation to join us for our annual Women of Influence evening. This year we're going to be joined by three wonderful ex-students of Loreto Normanhurst. We'll hear a little bit about their story, about the influence that their Loreto education has had on their life and career and take great inspiration from the influence they've had on families, communities and societies. So we're really looking forward to hearing from Catherine Livingstone, Hattie Dalton and Natasha Luschwitz, three of our alumni who will be returning for the Women of Influence evening. I really do encourage you to consider that invitation and accept it if you can, either here on site numbers permitting or virtually as well which is also an option.

Also in this week's newsletter, you'll see mention of the invitation you would have received parents to our Welcome Dinner and Drinks 2021. We did have to postpone that from the early February date and we've been able to secure that date for the 12th of March offsite so that we can have as many parents join us as possible. And I do look forward to seeing you on that evening and to being together once more for a celebration of who we are as a community, and as a wonderful circle of friends.

This week across all of Australia we have been part of the national launch of 200 years of Catholic Education. It's quite a considerable contribution that Catholic education has made to society and to schooling across Australia. By way of context, the first Catholic school in Australia was founded by Fr John Therry in October of 1820 in Hunter Street, Parramatta. And by 1833, there were 30 Catholic schools in the colony. And of course, we here at Loreto Normanhurst added to the beginnings of that story in 1897, and we have celebrated this week the place that our school has in the history and the heritage of Catholic education in Australia. Now at this point in time, 200 years later, one in five



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children across Australia are educated in a Catholic school. We're proud of the contribution that we make to Catholic education and we have honoured and celebrated in House time liturgies the beautiful founding story that we have here at Loreto Normanhurst, of Gonzaga Barry and those pioneer sisters who founded our school.

We give thanks for all of those who were at the beginning, for all of those who have carried the story and the tradition on and continue to make make a contribution to the lives of so many young people and families. Of course, we ask for blessings on those of us charged with the custodianship to teach and lead our families today.

Thank you for listening everybody. Have a lovely weekend and I'll see you soon.

*Ms Marina Ugonotti*

*Principal*