



Well, good afternoon everybody and welcome to our newsletter for this week. The last newsletter of term one, which is quite remarkable really, and very hard to believe and accept in some ways. But no doubt after a full first term of the school year, there are many staff members, many students, and of course many parents who were looking forward to the rest that the student vacation period will bring us all. So it's been a fulsome term and one of great celebration in so many ways in a great community and I hope that as we head towards Holy Week and the Easter period, there'll be an opportunity for rest and renewal for all of our families and members of the community.

I'm coming to you today from the primary kitchen garden or the garden club area, just between our primary school and the Mary Ward Health Centre. A beautiful setting where the girls joyfully and tenderly care for the garden and come to understand that beautiful natural cycle of life and the way in which we're enriched by the tendering of garden.

I've done so this week, because we've had a real culmination I guess of our ongoing commitment to justice. Of course justice isn't an event or a feature or focus of the school day or a week here at Loreto Normanhurst. It can't be because it goes to the very core of who we are and of what it means to be people who are trying to make the world a better place. But the last couple of weeks I've seen a lot of themes around justice and social justice emerging for us here as a community and indeed more broadly in the wider community. So we've gone from a focus on gender equality and women's rights with International Women's Day. We progressed our way through to Harmony Day, to close the gap and really grappled with the injustices that exist in key areas of life for our first nations people and then moved into this week to environment week.

It was a real culmination of coming to understand the complexity of some of our justice issues that are facing us and just how interconnected and interdependent they are, and therefore how we have to be sure that we seek the truth as Mary Ward told us at all times and be those instruments of justice. This week our JPIC, our social justice committee, our Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee, JPIC, and the Green Team collaborated and had been working all term really to get to the point this week of having a Justice Fair and it was really interesting in the lead up to that. The way in which the girls engage the whole community around awareness and one such way was with these conscious clothing tags, which was part of our fair this week with the clothes swap and on the back of that tag that I was given, it had, "Be curious, find out and do something." I think in some ways that three step approach brings us back to what Mary Ward said, "That you can't just talk about it. You can't just be seekers of truth.

You need to in a complimentary way, then be the doers or the instruments of justice in how you live your life." We know that to seek truth you've got to sit in the midst of it sometimes. You've got to sit in the complexity and chaos of issues, and you've also got to be open to perspective and to understanding and that's precisely this whole notion of being curious, having your awareness raised, finding out and then doing something which was handled through the week by those two key teams of student leaders in our school. So we did culminate in the Justice Fair and there was clothes swaps, there was a succulent stalls, there were homemade candles, there were beautiful cookie jars that you could take as gifts. And a real focus on the conscious way in which we need to engage as consumers in understanding the impact that our purchasing decisions has on others and on our planet. As well as understanding the necessity of basic human needs that some members of our community facing.

So all proceeds from the Justice Fair and the coin challenge that we had today with the challenge to be more going towards our school's contribution and commitment to Project Compassion for Caritas Australia. So I really do commend and am grateful to the students and the staff leaders of JPIC and Green Team for all the work they've done in these last couple of weeks.



We also had earlier this week and very much in that theme of understanding more, the first of our Seeking Truth Seminars and with a focus on feminine and feminist theology and it commenced this week and it was lovely to have actually more students in the Curran Theatre than adults, and a really powerful way of engaging in dialogue that we had on Tuesday evening this week. So if you weren't able to be there, I encourage you to look out for the second in that seminar series, which will be held in May and our visiting lecturers and theologians will be looking at mystery and mothering. Whereas we know May the month of Mary and also with mother's day falling in May, we thought we'd take a bit of a spin and a bit of a look through a different perspective out of feminist theology at mothering and the mystery that accompanies it. So I encourage you to join us for that.

This afternoon is Earth Hour and that's how we're going to wrap up enviro week here at the school, Earth Hour across Australia is tomorrow. So this afternoon, all the lights are out and we're really looking to minimise our reliance on energy and to do our little bit for Earth Hour in the last two periods of the day. With the sun shining, hopefully we'll need less and less reliance on electricity and all the rest and on power. So my final thoughts, and before I get to them actually. I did want to congratulate a few girls for this week and I'll come back to my final thoughts as we wrap up the term and as we wrap up this week.

I do want to congratulate a few students and a few groups of students on achievements from the last couple of weeks. Of course, there are many, there is so much that's going on. A whole lot of rich learning that's been happening and our year 12s have had some pretty significant periods of their formal assessment block and across the school of course. Students and staff have been really engaging in that feedback loop through assessment, knowing that it is part of the wonderful cycle of learning. That you have to really look at a point in time and then look at it from all those angles to understand how we can improve. So well done to all of you girls, for your commitment to your studies this year and to all your teachers who have accompanied you along the way.

But in particular I'd like to call out the following girls and congratulate them, to Erin Longney year 12, I mentioned Erin last time I spoke with you because she was heading towards the finals of CSDA Public Speaking, and Erin actually won the senior division. So congratulations Erin, and Indianna Cane of year 10 came in second in her division. So well done to both of you, Erin and Indianna. Congratulations to Erin O'Brien and Charli Fidler also of year 12, they've just been selected into the NSW state under 19 netball team, which is a wonderful achievement and they'll be flying the Loreto Normanhurst flag no doubt and I bumped into Erin this morning and she told me that they will be commencing training soon for their first tournament, which will be in July. So all the best to both of you Charlie and Erin. Also this week two of our rowing crews have been in Tasmania for the Australian National Rowing Championships. I'd like to congratulate Lizzie Powell and Greta Perosin of year 10. They made it through to the semi's and they came in sixth in the semifinals. Congratulations. I heard from the girls during the week after they raced and they told me it was a grueling race with really tricky, windy conditions. But I could hear the pride and the great satisfaction just in the tone of their email to me and I want you to know girls that we're very proud of your achievements and I know that you really dug deep and did us as the whole school proud. All the very best to our first VIII, they won their heat, they took out their heat last night and will head into the semifinals on Saturday. So I'm not sure if they're watching this video message, but perhaps their family and supporters are and we wish you all the very best and we'll be tuning in with those links that have been sent around.

I'd like to thank all members of our PAL Committee in various year groups who have been organising some community events and parent gatherings. It's wonderful that we've had some easing of many restrictions at a state level, which are enabling us to gather in safety and in greater numbers and I know that our parent community is really taking this on. Not only here at the school, when we're able to host you here at school, but in your groups and your community groups and friendship circles as members of



this community. So I know there's a whole lot of gatherings happening this weekend with our year 12 mothers weekend away and year seven and eight parents I know that that's coming up for you, so wish you well and to the fathers who've got their lunch coming up in June. So do keep an eye out for the community events now that we've got a different level of guidelines that we're working with and will really seek to bring us together whenever we can.

There'll be some opportunity for us to do so by us coming to you. So I'm really thrilled that Mrs. Kate Kovacs, our Director of Boarding and I will be able to head out for three different road trips, my country road trips I guess you could say, and the first one will be in May and hopefully our border families and members of our students who live in the country and all friends of Loreto will be able to catch up with us at some point in time. Our first road trip in May will take us to the central and the far West regions of new South Wales. So look forward to coming to you and also to hosting as many community and parents events as we can as these eased restrictions allow us to.

Music festival of course, is what we're all working towards for next term having moved it there. It was just glorious hearing the girls singing without masks on and really just seeing the joy in the quad last week and this week, now that they're back dancing in the quads and singing there as well. Really a big outburst of felicity.

One other event I did want to draw your attention to, of course, it's not really an event it's a commemoration. Here at the school next Wednesday, we'll have a Passion Liturgy for the whole school community, students and staff. On Thursday on Holy Thursday, when we of course are already on our student vacation period. Mrs. Kerry McCullough, we'll be sending out to all of our community a link to a Passion Liturgy that will allow you to join in with the way in which we are viewing and marking and commemorating the most solemn part of our calendar year, that of Holy week. So I do invite you to look out for our Passion Liturgy for the whole community. There'll be a link coming out to you for Thursday.

So as we head towards Easter and as we think of commencing Holy week with Palm Sunday this Sunday and we draw our minds in our hearts to the fact. In a way it's that ongoing invitation to seek truth and to do justice, Palm Sunday of course is when we remember that at that moment so much changed for not only Jesus and his followers, but for all of humanity. That we welcome Jesus into our lives on Palm Sunday and at the same time we mark that willingness to follow in his way and I think that when I consider this notion of seeking truth and doing justice, Palm Sunday is a beautiful way to conceptualise that, to do justice through that lens of love, self-giving love and through that lens of compassion. So this Sunday which is the beginning of Holy Week, it is a really significant time for us and for our families and for our community. To think about how to find truth through that way of justice, through that way of mercy and forgiveness and through that way of love. Historically there are many marches on Palm Sunday, the Palm Sunday rallies.

It's an ecumenical movement that gathers people from many different faiths in many different backgrounds and it's a way in which people are able to come together to March for a justice issue that is broader than the local, that goes to the core of who we are. I was just reading last night that this year, the hashtag is time for a home. Really across Australia this Palm Sunday, the marches, the ecumenical movement marching for justice. We'll be calling on the government to release refugees from detention centers and provide a permanent resettlement. So as I said, justice isn't a one-off event. It really is an ongoing commitment of who we are and how we do things and how we choose to do things. But I feel really strongly that Palm Sunday in the beginning of Holy Week is a way for us to truly tune into that commitment. That willingness to follow in the way of truth and in the way of love.



# Loreto Normanhurst

So I leave that thought with you, as I invite you into prayer. A prayer for our earth, a prayer that I've found, it's a beautiful little Loreto prayer book and it's in the chapter called justice times. This prayer and this reflection is entitled, "If the earth."

*If the earth were only a few feet in diameter, floating a few feet above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to marvel at it. People would walk around at marveling at it's big pools of water, its little pools, and the water flowing in between. People would marvel at the bumps on it and the holes in it. They wouldn't marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended in the gas. People would marvel at all the creatures, walking around the surface of the ball and at the creatures in the water. The people would declare it as sacred, because it was the only one and they would protect it so that it would not be hurt.*

*The ball would be the greatest wonder known, and people would come to pray it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know beauty, and to wonder how it could be. People would love it and defend it with their lives, because they would somehow know that their lives could be nothing without it. If the earth were only a few feet in diameter.*

So we take this moment in time, our commitment to protecting our earth, protecting the most vulnerable at the margins and to always seeking truth and doing justice as we head into Holy Week.

Blessings to you and your families for this Holy Easter period and for a restful and renewing time over the Easter vacation period. Thank you.

*Ms Marina Ugonotti*

*Principal*