



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



St. Damian's Newsletter

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Thursday November 28th 2024



ITALIAN DAY



A Note From the Principal

Dear Parents/Guardians & Carers

Congratulations to our Year 4 students and their families on the reception of First Communion and to those who came for a special blessing. Despite the very hot weather, the ceremony went very well. All the children looked beautiful/handsome on the day and each one was obviously feeling very special on their very special day. A huge thank you to Mrs Wright for all her organization, Mrs O'Leary and the choir for the music at Mass, to all the staff who attended to support and of course, a big thank you to Fr Dong for celebrating Mass for our school community. Congratulations again to the children who looked resplendent.

Yesterday we celebrated all things Italian with our Italian cultural day. The children had a great day enjoying lots of fun activities, including attending the special performance organized by Ms Batista. I think the highlight for the children was enjoying the delicious pizza and gelato. A huge thank you to all the staff for allowing the children this opportunity, to the Italian Committee of staff for organizing the day and activities, Ms Batista for her enthusiasm and most importantly Mrs Viola who co-ordinated, ordered and organized all the pizza and gelato for the students to order and enjoy. Bravi tutti!! Grazie mille!!



This Sunday marks the beginning of Advent. Advent is a four week season in the Church calendar dedicated to anticipating the arrival, or "advent" of Jesus, the long awaited Messiah. Catholics and Christians from many backgrounds celebrate this time with reflections on hope, peace, love and joy. Whilst their traditions may vary slightly, all focus on the hope-filled arrival of Jesus. This week we light the first candle on the advent wreath which represents **hope** – the longing for the coming of Christ, who brings hope to a broken world. We wait for Jesus in hope.

Christmas Carols



Next week is our Christmas Carols evening on Wednesday 4th December. As this is the final community event for the year we are hoping that all our families will join us to celebrate the end of another wonderful year of learning. Families are invited to bring picnic rugs, picnic chairs and join in with the singing as the students present a simple Nativity story. Hopefully it will be a lovely evening weather wise for us to enjoy our last community event together. Don't forget to buy your tickets for the Christmas Raffle which will be drawn on this night. Students are asked to be here by 6.30pm so we can start by 7.00pm. There are to be no balls/scooters or toys used on the oval on the night. We expect all siblings and family members of our students to participate respectfully and support the children who have been practicing diligently and are keen to perform for you.

School Closure Days

Please note that **this coming Monday December 2nd** is a pupil free day to allow staff to plan for the 2025 school year. **Students are not required at school on this day.** Their Care will operate a service for parents needing care.

Whole School Orientation for 2025

The students from Prep to Year 5 will meet their new classes and teacher for next year on Monday December 9th at 12.30pm – 1.30pm. The children will join together and enjoy getting to know one another in preparation for the following year. We hope that as many of the new teachers as possible will be able to join us on these days.

Final School Assembly

The final school assembly will be held Monday 16th December at 9.30am in the hall. At this assembly we usually announce our new Student Leaders for 2025 as well as farewell staff officially. Families are warmly welcome to attend.

Staff News

Mrs Marg O'Leary, our current Music teacher is retiring at the end of this year. Marg joined our school community in 2022 and has been instrumental in various school events, including the annual school carols and in last year's School Production. Marg is a very passionate music teacher and has given our students many opportunities to enjoy the various aspects of the music curriculum. After many years of service to Catholic Education in both Primary and Secondary schools, she has decided to leave teaching and spend more time with her family. We thank Mrs O'Leary very sincerely for her dedication and commitment to St Damian's School and wish her every best wish on this new stage of her life. Enjoy retirement Marg, you have truly earned it.

Mrs Elisa Answerth, one of our Learning Support Officers is also retiring. Elisa joined our school in 2015 and throughout her time here has worked with many of our students who have needed a little additional support. Mrs Answerth has been a very dedicated and hard working member of the LSO team who always focuses on the students in her care. Mrs Answerth is now looking forward to the next chapter of her life where she can focus on spending more time with her family and friends. Thank you Elisa, enjoy your travels and catching up with friends.

Mrs Mary Marotta is also leaving us. Mrs Marotta has been a teacher at St Damians for almost 12 years. She has taught many children over the years and contributed much to our community. Mrs Marotta took leave at the end of Term two this year and has been on leave since then. She has decided that it is time to leave our school and take on new adventures and experience new opportunities. We sincerely thank Mary for all her hard work and dedication to her students and our school community over her time here and wish her all the best for the future.

Miss Caterina Capogreco has accepted a teaching position at St Mary McKillop of the Cross in Epping and will begin there next year. Miss Capogreco has been at St Damian's for four years and this year was one of the Year 4 teachers. We sincerely thank her for her work with her students and her dedication to ensuring that each child flourished. We wish her all the best in her new school.

Mrs Sonia Tay is leaving St Damian's and taking a teaching position closer to home. Mrs Tay first joined St Damians as one of the Tutor teachers, which was part of a Government initiative post COVID. She then came back in 2022 sharing a Prep class with Mrs Kerss at the end of that year, Mrs Tay left to have her baby. We were very pleased to have Mrs Tay rejoin us this year sharing a Year 5 class with Miss Allen. Sonia is a hard working, dedicated teacher and we have been very lucky to have had her as part of our school community. Mrs Tay is going to St Theresa's School in Essendon, which is closer to where she lives with her family. We thank Mrs Tay for all her work and commitment to our school community and wish her all the best in her new school next year.

Mrs Christine Soosai Raj is taking time away from teaching next year to care for her family. Although only with us for a short time, Mrs Raj has certainly made a difference for her students. She is a hard working and thoroughly dedicated classroom teacher having taught a shared class with Mrs Rizzo this year in Year 3. We wish Mrs Raj every best wish next year and hope that she finds her time at home fulfilling.

Mrs Annette Hora joined our staff at the beginning of Term Three taking over from Mrs Marotta teaching Year One this year. In the short time that Mrs Hora has been with us she has made a huge difference for her students. Annette is a very experienced, competent, hard working and dedicated teacher who is solely focused on doing her best to ensure the students in her care learn to the best of their abilities. We are very grateful to Mrs Hora for accepting the short term position and giving our Year One students the stability and consistency they needed. We are not totally losing Annette, she will return to doing emergency work again next year and no doubt we will see her around our school. Thank you Annette for all you have done for our students. We wish you all the best for next year.

The 2024 School Year Ends on **Monday 16th December** after graduation **for the Year 6 students** and on **Tuesday 17th for all students from Prep – Year 5.**

First Two Days of 2025

As we did last year, staff will use the first two days of the school year to assess all students. All families will receive a letter detailing the day and the time that the children will need to come to school on one of the two days, either Wednesday 29th or Thursday 30th of January. We request that families come on the day assigned as we have a limited timeframe to test students and if they come on the wrong day there may not be time to assess them properly. This information will be sent home soon. Students from Year 1-6 will then begin the new school year on Friday 31st January. The new Foundation Year students will begin on Monday 3rd February.

School Reports

The end of year reports will be via Compass to all families on **Friday 13th December**. The teachers have dedicated much time and effort to assessing the students and providing you with the details of their progress, standard reached and achievements. Parents wishing to discuss any aspect of their child's report are encouraged to make a mutually convenient time with their child's teacher.

Prayer

Almighty God, we begin this Advent Season as an 'Advent People' – people of hope, ready to do your will. Let your blessing come upon us as we light the hope candle on the wreath. May it turn our hearts to you in the days ahead. Grant us the peace and joy we long for, as we await the coming of your Son with patient hearts. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Have a great week everyone

Rosanna

SECOND HAND UNIFORM SHOP

The SECONDHAND UNIFORM SHOP will be open this Friday 29th November 9am-10am and next Friday 6th December (last day open for this year) 9am-10am. (Located up the hill from the office. Cash only).

Thank you to all who kindly donated unworn and outgrown uniforms this year of 2024.

Many items all go to great new homes and happy students with the money raised going back into the school for resources.



Faith News

Sacrament of Eucharist

Congratulations to our Year Four Students who celebrated the Sacrament of Eucharist last weekend. We thank Father Dong for welcoming everyone and celebrating with us. Thank you also to our Families who prepared with their Children, and to our Year Four Teachers, Mr Riki Bossini, Ms Caterina Capogreco and Mr Rodney Nethercote who worked with the Students throughout the term.

St. Damian's Nativity and Christmas Carols Evening

As a School, we are busy preparing for our Christmas Carols Evening. We will be presenting the Nativity along with some traditional carols. The evening will take place next Wednesday 4th December commencing at 7:00pm. The Students have been preparing in earnest so please come along and celebrate with our community. Thank you for your support.

St. Damian's Christmas Giving Tree

As is tradition at St. Damian's, we have been invited by St. Vincent De Paul to support those in need by providing gifts. We would be most appreciative if you could contribute to our collection. To enable enough time for the gifts to be distributed to those in need, we will begin collecting items on Monday 18th November. The closing date for donations is Friday 6th December.

Please support our 'Giving Tree' which is placed in the School Foyer. Stars will indicate whether you wish to purchase a gift for a boy or a girl and will show an approximate age group. There are also stars to give gifts to a Mum, Dad or baby. Please take a star, purchase a gift, wrap the gift if you wish, then stick the star on to the package so the volunteers from St. Vinnies know who it is intended for. Please place the gift under the tree. These gifts will make Christmas a special time for families

Thank you in advance for your contributions towards this worthy cause. It is a privilege to witness our community act for others.

Mary-Ann Wright
Religious Education Leader

St Damian's Primary School Christmas Carols

Wednesday 4th December
Time: 7pm



Thank You to Such Devoted Choir Members

Last Saturday, some very passionate choir members turned up to lead the singing at the Year 4 First Eucharist Mass. How grateful the Year 4 students were to be so well supported with such enlivening and prayerful music for worship.

To James Harper, Alyssa Maroge, Soraya Mutuku and Winter Borres (seen in the photo attached) thanks for giving up your precious weekend time to help others and for being such reliable and dependable leaders at the microphone!

Most appreciative of your parents' support in ensuring you could be there too.

from
Marg O'Leary
Music Teacher and Choir Leader, St Damian's PS



INVITATION TO CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY MASS

Dear Parents,

I hope this message finds you well.

On **Christmas Eve**, we warmly invite you and your children to join us for our **Family Mass at 7:30 pm**, with **Carols starting at 7:00 pm**. This special celebration is a wonderful opportunity for our St. Damian's Community to come together in the spirit of Christmas.

To make it even more joyful, I encourage the children to dress as their favourite Nativity character: **Mary, an Angel, a Shepherd, a Star, a Donkey, a Sheep, a Wise Man**, or any other role from the Nativity story.

Let's celebrate this holy night with hearts full of love and joy. I look forward to welcoming you all and sharing this special time together.

Warm regards,
Fr. Joe Dong Tran P. P
St. Damian's Parish



We have 11 Christmas Raffle HAMPERS to win with an array of items and vouchers.

Tickets are to be purchased through your child's class. \$2 each or three tickets for \$5.

(To enter, simply complete the tickets and return to school with correct money by 3rd December).

(Tickets will not be sold on the night).

'Prizes drawn randomly by children picking out the tickets on the event night of Wednesday 4th December'.

Good Luck!



Prep C	Zara Hondros	For writing interesting facts about Elephants.
Prep M	Jeffrey Chen	For applying learnt spelling strategies and heart words in your writing.
Prep W	Arthur Jose	For his wonderful effort in writing descriptions about Lions.
1M	Oliver Mills	For improvement in reading—well done.
1S	Ela Horvat	For always doing her best and taking every opportunity to improve herself as a learner.
2AB	Ivan Huang	For working really hard on his persuasive writing piece ' Sport is the Best Hobby for Kids'.
2C	Luka Calleja	For being persistent in his learning and making good choices.
2Y	Summer Chen	For always trying your best and taking pride in your learning.
3B	Varunyah Yasokarthikeyan	For being a supportive classmate and always helping others succeed.
3M	Oscar Ngo	For doing his best to complete school and home learning tasks.
3SR	Jane Lu	For her continuous efforts throughout the year in demonstrating the school values.
4B	JaydenLam	For his dedication to achieving high standards.
4C	Andrew Pantelidis	For his enthusiasm towards learning and trying his best in all areas.
5AT	Daniel Wang	For your excellent engagement with Maths tasks in Patterns and Algebra.
5M	Alisha Pryor	For always trying her best, contributing thoughtfully to discussions.
5R	Ashton Lee	For embracing every challenge with enthusiasm and a cheerful attitude.
6GC	Jake Bozinovski	For consistently focusing throughout our lessons and trying his best.
6S	Olivia Lemberiadis	For being a considerate and conscientious student who strives to do her best.