St Thomas' Community News

Phone: 03 5592 1925  Email: principal@stterang.catholic.edu.au  February 6th

February

Monday 6
Tuesday 7
Wednesday 8
Thursday 9
Friday 10
  ~ Assembly @ 9am
  ~ SZ Principals Meeting - Ben to attend
  ~ Gr 5/6 visit to Mountview

A PRAYER FOR OUR STUDENTS

Dear God,
Thank you for the gift of education in every form.
As our children prepare to start a new year,
May confidence be their foundation,
May grace be their guide and
May hope be their compass toward a bright future.
I pray they would have eyes to see
The needs of those around them
And a heart to love well.
May they face each day with positivity
Knowing that no matter
What comes their way,
They do not have to face it alone.

Amen

Want to know more?
View or download our calendar and newsletters from Skoolbag or our school website.

Our School Vision

Inspired by Christ, together we learn and grow
From the Principal

Greetings Parents, Students, Guardians and Friends,
I have been blessed over the past week to meet with so many people singing the praises of the school, the staff and the students- it gives me great enthusiasm to hear and see people speak with such passion about THEIR school.

It is my hope that I can contribute in a highly positive and productive manner to life of St. Thomas’ Primary School. If I haven’t had the chance to meet you yet then feel free to pop in at any time, I’d love to chat.

Enjoy your week, Ben.

St Thomas’ Primary School Opening Mass
Thursday February 16th @ 10am

All school families and community members are welcomed to join our school as we ask God’s blessings upon our 2017 school year. This mass will also feature the investiture of our school leaders for 2017.

Open Communication

At our school, the staff welcome and actively seek parental involvement in the children’s education, this can take many forms and all support is greatly appreciated. Of particular importance is open communication between home and school. Staff are available to meet with parents at any time but please remember to arrange a mutually convenient time as staff cannot meet with parents when they are teaching, supervising students or preparing for classes.

Traffic & Student Management

It has been good to watch children coming to, and leaving school last week in order for new staff to gain an insight as to how student and traffic management occurs, particularly at the end of the day. A few points to consider;
~ if your child is a bus traveller and is being picked up by a parent or guardian then the school requires you to sign a white slip at the front office, or simply call and notify us.
~ all children walking home or being picked up by parents must exit using the Bolivar Street exit as this is the manned crossing, children are not to be collected in Lyons Street as it is busy, has limited parking and is unsupervised.

Family Assistance Scheme – are you eligible?

The Family Assistance Scheme, introduced by the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat offers a tuition fee concession to families who hold a current Health Care Card/Centrelink or Veteran Affairs concession card. Families who qualify for the scheme will pay $520 per annum for primary school tuition fees. The discounted fee covers tuition and capital fees only. It does not cover additional charges such as camps, student fees and excursions.

To be eligible you must produce a Commonwealth Health Care Card or Pension Card to the office (which we are required to photocopy) and complete an application form. If during the year your circumstances change and you become eligible for Health Care Card/Centrelink, please come and discuss this with Maria or Fay. Although a family may be eligible to receive a fee discount, families may choose not to apply for the fee discount and pay the full school fee.
Camp, Sports & Excursion Fund (CSEF)
Similarly, if you are eligible for the above assistance, then there is a fair chance you will also be eligible for the CSEF. Please see Maria of Faye in the office if you think this may apply to you.

Swimming Program
Our school swimming program is set to commence on Monday February 13th with our carnival set to take place on Friday February 17th- further information regarding this program will come home later in the week.

Specialist Subjects & Music Teacher
I am very pleased to announce that we have appointed Mr Donald Dureau to the position of Music Teacher. Donnie brings great enthusiasm and ability to the role and we look forward to his classes commencing with the children tomorrow.
Tuesday: Music & Indonesian
Wednesday: 5/6 & 1/2 ART, Library & PE- (children will need their library books and PE Uniform on this day)
Thursday: 3/4 & P/1 Art
Friday: All children wear sports uniform

Name that Uniform
The start of the year always presents itself as a great opportunity to ensure that all the school uniform items in your house are clearly labelled; this will save your children some worry and the teachers will also appreciate it greatly.

2nd Hand Uniform Items
As many parents have already seen, we have a large array of 2nd hand uniform items on display in the school’s undercover area. If you are chasing some uniform items, please peruse this selection as we have much more than what we normally require and need to offload some, or all of it ASAP.

Social Media
Have you liked our facebook page yet? It’s now live, simply search for St. Thomas’ Primary School, Terang!

Updating of Family Details
If any of your family details have changed over the holidays please let the office know ASAP. This is especially so with phone numbers for emergency contacts. It is vital that these are correct so we can contact these people in an emergency.

Conveyance Allowance
There is funding available for families if you have to travel more than 4.8km to pick-up or drop off students at Bus pick-up points, parents should apply for the reimbursement applicable through the Private Car Conveyance Allowance Application. Please contact the office if you think you may be eligible.

Working With Children Checks
If you want to come into the classrooms or possibly attend a camp or an excursion as a parent helper in 2017, you will need to have a current Working With Children Check. If you are interested, you can do this online. There is no cost for this card for a volunteer basis and it is really important you consider getting one of these as a safeguard for us all.
Please nominate St. Thomas’ Primary School as your volunteer organisation when filling out the form online from the following website http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/
Some Quick Notes & Reminders:

1. Newsletter Clarification: If at anytime you are unsure about anything listed on the newsletter, no matter how minor it may seem, please contact any staff member for clarification.

2. School Closure Days: In this term will be held on Wednesday February 22nd.

3. Term 1 will conclude on Friday March 31st.

4. Bell Times: Please be aware that all children are expected to be in class at 8.55am to be ready for formal learning at 9am. Classes conclude at 3:20pm.

5. Yard Supervision: Supervision is provided by members of staff for students from 8.30am until 3.30pm. Students should not arrive at school before 8.30am.

6. Early departures: Any children leaving early must be signed out by an adult, this register is located in the office.

7. Sunsmart: All students must have a school hat each day. Our policy is ‘no hat – no play’. Your assistance and support of our Sunsmart policy is greatly appreciated.

8. Absences: An explanation is required each time a child is absent from school. It is a legal requirement of teachers to keep an accurate roll of student attendance. Absences can be verbal, via note or by email.

9. Assembly: Will be held each Friday at 9:00pm, parents and community members are welcome to attend. The first assembly will be held this Friday.

10. Prep Rest Days: these will be every Wednesday and will run throughout February; Prep children will commence full time school in March.

11. Attached to this newsletter is a Local Excursion Permission Form, could all families please complete this form and return it to school no later than Friday February 10th.

12. School Calendar - on our website there is now a calendar tab which will show you all school events for the year- have a look, we hope it helps!

Parents & Friends News

Meeting
The first meeting of the Parents and Friends Association will take place on Tuesday February 14th, beginning around 7.45 (following the welcome picnic); this will take place in Sisters of Mercy Community Centre. It will be great to see you there. The Big Community Breakfast is on Tuesday 28th February, help is required, form attached to this newsletter.

Welcome Picnic
Our welcome picnic for 2017 will take place on Tuesday February 14th beginning at 6pm. This a full BYO event (drinks and food) and provides our school community with a great opportunity to gather socially, to meet and welcome new families and staff, and to celebrate all that is good with our school.

School Canteen
Our canteen runs in terms 1 and 4, selling small items for the children to purchase. If you’re able to assist with canteen duty please fill in the slip below and return it to school, our thanks in advance.

Name ____________________________
Preferred day/s ____________________
St. Thomas the Apostle 2017 PARISH SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

This year we will once again be offering a sacramental program for all parish families who desire for their child to receive either the Sacrament of Confirmation, Reconciliation or First Communion. Please find outlined below the dates on which each of these sacraments will occur; this will enable families of sacramental children to keep these dates clear. Further information regarding each sacrament will be given closer to the relevant date.

Reconciliation:
- Parent Information Night
- Reconciliation

Confirmation:
- Parent Information Night
- Presentation of Children
- Baptismal Promises
- Our Father
- Presentation of Folders
- Confirmation

St. Thomas' Sacramental Dates 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Information Night</td>
<td>Wednesday 8th March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation</td>
<td>Wednesday 29th March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td>Wednesday 26th April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekend 6th/7th May</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Weekend 13th/14th May</td>
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<td>Weekend 20th/21st May</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Weekend 27th/28th May</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sunday 4th June (Pentecost)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eucharist</td>
<td>Wednesday 13th September</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Weekend 16th/17th September</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekend 14th/15th October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekend 21st/22nd October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday 29th October</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND

Invest in your most precious asset.....Your Marriage!

Forget life's tensions and interruptions and rekindle the closeness, intimacy, love and romance that brought you together. Recharge your relationship batteries and explore the precious nature of your marriage, allowing you both to share your feelings, hopes and dreams with each other in ways that normal, daily living tends to inhibit.

There is no group sharing. Couples and a priest present the weekend. It is based around Catholic values but couples of all faiths are welcome.


Starts 7pm on Friday. Ends 5pm Sunday. Accommodation and all meals provided.

Information/Bookings: PH: Marianne & Marcel (03) 9733 0997 Email: vicbookings@wwme.org.au
Website: www.wwme.org.au
TERANG JUNIOR BASKETBALL SUMMER 2017 SEASON

Registration is now open online for the upcoming season.

Season Start Date - Friday 3rd March (Juniors) & Senior competition start date to be Monday 20th March. Both will be 12 week seasons with 3 weeks of finals.

The Registration period will be Tuesday 10th January through until Tuesday 14th February 2017

We have a few amendments that have been made on our registration system this season, which will see players and teams appear on the website itself instead of an attachment added manually. This streamlines our administration in coordinating the season even more than last season and will be a fantastic addition to the system. This means that until your registered and paid, you won’t be placed into a team online. It will also allow the scoresheets for each round to be automatically printed and results easier to enter and save lots of time for our volunteers in these jobs.

Please keep in mind that all players will be due to pay their BVC Insurance of $40.58 as well as their playing fees for their specific age group. Please remember to select the age criteria for each child you are registering to ensure correct game fees are applied, i.e. primary or secondary. If your a secondary student playing in the senior competition, you must select the senior fee.

We have opened up the registration two weeks earlier than normal to allow you plenty of time to have this done. (If anyone has paid their BVC for 2017 at another association - you must contact Kym Grundy 0427954324 on how to register - Please note you will need your receipt from that association)

It is extremely important that all registrations are done by the closing date of 14th February. Late entries will not be guaranteed a position in a team. This enables the team selection panel to get the teams as even as possible, which makes for a much more enjoyable season for everyone playing. It also saves hours of time in not having to reshuffle teams and players. We ask that you please remember this and be registered on time.

Players must be 7 years of age as at 1st January 2017.

We look forward to another great season ahead.

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Many Thanks, Terang Junior Basketball Committee

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Terang Athletic Club Training Resumes

Anyone in Year 3 and above, wishing to partake in running training are welcome to come to the Terang Recreational Reserve at 4.00pm until 4.45pm each Wednesday afternoon, weather permitting. This will run during Term 1 with the last session being Wednesday the 29th of March.

Please contact Jill Mckenzie for any further information on 0418175599.
Local Excursion Permission Form 2017

Excursions play a vital role in your children’s education at this school. We are required by law to have a parent permission form for all excursions undertaken at this school. To minimise the number of forms going home, we are requesting that you sign a ‘blanket’ Local Excursion Permission Form which will cover all local excursions within the town area.

For all other longer excursions and camps, individual notes and forms will be sent home.

My child/ren………………………………………………… has/have permission to take part in all Local Excursions during 2017.

I authorise the teacher-in-charge, where it is impractical to communicate with me, for my child to receive such medical or surgical treatment as may be deemed necessary.

Signed ___________________________  Dated ________________

(Parent/Guardian)
**St Thomas’ Foodies Sandwich Bar & Takeaway**

**School Lunch Order Price List**

**January 2017**

**Ph: 5592 1018**  
**Only Food Listed can be Ordered**

### Sandwiches/Rolls/Wraps

**Fillings:** Ham, Chicken, Silverside,  
Lettuce, Tomato, Cheese, Carrot  
Onion, Pineapple, Beetroot

| 1 Filling  | 3.20 |
| 2 Fillings | 3.50 |
| 3 Fillings | 3.90 |

**Salad**

Lettuce, Tomato, Onion, Carrot & Cheese 4.50  
Add Ham, Chicken or Silverside (extra) 1.30  
Caesar Salad ~ Lettuce, Bacon, Cheese, Chicken & Caesar Dressing 5.00

### Weekly Warmers (oven baked not fried)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chilli Tenders</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuggets</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Strips</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dim Sims (steamed only)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Burger w/lettuce cheese &amp; mayo</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemade Soup w/roll (Winter Only)</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sauce** 0.20

### Healthy Habits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>1.50pc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Salad Cup (Summer Only)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoghurt</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Salad

Lettuce, Tomato, Onion, Carrot & Cheese 4.50  
Add Ham, Chicken or Silverside (extra) 1.30  
Caesar Salad ~ Lettuce, Bacon, Cheese, Chicken & Caesar Dressing 5.00

### Daily Specials

**Monday ~ Fried Rice** 3.70  
**Tuesday ~ Carbonara** 4.50  
~~Lasagne 4.50~~  
**Thursday ~ Sweet Chilli Wrap** 5.00  
**Friday ~ Chicken Gravy Roll** 5.00

### Wednesdays Only

Pizza Muffins~ham pineapple or chicken pineapple 3.00

Hot Dog in Roll 3.50  
Party pie/Sausage Roll 2.00  
Pie/Pastie 4.20  
Sausage Roll 3.00

### Drinks

Water 2.50
St Thomas’ Big Community Breakfast
Shrove Tuesday – 28th February
7.30 – 9.30am at St Thomas’ School

Menu – Pancakes
       Bacon & Eggs
       Toast
       Tea, Coffee & OJ
       Fresh Fruit Salad
       Egg & Bacon Rolls

Cost – Adults - $8.00
       Secondary School children - $6.00
       Primary & Pre School Children - $4.00
       (or $30 per family)

Preparations are underway for our Annual “Big Breakfast”. We still require a few items for use on the day and also lots of helpers to fill the many jobs involved on Monday & Tuesday.

Please fill in the form (below) and return to the School ASAP or email terang@ballarat.catholic.org.au – before Friday 5th February.

This social gathering is very popular and we hope that all School families will attend and will invite their relatives and friends.

Please call me on 0407 932 169 if you have any questions. Joanne Roberts

I/we can supply the following items:

☐ 4 - slice toaster

I/we can help – (please tick if able to assist)

☐ Cutting up Fruit on Monday 8th February at 1.00pm in Canteen @ school
☐ Set up Monday 27th February at 1.00pm (Dads are a great help)
☐ Helping on Day (from 6am - 7.30)
☐ Helping on Day (from 7.30am - 9.30)
☐ Money Collector/raffle (from 7.15 - 8.15)
☐ Money Collector/raffle (from 8.15 - 9.15)

NAME..........................................................................................................................
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Every Victorian child should have access to the world of learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund helps ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. It is part of making Victoria the Education State and the Government’s commitment to breaking the link between a student’s background and their outcomes.

CAMPS, SPORTS & EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)

School camps provide children with inspiring experiences in the great outdoors, excursions encourage a deeper understanding of how the world works and sports teach teamwork, discipline and leadership. All are part of a healthy curriculum.

CSEF will be provided by the Victorian Government to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

If you hold a valid means-tested concession card or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible for CSEF. A special consideration category also exists for asylum seeker and refugee families. The allowance is paid to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions or sporting activities for the benefit of your child.

The annual CSEF amount per student is:
• $125 for primary school students
• $225 for secondary school students.

HOW TO APPLY

Contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from www.education.vic.gov.au/csef

MORE INFORMATION

For the CSEF application closing dates and more information about the fund visit www.education.vic.gov.au/csef
Eligibility:

- Families are eligible for assistance if their annual gross income is less than the Federal Poverty Line.

- Families must submit a completed application form and provide proof of income.

- Assistance is provided on a case-by-case basis, and eligibility may be determined by the school district.

For more information, contact the school district's Office of Family Assistance.

**Family Fee Discounts**

- Discounts are available for families who qualify for federal or state programs.

- Discounts are also available for families who meet certain income or educational criteria.

To apply, contact the school district's Office of Family Assistance.

- Additional discounts are available for families who participate in community service programs.

- Discounts are subject to change without notice.

For more information, contact the school district's Office of Family Assistance.
ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE TERANG
and ST. COLMAN’S MORTLAKE
PARISH BULLETIN
To access this bulletin online go to www.ballarat.catholic.org.au
and select either Terang or Mortlake Parish.

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

RECENT DEATHS: Eileen Maguire, Kerry Honan (Melbourne)
Betty Hodge

ANNIVERSARIES: Russell McGregor, Margaret Glennen,
Jack Ewing, Dawn Stapleton, Rachael Meade

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:
(Names placed on the sick list will remain for 3 weeks unless otherwise notified)

SUPPORTING OUR PARISHES:
Weekend 28th & 29th Jan 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parishes</th>
<th>TERANG</th>
<th>MORTLAKE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Collection</td>
<td>$576.35</td>
<td>$222.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caramut</td>
<td>$978.00</td>
<td>$285.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Giving Program Week 131</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Collection</td>
<td>$2,054.79</td>
<td>$477.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average given</td>
<td>$2,099.46</td>
<td>$472.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TERANG ROSTERS: LINEN: FEBRUARY: Bernadette Glennen

FLOWERS: 11th/12th Feb: Coral Bell, Betty Lee & Margaret Giblin
18th/19th & 25th/26th February: Maureen Kenna & Aileen O’Connor

COUNTING ROSTER:
Tues 7th & 14th February at 9.00am: Brian & Betty Healey

MORTLAKE ROSTERS:
LINEN: Rita Pasque
MASS SET UP: Gertie MacDonald
FLOWERS: 12th & 19th February: Jenny Finnerty

Liturgy Rosters: Weekend ~ 11th & 12th February 2017

READERS:
Terang Saturday 6.00 pm: 1. Aimee Moloney 2. Aimee Moloney
Mortlake Sunday 9.00 am: Mick Murphy
(Copies of next weeks readings are available on the table in the foyer)

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL:
Terang Saturday 6.00 pm: Aimee Moloney
Sunday 10.30 am: Hazel Borbon
Mortlake Sunday 9.00 am: Frank Quinlan

PROCESSION OF GIFTS:
Terang Saturday 6.00 pm: Brian & Cindy Moloney & Family
Sunday 10.30 am: Kath Glennen & Joyce Lucas
Mortlake Sunday 9.00 am: Leonie Quinn

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:
Saturday 6.00pm
Maureen Kenna, Meg Lenehan, Noel May
Sunday 10.30am:
Carmel Moloney (H) Bernadette Wurlod & Christina Lee
Mortlake Sunday 9.00 am: Rita MacDonald & Pam Smith
Music Mortlake Sun 9.00 am: Maureen

Lap Top Terang: Sat 6.00 pm: Jasmine Coolahan
Sun 10.30 am: Rachel & Anna Dickson

We welcome into God’s Family and our Parish Community
Isabella Lee Perry
daughter of
Lee & Renee
who will be baptised at St. Thomas’ Church this weekend.

PARISH PRIEST
Fr. Gerard Prunty

PARISH OFFICES
St. Thomas’ Terang
P.O. Box 25 Terang 3264
Ph: 5592 1195 Fax: 5592 2308
terang@ballarat.catholic.org.au

St. Colman’s Mortlake
St Joseph’s Caramut
P.O. Box 25 Terang 3264
Ph: 5592 1195
terang@ballarat.catholic.org.au

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
St. Thomas’ Terang
Mr. Ben van de Camp
Ph 5592 1925

St. Colman’s Mortlake
Mr. Tim Bourke
Ph 5599 2285

Mercy Regional College
Dr. Darren Egberts
Ph 5593 2011

St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Colman’s Parishes
acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians of this
land the Kirrae Wurung people.

WEEKEND MASS TIMES
ST THOMAS’ TERANG
Saturday 6.00 pm
Sunday 10.30 am

ST COLMAN’S MORTLAKE
Sunday 9.00 am

Next Weeks Readings:
11th & 12th February 2017
1st reading: Sir 15: 15 - 20
2nd reading: 1 Cor 2: 6 - 10
Gospel: Mt 5: 17 - 37
Weekday Masses

Tues 7th February: 1.30pm Terang
   (Funeral ~ Eileen Maguire)

Wed 8th February: 9.30am Camperdown
   (Mercy Commencement Mass)

Wed 8th February: 2.30pm Abbeyfield

Thurs 9th February: 10.00am Terang
   (Russell McGregor)

Thurs 9th February: 12.15pm Mortlake
   (St Colman's School Commencement Mass)

Fri 10th February: 10.00am Terang
   (Des Moloney (RIP))

Meetings

St Vincent De Paul Meeting will be held on Wednesday
8th February at 7.00pm in the Parish Office.

Knights of the Southern Cross meeting Thursday 9th
February at 8.00pm in Parish Office.

Music Liturgy Meeting: to be held on Friday 17th
February at 11.30am in the Parish office. All Welcome

"Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations."  Anon

Pope's Letter to Young People on the Occasion of the Presentation of the
Preparatory Document of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of the Bishops

My Dear Young People,

I am pleased to announce that in October 2018 a Synod of Bishops will take place to treat the topic: "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment." I wanted you to be the centre of attention, because you are in my heart. Today, the Preparatory Document is being presented, a document which I am also entrusting to you as your "compass" on this synodal journey.

I am reminded of the words which God spoke to Abraham: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." (Gen 12:1). These words are now also addressed to you. They are words of a Father who invites you to "go", to set out towards a future which is unknown but one which will surely lead to fulfilment, a future towards which He Himself accompanies you. I invite you to hear God's voice resounding in your heart through the breath of the Holy Spirit.

When God said to Abram, "Go!", what did he want to say? He certainly did not say to distance himself from his family or withdraw from the world. Abram received a compelling invitation, a challenge, to leave everything and go to a new land. What is this "new land" for us today, if not a more just and friendly society which you, young people, deeply desire and wish to build to the very ends of the earth?

But unfortunately, today, "Go!" also has a different meaning, namely, that of abuse of power, injustice and war. Many among you are subjected to the real threat of violence and forced to flee their native land. Their cry goes up to God, like that of Israel, when the people were enslaved and oppressed by Pharaoh (cf. Ex 2:23).

I would also remind you of the words that Jesus once said to the disciples who asked him: "Teacher [...] where are you staying?" He replied, "Come and see" (Jn 1:38). Jesus looks at you and invites you to go with him. Dear young people, have you noticed this look towards you? Have you heard this voice? Have you felt this urge to undertake this journey? I am sure that, despite the noise and confusion seemingly prevalent in the world, this call continues to resonate in the depths of your heart so as to open it to joy in its fullness. This will be possible to the extent that, even with professional guides, you will learn how to undertake a journey of discernment to discover God's plan in your life. Even when the journey is uncertain and you fall, God, rich in mercy, will extend his hand to pick you up.

In Krakow, at the opening of the last World Youth Day, I asked you several times: "Can we change things?" And you shouted: "yes!". That shout came from your young and youthful hearts, which do not tolerate injustice and cannot bow to a "throw-away culture" nor give in to the globalization of indifference. Listen to the cry arising from your inner selves! Even when you feel, like the prophet Jeremiah, the inexpediency of youth, God encourages you to go where He sends you: "Do not be afraid, [...], because I am with you to deliver you" (Jer 1:8).

A better world can be built also as a result of your efforts, your desire to change and your generosity. Do not be afraid to listen to the Spirit who proposes bold choices; do not delay when your conscience asks you to take risks in following the Master. The Church also wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism. Make your voice heard, let it resonate in communities and let it be heard by your shepherds of souls. St. Benedict urged the abbots to consult, even the young, before any important decision, because "the Lord often reveals to the younger what is best." (Rule of St. Benedict, III, 3).

Such is the case, even in the journey of this Synod. My brother bishops and I want even more to "work with you for your joy" (2 Cor 1:24). I entrust you to Mary of Nazareth, a young person like yourselves, whom God beheld lovingly, so she might take your hand and guide you to the joy of fully and generously responding to God's call with the words: "Here I am" (cf. Lk 1:38).

With paternal affection,

FRANCIS          Given at the Vatican, 13 January 2017

The rosary will be recited for the priests of the Diocese, and for world peace on Wednesdays following Mass, or at 10.00 am when there is no Mass. All are welcome to join us.

*****Notices need to be at St. Thomas' Parish Office by 10.00 am next Friday.*****