Our Year One students lead us in prayer this week with a focus on All Saints Day. They talked about the characteristics of saints and how we can in our everyday life be saint like. I thought you might be interested in the following:

**Seven Characteristics of the Saints**

**All saints are filled with the love of God.**

They have chosen God above all others and made a definite commitment to God.

**All saints love other human beings.**

It cannot be any other way. In the First Letter of John (4:20) we read: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.” Although saints may be different in many ways, they are always generous. You will never find a stingy saint.

**All saints are risk-takers.**

When God called, they answered. For some it was taking a chance on a new way of life in a new place. In the Old Testament, we have the example of Abraham, called at an old age to leave his country and to go to the place God had selected for him. Even today, it is difficult for older people to leave their level of comfort and to face the new and unknown. Abraham’s story is a marvellous example of trust in God, but even more so of a decision to plunge into the unknown. Like Abraham, saints responded to the graces that were given to them. Some were called to be popes, bishops, abbots or abbesses. Others found their calling in a quiet, reserved life, far away from the centre of activity.

St. Julian of Norwich lived in a small cell attached to a church. She was even walled in, but that did not keep people away; they came to her and asked for her spiritual advice.

St. Catherine of Siena lived at home, not in a convent, as a person dedicated to God. People flocked to her, but not because she wanted them to.

Others, whose names are not well-known, lived simple lives among their families and friends, serving God with all their hearts, but never making a splash in the world.

**The saints are humble, willingly and lovingly attributing to God all that they have and all that they will ever be.**

The saints showed their humility by using whatever gifts they had to perfection, but never attributing these gifts to themselves. St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas were brilliant men and they did not go around saying how stupid they were. They did acknowledge, however, that all they knew was as nothing compared to the infinite wisdom of God.

**Saints are people of prayer.**

Some, especially members of religious orders, had entire days of prayer. Others found their time with God in other ways. Dorothy Day—not canonized but recognized by many as a truly holy person—started her day with prayer but said that she met God daily in the crowds of the poor who came to her hospitality house. None of the saints saw prayer as a waste of time or as an activity for only the weak or naive.

**The saints are not perfect.**

Each of the saints had human flaws and faults. They made mistakes. Even at the end of their lives, they still found themselves in need of contrition, pardon and reconciliation.

**The saints are people of their times.**

One wonders how anyone escapes being of his or her time. There were injustices around the saints that they did not speak out against. St. Paul did not condemn slavery but encouraged slaves to obey their masters. St. Thomas Aquinas considered women unequal to men. He believed their only task in life was to bear children.

If we look at the lives of all the saints, we can certainly find faults. Far from discouraging us, this can give us courage.

*Perfection is not what we are striving for, unless it is as perfect a love as possible.*

Leanne Nettleton
**STAFF SPIRITUAL FORMATION DAY**

On Friday 18th November 2011 the staff will be lead by Father Dave through a Spiritual Formation Day to be held at Mamre House Mulgoa. This will be a pupil free day. Each year the Catholic Education Office asks schools in the Diocese to set aside one of our staff development days for religious and spiritual formation. This year Father Dave will be guiding the staff in an approach to scriptural reflection called “Lectio Divina”.

**RE News**

We pray for our students who are preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. May this be a time of learning and drawing closer to God

**Welcome**

We congratulate Ethan Tarry and Geremy Muhvich on their welcome into the Catholic Church.

**All Souls Day 2nd November**

Today marks the beginning of a month when we remember all the people we have loved who have died and we give thanks for the special place they have in our hearts. Parents and friends are invited to write the names of any they would like us to pray for in the Remembrance Book which will be kept in the front foyer. We take this book to mass with us each Friday and pray for our loved ones.

**Parish News**

November Mass Offering Envelopes are on the tables down the back of the Church. By placing an offering in the envelope and writing the name of the deceased on the front of the envelope you will have that name added to our November Remembrance Book which will sit at the foot of the altar during the month of November. Mass everyday will be offered for our departed brothers and sisters written up in our special book. Remembrance plaques may be purchased by phoning Tanya the parish secretary.

**ADVENT PARISH REFLECTION MORNING**

Saturday 10th December

Time: 9am Mass until shared lunch at 1pm.

On Saturday 10th December Fr Dave Hume will offer a Reflection Time in “Preparation for Christmas” starting with the 9am Parish Mass, followed by reflective times based upon Lectio Divina.

The Reflection morning, after Mass in our parish church, will adjourn to St Mark’s Staffroom.

Program: 9.00 am Parish Mass

9.30 am Morning Tea in St Mark’s staffroom.

10.00 am Prayer

10.15 am Lectio Divina: Matthew 25:14-30

11.15 am T E A B R E A K

11.45 am Prayer

11.50 am Fr Dave’s talk: The Parable of the Talents.

12.10 pm Fr Dave: Guided Meditation

12.30 pm L U N C H (Bring a plate to share)

**Congratulations to the following students who have been nominated by their peers as “Creative People”**


**Congratulations also to the following students who have been showcased in their learning spaces**

Happy Birthday to the following children who celebrate their birthdays:-
Andrew Shalala, Isabella Crawley, Skye Carpenter, Bayley Hawthorne, Benjamin Considine, Aliyah Dera, Dylan Reeding, Braden Doyle, Anneliese Hoare and Andrea D’Aprile,

NAPLAN 2011 Parent Meeting
This Wednesday November 2 the Years 3 and 5 teachers will be holding a Parent Meeting to discuss the 2011 NAPLAN. Parents are encouraged to attend. Please ensure that you have returned the note that was sent home by the class teachers so that we can cater for those who attend.

School Swimming Carnival
This Friday is the deadline for the return of the Primary School Swimming Carnival note to class teachers. PLEASE READ THIS NOTE VERY CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING IT to ensure that we have accurate details about your child’s swimming ability. Parents are also encouraged to offer assistance on the day so that the carnival can run safely and smoothly.

Change of Family Details
Please ensure that your family details, especially contact numbers are updated at the office when they change. This is very important in cases of accident or illness when we need to urgently contact parents.

World Teacher’s Day
Last Friday we celebrated World teachers Day. We would like to thank our parents for the beautiful morning tea that greeted the teachers in the staffroom. The children also presented the teachers with some lovely notes. We are really blessed to be teaching at Holy Cross.

Why God Made Teachers
When God created teachers,
He gave us special friends,
To help us understand His world
And truly comprehend
The beauty and the wonder
Of everything we see,
and become a better person
With each discovery.
When God created teachers,
He gave us special guides
To show us ways in which to grow
So we can all decide
How to live and how to do
What’s right instead of wrong,
To lead us so that we can lead
And learn how to be strong
Why God created teachers,
In His wisdom and His grace,
Was to help us learn to make our world
A better, wiser place

WHOOPING COUGH
If your child has any of the symptoms of whooping cough, such as a dry or persistent cough, which may be especially bad at night, a runny nose and fever, please see your doctor. If your child has whooping cough, your doctor will arrange a course of antibiotic treatment. Antibiotics given early in the illness are effective in stopping the cough and in preventing spread to other people. If your doctor diagnoses whooping cough please advise the school and keep your child at home until they have taken at least 5 days of antibiotics. Vaccination is the best protection against whooping cough. For further information please visit www.health.nsw.gov.au

Busways
Students progressing from Year 2 to Year 3 2012 are required by the Department of Transport to apply for a new bus pass. Bus application forms are available from the school office. Please collect your form and return to the office no later than Friday 9th December, 2011 to ensure your child has a bus pass for the following school year.
Assessment and Reporting
Over the next weeks the teachers will be preparing the students’ end of year reports.

The assessment and reporting process demands a great deal from teachers and grade teams. The determining of an A, B, C, D or E requires analysis of a great number of assessment samples and is the result of hours of observation, discussion and reflection.

The assessment process certainly tells us more about the child and it supports the next step in your child’s ongoing development.

It is important then, to look at some aspects of this process.

Setting the A, B, C, D or E Standard

As already stated, the setting of the A-E is based on a variety of Assessment tools, as well as:-

* Observation
* Professional Judgement
* Information from specialists
* Self Evaluations

The assessment task comes with its levels of achievement/attainment. These are rubrics. This format allows both the teacher and student to measure understanding and competency. Once an assessment has been completed, the teaching team then review all results and determine clear criteria for awarding a given score.

So what does a single score A to E tell us:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Suggests that this student is working at least a stage level above the average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Would suggest that the student is working above the average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Achieving outcomes consistent with the grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The student has a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and has achieved a limited level of competence in the processes and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Requiring high level of assistance in achieving results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But whilst the result is worth celebrating the true meaning of any assessment is “where we go next” with our knowledge about the student. This is the opportunity for teachers to refine the programme delivered and to create opportunities to extend the students current learning. Teachers are always very happy to discuss with you, the learning progress that your child is making.