Historically in Catholic devotional life, the month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with the First Friday of June observed as the proper feast day of the Sacred Heart. This year, the feast falls on 3 June.

The Heart of Jesus is the ultimate symbol of God’s mercy – but it is not an imaginary symbol, it is a real symbol, which represents the centre, the source from which salvation for all humanity gushed forth.

In the Gospels we find several references to the Heart of Jesus, for example, in the passage where Christ says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart. (Mt 11:28-29)”

Pope Francis reminds us that …

“The mercy of Jesus is not just sentiment: indeed it is a force that gives life that raises man up!”

Devotion to our Lord’s Sacred Heart can be traced back to the 11th century, but it is from the private revelations Jesus gave St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the 17th century that it took on its current form.

These aspirations (short prayers) to the Sacred Heart of Jesus are a great way to practice a devotion quite dear to our Lord, that to His Sacred Heart.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere.
Sweet Heart of my Jesus, grant that I may always love You more.
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I believe in Your love for me.
Heart of Jesus, burning with love for us, set our hearts on fire with love of You.
Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like Yours.
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Have mercy on us.
Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, increase in us faith, hope, and charity.
FROM THE PRINCIPAL’S DESK

Dear Members of the Mount Lilydale Mercy College Community

As I sit and write to you this fortnight I am acutely aware that the end of semester fast approaches and this week sees the beginning of the formal exams in the College. For those students undertaking VCE Unit 3 studies, the exam takes the form of the General Achievement Test (GAT), which is important in the grading process at the end of the year. For Years 10 and 11, it is the end of semester exams. Although exams might be a time of stress for many students, we must help them to understand that exams are an opportunity to demonstrate skills and knowledge learnt, rather than that which they have not learnt. Preparation is of course the key and this should take the form of a rigorous revision program. Let us pray for all our students and teachers at this busy and important time of the year.

I am also acutely aware that we are mid way through a federal election process that will see voting on 2 July. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference are also aware of it and have produced a document called: A Vote For the Voiceless. A statement by the Catholic Bishops of Australia on the election. The statement is not a call to vote for a particular party, and I assure you in reading it I did not see a reference to any political party at all. The statement does not ‘push’ an ideological line or simply defend the Church’s interests’ but rather it attempts to give a voice to the voiceless and make their faces seen. The Bishops refer to what the Pope calls a throwaway culture and include the following as discarded in such a culture:

- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Indigenous peoples
- The survivors of sexual abuse
- Those who suffer from family violence
- Those in the womb
- The elderly
- Those suffering mental illness
- Those suffering addiction
- Those entrapped in new forms of slavery
- Those desperately poor beyond our shores

The Bishops conclude:

“We hope that this campaign - for Christians at least and especially for Christian politicians - will be a time, not of spin and bombast, but a time of wise and true speaking that comes from deep and humble listening. Then our vote may be a vote in favour of a community where no one is thrown away, where all the voices are heard and all the faces seen”.

This statement is well worth your time. You will find it attached to this newsletter or you might like to avail yourselves of the website at https://www.catholic.org.au/

In the last newsletter I informed you about some Committees by which interested parents may become involved and support the College. These processes are genuine and consultative. We need parental involvement in the decision making processes. I repeat the invitations here in the hope that some interest is sparked.

1. Business & Finance Committee
   This committee meets seven or eight times a year and provides the Advisory Council and the Principal advice on College finances, including budget, technology, school fees and capital costs. This committee tends to meet at 7.00pm, usually on a Thursday night. Qualified and interested persons should contact Dean De Munk at the College. There is currently one vacancy on this committee. If you wish to discuss involvement with me please contact me at the College. Dean's email is ddemunk@mlmc.vic.edu.au and the Principals email is principal@mlmc.vic.edu.au

2. The Building & Planning Committee
   This committee provides advice to do with buildings and facilities, but specifically projects about capital improvement. This committee currently meets at 7.00am, seven or eight times a year. The Master Plan implementation is a focus of this committee at the moment. Once again interested and qualified community members interested in joining this committee should contact Dean De Munk and I would appreciate being copied in any contact made.

3. Policy and Curriculum Committee
   This committee is the major way in which the College consults with parents and staff about proposed changes to the College Curriculum and College Policies. It has been in abeyance for the last few years and we are now interested in reconstituting it early in Term 3. It will be chaired by Michael Johnston and parents interested in joining it should contact him directly. I would appreciate a copy of any email contact.
   Michael’s email address is mjohnston@mlmc.vic.edu.au and the Principal’s email address is principal@mlmc.vic.edu.au.

I also informed you that the first of the afternoon teas with the Principal will occur tomorrow Tuesday, 7 June 2016, from 1.30pm until 3.30pm. If you are interested in attending please contact Kathy Broadbent at kbroadbent@mlmc.vic.edu.au so that catering can be arranged. If email is not available to you please ring Kathy at the College. Later in the year we will trial the same concept but as a morning tea.

I would also like to inform the College community that Fr Robert Carden (Fr Bob) officially retired as the College Chaplain on Friday 20 March, two days before his eighty eighth birthday. Fr Bob, in his fifty plus years of service as a priest, has spent at least thirty of those in schools. He worked at the CEO in Perth, at a secondary school in Perth, and these past five years as our College Chaplain. We are grateful for the stewardship and service that Fr Bob has provided our community. I have written to the Vicar General seeking advice about availability of other priests to work in our school.
Last week I had the pleasure of attending the Year 12 Unit 3 Drama ensemble performance evening whereby the students were required to create a non naturalistic ensemble performance based on the topic of ‘Ignorance breeds influence’. The process required each ensemble group to research, brainstorm, collaborate, script, rehearse and present their performance to an audience. They are to be congratulated on their efforts and the quality of their performance.

We would also like to congratulate the following students:
- Zara Monk (Year 8) who after playing four seasons of AFL football with boys teams has been selected as a member of the Inaugural EFL Girls Interleague team.
- Mikayla Byrne (Year 9) who came first and Champion at the NSW Hack Championships
- Dylan Findley (Year 11) and Grace Clinton (Year 9) who have been selected as a pair to represent Victoria at the 2016 Australian Gymnastic Championships to be held at Hisense Arena

Lastly we support those families within our community that suffer the loss in the passing of family members.

We pray for Joe Kay, grandfather to Jack Kay (Year 8) who passed at the end of May. Let us pray for the repose of the soul of Joe and may he rest in peace.

God bless

Philip A Morison
Principal

FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL MISSION - ELIZABETH KEOGH

WINTER APPEAL

As winter approaches we as a Mercy community turn our hearts towards those in our community whose struggle is heightened during this season. This year’s Winter Appeal will be donated to our local St Vincent de Paul and to the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

This year we are looking for the following donations:
- Canned meals* (stew, hearty soups)
- Jars of pasta sauce**
- Cereal
- Long life milk
- Toiletries and sanitary items
- Tea and coffee

*ring pull cans preferable
**there is a high demand for this item

Elizabeth Keogh
Deputy Principal - Mission
As is the case each year, Mount Lilydale Mercy College was involved in National Reconciliation Week (last week). It is a week where our community recognises past wrongs but also sees the opportunity to build on a growing foundation for understanding our nation’s history and the story of its original inhabitants. The week was filled with important activities to illustrate what can be done to further enhance true reconciliation. Thank you to the students who laid a wreath at the Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Service at the shrine and those who participated in the lunchtime prayer service.

There is a call for volunteers to help out in the important behind the scenes jobs in this year’s College Musical ‘Anything Goes’. The producers are seeking students interested in helping with makeup, hair, backstage, ushers, parking, to name just a few jobs. If your child is interested, have them complete a form on the following link: http://goo.gl/forms/IN8U5i2OxBe0AZlw1.

**First Aid**

There continues to be a problem with students using their mobile phones to call home to be picked up during school hours. Please be aware that if a student is too ill to remain at school, the College First Aid staff will make contact with home to discuss the situation. Please encourage your child to follow this important guideline.

The College SRC has been busy again; surveying students to discover what students believe can be improved around the school. Their focus is now working through the data to prioritize student requests. Combined with this, the SRC have started the process of selecting two students from Year 7 to join the Council. Interviews will begin soon to have an announcement made before the end of term.

Good luck to all students sitting exams over the next few weeks. If you are experiencing any stress as a result, be sure to talk to someone about how you are feeling and use it as a learning tool on how to be better prepared for the end of year exams.

As always, give me a call if there is anything you need.

John Rodgers
Acting Deputy Principal - Students

**THE LONG WALK**

On the 21 November 2004, Michael Long embarked on an historic trek, walking from his home in the suburbs of Melbourne, all the way to Parliament House in Canberra, more than 650 kilometres away.

Building stronger relationships between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is everyone’s obligation. We need more people talking about the issues and coming up with innovative ways to create positive change.

It takes many to spread the word and pass on ideas that we all can be involved in. Mount Lilydale Mercy College students Danielle Virgona, and Ethan Wake of Year 10, along with Mr Warren Stephenson, attended Aquinas College, Ringwood to join in the Long Walk re-enactment, that was led by the founder Mr Michael Long and Mr Gavin Wanganeneen. In attendance were some 2000 strong, including staff and students from visiting primary and secondary schools.

History reminds us all that historical acceptance is essential to our reconciliation journey. Historical acceptance will exist when all Australians understand and accept the fact that past laws, practices and policies deeply affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. It is also a commitment to ensuring these wrongs are never repeated in the future.

Each individual can make a difference, although a difference is not for the short term.

Today I went on a visit to Aquinas College. During our time at the college we walked around the grounds of the school promoting the Long Walk charity. Michael Long, the creator of the Long Walk charity, came to the school and spoke to us. Michael reminded us how important the younger generations are in influencing our peers to treat the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with respect and equality. The whole day was a complete success and an amazing experience. It definitely opened my eyes and made me think about what we, as a community, can do to support and keep this charity going.

Danielle Virgona | 10 Red

On Tuesday the 24th of May, Danielle Virgona and myself had the pleasure of attending an event at Aquinas College known as the Long Walk. The Long Walk is an annual event at Aquinas, but this year, since Michael Long was attending, they invited neighboring primary and secondary schools to join them. After an incident of racism off the AFL field, Michael Long walked from his home town in Melbourne all the way to Parliament House in Canberra. He was joined by supporters along the way, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and so his walk became a symbol of hope and reconciliation for all of Australia. To commemorate this, all of Aquinas College walked inside and outside the school grounds with banners, which included the Aboriginal flag and the coats of arms of all of the schools attending. Later, at an assembly, Mr Long spoke to the school about reconciliation, how far we’ve come, how far we have to go, and why we must press on further. It was a moving and motivating experience for all who attended, and I hope for more opportunities such as this in the future.

Ethan Wake | 10 Red
**ALICE IN WONDERLAND QUIZ**

“’Have you guessed the riddle yet?’ the Hatter said, turning to Alice again.

’No, I give it up,’ Alice replied: ’what’s the answer?’ ”

Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

As part of this year’s Library and Information Week celebrations, on 26 May students and staff eagerly participated in an Alice in Wonderland Quiz and Picnic Extravaganza. Quiz participants enjoyed devouring a magnificent feast, including: cupcakes, biscuits, drinks and lollipops, while answering quiz questions from Lewis Carroll’s novel. Twelve teams participated in the quiz and the winning team was the Mad Not Hatters. Mount Lilydale Mercy College Libraries would like to congratulate all quiz participants for their efforts and enthusiasm during the quiz.

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**CATTLE ADVENTURES BEGIN**

On Sunday 29 May, Mr Andrew Feher, Mr Dean Fox, and myself, took a dozen of our finest young farmers down to Garfield in Gippsland to visit with Team H, one of the most successful hoof to hook cattle teams in the Royal Melbourne show. The students mucked in and helped with the leading training, grooming, and handling of the steers and heifers. All this was done under the expert direction of Hayden and Matt, the two young men at the heart of the team. This was a great first experience prior to our upcoming four day adventure in July at the Beef Cattle handlers camp in Bendigo. The Young Farmers cannot wait!

After the work was completed, we had the opportunity to yarn with Sonia and Rob, Hayden’s parents and masterminds of the operation, over a beautiful spread of scones, jam and cream in the paddock. We gained some great insights into the process of showing, its links to herd improvement and marketing. It certainly is great to have good guidance for our students as they investigate this complex and exciting industry.

I would like to thank Team H and our hardworking staff for making this and other experiences possible. It is a privilege to work with staff who so gladly give up their time to provide experiences like this for our students. We can all be proud that Mount Lilydale Mercy College allows students to experience life and grow in their skills in a range of industries.

Tim Thompson
Agriculture Teacher
Reasons to Learn a Second Language

Learning a second language can provide many benefits in the cognitive process, in the workplace, and it may also assist in the understanding of different cultures. A second language involves memorising rules and vocabulary, which can assist in the improvement of overall memory and it can also ameliorate English skills as it draws focus to grammar and conjugations. Being bilingual can also be an advantage as it supplies a competitive edge when searching for jobs and many companies are constantly looking for bilingual staff. Learning a foreign language may be advantageous towards prospects of traveling overseas, as you will be able to effectively communicate with more people and it can aid in the understanding of different cultures. As a LOTE student, I strongly encourage you to learn a second language as it is a fundamental element in today’s society and it is manifested through statistics that more than half of the world speaks two or more languages.

Maria Prusac
LOTE Faculty Leader

Year 10 and Year 12 Agriculture classes had a guest speaker visit their classes this week. Peter Sale is an Associate professor at Latrobe University and spoke to the students about possible careers in Agriculture.

Left to Right: Lachlan McDonald, Maddy Durston, Peter Sale, Adrain Ficcorilli

Sports Report

Year 8 Results 24 May

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Best Player</th>
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Senior Results 25 May

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**Year 9 Results 26 May**

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<tr>
<td>Lawn Bowls Blue / Gold</td>
<td>Tintern</td>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>OUT</td>
<td>NA</td>
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**Year 8 Results 31 May**

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**No Senior EISM 1 June**

**Year 9 Results 2 June**

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<td>Kaitlyn Spinks</td>
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</table>

**EISM REMINDERS**

- Please avoid booking medical appointments during Sport time, even if your team has a BYE, teams are still expected to train at these sessions.
- Football, soccer and hockey players need long navy socks. These are available from the uniform shop (Open 12:30-4.00 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday) for $10.
- Football and hockey players must have mouthguards to play EISM games – this is not optional.

**UNWANTED FOOTBALL BOOTS**

If any families have unwanted football boots (all sizes) in decent condition that they would be willing to donate to the College Sports Department, please bring them in! Thank you.

**NATIONALS BASKETBALL**

Mount Lilydale are lucky enough to be sending two senior teams (girls and boys) to Basketball Nationals held in Melbourne later this year (early December).

Selections for these teams are open to any Year 10-12 student and will be held over the next 2-4 weeks. Sessions will be held in the Doyle Centre:
- Monday lunchtimes
- Friday after school 3.30-4.30pm

Please see the Sports Office or Mr Haining for more details.

**CROSS COUNTRY TRAINING**

It’s getting cold again, which means cross country season is upon us! Come along to training to get a head start for the House Cross Country carnivals or EISM, or just to improve your general health and fitness with friends! Prizes for milestone kilometres and for the homeroom with the most kilometres on the board at the end of the season!

Training sessions:
- Monday after school 3.30-4.30pm
- Wednesday mornings 7.00-8.00am (bring $1 for breakfast!)

Meet at the Doyle Centre for all sessions

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Netball**

Congratulations to Emerson Woods (Year 10), Stacey Fleming (Year 11), and Steph Durant (Year 12), who recently played in the Under 17 AFL Yarra Ranges Interleague Netball Team in the 2016 Worksafe Community Championships at Healesville. They played against the Mornington Peninsula and Nepean Football League Team and won the game by 20 goals – well done girls!

**Indoor Netball**

Congratulations to Sophie Hennessey (Year 9), Sophie Jaworski (Year 7) and Lilah Sanderson (Year 7) who were all recently selected in the State Under 13 and Under 15 Indoor Netball Teams. The girls will play in a range of tournaments, playing against other states and New Zealand later in the year – best wishes for these tournaments girls.

**Karate**

Congratulations to Cassandra Banks (Year 8) who recently competed in the Shotokan Karate Cup in Melbourne. She picked up a medal, placing 2nd in the 12-13 girls Kata and has qualified for the Karate National Championships in August – best wishes for Nationals, Cassie!

**Football**

Congratulations to Josh McKenna (Year 11) who was recently selected to umpire the Under 19 Yarra Ranges Inter league football match. Best wishes for the rest of the season.

If you have any other student achievement news, please email dwebb@mlmc.vic.edu.au.
To help us celebrate 120 years of Mount Lilydale Mercy College, this year we will be hosting an 'ALL YEARS' REUNION!' This will be held at the College on Sunday the 14 of August from 1.00pm inside Centennial Hall. This event is free and open to everyone in the local community - Children, Grandparents, Old Collegians, Students, Staff and Neighbours! Please come and celebrate 120 Years of Mercy Education on the hill!

On the day we will have:  A Welcome Ceremony  Sausage Sizzle  Jumping Castle  McAuley Farm Tours  College Tours  Afternoon Tea  Wine Tasting  And more...

Please RSVP at oc@mlmc.vic.edu.au or at lstephens@mlmc.vic.edu.au

To stay connected with the College and the Old Collegians, please "Like" us at:

Facebook:  www.facebook.com/mlmc120years/  www.facebook.com/MLMCOldCollegians/

Instagram:  mtlilydalemercycollege  mtlilydaleoldcollegians

Twitter:  MtLilydaleMercy  MtLilydaleOC

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YEAR 7 ENROLMENT APPLICATIONS 2018

Do you have a child in Grade 4 or 5 this year?

Application forms for Year 7 2018 students who have siblings currently attending Mount Lilydale Mercy College have now been sent to families. If you have a child in Grade 5 and have not yet received an application form in the mail please advise us by contacting Marilyn Ryan on 9739 2229.

CHANGES TO THE ENROLMENT PROCESS FOR YEAR 7 2019

We wish to advise families that the enrolment process is changing. Students who are currently in Grade 4 and are looking at attending Mount Lilydale Mercy College in Year 7 2019 will be required to apply for enrolment in 2016. Application forms will be sent to families of students in Grade 4 in the coming weeks. Further information will be provided.

Year 7 2018 AND Year 7 2019 Enrolment Information sessions are coming up.

If you wish to attend one of these sessions the dates are:

WEDNESDAY 27 JULY at 1.30pm (Open Day)
TUESDAY 9 AUGUST at 7.30pm
In Centennial Hall
Mount Lilydale Mercy College is pleased to be selling the 16|17 Entertainment™ Memberships as a fundraiser in 2016 – the Memberships are now available to order!

You can choose between the traditional Entertainment™ Book or you can purchase the Digital Membership, which puts the value of the Entertainment™ Book into your iPhone or Android smartphone, all for just $65!

The Entertainment™ Memberships contain over 800 valuable up to 50% off and 2-for-1 offers for many of the best restaurants, attractions, hotels and retailers in Melbourne. Each Membership sold raises $13 for Mount Lilydale Mercy College to help us raise much needed funds.

Please show your support by visiting the link below and purchasing your Membership today:


For any enquiries please contact: Cathy Pote | finance@mlmc.vic.edu.au
Mount Lilydale Mercy College presents a **Parent Forum** on

**The Thriving Adolescent**

**Fall down seven times, stand up eight: Helping young people thrive**

**When:** Monday June 6th 2016  
**Time:** 7:00—9:00pm  
**Where:** McAuley Hall, Mount Lilydale Mercy College  
120 Anderson Street, Lilydale  
**RSVP:** 9735-4022  
Tea/Coffee and biscuits provided

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**Dr Louise Hayes will present on:**

- How to nurture the development of adolescents
- How parents can help their adolescent grow into confident happy adults
- Helping your adolescent negotiate changes in friendships, family and their identity
- Equipping parents with strategies to help young people develop social and emotional competence
- The essential ingredients for flexible thinking for healthy families and schools
- Using positive psychology to help teens manage emotions, achieve goals and build connections

**Staff will be trained by Louise earlier that day**

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**Louise Hayes, Clinical Psychologist, MAPS,**  
Senior Fellow The University of Melbourne, Fellow ACBS

Louise is a world expert in psychological wellbeing for young people. She teaches mindfulness-based well-being with young people in schools and clinical settings. She is a best selling author, international speaker, active philanthropist, clinical psychologist, a senior fellow with The University of Melbourne, a peer reviewed Acceptance and Commitment Therapy/Training (ACT) trainer, She is the co-author of the best selling book, *Get Out Of Your Mind and Into your Life for Teenagers* and *The Thriving Adolescent* For more information on Louise go to – [www.louisehayes.com.au](http://www.louisehayes.com.au) or [www.thrivingadolescent.com](http://www.thrivingadolescent.com)
FAITH DISCUSSION NIGHT
Q & A with Fr Paul

7:30pm-9pm
Wednesday
8th June

ST MARY’S NEW YOUTH CENTRE
58 Clegg Road, Mt Evelyn - Ph: 9736 2850, Email: mountevelyn@cam.org.au

St Mary’s NEW Youth Centre - 58 Clegg Rd, Mt Evelyn

MOVIE PARTY
FOR EVERYONE IN GRADES 4-6
Friday, 10th June
After School to 5:30pm

Permission forms to be returned to the Office by Wednesday, 8th June

HEAPS OF SNACKS, DRINKS & POPCORN
A VOTE FOR THE VOICELESS

A STATEMENT BY THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF AUSTRALIA ON THE ELECTION

May 2016
Australians are again going to the polls. We do so thankful that the electoral process will be free of the violence found elsewhere. Our political system may have its problems but we have a stable democracy, which is not to be taken for granted. Nor is the quality of those who put themselves forward for election to the Federal parliament. We are in their debt for their willingness to serve.

During the long election campaign there will be much talk about the economy and the need for good economic management at a time of some uncertainty. Both sides of politics will state their economic credentials in a bid to win power.

The economy of course is important and there does need to be sound management. But, as Pope Francis has pointed out, there is also a danger that the economy can become a kind of false god to which even human beings have to be sacrificed.

Among the people discarded in this throwaway culture are these:

- **Refugees and asylum seekers** who are often seen as a problem to be solved rather than as human beings in need of our help.

- **Indigenous peoples** whose cry for recognition has barely been heard and who suffer injustice at the hands of our justice system.

- **The survivors of sexual abuse** who have emerged from the shadows and whose voice is now being heard, crying out for redress and healing.

- **Those who suffer family violence** who are often unseen and unheard, behind closed doors with nowhere to go and no-one to turn to.

- **Those in the womb** who are among the most defenceless, at risk of being deprived of the most basic of all human rights, the right to live.

- **The elderly** who are seen at times as an economic burden now that they are unable to “produce” or consume in the way the economy demands.

- **Those suffering mental illness** who seem not to fit in with accepted patterns of social behaviour and are often presumed to contribute nothing to society, thus ending up in the too-hard basket.

- **Those suffering addiction** who can see no way out of the destructive grasp of alcohol or other drugs, gambling or pornography.

- **Those entrapped in new forms of slavery** who are the victims of sexual or workplace enslavement.

- **The desperately poor beyond our shores** who look to wealthy Australia for the help they need - often simply to survive - but find our nation less and less generous.

“This leads to what the Pope has called the throwaway culture - a culture of over-consumption where all kinds of things are thrown away, wasted, even human beings. The voices of the thrown-away people will not be heard in the long and rowdy campaign”.

This leads to what the Pope has called the throwaway culture - a culture of over-consumption where all kinds of things are thrown away, wasted, even human beings. The voices of the thrown-away people will not be heard in the long and rowdy campaign. Their faces will not be seen in all the advertising. Yet unless their voices are somehow heard and their faces seen, we will not have a truly human society in which economic management serves human beings rather than the other way round.

That is why we bishops want to speak a word as part of this campaign - not in order to push an ideological line or simply to defend the Church’s interests but to give a voice to the voiceless and make their faces seen, however briefly in a statement such as this.
There are others in our community, near and far, whose voices are unheard, whose faces are unseen. They are seen as politically irrelevant. They will not decide any marginal seats or determine the result of the election. Yet any society is ultimately judged not on how well it manages the economy but on how well it treats the thrown-away people.

Who then are the people unheard and unseen? What does it mean for Australia to care for them? If we fail to ask these questions and to try to answer them, then much that goes on in this or any other election campaign will be political theatre that does not address the real issues.

But it is not just individual people who are thrown away. The same can happen to the environment, both social and natural. At the heart of a healthy social environment there is marriage and the family. Yet political decisions can end up undermining marriage and providing less and less support for families despite a rhetoric that claims otherwise.

The fact is that economic decisions have been less and less favourable to families in recent years; and it may be that political decisions in the future will undermine further the dignity and uniqueness of marriage as a lifelong union of man and woman.

Support for marriage and the family does not look a big vote-winner, so that even the most basic human institution, upon which the health of a society depends, can become part of the throwaway culture or at best an optional extra.

Pope Francis has said that the earth too cries out for justice at this time. The natural environment - the land we live on, the air we breathe, the water we drink - even this can become voiceless, so that the earth’s cry for justice can go unheard. Now is the time to act, so that the natural environment is able to meet human needs rather than be sacrificed to the god of the economy. We need an economy that is truly human, not falsely divinised. This does not mean divinising the natural world, but it does mean treating it with respect and seeing it as a gift to be received gratefully rather than as a resource to be plundered at will.

Neither can we as Christians afford to be voiceless through this campaign. On all kinds of issues we need to make our voices heard. But to do that we will have to listen first - not only to the voice of the voiceless, but even to the voice of God. That is why for Christians and others prayer is an essential part of this long journey to the election. By prayer, we mean first listening to God who has a word to speak in all this - the God who is neither voiceless nor faceless.

To listen to God and to the voiceless is in the end the same thing. In hearing their voice, we can hear the voice of God. That is where the real God is; that is how the real God communicates.

We hope that this campaign - for Christians at least and especially for Christian politicians - will be a time not of spin and bombast but a time of wise and true speaking that comes from deep and humble listening. Then our vote may be a vote in favour of a community where no-one is thrown away, where all the voices are heard and all the faces seen.
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