



Dear parents, caregivers, and friends of Berne

As you may have been aware I have had the opportunity of a sabbatical break having returned in recent weeks to our newly renovated school. The time away was an enriching one. A highlight that I would like to share with you is one that although not necessarily to everyone's liking, I would recommend it.

I joined an enclosed community of 20 Cistercian monks in a monastery outside of Barcelona in Spain, nestled at the foothills of the breathtaking Prades Mountains. The Poblet Monastery was built in 1100s and has been operational off and on since that time. This community keeps what I call the great silence which I agreed to keep for the six days I resided with them, joining them for regular prayer (5.15 am first prayer of the day) and meals.

It was hard the first day having just flown from Australia and acclimatising myself to being away from home. The beauty of the monastery, the faithfulness of the monks to prayer and the silence soon grounded me as well as having no access to phone or internet helped in entering into the spiritual experience ahead of me for those six days! Long walks through their vineyards, hours of quiet time and prayer in their chapels and cloisters were helping me to slow down, take stock, allow God to do His work. Once you got into it you cherished the opportunities to be still like the monks.

They too enjoyed the quiet moments when they ate together but also they thirsted for a return to spaces where they could be focused on allowing God to more closely touch them in whatever they were doing whether it was working in the laundry, in the vineyard, in vegetable gardens or in their focused meditation times.

It was inspirational and a question arose: why live this way? Answers were to be found in just being with them and understanding how our society needed to take stock of how we were operating. The monks of these monasteries have much to offer our busy lives now in reminding us about what we should be valuing and cherishing in our lives.

Thomas Merton, viewed as a great spiritual writer wrote much on the value of this life as a Cistercian monk and while reading his writings during my six days I came to appreciate how easy it can be to cloud the opportunities for God to do his work. Not all of us can do what I did but the importance to take time, to take stock of the here and now is invaluable. Know that you were in my thoughts and prayers.

This week we are opening and blessing the newly refurbished school. The staff and students are already enjoying learning in the new spaces as well as savouring the opportunities to gather in generous community spaces. The hope of having a 'state of the art' facility is now a reality!

This Thursday we gather to give thanks to the donors: the Australian Government, Sydney Catholic Schools and our owners Marist Brothers Australia. It is a celebratory event of significance in the life of this school as it has received its first major refurbishment since the school moved here nearly 20 years ago. Students have been encouraged to showcase their learning at this event using modern technologies. It is timely for the supporters to have this opportunity to meet with the students, understand how they are making best use of the facilities and for the students to show their appreciation.

At this time of the year many things come together for staff and students, especially for the Year 10 students who are graduating. Despite the finishing line being in sight, it can also be a stressful time for parents and carers. Patience and gentle guidance are the most appropriate help for them. Students also have the assistance of staff in this. It is also timely to remind students and their families that our support continues beyond their enrolment at Berne and all are welcome to seek our assistance at any time.

Blessings,

Br Mark Paul fms
Principal

Issue 7 2017

Upcoming Events

9 November

Blessing and Opening of new Buildings

15–17 November

Years 7 and 8 camp

16–22 November

Year 10 work experience

20–24 November

Year 9 work experience

20 November

Berne performance Belvoir St Theatre

23 November

Year 10 Graduation Rehearsal

24 November

Year 10 Graduation

27–28 November

Photographer in Residence exhibition and opening

30 November

Picnic day

1 December

Years 7, 8, 9 students' last day Term 4

In This Issue

Principal's Address
Welcome Gemma Peters
Wests Tigers and The John Berne School Rugby League Program
Year 10 Flexible Learning
Berne Students to Perform at Belvoir St Theatre
ASX Thomson Reuters Charity Foundation Art Union Raffle
Students's Last Day 2017
John Berne Day
Santa Teresa Immersion
Congratulations Br Mark
Year 9 Camp
Blessing and Opening
Photographer in Residence
Welcome New Students
Parents' Corner

Welcome Gemma Peters

A big welcome to Gemma Peters who joins the counselling team. As a psychologist having worked in education and public health she brings a wealth of experience. Gemma has settled in well. Please make her welcome.

— Br Mark Paul, Principal



West's Tigers and The John Berne School Rugby League Program

Last term The John Berne School was lucky enough to be approached by the West's Tigers to be part of a joint initiative that aims to use the platform of Rugby League to help students both physically and mentally and to provide a positive environment in which they can participate.

The program is held once a week every Wednesday for Years 7, 8 and 9 students for one hour.



Students engage in discussion on a range of topics including: wellbeing, goal setting and career development and are also involved in a range of physical movement skills, games and fitness activities.

Our sincere thanks to the West's Tigers, particularly Cassandra Ewens (Community Coordinator) for spending time with the students each week and to Shaun Spence (Fan Engagement and Community Manager) for reaching out to Berne.

— Melissa Painter, PDHPE Teacher

Year 10 Flexible Learning

Our Year 10 Flexible Learning class has gotten off to great start this term. Costa, Zane, Christian, Peter and Michael have come up with quick meal ideas that have formed our menu selection for the term.

So far we have created numerous pasta meals and salads. The students proved that they are willing to try different cuisines and as a result we have enjoyed a variety of meals from around the world.



All the students have gained confidence in their meal preparation and cooking skills.

Our hope is that students gain the necessary skills to be able to replicate the meals at home with minimal assistance.

— Tanja Dunne, Year 10 Coordinator

Berne Students to Perform at Belvoir St Theatre

School can be scary.

The John Berne School education program promotes personal growth by, well, by putting students into scary situations, and helping them get through. And for most of us, the idea of standing in the spotlight, alone, in front of a darkened theatre audience, delivering a personal monologue...

Hey, here's an idea! Would you come and support them? Be part of a supportive audience, willing our fledgling actors to succeed. Giving a positive vibe to carry them through. What a difference!

This term Eryn, Jaidyn, Michael, Kody, Peter and Mikey have developed and practised their monologues under the direction of Gavin Vance of the Belvoir St Theatre Co. They will perform their play 'Who's Afraid?' for you at 2pm Monday 20th November, at the Belvoir St Theatre, Surry Hills.

Come and enjoy their success.
RSVP 9560 9260

— Grant Lee, Year 10 Teacher

ASX Thomson Reuters Charity Foundation Art Union Raffle

The John Berne School is proud to be a charity partner of the ASX Thomson Reuters Charity Foundation. As a charity partner, we have the opportunity to sell tickets in the annual ASX Art Union Raffle.

100% of ticket proceeds sold by The John Berne School will go directly towards our work to support vulnerable teenagers.

Purchase your tickets today for a chance to win in a great pool of prizes and to help support young people at The John Berne School.

The total prize pool is \$66,008.

Prize winners will be drawn at 2.00pm on Friday 16 March, 2018

[Click here](#) to purchase your tickets online or you can call the school office on 02 9560 9260 to purchase your tickets by phone.

Thank you for your support and for spreading the word with your friends, family and colleagues.

Our students have previously experienced failure in multiple areas of educational performance throughout their schooling.

Students' Last Day Term 4, 2017

The last day for students in Years 7, 8 and 9 is Friday 1st December 2017.

John Berne Day

On Friday the 13th October John Berne Day was celebrated by the students. The day was a time for students to reflect on a young Jean-Baptiste Berne who the school is named after.

Students were involved in a mass led by Father Erick Niyiragira from St Brigid's Parish Marrickville and during mass staff and students attending the Santa Teresa immersion were commissioned.



Bowling on John Berne Day

Mass was followed by a successful outing to tenpin bowling where students and staff competed against each other. At the conclusion of tenpin bowling the students arrived back at school where a barbecue sausage sizzle had been prepared for all.

The students concluded the day in their pastoral care groups where they learnt a little more about the Jean-Baptiste Berne story.

I would like to thank Father Erick, staff and all students who helped organise such a wonderful day.

— James Le Huray, Assistant Principal

Santa Teresa Immersion

During Week 2 this term staff members Kristina, David and myself and students Zane, Will, Costa, Eryn, Myles and Wilson travelled to Santa Teresa in remote central Australia for an immersion.

Following in the footsteps of the team who visited last year, the group had many experiences in the local school and



Myles, Michael, Eryn, Wilson, Costa, Kristina, Will, Zane, and David participating in a smoking ceremony

wider community. Students attended and helped out in some of the classes, prepared and served food in the school canteen, visited the local men's shed and learnt about the local indigenous culture and its spirituality and customs.



Viewing Uluru in the pre-dawn light
Photo: William

There was also lots of time to make friends at the swimming pool and explore the small town and its surrounds. One of the more enjoyable experiences was an afternoon and evening spent in the bush where there was the opportunity to sit around the fire, share stories, reflect, eat a meal from a camp-oven on the fire and gaze in awe at the magnificent and starry night sky.



Taking a leisurely stroll through rugged terrain

Members of the group expressed how comfortable and welcome they were made to feel and some would like to have stayed longer. Overall, the experience was very eye-opening and students reflected on how different our lives in Sydney are with all of our material trappings and motivations and dependence on technologies.

They were also able to compare their own lives with those of the young indigenous population who have far fewer opportunities in terms of

education and employment. At the end of the trip the group visited Uluru and rose at 4am to go on a sunrise tour of the rock before flying home.

For some students the time away was an opportunity to practise their photography skills. Collectively, the group returned with a large body of photographs, featuring mainly the very many beautiful landscapes and sunsets of the Macdonnell Ranges and Kata Tjuta National Park. The immersion group learned and saw many new things during the week and formed a close-knit team.



Many thanks to Club Central Hurstville for helping to make this immersion possible

The team wishes to express their thanks to the school and the wider community who supported the trip, especially Illawarra Catholic Club, Club Central Hurstville for their generous donation through the ClubGRANTS scheme and all of those who helped to raise the funds necessary to make the trip possible.

— Michael Muranty, Year 9 Teacher

Congratulations Br Mark

Br Mark Paul, our outgoing principal of four years, was formally recognised for his achievements and leadership during his tenure as principal at The John Berne School at the annual Marist Schools Australia Dinner on Friday 3rd November, 2017.



Br Mark receiving his award from Br Peter Carroll, Provincial and Dr Frank Malloy, National Director of Marist Schools Australia

Br Mark was awarded a certificate of appreciation by Marist Schools Australia for his outstanding contribution to the school, especially in securing a place for Berne at the Lewisham site and overseeing its complete refurbishment.

Congratulations Br Mark!

— Nicole Arathoon, Curriculum Coordinator

Year 9 Camp

During Week 3 a small group of Year 9 students and staff ventured to Crosslands Reserve at Hornsby Heights for a three day camp. The bush reserve is a beautiful location on Berowra Creek with lots of birds and lizards.

Shortly after arriving the group tried their hand at fishing. This and other attempts to catch fish on the camp were not successful, but as the saying goes “a bad day fishing is better than a good day at school!”. It was also fortunate that the group were not relying on catching fish to eat and that Nicole had prepared lots of scrumptious food.



A good day fishing with Year 9

As well as fishing the group did some bushwalking along the creek and also a canoe expedition up the creek which seemed so remote that it felt as though we were a thousand kilometres from Sydney. Nights were spent around the fire toasting marshmallows and playing spotlight and other games.

The weather remained fine until a thunderstorm swept through the reserve during the last night but everyone managed to stay dry and warm in their tents and some slept right through it.

— Michael Muranty, Year 9 Teacher

Blessing and Opening

The official blessing and opening of our refurbished site will take place this Thursday 9th November at 2pm.

We are very excited to show off our renovated teaching and learning spaces to all our supporters and school community.

I would like to invite you to attend the ceremony where the school will be blessed and officially opened by Bishop Brady, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney; Br Peter Carroll, Provincial Marist Brothers Australia; and Dr Michael Bezzina, Director Teaching and Learning, Sydney Catholic Schools.

A tour of the school's buildings and grounds will take place following the opening and I welcome you to join us for some light refreshments afterwards.



The John Berne School's buildings renewed

Please note that students are not to attend school on this date until 1pm.

I look forward to seeing you on the day. Please RSVP to the front office on 9560 9260 or events@johnberneschool.org.

— Br Mark Paul, Principal

Photographer in Residence

The students in Photographer in Residence Program will soon be exhibiting the photos they have taken.



Our sincere thanks to Petersham RSL for their support of the Photography in Residence program

So come along to the Petersham RSL on Tuesday 28 November. The students will have selected, worked up, enlarged, and printed their photos on high-grade photographic paper.

They're sure to look fabulous. Please come along and show our keen photographers how much you appreciate their art.

— Grant Lee, Year 10 Teacher

Welcome New Students

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to new students who recently joined our school: Rhys and Xavier in Year 7; Milad and Nik in Year 8 and Thomas in Year 9.

PARENTS' CORNER

Belonging and connectedness improves mental health and learning

This is an excerpt from the KidsMatter website.

All children need to feel that their world is a safe place where people will care about them, where their needs for support, respect and friendship will be met, and where they will be able to get help to work out any problems. When these needs are met children develop a sense of belonging.

A sense of belonging has been found to help protect children against mental health problems and improve their learning. Children who feel that they belong are happier, more relaxed and have fewer behavioural problems than others. They are also more motivated and more successful learners.

Being connected is about knowing you can seek support when you need it, that you will be listened to, and that you can work together with staff to help your child learn and develop. Support may come from talking with staff or from making connections with other families. Sometimes you might be feeling that things are going well, but just want to have a general chat about your child.

Being connected helps keep parents and carers informed. Parents and carers are better able to support their children's learning experiences when they are informed about what their children are learning and doing.

<https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/mental-health-matters/belonging>

Thomas Street Lewisham NSW 2049
Locked Bag 6 Petersham NSW 2049
T: 02 9560 9260
F: 02 9560 9290

office@johnberneschool.org
www.thejohnberneschool.org