



# St Mark's College *Newsletter*

*Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions*



*Junior School  
Bullying Seminar*

Reverend Father's Message  
Head of College Message  
Senior School Information  
Junior School Information

Volume 18 Issue 6  
Pentecost Term, 2013

*St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox College*

*'To Live Is Christ'*

*Enrolling Now for 2014 Kindergarten and Year 7*

*Contact Mrs Sidhom on 9825 6768*



# St. Mark's College Newsletter

Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2013



Volume 18 Edition 6

ABN: 67 796 481 099



### Theotokos Term 2013

Lessons commence for K to 12	Mon 15 <sup>th</sup> July
Yr6 Liturgy	Fri 19 <sup>th</sup> July
English Competition Yrs 3 to 12	Tue 30 <sup>th</sup> July
Yr6 Liturgy	Fri 19 <sup>th</sup> July
CCC Public Speaking Competition Yrs7-11	Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup> July
Yr12 Liturgy	Fri 26 <sup>th</sup> July
Chess Challenge, at St Mark's College	Fri 26 <sup>th</sup> July
ICAS English Competition Yrs 3-12	Tues 30 <sup>th</sup> July
Parent-Teacher Interviews Yrs 7 - 12	Tues 30 <sup>th</sup> July
Yr5 Liturgy	Fri 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aug
Yr4 Liturgy	Fri 9 <sup>th</sup> Aug
Parents and Friends' Meeting	Tues 13 <sup>th</sup> Aug
Yr10 Liturgy	Fri 16 <sup>th</sup> Aug
Year 9 Liturgy	Fri 23 <sup>rd</sup> Aug
Semester 2 Exams commence for Yrs 11 & 12	Mon 26 <sup>th</sup> Aug
Yr3 Liturgy	Fri 30 <sup>th</sup> Aug
Semester 2 Exams commence for Yrs 7 - 10	Fri 30 <sup>th</sup> Aug
Semester 2 Exams end for Yrs 7 - 12	Thur 5 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Senior School Pupil free Day, Yrs 7 - 12	Fri 6 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Year 7 2014 Orientation Day	Fri 6 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Kindergarten 2014 Orientation Day	Fri 6 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Yr2 Liturgy	Fri 6 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Parent-Teacher Interviews Yrs K - 6	Tues 10 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Year 12 Valedictory Liturgy, Yrs 5 - 12	Thur 12 Sept
Sports Award Evening Yrs 3 to 12, 6.30pm	Mon 16 Sept
Year 11 Work experience commences	Mon 16 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Year 7 Swimming Programme commences	Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Years 5,6,8,9,10 & 12 Camps commence	Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Year 12 Camp concludes	Thur 19 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Yr 12 Valedictory Liturgy & Luncheon, 8.30am	Fri 20 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Years 5,6,8,9,10 & 12 Camps conclude	Fri 20 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Theotokos Term concludes	Fri 20 <sup>th</sup> Sept

### Advent Term 2013

Staff Professional Development Day	Tues 8 <sup>th</sup> Oct
Lessons commence for Years K to 12	Wed 9 <sup>th</sup> Oct
Speech Night, Years 5 to 12	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup> Dec

### Uniform

Students return in Theotokos Term, in full winter uniform.

### Progressive House Points

ST ANTHONY	ST DEMIANA	ST GEORGE	ST MARINA
2451	2215	2354	2253

*"Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."*

*Isaiah 40:31*



### Science and Faith

Does modern science throw doubt upon our ancient Christian faith? Has science made religion unnecessary?

You would think this is the case if you listen to some of the opinions being loudly shouted in the media today. But the reality is quite different. I am currently reading a new book called "Mind and Cosmos" by highly regarded philosopher Thomas Nagel. It is heavy stuff, and I do not recommend it for everyone, but I mention it to point out that this giant of modern philosophy, who is an atheist by the way, has come to the conclusion that science cannot answer all our questions. In a nutshell, his argument is that there are things in this world that have not been explained by science, but cannot ever be explained by science. For example, consciousness - that state we all experience when we know that we exist; "what it is like" to be me - this is something that science, no matter how clever and complicated, simply cannot explain. The reason is simple: science is designed to deal with the physical world. Things like consciousness are not physical. So science cannot deal with them.

Where then are we to turn if we wish to understand these non-physical things? How are we to make sense of consciousness and morality and free will? To his credit, Nagel honestly acknowledges that he has no answer yet, though he hopes that one will be found in the future. As Christians, we have had the answer for two thousand years. The reality of non-physical things points to another level of existence, what we would call "the spiritual". And, we would also say, unless we include the spiritual in our view of the world, that view will always be incomplete and imperfect. Science is a brilliantly powerful tool for making sense of the physical world, but we must not fall into the trap of thinking, that this is all, there is. We experience daily the spiritual realities of our moral choices, the freedom of our will, our own consciousness and our Christian faith, is a brilliantly powerful tool for making sense of this spiritual world.

Science does not throw doubt on our faith - if anything it completes the picture, and reveals the existence of the spiritual world through its own limitations. Science and faith

complement each other. Together they give a fuller picture of the wisdom and goodness of God. As Albert Einstein famously said:

***"Science without religion is lame,  
and religion without science is blind".***

Make the most of your science lessons, students! You are exploring the mind of God...

*The Very Reverend Fr Antonios Kaldas*

***Message from the Head of College  
Building Programme***

The new Science and Technology Centre is progressing well and with the Lord's blessing it will be fully operational for the beginning of the 2015 academic year. Since the original plan was created, a number of adjustments have been made that will enhance the function of the building by utilising all the available space on site. The new Canteen will be on ground level sheltered from the elements, as well as being easily accessed by suppliers through the delivery dock positioned behind the Canteen Storeroom. The area in front of the building has been extended, opening up the space for assemblies to be conducted and enhancing teacher supervision, as well as providing an additional playground area for our students to utilise, during recess and lunch breaks. A well-resourced classroom with storage facilities for Music has been included on the top level and individual Faculty Staffrooms have been positioned on each level. Level One (1) houses the Technology and Arts Faculties with specialised workshops with dedicated computer facilities for Media, Graphics and IT delivery. Level Two (2) is for Science with three laboratories each designated to a specific field of study; Physics, Chemistry and Biology. The Science Faculty will be well-supported with a large Preparatory Room where experiments can be prepared and resources stored. Level Three (3) is assigned for the English, Humanities and Music Faculties. This is a flexible space with a number of general classrooms created that can be opened into a large open area to hold meetings, seminars or examinations. While the top level is an open space for PE lessons to take place for various sporting activities.



This building will allow the College to expand its curriculum and to provide greater open space for the students to play. All the demountable buildings will be removed from the site, creating a wonderfully landscaped playground area. To fully resource the building, it will require additional funds and the College will continue to plan ahead, but assistance from the parent community is essential, by donating to the Building Fund. This reduces our loan requirements and keeps school fees low. This building programme is a magnificent initiative that will transform the College, enhancing its appeal, as well as modernising the resources.

Projects like this take place due to a great deal of work undertaken behind the scenes by the Board, in making sure that the finances of the College are well managed and prudently spent. The Building Fund that parents contribute to annually, is also a significant factor in having the on-going financial strength to meet the loan repayments for a project like this.



The College welcomes donations to the Building Fund and I would like to remind parents that it is fully tax deductible. May the Lord continue to bless the College Community with His love and support for all that is achieved in His name.

***School Holiday Lessons for Year 12***

One of the major benefits of having your child enrolled at St Mark's College is that you are part of a caring community where the teachers in particular give their time generously to assist their students with their learning and overall well-being. During this school holiday break the teaching staff have organised lessons for Year 12 and some Year 11 classes, as a lead in to the Semester Two (2) Examinations and HSC Exams. In all, thirteen (13) of the fifteen (15) days of the break, the teachers are conducting lessons. This dedication and commitment from the teachers is overwhelming, and typifies their professionalism and willingness to assist our students. I extend my appreciation to the teaching staff and insist that students attend these lessons and I wish them well with their studies. As a reminder, students attend in full school uniform.

***School Holiday Lessons for Year 12***

<i>Monday</i>	<i>24<sup>th</sup> June</i>	<i>Physics</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>25<sup>th</sup> June</i>	<i>PDHPE</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>26<sup>th</sup> June</i>	<i>Chemistry &amp; 11 Eng Adv</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>27<sup>th</sup> June</i>	<i>Business Studies</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>28<sup>th</sup> June</i>	<i>English Advance</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> July</i>	<i>PDHPE</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>4<sup>th</sup> July</i>	<i>Visual Arts</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>5<sup>th</sup> July</i>	<i>English Advance</i>
<i>Monday</i>	<i>8<sup>th</sup> July</i>	<i>Physics</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>9<sup>th</sup> July</i>	<i>Biology</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>10<sup>th</sup> July</i>	<i>Visual Arts</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>12<sup>th</sup> July</i>	<i>English Standard</i>

***School Fees***

It is always difficult to raise the issue of school fees in a College Newsletter, as it is a sensitive topic. Recently a number of parents stated that if they don't meet their financial obligation on time with the College, that this is fine.

School fees are set each year to cover the overall expenses of the College. Some parents are under the misunderstanding that St Mark's College is fully funded by the Federal Government. This is not so! If the College was fully funded by the government it wouldn't need to charge tuition fees and

St Marks would be a public school. In fact, independent schools like St Marks charge a tuition fee, activity and subject levy, as well as having contributions made to the Building Fund. Why, because without the parent contribution, the College would be unable to cover its expenses?

The College sets a date for each of the three payments, so the school meets its financial obligations on time. If parents ignore the payment dates, then the College may not be able to pay the electricity, gas or water bills or may have to postpone ordering vital teaching and learning resources like paper or possibly delay doing vital maintenance work. The College is not flush with funds, but is financially secure due to prudent planning and good management.

The majority of parents understand that St Marks is a not-for-profit organisation and sets its fees to cover its annual expenses and to pay on time. It is disappointing though, when some parents state that they are unaware of the due dates for payment of school fees and require a regular reminder. It doesn't matter how good the planning by the College may be, it still requires on-going co-operation and commitment from parents to meet the obligatory financial expectations on time. ***Otherwise, the delivery of the service may not be fully met.***

St Mark's College prides itself on offering the best educational outcomes for students at an affordable tuition fee, compared to other Independent or Catholic schools.

### ***New Families Join St Mark's College***

During Pentecost Term a number of families joined St Mark's College for the first time while others returned. It is always a measure of a good school when parents return or through word of mouth new parents seek enrolment for their child at our College. This is a wonderful endorsement for our school, particularly when students return after experiencing another school environment.

St Mark's College is an outstanding school that creates an atmosphere conducive to learning, but above all else, is a safe and caring environment where students are encouraged to treat each other with respect within a strong Christian Orthodox ethos. What we have is unique and it is up to us to continue to maintain this special atmosphere for our current and future students.

### ***Annual Walk-A-Thon***

The Annual School Walk-a-thon took place on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June with the aim to raise funds for a an electronic noticeboard and fluorescent cross for the front of the College. The day commenced with a wonderful Pentecost assembly to commemorate the Holy Spirit descending on the disciples and their blessed efforts in their mission to spread Christianity around the world and bring it to where it is today.

Following the assembly, Senior Students walked for approximately ten kilometres from the school around Wattle Grove, through the back of Hammondville and ended their walk at Hammondville Park, where a sizzling barbeque and great sporting activities were being organised by the teachers and the Year 12 Students. The Junior School Students had a more direct walk, straight to Hammondville Park from School, whilst the Kindergarten students enjoyed their bus trip to the park. All students were involved in the activities at the park. The day was only interrupted by a small shower of rain; however, the

majority of the day had pleasant weather, as was prayed for by the students in the morning.

The total amount raised and the prize winners, will be announced early in Term 3.

On behalf of the Year 12 class of 2013, we would like to thank all the students and teachers who contributed and participated on the day, making it a wonderful success and memorable day for all.

A special thank you to Father Shenouda Mansour, Father George Nakhil and Mr Aziz for organising the wonderful Pentecost Assembly and to Mrs McKay for assisting with the cooking, on the day.

*Mr David  
Deputy Head of College*

### ***Western and Southern Suburbs Bus Run***

I have received some feedback from parents, concerned that the two new bus routes may not be permanent and therefore are reticent in making the move. For the run to be permanent it requires a commitment from parents, as with the current arrangements. The buses that are on offer are well maintained and modern, and the company is registered with the Department of Transport. ***The offer is currently available and we need parental support so that we can provide good modern transport for our students.*** Please contact Australian Bus and Coach Services on 0412 152 230 and discuss the routes that are on offer or speak to Mrs Sidhom, at the College.



#### ***Western Bus Route***

From the lower Hills District, Glendenning, Mt Druitt and Erskine Park areas.

#### ***Southern Bus Route***

Sutherland District, Gymea, Kogarah, Kingsgove and Riverwood areas.

### ***Curriculum Matters***

#### ***Subject Choices***

The Years 8 and 10 Information Evenings were held and subject information was disseminated to parents and students as a lead up to making an informed subject choice for the 2014 academic year. A plethora of courses are on offer and based upon the choices made by the students, courses will commence in October this year. It is interesting to note that our students select practical courses in Years 8 to 10 but this is reversed in Year 11. The reason for this approach by the students is because there is a perception that if they undertake a practical course it will not maximise their HSC ATAR. This is a misconception as indicated below from the 2012 HSC Statistical Report, where the top ATAR achieved by a student in a course is listed.

<i>Design &amp; Technology</i>	99.55	<i>PDHPE</i>	99.85
<i>Food Technology</i>	99.75	<i>Drama</i>	99.75
<i>Industrial Technology</i>	98.55	<i>Music 1</i>	99.90

Also, there is another misconception that certain courses are perceived as soft options and students are unable to attain a high HSC ATAR. Below are some additional statistics.

<i>English Standard</i>	99.70	<i>ESL</i>	99.95
<i>General Mathematics</i>	99.80	<i>Ancient History</i>	99.95
<i>Society &amp; Culture</i>	99.95	<i>Visual Arts</i>	99.95

This evidence indicates that a student should select a course based on their interest and ability within the course, as it

leads to a stronger overall performance in the HSC.

***For a student to secure a place in a chosen course, it will be based upon their academic performance from Years 8 to 10, but in particular throughout Year 10.*** Please keep this in mind and I ask that parents counsel their child on being diligent, so that there isn't any disappointment down the track.

### ***Semester Two (2) Examinations for Years 7 - 12***

The Semester Two (2) Examinations are held next term in Weeks 7 and 8. This holiday break is a great opportunity for students to review the comments made by their teachers in their school report, and spend time revising their notes and work on their weaknesses.

*Mr Chahrozian  
Curriculum Co-ordinator*

## ***Junior School News***

### ***Bullying Forum***

Last week Grade Six (6) students joined six (6) independent schools in a Bullying Forum, held at William Carey Christian School. This is the second year we were invited due to our students' excellent attitude and behaviour. Mrs Thompson and I accompanied the students who later participated in group work and discussions, to equip our students with skills and strategies to deal with bullying.

Bullying is a serious issue that St. Mark's Coptic College has been working on over the past two years, updating the students and parents with the latest strategies on how to deal with all forms of bullying, like Cyber Bullying. At St Marks, our focus is from a Christian perspective, where we expose our students to the teachings from our Lord Jesus Christ; to love, care, forgive and respect one another. With God's blessing and support our students are capable of dealing with bullying, by building resilience and accepting our Christian faith.



Our students represented St. Marks' Coptic Orthodox College superbly, as they stood out for their impeccable manners and intelligent responses. We would like to thank Grade Six students and their parents for rearing their children within a caring Christian home.

*Mrs Shehata  
Dean of the Junior School*

### ***Parent-Teacher Interviews***

Thank you to all the staff and parents who attended the Parent/Teacher Interviews held in the last week of Pentecost Term. These are an important and integral part of supporting your child's learning and building home-school relationships.

All students are to be commended for their efforts this

semester. Their academic performance has indicated that they are working diligently to achieve their personal best.

I thank each of you for your contribution and support of all that has taken place at St Mark's Junior School, throughout Semester One. I look forward to the new experiences that Semester Two will bring, the wonderful work that our students will produce and the happy faces of the children returning from the break.

### ***Important Dates:***

19th July: Incursion, Children's Theatre  
18<sup>th</sup> - 20th September : Years 5 & 6 Camp to Bathurst  
6<sup>th</sup> September: Kindergarten Orientation 2014

*All information will be sent home in Theotokos Term.*

*God bless  
Mrs Shehata*

*Dean of the Junior School*

### ***Curriculum Matters***

This year the College has introduced a new programme of learning for all students in the Junior School and is now bearing some wonderful fruit. Below is a piece of superb writing from Danielle Safi who is in the 5/6 Honours Class under the direction of Miss Ross, who is a Senior School English Teacher. Miss Ross conducts enrichment lessons to students in the 5/6H and 3/4L classes. Please enjoy reading Danielle's article.

### ***Thinking Back On My Life The life and times of Adibe Fahel***

It started in 1910 in what used to be called Palestine. For those that don't know, Palestine is between Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

My name is Adibe Fahel. When I was young I lived in a small village with my family. It was peaceful and there was no war. My parents loved me and nurtured me; my father taught me how to build many objects and creations even when I was just the age of five. I loved to build things.

I met a lady named Amal when I was seventeen, she was only fourteen. We got to know each other very well; I loved Amal for who she was. Amal was a beautiful, stunning and a very fine lady, we were arranged to be married in the year 1930. We were married in a small church and had a simple yet memorable celebration with our close family. On December the 1<sup>st</sup> we moved into a sturdy, comfortable and pleasant house near my parents in Haifa. My wife Amal, had four gorgeous daughters and we named them Adla, Violet, Magret and Nahla. I worked at my own mechanic shop called Adibe's Mechanics. As I said before, I have always loved to invent things.

Over the next few months I had been trying to design an electric hot water system that would be famous worldwide and would be known by everybody, although I just hoped that no one would steal my ideas. My wife and I were praying to have a baby boy; we were praying so hard to God that we ended up having a handsome little boy named George. From then on Amal would stay at home with the children or take them out while I was at work, then I'd come home from work eat the food Amal cooked for the day and spend as much time as I could with the kids.

In 1944 Amal was feeling very ill I had to leave work and take care of the children. The doctor said there was no real cure to this illness, so what she had to do was rest and drink as much water as she could. The kids were all helping Amal, especially Adla. In the following week Amal was completely

better, we were all shocked. I took Amal and the children to celebrate Amal's recovery.

In 1950 Adla became a nurse; we were so proud of her. I continued working on my electric hot water system and finally after two years it was finished. A close friend of mine Magdy, who worked at my shop, had seen my invention; he was impressed. Before I knew it he had shown my invention to the local authorities of the Government, claiming that the invention was his and he had become rich and famous by stealing my work. I was upset *aaahhhh* but that wouldn't stop me from building and inventing more things.

However, five years later out of nowhere Amal passed away after suffering a heart attack. My family and I were mourning her death; all my children were so sad and longing for their mother. The years went by so quickly and before my eyes my children were all married. I retired and ended up living alone. My children never abandoned me and visited me often with their children. That was great, but it did not fill the gap left by the departure of my wife Amal. These days I just think about my past like how my good friend Magdy betrayed me like how Amal had passed away for no reason. In 1976 I was already old and because of my old age, I was unable to move around freely, in fact I had to use a wheel chair. I felt that it was the end of my days. At this time I prayed that I could be re-united with my amazing wife Amal.....and I think I just did.

*Danielle Safi  
5/6H Student*

## **CAREERS**

### **UMAT Registrations**

The registration deadline for UMAT has passed.

***The UMAT will be held on 31<sup>st</sup> of July.***

*Mrs Gerges,  
Career Adviser*

### **Parents and Friends' News**

The Parents and Friends' Association holds their Annual Fundraising Dinner and this year, it will be held at the Skyview Reception Centre in Liverpool. Tickets are \$50 and everyone is welcome to attend. This is a wonderful evening where we get together as a community to enjoy the night and to see our children perform.

On behalf of the P&F Committee I welcome you to attend and ask that you organise a table of friends to join us. It will be a night to remember and it would be great to have you with us. Tickets will be on sale over the school holiday break at the College Office. Please don't leave it too late and be disappointed. Book your ticket now.

God bless and looking forward to seeing you at the dinner.

### **Challenges In Raising Junior School Children**

This information session was organised for the June Meeting, but unfortunately Dr Eman Sharobeem fell unexpectedly ill on the evening. This session has now been rescheduled for the August Meeting. Come along and be informed.

### **Parents and Friends' Meeting**

The August Meeting is continuing with its Special Speaker Presentations. The topic is:

***"Challenges in raising Junior School children,  
from 0 to 12 years of age"***

***Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2013, D Block***

*The speaker is Dr. Eman Sharobeem.*

*We welcome everyone and look forward to seeing you.*

*Mr Rouchdi  
P&F President*

## **Parents and Friends' Annual Fundraising Dinner**

*Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July  
6.30pm to 9.00pm*

***Skyview Reception Centre***

***1/28 Railway St, Liverpool***

*Cost: \$50 per person & children under 3 years of age, free  
(Non-Refundable)*