



St Oliver's Primary School

# Newsletter

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Term 4 , Week 7

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24 November, 2016

## CLOSING OF THE MERCY DOORS - THE END OF THE YEAR OF MERCY

We have come to mark the end of the Jubilee of Mercy. I hasten to add that this does not mean that it is back to business as usual in our daily living and relationships with others. The Jubilee of Mercy is not a temporary aberration. Rather it has been an opportunity for us to reflect and live more intensely the fundamental call of the Gospel *"to be merciful like the Father"*. It has served as a launch pad for the whole church to contemplate the mystery of mercy and become a more effective sign of God's action in the world. The closing of the Mercy Door ends the period of the launch and leads us to the ongoing phrase of living God's mercy. The Jubilee of Mercy has challenged the whole church to break loose from its comfort zone and self-referential mentality. Just as Christ did not stay put in his divine status but made the missionary journey to the world, the church too is called to make that same missionary journey to reach out, accommodate and accompany those struggling to live and still falling short of the Christian ideal. *TO PUT IT IN A DIFFERENT WAY, THE FOCUS OF MERCY MOVES FROM THE MERCY DOORS OF CHURCHES AND SHRINES TO THE DOORS OF OUR HEARTS.* Pope Francis, has dedicated himself to the task ever since that day when he bowed and asked the people for their blessing. It was a powerful symbol of a humble, listening and accompanying church. The new wine of God's unconditional love, boundless mercy, radical inclusivity and equality needs to be poured into new wineskins of humility, mutuality, compassion and powerlessness. The old wineskins of triumphalism, authoritarianism and self-reference abetted by clerical power, superiority, and rigidity are broken. The servant leadership of Pope Francis is indicative of the new era of hope, even if we are struggling to find our way in the emerging and unfamiliar landscape.

Like Francis of Assisi and his namesake Pope Francis, let us go and rebuild the church of God which will "shine with its healing rays" after the burning. Let us continue to live the spirit of the Jubilee of Mercy which is that of true repentance, humility and conversion to God's total self-emptying in Christ and his audacious identification with those on the periphery. Let us learn to reclaim the powerlessness of Christ and the fundamental ethos of care for the weak and justice for the excluded. Let us learn the art of living deeply in God's love, attentive to his presence and responsive to his call. Then we can truly be the conduit of mercy and the sign of hope for all.

Excerpt from homily of Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen,  
Bishop of Parramatta



## DATES TO REMEMBER

### November

25th

Stage 2 @ Parish Mass

Principal's Morning Tea

### December

2nd

Stage1 & ES1 @ Parish Mass

Whole school assembly @ 2:30pm  
presented by Stage 1

5th – 15th

Swimming Program @ SOPAC

8th

Reconciliation @ St Oliver's Church 5pm

St Oliver's Christmas

Concert @ 6:30pm (note change of time)

16th

Graduation/Thanksgiving  
Liturgy and Awards from 12:00

### Term 1 - January 2017

30th

Year 1 to Year 6 commences school

### February 2017

1st

Kindergarten commences school

Weekly Attendance for Term 4 Week 6 -  
93%



## Focus On Learning

### How to encourage kids to be problem-solvers

By Michael Grose



When parents solve all children's problems we not only increase their dependency on adults but we teach kids to be afraid of making mistakes and to blame themselves for not being good enough. That's fertile ground for anxiety and depressive illness.

So, how can we raise kids to be courageous problem-solvers rather than self-critical scaredy cats? Here are six practical ideas to get you started.

#### 1. Turn requests into problems for kids to solve

Kids get used to bringing their problems to parents to solve. If you keep solving them, they'll keep bringing them. 'Mum, my sister is annoying me!' 'Dad, can you ask my teacher to pick me for the team?' 'Hey, I can't find my socks!' It's tempting if you are in a time-poor family to simply jump in and help kids out. Alternatively, you can take a problem-solving approach, cuing them to resolve their own problems and take responsibility for their concerns. 'What can you do to make her stop annoying you?' 'What's the best approach to take with your teacher?' 'Socks, smocks! Where might they be?'

#### 2. Ask good questions to prompt problem-solving

A problem-solving approach relies on asking good questions, which can be challenging if you are used to solving your child's problems. The first question when a child brings you a problem should be: 'Can you handle this on your own?' Next should be, 'What do you want me to do to help you solve the problem?' These questions are not meant to deter children from coming to you; rather, to encourage and teach them to start working through their own concerns themselves.

#### 3. Coach them through problems and concerns

So, your child feels she was unfairly left out of a school sports team by a teacher and asks you get involved. The easiest solution may be to meet with the teacher and find out what's going on. You may or not resolve the problem but in doing so you are teaching a child to become dependent on you. Alternatively, you could coach your child to speak to the teacher herself and find out why she was left out. Obviously, there are times when children need their parents to be advocates for them such as when they are being bullied, but we need to make the most of the opportunities for children to speak for themselves. Better to help your child find the right words to use and discuss the best way to approach another person when they have problems. These are great skills to take into adulthood.

#### 4. Prepare kids for problems and contingencies

You may coach your child to be independent – walk to school, spend some time alone at home (when old enough), catch a train with friends – but does he know what to do in an emergency? What happens if he comes home after school and the house is locked? Who should he go to? Discuss different scenarios with children whenever they enter new or potentially risky situations so that they won't fall apart when things don't go their way. Remember the Boy Scouts motto – be prepared!

#### 5. Show a little faith

Sometimes you've got to show faith in children. We can easily trip them up with our negative expectations, such as by saying 'Don't spill it!' to a child who is carrying a glass filled with water. Of course, your child doesn't want to spill it but you've just conveyed your expectations with that statement. We need to be careful that we don't sabotage children's efforts to be independent problem-solvers with comments such as, 'Now don't stuff it up!' 'You'll be okay ... won't you?' 'You're not very good at looking after yourself!'

#### 6. Applaud mistakes and stuff-ups

Would a child who accidentally breaks a plate in your family while emptying the dishwasher be met with a 'That's really annoying, you can be clumsy sometimes' response or an 'It doesn't matter, thanks for your help' type of response? Hopefully it won't be the first response, because nothing shuts a child's natural tendencies to extend themselves down quicker than an adult who can't abide mistakes. If you have a low-risk-taking, perfectionist, consider throwing a little party rather than making a fuss when they make errors so they can learn that mistakes don't reflect on them personally, and that the sun will still shine even if they break a plate, tell a joke that falls flat or don't get a perfect examination score.