Acting Assistant Principal Religious Identity and Mission (APRIM) Report 2016

2016 has been a very busy year for All Saints. We have been continuing our vitally important work on Catholic Identity; building on the school’s religious identity and culture. The staff and children have been involved in excellent teaching and learning experiences in our faith-centred environment.

On numerous occasions the school gathered as a community to celebrate masses and liturgies. We began the year with the Welcoming Mass, which focused on belonging. It is our responsibility to ensure that everyone feels welcomed and respected. We are each blessed with the gift of belonging to God’s family. We started Lent with our Ash Wednesday liturgy and finished Term 1 with the Holy Week liturgies of Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday and Good Friday. This was followed by the Easter Mass celebrating Jesus rising, The Resurrection. During Term 2 we celebrated the Regional Mass at Cardijn College. This three yearly event coincides with World Youth Day and included all the Catholic schools in the Southern Fleurieu. The theme of the Mass was ‘Called to Love’ and gave us a time to consider the many places we find God’s love and the many ways we can share that love in the ordinary of everyday. We also celebrated Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit. In Term 3 the community gathered to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. We came together to thank God for Mary, Mother of Jesus. Mary was chosen by God to carry out a special role in her life, God chooses us to do a special role in our lives too. Whatever we are asked to do by God, God promises to help us to do it well. In Term 4 we celebrated the Feast Day of our school, All Saints. The saints lived out the Reign of God, and their lives are examples for us to aspire to and follow. The Feast of All Saints is a very important part of our Catholic identity and culture within our school. We are the only school in South Australia called All Saints and we are proud to profess this.

We celebrated a number of special liturgies during the year, including: Reconciliation Day, Grandparents and Special Friends, Indigenous Day and Remembrance Day. These liturgies were a culmination of the teaching and learning that was taking place in the classrooms.

The 2015/2016 Sacramental Program was successful with a group of 19 children celebrating the sacraments of Confirmation in Term 2 and First Eucharist in Term 3. The children and families took part in workshops with children from St John the Apostle Parish School prior to celebrating each sacrament. We were also joined by a number of children from State schools and Emmaus and Antonio Catholic Schools. There are 24 children who have enrolled in the 2016/2017 Sacramental Program. The group gathered and have completed workshops exploring the sacrament of Reconciliation. The children celebrated Reconciliation at St Luke’s with Fr Charles, Fr Tom and Fr Charles, from Aberfoyle Park parish, in Term 4 and will continue on their Sacramental journey in 2016.
Our Staff Reflection Day was facilitated by myself this year at Seaford Ecumenical Mission (SEM). We spent the day continuing to explore our Catholic identity and prayer. Both of these are extremely important within our community as we have focused heavily on developing the Catholic culture of our school. Our role as educators in a Catholic school is to carry out the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church by spreading the good news to all. We draw on scripture to inspire our work, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation’. Mark 16:15. In everything we do within All Saints we are constantly reminded of our commitment to Catholic Education. We believe that children are made in the image of God and we have been given a great gift to educate these children in our care, not only academically but also to enrich their spirituality and to care for the whole child.

The Year 6 and Year 7 classes went to SEM and Moana Surf Life Saving Club respectively for their Reflection Days. It was a time for the children to reflect on their All Saints journey with the theme, ‘Called to love’, which was a connection to the Regional Mass in Term 2. The children were involved in a number of activities related to 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8: ‘Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing; but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things; believes all things; hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends’. These activities helped them to think about their All Saints journey. It was also great to have mass with Fr Tony to start both days of reflection.

2016 was the third year that the Year 4 children in all Catholic Schools participated in an assessment in Religious Education. The assessment, known as ReLAT is designed to assess some of the basic knowledge taught in Religious Education lessons. The assessment is not a measure of a child’s faith or their participation in the broader life of the Catholic community. The ReLAT assessment tool is an online multiple choice test with 35 questions. The Year 4 children of All Saints did well in the testing. The data has been collated and used to plan professional learning to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education.

Many staff members attended Religious Education Professional Learning days facilitated by the Catholic Education Office (CEO) to build upon their knowledge and support their teaching. The teachers keenly shared their experience and resources with their colleagues on returning to All Saints. A number of staff members continued their journey in study to gain their Graduate Certificate in Religious Education through Uni SA. We also had one member of staff begin their Masters in Catholic Educational Leadership through the Australian Catholic University (ACU).

This year we celebrated the first ever Catholic Education Week in May. The event was held in both the Adelaide and Port Pirie Dioceses and showcased Catholic Education across the state. In the Diocese of Adelaide, the focus was, ‘Every child matters.’ There were a variety of activities that took place during the week which culminated in the Southern Vales Regional Mass at Cardijn College.

This year has been extra special for All Saints as it was decided to have a whole week celebrating what it is to be All Saints. The week started with an assembly, which highlighted all the wonderful things that have happened during the year that have built the Catholic identity and culture of the school. All Saints Day Mass was celebrated by Fr Charles in the school hall and the children researched saints for our new House structure for 2017. We
were visited by St Francis Xavier’s School Band and had our annual excursion to the beach to round off a great week being All Saints.

Our connection with Seaford Ecumenical Mission (SEM) has continued to flourish in 2016 with classes attending the Wednesday morning Community Mass. The children overwhelmed Fr Tony and Jan Hicks, SEM Pastoral Associate, with their generosity in donating cans and packets of food each week for people in need in our community. Children also carried out a special Easter egg collection during Easter and will be making Christmas cakes, with the help of Mr Goldfinch, for the SEM Christmas Hampers. Classes were involved in Family Masses on the third Sunday of the month and there will be further development of this next year.

All Saints has also been a place of social justice throughout the year with the many different charities we have raised money for, including: Project Compassion, Hutt Street Centre and Catholic Charities SA.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my work as the Acting Assistant Principal: Religious Identity and Mission (APRIM) during 2016. I wish the All Saints community continued development in 2017.

God Bless

Nick Wright

Acting APRIM