Dear Families, Friends and Students,

Welcome to the brand new school year of 2017. I hope you have enjoyed a restful break from the school routine with your family. There is so much excitement about the start of school. There is an energy about welcome and reconnection. It’s hopeful and optimistic.

First Day—Welcome from our Bishop and Director:
Bishop Greg and Ms Brenda Keenan (our Director) both extend their best wishes for the start of the year. They remind us that Pope Francis calls us to “be people capable of shedding light on new ways of relating to others and to the world around us” (EG 74). Our theme this year ‘Honouring our Past, Creating Our Future’, will provide us with an opportunity to celebrate our past and look forward and plan with hope, for the future. We are encouraged to build our community by reflecting on the following:

- Creating communities of gratitude.
- Creating communities of compassion.
- Creating communities of missionary people.
- Creating communities of faith.
- Creating communities of service.

Bishop Greg and Brenda wish everyone at St Joseph’s Renmark a memorable year with many life long learning experiences.

Principal Renewal Leave:
I wish to inform our whole community that I will be taking Principals Renewal Leave starting Week 11 this Term and all of Term 2. I will be using this leave to commence further study and begin my Masters In Education. I will also be attending various International Leadership Conferences and visiting other schools around Australia. During my leave an Acting Principal will be appointed which the CEO will facilitate. My leave and study has me filled with so many feelings of nervousness, anxiety and excitement, but most of all I am looking forward to bringing all my experiences back to our community to further enhance the learning environment at St Joseph’s Renmark. I will share all my experiences and learning in the coming weeks.
Welcome Assembly:
We had a fantastic first day with outstanding numbers at our P&F Coffee and Chat followed by our Welcome Assembly. Building and fostering a vibrant and positive community is one of our strategies to providing a meaningful education. We warmly welcome all of our new families to the St Joseph's School Community. Particular acknowledgement to our Reception students as they embark on their first year of schooling. We are delighted that you have chosen St Joseph's as your family school. We now begin the journey of a new year together.

Contemporary Learning:
The school is looking fantastic. I thank all the parents and staff who helped at the recent Busy Bee. We take great pride in our fantastic facilities and the positive learning environments that have been created. The staff have been working hard to prepare their learning spaces ready for our excited students. We are committed to consolidating our “Contemporary Learning” methods. Please share your ideas, encouragements and concerns with us so that we can provide the best possible learning environment for your child.

Parent Information Night:
I wish to promote our Parent Info Night scheduled for this Thursday, 2nd February. This is a wonderful opportunity for staff, parents, carers and students to join together in a fun and welcoming manner. Staff will also be presenting brief details about their class structures and processes. More details are provided in the note distributed with this newsletter.

P&F Welcome Night:
The Parents & Friends Community invite all families to the Renmark Swimming Pool on Wednesday, 8th February from 5.30pm to 7.30pm. They will be providing a free sausage sizzle and hamburgers with bread and sauce. Please return your family reply slip to assist with catering purposes. Drinks will be available from the pool. This is an informal gathering to chat to staff and other families and we encourage all families to attend.

Staff Formation:
Recently, our staff have been immersed in activities, presentations and professional development opportunities. They included comprehensive and thorough learning in THRASS and looking at how we can use DATA to inform teaching. We have reviewed all our practices and procedures. We have been challenged and inspired about our role as educators in a Catholic School and we have committed to building positive relationships with each other and with all our parents/carers and students. The learning opportunities were so valuable which has helped with our staff formation and provide an excellent platform for a very positive year.

We enjoy and understand the extra dimension of community that is a feature of St Joseph’s. We aim to work with our whole community to bring to St Joseph’s the confidence, skills, knowledge and particularly the enthusiasm necessary to see our students reflect on their schooling firstly, as enjoyable, with memorable relationships, a spiritual dimension to their life and an attitude that learning is a life-long process.

Regards,
Don DePalma

Our new students and their families were welcomed at our Assembly this morning.