Dear Parents/ Guardians

On Sunday next we start the season of Advent which is the four weeks leading up to Christmas. We all know what a busy time we all face leading up to Christmas and no doubt each year you ask yourselves why the busyness?

Well how about seriously taking time to really think about what this season is all about. It has become so commercial and such a financial burden on people that the real meaning is lost. Why not take some serious time with your family, relax with them, pray with them enjoy their company. Maybe there is a family member whom you have not had contact with for a while. A phone call/email to that person would be a great way to prepare for the feast of Christ's birth. There will come a Christmas when somebody you love dearly will no longer be with you. The values you pass on to your children will sustain them in life. Why not make sure that they are worthwhile? I have very happy memories of how my parents taught me by their wonderful example and the way in which they shared important things with us as children. They did not have money to spend on us and, at the time, that was hard but how I appreciate now that money was not everything.

Blessings on you and your family.

Sr Brenda Kennedy
Principal
Advent Mass
We will celebrate the beginning of Advent with a Mass on Friday December 6 at 9.15am in the church. All are welcome.

Reports
End of year reports will be sent home on Monday December 9. If you do not receive your child’s report on that day, please contact the office.

Also enclosed with the reports will be the class lists for 2014 and the timetable for the Maths assessments on the first two days of next year. Please do not be concerned if your names are not on this list as we cannot fit in all of our families. All children will be assessed by the end of the first two weeks.

Class Placement for 2014
If your family is not returning to Holy Family in 2014, could you please inform Sr Brenda in writing by no later than Monday 2nd December 2013. Please indicate the school that they will be attending. This is a legal requirement.

Fundraising News
Many thanks to all the staff and families who helped out at the Bunnings BBQ last Sunday. It was a great success as we made a profit of $1000. Thank you to the families of the following children: Caleb and Nadia Cunningham, Ben Taualai, Jesse Mort, Jordan Keeley, Ema Manas, Aiden Montgomery, Peyton Bowden, Bailey Stanley, Daniel Susanto, Akekar and Kairae Atera Chapman, Caleb, Marley and Tiara Tielemann, Soane and Helen Tuimavave. Your time and assistance was very much appreciated.

Our recent disco was also a great success, raising a total of......Next year we have decided to change the date for our annual disco and hold it in Term 1. We are doing this for two reasons. There are many financial demands on families at this time of year and it will also be a welcome fun night for our new Kindergarten children. The date will be given to you early in Term 1 2014.

End of Year Christmas Concert
We have invited Peter Kearney, a well-known singer to spend a day with the children, teaching them songs which will be sung at our family Christmas Concert. The concert will be held on Wednesday December 11 and will commence at 6.30pm, and conclude at 8pm approximately. As with our Creative Arts Night we will start with a sausage sizzle at 5pm for anybody who would like to join us. Food and drink will be paid for on the night. I am conscious that we have been asking a lot for money lately. This day will cost $1200. We are not going to charge our families, but if you can help with a donation, no matter how small, it will help and be appreciated.

Parent Helpers Morning Tea
Holy Family wish to thank our Parent Helpers and Volunteers for 2013. We invite you to our ‘Thank You’ morning tea being held in our school Hall on Thursday December 12, where you will be welcomed with a warm cuppa and a lovely selection of cakes and cookies.

Year 6 Graduation
Our Year 6 children will celebrate their graduation from Primary school on Tuesday December 17 at 7pm with a Mass in the church. This will be followed by supper in the hall.

Sympathy
Our sincere sympathy and prayers to the Chan family (Jadelyn Year 4) on the recent death of their mother and grandmother. May she rest in peace.
**Library News**

**Book Borrowing Over the Holidays**
Parents, did you know that children who continue to read over holiday periods become better readers! Why not encourage your child to borrow books over the holidays? Our school library is stocked full of good reading material. Let's make good use of it.

If you would like your child to borrow books from our school library over the holidays, please come along to the library either before or after school, to borrow. During these last weeks of the school term, we will be open from 8.25am till 8.55am and then from 2.30pm to 3.30pm Wednesday through Friday, for borrowing. Children who wish to borrow must be accompanied by an adult!

**Book Fair and Book Club**
Please drop into the library either before or after school to have a look at our new lounges for the little ones and our reading tent. Both of these items have been proved very popular with the children. These wonderful items of furniture were purchases with Book Fair and Book Club revenue. We are so lucky to have had so many people support us with both the Book Fair and Book Club this year. Thank you for your ongoing support. As you can see, our school benefits directly.

**Geronimo Stilton**
Geronimo made a quick, flying visit to our school during the Book Fair. He visited all the classes and spoke to many children. Geronimo was very happy to see so many children reading and writing! He sends his best wishes to us from his home on the Central Coast, where he is writing a new book!

**The Advent Wreath and Candles**
Advent wreathes are a tradition used to mark the four weeks of Advent. It's usual form is a horizontal evergreen wreath holding four candles. Each week a candle is lit. The underlying symbolism is that the accumulation of light is an expression of the growing anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ who is the light of the world.

Three of the candles are violet-coloured to symbolize faithful expectation and the one rose candle symbolizes joy and hope.

Finally, the circular wreath represents God’s eternal love which has no beginning or end.’

From the Catholic Enquiry Centre [http://www.catholicenquiry.com](http://www.catholicenquiry.com)

**Emerton Emu Express**
Thank you to all students who have participated in the fortnightly challenges. We would especially like to acknowledge and congratulate the following students for an outstanding participation in the Emerton EMU Express:

Tahlia Broomham (KS)
Ana Vave (KSM)
William Bell (1C)
Hannah Nicholls (1C)
Abbi Collins (1F)
Alysha Vendrasco (2W)
Kevin Altamirano (2B)
Nadia Cunningham (2B)
Bianca Smith (4B)
Gavin Gibson (4B)
Matthew Altamirano (4S)
Selenna Fuimaono (5A)
Myia Vendrasco (5AG)
Caleb Cunningham (6W)

**2014 School Calendars**
The school will not be producing a 2014 calendar, as in previous years. A list of activities will generated each term which will list the important dates and activities of our school community.
Farwell Jodie Smith
As many are you are aware, this is Jodie Smith’s final week before starting her maternity leave. I would like to wish her many blessings as she awaits the birth of her second baby. Enjoy the calm before the storm Jodie!! We will miss you at Holy family and we look forward to hearing the good news on December 18. Anne Andruskin will be taking Jodie's class until the end of the year.

Dates for your Diary

December
06th Final Assembly
11th End of Year Christmas Concert
12th Kindergarten 2014 Morning Tea
13th Award Ceremony & Christmas Carols
17th Year 6 Graduation Mass 7pm
18th Final Day for Students

January
28th Staff Return to School
29-30th Maths Assessment Days
31st All Children Return

Christmas Raffle
Our Christmas Raffle will be held again this year. Children have been given tickets to purchase for the wonderful prize baskets that will be offered. Each book costs $5.00. We ask if these could be returned as quickly as possible. If you require any further booklets, please come to the office and ask Marie.

Bus Passes
If your child is currently in Year 2 and holds a bus pass, an application form for a new bus pass must be completed as they progress to Year 3 for 2014. Applications are available in the school office and need to be returned as soon as possible.

MAI Testing
During this year we have been focusing a lot on Maths/Numeracy and in particular the number strand of this Key Learning Area. All staff have been trained in the use of a special assessment tool called the “Mathematical Assessment Interview (MAI)”. This is a one to one interview with a student which takes approximately 30 minutes. The information gathered from this assessment is extremely useful in helping teachers understand where students are in their understanding of number.

You may remember that we used this instrument to assess our students at the beginning of 2013 and the information gained was invaluable in helping the teachers to understand your child’s knowledge and understanding of numbers.

As this interview takes a long time, we are again going to spend the first 2 days trying to get quite a number of children assessed. To assist with this process there will be no school for children until Friday January 31st. On Wednesday January 29th and Thursday January 30th we will ask a number of children to come to school at a particular time to have their assessment done. If there is more than once child in your family, we will organise to have all the family done at the same time. The children who are not assessed during these two days, will be done as quickly as possible in the first 2 weeks. The hope is that every student will be assessed in the first 2-3 weeks.

If your child is going to be assessed on January 29th or January 30th, you will receive notification of a time, when you receive your child’s report later this term. If you do not receive a letter, it means your child will be assessed when he/she returns to school.

Email: emerton@parra.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.holyfamilyemerton.parra.catholic.edu.au