



28th July 2011

Dear Families

In my time at St. Alipius Parish School we have been featured in the news for many wonderful reasons – for supporting our community, our environment and those in need.

We have been showcased as a school with a proud history, a welcoming community and a rich learning environment.

This week our school's name is again in the paper and on the news. However, this time the report is about an appalling chapter in the history of St. Alipius *Boys' School* – a school that operated in the building near our church, until 1976, under the Christian Brothers.

In the mid 1970's Brother Robert Best perpetrated atrocities on a number of students at that school as well as at schools in Melbourne and Geelong. This week he has been convicted by a jury and pleaded guilty to numerous charges. You may have read about this in both local and metropolitan papers.

Yesterday, I was informed that the ABC's 7.30 Report will feature a story about Robert Best on Friday evening's program – and St Alipius will again be mentioned. Although our name is used in all media releases, our school was *never* involved in these awful events. If anything it has made us a stronger community and even more vigilant in our protection of children and their innocence.

The Catholic community of Ballarat and the St Alipius Parish School Community are appalled at what happened in the 1970's. We pray for justice and healing for the victims of these horrendous crimes and we commit ourselves to vigilance in ensuring the safety of every child in our care.

Childhood is precious – children are precious. When children's lives are damaged, so too is the fabric of our community. Many good things happened at St. Alipius Boys' School; many fine men began their schooling there; however the evil that took place casts a shadow over our Parish and hurts good people.

If you wish to speak with me about any aspect of the media reports, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards
Eileen Rice
Principal