Year 9 traditionally challenges students with a range of new tasks and responsibilities in a variety of areas. One of Mazenod College’s aims is to provide the means by which the full potential of each of its students and that of the school community is realized. Whether it was through Faith, Academic, Community or Personal Development, 2012 has been no exception with the students meeting these challenges with enthusiasm and new-found maturity.

Faith Development was achieved by providing students further opportunity for prayer, reflection and the support needed during this decisive period of their schooling. On top of the regular masses the College holds throughout the year, Form masses facilitated by Sr. Frances Wilson and the respective Religion teachers were held in Term 3. Here the students were given the responsibility to research and allocate prayers and reflections for a classroom mass that would assist them on their own personal spiritual journey. The students willingly accepted this responsibility, acknowledging and embodying the core values passed down from our founder, Eugene De Mazenod and are well on the way in developing an inwardly directed, responsible approach that allows them to choose freely with the aid of a well-informed conscience.

The vast majority of students accepted the academic challenges of the year and performed well within the classroom. Students who excelled in their respective areas were rewarded with extra-curricular activities that included participation in the College Debating Team, commendation in the Australian Stock Exchange Competition, having the opportunity to meet Nobel Laureate Professor Brian Schmidt, and being rewarded for successful completion in a National Geography Competition.

The introduction of the 1 to 1 Laptop Programme proved to be successful, with the students embracing the roles and rationales placed upon them by the College by utilising the laptop as an educational tool and developing an understanding of what it means to have digital responsibility. It is encouraging to see the evidence of creative, imaginative assessment developed with the aid of laptops and to see firsthand the enthusiasm students show when taking accountability for their learning.

A student’s community development is essential in their progress as a Year 9 student, with the aim to reward a student’s attitude toward cooperation and to promote their sense of belonging. This was explored in several ways throughout the year. One such occasion was the Amazing Race that pitted House versus House in a series of challenges designed to test the mental and physical capabilities of every Year 9 student. Whether it be ‘Mazenod Sudoku,’ ‘The Great Group Feed,’ or ‘The How Well Do You Know Mazenod – Jenga Challenge’ each student represented their respective House exceptionally well. Furthermore the student’s participation in Form Assemblies, Year 9 Football Tipping Competition and AFL Dreamteam were all activities that were designed to create a stronger sense of community amongst the Year 9 cohort.

The highlight of the Year 9 calendar has been the two socials held with our sister school St Brigids. Both the rivercruise and rollerskating social were tremendous successes due to the enthusiasm, enjoyment and participation of all involved. To be able to witness the students actively partake in activities that are steered away from the classroom is a humbling experience. I enjoyed seeing students demonstrate their skills in other forums, whether it be on the dance floor or on a pair of rollerblades, whilst also interacting with others in a respectful way in a fun environment.

In assisting with a student’s personal development, three words were introduced to the Year 9’s at the start of the year: accountability, integrity and respect. Each student was made aware of the importance of each and the significance they would play throughout the year. It has been most pleasing to see that all students have shown an improvement in these areas this year. Students have become more accountable for their actions, both in and out of the classroom. A sense of pride emanates throughout the corridors in Year 9 with students being proud of their uniform, the work they present and their interactions with their peers. A respect for the College, the staff, the students and most importantly the individual has been generated and I am confident in the students’ ability to continue these positive attitudes in Year 10.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Form and House Representatives who represented the student body with a willingness and mature approach and although most efforts seemed to go unnoticed I can assure you that your assistance was greatly appreciated.

Furthermore I would like to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of Mr Michael King, Mr Butch Worth, Miss Julia Farinaccio, Ms Jenny Moulton and Mr Michael McShane, who, as Form teachers, have played a significant role in the daily pastoral care of the Year 9 students. Their constant guidance and encouragement has been invaluable.

Finally I would like to applaud the Year 9 cohort on the positive and industrious manner in which they have addressed the numerous challenges this year level offers. They now seem well prepared to cope with the rigours that undoubtedly will present themselves next year.