

BEING A BELIEVER IN A SECULAR WORLD

The Jesuit philosopher Teilhard de Chardin described each of us as “spiritual beings on a human journey”, while Saint Augustine urged us to journey into our humanity where we will find God.

Today's world is one where believers experience a strong dichotomy between secularism and their life of faith.

Karl Marx saw capitalism as the uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, while today many seasoned commentators believe capitalism is responsible for providing the means of self-cultivation, providing tangible and intangible benefits for billions of individual human beings.

Following the fall of communism in the last decade of the 20th century Pope John Paul II, in his landmark encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, acknowledged the benefits of capitalism, but championed the importance of capitalism being operated within structures that focus on the common good of humanity. This is not always an easy fit!

As post-modern leaders and educators we are definitely on a lifelong journey, since we find God by exploring our humanity. There is so much we do not know about ourselves and humanity generally.

Thomas Merton famously said, “My Lord God, I do not know where I am going... and the fact that I think I am following you will does not mean that I am actually doing so.” But he extended this elsewhere, “You do not need to know precisely what is happening or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognise the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.”

Maybe a way to live within the ambiguity we all experience is to recognise that gratefulness is at the heart of faith. This framework allows us to deepen our faith, yet at the same time, the reality is there is very little certainty in our experience of living.

We are left with the often quoted dictum of St Augustine, “Lord, our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

Greetings

Ngā mihi nui ki a koe me tō whānau.

We wish you well for Term 2. It will be a joy to meet you again at our New Zealand Catholic Education Convention in June.

NZ Catholic Education Convention 10-12 June 2015

‘Horizons of Hope’, New Zealand’s triennial Catholic Education Convention, will take place in Wellington, 10-12 June 2015. Early bird registrations have closed but registration is still available at www.cathedconvention2015.co.nz. The convention dinner is included in the registration price this year. International speakers include Professor Therese D’Orsa from Australia, and Sr Gemma Simmonds CJ from England. They will present keynotes and seminars. Katie Novak will be beamed in from USA to present a Spotlight seminar on Universal Design for Learning. There will be a range of significant seminars on latest best practice. NZCEO can answer questions about the convention – email convention15@nzceo.org.nz.

Identifying and Developing Future Secondary School Principals Programme 2015

Calls for nominations to this programme will be sent to schools, diocesan offices and proprietors shortly, with applications closing on 12 June. The course will take place in Auckland over the weekend of 14-16 August.

Congratulations to Principals New to Leadership in a Catholic School

Ben Gorman, St Joseph’s School, Rangiora

Chris Linders, St Joseph’s School, Stratford

Jacqui Luxton, St Mary’s School, Whanganui

Louise Campbell, Marist Catholic School, Herne Bay, Auckland

Meditation and Spirituality

Fr Peter Murphy’s article on the need for meditation and spirituality development for students and teachers, in the latest Good News and the News, was picked up by CathNews, Newstalk ZB and Radio Rhema and he was interviewed by a journalist from ZB. The article obviously struck a chord.

A Useful Article

www.msje.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Marianist-LGBT-Final-2-15.pdf. This article about addressing LGBT issues with youth is a useful reminder of how leadership, teachers and counsellors can ensure that LGBT students in our schools are well cared for.

Pope Francis in the Philippines

In January 2015 in the Philippines Pope Francis told young people that the most important subject they must learn in life is to love. To love like Jesus, he said, we need three languages: the language of the mind, the language of the heart and the language of the hands. These three languages, he said, must be spoken together in harmony.

New Catholic School for Christchurch

As a result of the red-zoning of St Paul’s School, Dallington, a new Catholic primary school will open at the start of 2016 on the site of the current Our Lady of Fatima School. Our Lady of Fatima and St Paul’s School Dallington will close, and the new school will meet the ongoing requirements of Catholic primary schooling in the St Francis of Assisi parish.

“When I give food to the poor they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food they call me a communist.”

Dom Helder Camara

Pope Francis Says

In August 2014, greeting a crowd of 50,000 young German altar servers in Rome, the Pope suggested, "Maybe many young people waste too many hours on futile things, chatting on the internet or with smart phones, watching TV soap operas, and [using] the products of technological progress, which should simplify and improve the quality of life, but which distract one's attention away from what is really important."

It Makes You Think

"Catholic schools do not exist to perpetuate themselves or to propagate a style of pedagogy: rather, Catholic schools exist in order to bring members of the community into a deeper life with Christ." (National Catholic Education Association (USA) newsletter, October 2014, referencing 'Catholic School Leadership, Hunt, T, Oldenski, T, Wallace, T (eds) 2000)

Ponder This

An evangeliser is someone who tells stories. Our Catholic stories need to be communicated with courage, joy, a sense of urgency for our time and inspiration so that our students are connected to our Church in a vital contemporary way. Teachers of millennials need to live their vocation as a teacher, tell stories about themselves (including about their own faith journey) in a light hearted manner and their experience, get personal (within limits!), be open to dialogue with each student. Why does a parent choose a Catholic school – the brand must be clearly Catholic, recognisable, well promoted and its benefits must be a promise to parents and kids: "Education for life and for Heaven" is an American example of such a brand.

Evangelising Millennials

American (UCLA) research suggests:
For millennials internet is more important than TV, because it is interactive; reality is no longer real; doing is more important than knowing; learning more closely resembles Nintendo than logic, staying connected is essential, there is zero tolerance for delays.

Some Websites to Check

www.livingfaith.com

www.au.org The Word Among Us

www.faithfirst.com RCL Benziger e-media for Catholic spiritual formation

www.loyalapress.com

www.blestarewe.com

www.webelieveweb.com Sadlier publishers

www.bustedhalo.com Paulist Fathers

www.catholicTV.com

You tube: David Attenborough on What a Wonderful World (several versions of this are available)

A New Caritas Resource

Caritas has recently produced a resource book for teachers in North Hokianga, called "Te Warawara: Te Wairua o te iwi o Te Rarawa. Written at the request of Mina Pomare-Peita, the Principal of Te Kura Taumata o Panguru, it provides activities and worksheets for teachers in the Far North who are teaching their students about being kaitiakitanga of their forest. Caritas will have the resource on show at the NZ Catholic Education Convention, or contact Crispin

Anderlini at Caritas for more information. The presentation of the book at the Waihou marae in December was shown on Te Karere, on TV1, and can be found on You tube.

Encyclical on Environment due in June

Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment is now being translated into different languages, with an anticipated release in June. It will focus on the role of humans as the stewards of creation, and the natural sciences, combining faith and reason.

Catholic Schools Working Together

Since Catholic schools were first opened in New Zealand many have worked together for the furtherance of Catholic education. Integration strengthened this trend. The emergence of digital technology has massively increased the potential for sharing information, and collaboration, leading to a new Catholic schools portal which will facilitate another leap forward. We look forward to the launch of the portal a little later in the year. Meantime, globally, many New Zealand Catholic teachers and students already collaborate with colleagues in the United States of America and other countries through a variety of channels, including www.catholicedchat.blogspot.com. We have much to gain from developing our global perspective.

Pope Francis Says

"The light is always inside us, because the light gives us joy, gives us hope. When people seek the light they can make the world a better place. God is Love. The love of God never leaves us. It is always with us. Let us have faith in this love."



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"There where you are, you will find hope."

St Mary MacKillop