

OUR CATHOLIC IDENTITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

New Zealand's Catholic schools have a good reputation in the market place as attested by a number of indicators. We know what supports our academic success. It is the strong Catholic identity that exists in our schools.

Catholic education is based on the Gospel message that all humans are made in the likeness of God. It seeks to address the development of the whole person. It presents an education for life, remembering the transcendent purpose of our lives and our hope to spend eternity with the God who loves us.

In order to be authentically Catholic and unabashedly so, it is important that a strong Catholic culture is built up in the school. This is done by the school leadership and each member of staff interacting with students. While the Religious Education syndicate or department is at the front end of strengthening the culture and identity of the school, the entire school community ought to be the breathing manifestation of this identity.

Taking all this seriously is crucial to the long term health of each Catholic institution. Staff professional development opportunities in theology and the enhancement of the practical manifestations of Catholic Special Character are sacred responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, the principal and others in various leadership roles in the school.

Catholic traditions associated with the Church's liturgical year, the marking of Feast Days and the various significant saints are all part of celebrating our Catholic identity.

In this Year of Faith when evangelisation is to the fore, maybe we could keep this Gospel passage in mind: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4: 18-19).

**"If you aim for nothing you
will hit the spot every time."**

Right Hon Helen Clark,
former Prime Minister of NZ

Greetings

Ngā mihi o te wā ki a koutou.

Hopefully the full flowering of springtime will be an enjoyable experience for you.

Next Catholic Education Convention, Wellington, 10-12 June 2015

Please note this date in your 2014 and 2015 diaries, for long term planning.

Supporting Schools and Families in Christchurch

Thank you to all those schools who contributed so generously to the Christchurch Catholic Schools Appeal 2013. The principals and staff of the Christchurch schools have been very grateful for the wonderful support of those throughout New Zealand, as they worked to support students and families in a range of difficult circumstances in the winter.

Microsoft – NZCEO MS365 Initiative for Schools - Latest

NZCEO has now signed the Alliance Agreement with Microsoft New Zealand. A group of six schools has met to begin planning for the pilot to begin in February 2014.

Feedback from Schools on Religious Studies Achievement Standards

Catholic secondary schools Religious Education departments are congratulated on their feedback on the proposed changes in Religious Studies Achievement Standards. The number of schools feeding back was very high and those co-ordinating the project have expressed their gratitude for the work of those in schools, and the work of the Religious Education advisors.

Congratulations to Principals New to the Leadership of Catholic Schools

Tracy Kopua, Christ the King Catholic School, Owairaka, Auckland
Michelle Jadoo, St Mary's School, Avondale, Auckland
Kathryn Carey, Pompallier School, Kaitaia
Ann McKeown, St Joseph's School, Orakei, Auckland
Shelly Fitness, St Michael's School, Rotorua
Tim Nelson, St Mary's School, Carterton
Annette Mahoney, St Joseph's School, Balclutha
Christopher Gunn, St Joseph's School, Dannevirke
Therese Young, San Antonio School, Eastbourne
Bernadette Stockman, St Mary's College, Auckland
Steve Douglas, St Anthony's School, Seatoun.

Caritas Social Justice Series 2013

Caritas is congratulated on the interesting materials published for Social Justice Week 8-14 September. The focus on youth and employment will be resonant with both primary and secondary school students – those who read the Caritas report some years ago on child labour in New Zealand will welcome this fresh material including the booklet Justice at Work.

A School that is Effective for its Māori Students

Cullinane College is congratulated for its work in response to the needs of its Māori students. It was the only school showcased for its good practice in the July 2013 Education Review Office National Report 'Secondary Schools: Pathways for future education, training and employment'.

Schools as Centres of Community Wellbeing

Catholic schools do well in promoting the wellbeing of their families, and of their community. School leadership is congratulated on the way families are supported behind the scenes and through active parent groups. In initiatives in the last several years some schools have become centres of community wellbeing, where links to local medical, health, community and other services are accessible and promoted. This is a wonderful advance in accordance with Catholic values.

Parent Portals worth Emulating

De La Salle College, Mangere, is one of a number of schools that have developed a parent portal on their school website. Parents are provided with a log-in code, and then have access to calendars, reports, timetables, assignments, attendance, assessment reporting, communication and discussion forums.

Words from Pope Francis

- In Lumen Fidei Pope Francis reminds us that living the spirit of faith consists in our willingness to let ourselves be constantly transformed and renewed by God's will. Our faith is not meant to be a private matter or a personal opinion: it is meant to be proclaimed in words and actions.
- In a homily at St Martha's House, 27 September 2013, the Pope said: "Know Jesus with the mind – the study of the Catechism; know Jesus with the heart – in prayer, in dialogue with Him. This helps us a good bit, but it is not enough. There is a third way to know Jesus: it is by following Him, Go with Him, walk with Him. It is necessary to go, to walk along the streets, journeying.... To know Jesus in the language of action. ... You cannot know Jesus in first class."
- To the millions of young people gathered to be with him at the end of World Youth Day, Pope Francis offered three simple ideas: "Go, do not be afraid, and serve". Read the full text of the Pope's homily at <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-s-homily-at-closing-mass-of-world-youth-day-at-copacabana-beach>

An Opportunity to Teach in Northern Territory, Australia

John Young, former principal of St Joseph's School, Upper Hutt, has asked NZCEO to circulate the information that the Catholic Education Office, Northern Territory, is recruiting teachers for 2014, to teach in its remote indigenous schools. Keen, resilient teachers can apply through www.ceont.catholic.edu.au. New graduates will be considered very seriously.

Boards of Trustees and Co-Option

At any stage of the Board's life cycle there may be a need to co-opt one or more people to fill a vacancy. Boards are reminded that this is a good opportunity to provide the Board with different perspectives and strengths. Pacific Islands people and Filipino people may well be brought onto the Board in this way, and they are likely to provide significant strengths.

"Trust in the Lord and do what is good. Make your home in the land and live in peace. Make the Lord your only joy and he will give you what your heart desires."

Psalm 37

Useful Reading for Board of Trustees Members

The NZ Education Gazette, published fortnightly and available online at www.edgazette.govt.nz. In the 29 July 2013 edition, for example, articles of importance to schools and Board members include social media for professional learning, accelerated achievement in literacy and mathematics, digital equity in the classroom and consistency in developing positive behaviour.

Congratulations

- McAuley High School was featured in an article in Leo Pasifika, on the Pasifika Youth Conference. Students presented on an innovative programme in the school to increase NCEA achievement. Student Hinemoa Finau spoke on the importance of education and encouraged Pacific students to reach their full educational potential.
- In another article the magazine reported on Samoan mother Natalie Dillon who is a newly appointed Board of Trustees member at St Dominic's School, Blockhouse Bay, Auckland, the school she attended, and which her children now attend.



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