



According to Australian research, Catholic schools are significant contributors to the nurturing of a humanity that is generating an authentic non-institutional spirituality.

The same could be said in New Zealand – our students gain a huge experience of spirituality in school, in terms of the love that teachers model, the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided for them and the experience of love in action that schools enable them to undertake through a range of social justice activities. They gain a sound and faithful understanding of the meaning of being Catholic as well as a developing intellectual knowledge of religion.

But our schools do far more than this. The contribution of schools throughout the country to the initiation of students into the Church, in particular through sacramental programmes, is a wonderful gift that teachers make to our young people and to our parishes.

Primary and secondary school staff are working tirelessly with parishes to provide instruction for students, and assisting in the arrangements for the reception of the sacraments of initiation. Hundreds of young people are benefiting from the selfless giving of teachers, in particular DRSs.

The Church in New Zealand is conscious of the deep debt of gratitude owed to you, our teachers. Thank you to you all. You make Church deeply present and deeply real for your students and for our local Catholic communities. Our schools are ever more and more truly Catholic because of the work that you do.

“For one human being to love another; that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks.”

RAINER MARIA RILKE

“Without the human community one single human being cannot survive.”

THE DALAI LAMA

Greetings

Tēnā koutou katoa. Ka nui ā mātou mihi ki a koutou i te wā nei.

Anei ngā pitopito kōrero o te wā.

Resources for Catholic Schools to Support the New Zealand Curriculum

The National Centre for Religious Studies has sent to secondary school DRSs the 2008 draft interim edition of 'Understanding Faith, the Religious Education Statement for Catholic Secondary Schools'. This includes 'Religious Education Te Whakaakoranga and the New Zealand Curriculum', and a brief statement on the Responsibility of Boards of Trustees for Religious Education (based on material in the Handbook for Boards of Trustees of New Zealand Catholic Integrated Schools, and on the Catholic Special Character Review and Development document). Check www.ncrsnz.org.nz.

Groupings of Religious Education Advisors are working on a further statement providing a Catholic perspective on the New Zealand Curriculum. This material is likely to be distributed in June or July, for use in school workshops. For further information contact Br Kevin Wanden at NCRS. Email ncrsnz@clear.net.nz.

On Being Fully Human – Presentation by Fr Walter Vogels

The Wellington Catholic Education Centre recently arranged for Fr Walter Vogels to speak in Sacred Heart Cathedral Wellington on 'Being Fully Human – our relationships with nature, God and others, through reference to scripture'. This presentation will be available to watch for the next couple of months at www.wcec.org.nz. Note that the sound of the introduction is poor, but the presentation itself is very clear.

Congratulations to Leaders Who Have Recently Taken Up their First Appointment as a Principal of a Catholic School

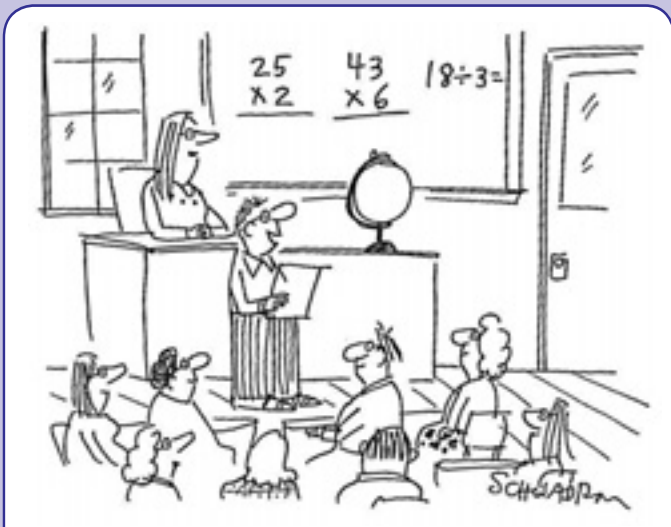
Gail Kissick, St Peter Chanel, Motueka
Carmel Brosnahan-Pye, St Joseph's School, Timaru
Jane Hahn, Christ the King School, Owairaka

Congratulations

A delightful and inspiring article by Principal Mary Clare Murphy about 'Tall Poppies', the annual production of St Patrick's School, Greymouth, was published in the Term 1 issue of Education Today. The production was masterminded by teacher Susan Smith who leads a culture of performance in the school which is based on a cross-curriculum approach ensuring the involvement of absolutely everyone,

Bishop Viard College, Porirua was the venue for the Minister of Education's launch of the 'Fuelled 4 School' challenge, which encourages intermediate and secondary school students to develop their own plans to combat nutrition issues among their peers. See www.fuelled4school.co.nz for details. Other Catholic schools also in the challenge are Hato Petera College, John Paul College, McAuley High School, St Bernard's College, and St Mary's College Auckland.

David Ivory, HOF Social Sciences at St Thomas of Canterbury College, Christchurch, is the inaugural Fulbright-Cognition Trust Scholar Award in Education Research. He will travel and work on research in the United States for three to five months. David received the Sir James Fletcher Award for his work in enterprise education in 2007.



“‘How I Spent My Vacation,’ by Kevin Grundy . . . My family drove from gas station to gas station, looking for the cheapest gas.”

World Youth Day

As World Youth Day approaches, 4000 New Zealanders are confirmed to attend the event in Sydney. They are now involved in catechetical preparation for World Youth Day. Another 4000 pilgrims are expected to visit New Zealand for Days in the Diocese. Leaders of a range of Catholic Church organisations came together recently to begin to plan how they will support the development of the spirit of World Youth Day in the life of the Church in New Zealand over the years to come.

Interesting Use of Technology

Some school DRSs, here and overseas, have started RE blogs. It would be interesting to share best practice on this. Please let us know if your school is involved in RE blogging.

School Reunions

- St Joseph’s School, Kaikoura 125th Jubilee: 17th-18th September 2008. To register interest or make inquiries contact Monique Smith 03 319 6380, mslid@xtra.co.nz, Julie Howden 03 319 5830 or bendamerehouse@xtra.co.nz.
- Wanganui Catholic primary schools: Queen’s Birthday weekend 2008 (St Marcellin’s, St Anthony’s, St Joseph’s, St Vincent’s and Marist Brothers). For details email bonnie@stmarcellin.school.nz.

Juno - A Film Worth Noting

Recently released film Juno provides a funny and thoughtful tale of teenage pregnancy, celebrating the choice of life over abortion. The film has appeal for boys as well as girls. It may have a role in classrooms.

‘Inform’ Newsletter Available

‘Inform’ is a publication of the Catholic Adult Education Centre, Sydney, which provides information on the most current issues in our faith. A single subscription (6 issues per year) is (A)\$10, with major discounts for multiple copies. Email info@caec.com.au for further details.

Our International Church

The first Catholic school in India was started by St Francis Xavier in 1541, in Goa. Today the Church has 14,539 Catholic educational institutions in India, of which 448 are colleges. Some 60% of the schools are in rural areas.

A Thought Worth Pondering

A retired financier who is not religious has given a gift of over \$27 million to charitable works of the archdiocese of New York because “without the Roman Catholic Church there would be no Western civilisation.”

Research on the Effect of Catholic Schooling

American research by Perl and Gray (2005) has found that those who were raised Catholic and attended Catholic high school for at least three years are significantly less likely to switch to another faith, or to switch to no religious affiliation. Another study by Gautier indicates that although the number of highly committed Catholics has continued to drop, there is significantly higher commitment from those who have attended Catholic high school. These studies add to earlier studies on the positive effect of Catholic schooling.

Some Thoughts for Teachers

Teachers are those who use themselves as bridges, over which they invite their students to cross; then having facilitated their crossing, joyfully collapse, encouraging them to create bridges of their own. Nikos Kazantsakis

In a completely rational society, the best of us would be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something else. Lee Iacocca

A child’s teachers during the first six years of school will largely determine the nature of that child’s attitude to authority and the educational climate in junior and senior high school (and beyond). James C. Dobson

The task of the excellent teacher is to stimulate “apparently ordinary” people to unusual effort. The tough problem is not in identifying winners; it is in making winners out of ordinary people. K. Patricia Cross.



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