



Martin Luther King's, 1967, "I Have A Dream" speech in the early days of the civil rights movement in the United States of America, has, over the years, galvanized many people into recognising the importance of having realizable dreams.

King emphasized the importance of positive thinking as opposed to the victim mentality. He also emphasized the importance of education as a vehicle for enabling individuals to blossom and realize their potential. There is no doubt that conveying to students and our fellow citizens the importance of self-improvement and of developing the means to do so is vitally important.

As Catholics, hope is one of the most wonderful gifts we can offer the younger generation. Faith, Hope and Charity are the major virtues that oil and fuel the building up of a better world and enhance the lives of individuals. However, in this post-modern era, it is probably Hope which is the virtue that needs emphasizing most, since large numbers of people are anything but hope-filled. Our God is a God of hope, a God who urges us to do our bit to bring about the ultimate Kingdom of Love and Hope for everyone – this is indeed a noble goal worth investing energy and enthusiasm in.

As schools are pivotal vehicles for transmitting Christ's Good News, all of us involved with them have a responsibility to fundamentally be people of Hope – no doubt you are, so THANK YOU!!

Greetings to you all

Nau mai, haere mai ki te whānau akonga o Aotearoa.

Very best wishes for the end of year activities, which always require extra energy and dedication from school staff.

Catholic Schools Brochure Distributed

Schools have recently received copies of a new brochure, 'Catholic Schools, a Heritage to be Proud Of'. It is expected that principals and teachers will find many uses for this brochure: in displays, within the classroom, for Boards, for parents of current and prospective students. The brochure outlines the history of Catholic education, and explains the benefit of Catholic schooling today, and the need for support, including financial support. Schools have received copies based on the number of students on their roll.

Ministry of Education Circular on Crown Entities Act

In September the Ministry of Education published Circular 2005/16, which covers the responsibilities of Boards of Trustees as a result of the Crown Entities Act 2004. Those associated with school finances need to note carefully the paragraphs which comment on schools' use of diocesan development funds.

Use of Unit Standards to Gain Credit in Religious Education

Thanks are expressed to secondary school DRSs who answered a questionnaire from NZCEO about Unit Standards used to assess Religious Education. Forty six out of our forty nine schools are using a total of 47 standards from 12 domains, making a total of 45,771 entries. Twelve unit standards from the domain Understanding Religion account for 12,311 entries, 29 unit standards from seven other Christian domains account for 32,855 entries and six unit standards have been used from four other domains. This information is very helpful at a policy creation level.

Improved New Zealand Catholic Education Office Website

NZCEO is pleased to announce its new-look website. The address has not changed, but there is a smart new presentation and the new structure should make it easier to find material. There are plans for particular communities of interest to be developed as needed. If you have any ideas for further improvements, or if you discover any teething problems, please let us know. Visit www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz

Major Partnership for Schools and Sponsorship for Catholic Education Convention

Computer and Network Solutions (CNS), whose managing Director, Terry Perreau, was the bursar at Rosmini College for a decade, has entered into a partnership with NZCEO which will enable the Catholic education sector to source a range of IT equipment and services at excellent educational rates. The company has also agreed to provide major sponsorship for the 2006 convention.

Teachers with Qualifications in Religious Education Available to Teach in 2006

Teachers graduating from education courses with Theology and Religious Education qualifications are listed on the NZCEO website at www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz/teachers

"Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections are first overcome."

SAMUEL JOHNSON

New NZCEO Strategic Plan Nearing Completion

The New Zealand Catholic Education Office Strategic Plan for 2006-2010 is nearing completion. The Board of the Office has sent the draft plan out to Proprietors for their comment, after which the plan will go through its final stages. Thanks are expressed to the reference group which worked to develop the plan and to all those who have provided input in both the earlier and the later stages.

A Measure of Special Character in Catholic Schools

Special Character is a legal term enshrined in the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 – but it is more than that.

It is the responsibility of all associated with the school.

It defines the school, in the ways people educate, support and relate to each other. It is observed in the attitudes and behaviour of the students, in relationships between staff and students, between staff members themselves and between staff and parents/caregivers. It is further strengthened when school and parish enjoy a positive partnership.

It is the living out of Gospel values.

When the school's Special Character is alive and well it is enshrined in the governance, management policies and procedures which underpin all aspects of Catholic school life.

Drawing on the Heritage of the Church to Help Youth Consider Today's Problems

Recently Dr Peter Vardy, speaking to the National Secondary Catholic Principals' Conference, suggested that Catholic schools can assist senior students to think deeply about the complex ethical questions of the 21st century by exposing them to the philosophy of the past, including Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas. Several schools are developing materials which make use of this foundational material, including St Bede's College, Christchurch.



"I'm going to really miss you next year, Harold."

Did You Know?

- Isaac Newton's great predecessor, Johannes Kepler, wrote "For a long time I wanted to become a theologian. ... Now, however, behold how through my effort God is being celebrated in astronomy."
- Physicist and Nobel Prizewinner Charles H Townes wrote that differences between science and religion "are largely superficial ... The two become almost indistinguishable if we look at the real nature of each."

However, equating God only with the structure and function of the material world is not enough. The Christian God has two aspects, God the Creator and God the Redeemer. God the Redeemer is inevitably missing from the "god and physics" discourse. As the Jesuit philosopher Michael Buckley pointed out, rational inference can never substitute for the personal experience of the divine, which is, and must remain, the grounding of faith.

"Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones."

PROVERBS 16:24

Australian School's Academic Success Based on School Culture

Trinity Catholic College in Auburn, Western Sydney has an extremely socio-economically disadvantaged school population but it has turned around its academic performance in five years, from below average to superior. The school focuses on teaching and learning as the first priority every day, minimising disruptions to daily routine and maximising the time students spend in the classroom with their regular teacher. The number of courses on offer has been reduced, students are encouraged to study HSC subjects best suited to their ability level, and minimum standards are set for students to achieve in Year 10 (NZ Year 11 equivalent), in order to study the most demanding HSC courses in Years 11 and 12. As a result, students work hard to achieve their goals, 60% of the students go on the university and the rest mostly find employment or go on to other tertiary study.



KONICA MINOLTA

Kia kaha, kia maia, kia u.

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