



The dignity of each person is the fundamental lens through which Catholic schools view their students. The Biblical teachings about this, along with the theological reflections that expand the "temple of the Holy Spirit" understanding we have about each person, are the foundation on which we build our philosophy of education.

It is of more than passing interest that the experience of effective schools, in New Zealand and elsewhere in the world, and also current academic research on the matter, both focus on the fundamental importance of treating each student well, knowing their name and displaying interest in what they do and who their family is. This is simple, effective engagement with students which builds trust and enhances learning opportunities.

When students know they are part of a school culture that treats them with dignity they are more likely to discover personal meaning in the work they are asked to do and apply themselves to it. Once purpose is established energy and commitment follow.

As we get into the New Year our Catholic schools will, as always, focus on their responsibility to offer an education which is religiously based so that students positively resonate with it.

Our lives are journeys of hope. God is present in the goodness of others. Students who experience a Catholic school as a place where their dignity is well regarded are more likely to go out into the world with attitudes that engender the virtues of graciousness, love, trust and openness. These attitudes and virtues in turn help others to respect the dignity of their fellows.

With financial pressures swirling around all of us, focusing on fundamentals like the dignity of others gives a solid base to our actions.

May you experience the Good Lord's goodness and love as the year progresses.

Greetings

Maka atu o koutou manukanuka katoa ki runga ki a ia; e whakaaro ana hoki ia ki a koutou (1 Pita 5:7) Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

We wish you well as you settle into the 2009 school year.

Dates for Your Diary

- CATHOLIC EDUCATION CONVENTION 29-31 JULY 2009. Although registration costs are not finalised as we go to print, we expect that they will be only slightly increased from last convention. Please budget accordingly. Further information accompanies this newsletter.
- Catholic Schools Day 19 May 2010. Please note the change of date, arising from a clash of dates with the major Oceanic Region Meeting of Catholic Bishops, which our Bishops will be attending.

Certification for Teachers in Catholic Schools

The 'Handbook for Certification in Catholic Special Character and Religious Education' is now available on line at www.ncrs.org.nz, www.faithcentral.net.nz and www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz. Certification is available for all teachers in Catholic schools, either in Catholic Special Character or in Religious Education. This important initiative will help to sustain and further elevate the standards of Catholic Character and Religious Education offered in New Zealand's Catholic schools. All those involved with the development of the Certification framework are congratulated.

NZCEO Board Chairman Honoured

Geoff Ricketts is congratulated on the award of QBE Chairperson of the Year. He received this award in his capacity as Chairperson of Lion Nathan, and as a result of his involvement in a wide range of boards and community services, including the Auckland Catholic Diocesan Advisory Board. NZCEO and the Catholic community is privileged to have access to Geoff's skills and expertise.

Catholic Education Convention Laureate Awards

Once again, at the NZ Catholic Education Convention several laureate awards will be presented to outstanding contributors to the New Zealand Catholic education system. A nomination form accompanies this mailout. Those receiving awards will have contributed to the wellbeing of more than one school – their work will have extended across the system, nationally or regionally, and will have had a significant impact on sustaining the system.

Caritas Lenten Reflection Programme Is Available in Three Languages

Caritas is congratulated on making the annual Lenten Reflection Programme available in Tongan and Samoan, as well as in English. This material may be of use to parents and students. Contact lisa@caritas.org.nz to obtain copies, or phone the Caritas office, 04 496 1742.

Catholic School Students' Ethnic Makeup in July 2008 (Ministry of Education)

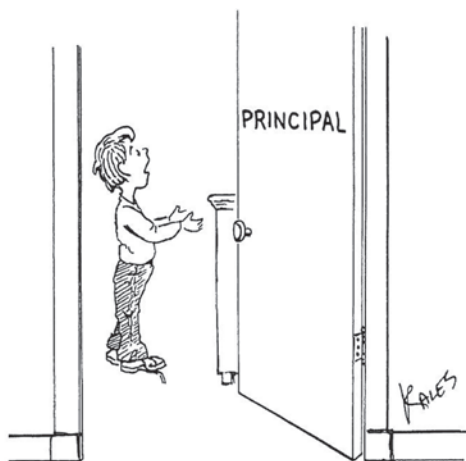
NZ European 55%, European 4%,
Māori 13%, Pasifika 15%,
Asian 9%, Other 3%, Foreign fee paying students 1%.
Catholic school student numbers rose 200 from the 2007 figure, reaching 65076.

Congratulations to Colleagues on Their First Principalship in a Catholic School

Mark Rice, St Paul's College, Auckland
Shaun O'Leary, St Joseph's School, Paeroa
David Olivier, St Peter's College, Palmerston North
Peter Knowles, St Joseph's School, Picton
Julian Ineson, St Thomas's School, Winton

"Faith is not just something you have, it's something you do"

Barack Obama



"Honestly, I really didn't do it. Some other kid stole my identity."

Congratulations

Villa Maria College, Christchurch, has developed a substantial programme on sustainability for Year 12 students. Student work on sustainability involves other year levels also, and crosses a number of subject areas.

St Patrick's School, Kaponga, principal Libby Whittington is congratulated on the positive way she handled the media when the children were involved in a road accident in November 2008.

St Francis Xavier School, Dunedin, is one of a number of schools that have made good use of indicators from the Catholic Special Character Review and Development document to survey their parent community on the school.

Jo Brady, St Joseph's School, Whakatane, and Arna Graham-Somerville and staff, St Joseph's School, Fairfield provided exemplary leadership in the very successful Hamilton Diocese Catholic Schools Conference. Anthony Mills, St Thomas More School, Mount Maunganui, gave an inspiring presentation on working with boys in the classroom.

Seekers Programme's Long Term Success

The Seekers programme, which is on offer to students at St Peter's College, Palmerston North, started in 2000. In 2008 39 students entered the programme, with 21 of them later receiving First Eucharist (including 10 who received baptism also). Parishes and parents are fully involved.

New Reading

'Catholic Schools – Hope in Uncertain Times', ed. Anne Benjamin and Dan Riley, contains essays by Australian and international leaders of Catholic education on the contribution that quality religious schooling can make to society. Order online from www.johngarratt.com.au. Cost A\$49.95.

'The God Book: Talking about God Today', ed. Neil Darragh, is available from cit@auckland.ac.nz.

**"Battles in the public square
are won with words."**

Sarasas Schools Bangkok Offer Exchange Opportunities

NZCEO has a Memorandum of Understanding with Sarasas-affiliated bi-lingual schools in Thailand, to facilitate the exchange of students and teachers between Thailand and New Zealand. Schools or teachers interested in investigating the range of possibilities available can contact Adrian Jones, External Liaison and School Development Officer, through admin@ektra.ac.th. Visit www.ektra.ac.th to gain further insights into Sarasas Ektra and other Sarasas schools.

Tui Motu Seeks More Subscriptions

With the recent downturn in the economic climate Tui Motu has experienced a downturn in subscriptions. It asks current subscribers to encourage others to subscribe.

A Thought

"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 Kazantzakis.

Prayer Portraits

A4-A6 colour illustrated prayer pages are available from Lasallian Education Services. Email brendancarroll@delasalle.org.au for details.

Useful Websites

www.faithtakingjustice.com.au is a Jesuit website providing material and resources on the key principles of Catholic teachings on justice in society.

www.cts-online.org.uk is the website of the Catholic Truth Society (CTS). It contains a catalogue of books and resources, including story books for children aged 3-9 that may be useful for Religious Education.

Education from the Beginning

An article in the December 5th 2008 Education Review commented on the number of the country's earliest schools that were Catholic, and the importance of community in the survival of these schools.



KONICA MINOLTA

Mā te Atua koutou e manaaki, e tiaki.

Pat Lynch, C.E.O.

Susan Apáthy, Deputy C.E.O.

Maureen Condliffe, Operations Manager

Donna Campbell, Financial Controller

Jane O'Connell

Adele Pedreschi

Wendy Rozenberg

Lighting New Fires is published by the New Zealand Catholic Education Office, PO Box 12307, Wellington. Phone: 04 496 1739

Fax: 04 496 1734 or Email: nzceogs@nzceo.catholic.org.nz

Website: www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz