

Message Stick

To all members of the Catholic Education family



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

Reflection from Pope Francis

If the world is divided, if the Church is polarized, if hearts are broken, let us not waste time in criticising others and growing angry with one another; instead let us invoke the Holy Spirit.

Please remember in your prayers recently deceased members of our wider Catholic Education Family.

William 'Dub' Goodwin, father of Bill Goodwin, Principal St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bundaberg.

Please remember in your prayers members of our wider Catholic Education Family who are unwell at this time.

Brendon (Ben) Hall, father of Lachlan Hall, Marist College, Emerald.

St Brigid's Catholic Primary School, Emerald recently commissioned Indigenous Artist Deadly Arthur (Arthur Conlon) to provide some artwork around the school.



Friday 2 June 2023

Good morning everyone

I was delighted to hear of the many activities undertaken across our Kindergartens, Schools and Colleges recognizing National Reconciliation Week. Congratulations to all involved in the planning and presenting of liturgies, activities and ceremonies celebrating this important week which concludes tomorrow (3 June), the anniversary of the 1992 High Court Mabo Decision which led to the establishment of the Native Title Act. The deeply respectful way in which our communities engage in these special commemorations is very inspiring and works towards facilitating a mutual understanding and deeper appreciation for our shared histories, cultures and achievements to help bring about a more just and inclusive future.

I extend my thanks and appreciation to all who contributed to the success of the Diocesan Festival gathering held last weekend at The Cathedral College in Rockhampton which brought together representatives from all sectors of our Catholic community. Hosted by Bishop Michael and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, it was a great opportunity to come together to discuss and to learn more about the pastoral focus of the Diocese over the next five years outlined in the newly launched Diocesan Pastoral Plan. On the eve of Pentecost, the presence of the Holy Spirit provided a renewed sense of hope and unity and a strengthened commitment to sharing God's comforting love and support with others. Thanks also, to Rob Alexander (Principal) and The Cathedral College community for their generous hospitality in providing facilities to host the gathering.

I was very pleased to be present at Emmanuel Catholic Primary School, Mackay for their 40-year anniversary celebrations this week. Opened in 1983 by the Marist Sisters and surrounded by picturesque cane fields, Emmanuel started as a Year 1-10 school growing rapidly to serve the needs of the expanding population in North Mackay. Current Principal, Geraldine Rostirolla, was a foundation staff member and I very much enjoyed hearing Geraldine's reflections on the school's journey. Congratulations to all on this significant milestone in the life of the school and to the many who have contributed to the vibrant, faith-filled and life-giving Emmanuel community over the past four decades. We pray they will always know God's love, mercy and abundant blessings.

On Wednesday I enjoyed catching up with staff and students during school visits to MacKillop Catholic Primary School, Andergrove and yesterday St Brendan's Catholic Primary School, Northern Beaches and St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School, Mackay. It was wonderful to see firsthand the dedicated and faith-centered teaching and learning happening in these school communities. My thanks to Allison Blakey (Principal MacKillop), David Paul (Principal St Brendan's) and Olivia Rostirolla (Principal St Francis Xavier) and their respective staff and students for the warm welcome extended to me during my visit.

Finally, I very much appreciated attending the very life-giving Pentecost Ecumenical Prayer Service held at St Joseph's Cathedral last Sunday bringing together members of multiple mainstream Christian faith traditions. Many of you would know Sr Beryl Amedee who recently celebrated her 60th Jubilee as a Sister of Mercy and who has worked tirelessly for many years in the area of Ecumenism. Members of the Ecumenical Ministers' Fraternal joined in a prayer of blessing over Sr Beryl in a heartfelt tribute for her wonderful ecumenical advocacy. May we too, seek to emulate Sr Beryl's example and work to strengthen our relationships with all Christians.

God bless,

Leesa

Where's Leesa: Monday 5 June, Office and School visit St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Rockhampton; Tuesday 6 June, CHRISTOS, at The Haven; Wednesday 7 June, Office, Thursday 8 June, Office and Primary Principals' Meeting; Friday 9 June, School visit Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Gladstone; Blessing and Opening St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Gladstone; The Cathedral College Musical.

St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School, Mackay: the venue for their staff meeting was a little different and incredibly special. Indigenous Liaison Officer, Mrs Karlie Tatchell organised a “Walk on Country” for staff. Guides, Auntie Antoinette and Auntie Veronica shared some of the rich history of our local Yuwi people and staff learned of the Torres Strait and South Sea Islanders who were brought here to work in the cane fields and reflected on the strength and resilience of these proud peoples. What a wonderful way to acknowledge National Sorry Day, 26 May, as well as National Reconciliation Week 27 May - 3 June.



St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, Bundaberg recently participated in the annual National Simultaneous Storytime. Every year, a picture book, written and illustrated by Australians is read simultaneously in schools, libraries, childcare centres, and homes across the country. This year our book was *The Speedy Sloth*, written by Rebecca Young and illustrated by Heath McKenzie.



Staff, families and students at St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, Blackall joined in Walk Safely to School Day last week with adopt-a-cop Constable Ray ensuring that everyone arrived safely at school and on time.



Pictured below at the Emmanuel Catholic Primary School, Mackay 40th Anniversary celebrations are from left: Leesa, Vince McSherry, Sr Noelene Simmons, Lindsay Ferguson, Geraldine Rostirolla and Michael McCusker.



Students at Catherine McAuley College, Mackay have been learning how to be still in Christian Meditation sessions being held in the College’s Sacred Space.



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