

Message Stick

To all members of the Catholic Education family



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

Reflection from Pope Francis

Overwhelmed by a ton of words, we let the *Word of God* slip by us. We hear it, but we fail to listen to it. We listen to it, but we don't keep it. We keep it, but we fail to let it provoke us to change. We need to stop being "deaf" to God's Word!

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

Dorothy Brand, mother of Warren Brand, Catholic Education Office, Rockhampton.

Margaret Landers, mother of Rita Mactaggart (St Brendan's, Mackay) and grandmother of Jemima Mactaggart (St John's, Walkerston).

Geoff Murphy, friend and significant supporter of Catholic Education.

Congratulations to:

Michael Watson (Catherine McAuley College, Mackay) and wife Merle on the safe arrival of Christina.

Matthew Hodge (Chanel College, Gladstone) on completing his Doctorate studies.

Thursday 25 January 2024

Good morning everyone

Welcome to the new school year and our first *Message Stick* for 2024. I hope you had a wonderful break with family and friends.

I am aware that during the Christmas/New Year period several families experienced loss and sadness. Please be assured of my continuing thoughts and prayers for all whose lives have been touched by sorrow. My thoughts and prayers are also very much with those experiencing ill health at present.

As I am writing this *Message Stick*, there is a great deal of community concern regarding potential impacts from the tropical low that is forecast soon to be a cyclone and nearing the Queensland coast. Our schools in the Northern Region have prepared as much as possible for any eventuality. My sincere thanks to Michael McCusker for his coordination of our response to this event and to the members of the CEDR Critical Response Team and all who have contributed to our preparedness. Our thoughts and prayers are for the safety of all in the communities likely to be affected by this potentially severe weather event.

Our Opening School Year Masses held in various regions last week were once again uplifting and joyous celebrations, despite the heat and humidity. Undoubtedly, a highlight for me was the entrance procession of our school banners, representing each of our communities, into a capacity-filled St Joseph's Cathedral. I reflected on how blessed we are to gather, in a spirit of faith and hope, to recommit ourselves to the Ministry of Catholic Education. Another highlight was the presentation of plaques to long serving staff. The names of those who received Long Service plaques are included in this *Message Stick*. Congratulations to all these long serving staff and I thank them most sincerely for their significant contribution and valued service to Catholic Education.

I extend my sincere thanks to Bishop Michael for presiding at our Rockhampton Region Mass and to the Priests who concelebrated. Thanks to Kellie Jenkinson (AD: Mission), the FIARE Team and to all who assisted in many and varied ways to make the Mass such a special occasion. It was great to have so many of you join via the livestream. To all who contributed to the planning and organization of Opening School Year Masses across our Diocese, I extend my sincere appreciation.

A very special welcome to all who are joining our Catholic Education family for the first time or are moving into new roles. I pray you will find personal and professional fulfillment in your ministry. I offer my very best wishes to the newly appointed Principal of St Therese's Catholic Primary School, Monto, Scott Murray. With a genuine love and understanding of smaller rural communities, borne of personal experience growing up, living, and working in Far North Queensland, I know Scott will provide wonderful leadership for the St Therese's school community.

During this week it has been wonderful to join Bishop Michael in visiting the schools and kindergartens in Rockhampton to meet teachers and students as we begin another school year. I am looking forward to visiting the schools in the Southern Region next week.

In closing, I wish all in our Catholic Education family every one of God's many blessings for 2024. Thank you for your dedication and commitment and I look forward to working with you to make a real difference in the lives of those in the communities we serve.

God bless,

Leesa

Where's Leesa: Monday 29 January, St Joseph's Biloela and St Therese's Monto; Tuesday 30 January, St Joseph's Bundaberg, St Patrick's Bundaberg, Shalom College Bundaberg; Wednesday 31 January, St Mary's Bundaberg, St Francis Tannum Sands; Thursday 1 February, Star of the Sea Gladstone, Chanel College Gladstone, St John the Baptist Gladstone; Friday 2 February, The Cathedral College Opening School Year Mass.

**Catholic Education Opening School Year Mass Rockhampton
St Joseph's Cathedral, Friday 19 January.**



Staff from our Catholic Kindergartens gathered last week in Rockhampton for Professional Development Days. Pictured below left: Roslyn Davies (Teacher Director) St Joseph's Bundaberg, Sharon Hage (Teacher Director) St Joseph's Biloela, Julie Turner, Kindergarten Curriculum and Equity Coordinator, Michelle Gallagher, Kindergarten Curriculum and Equity Coordinator, Bronwyn Berry (Teacher) St Brigid's Emerald, Tracey Novak, Early Learning and Care Manager, Belinda Rule (Teacher) Emmanuel, Mackay and Kathleen James (Teacher) St Joseph's Park Avenue.

Staff from St Brendan's Catholic Primary School, Mackay attended a Professional Development Day recently with guest presenter, Fr Richard Leonard SJ, speaking about Catholic Identity.



St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Gladstone recently received their new Marist Cross, pictured below.



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Around our Kindergartens, Schools and Colleges

We are always very grateful for any Good News stories from our Kindergartens, Primary Schools and Colleges that we can share via the Message Stick. Please send content and photos to media@rok.catholic.edu.au no later than Tuesday COB each week of term.

Friday 16 February

We extend sincere congratulations and thanks to the following long serving staff who are being acknowledged at appropriate times within respective communities.

NAME	SCHOOL / REGION	YEARS
Natalie Pobar	St Benedict's, Yeppoon	20
Sandra McLellan	Holy Spirit College, Mackay	20
Angela Russo	MacKillop, Mackay	20
Tina Knight	St Joseph's, Biloela	20
Donna Delaney	St Patrick's, Bundaberg	20
John McDevitt	Catholic Education Office	20
Kathy Fishburn	St Joseph's, Wandal	20
Patricia Billman	The Cathedral College, Rockhampton	20
Ian Jenner	Shalom College, Bundaberg	20
Wes Rose	St Mary's, Mackay	20
Susan Cutting	Our Lady's, Longreach	20
Caroline Roper	St Brendan's, Mackay	21
Suzanne Smyth	Star of the Sea, Gladstone	21
David Wild	Chanel College, Gladstone	21
Christopher Johnstone	Shalom College, Bundaberg	21
Julie Goltz	St Peter's, Rockhampton	21
Angela MacKenzie	OSHC St Francis Xavier, Mackay	21
Joanne Ciantar-Schatkowski	St Patrick's College, Mackay	21
Evelyn MacDonald	St Patrick's, Emerald	22
Anna Tom	St Mary's, Rockhampton	22
Nichole Parkin	Emmaus College, North Rockhampton	22
Catherine Simmonds	Catholic Education Office	22
Annette Hammermeister	St Patrick's, Bundaberg	23
Wendy Cunningham	St Patrick's College, Mackay	23
Helen Ellis	Catholic Education Office	25
Natalie Field	Catholic Education Office	25
Kim O'Shea-Hard	St Patrick's, Bundaberg	30
Ann Harkin	St Paul's, Gracemere	30
Katherine Howell	St Anthony's, North Rockhampton	30
Seamus Toman	Emmaus College, North Rockhampton	30
Michael Harman	Shalom College, Bundaberg	30
Terri Leotta	St Mary's, Mackay	30
Susanne Georgeson	St Paul's, Gracemere	40
Karyl Young	Emmaus College, North Rockhampton	40
Mark Hayes	Chanel College, Gladstone	40

*Thank
you* 

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