

Message Stick

To all members of the Catholic Education family



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

Friday 9 February 2024

Good morning everyone

Greetings to all from the Northern Region where I have been accompanying Bishop Michael visiting our schools and colleges in Mackay, Sarina and Walkerston. It has been delightful connecting with so many staff and students on our many classroom visits where we have been so warmly received. It was wonderful to be with the St Patrick's College community and the Holy Spirit College community for their respective Opening School Year Masses, and it was my great pleasure to assist Bishop Michael at the official Blessing and Opening of Stage 2 capital works at Catherine McAuley College. My sincere thanks to our Northern Region Principals and school communities for facilitating such an enjoyable visit.

Lent and our journey to Easter commence next week with Ash Wednesday. The symbolic ritual of receiving ashes made from burning blessed palms from last year's Palm Sunday, prompt us to reflect, rebalance and refresh our relationship with God and open our hearts to the empowering grace of the Holy Spirit. We receive ashes as a cross on our foreheads as a reminder of our anointing at baptism with a cross, and of Christ's sacrifice on the cross for our salvation. Thank you to all involved in the preparation of Ash Wednesday liturgies and for providing this significant faith experience for those in your communities.

Spanning the six weeks of Lent, is Caritas Australia's Project Compassion. As you would be aware, this fundraising initiative is a key social justice focus for our Catholic Education communities as we look to help people across the world living in some of the most vulnerable circumstances. The Project Compassion [website](#) provides engaging information and resources for schools to access and to promote participation and involvement within their communities. Thank you to all those who coordinate and facilitate these activities each year.

Next Friday we will be gathering in our communities for our Bishop's Inservice Day 2024. I am looking forward to joining you as we turn our attention *to Social Action and Justice* and the call through the Ministry of Catholic Education to uphold human dignity and worth guided by our Catholic social teaching. My thanks to all involved in presenting this important day of formation, especially to Kellie Jenkinson (AD: Mission) and the FIARE team.

God bless,

Leesa

Bishop Michael and Leesa at the Blessing and Opening of Stage 2 works, Catherine McAuley College, Mackay. Pictured below with (Jim Ford (Principal), Julieanne Gilbert MP (Member for Mackay), Fr Matthias Ogwo, and college students.



Where's Leesa: Monday 12 February, School visits Sacred Heart and St Benedict's Yeppoon; Tuesday 13 February, QCEC Meeting Brisbane; Wednesday 14 February (Ash Wednesday) and Thursday 15 February, Office; Friday 16 February, Bishop's Inservice Day.



Reflection from Pope Francis

Jesus reveals to us that God is not a detached master who speaks to us from on high. He is a loving Father who draws near to us, comes into our homes, wants to save and liberate us and heals us from every ill of body and spirit.

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

John Slade, father of Julienne Morrison and Kate Peers (St Benedict's, Yeppoon), father-in-law of Shane Peers (St Brendan's College, Yeppoon) and Megan Slade (St Ursula's College, Yeppoon) and grandfather of Georgia Holzberger (St Patrick's, Emerald) and Mia Peers (Sacred Heart, Yeppoon).

John Bean, step-father of David Gahan (Shalom College, Bundaberg) and Toni Gahan (St Mary's, Bundaberg).

Robert Bonnell, brother of Suzanne Chalk (St Joseph's, Biloela) and uncle of Katie Muller (St Joseph's, Biloela).

SOUTHERN REGION SCHOOL VISITS



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Springsure whole staff (pictured above) undertook Berry Street Trauma Informed training during staff professional development days at the start of the year. The group will complete another two days at the beginning of next year.

Recent rains ensured a spectacular drone photo of **St Brigid's, Emerald** and surrounding landscape, as the community marked the school's first decade. Students and staff formed the number '10' on the school oval creating this memorable shot.

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PROJECT COMPASSION
FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS

Congratulations to:

Maddison Lowth (Marist College, Emerald) and husband Alex on the safe arrival of George Andrew.

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