

# Message Stick

To all members of the Catholic Education family



Catholic Education  
Diocese of Rockhampton

## Reflection from Pope Francis

May the Holy Spirit foster communion and fraternity among Christians of different confessions. May the Holy Spirit grant world leaders the courage to dialogue that leads to an end to all wars.

Please remember in your prayers recently deceased members of our extended Catholic Education Family:

**Kevin McCusker**, father and father-in-law of Michael (AD: Schools – Northern Region) and Marie McCusker, Anne and Mark Effene; grandfather of Emily McCusker, Emmanuel Catholic Primary School, Mackay, Tom Effene, Catholic Education Office, Rockhampton and Louise Effene, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Wandal.

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

**Monica White**, Principal of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bundaberg.

## Friday 31 May 2024

Good morning everyone

This was a very special week of celebrations and commemorations as we marked the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of our Bishop, Bishop Michael McCarthy, and the visit to the Diocese of Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Most Reverend Archbishop Charles Balvo.

Along with many representatives from Catholic Education, I was delighted to be present at the Mass of Thanksgiving and formal reception on Wednesday evening to celebrate Bishop Michael's special occasion. The celebrations were especially blessed by the presence of Archbishop Mark Coleridge (Brisbane), His Excellency Archbishop Balvo, Bishop Tim Harris (Townsville), Bishop Ken Howell (Toowoomba), Bishop Emeritus Brian Finnigan (Brisbane), together with the Priests of the Diocese, Religious, parishioners and representatives of the various Diocesan Ministries.

Earlier on Wednesday, Catholic Education held a special liturgy at St Joseph's Cathedral to celebrate Bishop Michael's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination. I sincerely thank the many students and staff who attended and to all those who joined us via livestream. It was certainly a joyous and meaningful liturgy of praise and thanksgiving, brought to life by our many student participants who so beautifully and prayerfully led various parts of the liturgy. It was wonderful to have His Excellency Archbishop Balvo present and I sincerely thank Fr Matthew Moloney for presiding and the many staff and students involved in the careful and detailed preparations. My thanks to staff at the Catholic Education Office for their wonderful work in coordinating the liturgy and ensuring that all went smoothly on the day.

In congratulating and thanking Bishop Michael on a decade of leadership of the Diocese, we ask our loving God to continue to bless Bishop Michael every day as he continues in his role as our chief shepherd and guide. Congratulations and thank you, Bishop Michael.

On Tuesday, I was delighted to be present at the Blessing and Opening of new facilities at Chanel College, Gladstone together with Bishop Michael and Archbishop Balvo. My sincere thanks to Susan Bunkum (Principal) and the Chanel College community for their wonderful hospitality and to all who contributed to the celebration of this historic event in the life of the college.

As part of his tour of the Diocese, Archbishop Balvo also spent time with staff and students at The Cathedral College, Emmaus College and St Joseph's, Park Avenue, as well as a visit to the Catholic Education Office to meet staff and engage in conversations with our Indigenous Education team. It has been a delight to have Archbishop Balvo visit so many of our communities and take part in the many celebrations that have occurred this past week. We wish His Excellency every blessing in the future.

National Reconciliation Week continues to Monday 3 June, the anniversary of the High Court Mabo decision recognising the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as traditional landowners. Reconciliation must address issues of inequality, systemic racism, and situations where the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are ignored, denied or reduced. We ask the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us in our efforts as we continue to work towards healing and reconciling action.

God bless,

*Leesa*

**Where's Leesa:** Monday 3 June, Office; Tuesday 4 June, CHRISTOS, The Haven; Wednesday 4 June, to Thursday 6 June, School visits Mackay, Friday 7 June, Qld Directors' Forum, Brisbane.

**Celebrating Bishop Michael's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his Episcopal Ordination and the visit of His Excellency, Most Reverend Archbishop Charles Balvo, Apostolic Nuncio to Australia to the Diocese**

Pictured below: Archbishop Balvo, Bishop Michael and Fr Don White, with students from the Bundaberg Catholic Primary Schools.



Blessing and Opening of the new Aquinas Wing at **Chanel College, Gladstone.**

Pictured from left: Bishop Michael, Susan Bunkum (Principal), Archbishop Balvo, Fr Andrew Chase (Parish Priest), Leesa and Fr Peter Doherty (Assistant Priest).



**Catholic Education Prayer of Thanksgiving St Joseph's Cathedral**



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**Upcoming Events**

**Wednesday 12 June:**  
10:30am St Joseph's Cathedral, Mass of Thanksgiving and Farewell for Leesa Jeffcoat AM.

**Congratulations**

The Bishops of Queensland have announced the appointment of Madeline Brennan KC as the new Independent Chair of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC). Madeline has family ties to Rockhampton and brings a broad range of expertise and experience to the role. In congratulating Madeline, I also acknowledge the great service and dedicated contribution of outgoing Chair, the Hon. Margaret White AO. As a tireless advocate for Catholic education, Margaret has been a highly esteemed colleague and well-respected voice in education for many years. We ask God's abundant blessings on both Madeline and Margaret as they embark on new futures.

*Leesa*

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