

Catholic Schools Day 2021

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e te whānau whakapono, tēnā koutou, tēnā anō tātou katoa.

From the beginning of the Church's life in Aotearoa the desire that young people be educated in their faith, understand what they believe and experience what living a life in relationship with God looks and feels like, provided the motivation to create Catholic education establishments. We see it from the very first schools through to the latest Catholic school opened this year.

As school staff you have a key part to play in this. We are very blessed to have such committed teachers and staff working together with parents for the faith development of our children.

Our schools are part of something much bigger than themselves, namely the Catholic Church. This community of faith finds its local expression in the parish and the school. It is in this context that we reflect on our schools as Tūrangawaewae, a place to stand.

This place to stand comes from belonging to the school community but also beyond that to the Church community of faith. We know that we extend this welcome also to those who may not be from our faith community. This gift of hospitality and desire to share what we have with others, is at the heart of the gospel call. This is the place where we have a right and desire to belong to, it is Tūrangawaewae for all.

Our Catholic schools as places of belonging allow us to celebrate and grow in what we have in common, what binds us together. As Christian people it is our baptism in Christ. It is also the call of the Gospel and the Church to live in the way that Jesus taught us.

The challenge for us is to ensure that our young people have every opportunity possible to fall in love with Jesus Christ and his Gospel. When we belong we are united by what we have in common, and for us it is the life of the God dwelling in us. If our young people are going to be connected, to desire this as a place they want to stand in, then they will need to be convicted in their commitment to Christ. Our challenge is to see that our schools are places where our young people have every opportunity to experience God both personally and in the community.

As we reflect on our Catholic Schools and our mission, may we take the time to look at how we are doing that in our own communities, to celebrate where it is happening well, and to strive to see where we can achieve this even more fully, in this great calling and gift of Catholic education.



Archbishop Paul Martin SM
Coadjutor Archbishop of Wellington
Apostolic Administrator of Christchurch