

**TO: ALL SCHOOL STAFF**

Dear Colleagues

Today marks the end of an extraordinary semester of schooling the likes of which we hope we will not experience again. I know from speaking to staff that for many of our staff, students and school families the anxiety and uncertainty created by our community environment, first through smoke, then fires and recently a global pandemic, has been at least unsettling and frequently distressing. A number of teachers have agreed that this time has been the most challenging in their careers so far.

I thank each and every staff member in Catholic education for your dedication to our students and families. Jesus calls us to serve in unexpected ways. As our vision for Catholic education in the Archdiocese states, Jesus has well and truly been our greatest teacher in recent times in the support provided to all in our school communities and beyond.

In recent weeks I have heard many stories of learning under adversity, triumph over challenges and truly sacramental moments between teachers and students amidst the move to remote learning and return to face to face teaching. From all I have heard there has been an outpouring of thanks and support from so many parents. I am very proud to be part of a community of Catholic educators in the Archdiocese who have achieved so much for the children in our care.

The heartfelt appreciation of parents and students gives me every reason to be even more certain that Catholic schools, and all we stand for and live out, are as valued today by our school communities as ever. Speaking with Archbishop Christopher recently, I shared some of what I have heard from you about term 2. We both agreed that our region is blessed to have such dedicated staff across Catholic schools in the Archdiocese.

One of the most frequently expressed sentiments I have heard in recent weeks is that for many staff and students it feels more like the end of term 4. I know that all principals very much have this in mind as we conclude term 2. It is vital that everyone takes time for renewal over the school holidays and in the term ahead plan the rest of the year in a way that is realistic and sustainable given our circumstances.

In term 3 as a Catholic education system we will be launching new plans for support and high-quality professional development and coaching for schools and staff across the Archdiocese. I look forward to discussing these exciting initiatives with you in term 3.

On behalf of all in Catholic education in our Archdiocese thank you again for all that you have done in the service of our school communities in the first half of 2020.

May the Lord bless you and keep you and your families and may His face shine upon you,

Best wishes for a safe and restful school break

Ross Fox  
DIRECTOR

3 July 2020

