



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

1 October 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to advise that after many months of hard work with numerous drafts, the *Working Together in Mission: Charter for parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne* has been finalised and it is now being forwarded to you. You are the ones invited to 'bring it to life' as it were.

We have indeed come a long way since our first continuously operating Catholic school in the Archdiocese, St Mary's Williamstown, which began in May 1842. The earliest available record of enrolment shows the school had six boys and eight girls. Today we have over 150,000 students in 330 Catholic schools across the Archdiocese. *Working Together in Mission* charter, that is now in your hands is really the first time that mission, the roles and responsibilities of all involved have been brought together in a single statement. I believe the offering is a rich one for as you leaf through the pages, so many key words and phrases are to be found:

support, encourage, guide, lead, authentic relationships, mission, faithful living the Gospel, service, Catholic mission and identity, custodians, working together, witnesses, formation, Church, collaboration, parish, Eucharist, Jesus Christ, ministry.

This really is the 'go to' statement for the 'how to' of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. It doesn't talk of curriculum per se, of financial accountabilities, or staffing schedules and meetings, timetables, term dates and student/parent conferences all of which are critical aspects of schooling week in and week out. However, what the Charter achieves is to draw us away from that which can so often and so easily capture our time and energy and invite us to reflect on the essential foundations of what we are all called to be. It is together that we must work and minister be it as; priest, principal, member of staff, parent and most importantly, students so as to ensure that the lived experience of Catholic education at the local level, be that in primary or secondary, is a genuine expression of who we are as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that, to the best of our ability, all within the Catholic school community of which we are a part find, in the words of Benedict XVI, 'a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.'

The activity and mission in which we all work together is profoundly sacred and we need each other to help it be a rich experience for all. I certainly hope and pray that this *Working Together in Mission* will provide essential direction and guidance for us all.

With every best wish,

Yours sincerely,

Rev Mark Reynolds EV
Episcopal Vicar for Catholic Schools