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Special Message  
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Thursday 28 January 2021**

Dear Principal

I draw your attention to a message that was emailed to parish priests in the Archdiocese of Melbourne this afternoon.

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Dear Father

Welcome to the 2021 school year.

I hope that the joy and promise of the Christmas season has carried on into the new year and that your communities begin 2021 with a sense of renewed mission.

Thank you for your support in signing the agreements that ensure the continuation of the rich tradition of Catholic schooling in Melbourne. We are confident that the new arrangements with Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) will provide a strong foundation for our shared mission well into the future.

The new governance arrangements will shape the work of MACS and create new processes, policies and procedures to enhance the way we work together as one of the largest education organisations in Australia. But at a local level, Catholic schools will remain 'actively embedded in the life of the faith communities of the local Church, which in turn is tangibly manifest in the life of each school' (*Working Together in Mission* charter).

In this sense, I would like to acknowledge and underscore the importance of your role, as recognised in the charter, as custodian of mission, in collaboration with the principal and the School Advisory Council, so that the involvement of the local Church in the life of the school is fully realised.

As the 2021 school year begins, I trust that there are many opportunities in which your role as the custodian of mission might be expressed just as strongly now as it has been in the past – whether in the celebration of the Eucharist, in the induction and formation of new staff and students, or just as a welcoming presence. Together, in the shadow of the isolation of 2020, we have the opportunity to reframe and rebuild the relationships in Catholic schools with a focus on mission in a spirit of hope.

With this in mind, a priority task for each school will be the development, over the course of 2021, of a School Advisory Council so that the involvement of the local Church in the life of the school can be assured. This will be quite a journey and your role is vital, given the unique context that each school community presents and the particular configuration of Catholic schools in each parish. The MACS office will develop tailored programs and services to support this essential work in each MACS-governed school.

Our hope for 2021 is that the establishment of MACS encourages a reflection on mission, your role as pastors, and the role of principals and School Advisory Councils that will lead to a reinvigoration of Catholic schools and the Catholic leadership that is expressed in them.

I look forward to working with you as we continue to provide a high-quality, mission-focused education to all our students.

Yours sincerely

Jim Miles  
Executive Director

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