

# Good News & The News

September 2012  
Volume Thirty Two

Broadsheet of Good Practice in Integrated Schools

Editorial

What a lovely event the convention was – we want to say a very big thank you to everyone who made it such a success, all of you who attended, the large numbers of you who generously offered your time and talents to present seminars of excellent quality, our student attendees whose maturity, intelligence and talent we are in awe of, our primary school performers who brought tears of joy to many eyes, our sponsors and trade exhibitors whose financial backing made it possible, our helpful and effective conference staff from Christchurch and at the Michael Fowler Centre, our convention committee and liturgy committee, and our ever patient and endlessly hardworking office staff. For everyone, the convention is an exercise in hope, sustained over a large number of months as the planning and organisation proceeded, which eventually flowered in this event which will nourish us for many months to come.

Quite a number of people claimed that it was the best convention ever – so we know that our goal for next time is to make it even better! No pressure!

Despite the tough financial climate we had, as last time, 86% of our schools attending, with many schools bringing large groups, including significant numbers of parish priests and Board of Trustees members. We would encourage you to share in the convention by going to the website ([www.nzceo.org.nz](http://www.nzceo.org.nz), then follow the link to the convention website), and listening to the podcasts of the keynote addresses and other material from the auditorium, and to investigate the material from some of the seminars, the texts of liturgies, the powerpoints of the waiata, the chants from the Miha, and other material, including the photos, some of which are in this newsletter (with thanks to Michael Otto of NZ Catholic).

We have not at this point had all the post-convention feedback and we look forward to finding out what we did well and what we can improve for next time. The final bills are not in either, but we are confident that we have broken even. Our aim is to keep registration costs as low as possible, but not to make a loss. We cut a number of corners this year in our efforts to do just that, and we are grateful for your support.

Other articles in this edition extend on the convention, and continue our focus on good practice in schools. We hope, as always, that you will enjoy and share this Good News with your colleagues and community.

Susan Apáthy

## Reading Together programme

Liz Horgan, Principal, St Joseph's School, Otahuhu, Auckland

The *Reading Together* programme was developed by Jeanne Biddulph as a way of providing parents with strategies to help them support their children with both mastery and enjoyment of reading. Jeanne recognised that parents wanted to help their children but she also realised that many parents needed help to do so, especially when children get “stuck”.

We have found *Reading Together* to be the most effective home/school programme we have run. *Reading Together* gives parents strategies and confidence to assist their children with reading and it enhances and consolidates relationships at all levels – within the family, with the school and with the local library. It is truly a wonderful programme to be involved in and the feedback we have received from parents is heart-warming, humbling and always extremely positive. We first started using the programme in 2005 and have run it every year since. We work with 12 – 15 families at a time and have now reached more than 150 families. We are now at the stage of working mainly with the families of children who are new to the school and/or starting to learn to read, although the programme can be effectively used with all ages.

In 2007 the Ministry of Education commissioned a piece of research on *Reading Together* which showed that the *Reading Together* programme had a substantial effect size in terms of reading outcomes. Refer [www.readingtogether.net.nz/ReadingTogether/MinistryofEducationDocuments](http://www.readingtogether.net.nz/ReadingTogether/MinistryofEducationDocuments). As a result the Ministry is currently providing support for *Reading Together* to be run in all Decile 1 – 3 schools. This is a very positive move. As a principal colleague said of *Reading Together*, “There are no silver bullets in education but this comes very close.” The secret lies in the fact that the programme has a very solid research base as well as being grounded in the practice of a very experienced teacher (developed by a teacher for teachers!) and is embedded in relationships. The programme certainly develops the skills and strategies of parents in supporting their children's reading and strengthens community links. *Reading Together* has consistently shown positive results over a very long time. We would strongly recommend it to any school and would be happy to discuss it.



▲ The *Reading Together* programme at St Joseph's School, Otahuhu.

# Chinese Cultural Education at Holy Cross

Kathy Moy-Low, Principal, Holy Cross School, Henderson

In July more than 120 children from West Auckland learned to make spring rolls, tried Chinese brush painting, paper cutting and calligraphy and dined on Chinese food as part of our Confucius Classroom Chinese Cultural Day. Pupils performed ribbon and fan dances and mask drama before the group took part in workshops and games.

## Making spring rolls

Holy Cross Primary School offered Chinese (Mandarin) as a subject in 2005 and then from 2008, after one of our teachers, Jenny Booth, became enthusiastic about introducing it after teaching French, Maori and German. We saw very quickly how much our senior girls liked writing the characters and learning Mandarin.



As well as the cultural understanding they gain, it's a living language for them. They go down to the local mall, order food and talk to the Chinese proprietors there. It's relevant for them. The parents understand why the children want to learn Mandarin.

All 400 pupils at Holy Cross learn Chinese, along with 500 students at Western Heights, 80 at Henderson North and the Year 9 students at St Dominic's. We look forward to a time when local secondary schools will feel the pressure of students wanting to learn Chinese.

We were grateful for funding and help obtained through the Confucius Institute in Auckland.





▲ Feather Bearers at the opening ceremony.



▲ Arohanui Strings, St Michael's School, Taita.

## Our Keynote Speakers – Soundbites

Our keynote presenters were of the highest quality. They presented on very different ideas, in significantly different ways, and yet they blended together harmoniously to reflect each other's ideas and to sustain the theme of the convention, Nga Taonga, the treasure of our Catholic education. Their speeches are available on the convention website as podcasts.

Fr Michael Holman SJ noted that the consumer culture blocks out and shouts down openings to faith, teaching young people and adults to live on the surface of things, rather than to

face up to the deepest questions of life. He said, "Three things matter: meaning, a habit of reflection, and witness." He challenged us to educate "men and women of depth" (Fr Adolfo Nicolas SJ), and to provide the life-giving witness that can make faith in Jesus both attractive and compelling to young people who are full of enthusiasm, generosity, compassion and concern for social justice.

Megan McKenna made us feel the intense power of stories to change our hearts. She said that when you read stories they go into your head, and when you hear stories the

message goes into your heart. When we read the Gospels it is to confirm what we already know, but when we hear them as stories told to us, that is when we experience conversion.

Br Pat Lynch named Catholic schools as "key platforms for addressing the challenge of the new evangelisation", and urged us to "dream dreams of what could occur".

Bishop Peter Cullinane said, "We help children to discover how much they have been loved by God, which is the greatest discovery they will ever make."



▲ Keynote Speaker, Fr Michael Holman SJ, with Br Kevin Wanden.



▲ Keynote Speaker, Megan McKenna.

## 2012 New Zealand Catholic Education Laureates Applauded at Convention

In his 35 years of service to Catholic education Alan Watts has been principal of three schools (currently Stella Maris School, Silverdale), served on the executive of the New Zealand Catholic Primary Principals Association, and served the Dunedin diocese and community in a range of ways.

Mary Lynch has recently concluded 20 years as principal of Villa Maria College, Christchurch. She was a member of the National Religious Education Curriculum Writing Party, developed initiatives to meet the learning needs of the school's Maori community, served on the executive of the National Association of Principals of Catholic Secondary Schools, and served on other education sector bodies.

Tony Hanning, Director of the Dunedin Catholic Education Office, served as a principal, has worked on a range of Catholic education bodies, and is known for his enthusiastic work on the integration of Catholic schools and his impeccable historical knowledge in this area. He has committed his life to the community, and to the wider community through Lions Club International and other causes.

They are warmly congratulated.



▲ Alan Watts, Mary Lynch, Tony Hanning, Laureate Award recipients.



▲ The Bishops concelebrate the Convention Mass.



▲ Singers Taka Vuni and Christian Malietoa Brown from St Peter's College, Auckland.

## God's Honours Board Launched

Convention attendees were privileged to be present at the launch of God's Honours Board, by Brendan Schollum, former principal of Sacred Heart College, Auckland and foundation principal of Aquinas College, Tauranga. The book covers the people and Religious Orders that have shaped Catholic education in New Zealand, with colourful anecdotes, and mini-biographies of more than 40 key people who have served Catholic education outstandingly. The book is a very valuable resource for all schools.



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