



Shine like stars in the world: E tīaho ana koe hei rama i te ao¹

Pope Francis has designated 2025 as the Church’s Year of Jubilee: Pilgrims of Hope, Manene o te Tūmanako (re reo Māori); Faigamalaga o le Fa’amoemoe (Samoan); Pilikimi ‘o e Tu’amelie’ (Tongan) giving voice to his desire for the year to foster:

- a greater sense of global sisterhood and brotherhood; kaha ake te hononga o ngā tēina me ngā tuākana i te ao,
- solidarity with the poor; te whakakotahitanga ki te hunga rawakore,
- and caring for the environment; tiaki i te taiao

Furthermore, Pope Francis calls us to “fan the flame of hope... by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision”². Pope Francis evokes a year of restoring a climate of trust and hope for the coming of the reign of God. He calls us to be cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel and to transform humanity and the cosmos in the expectation of a new heaven and new earth.

Christian hope, as with all virtues, comes from God and leads us to God. Christian hope offers us courage, light in the darkness, and sustains us with the truth that God leads us through difficult times on our hīkoi wairua³ to heaven. Pope Francis reminds us that “The Holy Spirit works without rest for the sake of humanity and the world, and even the greatest pains of history will be overcome this is the hope that resounds every morning!”⁴ Therefore, the Catholic school as a hope-filled Catholic community teaches and models that God’s desire and plan of love, justice and peace for humanity, and all of creation, will prevail. It is in understanding the power of Jesus’s teachings on the Reign of God that we understand that through living Jesus’ Gospel, which is often countercultural, all evil will be overcome.

Christian hope must be expressed in our actions. It empowers us to live differently, requiring us to respond with pūaroa compassion, supporting each other, near and afar, in the difficult times, wanting the best for each other and creation. The story of our school’s founding order/s or patron saints, which is Christ-centred, presents an example of how lived faith brings light into difficult times both past and present. Through exploring this story, schools can find a model and example of how Christian hope is experienced today, oriented towards aroha of others, and finds its ultimate conclusion in eternal life and happiness with our loving God in heaven. Catholic schools, which live differently because of their lived faith, are emblems of hope, light in the darkness: they “shine like stars in the world.”

¹ Philippians 2:15b: Piripai 2:15b

² Pope Francis (2022). Letter to Most Reverend Rino Fisichella President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization

³ See pages 24-27 in *Tō Tātou Whakapono: Our Faith Religious Education Curriculum for Catholic Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand*

⁴ Pope Francis (2017). Wednesday Audience 2 August