

## **Principal's 2020 Report**

Good evening and thank you for attending tonight's meeting. I appreciate the opportunity to report to you in our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year at Mater Christi.

Our world has altered due to COVID-19. The pause button was pushed on so many aspects of our lives. The choices we had to make and the steps we took revealed who we are as individuals, staff, and community.

From those very early days when decisions were made daily to guarantee our community's safety; to the successful rollout and delivery of our online learning program – HELP, for students and their families, the whole Mater Christi staff collaborated, problem-solved, and adapted. The speed at which staff took on new learning platforms, adapted the curriculum to meet the students' diverse needs, and provided a quality educational program provided a sense of stability in unstable times.

Our commitment to learning, our focus on our students' social and emotional well-being, our responsibility to ourselves, each other, and our community were outstanding despite the challenges.

We should all be immensely proud of who we are and what we have achieved.

One of the many blessings that we acknowledge at Mater Christi is a wonderful partnership between home and school. Our capacity as educators is made more powerfully when we know that we have the wholehearted support of our families. We regularly witness the sense of compassion, empathy, determination and the have a go attitude modeled by our families. It is these characteristics that are then adopted by our students and radiate throughout our school. The many emails, cards, cakes, biscuits, coffee van, care packages, waves, thumbs-up, and smiles by our families all affirmed all the staff's excellent work during these adverse times. Who could forget the cast of thousands in drive through each morning and afternoon? I even perfected my hand signals - stop, turn left please, and thanks.

We commenced the year with our mantra from Mother Teresa 'Do small things with great love.' This strongly compliments our school motto 'Charity in our hearts and the Making Jesus Real program.

At the heart of Mater Christi is how we allow our children to encounter the deep love of God and his Mother. This work is underpinned by the commitment we all share in.

Fr Dat and Fr Joe continue to maintain a close link between School and Parish, taking an interest in school affairs with both priests being available to the school for celebrations and the sacramental program. We all breathed a sigh of relief that the Sacramental celebrations could go ahead, although a little differently this year. Thank you to Fr Dat and Fr Joe for your continued support and your work in nourishing our community's faith life. Our appreciation to Marina Hayward, Julie Southwell, and the sacramental year level teachers for all your hard work and dedication with the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

### **Learning Dimension**

Our commitment to developing a love of learning within each child continues to be a key driving force at our school. I acknowledge the efforts of our Support Staff –Tracy Duffy, Paulina Sweeney, Mandy Ikin, Tania Marraffa, and the many Education Assistants who work with the children. I would especially like to mention Diana Wake, Stacey Harding, Michelle Topic, Di Michaelas, Deborah Gladwell, and Karina Minervini.

It seems like a distant memory now, when all the support staff and EA's upskilled with PM readers to support students accessing home readers online. Paulina, Tracy, and Mandy led the charge to organise this initiative and upskill so many staff members. It was a mammoth undertaking.

Katie McNally, IT Coordinator, has led us through Seesaw's upskilling and ensuring students can access online learning from home. How great that last year we expanded our Seesaw license and our Year 4 students having access to 1:1ipads for their learning at school, especially with COVID.

We take particular pride in the specialist subjects we offer at Mater Christi, the myriad of opportunities they provide for our students, and the passionate staff who teach in these areas. We continue to demolish the opposing schools in so many interschool competitions. We have been so fortunate to continue with all the in-school and interschool carnivals and events. This year Jane King formed our school band. These young musicians played at our Liturgies and, on a few occasions, welcomed the community to a new school day with music and song. Thank you to Jane King for coordinating this initiative. This term, we trialed Music & Drama as an addition to the specialist curriculum for Kindy with great success and will continue these programs next year.

Our distributed model of leadership has resulted in staff members leading the implementation of particular learning areas. I would like to acknowledge particularly:

Tracy Duffy – Support Coordinator

Deborah Gladwell – Library Officer

Adele Paino & Courtney Edmondson – Curriculum Leaders

Katie, as IT Team Leader, how, together with their teams, have led the staff through great learning.

Anthony Jenkins, Luke Scott & Edward Martin are the reason our school looks so good. Thank you, gentlemen.

I would also like to mention our School Psychologist, Tony Schneider, and Counselor Rebecca Rowland. They give so much of their time and energy to the healing and building of relationships. There is an ever-increasing demand on their time, and they manage to provide this service with grace and professionalism.

Our staff continues to impart an outstanding level of care and compassion for the young people who have been entrusted to us.

To every one of my staff, I give my heartfelt thanks and appreciation. All schools say they are great. We can boast that Mater Christi is genuinely excellent and that you, the staff, are the difference and make a difference in our school.

### **Administrative Dimension**

Like many households, our school operates within a tight budget. I continue to admire the capacity of Robin Giles to manage our resources and ensure our staff and students continue to access all that is required so that they can provide the best opportunities for our children. Robin is a most gracious gentleman who always looks out for the greater good of all, including people's individual needs. Robin retires after 30 years of service in Catholic Education, of which ten years have been at Mater Christi. Robin was Bursar at Kolbe Catholic College in Rockingham and supported Star of the Sea and St Vincent's, as Finance Officer. Please join me in warmly in thanking Robin. Thank you to Paula Nichols and Bek De Souza for their ability to always be the welcoming smile across the counter or the friendly voice over the phone. Great appreciation to Amanda Burke, an extraordinary person who has time for everyone and always acts with grace and dignity.

## **Community-Centered**

I applaud our Parents and Friends' efforts in facilitating experiences for our students and families in what has been a most challenging year. The P&F Association continues to be active and generous in their support of the school. To the P&F Executive - led by Stephanie Gill, Louise McEntee, Vicky Hartill, Jennifer Cotton, and many others, thank you for your hard work and contribution to our community.

This anniversary year, Leah Rheinberger and her team created an inspirational and historical cookbook worthy to grace any coffee table, let alone our kitchens, to be used and become a much-loved necessity.

Another significant event was the Colour Fun Run. Thank you to Michelle Hall and the team who worked behind the scenes and volunteered on the day. What an achievement and what a result.

The School Board Members have provided an invaluable service to the school, and their support is much appreciated. Many thanks to Olivia Rodriguez and Mark Rheinberger for their two years of service on the Board and Michelle Hall, who was P&F Representative during 2020. To Luke Zammit on leading our Board through staffing appointments, oval discussions, and capital development. Thank you for your wisdom, good nature, attending so many meetings, and establishing an Ugg boot dress code for the Board. Dinny Kutty, as Treasurer is shaking his head less and less with our migration to accrual accounting and AoS. Thank you Dinny in working with us through these changes and understanding the complexities involved for all concerned.

Our Canteen and the Permapleat Uniform Shop continue to provide an excellent service to our community. Thank you to Wendy Scherini, Karen Piscopo, and Simone Douglas.

We have a few staff finishing at the end of the year:

Thank you to Jacynta Wake for stepping in this term for Laura Barker, Kirsty Cunningham, who is awaiting the birth of Baby Cunningham number two, Nick Magry, who is continuing in Catholic Education at John Bosco College, Tony Schneider retiring (Psychologist) – Tony has been with us since virtually the beginning of the school,

Nicole Woodhouse is taking parental leave. We await the stork's delivery early next year and look forward to sharing Kirsty and Nicole's joy.

I thank these staff members for their passion, commitment, and the excellent contribution they have made to our children's education and the Mater Christi community.

I would also like to welcome new staff for 2021:

Ron Fris, the new AP while Nicole is on leave,

Barbara Neville as Finance Officer,

Sophia-Rose Berini, the Year 4C teacher,

Juliet Ferris as Year 3B Teacher,

Danielle Wade – 3-year-old teacher – welcome back Danielle

Sandy Collison as a Kindy EA

and Joanna Grandy Year 2 EA

By the end of next week, I will be able to announce the new Psychologist

To two outstanding people, leaders, mentors, and friends – Julie Southwell and Nicole Woodhouse. I am not sure what I or Mater Christi would do without these two women who continually model servant leadership and are always working to ignite and nurture a culture of learning which has the child at the centre of all they do. We laugh at each other's jokes because, at times, no one else thinks we are funny.

In 2020, we have experienced a defining moment in our history. We revealed ourselves by our reactions, our responses, and our shared values. Adaptation, innovation, and creativity were embraced, and an already cohesive community was strengthened. There is so much more to our journey and our story. We look to next year with hope and with joy.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Leadership Team, thank you to everyone involved in making Mater Christi the wonderful place that it is, as we work together to nurture the children in our care.

Wishing you and your families every blessing for 2020, and may the Spirit of Jesus be welcomed into your hearts and homes this Christmas. Thank you.