

Dear Parishioners and Friends of All Saints by the Sea,

As we reached the end of Term 2 at St Thomas More Catholic School, we had so much to celebrate and be grateful for across our school community. It was a full, joy-filled, and rewarding term, rich with learning, connection, service, sport, faith, and environmental action.

Our theme for the term was Kaitiakitanga – Guardianship of Creation. This gave our children many opportunities to explore what it means to care for God's creation, for one another, and for the world around us. Across the school, our students were involved in learning that connected faith, sustainability, service, and practical action. It was wonderful to see this theme come alive through classroom learning, environmental projects, and community initiatives.

We began the term with a beautiful ANZAC Liturgy, where our school community gathered in prayer, remembrance, and gratitude. It was very special to honour those who have served and sacrificed for our country, and to help our children understand the importance of peace, courage, service, and thankfulness.

At our first school Mass of the term, Fr Sojan gave a special blessing to our newest teacher, Natalie Smyth, as she began her teaching journey with us in Pipi class. He also presented her with a candle lit from the Easter Candle flame, a beautiful symbol of faith, hope, and new beginnings. We were delighted to welcome Nat into our St Thomas More whānau.

Our connection with the parish continued to be a real blessing throughout the term. Our Friday Masses gave our children regular opportunities to gather with parishioners in prayer and worship. Following Mass on the fourth Friday of each month, our Vinnies Youth leaders helped serve morning tea in the Parish Lounge. These morning teas have been a lovely opportunity to connect with our parish community, and we are grateful for the warm welcome our children always receive.

More recently, our Vinnies Youth leaders helped set up for and serve at the annual St Vincent de Paul Mid-Winter Luncheon. Our students warmly welcomed guests, served meals, and proudly performed one of our kapa haka waiata. We were incredibly proud of the kindness, respect, and joy they brought to the day, reflecting our school values through their service.

A very special celebration this term was the opportunity to acknowledge Sr Alba Grace at our Friday parish school Mass. Sr Alba Grace attended St Thomas More as Charlotte Ning from 2003 to 2005, before continuing her Catholic education at Aquinas College. This term, she made her final vows with the Sisters of Mary Morning Star. We were incredibly proud to recognise her and give thanks for the beautiful witness of faith, prayer, and service she gives through her vocation. Her parents, Laura and Brian Ning, are much-loved members of our parish community, and it was a privilege to hold Sr Alba Grace and her family in our prayers.

Pentecost was another joyful celebration in our term. We celebrated at Mass, in our classrooms, and with a shared birthday cake for all our students to enjoy. Pentecost is often called the birthday of the Church, and it was a lovely way for our children to reflect on the Holy Spirit bringing courage, strength, and joy.

Kindness Day was also a special part of our term. Each year in May, schools across New Zealand take part in Bullying-Free NZ Week, and our Kindness Day helped us reflect on our shared responsibility to create a school environment where every child feels safe, included, welcomed, and respected. The gold coins collected were donated to support the work of St Vincent de Paul.

We also enjoyed many community and fundraising highlights. Our PTFA Mother's Day Movie Night was a wonderful evening, bringing whānau together while raising money for our much-needed playground upgrade. These events take a great deal of organisation, and we are very grateful to our PTFA and everyone who helped make the evening such a success.

Sport was another highlight of Term 2. Our school Cross Country was a wonderful day of effort, encouragement, and participation. We were very proud of the way our tamariki showed perseverance and support for one another. Our Cross Country representatives went on to represent our school with great determination at both the cluster and Western Bay events. Our netball and basketball teams also did themselves proud throughout the season, showing great sportsmanship, teamwork, and commitment.

Across our classrooms, it was wonderful to see children engaged in rich learning experiences and continuing to make meaningful progress across the curriculum. Our senior students enjoyed their Food for Thought visit to New World Mount Maunganui, where they took part in authentic learning connected to health, mathematics, literacy, and making informed choices. These experiences helped our children see that learning is connected to everyday life and the choices we make for ourselves and others.

Our Kaitiakitanga theme was brought to life beautifully through our environmental learning. A highlight was our annual dune planting, which coincided meaningfully with our preparations for Matariki. This year, our tamariki planted over 250 native plants, contributing to the care and restoration of our local environment. This hands-on learning helped our children understand the importance of protecting our coastal dunes, supporting native biodiversity, and taking practical action to care for God's creation. It was a wonderful example of learning, service, sustainability, and community coming together.

We were also delighted that St Thomas More Catholic School was successful in receiving funding through the Bay of Plenty Regional Council School Sustainability and Resilience Fund. This funding will enable us to establish a pātaka kai, or community pantry, where surplus produce from our school garden can be shared with whānau and the wider community. Thank you to everyone who supported our application and took the time to vote. We are very grateful and excited about the positive difference this project will make as we continue to grow kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga, and care for our community.

As we prepared for Matariki, our children had opportunities to reflect on thankfulness, remembrance, hope, and caring for one another. Matariki always offers a beautiful moment to pause, look back with gratitude, celebrate the present, and look forward with hope.

We ended the term with colour, energy, and generosity through our Caritas YCC and FIFA World Cup Day celebration. Children came along wearing country colours and crazy hair as we enjoyed a day of fun, team spirit, and football-inspired activities at Arataki Field. Gold coin donations supported Takuilau College in Tonga, helping our children understand that even small acts of generosity can make a meaningful difference.

Looking ahead to the beginning of Term 3, we would love to invite all parishioners to join us on Friday 24 July as we celebrate Grandparents and Grandfriends Day. After the 9:00am Mass, parishioners are invited to come over to school for a cup of tea and some delicious baking. This will be a lovely opportunity to spend time together, celebrate the special place grandparents and grandfriends hold in the lives of our children, and continue strengthening the beautiful connection between our school and parish community.

As we look back on Term 2, we give thanks for the many blessings within our school community: the learning, laughter, effort, service, friendship, prayer, and care that shaped our days together. We are especially grateful for the ongoing support of our parish community. Your prayers, encouragement, presence, and care mean a great deal to us.

To learn more about all that happens at St Thomas More Catholic School, please scan the QR code below or visit our website.

Mā te Atua koutou e manaaki.
May God bless you all.

Ngā mihi nui,

Lisa Broadmore
Tumuaki / Principal
St Thomas More Catholic School

