

## Why hope might be the most important thing schools teach this Easter

As Brisbane Catholic Education's (BCE) 146 schools gather as faith filled learning communities this Easter, four schools reflect on why hope may be the most important gift they offer their students.

Hope continues to shape life across BCE's 146 schools, underpinning everything from learning to pastoral care, inspiring students to give back to those in need, and coming alive in the strength of community.

### **Hope is what makes learning possible**

Mt Maria College Petrie Principal Kerry Maher says hope is not an optional extra in education, but an essential condition for learning.

"Students need to believe their efforts will lead somewhere and that they can make a real difference in our world," she said.

"In a Catholic education, that belief is nurtured with intention. When we educate the whole person spiritually, academically, socially and emotionally, we create the conditions for young people to grow as hopeful and confident learners."

Kerry adds that strong connections between the College and Our Lady of the Way Parish, along with initiatives such as the Marist Game Changers and pastoral care programs, support students to develop a sense of purpose shaped by service.

"Through these experiences, students come to understand that their lives have meaning and that they are called to contribute to the good of others," she said.

The College community recently gathered to celebrate Easter through a liturgy Kerry described as a meaningful time of reflection, unity and hope.

"Easter invites us to pause and reflect on suffering, sacrifice and renewal," she said.

"As a community, we remembered the passion of Good Friday while also rejoicing in the hope and new life of the resurrection."

Students and staff from a range of cultures and beliefs came together in prayer, sharing a common sense of hope expressed through the Prayers of the Faithful.

A special moment during the celebration was the blessing and installation of a new College Cross by Parish Priest Father Louie Jimenez. The cross was crafted, on site, from the timber of a College tree brought down during Cyclone Alfred.

"The cross is a powerful symbol of resilience and renewal," Kerry adds.

"It reminds us that even in times of challenge, hope can be restored and new life can emerge."

# BCE media release

The cross will also be used during the Parish's Good Friday Celebration of the Lord's Passion, further strengthening the shared faith life of the Parish and our College community.

## **Hope walks with us in times of challenge**

St Ignatius School, Toowong Principal Benedict Campbell said hope lies at the heart of Catholic education.

"Hope is not about ignoring the challenges people face," he said.

"Rather, hope invites students to walk alongside others with compassion, trusting that love and faith can bring light even in difficult times.

"At Easter, we are reminded of Jesus' example, he did not turn away from the suffering of the world, but responded with care, generosity and self-giving love.

"That is the kind of hope we aim to nurture in our students."

This understanding of hope is reflected in the St Ignatius School community's support of Caritas Australia's Project Compassion with students taking part in an Easter Hat Parade to help raise much needed funds for those experiencing poverty globally.

The school is also calling for donations of Easter eggs, soft toys, Easter activities and arts and crafts, stickers, baskets and bags, with all donations supporting Project Compassion.

"Through action, students come to understand that caring for others is central to who we are as a Catholic community, and that through generosity and compassion, our students can help bring hope to people both locally and globally," Benedict adds.

St Eugene College, Burpengary, also raised \$8,242.25 for Caritas Australia's Project Compassion this Term, offering a powerful sign of hope during the College's Year of Belonging, 'live the life of the family of which you are a part.'

Through House initiatives, Lenten activities, and whole-school events, students demonstrated that belonging reaches beyond their own community, embracing the global family.

Through an act of generosity, St Eugene College students live out St Eugene de Mazenod's invitation to practise charity, demonstrating how small, shared actions can bring dignity, hope and enduring change for those at the margins.

## **Hope is lived in community**

Sophia College, Plainland Principal Narelle Dobson said hope is never formed in isolation.

"Since opening our doors as a College in 2021, we have come to understand just how deeply hope shapes a community," she said.

"Hope brings people together, gives meaning to shared moments, and helps a community grow not just in size, but in spirit."

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This sense of hope lived in community was powerfully experienced this Easter with the College's first cohort of Year 12 students taking part in Stations of the Cross with Father Bernie at St Mary's Catholic Church, Ipswich.

Rather than observing the Easter story from a distance, Sophia College students were invited to enter into it, to walk, reflect and pray together.

Walking the stations from Mary's perspective encouraged deep empathy and compassion, helping students connect more personally with Jesus' journey.

"The Stations of the Cross reminded our students that they are not alone," Narelle adds.

"They are part of a faith community that walks together, reflects together and supports one another, especially in times of challenge."

## **BCE Open Week 2026**

Discover the Sophia College, Plainland difference at their BCE Open Week event on Wednesday, 29 April from 3.30 pm to 7 pm Come meet the Principal and discover what makes their campus so special! For more information [click here](#).

You are also invited to discover the St Ignatius School, Toowong Open Day on Wednesday, 29 April at 9 am. For more information [click here](#).

St Eugene College, Burpengary, also invites families to discover their College on Wednesday, 29 April at 5pm. For more information, [click here](#).

For more information about Mt Maria College, Petrie or to enrol [click here](#).