



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE



Yesterday, we gathered as a school community for our Ash Wednesday liturgy, and our children reverently received the sign of the cross in ashes on their foreheads. It was a beautiful and prayerful beginning to the sacred season of Lent — a time when we are reminded of who we are, and who God is calling us to become.

Lent is not simply about giving something up. It is about returning to the heart of the Gospel. It is a season of renewal, reflection, and recommitment. The ashes we received are a quiet but powerful reminder that we are called to turn back to God with sincerity, humility, and hope.

In his 2026 Lenten message, Pope Leo XIV calls us to see Lent as “a pilgrimage of the heart.” He reminds us that this journey is not one we walk alone, but one we undertake as a community — learning to pray more deeply, to fast with purpose, and to give with generosity. He urges us to let Lent be a time where our faith becomes visible in action: in kindness offered freely, in forgiveness extended willingly, and in courage shown when choosing what is right.

At St Therese School, we will encourage our students to embrace the three pillars of Lent — prayer, fasting, and almsgiving — in age-appropriate and meaningful ways. This may look like spending intentional time in prayer, making small sacrifices that build self-discipline, or supporting others through acts of service and compassion. More importantly, it is about nurturing hearts that are attentive to God and responsive to the needs of others.

As families, you may wish to speak together about what Lent will look like in your home this year. Perhaps it is choosing something to give up, committing to a shared act of service, or setting aside time each day for prayer. Whatever form it takes, Lent offers us an invitation: to slow down, to listen, and to grow.

If your child will be participating in fasting during this Lenten season and this affects what they are able to eat at school, please contact Mrs Kerr in the school office as soon as possible.

May this season be one of grace for our entire community. May it draw us closer to Christ and to one another, and may we journey toward Easter with hearts renewed and ready to celebrate the hope of the Resurrection.



MEET OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Benjamin has been part of the St Therese School whānau for many years, with his children attending the school from 2015 to 2019. He has served on the Board of Trustees since 2015 and is an active member of St Therese Parish, giving him a strong connection to both the school and the wider faith community.

As a Proprietor's Representative and Presiding Member on the St Therese Board, Benjamin is committed to supporting our Catholic character and helping every child grow in truth, respect, perseverance, courage, and love. He brings a parent's insight, a long-standing understanding of the school's journey, and a desire to strengthen partnerships between our families, parish, and community.

His aspirations are simple and steady: to help our school continue to thrive, to ensure our learners are well-supported and future-ready, and to uphold the welcoming, faith-filled environment that makes St Therese School such a special place.

OPENING MASS 2026



Our school year began beautifully as we gathered in St Therese Church for our Opening Mass, celebrated by Father Arul. With the theme "Called Together – Walking in Faith," we were reminded that we begin this year united as one community, walking side by side in faith, learning, and service.

Our students played an important role throughout the celebration. Room 1 led the Opening and Offertory Processions with confidence and reverence, Room 3 proclaimed the Prayers of the Faithful, and Room 6 confidently read the main readings. Room 4 offered a liturgical dance to "How Beautiful Is the Body of Christ." A special thank you to our altar servers, who did an outstanding job serving throughout the Mass, and to the students who managed the audiovisual support. For many of them, this responsibility was completely new, and they rose to the occasion with great composure and skill.

We are also deeply grateful to our parents, whānau, and community members who joined us for this special celebration and stayed to share lunch together afterwards. Beginning the year in prayer and fellowship was a powerful reminder that we are truly called together, walking in faith as one body in Christ.



Additional photos from our Opening Mass and Ash Wednesday Liturgy can be found on the St Therese Facebook page.

A SPECIAL FRANCISCAN VISIT



Last week, the Franciscan Friars (OFM) hosted a special fraternal visit from Fr Massimo Fusarelli OFM, Minister General, accompanied by leaders from the Asia & Oceania Province. During their time in Aotearoa, the group met with Bishop Steve Lowe, Bishop of Auckland, marking an important moment of connection and fraternity within the Church.

We are especially proud to acknowledge Fr Arul, our parish priest, on his appointment as the leader of the Franciscans in New Zealand. This is a significant role within the Order, and we feel incredibly blessed to have his leadership and presence so closely connected with St Therese School. We continue to keep the Franciscan community in our prayers and give thanks for their faithful service.



Pictured above left to right are:

Fr Yornes Panggur, Fr Stephen Bliss (Minister Provincial), Fr Massimo Fusarelli (Minister General), Bishop Steve Lowe (Bishop of Auckland), Fr John Wong (Definitor General for Asia & Oceania), Fr Adrianus Nahal (Definitor – Provincial Councillor), and Fr Arul (OFM Leader for New Zealand).

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMME EXPRESSION OF INTEREST



An Expression of Interest survey for the 2026 Sacramental Programme was posted on HERO last week. We ask that all parents of students in Years 4–8 please respond — whether your answer is *yes* or *no* — as this will help us plan appropriately.

In 2026, students may begin preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation, two deeply significant Sacraments in the Catholic Church. Through First Holy Communion, children receive the Eucharist — the Body and Blood of Christ — for the first time, entering more fully into the heart of the Mass and our sacramental life. Through Confirmation, they are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and strengthened to live their faith with maturity, courage, and commitment. These Sacraments are important milestones in a young person's faith journey and mark a deeper belonging within the Church.

Once we have a clear understanding of numbers, we will share further details about the structure and expectations of the Sacramental Programme. With Bishop Steve Lowe joining us in August for this special celebration, it is important that preparations begin soon.

We look forward to walking alongside our families in this important step of faith formation.





The Auckland Regional Dental Service (ARDs) is a Health NZ/Te Whatu Ora-operated service, which provides FREE dental care to children across the greater Auckland areas. In order to prevent any eligible children missing out on receiving free dental care, ARDs is cross-checking their own records with school rolls.

For our children's better oral health and wellbeing, our school roll will be shared with the service as required. To find out more information about ARDs, please visit ards.co.nz or call 0800 TALK TEETH (0800 825 583).



Children's Community Dental Clinic

Free for children 0-17 years

WINTER NETBALL SEASON 2026



The winter netball season will soon be upon us, and we are currently seeking expressions of interest for students in Years 4–8 who would like to join our Primary (Year 5 & 6) and Intermediate (Year 7 & 8) netball teams for the 2026 Auckland Netball Winter Competition at Windmill Park.

Thank you to those families who have already responded to the HERO post indicating whether your child is interested in playing and whether you are able to assist in a coaching, managing, or umpiring role. Your early responses are greatly appreciated.

At this stage, entry into the competition will depend on having:

- Sufficient committed players, and
- Parent volunteers willing to support teams as coach, manager, or umpire.

Please don't feel you need prior netball experience to help. Auckland Netball provides free workshops, online guidance, and development opportunities, and we will fully support anyone willing to step forward.

Competition Details – Windmill Park Winter Season 2026

- **Year 5 & 6:** Wednesdays, 13 May – 26 August (no games during July holidays)
- **Year 7 & 8:** Mondays, 4 May – 24 August (no games during July holidays)
- Games begin from 4:00pm onwards

Students will also commit to weekly after-school training during Terms 2 and 3, as well as attending all scheduled competition games.

If you have not yet done so, please complete the survey on HERO by Sunday 22nd February, selecting the option that best reflects your family's interest in playing and/or supporting a team. Without sufficient adult support, we will be unable to enter teams into the competition.



We look forward to seeing if we can make netball happen again this season for our students.

HERO APP – STAYING CONNECTED TO LEARNING



Following on from last week's communication, we'd like to remind families that our teachers are now providing weekly learning posts on HERO outlining what is happening in each classroom. These updates offer valuable insight into the learning taking place and help you understand the skills, knowledge, and concepts your child is engaging with each week.

We strongly encourage all parents to check HERO when notifications are received, take a few moments to read the posts, and, where possible, sit down with your child to talk about what they are learning. These conversations at home are powerful. They reinforce learning, build confidence, and strengthen the partnership between school and family.

Throughout the year, teachers will also begin sharing individual learning posts specific to your child. These posts can only be viewed by that child's parents and will provide more personalised insight into progress, achievements, and next steps. HERO is an important tool for keeping you connected to your child's learning journey, and we appreciate your ongoing engagement with it.



PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS – DATE CORRECTION AND INFO



Please note that meetings will be held on **Wednesday 11 March** (not Thursday 12 March as previously stated). We apologise for any confusion this may have caused.

Bookings will open just over two weeks prior to the meeting date, and we encourage all parents to secure a 10-minute time slot with your child's teacher. These meetings are an important opportunity to hear how your child has settled into the school year, receive information from recent assessment data, and discuss next steps and learning goals. Please keep an eye out for the HERO notification when bookings open.

On Wednesday 11 March, school will finish at 12:00pm. Supervision will be available until 3:00pm for students whose parents have contacted the school office by the day prior. This is essential so we can ensure appropriate staffing and supervision. There will be no Navigators Homework Club on this day, and all students must be collected by 3:00pm.

Interviews will run from 1:00pm to 6:00pm, in 10-minute blocks. We look forward to a strong turnout from our community. Working in partnership with families is vital to supporting your child's success, and we value this time to connect with you.

St Therese School
Primary and Intermediate

PARENT - TEACHER CONVERSATIONS

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF OUR STUDENTS"

WEDNESDAY 11TH MARCH
1PM - 6PM

BOOKINGS ARE MADE THROUGH THE HERO APP.

PLEASE SEE MRS KERR IN THE OFFICE FOR ANY ASSISTANCE WITH THIS.

SCHOOL CLOSES AT 12PM

Supervision available for students until 3pm in the library. Please advise the school office if your child is remaining.

Telephone: (09) 620 9441
Email: office@sttherese.school.nz

NO NAVIGATORS ON THIS DAY

CELEBRATING AND FAREWELLING PATA



For many years, Pata has been a deeply valued and much-loved Teacher Aide at St Therese School, supporting individual children and small groups in classrooms while generously serving wherever she was needed. Her connection spans generations — with her own children and now grandchildren part of our school community — and through Breakfast Club, duties, gardening, preparing resources and so much more, she has given of herself wholeheartedly, always with warmth and a genuine smile. Please see the information on the next page and join us in celebrating Pata.



Celebrating Pata

We warmly invite
our St Therese School
community to join us:

Wednesday 4th March
2pm
St Therese School
Library



Let's celebrate Pata,
a long serving Teacher Aide at
St Therese School, and a special part of
our school community. Her many years of
commitment and service to our school
and communtiy has had an invaluable
impact on so many. Join us to celebrate
this incredible person.





SPOTLIGHT ON

Values Winners

Hana

... for the brave way she has begun school this year, facing unfamiliar routines with determination and giving everything a genuine try despite her nerves.

Edward

... for consistently putting up his hand, sharing his ideas, and showing that real learning requires the bravery to try—even when you might be wrong.



Sina

... for stepping forward to altar serve for the first time and for persevering through challenging maths with quiet determination.



Liya

... for the strength and positivity she has shown as she begins her first school experience in New Zealand, embracing new friendships and learning with resilience.



Emmanuel

... for confidently stepping into leadership and connection from his very first days at St Therese School, including reading at Mass and supporting younger students



CATHOLIC DEDICATION MASS



On Tuesday 17 February, the staff of St Therese School attended the annual Catholic Schools Dedication Mass celebrated by Bishop Steve Lowe at Christ the King Church. This special Mass brings together Catholic schools from across Auckland, united in faith at the beginning of the school year, to dedicate our work and ministry to God.



The Dedication Mass is a powerful reminder that Catholic education is more than academic excellence; it is a vocation grounded in service, faith, and mission. As Catholic educators, we listened carefully to Bishop Steve's homily and embraced his encouragement to live out our roles with integrity, compassion, and a deep commitment to nurturing the faith of the young people entrusted to us.

During the celebration, each of our four teachers was acknowledged by the Bishop for their commitment to service and professional study. It was a proud moment for our school, recognising the dedication and ongoing formation of our staff as they continue to serve our community with generosity and faith.

TERM 1 EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Friday 20 th February	Cricket Lessons for all classes (with Auckland Cricket)
Monday 23 rd February	Fire Drill during classtime
Wednesday 25 th February	R4 Sports Exchange Trip to Dominion Road School
Thursday 26 th February	Assembly led by Room 4 at 12:30pm in the school library
Thursday 26 th February	Board of Trustees Meeting at 6pm
Friday 27 th February	Cricket Lessons for all classes (with Auckland Cricket)
Tuesday 3 rd March	Mt Roskill Zone T-ball Event for Room 4 students
Tuesday 3 rd March	Batfirst Cricket Programme for Room 3 students
Wednesday 4 th March	Wheels Day
Wednesday 4 th March	Pata's Farewell at 2pm in the library
Thursday 5 th March	Cricket Lessons for all classes (with Auckland Cricket)
Friday 6 th March	Football Taster Sessions for all classes (TBC)
Wednesday 11 th March	Parent Teacher Meetings from 1pm – 6pm
Friday 13 th March	Junky Monkeys Loose Parts Play for all classes from 9:30am-1pm (all welcome)
Friday 13 th March	Assembly led by Room 3 at 2:15pm in the school library
Monday 16 th – Friday 20 th March	Book Week
Monday 16 th March	Fire Drill during breaktime
Tuesday 17 th March	Mt Roskill Zone Ki o Rahi Event for R4 students
Friday 20 th March	Book Week Costume Day. Parade at 9am (all welcome)
Thursday 26 th March	Board of Trustees Meeting at 6pm
Friday 27 th March	Assembly led by Room 6 at 2:15pm in the school library
Thursday 2 nd April	Assembly led by Room 1 at 11:30am in the school library
Thursday 2 nd April	Stations of the Cross led by Room 6 at 12:15pm
Thursday 2 nd April	Last Day of Term 1. School Closes at 3pm