

### Staff Prayer:

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Friends, as we re-gather today to begin a new school year together, we pause for a moment to reflect on what's happened in these past months and to ask for God's help as we prepare for the year ahead.

There is a story in Matthew's Gospel about Jesus calming a storm. The story tells us that, as the apostles are in a boat with Jesus, a great storm rises up, and, through a miraculous act, Jesus manages to calm it.

Right now, some of us might be feeling like we've just come through a great storm.

When we think back to March 12<sup>th</sup>, as we walked out of school on that drizzly afternoon in Spring, little did we realise that a sea-swell was rising, and that the world as we knew it then was about to change utterly.

For many it was a time of fear, confusion, and darkness.

Yet, out of that darkness and fear, have come great beacons of light and hope. We saw moving acts of kindness as neighbour helped neighbour; we saw tremendous acts of commitment as frontline workers turned up to their jobs day after day. We saw acts of great compassion as communities found new ways to support those in mourning. We saw acts of friendship as people discovered ways to connect in cyberspace, and we saw acts of love as people went above and beyond to help those who needed help. Kindness, commitment, compassion, friendship, and love: These are the traits that shone out on the darkest days, these are the traits that helped us get through it all, and these are traits that are the hallmark of what it means to be a Catholic School. Day in and day out, when we work with the students in our care, these are the traits we wish them to develop.

As we gather today, there are aspects of the year ahead that remain uncertain, and, while there are things we can't plan for, there is one thing we do know for sure, which is that as a committed school community, we will continue to *be*. As we always do, we will continue to support each other, to help each other and to be there for each other.

Like the apostles in that boat after Jesus calmed the storm, we are still feeling the waves and whirlpools of this tempest called Covid. We are uncertain about what the future holds, but, like the apostles, if we have faith in God and we support each other, we can withstand any gale-force wind that beats down upon us.

As we meet today to discuss the year before us we ask God to bless us, the work we do, and the children we teach. We ask God to guide our discussions today, to let our ears, heads, and hearts be open and tolerant. May the decisions we make be for the betterment of our whole school community, and, when we arrive at the close of the school year, we pray that our lives will have been enriched both by our work and by our companionship.

Today, we pray for a great year ahead, Amen.