Message from  
Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB  
Archbishop of Perth  
To all Primary and Secondary Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Perth  

January 2016

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As I did last year I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and fulfilling 2016 as the new school year gets underway. In a special way I want to acknowledge all those who are joining our Catholic system for the first time. I hope you find your time with us to be richly rewarding.

In our Catholic world this year we are living a jubilee Year of Mercy, called for by Pope Francis. For that reason I want to invite all of you to put at the heart of your efforts this year this quality of mercy. No doubt "mercy" means different things to different people. In my own reflections I have come to think of it as being all about "large-heartedness". Mercy calls us to go beyond the letter of the law, or the strict limits of our contracts, or overly-careful calculations about what we or others deserve. "Large-heartedness" calls us to look at life through a different lens, with different eyes. We don't look so much at what we, or others, deserve or have earned or have a right to. We look at what will be most enriching, life-affirming and uplifting. We try to look at a person's deepest needs and hopes, rather than at their "just deserts".

In our schools this will obviously play out in our relationships with the young people we serve who are, of course, our central concern. But it will also play out, very importantly, in our relationships with each other, and with the parents of our young people, even those who can at times be very demanding or even, in our view, unreasonable.

Pope Francis has reminded us that Jesus himself is "the face of the Father's mercy". A Catholic school community, grounded as it must be on the person and teachings of Jesus, has as a primary responsibility the task of reflecting this face of Jesus, this face of mercy, to all those who come in contact with the school. But as well as being a serious obligation for all of us who are part of a school community, this is also a recipe for a truly harmonious, happy and life-filled school.

May your school be a reflection of the face of divine mercy in 2016.

Yours sincerely in Christ

+ Timothy Costelloe SDB

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