

Launch Out Letter (LOL)

September 2020

God works in mysterious ways

By Vicky Raw, Launch Out Candidate, Te Whetu o te Moana - Star of the Sea, Marlborough

In 2013 I spent four months working as a volunteer in a low decile lay-led Benedictine school in Santiago, Chile. I am not a teacher and my music and art skills are no better than a pre-schooler's! So what was I going to do? God didn't reveal the answer in a dream. Rather it was through what I saw and experienced in prayer and conversations with people that I discerned what my ministry could be. And that was to create 'community' with the children and parents / caregivers of Years 1 and 2 through a small gardening programme.

No aims and objectives were set. No sets of instructions were followed. The one thing that we did every week was to start in prayer and the rest just flowed. Germán, a delightful 6 year-old gave us the name Los Semilleros de San Lorenzo – the Seedbed of San Lorenzo. How insightful and spirit-filled was that name to become. Much of what we did was organised chaos but out of nothing came a bountiful crop – both spiritually and physically. From donations of soil, seedlings, a few dollars, some wooden fruit and veggie crates that became planter boxes a whole section of the school playground became a temporary vegetable garden. The joy that so many children had in watering the plants during their break-time (to the point of almost drowning), watching them grow and eating things that they had never tried before was deeply moving. The older children watched on with intrigue as the little ones created this Garden of Eden. The surplus seedlings were potted up and given to each of the 120 Year 1 and 2 students. What I had taken for granted in NZ was a totally new experience for so many at San Lorenzo. Having arrived with little idea of what I was going to 'do' I left with a heart filled with joy. God blessed all abundantly.



Los Semilleros de San Lorenzo: Germán, Agustín, Antonia and Sara – August 2013

Ministry is a gift given to us by God. Jesus showed us the ultimate example of what it meant to minister to people. His miracles, parables and conversations with people from the lowest to the highest in society were done to bring about the Kingdom of God to those that he met. When people were hungry he fed them with real food; when people were sick he visited them, touched them and cured them; when people were afraid he calmed the stormy waters; and when people were happy he joined in their celebrations at weddings and dinners. His ministry was one of love and service. He walked (quite literally!) side by side with those around him. His example should therefore be my guiding light for my ministry to bring the Kingdom of God, the light of Christ to those that I meet in the world that I live in.

When I was first thinking about what ministry meant the official groups that exist at a parish, diocesan, national and even international level came to mind. They are the necessary backbones that hold our communities and Church together – Parish Pastoral Council, St. Vincent de Paul, children's liturgy, ministers to the sick, Archdiocesan Pastoral Council etc. I can tick the box against some of these groups.

But what else does ministry involve? What are the fundamental ingredients to ministry? They are love and service. These must be at the core of all that I do ; be it within pastoral ministry, at home with family and friends, as a volunteer for a sports group or within my workplace. These are the places that I live and work in. I know that I can so easily get caught up in the 'doing' and can miss the special moments but my time spent with Los Semilleros de San Lorenzo ignited an internal fire. I was given this opportunity to share my time, talents and gifts with these wonderful people and in return I was given so much more. In my ministries I ask God to open my eyes to the unexpected gifts that are shared with me.

The gift of ministry is to be unwrapped, savoured, enjoyed and cherished. It also brings with it a need to respond by way of thanks by sharing it with others. Pope Francis once said, "It is not a job contract: 'I have to do it'. The act of doing is in the second place. I must receive the gift and care for it, and from there flows all the rest: in contemplation of the gift. When we forget this, appropriate the gift, and turn it into a function, then we lose the heart of ministry and lose Jesus' gaze who looked upon us and said: 'Follow me.'" (19 September 2019).

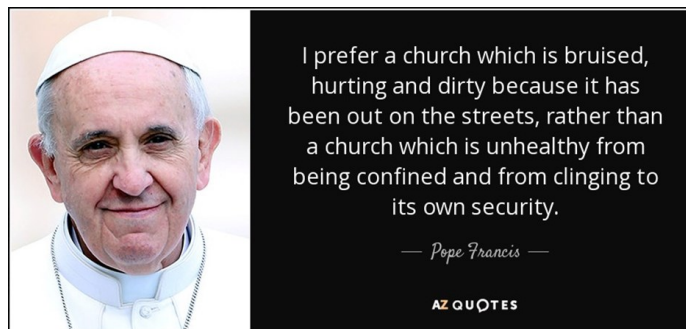
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Love and service were the hallmarks of the early Christians in Jerusalem. They met together to pray, to share in the breaking of bread, the Eucharist, and worked and pooled their resources to help the needy. This new way of living attracted many followers, Acts 2:42-47. This radical way was counter-cultural as this new community of Christians included the marginalised, slaves, gentiles, poor and widows along with the Jews – all were part of this New Chosen People of God.

Today, you and I are part of this very same community of the New Chosen People. Love and service through our ministry as lay and ordained men and women is as transformative and powerful as it was in the early days of the church. Is this truly possible? When we recognise that love and service are at the very heart of our Christian spirituality and a gift from God this will make ministry to those that we serve be an encounter with Jesus – the Kingdom of God on earth.

The Holy Spirit will always guide our discernments as we move forward into new realms. Just as in the early days of the Church where they risked so much to live out and share the Good News of Jesus Christ so too must I be prepared to be part of the Church that takes risks to build up the Kingdom of God. As Pope Francis said....



For me, 'doing ministry' is building relationships that support and empower parishioners to minister to each other, to go out to live the gospel messages and be Jesus' hands and feet here on earth.

Doing Ministry, Living Ministry

By Debbie Matheson, Lay Pastoral Leader
Metropolitan Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish

'Doing ministry', what does this mean? And specifically, what does it mean for a Lay Pastoral Leader? This is the subject that I have been asked to share with you. Below I share some of my experiences of 'doing ministry'.

I think it would be fair to say that all Lay Pastoral Leaders (LPL) experience ministry differently. Their gifts and talents, life and career experiences, desires, and aspirations for the role along with those of the team and community that they are assigned to, and any community focus all define what 'doing ministry' looks like for each LPL. 'Doing ministry' is by its very nature relational and collaborative.

For me, 'doing ministry' is building relationships that support and empower parishioners to minister to each other, to go out to live the gospel messages and be Jesus' hands and feet here on earth.

An important aspect of ministry is to ensure that you can keep ministering. *"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God."* Acts 20:28. Setting boundaries, attending supervision, taking care of your spiritual nourishment, and ensuring that you regularly minister in areas that nourish and build you up are important aspects of ministry. They will help ensure that you do not 'burn out'. These are areas that often, in the busyness of ministry life, can easily get side-lined or overlooked.

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'Doing ministry' is rewarding, challenging, and all consuming. *"But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded."* **2 Chronicles 15:7**. Finding a balance that works is not easy. One of my constant challenges is to limit my hours spent 'doing ministry', to stay within boundaries that ensure that my waking hours (and sleep hours) are able to support my health, family life, personal goals and my ministry. I regularly need to make undesirable decisions around my ability to progress ideas and areas of ministry that I wish to, and in being able to respond positively and timely to support parishioner requests and their ministry. The challenge comes not only from lack of time (this ministry is so vast I don't believe it is possible to ever have enough time), but also from the copious amount of what I will define as 'administrative work' that the role naturally encompasses. I find that the administrative side of 'doing ministry' can easily override my primary focus and drive, that of building relationships that support and empower parishioners. Two personal attributes that I need in abundance are adaptability and resilience. During my time as an LPL I have experienced many impossible to foresee situations that have tested my ability to adapt, my determination and my resilience. Change is always in the air and often comes from left field. But I do believe that God never gives us more than we can handle, and I always look for the positive gift and growth in each situation. I am doing my best, what I was called and formed to do.

The diversity, background, and variety of gifts and talents in each community is vast, and I am affirmed and energised in my role when I tap into these. Helping parishioners discover and appreciate their gifts and talents and assisting them to know how they can best use them for the Glory of God. *"To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."* **Ephesians 4:12**. Hearing their "Yes" in response to inviting them to actively participate in their baptised lay ministry, nurturing a community and experiencing their positive responses is akin to seeing my own children flourish and grow. These experiences all sustain me and my ministry in the challenging times.

My responding to the Holy Spirit and 'Doing ministry' is a wonderful privilege and is very rewarding. However, it is not a walk in the park. There are many challenges and times when I find myself reflecting on why I have been called and questioning my ability/capacity to respond, but these are also opportunities for growth. Keeping a positive frame of mind, leaning on fellow leaders, setting boundaries, attending supervision, and keeping my eyes firmly focused on God sustains me in 'doing ministry' for as Paul said *"let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."* **Galatians 6:9**


"Let us not become
weary in doing good,
for at the proper time
we will reap a harvest
if we do not give up."
Galatians 6:9

Copied from <https://thejoyfulchristianblog.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/aaaablank-facebook-post.png?w=840>


Cheryl Cooper

Happy Birthday!

Birthday blessings to: **Patricia Lynch, 5 September**
Vicky Raw, 8 September
Mikaela Teofilo, 19 September



Parade.com

Is your parish lockdown ready ?

By Joe Green, Lay Pastoral Leader, Wellington South Parish

In early August 2020 the Ministry of Education shared with the education sector a one pager *Stamp it out: our plan to respond to new COVID-19 cases in the community*. It outlines the 'triggers' to move back to a higher level of alert, either regionally or nationally.

Some of the following questions might help you prepare:

- Do you know what the alert levels look like? The COVID-19 website has a simple explanatory.
- Is your current contact tracing up to standard? Do you have the QR code accessible at all your parish facilities? Do you remind people of the harm minimisation standards (stay at home if sick, wash hands regularly, cough into your elbow, have masks available – be open to wearing them in public places, and be prepared to contact the health line if unwell).
- Do you have hand sanitiser available as a routine? Washing facilities with hot water and soap?
- Do you have your parish roll up to date? With it accessible should we go straight to full lock down?
- If we are in the situation where Sunday Mass has been suspended, or where we are in level 3 or 4: have you worked out how you will ensure contact with parishioners? Have you put in place mechanisms to provide support (for example by donating to a food bank, or setting up volunteers to a foodbank)? Have you thought of setting up small support groups? Will you offer prayer/reflections/meditation/Mass by social media? Have you set that up ready to go? If you do not offer this, do you have the links to tell parishioners where they can access these?
- Are you able to participate in zoom meetings?
- Have you catechised your parishioners so that, in the absence of a priest, they are able to pray with, pray for, bless, or console a loved one who is sick, or who might be dying?



About Joe and a pandemic:

Joe in his time in the national police, from 2013 to 2016 was a Coordinator for emergency management at police national headquarters, with responsibility for the national and police pandemic plan, rewrite of the national civil defence plan, and underground mines response planning, and cruise ship emergency planning.

This was shared around earlier and is now posted in the ADW website:

https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/adw_community/26195/



- Thank you to Mary Jackson Kay for our retreat last 31 July-02 August at the Home of Compassion, Island Bay. The warmth of those days is still lingering inside us.
- We have no set dates for the rescheduled Theological Reflection Seminar by Anne Powell. I will email as soon as I know of the date and the venue
- Happy 40^h anniversary of religious vows to Regina Daly
- We are still on for the 10 October Prayer Day with Regina Daly at Pa Maria
- Our dear Patricia has discerned to take a bow from being a Launch Out Candidate as she takes on greater responsibilities on her teaching role at St Mary's College. She is welcome to join us on either the coming prayer day or the learning day, where she will bid you all a personal farewell as a Launch Out Candidate. Who knows when she might come back in the future to resume her formation? (Vicky came back after 11 years). We will miss her company, but I am sure we will see her around.
- See you all for our zoom meeting on 24 September 6:00-6:45PM. I'll email you the agenda near the time.

Is anyone among you sick? (James 5:14)

By Tony Lenton, Senior Hospital Chaplain New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference
2007 Launch Out Graduate

In a lift at the hospital where I was working as Chaplain, I saw this man whose face looked as if he had been severely injured in a fight. I wanted to say something but needed to test where he was at before considering if I should try breaking into the sombre quietude that he seemed to have had built around himself to shield his physical and spiritual hurt. Then suddenly he was gone out of the lift. I felt the pang of a lost opportunity.

Thankfully, the Holy Spirit had other ideas because as it turned out this dear man with the bruised and disfigured face, I was to see later as I completed my rounds.

He looked so forlorn, as he sat in his bed. When I introduced myself as a Chaplain, he shared with me that he had an eye surgically removed (a last resort procedure for a medical complication). His wife too looked on helpless as there was nothing, she could do for him. She looked burdened with worry for him.

They sat there together, exhausted and afraid, and my heart was troubled for them. I knew from my patient list he was Catholic. I wondered what to say – but then, inspired by the Spirit I said ‘I am glad I have found you’, they looked up with questioning eyebrows and faces - ‘I had an email from the Pope this morning who said before you go home today make sure you find and speak to Sione and see if he is alright and let me know!’ There was a moment’s incredulous silence, but then we all laughed, and they relaxed. A tear from the empty eye socket rolled down Sione’s face and his wife cried a little too. We then prayed and I gave them Holy Communion.



Their level of vulnerability is so common among those in hospital and is heart-breaking. Yet a kind word and taking time with them will often be like the ‘balm of Gilead’ *Genesis 37:25, Jeremiah 8:22,46:11*. Even for a moment ‘thy Kingdom come’ can become a reality.

How I long to spend more time with the Siones of this world and to be a reassuring presence by taking time praying with and most importantly letting them tell their stories or just ‘be’ with.

As I reflected on this encounter and others I have had, It occurred to me that Sione’s arrival at hospital is only part of his journey; from the first presentation of symptoms that led to a diagnosis and then a treatment plan to resolve the problems and then the subsequent rehabilitation when he returns home. The average length of stay in a hospital is around only four days, but the journey is much longer.

Sione’s wife travelled with him through this time (not just at the hospital) and she too will need some support – increasingly with the stress on the hospital system we are finding that Chaplains are spending more time supporting staff. Now, more often, the issues they are seeing are those of increased severity, because much elective surgery is suspended during the higher COVID Alert levels. Like us, they too are affected by the worry and dislocation caused by the responses to the pandemic.

James 5: 14-16 suggests we call for the elders if we are sick – but may I ask how well equipped and organised are our pastoral responses in our parishes? It would seem to me that with dislocation of the post-COVID world many of our people (and others) will need a lot of support.

One of the areas, that had it been mismanaged, would have caused chaos, was in the care of the elderly. Although we did have a couple of outbreaks, they were caught, and the people supported in Hospital. Apart from Covid, the elderly is so in need of our ongoing support and love. Even the discussion on impending End-of-Life Bill, may cause much heartbreak and careful ministry will be needed.

So, I wrote a reflection on the matter, suggesting the idea that our parishes form and train Pastoral Care Teams (PCT) that looked after Siones of this world from the day he first learns that his symptoms need serious attention and when he comes out of hospital (where he was supported by the Hospital Chaplains) and begins his rehabilitation. A PCT can also offer support to Sione's family and especially, keep an eye on the elderly of their parish.

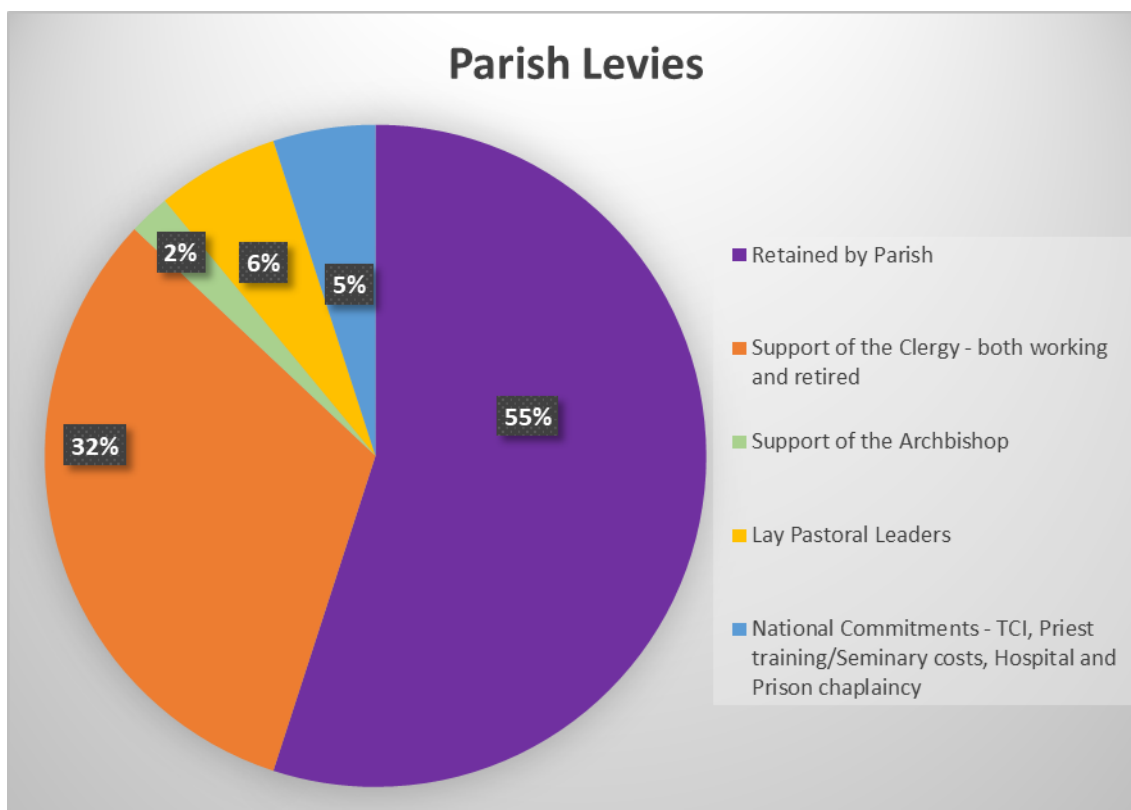
Authentic faith in a Catholic setting is expressed 'in communio' that is, in its fullness, expressed as men and women, not alone, but operating together with a common faith and belief reaching out in the love of God to do what they can to relieve the burdens in people's lives.

Parishes are faith communities inspired by the Gospel message and energised by the Trinity, itself the perfect expression of community. As a caring, non-judgemental, Eucharistic Faith community they remain the cornerstone of any future outreach and the obvious place from which to grow practical loving concern.

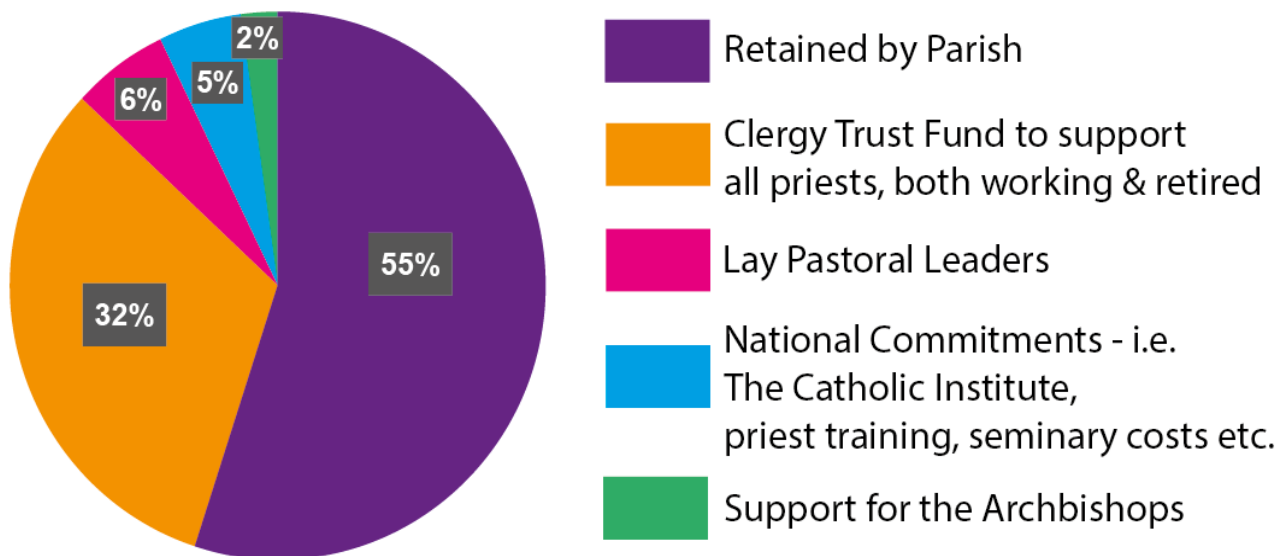
The NZCBC have approved the development of the PCT. I would be grateful for your support and prayers. If you are interested to do it as a Pastoral Project or run it in your parish, email me at tlenton@nzcbc.org.nz

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Where do the Parish levies go?



Offertory giving: where does my gift go?



Online Resources

The experience of lockdowns has been a springboard for many conversations about liturgy. John Grayland, director of liturgy of the diocese of Palmerston North and Thomas O' Loughlin, a British theologian, began an online discussion forum. If you are subscribed to [CathNews](#) you can join one of them. I was privileged to join one and thoroughly enjoyed it. Here is a link to a recording of those discussions (Thank you Mary Ann Greaney for providing the links):

[Session ONE](#)

[Session TWO](#)

[Session THREE](#)

Below are links to online masses

ADW: <https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/>

From other dioceses: www.nlo.org.nz

Links to other prayer resources:

1. St Ignatius gives us the idea of meeting sacred scripture with one's own life, mediated through Imaginative Contemplation. See <https://www.pathwaystogod.org/resources/praying-art>
2. Walking with God meditations during your daily walks <https://pray-as-you-go.org/prayer%20tools/>
3. Daily Scripture reflections <https://pray-as-you-go.org>
4. A variety of prayers and reflections <http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Sitemap>

Relax and have a bit of fun from these videos shared by Joan McFetridge and Cecily McNeill

[HMS Pinafore](#)

[Bells of Banff](#)



When he had finished eating, he said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch".

Luke 5: 4