

Launch Out Letter (LOL)

December 2020

In all things

By Mely Kartawidjaya, Launch Out Candidate

I couldn't believe it, when I heard on the news that New Zealand would go to Level 4 lockdown in a few days. This means, the borders will be closed, as well as offices, public places and parks. My employer advised me to prepare to work from home, so I packed my office files and computer. Before I left the office that afternoon, I heard news about panic buying. It was grim. On my way home, my mind started to play — 'Coronavirus has spread so widely, it has reached even New Zealand, which is at the end of the world, but now we have got it! What is God's plan for the world, for his people, and for my family? Should I stock up on food? Churches will be closed, how are we going to attend Mass?... This is scary. And I also knew how poorly other countries coped.



At home, over dinner, my family talked about the situation. Everyone was somehow feeling alright and the children were well-prepared for online learning. However, it was hard for my husband, as it meant he could not work during the lockdown. I appreciate that at least no one was panicking! In one of our family prayers, we closed with a passage from Romans 8:28 *"For we know in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* Yes, all things! Not some or a few things... but in ALL THINGS!

The first few days of Level 4 lockdown, I felt slow, bored, and isolated, but then I started to adjust to the new routine. Gratitude became my habit. Once a week, I went to the supermarket to buy groceries, when I planned the shopping list, I put a Post-it note with words 'Modesty' and 'Simplicity' in my car dashboard to remind me not to buy the things that I don't need even though I wanted it! My family enjoyed home-cooked breakfast, lunch, and dinner, we didn't crave for fancy food, and no more takeaways! I was thankful that I could work from home and help my daughter with her home-learning. We played, shared stories, and prayed. We missed going to Mass, but Christ was truly present in my family; we were building a Christ-centred family together to receive and share Christ. For me this was the 'Breaking of the Bread!'

On the third week of the lockdown, over another dinner, my family talked about what we liked about the lockdown. We felt much closer, we enjoyed each others' company with or without conversation, we were relaxed, no one rushed in the morning. We were grateful for the government, doctors, nurses, and the essential workers risking their lives to help others. We also grieved for all the suffering in the world, and for those who were affected by the pandemic. We prayed for the world to recover. We held on to hope.

Now, we are entering the Advent season. A good reminder for me to prepare my heart to welcome Christmas and share Christmas with those who were not able to celebrate it because of the pandemic, especially my friends and families in Indonesia who were affected physically, emotionally and spiritually. Technology played a good role for me to reach out to them. Overseas became closer to home. My Mum in Indonesia, who had recently recovered from Covid19, became more open to consider faith in her life.



Mely's lovely family

I was humbled by my experiences in 2020, a significant year for many people, a history for my children's children to remember. The lockdown has changed my way to live. It has also changed the way I worshipped God. The 'Breaking of the Bread' came alive to me in a very personal way. ...I welcome you, Jesus... in ALL THINGS!

Happy Birthday!

Birthday blessings to: *Lucienne Hensel, 15 November*
Mely Kartawidjaya, 14 December
Sharon Penny 19 December



Updates

- ◇ The *Redress Hearing of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse* will be held from
- ◇ 30 November to 11 December in Auckland. This particular part of the hearing will be based on the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Salvation Army. A letter from Cardinal John was sent out to your parishes. Here are useful resources you can look at [Resources about the Royal Commission into Abuse](#)
- ◇ Congratulations for a successful Project Presentation last 20 November 2020. I received a lot of affirmation from those who attended. Well done to all of you. For a year of disruption, it was certainly a fruitful one. Many thanks to those who made it possible— Mentors, Spiritual Directors, Cardinal John, Mary Ann Greaney, Chris Walkerdine and Mrs Ann Williams. There are many more I could name — it takes an entire Diocese to raise a Lay Pastoral Leader!
- ◇ I am yet to finish the documentation for the Project Presentation, I will send it out either by end of the year or early next year.
- ◇ Just to share my bit of the action. I am the Lead Researcher for the Cultural Groups Review for the ADW. I am doing this with Gerry Burns Vicar General, our Team Leader and with Christine Walkerdine, the Review Coordinator. We are aiming to run a review with at least 11 (for now) Ethnic communities and chaplaincies between December and March 2021. Please pray for us.
- ◇ As released in a letter by Cardinal John dated 02 November, there will be role changes starting 18 December. This means, Parish Leadership Ministry and Marriage, Family and Young Church will be merged under a new Director for Church Mission. Launch Out will fall under this new entity.
- ◇ As I organise for our events for next year there are some changes in the initial calendar I sent you, due to venue and facilitator availability. I will keep in touch for those changes.
- ◇ This is connected to the dates for 2021, could you pencil in 16 January, 10:00 AM-2:30PM, for a year-opening meeting here at The Catholic Centre, Level 2, Board Room. This room would have the facility to Zoom in Vicky from Blenheim. The agenda is to unpack your experiences in 2020 and discuss preparations for your Pastoral Projects for 2021. I'll send you an invitation. If this date is not feasible, an alternative is for us to Zoom. We'll keep in touch.

“Hope changes everything, even when nothing has changed”

(Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher to the Papal Household)

By Lucienne Hensel, Launch
Out Graduate & Family Ministries

*“As a deer yearns for running streams, so I yearn for you, my God.
I thirst for God, the living God; when shall I see the face of God?...
Why, my soul, do you despair? Why are you so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God, for I will praise him still, my Saviour and my God.”*
(Psalm 42:1, 2, 5)

Over the years I have often turned to these verses of Psalm 42 – they both comfort and challenge me to put my hope in God. Hope is not something one tends to think about when things are fine. It is when the future seems bleak, when there is suffering, and things just don’t make sense... It is then that I dig deep for hope. In such moments, the words of Psalm 42 become so meaningful and help me to ‘put my hope in God’ once again.

Putting hope in God is an act of faith. It is not a passive resignation to the way things are, it is also not just ‘looking on the bright side of life’. Hope is a concrete step I take to centre my thoughts, my heart, and my entire being on God and to trust that He desires all good things for me. Hope also requires a thankful heart. It is when I gratefully remember how faithful God has been in the past, that I can firmly hope in Him for the future. A wise friend once told me that hope is our faithfulness hand in hand with God’s own faithfulness to us.

Jeremiah 29:11 speaks of God’s plans “to give (us) a future and a hope.” I have often pondered these words... What do they really mean? It is so easy to focus on what I consider a ‘hopeful future’ for myself. But God’s ‘future and hope’ go way beyond my plans and dreams. Those can easily be shattered when life gets in the way. Even then, I have hope that in all circumstances, God will work things for my good. (Romans 8:28)

Hope orientates our life towards the promises made to us by our loving God, for whom we yearn. It is a confident expectation of what God has promised – that He *will* be with us, that He *will* pour His love into our hearts and *will* fulfil our longings. God is the source of our hope and ultimately, God is all we hope and long for, because we were made for God.

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In recent weeks I saw the difference that our hope in Christ makes as I sat at the bedside of Mary Margaret - dear friend and Launch Out companion. Mary Margaret was dying; there was no more treatment available for her cancer, no ‘future’ for her. Yet as she faced her mortality, she held on to a real, tangible hope and it made all the difference. I was reminded of Cardinal Raniero’s words: “Hope changes everything, even when nothing has changed”.

Mary Margaret had a grateful, hopeful heart. In her final days, she reminisced – sometimes in wonder - at the countless ways God had blessed her throughout her life. From her hospice bed, she received and gave back love and joy to family, visitors, caregivers and friends from around the world. She knew without a doubt that, “when the chimes draw to an end” (her words) she would be welcomed into the arms of a God who is love. Her total trust in Eternal Love really challenged me to examine my own heart. How real is my hope in God? Who is my life truly centred in? As I watched my friend’s life ebbing away, I found myself digging deeper in hope for the God of my longing.



It is said that a person without hope is like a dead man. He has nothing to live for. Mary Margaret was a woman fully alive. She had everything to live for, right to her final moment when she was welcomed into the Father's embrace in the presence of the angels and saints. We laughed and cried together as we said our final goodbyes, and the very last thing she said to me was, "*Lucienne, I can't wait to see you again!*"

As Fr Patrick said at your farewell, "*Our belief, our hope, our truth, is that Mary Margaret, you are now with the Lord*". Until we meet again, Mary Margaret, may you be held in the palm of God's hand.

**"Why, my soul, do you despair? Why are you so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God, for I will praise him still, my Saviour and my God!"**

Online Resources

The Launch Out Community is blessed to be supported by religious communities who have guided us with their wisdom as Spiritual Directors and Facilitators of Prayer Days and Retreats. I invite you to visit their websites for very good source of inspiration for your personal prayer and if you are looking for ideas when leading groups.

- Check the Prayer Space of the Presentation Sisters. I particularly like the You Tube instrumental video <https://www.pbvm.org/spirituality/prayer-space/>. You can also find good reflections on certain topics and social justice issues in their Resources webpage <https://www.pbvm.org/resources/pbvm-reflections-on-sdgs/24/>
- The Cenacle Community also have their virtual Prayer Pages. They have such good resources that was designed during the lockdown period but just as relevant in our present times <https://cenacle.org.nz/prayerspace/prayerpagesamonthlyreflection>
- The Marist Fathers in particular, have their monthly publication, The MARIST MESSENGER, which you can subscribe in hard copy. They also have a website which has many outstanding reflections on different topics <https://www.maristmessenger.co.nz/>.
- The Daughters of Our Lady Compassion has webpage of wonderful quotes and reflection from and about Blessed Suzanne Aubert <https://compassion.org.nz/stories/quotes-reflections/>

Hope or Fear – Choosing the lens for looking at 2020

By Fiona Rammell, Launch Out Graduate & Former LPL of Sacred Heart Cathedral

What a year it has been. As we look back on 2020 it is easy to think of it as an *annus horribilis* to coin the phrase used by the Queen in 1992. Social media is also full of messages telling us this. We talk about it with each other saying roll in 2021 as we feel done in with 2020.

But what if we looked at the year gone with a different lens? What if that lens was hope instead of fear? What if 20/20 the expression for perfect vision is also a metaphor for this year 2020 being our chance to see things in a new light?

As Catholics our founding story, the lived life of Jesus, is full of hope. After all we are meant to be a people of hope! The dance of life, death and resurrection is the trinity we are meant to live by. But do we really? How often do we get trapped in the death forgetting the resurrection?

Covid19 this year was a death in so many ways. For some it was the taking of their last breath. For many others the death was the loss of their job, the closing down of their business, the reality of not being able to put food on the table, the not being able to gather for graduations, funerals, weddings and other occasions. The list goes on.

Amid these deaths if we are willing to look there are opportunities born. Through the dark there is the light, the resurrection if we are looking through the lens of hope. Job, that good faithful servant of God who lost everything is the story we read not wanting that to be our reality. We fight against it. We insure against it. We hedge our bets,

we make sure we put away for a rainy day, we believe we need to be in control. Yet Covid19 is a reminder we cannot control everything. The world can bring us to a standstill.

“What if 20/20 the expression for perfect vision is also a metaphor for this year 2020 being our chance to see things in a new light?”

Fear makes us small where hope makes us stand tall. Fear stops us from not seeing our neighbour where hope helps us embrace our neighbour. Fear releases boundless negative energy where hope releases joy even in the midst of devastation.



Fiona and her first grand daughter born in 2020

Jesus on the Cross did not give up. It hurt. It was not fair. It was brutal. It was cruel. All words we could describe this year to be. Yet the hope Jesus had in knowing that this too shall pass led him to a new beginning.

John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."

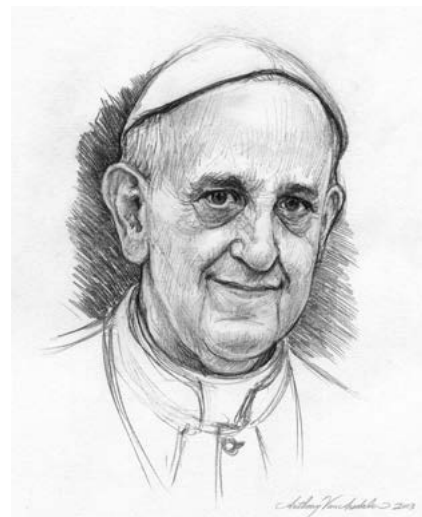
And so as we celebrate this time of Christmas, a time of remembering the hope that was born in that tiny stable in the form of a baby, let us draw on this strength, and birth the hope that is within each one of us knowing that in the midst of our despair there is always hope and the chance for a new beginning. As I look in the eyes of my first grandchild I am filled with hope of this amazing new beginning.

Covid19 gave the world a chance to hit the reset button. Let us take the opportunity Covid19 has taught us to push our reset button from working from a place of fear to a people working with a sense of hope.

May your Christmas be filled with hope and joy.

"Mary was praying when the Archangel Gabriel came to bring his message to her in Nazareth. Her small yet Immense “Here I am”, which made all of creation jump for joy in that moment, had been preceded throughout salvation history by many other “Here I am”, by many trusting obediences, by many who were open to God’s will. There is no better way to pray than to place oneself like Mary in an attitude of openness, with a heart open to God: “Lord, what you want, when you want, and how you want.” That is, a heart open to God’s will. And God always responds."

Pope Francis



Copied from <https://www.pinterest.nz/pin/261208847111489924/>

SNAPSHOTS

LAUNCH OUT PROJECT PRESENTATION

20 Nov 2020, The Catholic Centre



The wisdom of the group is better than the wisdom of the leader, which removes the pressure to perform

God does not care what people think, rather God cares about what people's hearts are doing

God does not need people to think what they should, but rather try

People need to feel they have a loving person listening to them and open

It is about allowing people to discover and learn new ideas and being alongside people for awhile—they'll come back for more if they love you but if they won't, if they think you are just trying to teach them



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

SUSAN APATHY
As shared by Margaret Bearsley