



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

LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL)

May 2021

Welcome to the May issue. This month we have invited a Launch Out Graduate to lead this month's Gospel reflection. We thank **Fiona Rammell** for her piece on the last Sunday Gospel, which also builds upon the preceding Pentecost Sunday. Incidentally, her "breath" reflection was inspired and in fact written, while she was treated in hospital for an injury. **Margaret Beasley** reflects on ecumenism drawing from the experience of her family and good ol' theological rigour. This is a timely topic for Christian Unity which was held in the 3rd week of May. I like the part when she said—"Christians are mad!", aren't we so? **Bridget** delivers her series on lay theology this time, by tackling the concept of Charism. We usually associate this with religious orders but Bridget's piece underpins the rule of charism in our ministries .

We are fortunate to have **Alan Roberts** to write for us this May. His article is on "Working as a team in parish" and he wrote it as a learning resource. I find similarities with this to Collaborative Ministry, however I do prefer the convivial word "team", which makes it feel more personal and inviting. He developed the idea with David Orange, back then in Wainuiomata, and they were called the "Dave Alan Show", I googled this up and so begins my education on Irish pop culture. Happy reading.

— Maya Bernardo, Launch Out Formator and Manager

The Breath of Life (Jn 20:19-23)

Gospel for the last Sunday of May 2021

By Fiona Rammell
Launch Out Graduate and former LPL



Copied from <https://www.sampleposts.com/peace-quotes/>

Breathe! Deep breathe! It was what they told me to do as I was rushed to hospital with an injury! Before the operation, during it and after, breathing deeply and slowly to keep myself calm and allay the fear, was the advice I kept getting.

Breath!! It's something we take for granted but something we all do. Without it we would not be alive.

In the Gospel reading of John, the disciples have locked themselves away in a room for fear of what might happen to them. It is Jesus arriving among them and greeting them with peace be with you not once but twice and then breathing the Holy Spirit upon them that gives them a new lease on life and the ability to do what they were called to do.

This breathing upon them links back to Genesis 2:7 which says: "...the Lord God formed everyone of dust from the ground, breathed into their nostrils the breath of life; and they became human beings". In Ezekiel 37:9 "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breath upon these slain that they may live".

Breath is always associated with living. Without breathing we are nothing.

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This gift of breath, like all gifts we receive, is freely given with love. It is the life force within us. In the early years the word for God was *Yahweh*. But it was never spoken. It mimicked the breath. *Yah* for the inhale and *weh* for the exhale. It was the word for God spoken using our breath.

Jesus breathes God into the disciples. It is everything they need for the journey ahead. Without this they are powerless. Without realising it, everything they had was right there inside them. In the depth of my pain, lying on that operating table, what I needed was right there inside of me. My breath. My *Yah* (breathe in) my *weh* (breathe out). Right there within me. My constant companion.

My good friend and mentor, Sister Veronica recently took her last breath. At the age of 93 she finally got to retire. Right up until her death she was still being a disciple, not stuck in a room, but each day heading out to Pak 'n Save, on the streets and in her community spreading the message her long life had told her to be true: to love with agape love, is to love as God loves. It is a self-emptying love. It will never use people for selfish or sinful purposes, and it desires only their highest good.

This is what Jesus desired for his disciples: not to be paralysed by fear, but to be anchored in peace so that love can freely flow to the world.

When we breathe deeply we take away our bodies ability to panic or hyperventilate. How amazing is that! The power of our breath. The power of *Yah-weh* deep within us. Let us be constantly reminded, each time we breathe, of the divine spirit within us. St Paul said to pray without ceasing. We do this by simply breathing.

May the gift of breath awaken within you the gift of life and be a constant reminder that *Yahweh* (God) never leaves us. How beautiful is that!



1. What is the origin of the word 'charism'?
2. When was the word 'charism' first used?

See Page 3 for the answers

What is your 'Charism'?

(from *The Emerging Laity* by James and Evelyn Whitehead, 1986)

By Bridget Taumoepeau
Launch Out Mentor



In the 1960's, after the Second Vatican Council, there was an awakening of the importance of conscience (the personal authority, which is the inner guide of Christian life and vocation). In the 1970's the gift to the church was the resurgence of charism. These two are linked, in that conscience led many lay Catholics to look at ways towards fuller participation in the community of faith, and they then needed to decide what was their charism.

We often associate charism with religious orders – to teach; to nurse; to care for the dying; to preach; to evangelise by publishing educational material; to pray in an enclosed setting etc. But lay people began to recognise that they, too, had a charism – caring for the dying; working with troubled teenagers; discussing the ethics of the workplace.

A charism has three characteristics: first - a personal strength e.g., Musical, administrative, teaching, hospitality. A person can identify "What I do well." Second – that strength is recognised as a gift – people begin to realise that they both have a gift and can use it. Charisms call us to be grateful. Third – these gifts are personal, but not private, so they are there for the benefit of the community. They bind us in two directions – to the Spirit, from whom they came and to the community, for which they are given.

After Vatican II many Catholics began to experience in their own lives the connection between charism and adult faith. We do not just have needs, we have gifts, which can be used to challenge, or console, or celebrate. These charisms enable us to contribute to the community as well as to receive from their largesse.

So, charism is a call to ministry. The long-standing distinction between clergy, who minister, and laity, who are religious consumers, became less and the sense of ministry became wider – to the family, the workplace and the world.

In applying for the 'Launch Out' programme and in your training did you think about your own charisms?



BIRTHDAYS

May

05 Cardinal John Dew
Archbishop Paul Martin

12 Mary Jackson Kay

27 Mary-Ann Greaney

Answers to the QUIZ

Copied from <https://harlowallianceparty.org/answers-to-quiz-3>

1. What is the origin of the word 'charism'?

It comes from the Greek *charisma*, which is a personal attractiveness, or degree of interest that allows one to influence others. In the Christian tradition that is considered to come from the Holy Spirit. The word charismatic also has the same origin, meaning that one has an ability to be magnetic, or attractive. In Christianity, a charismatic movement is one which emphasises the role of the Holy Spirit.

2. When was the word 'charism' first used?

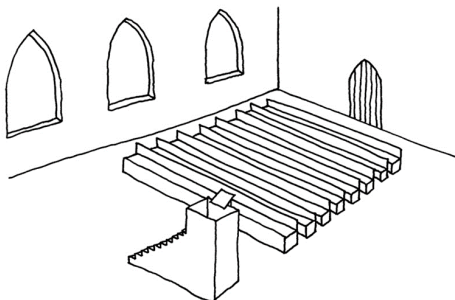
Around 1641, when it was first noticed in print, according to the Merriam–Webster Dictionary.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Catholics. Prayer, Belief and Diversity in a Secular Context: A New Zealand Perspective.** By Joe Grayland . I bought the book but haven't got around to reading it yet. It is recommended by Joe Green I think we need to be abreast of the works of our local theologians. USD10 + in Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/Catholics-Prayer-Diversity-Secular-Context-ebook/dp/B085BXZQBK>
- **Poems with visuals by Noel Davis** we used some of this in the last Prayer Day with Regina Daly <https://www.emmausproductions.com/special-feature/tribute-to-noel-davis/>
- **The Eight Spiritual Mountains of the Future Church** by Joan Chittister https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BmW2xwQkbU&ab_channel=GarrattPublishing



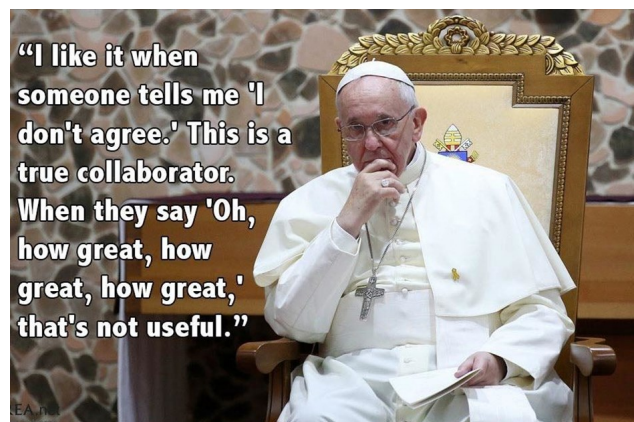
THE CHURCH IS EMPTY



THIS IS BECAUSE EVERYONE IS BUSY



Copied from <http://beamcountypriaryschool.org/online-subjects>



Copied from <https://cartoonchurch.com/content/cc/church-is-empty-20/>

Copied from <https://allthatsinteresting.com/pope-francis-quotes#3>

UPDATES

Awakening to the Energies of Love

Regina Daly led the Launch Out Candidates in a moving retreat with the theme "Awakening the energies of love". It was held at the Home of Compassion, Island Bay.



We closed the retreat with a mihi with the Maori community, who blessed us and gave us a heart warming mihi (too bad we didn't have a picture)

Liturgical Leadership and Practice with Patrick Bridgman

Vicky, Bernadette, Jude and Margaret has just finished the face-to-face classes with Patrick Bridgman. The pictures below were taken when they presented their first assessment of designing and running a liturgy.



Its all in the family—reflection on ecumenism

By Margaret Bearsley
Launch Out Candidate

When I bump into friends I haven't seen in a while, they will often start a conversation with: "...and how are the sisters?" That's because they are aware of the in-house 'Reformation' that occurred within my family some 40 years ago, with half of us ten 'cradle Catholic' siblings—four from amongst we six sisters—becoming fundamentalist Christians, of a Baptist nature.

My close friends know that, after decades of acrimony and upheaval that splintered our family in ways not too dissimilar from the Reformation and Counter-Reformation across Europe (though thankfully, to date, no bloodshed), one of our sisters discovered she had terminal cancer. That dreadful situation brought at least the girls' side of the family back together again. And did we have some fun together over the last couple of years of her life!

But things fell apart again over our religious differences, at the time of our sister's funeral. And now, a couple of years and many tears later, we remaining five are friends again.

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Copied from <https://www.slideshare.net/mopelzel/ecumenism-and-interreligious-dialogue-75732707>

With the anxieties and mistrust that separated we Catholic and Baptist sisters (and let's not even talk about the four boys; little hope there!), I sometimes wonder if my family life is a prophetic action, similar to Hosea's. As Chapters 1 and 3 of the prophetic book have it, Hosea was commanded by God to marry a prostitute, as an act of prophetic symbolism regarding Israel's unfaithfulness to God. My family's in-house Reformation, and we sisters ultimately finding ways to connect as sisters, seems like something of a prophetic action about ecumenism.

However, we haven't found a way to worship together. I did propose, the last time we sisters were together before our sister died, that they come along to Mass with me. But no.

So, the scandal of my family's separation is a very localised experience of the scandal of the separation of the Christian churches.

If you take a 1.5 kilometre walk down The Parade, from Dee Street down to the sea in Island Bay, Wellington, you pass five different Christian churches. What on earth is the point of all those churches, each with a different, or worse, the same, message out the front?! Non-Christians must think that Christians are mad. I sometimes think that Christians are mad.

In his *Sacramental theology after Vatican II*¹, Peter Fink SJ describes the post-Vatican II developments of liturgical theology with its focus on the growing understanding of Sacrament being embedded within the ritual actions of the liturgy. Liturgy expresses and makes present the mystery of Christ; it also links worship, faith, and human life. Contrast this with the pre-Vatican II Western scholastic theology of the 13th to 20th Centuries, where the Sacraments were 'things' that could be observed and analysed—sacred objects, or holy signs, given by Christ to be received through the ministry of ordained priests.

Peter Fink explains that the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, the first of the Vatican II documents to be published after the Council, reinstated the primitive concept of liturgy as the work of the people, with all of the Sacraments falling within this work. The Constitution identified that Sacraments are not things at all, but lively expressions by the whole assembled church of its faith and mission to embody and make accessible the saving work of Christ.

Taking a forward look at possible new developments in liturgical theology, Peter Fink suggests that when the symbolic nature of liturgy is taken seriously, it should impact ecumenism and, ultimately, church unity. He explains that, generally, the ecumenical task has been to pursue church unity by reaching some level of agreement around doctrine—which rests on the assumption that agreement *can* be reached. He goes on to say:

Yet, what if it were the case that agreement can [not] and should never be reached...? If it is true that the nature of symbol demands a plurality of interpretations, it might well be discovered that the disunity which the churches are trying to overcome does not really exist, and, on the deepest level of the church's life and prayer never did. ... while different communities of Christians disagree as to what they think they are doing sacramentally, nonetheless, within a reasonable range of deviation based on culture, language, and perception, all Christian communities continue to do the same thing. The impact of such a realization on the theology of Christian worship, and indeed on Christian life and theology in general, would be enormous².

Peter Fink wrote that article some 30 years ago. To my knowledge, an enormous shift hasn't yet happened. But it's the sort of thing that Pope Francis commends.

In *Fratelli Tutti*³, Pope Francis' opening paragraphs refer to his namesake, Saint Francis: "*Francis felt himself a brother to the sun, the sea and the wind, yet he knew that he was even closer to those of his own flesh. Wherever he went, he sowed seeds of peace ...*"

The encyclical concludes with a call to unity in the world, through religions being at the service of fraternity:

*...we, the believers of the different religions, know that our witness to God benefits our societies. The effort to seek God with a sincere heart, provided it is never sullied by ideological or self-serving aims, helps us recognize one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters*⁴.

Perhaps Pope Francis' respect for plurality is what Peter Fink identifies in his statement that doctrinal agreement *should not be reached*.

While Hosea's wife may have provided a symbolic mirror to shame an unfaithful Israel of the 8th Century BC, my sisters and I seem to be mirroring *Fratelli Tutti*. We may not be able to worship together, but we certainly know how to eat, drink and share life together—no scandal there!

References:

¹ Fink, P. E. (1990). Sacramental theology after Vatican II. In P. Fink (Ed.), *The new dictionary of sacramental worship* (pp. 1107-1114). Collegeville: The Liturgical Press.

² *Ibid.*, 1114.

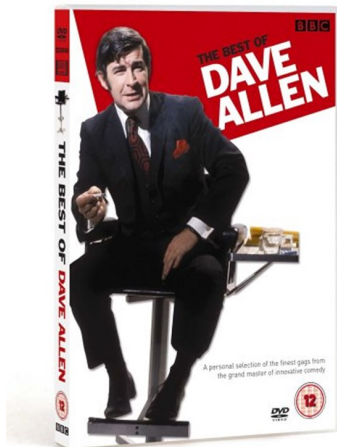
³ *Fratelli Tutti*, October 2020, paragraph 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, paragraph 274.

Working as a team in parish

By Fr Alan Roberts
Parish Priest, St Mary's Hata Mere

In the early 1980's I approached Fr David Orange and floated the idea of he and I request a Team Ministry appointment. The concept of priests working as a Team had been proposed by Cardinal Tom Williams soon after he became bishop of the diocese. Our request was granted and we were appointed to Wainuiomata. Our time together lasted for almost five years. On the lighter side it became known as 'The Dave Alan Show', after the Irish comedian, Dave Allen, popular at the time.



In practice, this Team Ministry meant that neither of us would be 'the boss'. Being the senior, Dave was the canonical parish priest in name only. No decision or changes would be made unless we both agreed. A requirement was that we prayed together, but apart from that we had to find our way. There was no one to advise of the pitfalls and if we couldn't work co-operatively the Team would dissolve. The Cardinal's motivation for introducing the concept may have been in part to solve the problem of priests still being posted to assistant positions after more than ten years of ministry. Certainly for myself I saw it, at least to some degree, as a solution to the frustration resulting from the parish priest/curate system. I would grow beyond that and have since accepted that Team Ministry is the best way to work effectively in parish life.

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Were I to go into Team today, I would do so with the same principles mentioned above. However, it would be a mistake for me to say: "when I was in a Team before, we did it this way". What works in one parish, may not work in another. Each Team must evolve in their own unique way. Certainly many aspects of my experience are worth a close look, but things have changed ... Lay Pastoral Leaders for one! And, if you are one of them, and required to work in an area with others, my advice is 'don't even think about it, unless you can be part of a Team and *feel* that you are'.

WHY TEAM MINISTRY?

1. It is more effective. People sense the unity of the leaders and want to assist. They come to sense the vision, and, when that happens the rocket is launched, provided of course, that you do have a united vision.
2. It means a more genuine discernment in 'where to from here'. If you are praying together and sharing honestly, you will all develop a sense of what is right when it is time to move.
3. It looks after each person. "It is not good that man/woman should be alone." Working alone breeds burn out and cynicism. Your *modus operandi* may never be challenged and your narrow vision never widened. Working together means you have a place to vent your frustration and the vision of another will challenge you.
4. Working with others enables one to ENJOY the apostolate. This creates community, breeds vision and the imagination of those in the pews begins to light up.

WHAT IS NOT TEAM MINISTRY

Example One:

Maggie Karl, a catechist in the Samoan community and Lay Pastoral Leader, Kevin Smith, B. Theol. receive a letter from the Bishop appointing them to form a Team under Fr John Little, beginning in a month's time. They have never met and know nothing about each other.

While this could be an enjoyable and harmonious time for all three, it is a huge risk. Can Kevin adjust, considering he has been involved in a fairly high-powered job in the business world? How does Fr John view his role? Will he insist on being in charge? Will Maggie feel comfortable with these two men? Let's compare the above appointment to the following:

Example Two:

The Bishop calls all his potential labourers to a conference for next year's appointments. There he explains which parishes are needing new personnel and he is inviting a Team of three to take on parish X, a large multi-cultural parish. He arranges for all to speak for 5 minutes about themselves, and then go and talk to anyone they think they could work with as a Team.

After a day, Maggie, Fr John and Kevin feel they could work together. So they agree to start meeting to explore more deeply. They want to know the strengths and weaknesses of each other and whether or not they are on the same wave length. Eventually they go away for three days with a facilitator. They spend this time in a kind of retreat, sharing scripture, praying together and formulating their vision. Then they agree to ask their Bishop to be appointed and maybe for a set number of years. They elect Maggie as their Chairperson, the sort of 'go to' person, responsible for ensuring the spirit of Team is maintained.

DISCUSSION:

1. *Comment on the first example. Would you accept such an appointment?*
2. *What would be difficult for you in example 2?*

WHAT IS NEEDED TO BE A TEAM

A true team can only be formed if each knows their own gifts and is aware of and respects the gifts of the others. Each must genuinely believe in their colleagues.

A true team must have a common vision: e.g. 'we will build a genuine Christian community committed to the poor'. Vision is the foundation stone, but it is not a plan. It is wider than that, and it rubs off and inspires. The following story may help you understand:



St. Patrick's Church, Wainuiomata

Before I set out in Team I have to admit that I was largely solving the problem of simply being a curate! Then Dave said to me: "you know, we could evangelise that place" and his words hit me between the eyes. I just hadn't thought like that. Significantly, the RCIA became a major occupation during those years. The numbers entering the Church began to swell and lay leadership was developing as a result. This development staggered us. It was quite simply God at work, but through many very quiet, low key committed parishioners.

It goes without saying that Team formation requires several hours or days of meeting and sounding one another out. If your vision of the Church and your philosophy of pastoral work happen to be poles apart, Team would be difficult. It is not an exaggeration to say that there are Vatican 11 and pre-Vatican 11 Catholics. Old wineskins and new wine don't mix.

WORKING TOGETHER: Following consultation, a Team leader oversees the allocation of responsibilities to each of the members: e.g. adult education, RCIA, liturgy, prayer, justice etc.

Having a particular portfolio, should not exclude the others, even if there is no involvement, e.g. X has a great knowledge of the gospels, and conducts a seminar for six weeks. The other members have no inclination to teach on the subject, but they do attend the seminars as an affirmation of their colleague and to endorse the importance of scripture. Or, if they don't attend, they will ask people how they are finding the seminars and feed-back to their colleague. In other words, each makes sure they know what is going on and support where they can.

The need to 'go together' is more important than we might think. Team is not just about getting along well with each other, doing your work undisturbed and never letting the others in. It is about conveying a message of unity and belief, as well as yourself being affirmed, encouraged and growing in enthusiasm for the mission. The Team need each other.

Discussion: What is your impression of this section?

COMMITMENT

Probably there is no more important word for the success of Team Ministry than that of *commitment*, because, make no mistake, it will be difficult.

When you have team meetings you must be able to speak honestly. You must know how to lay out respectfully the issues troubling you. You must be humble enough to accept what another says. Respectful listening is vital. If a team member is going through a difficult patch personally, it isn't 'not your business'. A skilled supervisor is needed and a commitment to regular meetings is vital.

PRAYER AS THE BASIS

What led me to asking Dave to come into Team Ministry with me was due to both of us being exposed to Ignatian Spirituality. We had both recently participated in the Jesuit training in Sydney and had become convinced of the value of contemplative prayer. We knew that this had to be the foundation stone of our lives and work.

Apart from our personal time of prayer, each day we would pray Morning Prayer together from the Divine Office. This would lead us into conversations about our work and the direction we were taking. St Ignatius constantly recommends asking for a particular grace during prayer. This would happen naturally as we diverted from prayer to parish and back again. It was a fascinating time as we gave God our concerns and noticed how the parish was being blessed. An extraordinary bond grew between us and most days we left the prayer laughing!

For the first two years we initiated seminar after seminar and soon parishioners were teaching others. After I moved on, Dave introduced the 24/7 adoration of the Eucharist. This took place in the presbytery prayer room; one person at a time, one hour each once a week, all day, all night.

THE GOLDEN RULES

- You discern a vision out of prayer and reflection
- You commit to praying alone and together to keep the vision alive
- You have a sense of humour
- You get rid of your ego and tendency to dominate
- You like and respect the other team member (s) and recognise their particular gifts
- You know yourself and have a realistic understanding of your particular gifts
- You can work together and positively affirm each other
- You review your work with a facilitator on determined dates, say 3 times per year
- You can work happily together and are doing so.

We could sum up the ingredients for a successful Parish Team Ministry, by stating that what is needed are:

Contemplation Co-operation Encouragement Commitment



Image Copied from <https://churchgrowth.org/team-ministry-everyone-at-your-church-meeting-needs/>