



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)

August 2021

I was wondering if there would be an August issue. Here we are again...how have I changed since the last lockdown? What can I do better? How can I listen better to those around me and the Holy Spirit in this moment? Pope Francis' book *"Let us dream"* was written for a moment like this, calling us to "listen and walk together".

The generosity of our contributors under these circumstances reflects a response to Pope Francis' call. For this issue, **Bernadette Patelesio** leads the reflection on the last Sunday Gospel. Her piece is on going deeper into the heart of the law. This can apply to the stringent pandemic restrictions we follow here in New Zealand. We want to keep each other safe, we do it for love. **Telesia Alaimoana** shares about her journey after graduating from Te Kupenga as part of the Launch Out requirements. It wasn't a walk in the park and you certainly need a more compelling reason to put up with the rigors of studies other than to finish a degree, which may not lead to a high-paying jobs as most qualifications promise. Again, like Bernadette, she points to love, as the one that kept her going. Then we have **Susan Apathy** sharing her spirituality of gardening. I like garden as a noun, not a verb, but her article made me understand how many find gardening a soulful undertaking. God, as the Gospel suggests, is a gardener who scatters seeds, takes time to pick the weeds, who prunes, etc. Gardening in effect is a labour of love and for love. Finally, we have **Bridget Taumoepeau**, shared with us some of the history of Launch Out. My interest was piqued to know of Sr Ethel Bignell, RSM who wrote a moving piece on lay pastoral leaders in preparation for the 1988 Synod. The Lay Pastoral Leaders and Launch Out are prophetic fruits of our journey as Church here in the Archdiocese of Wellington. Reading Bridget's article I found myself quoting an old cheesy saying— love finds a way.

Beyond rules and laws, beyond the struggle, beyond the messiness of disruption, beyond the obstinacy of institutions, we are called to go deeper into the heart of the matter, where love is, where God is, listening, moving and loving us.

Stay safe everyone.

— Maya Bernardo, Launch Out Formator and Manager

Washing hands Gospel for the last Sunday of August 2021

By Bernadette Patelesio
Launch Out Candidate

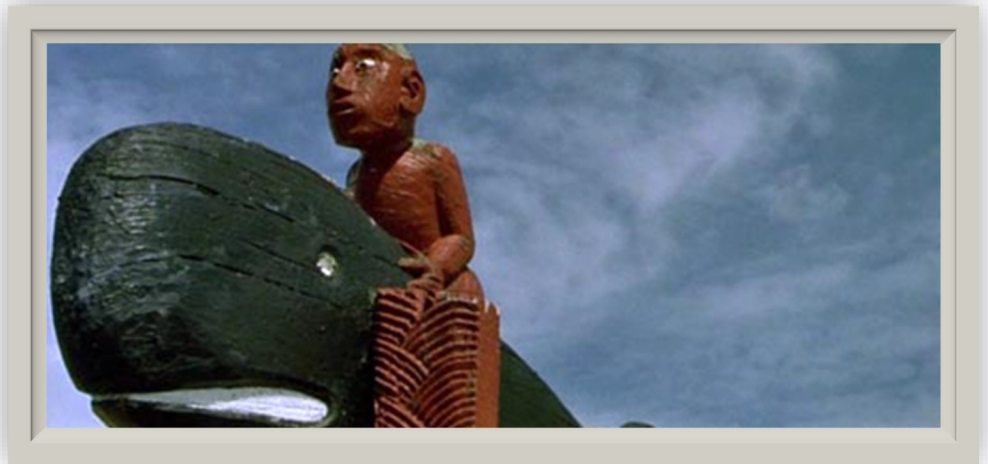


My first thought after reading the Gospel was that in this time of COVID we do actually need to wash our hands!!

The Pharisees raised what they thought was a valid point with Jesus, and perhaps they were hoping he would remind his disciples of their traditions, and commend them for being so earnest! After all, you should observe local customs, and these disciples were blatantly disregarding Pharisee tradition.

But Jesus wanted them to go deeper than judging his disciples on their external behaviours. What really matters he says, comes from God, and it is what comes from the heart of man that has the potential to defile us. He really outed the Pharisees!

Some of you may know the movie Whale Rider. Paka, who is the grandfather of Paikea, has lost his carved whale tooth pendant. He grieves this deeply and mourns it. He takes himself away. In her childish wisdom, Paikea his granddaughter, says “It’s quiet down deep, Paka needs quiet, he didn’t want to talk anymore, he just wanted to go down and down.” Paka was consumed with his own desires for his people, and it made him miserable.



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It is what comes from God, who is pure love, and knowing what is truly on our hearts, not just our own desires, that can transform us as we seek to return to God just some of the unending, unlimited love he has lavished on us.

Jesus warns us about “Leaving the commandment of God, and holding fast the tradition of men.” God’s first commandment is to love one another. Let us listen to his commandment and together receive the love that God has given freely to us, so that we can act according to God’s will for us in our lives, in love for one another.

In this Gospel reading we are invited to look within and evaluate our lives. Can we take some time this week to reflect on our lives as an individual, as a family, as a church community and as a culture. Does the trajectory we are on come from God or the heart of man? Take some time to question Jesus about it, to listen to what he says and go deeper. Abandon those things that are external and meaningless and lean in to the love that has no limits.



1. What is a synod?
2. What does synodality mean?
3. What will be the topic of the next Synod of bishops in Rome in 2023?

Answers in Page 8

Encountering the love...my Launch Out journey thus far

By Telesia Alaimoana
Launch Out Candidate

In December 2020 when the final assessment came back from marking, I realised that I have just completed and passed the last of the four papers I studied during that year, towards the New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies-Christian Leadership Strand, as part of the Launch Out requirements. I was not overly excited as I knew it would be another six months before I can finally hold that piece of paper in my hand and graduation is not yet confirmed. Instead, I looked back to 2016 and reflected on the tertiary journey from then to now.

It was not plain sailing as some may think, instead it has been a journey full of ups and downs. The struggle for me was very real, especially when you have a family and a full time job coupled with online or distance delivery of the papers. I often felt isolated and alone, with many sleepless nights of reading and trying to make sense of the machinery of Catholicism. When I could not start a journal, I often asked myself, "why am I punishing myself? Did I really need to stay up until 2am to try and write a journal?" I often struggled to balance my work time, study time and my family responsibilities. Mid-year 2017, I took on an extra family who became homeless while living in Wainuiomata. A mother with two primary school children and a three month old baby. I only had one spare room in the house!! We managed and made do with the space I had for six months. Study time during that year was from 10pm at night when everyone had gone to sleep. Annual leave was also taken to try and catch up with journals and assessments well over due. But WHY?

Because I must be loving what I do for me to continue doing it. There are different kinds of LOVE that I encountered through this journey. I often think of my mother whom I had looked after for several years

with my younger siblings. Her love for me as a mother has made me the person I am today. Family love is loving those immediate members of your family. Like the love I had when I encountered a family in need of a home. My love for my children is also another type of love that I don't think is the same as family love. I see my children as a gift from God and I ought to love and nurture them, like my mother's love for me.



Image copied from concreteplayground.com

The love between a husband and wife is yet another type of love. Falling in love can leave one "spellbound". This human love left speechless to a certain extent, not finding it necessary, or even possible, to accurately express what I felt. Love is the foundation of our lives as human beings made in the image of God. During the study journey, I felt that no one cared or loved me. That they abandoned me, all alone during cold winter nights while they sleep in their warm beds. I don't cry often, but I shed a tear or two. Am I expecting a little too much from the others especially my husband? May be I am, but this is the reality of what I was going through and it did not feel right for me.

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There were days when I had felt overwhelmed on account of one thing or another. I found myself with much responsibility and anxious about being able to do well and complete what was in front of me, and there were times I felt overwhelmed for the opposite reason; finding that life seemed to be at a standstill and I was not sure what to do next.

Prayer is the backbone of my strength to carry on. Those lonely nights by myself is when I often encounter God and prayers. It was during these encounters that I truly felt the love of God, the love that is beyond any experience of human love, and thus, when experienced on a profound level, I found myself sitting back in awe and admiration of the God whom I love. No words will be able to capture or express my admiration and amazement of the glory and splendour of the God with whom I have been drawn to love during the struggles of the study journey.

In June 2021, graduation day the reality had started to slowly sink in. Spending the morning with my husband, nervously awaiting something to happen. I had no idea what I was waiting for to happen that day....but I was expecting something. It was the simple words of my dear husband "Congratulations, I love you" that made me feel I have accomplished something special.

"Falling in love", as it relates to God, is not only a human passion or emotion, it's a spiritual yearning that consumes your soul and leaves you content in His presence. The experience of this spiritual union with God is all that I need in life to find fulfilment and it will be the source of all that I do in life, that my actions will be solely directed toward the love of God. I reflected upon the depth of my love of God and if I could not see this love alive in my life, then I will need to tell Him that I desire that love and seek Him with all my might.

I will leave you all my friends and readers today, knowing that all of you including my family have always loved me as I journeyed through the last four years, into the next phase, but most of all knowing that God's love for me has made the impossible possible and I am truly grateful for that LOVE as I continue this Launch Out journey.

Fa'afetai.

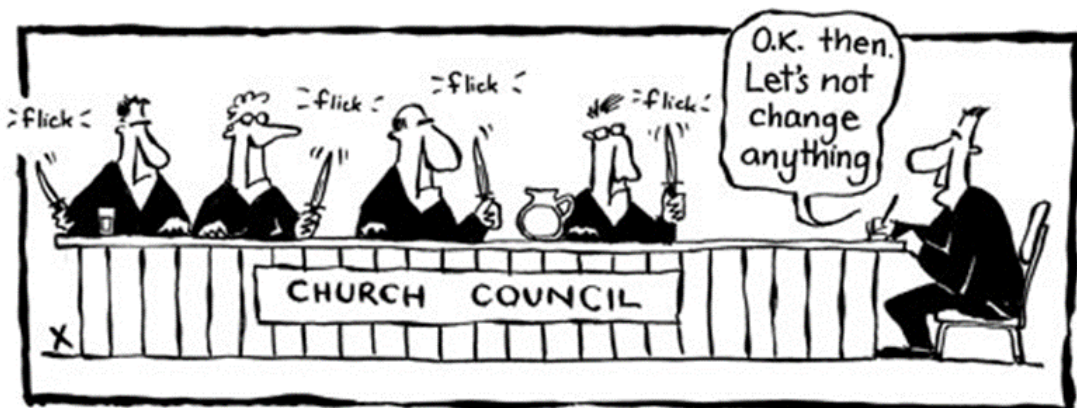


ONLINE RESOURCES

- Food for faith a blog by John O' Connors, current director of the National Liturgy Office [home - food for faith](#) . It contains readings for the day and relevant and insightful articles on faith and church. Thank you Catherine Gibbs for sharing.
 - Roots and Branch Synod. A group of lay and theologians in Great Britain are organising an "inclusive" synod. Their blurb says—" *A synod that starts with women and does not end there*", as a counterpart to a male dominated Synods. A synod that is meant to reclaim what Pope Francis says as the true meaning of "*walking together and listening to each other*". Click this: [Home | Root & Branch Synod \(rootandbranchsynod.org\)](#) . I am putting this here as a way of making us aware of the different conversations going on in the Church, particularly in the upcoming Synod. A caveat on this is that, the Vatican has not yet released on the details of what this Synod is all about. It is interesting though to see the interest it is generating within the faithful. Thanks to Susan Apathy for sharing this.
 - Chris Walkerdine, Parish Engagement Coordinator, released two documents for the parishes: 1) Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils; and 2) The Universal Prayer. Click on this site to download [Resources for Parishes | Archdiocese of Wellington \(catholic.org.nz\)](#)
 - I have sent this out to all of you via email—[Agencies and Help](#) list from the Catholic Social Services. All of you are intensely involved in your parishes and communities, so it is likely you may hear of someone who may be in need of help. Feel free to share this list around. Be the super spreader !
 - In the UPDATES I recommended reading Pope Francis' "**Let us dream**", if you don't feel like reading, you can click on this site on the [30 best quotes](#) from the book
 - [From the Facebook page of James Martin, S.J.](#) : "Discerning Deacons" project, which has been engaging thousands of Catholics in the church's ongoing discernment about women serving as deacons. Pope Francis has created two commissions to study the question, and it is something that is supported by many bishops. You can register for the event here: <https://discerningdeacons.org/feast-of-st-phoebe-2021/> .Thanks Bridget for sharing. (This is proof that the Archdiocese of Wellington is way ahead of the rest).
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The development of lay pastoral leadership in the Wellington Archdiocese

By Bridget Taumoepeau
Launch Out Mentor

The roots of this go back to the Second Vatican Council (VCI) as well as the rise of Lay movements in New Zealand, known as Catholic Action. Both of these historical events raised the profile of lay people in the church and changed the role of laity. Another important feature was the Synodal nature of the Archdiocese. The first



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recorded Synod was in 1870, with another one described in detail in 1888 – it was a very clerical affair!

Of the recent Synods the first was in 1988 and in preparation for that, the late Sr Ethel Bignell RSM wrote a very interesting background paper, entitled “Ministry – Lay and Ordained”. Bear in mind that this was written before the establishment of LPL’s, although discussion was starting about whether the Archdiocese wanted to have ordained permanent deacons or lay leaders. Cardinal Williams was very responsive to the views of the church members in the Archdiocese, both clergy and lay, and as a result of that he respected the view of two synods (1988 and 1998) that the wish of the people was for Lay Leaders. And so, launch Out came into being!

Sr Ethel refers to the importance of VCI and its teaching that the church should be equated with the People of God. VCI insisted that all baptised people participate in the priesthood of Christ and also put emphasis on service rather than the status of ordained ministry. She goes on to describe ministry as “a specific activity supported and designated by the Church, which discloses the presence of God in some way in our human situation and empowers us to live more fully in the mystery of God – in communion with God and with one another.” She quotes *Gaudium et Spes* §33 which states “The apostolate of the laity is a sharing in the church’s saving mission. Through baptism and confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, and especially by the Sacred Eucharist, that love of God and humanity which is the soul of the entire apostolate is communicated and nourished. The Laity, however, are given this special vocation: to make the church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that it can become the salt of the earth. Thus, all lay people, through the gifts which they have received, are at once the witnesses and the living instruments of the mission of the church itself ‘according to Christ’s gift’ (Eph 4:7).”

“She (Sr Ethel Bignell, RSM) goes on to describe ministry as “a specific activity supported and designated by the Church, which discloses the presence of God in some way in our human situation and empowers us to live more fully in the mystery of God – in communion with God and with one another.”

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Sr Ethel addresses the practical implications of this role of the laity. She points out that it is not enough to just have programmes or activities. The whole community needs to be built up. It is not enough to be comfortable in a group – it requires service and reaching out to others. Any activities must be assessed in terms of their impact on the whole parish.

It is very interesting to read this 1988 article where she addresses not only the role of laity but the qualities required in a priest – leadership; theological knowledge; being a liturgist; using his own particular skills; and the ability to facilitate the ministry of others, making it possible for others to succeed in ministry. These qualities would also now be considered important in lay leaders and the Launch Out training would address those requirements. Sr Ethel ends by looking to the future and questioning what ministry may look like in the future; how much do people tend to leave the responsibility for parish ministry to the priest; what tensions arise as people become aware of their call to ministry through baptism and confirmation; and how are people being chosen and trained?

I think this was an excellent way to address the effect of VCII on the role of the laity; the changes of thinking that that brought about; and to look at the practicalities for the parishes in the Archdiocese. An interesting part of the history of the development of Lay Pastoral Leadership.



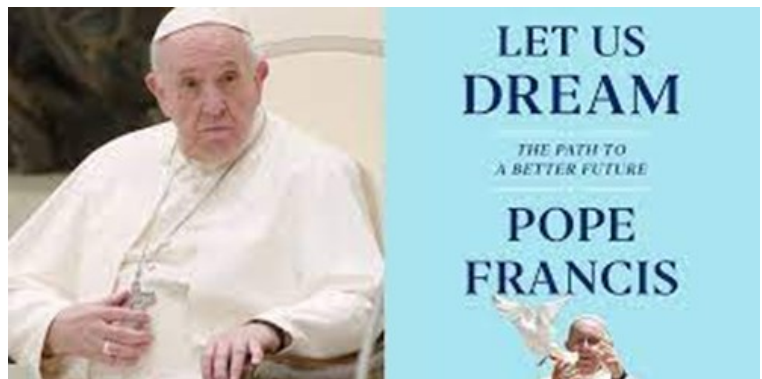
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The basic rule of a crisis is that you don't come out of it the same. If you get through it, you come out better or worse, but never the same.

– POPE FRANCIS

@TheMillennialGrind

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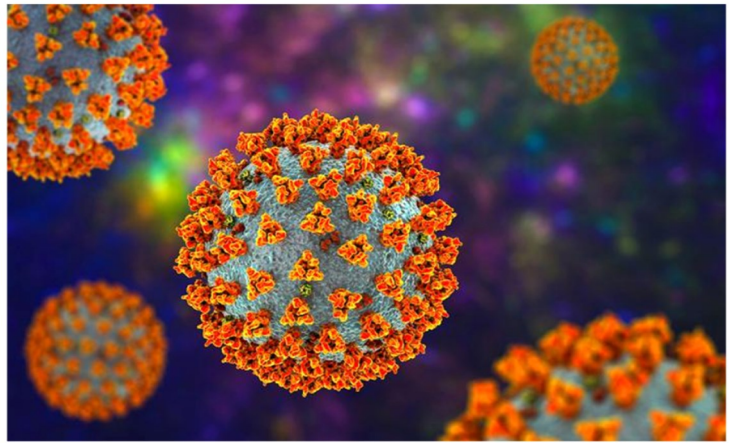


UPDATES

I honestly struggle to put anything on the updates at this time when we are in lockdown. First, I can't think of any upcoming events or it may be that the uncertainty that surrounds us that makes it harder to look ahead.

You may feel the same uneasiness thinking of your Pastoral Projects. Some of you may well be on the way to finishing (lucky you). Whatever happens, do not be disheartened. The heart of our Pastoral Project is to learn how to work alongside people and to listen to the Holy Spirit as it speaks to your own life, the parish and to the "signs of the times", such as Covid 19.

A commitment to nurturing our spiritual lives is the best care we can give to ourselves, as we look after those entrusted to us. That's why it is important that we all continue to see our spiritual directors. Many of them can accommodate zoom. Also do get in touch with your mentors to reflect on any adjustments to your Pastoral Projects. Drop a line in our WhatsApp group. We are all in this together. Finally, I think the best time to read Pope Francis's book **"Let us dream"** is during lockdown. I guarantee you, this is the best treat you can give yourself at this point. If you have read it, pick it up again, to read or just skim and let his words, give you the vision to see beyond the mist of our challenges. (It's available on e-book or you can look at the 30 best quote from the book in the ONLINE RESOURCES section).



Copied from the conversation.com

The MINISTRY FORMATION DAY was held on 17 August 2021 at St. Anne's Newtown attended by clergy and lay pastoral leaders. The intention of the event was to understand what "Synod" and "Synodality" means. This is in preparation for the Synod called by Pope Francis which will commence on 17 October 2021. Keep a mental note of this as soon the Archdiocese (through Cardinal John and Archbishop Paul) hears from the Vatican further details, this will be rolled out to the parishes as soon as possible.

Answers to the QUIZ

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

1. A synod is a church meeting. A synod of bishops is a gathering of bishops to discuss a topic of theological or pastoral significance, to prepare a document of advice or counsel to the Pope.
2. Synodality, for Pope Francis, is a process of consultations and dialogue involving clerics and lay people, leading to decisions being made. These should be by consensus, not just voting like in a parliament. It is often described as walking together, as it comes from two Greek words meaning 'common road'.
3. The next synod is on synodality! "For a synodal church: Communion, participation and mission" There will be a two-year preparatory phase involving Catholic dioceses worldwide – make sure you contribute!

Gardening the soul

By Susan Apathy
Launch Out Mentor



Zen Garden, Hamilton Gardens, photo by Zoltan Apathy (Susan's husband), 7 April 2021

"Gardening is an active participation in the deepest mysteries of the universe." Thomas Berry

My love of gardening, or rather, of gardens, goes back to my childhood, to the wonderful back garden of my maternal grandparents' house in Napier, with a gigantic pepper tree, a goldfish pond, a walnut tree, roses and other delights, and to the gardens cared for by my mother, particularly the garden of the house we spent longest in, with its big tree for climbing, its roses, dahlias and another pond, and my own tiny patch of garden to care for. These gardens gave me a great sense of peace and delight – they took me into a different space which I can now recognise as transformative.

My own gardening efforts during my adult life were relatively sporadic and not always fruitful, partly because of time pressures (jobs and children etc), and partly because gardens in Wellington in the wind and clay soil, aren't all that easy to tend.

So, two years ago when we were house hunting in Waikanae for our retirement home, I was quite literally enchanted by the garden of the house we ultimately bought, with its big old trees, its range of plants, its slightly ramshackle quality, which gave it an otherworldly feeling, and the sense that I was making a link with generations of gardeners, particularly my mother. This garden felt a place I needed to have for my own spiritual wellbeing.

My ability to actually keep the current garden in some sort of working order is another matter – we now get some paid help for the garden, and my husband does the heavy work. However, I have time to contemplate what the garden does for me spiritually, and, important question, to ask myself why I am reluctant often enough to go out and do some garden work. What guilt do I not wish to confront?

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These are spiritual questions. My garden links me to Franciscan spirituality, the effort to find God in all things (including weeds and bugs), the medieval concept of the great chain of being (which matches our current awareness through physics of how every particle of the universe is part of the great chain of existence), and of course Pope Francis' writing on integral ecology which radiates through my thinking. My contemplation of life in my garden helps me to understand what attitude I can develop to the whole world, and how I might contribute to the wellbeing of small aspects of the whole world. My ecological commitment is fed by my relationship to my own garden.

St John of Damascus said that prayer is "the lifting of the heart and mind to God". I find that, although I do not always consciously do this in the garden (particularly if I am pulling up weeds, chopping back overexuberant plants or contemplating plants dead partly through my neglect) the garden is where I can stop, concentrate on a flower, a leaf, a bird eating seeds, raindrops on the grass, and engage in a truly contemplative moment. I need this soul balm, even if I don't give myself enough time for it. I am more likely to pray when I am not using the words of conventional prayers, but am looking at my plants.

St Bonaventure said that for us to work up to loving God we must start by loving the very humblest and simplest things and move up from there: "Let us place our first step in the ascent at the bottom, presenting to ourselves the whole material world as a mirror, through which we may pass over to God, who is the Supreme Craftsman," he wrote. While the garden is not my only mirror of God, it is a source of real contemplative serenity. Thomas Moore says, "A garden entices us to slow down and stop, an important dynamic for the soul... our own perpetual paradise where we can be refreshed and restored."

As to my reluctance to go into the garden and do the work, or even do the contemplation, mentioned above, I am working on what is the fear in me that makes me avoid doing what I know is good for me. Explanations or thoughts are welcome.

If you feel you don't have the time for a garden, contemplate with joy a simple house plant, or the nearest park and its trees and flowers. I hope they will bring you closer to the flow of our universe, and will provide moments of awareness of delight and love.

And the photo at the top? The Zen Garden in Hamilton actually says everything I could possibly say about contemplation in the garden, and I can only recommend a visit, of at least half an hour.

(If you can't get to Hamilton, the gardens in the Buddhist Monastery in Stokes Valley are not as utterly amazing, but they are certainly closer than Hamilton.)

*"Gardening is an active participation
in the deepest mysteries of the
universe"—Thomas Berry*



This is a photo of a corner of my own garden in Waikanae. Mine is not as manicured as the Zen garden of Hamilton, but it is my sacred space, where I commune with God.