

From the editor

Annette Scullion

Globally and locally climate change is an issue that confronts us all and challenges us to act with urgency. Here in New Zealand, we are being invited to respond to the Government’s critically important discussion document on its emissions reduction plan for 2022–2035, p 4.

As we go to press, the UK is hosting the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow. All countries are being asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets that align with reaching net zero by the middle of the century. On the eve of the summit, New Zealand has updated its pledge to cut the country’s net emissions to 50 per cent below gross 2005 levels, by 2030.

In Rome, Pope Francis has urged people to pray so that ‘the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor’ is heard at the climate summit. In a message

on BBC Radio 4, Pope Francis said only urgent action could ‘offer concrete hope to future generations’. Warning global leaders that time is running out to address climate change, Pope Francis urged them to ‘take radical decisions’ that would ‘provide effective responses to the present ecological crisis’.

From the outset of his papacy, Francis has made environmental issues a priority. He has noted poor people suffer most as a result of an ‘ecological crisis’ brought about by economic models, industrial systems, and policies that are detrimental to the environment.

There has been no shortage of leadership from Pope Francis on this issue. He is doing everything in his power to mobilise the Catholic population and the whole world to take action. Are we listening to what he has to say? Are we ready to make changes in our own lives and communities to show we hear ‘the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor’?

The authority of service

+ John A Cardinal Dew
Archbishop of Wellington
Archdiocese
Apostolic Administrator of
Palmerston North Diocese

This article is an abridged version of a homily that Cardinal John gave at St Teresa’s Pro-Cathedral in Karori, Wellington, and at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Palmerston North, at the Opening Masses for the Global Synod on Synodality, on Sunday 17 October.

Six years ago today, I was in Rome for the second session of the Synod on the Family. During the synod’s three weeks, there was a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Synod of bishops. One of the talks given was by Pope Francis. I remember two things from his speech.

The first was, ‘The only authority we have is the authority of service.’ I have repeated that sentence many, many times and I will never forget him saying those words. The second was, ‘It is precisely this path which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.’

In a nutshell ‘Synodality’ is about all members of the Church – all of us – walking the path of life together, truly listening to and being of service to one another.

This particular synod we are preparing for is about the Church and the kind of Church we imagine and want for the future. It is not a Church Pope Francis has come up with! No, this vision of Church we’re talking about is what the Second Vatican Council recovered over 50 years ago. The document we have been given to help us prepare for the synod invites everyone, all

the baptised, to imagine, to dream what the future of the Church can be.

I have been present at seven synods in Rome and participated in three local synods in the Archdiocese of Wellington. This synod, ‘For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission’ is very different. We are all invited to take part in this two-year process from today until October 2023.

Let’s make it an adventure by walking together with faith, listening to each other, engaging in a process of healing guided by the Holy Spirit and supporting one another.

This synod’s title includes three key words: ‘Communion’, ‘Participation’ and ‘Mission’. Those words give a glimpse of what synodality means and what the Church is to be.

1. COMMUNION – even our God is a communion! The word emphasises the deep bond we share in the love and the unity of the Trinity.
2. PARTICIPATION – stresses we all have a rich diversity of gifts

to share. All of us are called together to pray, to listen, to think about, to dialogue, to discern and to be involved in pastoral decision making.

3. MISSION – highlights the fact we can never be centred on ourselves. We exist to take the Good News out to everyone.

Watching Pope Francis at synods and listening to him, one hears over and over: ‘Speak with boldness; don’t be afraid; trust in the Holy Spirit who guides us.’

Trust in God, move forward with courage, build unity through discernment, discover and help bring about God’s dream for us, be positive and enthusiastic. Take seriously that word ‘*enthusiasm*’, which means, ‘to be filled with God!’ And filled with God, we cannot go wrong.

»» For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission: updates from Wellington and Palmerston North dioceses, p 14.



Cardinal John Dew celebrates opening Mass for the Global Synod on Synodality, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Palmerston North.
Photo: Isabella McCafferty

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Sending articles to WelCom
In its mission to communicate about news and events in the Wellington and Palmerston North dioceses, WelCom publishes information, stories and photos received from readers.

The articles should be no longer than 300 words unless by arrangement with the editor. Please send as a MS Word document attached to an email or pasted into an email message. Please include your name, address and day-time phone number. At the editor’s discretion, articles may be edited for length or clarity.

Photos should be in their original format (unedited, uncropped), at least one megabyte (MB) in size and attached to an email as separate photo files – JPEG, TIFF, GIF or bitmap (BMP). Please include names for a caption.

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TRAFFIC LIGHTS, VACCINE CERTIFICATES AND CHURCH SERVICES

On 22 October 2021, the Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, announced a plan ‘to help all New Zealanders stay safe’ from Covid-19 into the future.

Similar to the current Alert Level system, a new framework will be introduced that will have three settings – green, orange and red.

Under the new Covid-management system, places of worship may legally choose to implement a vaccination entry requirement for congregants. Whether they do or do not has different consequences.

Vaccine certificates will also apply to clergy.

The Government’s three-tier ‘traffic light’ framework will come into effect once 90 per cent of the eligible population has received both doses of the vaccine.

CHURCHES USING VACCINE CERTIFICATES

Places of worship will be open at **green level** for vaccinated people. There will be no limits if vaccination certificates are used.

During the **orange level**, there will be no limits on attendance if vaccination certificates are used.

Limited numbers of vaccinated people will be allowed to attend places of worship during the **red level**. They may open for up to 100 people, based on one-metre social distancing.

CHURCHES WITHOUT VACCINE CERTIFICATES

If a place of worship does not wish to request proof of vaccine, they have to operate with strict limits on capacity and space requirements. They may need to close in orange and/or red levels, Ardern says.

If a place of worship does not request proof of vaccine, restrictions will apply. At **green level** gatherings will be restricted to up to 100 people, based on one metre physical distancing.

At **orange level**, places of worship must keep to a 50-person limit, based on one-metre physical distancing.

At the **red level**, places of worship that do not request proof of vaccine will be restricted up to 10 people, with one-metre physical distancing.

The Prime Minister said the framework is more flexible than the current Alert Level system.

‘We know that businesses that only open to vaccinated customers pose a lower risk. We can move up levels when needed to control an outbreak,’ she said.

The Prime Minister said the vaccine used in New Zealand is safe and effective.

‘If you are vaccinated it means that you are less likely to catch the virus, and much less likely to end up in hospital if you do.’

The more people who are vaccinated, the harder it is for Covid to spread through communities quickly, and find our most vulnerable, she said.

Covid protection framework: covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/covid-19-protection/

Sources: CathNews; New Zealand Government – covid19.govt.nz

Catholic guidelines to help people who choose ‘assisted dying’

Catholic health professionals, chaplains and priests are being given guidelines and pastoral help to work with people who decide to die under the End of Life Choice Act, which takes effect on 7 November, 2021.

Though the Church opposes the deliberate taking of human life, it cannot turn away those who choose ‘assisted dying’ under the new law, says Bishop of Hamilton Stephen Lowe, vice-president of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference.

‘Life puts before us many questions and choices,’ says Bishop Lowe. ‘As a Church we try to help people look at these questions and choices through a Christian lens. Individuals

often find themselves in complex places. In these times the Church tries to offer guidance to people as best as she can, but people make their own choices.

Often, as a Church, we find ourselves caring for people dealing with the consequences of such choices. Our pastoral practice is always called to be a reflection of our God, who does not abandon his people.’

The bishops have written a pastoral statement and a set of guidelines for chaplains, priests and other Catholic professionals who care for the dying. The Church’s Te Kupenga-Catholic Leadership Institute has been organising workshops on

working with the law.

The Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand opposed the End of Life Choice Act Referendum held at the 2020 general election. However, the referendum was passed.

Bishop Lowe said ‘medically assisted dying’ or euthanasia would not be offered in Catholic rest homes or hospices, just as many non-Catholic carers would not offer it.

‘However, it will become available in a number of hospitals and other public care facilities throughout the country. These are the places of work or ministry for some of our Catholic community. We do not need to deny the objective wrong of euthanasia in order to

accompany, with consolation and hope, those who might feel drawn or pushed towards this type of death,’ said Bishop Lowe.

‘The legal availability of euthanasia in New Zealand does not change Catholic convictions about the practice. At the same time, our faith tells us there is no place or situation, no matter how uncomfortable, where our faith cannot be expressed, or God’s grace encountered.’

The *pastoral statement* and the *guidelines* from the bishops are on their website: catholic.org.nz

» The bishops’ pastoral statement is republished in full, p 16.

Ministering in a place that we might rather not be: the advent of euthanasia in Aotearoa

Rev Dr Michael McCabe and Dr John Kleinsman

The 2019 End of Life Choice Act comes into force in Aotearoa New Zealand on 7 November 2021. The advent of what is legally referred to as ‘medically assisted dying’ – otherwise known as euthanasia – will not only put many vulnerable people at risk; it will also provide a challenge to Catholic health professionals, chaplains, and priests, particularly when medically assisted dying occurs in their everyday places of work and ministry.

At the same time, medically assisted dying also provides an opportunity for Catholic healthcare and hospices to go back to their core values, which centre on the inalienable dignity of each and every person as well as the provision of ethical palliative care that reflects the best evidence-based medicine, including pain relief. Because medicine is both a science and an art, ethical palliative care must be applied according to the individual patient’s need for control of distressing symptoms and pain relief.

Taking care of the sick, the vulnerable, the elderly, and those living with disability is a central motif for how, as Catholic caregivers, we actively live out our faith in Jesus Christ. It was Jesus who consistently called attention to the innate dignity of the individual and did so by meeting people precisely at their point of need. By following Jesus’ example, we can continue to build a counter-culture of life and bring hope to all in need of our care no matter the situation.



‘Taking care of the sick, the vulnerable, the elderly, and those living with disability is a central motif for how, as Catholic caregivers, we actively live out our faith in Jesus Christ.’ Rev Dr Michael McCabe (above) and Dr John Kleinsman (below) address clergy and chaplains at a ministry formation day last month, at St Theresa’s Hall, Plimmerton.

Photos: Annette Scullion/WelCom



Meeting people who are dying at the point of their need, and accompanying them on their journey towards death, is what Catholic orders and carers have been doing for more than 2000 years. The availability of euthanasia, however, means many priests, chaplains, and Catholic health carers will soon find themselves in a new space – or, as the New Zealand

Catholic bishops put it in their newly-released Pastoral Statement on the spiritual and pastoral care of persons contemplating assisted dying, ‘in a place that we might rather not be’.

What will that place look like? It will be a place to bring consolation and hope for all in the midst of the struggles that are part of the journey of the dying and their whānau.

Thus, the bishops write: ‘Many parents know only too well the mix of desolation and consolation. Sometimes their children – young or adult – make decisions, or behave in ways, contrary to

a companion document titled *‘Ministers of Consolation and Hope’* which provides principles and guidelines for those working with and ministering to people contemplating assisted dying.

“It was Jesus who consistently called attention to the innate dignity of the individual and did so by meeting people precisely at their point of need.”

the Gospel. Yet, as mothers and fathers, far from turning away, they stay close...[and] pray for their daughter or son, entrusting them to our merciful God while continuing to walk alongside them in love.’

In the same way, the bishops note: ‘Pastoral and spiritual accompaniment of those considering assisted dying becomes a hikoī of hope most especially because it leaves open the way to an encounter with God; as an expression of an enduring commitment to care. Our prayer and ministry with the dying need never know human barriers.’

The Pastoral Statement, titled *‘Bearers of Consolation and Hope’*, is accompanied by

Dr John Kleinsman is Kaitohu/ Director, The Nathaniel Centre, the New Zealand Catholic Bioethics Centre. Rev Dr Michael McCabe is the founding director of The Nathaniel Centre, established by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference in 1999, and is parish priest of Our Lady of Kāpiti Parish, Te Whaea o Kāpiti.

» The New Zealand Catholic bishops’ newly released pastoral statement, *Bearers of Consolation and Hope*, is republished on p 14.



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Catholics urged to get involved in climate response

The Government has published a discussion document, 13 October, on Aotearoa-New Zealand’s first emissions reduction plan (ERP) and emissions budgets for 2022–2035: *Te hau mārohi ki anamata Transitioning to a low-emissions and climate-resilient future* (Discussion Document). All New Zealanders are being invited to have a say to shape the final emissions reduction plan. Consultation started on 13 October 2021 and ends on **24 November 2021**. The Government will issue a final ERP and emissions budgets for 2022–2035 by 31 May 2022 in light of consultation on this document. Those decisions will influence economic activity for the next 14 years.

Caritas says recent government announcements on climate recognise the urgency of making deep far-reaching changes across all sectors of New Zealand society, and the need to provide climate finance for the poor. But it says they do not go far enough in aiming to cut this country’s emissions sooner.

The Government put out a discussion document for its emissions reduction plan to get to net zero carbon-equivalent emissions by 2050 and it announced a four-fold increase in climate finance to poor nations over 2022–2025. In addition, Climate Minister James Shaw is expected to update the overall climate action pledge (Nationally Determined Contribution) for the UN conference on climate change in Glasgow, COP26, early November. Caritas has welcomed the increase in climate finance as ‘long overdue’, and ‘rightly prioritises adaptation action and the Pacific’.

“We need Catholics from all walks of life to get involved in this ERP consultation, and ongoing work to get New Zealand to a fair and just, carbon-neutral future.”
– Julianne Hickey, Caritas Director

‘However,’ says Caritas Director Julianne Hickey, ‘the Government must ensure this finance is used well to make a difference to the most vulnerable communities in the region. It must actively involve local communities and civil society in identifying needs, and in planning, implementing and monitoring for good, climate-related action.’

Caritas says a preliminary view



All New Zealanders are being invited for feedback on this document to help shape the final emissions reduction plan online at: tinyurl.com/ERP-Discussion-Document

of the consultation documents for the ERP provides a positive vision for 2050. It recognises the need to tackle climate change in an integrated way, addressing issues such as poverty and biodiversity loss, rebuilding from the Covid-19 crisis in a sustainable way, and working in partnership with Māori. However, ‘to meet our responsibilities as a developed nation that has benefited from fossil fuels, we should be trying to

become carbon neutral by 2040,’ says Julianne Hickey. ‘Covid has exposed vulnerabilities in existing economic arrangements. For example, long supply lines mean delays in housing construction and rising prices for low-income households. We should seek to rebuild a more sustainable, localised economy providing for food, energy and housing through local and community-based mechanisms, as well as strengthening local resilience in the face of increasingly severe weather events and sea-level rise,’ she says. ‘We need Catholics from all walks of life to get involved in this consultation, and ongoing work to get New Zealand to a fair and just, carbon-neutral future: farmers, transport workers, managers, office workers, homemakers, parents, students, health-care workers and cleaners. In our modern interconnected way of life, all our activities impact to some extent on climate and the environment. Each of us has a part to play and can help find solutions and urge our politicians to work for a healthy climate, healthy lifestyles and communities, and ultimately restoring a healthy planet.’ The Discussion Document and feedback process is online at: environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Emissions-reduction-plan-discussion-document.pdf

New fields for Caritas director

After 10 years at the helm of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, Julianne Hickey is leaving her role as Director of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ agency for justice, peace and development. Since joining the agency in 2012, Mrs Hickey has led a team of some 20 people working on behalf of the bishops for ‘a world free of poverty and injustice through community development, advocacy, education, and emergency relief’.

‘It is time for a refreshment in the leadership and for someone to bring a new perspective and new energy to the role,’ says Mrs Hickey. Reflecting on her time at Caritas there are many highlights, but it is always about the people and the communities, she says. ‘Whether the remote communities of Papua New Guinea, or our Pacific Island neighbours, it has been wonderful to work with our sisters and brothers in the region and around the world. And I have loved getting to know Catholic communities across Aotearoa New Zealand through our schools and parishes. ‘It has been wonderful for my own personal journey as well. My understanding of te ao Māori has grown significantly, particularly through our visits to Māori Katorika in Panguru – a community in the northern Hokianga harbour, Hiruhārama–Jerusalem on the Whanganui River, and at Kaikōura. It’s been a real privilege to connect and get to know these communities and I’ve been enriched by this.’ In 2017, Caritas being invited by the Parihaka community to witness the Crown formally apologise for the pacifist settlement at Parihaka in 1881, was a phenomenal experience Mrs Hickey says. Under her leadership, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand has become a significant voice on care for creation and the need for action to address climate change. She says that producing the annual *Caritas State of the Environment for Oceania Report* over the last eight years and hearing the voices of community



Julianne Hickey during a visit to Rarotonga this year. Photo: Supplied

leaders from Pacific Island nations in inspiring discussions has been another high point. Mrs Hickey met Pope Francis in 2018 and 2019 while in Rome for the Council meeting of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), and the General Assembly of Caritas Internationalis. The work of Caritas has been inspired and challenged by the encyclicals and writings of Pope Francis, ‘particularly *Laudato si’* and *Fratelli Tutti* – to hear the cry of the earth, and the cry of the poor,’ she says. At the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP 21), as one the international Caritas delegates, Mrs Hickey presented key findings and recommendations from Caritas’ 2015 *State of the Environment report*. In 2017, she spoke to a UN gathering in New York about deep-sea mining undermining the ability to achieve UN sustainable development goals. These achievements have not been mine alone Mrs Hickey says. ‘What we have been able to achieve as the Caritas team has been together with the support of the Catholic community throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. ‘Looking ahead, with my three children still at school, our family will be in Wellington for the next few years. In the new year, I will be looking for a role in an area that makes a difference to communities, perhaps in an area like health or justice. ‘I hope the Caritas Board will find a wonderful person who will love leading Caritas as much as I have and can contribute to our global and regional connections and continue our work of justice and peace.’

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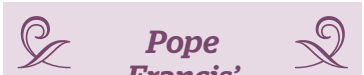
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Te mate urutā - The virus pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic is affecting everyone in all walks of life. WelCom has invited reflections from some of our Catholic leaders about impacts on their communities.

Listening, understanding, communicating in love



Deacon Danny Karatea-Goddard

Many of us are now beginning to feel the creeping effects of this time of the new Delta Covid, its impact on our whānau, communities, friends and businesses. For us older ones we are reminded of the 1981 Spring Box tour where cracks and divisions landed in our homes. Many are finding themselves in an *us-and-them* situation. These divisions are real and we need to find ways to be together in a new way where we know we are still whānau and we still love one another.

Like the majority of the Māori population, our leadership, our iwi and hapū, I strongly agree with the current pro-vaccination response that Māori health professionals and commentators are promoting. I get it, it's a public-health issue. For the same reasons that we introduced mandatory wearing of seat belts in cars and the banning of smoking in enclosed public places, the wearing of masks and vaccination is essential in managing our new existence.

Current data is telling us it is Māori who are not only lagging behind with vaccinations, but now are overrepresented in hospital numbers due to Covid-related sickness.

I have been at a loss of why many of our younger population are dismissing the public health response. It's important to recognise that for some time now our Māori population is defined by being under 25 years of age with the greatest population residing in Auckland.

I've come to the realisation that it is so important for us to listen, understand and communicate with aroha, with respect and in a mana enhancing way.

What are they, our rangatahi and mokopuna, saying?

- There is still mistrust of Government and authorities due to the reality of inequities, systemic racism and bias, which sees our overrepresentation in the negative statistics, we are the poor, the incarcerated, the sick, the homeless, living in substandard housing, the impoverished and many would not know that Māori life expectancy is seven years younger than those who are not Māori.
- Their news and information come from online social media, Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok, Instagram, not television, not radio, not press.
- Recent moves to enforce vaccination compliance is a violation of individual freedom and tino rangatiratanga.

• The current Government responses have excluded to date a whare tapa whā – model of Māori Health Care approach. Māori providers who hold the relationships and 'know how' in our communities were initially ignored and not funded. It is our own, like-to-like, youth-to-youth who are more able to reach into our population to listen, to understand and to communicate with aroha and mana enhancing ways. It will be them who provide solutions.

To all my whānau, on 23 August 2021, the Delta variant arrived in Aotearoa on a flight from Sydney. I have seen posts criticising the Government for reneging on the promise of not to impose vaccinations that were made in 2020. My response would be that no one saw this devastating Delta variant coming. It is here and it is a game changer. Our country will no doubt have to open the borders in the near future to enable our economy to remain buoyant. In aroha and with the deepest respect I pray that my whānau and neighbours, my brothers and sisters in our community choose to be vaccinated, not once, but twice to protect the most vulnerable, our pakeke kaumātua, our tamariki mokopuna, our hope, our future. Vaccination is here, becoming more and more accessible, e te whānau kia haumarutia te noho, manaakitia to tātou whakapapa.

>> Marlborough and Central North Island parishes, pp 8 and 9.

Tedium, grief, hope in a pandemic



Joe Grayland

Tedium, grief, and hope are the three words that sum up my experience of lockdown.

Tedium is the tiredness that inhabits every day and every decision. We are living in the tedium of a car journey that won't end where everyone, not just the children, is asking, 'are we there yet?' Living in the banality of sameness in a routine of masks and indecision. There is a wearisomeness in the lives of many. I can see it on their faces; it falls like a pall over events that would otherwise be joyous. There's a tiredness to deciding, again and again, not to do something, not to go somewhere, not to visit someone, not to come to church. The tedium of figuring out again and again what still makes sense seeps into bones and spirit.

Grief, like volcanic ash, has layered itself over our living. No decision is without it. The grief of doubt: will it happen? The grief of peace: will we lose it? The grief of loss: will we get back what is gone? The grief of death: shall we bury or cremate? The grief of freedom: what can we be sure of? Each decision and ordinary daily tasks are layered with grief. The tedium of grief consumes energy. It leaves individuals, organisations and businesses open one day and closed the next. Grief goes deep into the psyche and manifests itself in violence, avoidance, and withdrawal. Grief sets up opposing points of view that demand attention and defies reconciliation.

Hope is the hold. Hope gives tedium and grief a larger context and an opportunity for meaning. Hope gives hope of something else, of life beyond its present moment. Hope doesn't give back the past and the old certainties; they are gone! Hope calls us forward to embrace a new reality, whatever that may be. Hope is not without purpose or vision. Hope is the invitation to find a new compass point beyond grief and tedium. Hope is the compass point of the future. We turn, resolutely, towards it.

"Hope is the compass point of the future."

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." - Romans 15:13

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‘Listen to the Pacific’



Cardinal Soane Patita Mafi.

Cardinal Soane Patita Mafi, Tonga’s first ever Cardinal, has a simple message for politicians attending the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow – ‘Listen to the Pacific.’

‘We want those big nations to really see and to really hear. Not to pretend. Not to turn away. We want them not to be deafened to the cry of reality by other agendas. Can they turn an ear of love, not of political expediency? Are they prepared to hear the voice of the voiceless?’

The COP26 climate conference is regarded by many as the last chance to avoid the worst that climate change presents and the Pacific Islands are among the most vulnerable countries in the world.

Cardinal Mafi is a member of the executive of Caritas Internationalis and the president of Caritas Oceania. Across the Pacific, he sees climate change-induced problems in many Island states. These include deforestation in the Solomon Islands, people in Kiribati losing their homes, and villages in Fiji forced to relocate owing to rising sea waters, vanishing foreshores and erosion.

The General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, Reverend James Bhagwan, has called on as many Pacific delegations as possible to attend the COP26 Summit so that Pacific voices are heard.

Rev Bhagwan said Pacific nations had to continue asking the global community to commit to the Paris agreement and the 1.5 degree threshold. Climate change may pose more abstract issues such as financial and political policy for non-Pacific countries. However, for the Pacific nations climate change is a matter of life and death, he said.

Rev Bhagwan stated that they will also be working with the World Council of Churches, faith communities, and civil society to promote the Pacific view of climate change response.

Sources: Vatican News, Asia Pacific Report, RNZ News



The Pacific Conference of Churches has partnered with Green Faith, an inter-religious global movement which calls for the end of fossil fuels. Photo: PCC

Family of slain MP urge ‘kindness and love’

The family of British MP Sir David Amess have said their hearts are shattered as they called on people to ‘set aside hatred and work towards togetherness.’

The Conservative MP was a Catholic and strong pro-life advocate. He was stabbed multiple times during a meeting with his constituents in Belfairs Methodist Church in Essex, UK, October 15. A 25-year-old British man is being held under the Terrorism Act.

Sir David, 69, was married with four daughters and a son. The family said the ‘wonderful’ tributes paid to him by friends, constituents and the public had given them strength.

‘We have realised from tributes paid there was far more to David than even we, those closest to him, knew,’ they added. ‘We are enormously proud of him. Our hearts are shattered but we will survive and carry on for the sake of a wonderful and inspiring man.’

They described Sir David as strong and courageous, a patriot, a man of peace. ‘We ask people to set aside their differences and show kindness and love to all. Please let some good come from this tragedy.’

Raised as a Catholic, Sir David was known politically as a social conservative and a prominent campaigner against abortion. He

was also a committed campaigner on animal welfare issues.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster paid tribute to Amess, urging prayers for him and his family.

‘David carried out his vocation as a Catholic in public life with generosity and integrity. He served in Parliament for four decades and was respected by all political parties across the House. His untimely death is a great loss.’

Sir David, an MP since 1983, is the second serving MP to be killed in the past five years, following the murder of Labour MP Jo Cox in 2016.

Sources: BBC News, Boston Pilot



British MP Sir David Amess was a Catholic and strong pro-life advocate.

Call for greater assistance for Afghans

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) has urged the Government to make a greater commitment to assist those Afghans whose lives are now at risk as a result of the recent Taliban take-over of the country.

‘Australia has responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Afghans, not only because of our 20-year-long military presence there, but also because of the common humanity we share,’ said CRA President, Br Peter Carroll fms. ‘This responsibility is especially owed to those who have worked alongside Australian soldiers, diplomats and aid workers over the past two decades.’

‘While we recognise the Government has evacuated over 4000 Afghans to date, we join the many individuals and organisations around Australia who are advocating for the Government to commit to a long-term goal of taking in 20,000 Afghan refugees,’ he added.

CRA expressed its deep concern for the human-rights defenders, women and girls, who may be subjected to great suffering through a denial of civil rights, forced marriages and sexual violence under the Taliban regime or other extremist groups.

‘In war-torn regions, often only one person can afford to leave ahead of their family. We know a large community of Hazara men who have previously fled Afghanistan for Australia, have been forced to leave behind their wives and children, who now face grave danger,’ said Anne Walker, CRA National Executive Director.

CRA called on the Government to stand in solidarity with the peoples of Afghanistan in practical ways. This should include a sincere review of Australia’s system for granting family and partner reunion visas under the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme.

Biden hails ‘most significant warrior for peace’

Pope Francis has met with President Joe Biden at the Vatican, the first Catholic President since John F Kennedy. President Biden was in Rome for a meeting of the G20 Summit, in late October.

According to a Vatican statement, the Parties focused on the joint commitment to the protection and care of the planet, the healthcare situation and the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the theme of refugees and assistance to migrants.

The two leaders exchanged gifts. One of the gifts President Biden gave Pope Francis was a ‘command

coin,’ which is given ‘to warriors and leaders, and you are the most significant warrior for peace I’ve ever met,’ said the President.

President Biden met with the Pope two days before he travelled to Glasgow to attend the COP26 United Nations summit on climate change. On the day they met, Pope Francis released a statement calling for radical action on climate change.

‘These crises present us with the need to take decisions, radical decisions that are not always easy,’ he said. ‘At the same time, moments of difficulty like these also present opportunities, opportunities that

we must not waste.’

President Biden has been under pressure from conservative bishops in the US over his support for abortion rights and same-sex marriage, which they argue disqualifies him from receiving Communion. President Biden said abortion did not come up in the meeting. ‘We just talked about the fact he was happy that I was a good Catholic and I should keep receiving Communion,’ he said.

Sources: Vatican News. CNA



Pope Francis meets US President Joe Biden at the Vatican, October 29, 2021. Photo: Vatican Media

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Bishop welcomes end of PNG detention programme



‘The end of the Australian offshore detention programme in Papua New Guinea is a welcome development,’ says Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, chair of the Australian Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service.

Photo: Diocese of Parramatta

Bishop Long, who visited Port Moresby in 2016 and Manus Island in 2019, was responding to the recent announcement that the Regional Resettlement Arrangement between the Australian and Papua New Guinea governments will end on January 1, 2022.

‘The Australian Catholic bishops have consistently argued that asylum-seekers, no matter how they arrive in Australian territory, should have their claims for refugee status determined in Australia,’ he said. ‘It is the responsibility of the Australian Government to assess their cases guided by our international treaty obligations.’

Thirteen people have died in offshore detention.

The Refugee Council of Australia reports that more than 1000 recognised refugees who have been subject to offshore detention in Papua New Guinea or on Nauru are still waiting in limbo for resettlement.

The majority of refugees affected by offshore processing are in Australia after temporary transfer for medical reasons or to accompany family members medically transferred. Furthermore, the majority of refugees and asylum-seekers held by Australia in detention

centres, hotels and other temporary facilities have not been fully vaccinated against Covid-19 and a number have tested positive for the disease.

Among 1223 people transferred here [Australia], about 1050 have refugee status but are banned from resettling in Australia.

‘In bringing this chapter to a close, the needs of all those refugees and asylum-seekers who remain in Papua New Guinea must be addressed. Durable solutions must be found for each person transferred to Papua New Guinea by the Australian Government,’ Bishop Long said.

‘International assistance will be needed to resettle the remaining refugees and asylum seekers who do not wish to settle in Papua New Guinea.

‘Countries like Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada are far better resourced than Papua New Guinea to care for these people who have been in limbo for more than eight years.’

Bishop Long said Church and community organisations in Australia and elsewhere stand ready to assist.

Source: ACBC Communications

Crusader sword discovered

A 900-year-old sword believed to belong to a Crusader Knight has been found off the coast of Haifa, Israel. The sword measured four feet long and its hilt is encrusted with seashells and stones. The sword was found by a scuba diver who reported his find to the Israel Antiquities Authority, which examined the object and believes it to be around 900 years old. The iron sword has been preserved in perfect condition and is a beautiful and rare find. It may have been unearthed during a recent storm that shifted the sand that hid it for centuries.



Pope hopes to visit Oceania in 2022

Pope Francis said he hopes to continue traveling next year, including making visits to countries in Oceania and Southeast Asia. ‘I still have to pay the overdue bill for the trip to Papua New Guinea and East Timor,’ the Pope told Argentine news agency Telam. The Pope was originally planning to visit the two countries in 2020. However, all papal trips were cancelled in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Monsignor Marco Sprizzi, an official at the apostolic nunciature in East Timor, said Pope Francis told him that he hoped to visit the country in January 2022 if the situation had improved.

Nobel Peace Prize 2021 recognises two journalists

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2021 to Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov for their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, a precondition for democracy and lasting peace. The Nobel committee announced last month Ms Ressa and Mr Muratov are receiving the Peace Prize for their courageous fight for freedom of expression in the Philippines and Russia. At the same time, they are representatives of all journalists who stand up for this ideal in a world in which democracy and freedom of the press face increasingly adverse conditions.

In honouring Maria Ressa of the Philippines and Russia’s Dmitry Muratov, the Norwegian committee offered a ringing endorsement of the promotion of truth over spin, lies and threats. Ressa, chief executive and co-founder of news website Rappler, has shown unflinching courage covering the regime of President Rodrigo Duterte, whose war on drugs has left 20,000 people dead. Muratov is the founder and editor-in-chief of Novaya Gazette, described by the Nobel committee as ‘the most independent newspaper in Russia today, with a fundamentally critical attitude toward power’.

Berit Reiss Andersen, the Norwegian lawyer who chairs the Nobel committee, commended their ‘courageous fight for freedom of expression, a precondition for democracy and lasting peace’.

‘Free, independent and fact-based journalism,’ he said, ‘serves to protect against abuse of power, lies and war propaganda.’

Chicago marathon fundraiser for the poor

The Bank of Chicago Marathon is known for the thousands of people who line the route and cheer on the runners as they pass through the city’s 29 neighbourhoods.

This year’s race, on Sunday October 10, was no different, especially with the addition of dozens of Franciscan women and men religious and laypeople awaiting runners at an intersection on the West Side. Among them was Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Robert J Lombardo, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, who blessed runners as they passed by.

The group was there to cheer on members of Team OLA, which raises money to support the Mission of Our Lady of the Angels in West Humboldt Park and its outreach to the poor.

Sr Baliga, who is in charge of Team OLA, said the team, which runs both the Chicago Marathon and the Shamrock Shuffle, is the mission’s only fundraiser each year. It is on track to meet its goal of raising US\$250,000, she said.

Sr Baliga was a track star at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and regularly runs marathons. Last year, after the Chicago Marathon was cancelled, she took her run to the treadmill and raised over US\$190,000 for the mission and set a world record for the fastest time for a woman to run a marathon on a treadmill.

Team OLA is more than just a way to raise much-needed funds for the mission, Sr Baliga said.

‘It’s both a fundraiser and an evangelisation opportunity, which is a great thing,’ she said. ‘I think if it’s at all possible to make fundraisers



Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Robert J Lombardo gives a Chicago marathoner a high five during the 2021 Bank of America Chicago Marathon.

Photo: Karen Callaway, Chicago Catholic/CNS

evangelisation opportunities it’s the best way to do this, because then you can bring people into your cause and your efforts who may not be as engaged with the Church in various capacities.’

Source: Catholic News Service

‘Massive phenomenon’ of sexual abuse in French church

The French Catholic Church has expressed ‘shame’ and pleaded for forgiveness, after a devastating report found that at least 330,000 children were victims of sexual abuse by clergy and lay members of church institutions over the past 70 years.

The publication of the landmark report, France’s first major reckoning with what the Catholic Church accepted was ‘appalling’ abuse, has shaken the country with its horrific findings of a ‘massive phenomenon’ of sexual abusers of children operating for decades within the Church and its associated institutions.

The two-and-a-half-year independent inquiry found that staggering numbers of children were subjected to sexual violence by priests and clergy while the crimes were covered up in a ‘systemic way’ by a deliberate ‘veil of silence’ in the Church.

The president of the investigative committee, Jean-Marc Sauvé, told a press conference: ‘Until the early 2000s the Catholic Church showed a profound and even cruel indifference towards the victims.’

The report found an estimated 216,000 children were victims of sexual violence by French Catholic priests, deacons and other clergy from 1950 to 2020. When lay members of the Church, such as teachers and catechism supervisors, were included, the figure rose to at least 330,000 children sexually abused over 70 years.

It said the ‘vast majority’ of victims were boys, who came from a wide variety of social backgrounds and who were attacked at a young age before reaching adolescence. Some sex offenders inside the Church were

‘predators’ on a vast scale who targeted extremely high numbers of children over long periods, with some attacking more than 150 victims.

Sauvé said the numbers of victims were ‘damning’ and ‘in no way can remain without a response’. He urged the Church to pay reparations even though most cases were well beyond the statute of limitations for prosecution. He recommended the Catholic Church overhaul its internal legal system, reform its governance, rethink training and look at the dynamics that allowed the abuse to take place – namely the overwhelming power of priests and ‘the identification of a priest to Christ’.

Sources: Reuters, BBC News

Observations of ‘new ways’ in Marlborough parish

Fr Gerard Burns

Our Lady Star of the Sea, Te Whetu o te Moana is a large parish. It was formed in 2016 with the combination of the former Picton, Kaikōura and Blenheim parishes so it stretches from the tips of the Marlborough Sounds to south of Kaikōura and halfway across towards Nelson. As much of it is in Te Taihū o te Waka (the prow of Maui’s waka which is Te Waipounamu) the parish’s name is fitting. Our Lady, Star of the Sea, has been a guide for mariners. And just at the moment, Mary the mother of Jesus and Star of the Sea is getting a lot of work.

The parish has faced a series of extra challenges in the time of its existence: the Kaikōura earthquake, the sudden death of its first parish priest (Fr John Pearce), a property review (the parish had seven churches), and the various pastoral concerns of a large and varied parish. And in the last two years the wait for a new parish priest to arrive – Fr Giltus Mathias – prevented by Covid lockdowns and the ‘reset’ of New Zealand’s immigration and visa policies.

Fr Giltus, who has worked in the parish previously, has been waiting in Australia with another Passionist priest for two years to be able to come to Blenheim but this is not

yet possible. Interim parish priest, Fr Pat McIndoe, had taken on the job when Fr John Pearce died, but had been waiting himself to return to PNG to help in formation and parish work there. Eventually Fr Pat was able to go in May of this year but that has left only one Passionist priest, Fr Jacob Kuman, in residence in the parish Sea at present when the Passionist congregation was hoping to have a community of three.

So in the meantime, some short-term ‘patch-and-cover’ methods have had to be employed to help this wide-spread parish. Priests are being loaned from other parts of the diocese for three-week to two-month periods to assist Fr Jacob with the sacraments and parish duties. The smsm Sisters resident in Kaikōura maintain a wise presence there and a solid parish organisation in the various communities keep the waka stable.

The ‘new’ things though are that Fr Giltus, has taken up as much as can be done from afar via Zoom meetings and occasional film-clip appearances and homilies at Masses. Far from being an absentee parish priest, Giltus is ‘beaming in’ to both be as present as possible from Sydney in visual and spoken form. In this way he can also work closely with the parish leadership and administration. It is not ideal but it is more than could be done

perhaps even five years ago.

On the ground, Fr Jacob, Srs Maureen and Frances-Marie and the various lay ministers have been doing as much pastorally as possible, including a daily livestreamed weekday Mass from the presbytery during lockdown. I was privileged to be able to spend a couple of months in the parish over June and July this year as these systems were being set up and it was impressive to see the coming together of pastoral energy and technological competence.

In the 15th century the new communications technology was the printing press and the Church had to learn how to use in its mission that technology and the new mindsets it brought. While what is happening in Our Lady Star of the Sea parish is not pastorally ideal – the kanohi-ki-kanohi, face-to-face and personal presence is still the best way to work – I could see again what might be possible if we learn how to use the new technologies well.

Covid and the various restrictions on large-scale gatherings is, of course, having a great impact on ordinary parish life. Hopefully this will lessen as time goes by, but the experiences of this time can provide much fruit.

Ordination to the Presbyterate an honour



Fr Hayden Powick sm at his ordination with his parents Edward (Eddie) and Rachael Powick. Photo: John Pierce

Ordination to the Presbyterate is the honour and responsibility to bring Christ crucified and risen to the world, says newly ordained priest Fr Hayden Powick sm. ‘I am learning what this means through my ministry at St Mary of the Angels and St Pat’s College. It is both hard work and joyful, particularly the ministry of Confession. There is something beautiful about someone burdened with sin and despair finding hope in God’s mercy.’

Fr Hayden says being ordained in his home parish was a blessing after being away for so many years. ‘Countless people have prayerfully supported my journey and I am deeply grateful to them all. There was something bittersweet about the limit of 100 guests and I hope to visit the parish at a later date once restrictions have eased.’

Fr Seph Pijfers parish priest Our Lady of the Bays Tasman said,

‘Hayden’s ordination has been a real source of pride for his family and many in the parish and at Garin College who have followed his journey and been praying for him throughout his formation.

‘Hayden’s large and extended family are well known in our parish family and beyond. As a family with them, we are equally proud of Hayden’s milestone in responding to God’s call in his life. Their support, prayers and love have been so important to him.’

Fr Hayden says one of the great joys of religious life with the Society of Mary is the variety of ministry. ‘I have enjoyed missionary work in the past, but I enjoy far more the “surprise” factor of not knowing what God has in store for me. Whatever I end up doing, I wish to bring the peace and truth of God’s word to people. Please pray for me!’

Westport parish priest’s house gutted by fire

In the early hours of Saturday morning, 16 October, Fr David Gruschow’s house in Westport was gutted by fire.



Fr David Gruschow’s house in Westport was destroyed in a fire.

Photo: Supplied

Fr David, St Canice’s parish priest in the Buller to Inangahua pastoral area, was away overnight staying with friends in Nelson to attend Fr Hayden Powick’s ordination in Richmond. ‘It was a blessing I had taken my two dogs, Billy and Sam, with me as my friends were able to look after them while I attended the ordination,’ said Fr David.

He returned to a burned-out shell, with his possessions destroyed.

A passerby had alerted the emergency services. Four fire crews were called to the house at 5.23am and had to call for assistance. The house was engulfed in flames and the interior badly damaged. The

Westport volunteer fire brigade were able to contain the fire to the centre of the house, but the house is uninhabitable.

‘While the exterior looks relatively untouched, the inside is ruined,’ Fr David says. ‘The conclusion seems to be there was a fault of some sort in the wires in the ceiling.’

Fr David bought the 1950s’ house when he moved to Westport in 2018. The house was rewired a few years ago and fitted with smoke alarms, but because the fire started in the ceiling, the alarms didn’t sound, says Fr David. ‘It was most fortunate that I and the dogs were not there.

‘Most things were damaged, but some items can be replaced, such as the TV. But there’s more important things than stuff,’ he says. ‘People have been very supportive and helpful. The flipside is that this experience has helped me better understand the plight of the flood victims who lost their homes in July. It’s a very similar thing.’


Fr David has moved into the housekeeper’s flat adjoining the presbytery, which hasn’t been used in some years.

‘Repairs to the house are not expected to be completed for another year. Although miracles can happen,’ he says.



Fr David Gruschow with his beagles, Billy and Sam.

Photo: Sr Lusiana Raratini dolc




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Marist St Pat’s family celebrate 50 years

John Holden

The Marist St Pat’s Club 50th Jubilee celebrations saw past and present players and supporters fill the Hataitai clubrooms in Wellington over Queen’s Birthday weekend. A common theme discussed was how sporting activities and physical fitness add value and joy to life and benefit everyone involved.



MSP Junior team with volunteer coaches and managers.

Photo: Supplied

Cardinal John Dew, MSP patron, celebrated Mass on Sunday 6 June. In his homily, Cardinal John noted that many at the previous evening’s dinner had commented how the values and mentoring learnt in the MSP environment, were ‘game changing’ for them. As a result they said they went on to become ‘good citizens’ to contribute to their families and Aotearoa New Zealand.

At the celebrations, tributes were also paid to the many Club administrators, players and supporters who volunteer on committees, prepare meals, clean facilities and provide financial support, the strength of camaraderie and friendships, and how families are cared for at times of sickness and hardship.

In his foreword to *C’mon Red* – the book written by Tim Donoghue to mark the 50th Jubilee – Cardinal John reflected how the family spirit cultivated at MSP and valuable life lessons learned show sport is for everyone.

Since its formation in 1971, MSP has been to the fore in Wellington Club Rugby caring for its members. During its 50 years, the Club’s Premier team has participated in 22 Jubilee Cup finals and has won (64 per cent) the sought-after trophy 14 times. MSP teams have also won 136 trophies throughout the Club’s 50 years.

MSP has a philosophy that sport is for everyone, regardless of religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender or ability, and that all have the right to participate and share the moments of great joy and satisfaction.

The Club’s deep tradition and values – compassion, respect, charity, integrity, perseverance, humility, loyalty, honesty, joy, forgiveness, justice, courage – come from the Catholic education system as spelled out in assemblies, classrooms, and posted throughout schools and sporting institutions.

C’Mon Red can be purchased for \$50, email: donoghue.tim@gmail.com or ph 027 273 4630.

Caring for Pukekaraka

Pā Phil Cody from Te Whānau Pukekaraka, Ōtaki and Elishka Graham from Māoriland Inc, Ōtaki, were part of a local working bee doing a recent planting of Renga Renga (New Zealand rock lilies) along the top of the Puke (hill) during the Māoriland Matariki festival.

The planting was part of the Matariki Taiao programme that has taken place over the last five years on Pukekaraka hill. An important part of Matariki is looking after the environment said Elishka Graham, ‘and that is part of what Māoriland wants to do.’

Pukekaraka overlooks St Mary’s Church and St Peter Chanel School on Convent Rd, Ōtaki. The plantings have also involved the children from St Peter Chanel.

‘This planting has completed over 1000 trees, flaxes and native grasses going in over the last five years on the southern slope of



Elishka Graham and Pā Phil Cody planting Renga Renga along the top of the Pukekaraka, Ōtaki.

Photo: Supplied

Pukekaraka,’ says Pā Peter Healy, Te Whānau Pukekaraka.

‘It’s great to have this final block cleared and planted, he says. ‘Pukekaraka hill is Ngāti Kapu land and we are really grateful they have

allowed us to plant here.’

Recent funding for local mārae projects has seen a new track on the Pukekaraka, so access and viewing the plantings and the local vista is now much easier.

Central North Island News

Fr Bernard O’Donnell

Isolation is not a new thing for the Central North Island. While the pandemic lockdowns have caused changes and interruptions to Church services and pastoral activities, some of the changes have brought out good in people who have responded in practical and kind ways.

Due to the difficulty of reaching Taihape in winter, help came from the Palmerston North circuit of priests. People appreciated having these visits to keep the continuity of Masses when churches were open.

In Ohakune social-service agencies from Ruapehu Whānau Transformation distributed parcels of food to the elderly and needy.



Congregation after Mass at St Joseph’s Church Ohakune, 16 October, following the introduction to the worldwide synod.

Photo: Merrilyn George

Market gardeners came on board too to distribute vegetables. Social media platforms have become more important for keeping in contact.

So, in a way, the added isolation through lockdowns, has brought people closer together through practical solutions and caring.

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The Season of Advent – Ko te Wā o te Aweneti

Sunday 28 November – Friday 24 December 2021
Rātapu 28 Whiringa-ā Rangi – kit e Rāmere 24 Hakihea 2021

The four-week season of Advent is a time of prayerful and practical ways to prepare for the celebration of Our Lord's birth on Christmas Day. Christ was born to bring hope to a darkened world. During this time of the world-wide Covid-19 pandemic and all the difficulties it brings, the season of Advent offers us a new beginning and a promise of hope for better times.

SUNDAY 28 NOVEMBER 1st Sunday of Advent

"May the LORD make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we have for you."
1 THESSALONIANS 3: 12

MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER

"In days to come, the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills. All nations shall stream towards it."
ISAIAH 2: 2

TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER

"Come after me, says the Lord, and I will make you fishers of men."
MATTHEW 4: 19

WEDNESDAY 1 DECEMBER

"Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come."
PSALM 23: 6

THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD."
PSALM 118: 26

FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER

"The LORD is my light and my salvation. I seek to dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life."
PSALM 27: 1, 4

SATURDAY 4 DECEMBER

"The LORD will give you the bread you need and the water for which you thirst."
ISAIAH 30: 20

SATURDAY 11 DECEMBER

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."
LUKE 3: 4

SUNDAY 12 DECEMBER 3rd Sunday of Advent

"Shout for joy, O daughter Zion!"
ZEPHANIAH 3: 14

SUNDAY 5 DECEMBER 2nd Sunday of Advent

"The LORD has done great things for us; we are filled with joy."
PSALM 126: 3

MONDAY 6 DECEMBER

"Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven."
PSALM 85: 11-12

TUESDAY 7 DECEMBER

"Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care."
ISAIAH 40: 11

THURSDAY 16 DECEMBER

"My love shall never leave you nor my covenant of peace be shaken, says the LORD."
ISAIAH 54: 10

FRIDAY 17 DECEMBER

"Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever. The mountains shall yield bounty for the people, and the hills great abundance."
PSALM 72: 2-3

WEDNESDAY 8 DECEMBER

"Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women."
LUKE 1: 28

THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER

"Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a Saviour."
ISAIAH 45: 8

FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER

"The LORD will come; go out to meet him! He is the prince of peace."
PSALM 1

MONDAY 13 DECEMBER

Show me your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.
PSALM 25:4

TUESDAY 14 DECEMBER

"The Lord hears the cry of the poor. I will bless the LORD at all times."
PSALM 34: 7

WEDNESDAY 15 DECEMBER

"Raise your voice and tell the Good News: Behold, the Lord GOD comes with power."
ISAIAH 40: 9-10

MONDAY 20 DECEMBER

"The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus'."
LUKE 1: 30, 31

TUESDAY 21 DECEMBER

"Sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!"
ZEPHANIAH 3: 14,

WEDNESDAY 22 DECEMBER

"Mary said: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my saviour. For he has looked upon his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name."
LUKE 1: 46-49

THURSDAY 23 DECEMBER

"Thus says the Lord GOD: I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me."
MALACHI 3: 1

FRIDAY 24 DECEMBER

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for he has come to his people and set them free."
LUKE 1: 68

I ēnei wiki e whā o te wāhanga o te Aweneti he wā mō te karakia, mō te rapu ara hoki ki te whakanui i te whānautanga mai o tō tātou Ariki hei te Rā Kirihimete. I whānau mai te Karaiti hei kaikawe i te whakaponono ki tētehi ao pōuri. Na, i tēnei wā o te Mate Karauna – 19 me ōna raruraru kua pāngia ki ngā tōpito o te ao, hēoi ka hau mai te wāhanga o te Aweneti ki a mātou, he tīmatanga hōu, he mea tūmanako kia piki anō te ora ki a mātou.

Details of stained-glass windows, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Palmerston North.
Photos: David Lupton
You can download this Advent calendar as a poster from our website: welcom.org.nz

Young Catholics

Dates for World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon announced

The dates of the next World Youth Day (WYD) in Lisbon, Portugal, have been announced. The world's largest gathering of Catholic young people will take place from August 1–6, 2023.

Making the announcement on October 3, Cardinal Manuel Clemente, the Patriarch of Lisbon, said: 'We hope the 22 months that will lead us to WYD might be a time of evangelisation for all.'

World Youth Day was established by Pope John Paul II in 1985. The week-long gathering usually attracts hundreds of thousands of young people, from all over the world.

The international event is typically held on a different continent every three years with the presence of the Pope.

Pope Francis announced the Portuguese capital would host the global Catholic gathering of young people at the closing Mass of the last international World Youth Day in Panama City in January 2019.

Lisbon, a city of 505,000 people, is around 75 miles from Fatima, one of the most visited Marian pilgrimage sites in the world. A report on 'European Young Adults and Religion', published in 2018, found that Portugal has

one of the highest levels of weekly Mass attendance among young people in Europe.

The organising committee for the Lisbon event said it decided to announce the date for October 4 in honour of the Feast of St Francis of Assisi.

World Youth Day in Lisbon was initially scheduled for August 2022, but the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life of the Holy See, announced postponement of the event by a year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The bishop overseeing preparations for World Youth Day 2023 said in an interview earlier this year the event will be an opportunity to renew hope in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

'I wish WYD Lisbon 2023 to be from and to all the people and that it can mean an opportunity to renew the hope in the post-pandemic period,' said Bishop Américo Manuel Alves Aguiar, Auxillary Bishop of Lisbon.

For more information, visit the official website of WYD 2023 at lisboa2023.org/en/

Young enterprise scheme sprouts nutritional product



St Mary's College Sprout It team, selling their microgreen growing kits at the Harbourside market in Wellington (l-r): Amie Whitney, Antonia Gray, Rachael Bakhos and Rae Lyons.

Photo: Supplied

Hannah Mclellan

Five, Year 12 St Mary's College students have launched a small business venture that promotes nutrition and sustainability. Known as 'Sprout It', the company has developed a kit – selling at \$22 each – containing ingredients to grow a range of micro-edible seedlings.

We developed our venture as an entry for a Young Enterprise competition – the national educational scheme that gives secondary school students a platform to start their own business and gain experience from the business world.

Our hands-on business team are passionate about nutritional eating. Our microgreen growing kit nurtures seeds for harvesting as mature seedlings, which are added directly to food as microgreens. We have developed the kits to be sustainable – everything is recycled, biodegradable or reusable. The mats in the kit are upcycled from pre-used insulation food bags made from New Zealand wool and the container is reusable. The kit comes with recipes and seed cards aligned with the microgreens that are grown. Refill kits are

also available, which enable the container to be restocked with three mats and three seed packets with seed cards.

Our hope and vision is, one day, everyone will have access to a balanced diet and knowledge of proper nutrition and the importance of caring for our environment.

To support our sustainability vision, our company will donate part of our profits to Kiwi Harvest, which provides meals to people who do not have access to healthy eating.


Another priority for us is to reduce plastic waste – especially in food packaging. When food is grown directly at source, it cuts out packaging for storage and transport, and shows exactly what's going into the food. With everything in our kits being reusable, recycled or biodegradable, growing and 'selling' food in this way also helps to reduce our business' carbon footprint.

Please order one of our kits! Go to our website: www.sprout-it.co.nz or email us at sprout.it2021@gmail.com to purchase a kit.

Hannah Mclellan, Year 12 student, St Mary's College, Wellington.



Young people wearing T-shirts with the official WYD Lisbon 2023 logo. Photo: lisboa2023.org



KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Annual Grant Invitation

The Knights of the Southern Cross, Wellington, Charitable Trust Board is seeking applications from organisations based in, and operating primarily within, the Archdiocese of Wellington who need financial assistance to carry out religious or charitable or educational works.


Requests for application forms can be made to patrick.mcgill@xnet.co.nz.

Applications for grants should be made by **Friday 21 January 2022** and should be sent to:

KSC Wellington, Charitable Trust Board
PO Box 56029, Tawa, Wellington 5249



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Rangatahi Katorika

Younger college students acknowledge ‘big sister’

Acting as a ‘big sister’ to younger students and providing a shoulder to lean on in times of need has garnered recognition for a student at Sacred Heart College, Napier.

Lydia Healey, Year 13, won the college’s ‘Upstander’ competition, which asked students to write the name of someone they thought was an upstander and post their votes in the guidance counsellor’s office.

Lydia says she was shocked to find out she had won and believes it was the Year 9 students in her tutor class

who nominated her.

‘We always tell them they can come to us if they need but they usually get too scared, so I think it’s quite cool they see me that way,’ Lydia said. ‘It’s good to know that I can make a positive difference in some way.’

The Upstander competition was part of Wellness Week in June, which had a focus of anti-bullying and being someone who stands up for those bullied, stops bullying or gets help for victims of bullying.

The initiative has been driven

by Guidance Counsellor Tracey Pinfold and Deputy Principal, Pastoral, Rachel Read.

Ms Read says they received more than 100 entries from students for their peers who had been supportive and caring to others and who demonstrated the college’s HEART values – Hope, Equity, Aroha, Respect and Tenacity.

The school has adopted Sir Mason Durie’s Te Whare Tapa Whā model, and each term focuses on one of the key tenants of that philosophy: taha tinana (physical wellbeing); taha hinengaro (mental wellbeing); taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing); taha whānau (family wellbeing).

Ms Read says the students’ wellness is closely connected to how well they succeed at school. ‘It is absolutely vital and at the centre of everything we do.’

Principal Maria Neville-Foster said, ‘At Sacred Heart College we teach our girls the importance of caring for the vulnerable and those around us being marginalised.

‘Our Wellness Week allows us to focus on what this looks like every day and gives students a chance to thank those who make a difference in their lives.’



Sacred Heart College Year 13 student Lydia Healey, centre, with Year 9 students from her tutor class. Photo: Supplied

A ‘taste’ at St John’s College



St John’s College Head Boy Jonty Unwin (l) with St Patrick’s School student Taika King, and Deputy Head Boy Jaden Murphy with Puketapu School student Archie Plews. Photo: Supplied

Boys looking for their high school home for the next five years, had a taste of St John’s College at an open day in June. At the ‘taster day’, 115 Year 8 students from schools around the region experienced sports, ‘fancy food’ in culinary arts, and robotics and science.

Head Boy Jonty Unwin said it was exciting to see the boys showing interest in his school, at work, ask questions, on the sports field, and forming bonds ahead of next year.

Year 8 Puketapu School student Archie Plews ‘loved’ the day and

spending time with the older boys. ‘They’re role models by the way they act, what they do.’

Deputy Head Boy Jaden Murphy said he enjoyed getting to know the younger boys and showing them around the school. ‘There are a lot of opportunities and the teachers genuinely care about the students and their success in and out of the classroom.’

Principal Mr Rob Ferreira said, ‘Our senior students were great with the young men, and I enjoyed meeting these students and talking to them.’

‘Why I like going to a Catholic School’

Lyanie, a Year 8 student at St Claudine School, Wainuiomata, shares her thoughts for Catholic Schools Day, 29 September 2021: Tūrangawaewae: Catholic Schools – A Place to Stand.

Going to a Catholic school means being a part of a big Catholic community. It is a privilege because of how we learn together about the word of the Lord. It is important to pray together with your class when school starts and when school is finished. The most important thing

in a Catholic school is that everyone should know how to show respect and kindness for one another.

In a Catholic school we wear our uniform with pride. We spread positivity in our classroom, which helps students understand and learn. There is something important that makes a Catholic school a better place to study – it’s the school values. Our values are service, compassion, integrity and respect. The reason why these values make my Catholic school a unique place

to learn is because we know what is right or wrong, and we are aware of the type of students we should be. Being in a Catholic school helps me and other students to be closer to God, because of how we pray together and learn together.

My journey in a Catholic school helps me to be myself and to know how to show respect and love to my family, my friends and my Catholic school. I’m thankful and grateful to be a part of this lovely and amazing school community.



St Claudine’s student, Lyanie. Students follow St Claudine Thevenet’s example and live with respect, integrity, compassion and service. Photo: Supplied



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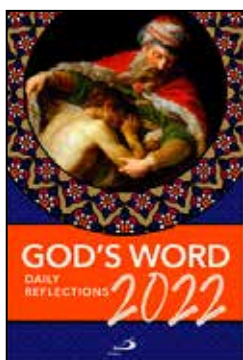
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For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission

Pope Francis has invited us all to embark on a journey together – to evaluate, discuss, think and dialogue so we can determine the direction forward for the Church. On Sunday, 17 October 2021, Cardinal John Dew celebrated the Opening Masses for the Synod, for the Archdiocese of Wellington at St Teresa’s Pro-Cathedral and for the Diocese of Palmerston North at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. The consultation and submission process has now begun.

The Synod Office in Rome had originally set the date for making submissions at 12 December 2021. In late October, the Synod Office extended the time for making submissions to a new date, which is expected to be set several months into 2022. The new date will be confirmed in the near future.

A time to listen

Synod Team
Diocese of Palmerston North

In the Diocese of Palmerston North, consultation for the Synod is now taking place in local parishes and communities.

Groups and individuals from all across the diocese are invited to gather in groups and make submissions based on discernment and dialogue.

1. Read and reflect on the resources provided by the Vatican and our diocesan ‘Participation Booklet.’ All resources are accessible online at pndiocese.org.nz/synod – under ‘Resources’.

2. Gather and discern in groups – together in person and online – to discuss and discern key questions and themes. Our ‘Participation Booklet’ aims to assist with this process.

3. Respond to the questions and provide responses either by email, online or by sending in a postal response. *Details for how to make a response are available online.*

This consultation phase is now open and we encourage you to get involved sooner rather than later. You may choose to gather a group specifically to participate in this process, or you may gather as an already established group. Although we encourage you to participate in this process as part of a group, you are also more than welcome to make a response as an individual. Your voice is valuable, and we want to hear it!

Please make sure you get a chance to be part of the conversation. For more information, resources and links please visit: pndiocese.org.nz/synod

*Teresa Edwards, Isabella McCafferty,
Fr Simon Story and Nick Wilson,
Diocese of Palmerston North Synod Team.*

The time is now!

Church Mission Team
Archdiocese of Wellington

The Global Synod: *For a Synodal Church* is underway and involves all of us. As Cardinal John Dew says, ‘Your baptism calls you and entitles you to be involved.’

How you can get involved

Specially prepared resources – you are invited to read and reflect on the materials on our website. Our team has prepared a synod booklet for the archdiocese that outlines the reflection and discernment process. You can download it from: wn.catholic.org.nz/about/archdiocesan-synod/

You can also read the Synod Preparatory Documents on the Vatican Synod website: www.synod.va

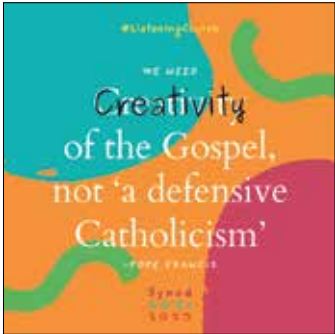
Contact your parish – to find out how you can join or lead a synod reflection group. Synodality is about journeying together. Reflecting with others is the best way to engage with this process.

Get together with friends and family – form your own group. The Synod Booklet has tips about how to do this.

Reach out – to those who may no longer feel connected to the Church and invite them to take part.

Submit your response – here is how to submit contributions, as a group or individually.

- Online – use the Synod Response Tool on our Synod page: wn.catholic.org.nz/about/archdiocesan-synod/



- Email – download the Word document ‘Synod Participation Response’ from our synod page or ask your parish office. Email your response attached in Word format to: synod@wn.catholic.org.nz
- Post – mail your response to: Office of the Archbishop, Archdiocese of Wellington, PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140.
- Verbal – if you have difficulties making a written response, please phone us for advice about how to provide a verbal response.

What happens to your responses?

Each diocese will collate its own responses and submit a diocesan document to the New Zealand Bishops’ Conference. The six diocesan submissions will be synthesised by the bishops to form a single national document, which in turn will become part of an Oceania document and submitted to the Synod of Bishops in Rome.

Contact us

If you have any questions or would like support to make this happen in your community contact Chris at: c.walker@wn.catholic.org.nz or ph (04) 496-1706 or Lucienne at: l.hensel@wn.catholic.org.nz or ph (04) 496-1715.

The more voices heard, the better. Please join us and invite others to do the same.

Pope Francis wants to hear from everyone.



Alfred Tong ordained as deacon



Archbishop Paul Martin with Alfred Tong (left) and fellow deacons Adam Kirkeby and Monty Bamford.

Photo: Peter Fleming/Catholic Diocese of Christchurch

On 2 October, Alfred Tong, a seminarian at Holy Cross Seminary in Auckland, was ordained a transitional deacon for the Archdiocese of Wellington. Archbishop Paul Martin sm ordained Alfred along with Adam Kirkeby for the Hamilton Diocese, and Monty Bamford for the Christchurch Diocese. The Ordinations to the Holy Order of Deacons took place at St Mary’s Pro-Cathedral in Christchurch.

Alfred began his training at Holy Cross Seminary in 2016. After growing up in Upper Hutt and attending St Patrick’s College, Silverstream, Alfred studied pharmacy then became an environmental scientist with a PhD from Otago University. During his

time in Dunedin, it was seeing the simple things the chaplain did for others that made Alfred consider priesthood instead of academia.

‘What made me decide “yes” was people’s need for God’s presence in their lives, especially when they needed someone to listen to, to have a coffee with, to be comforted that God is with them.’

Alfred says, ‘attending to these very human challenges, along with Jesus and his compassion and love, present in all situations and people, has given my life an extraordinary level of meaning and peace.’

Alfred will spend some time back at Holy Cross Seminary until mid-2022, when after a time in parish ministry in the Archdiocese, he ‘will hopefully be ordained to priesthood.’

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Chief Executive

LOCATION: WELLINGTON



Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is the New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ agency for justice, peace and development. We work for a world free of poverty and injustice through community development, advocacy, education, and emergency relief. Our mission is love in action: We unite with communities, especially in the parishes, colleges, marae, religious orders, schools and other Catholic agencies of Aotearoa New Zealand and Oceania to overcome poverty, protect lives and relieve suffering. Gospel values and Catholic social teaching underpin our work.

Currently we are seeking a Kaiwhakahaere Matua Chief Executive to oversee the day-to-day management of the organisation, the delivery of its strategy, and the proactive engagement with its communities and partners. The CE will build strong relationships to promote the work and profile of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand and be proactive at seeking key networking opportunities.

In conjunction with the Board, the CE will also be responsible for driving and implementing the vision and strategic direction of the organisation. They will lead all Caritas staff, duly supported by the Senior Leadership Team. Further information about our work, mission and values can be viewed at <https://caritas.org.nz/annual-reports>.

Preferred candidates for this role will be practical, passionate and innovative leaders, with a service ethic and an affinity with our organisational values. A strategic mindset that can be pragmatically applied is also useful, as are communication skills that will strengthen relationships between the organisation, its partners, and its community. A collaborative style, operational nous, and strong people leadership will be hallmarks of the successful candidate.

For those seeking a fantastic career opportunity committed to service, this role represents a compelling next career step.

Candidates can apply online at www.sheffield.co.nz. To apply by email, please attach your cover letter and CV and send to cvwlg@sheffield.co.nz quoting 7881WC. Applications close on 22 November 2021 at 9.00am. Emails will be electronically acknowledged and further correspondence may be by email. For more information please phone Nicholas Buck on 027 474 5366.

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Amid the fray – when our children leave the faith

“What the statistics don’t show is the pain felt by so many parents who watch their children drift away.”

Greg Erlandson

Once upon a time, you may have prayed for your darling child to become a nun. Odds are you never prayed that she become a none.

Gallup reported earlier this year that church membership by Americans has hit a historic low, falling for the first time below 50 per cent. More disturbing is the growing number of young people who identify as ‘nones’, those without any religious affiliation.

Right now, almost one out of every three young people (those under the age of 40) claim no religious affiliation. These numbers hold true for Catholics as for non-Catholics.

What the statistics don’t show is the pain felt by so many parents who watch their children drift away. Those who have raised kids in the faith, went to Mass every Sunday, sent their children to religious education programmes or to Catholic schools, feel this pain most deeply.

‘What did I do wrong?’ we ask. ‘What should I have done differently?’

Catholics have always put great stock in the fact that the faith is inherited. One is ‘born Catholic’, or ‘a cradle Catholic’. This is no longer true, as Sherry Weddell points out in her powerful book, *Forming Intentional Disciples*. God has no grandchildren, she says. These days, you don’t inherit the faith like you do your eye colour or your skin tone.

That parents worry about the faith lives of their children isn’t something new. Such

worry is as old as St Monica praying for her son St Augustine.

But talk with Catholic parents these days, and it feels more widespread than ever. On any Sunday, there are likely dozens of Monicas in your parish and mine praying that their teenage or adult children return to the faith, get married in the Church or have their grandchildren baptised. The unbaptised grandchild is a particularly deep wound.

There is a lot of anger and a lot of guilt swirling around this topic. The sociologist Christian Smith once warned lukewarm parents that ‘we’ll get what we are’. Lukewarm begets lukewarm, he was saying.

Yet what seems increasingly common are parents who love the faith, who feel it is an essential part of life, and who feel as if they’ve done something wrong when their kids wander away. What they are getting is not what they are.

If such disaffiliation from the faith of their fathers and mothers is nothing new for young people, the scale of the departure is. There are lots of explanations of why it is happening.

Weddell believes that a fundamental problem in the Church – including priests and parents – is a lack of personal relationship with the Lord.

We follow the rules, we do the right things, but we really don’t know Jesus and we don’t do a good job of talking about our relationship with Jesus. That somehow feels, well, Protestant.

For the same reason, it can be hard for some of us to communicate with our children, adult or otherwise, what Jesus means to us, who he is in our lives.

Yet I also think that for many young people, they simply don’t have time to invest in faith. They live in a world almost mad with distractions, and many of the messages buried in all those distractions is that religion is not something to be taken too seriously. It’s worse than hostility. It’s apathy.

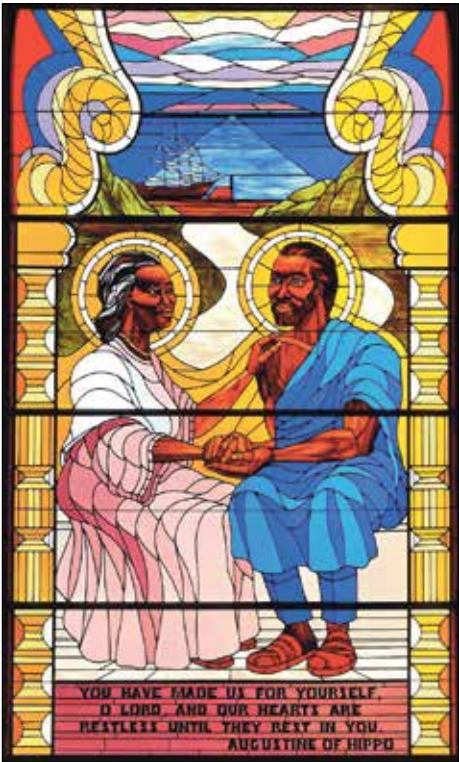
Faith is something they’ll get around to someday. Maybe when they have children. Maybe when they have cancer. It isn’t essential now.

The real enemy of the faith in our age is indifference. Combating this enemy may be the biggest challenge facing our parishes, and our families, today.

Greg Erlandson is director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, Detroit, USA.

Source: *Echoes – a Forum of Catholic Thoughts*, Boston Pilot, September 2021

Data from the 2018 Census shows that 48.59 per cent of New Zealanders have ‘no religion’ – up from 41.92 at the 2013 Census. The number of people identifying with a Christian faith had fallen from 47.65 per cent in 2013 to 37.31 per cent in 2018. The numbers continue a trend line, which has been observed over several recent Census counts.



St Augustine and his mother, St Monica, depicted in a stained-glass window at St Augustine Church in Washington, USA.

Image: FacebookTwitterMore9

Fostering a distinctive identity in Catholic Aotearoa New Zealand

The National Liturgy Office (NLO) supports the New Zealand Catholic bishops in their pastoral, liturgical, and teaching ministry, and ensures that the distinctive identity of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa-New Zealand, with its Māori dimension, is present and celebrated in the Liturgy and celebrated.

NLO provides Liturgical resources as required by the bishops and as requested by people. It ensures no Liturgical area is missed and that requests from parishes, school chaplaincies and individuals are answered readily.

The office provides support and resources throughout the Liturgical year for the Mass–Miha, sacraments and rites, ministries, Liturgical music, and Church-related news and events. Support for Sunday Liturgy is changed weekly and throughout the year for Church seasons, Solemnities and some feast days.

The NLO team consists of Fr John O’Connor as director and Catherine Gibbs as administrative assistant. Their office is in the Archdiocesan Centre, Wellington. They oversee,



Fr John O’Connor is a frequent presenter at conferences and diocesan functions.



Catherine Gibbs speaking on a video-teaching resource.

produce and distribute resources to the six dioceses and others as requested. Materials are on the NLO website: nlo.org.nz

John O’Connor is a priest of the diocese of Christchurch with a background in parish ministry, spiritual and retreat direction. Catherine Gibbs lives in the Wellington Archdiocese and has a background in music, and arts education. She has strong links to promoting social justice and integral ecology.

‘We both work part-time for NLO from different cities, which requires considerable flexibility,’ Catherine says.

NLO is supported by a national Liturgy advisory group, representative groups from the dioceses and national networks, which include the Liturgical musicians’ network, the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults’ network, and the National Sign Language group for liturgy needs. ‘Through the Vicars for Māori we have also built good relationships to deliver scriptural translations, karakia and himene translations,’



Rangitahi from Te Kura Taumata ō Panguru singing ‘Mō Maria’ for the NLO team visiting Northland.

Photos: Supplied

says Catherine.

‘NLO has been impacted by the effect of the pandemic on Catholic communities. While the dioceses have responded directly with provision of live-stream Masses, we have provided supporting resources for parishes and schools. And we are providing support for Te Ara a Maria Hikoi,’ Catherine says.

John and Catherine offer regular Zoom meetings for schools and parishes seeking support for Liturgies. ‘While the pandemic has restricted our physical availability, our desire is to respond to any invitation, either in person or by phone or Zoom,’ says John.



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The **Survivors Network** of those **Abused by Priests** (SNAP) Aotearoa-New Zealand is an **independent**, grassroots, non-binary peer-support network among victims and survivors of clergy, religious and institutional abuse.

If you or someone in your whānau need support, please contact us.

Call or text 022 3440496 or email: aotearoa-newzealand@snapnetwork.org www.snapnetwork.org



Bearers of Consolation and Hope Ngā Kaihāpai o te Aroha me te Tūmanako

*A Pastoral Statement from the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference on
The spiritual and pastoral care of persons contemplating assisted dying in
Aotearoa New Zealand*

1. Faith sometimes leads us to places we might rather not be (cf. *John 21:18*; *Pope Francis, Homily 14 April 2013, 2*)

Soon, in Aotearoa New Zealand, some health professionals, chaplains and priests will find themselves in situations not of their own choosing. ‘Medically assisted dying’ (euthanasia) becomes legally available in our land on the 7th of November [2021]. While this course of action will not be offered in our Catholic rest homes or Catholic hospices, or indeed many others, it will become available in a number of hospitals and other public care facilities throughout the country. For some of our Catholic community, these are their places of work or ministry.
2. The implementation of assisted dying for persons with a life-limiting illness will put many vulnerable people at risk. These include the elderly who may feel they have become a burden to family and society, and many others, some of whom will be young. The question arises: how might we, as Catholics, respond when someone confides in us that they are contemplating assisted dying? How can we be bearers of consolation and hope in these situations?

The Old Testament figure of Job is a striking example of one who struggled with his circumstances, both societal and personal. He was filled with angst about the prevailing culture, and he found his own life almost intolerable. Yet, he clung firm to his belief in the goodness of God and reasoned that “if we take happiness from God’s hand,
- must we not take sorrow too?” (*Job 2:10*). Through perseverance in faith and trust in God’s time, te wā o te Atua, Job was able to turn his personal cry of despair into a wonderful testimony of consolation and hope for all.

Many parents know only too well the mix of desolation and consolation. Sometimes their children – young or adult – make decisions, or behave in ways, contrary to the Gospel. Yet, as mothers and fathers, far from turning away, they stay close, ever ready to offer a hand or word that redirects rather than scolds (*Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi, 38*). They pray for their daughter or son, entrusting them to our merciful God while continuing to walk alongside them in love.
3. The legal availability of euthanasia in New Zealand does not change Catholic convictions about the practice. We profess that we are made in the image and likeness of God and, furthermore, that we are drawn into God’s own divine life through Baptism. Our fundamental belief, that all human life is therefore sacred, leads us to teach that we should never take the life of another.

At the same time, our faith tells us there is no place or situation, no matter how uncomfortable, where our faith cannot be expressed, or God’s grace encountered. Perhaps too often we presume that God works only through our better parts or places. Yet, most of God’s plans are realised in and through our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses (*Patris Corde, 2; 2*
- Corinthians 12:9-11*), and often in places where, understandably, some might hesitate to go.
4. What precisely is it that our Catholic health professionals, chaplains, priests and lay pastoral workers can bring to those contemplating euthanasia who, with good intent, turn to them for consolation? What is it that we can bring to these situations as whānau – parents, daughters and sons, siblings – or as friends?

Like Job, we could be tempted to give up, or turn away, and thus let the desolation of wrongdoing or despair take over. But, as Job reasoned, that would be turning our backs on God. Faith, in the first instance, calls us to remain present with the suffering other. That indeed is what consolation or *con-solatio* means: bearing another’s suffering by sharing it and entering into the solitude of others to make them feel loved, accepted, accompanied, and sustained; simply being with the one who is dying; bearing witness to hope through our closeness (*Samaritanus bonus, 10; Spe Salvi, 38*).

Through this power of hope we can, person by person, transform the places of assisted dying into outposts of the Holy Spirit. Pope Benedict put it this way: “the dark door of time always remains open, when we are bearers of hope” (*Spe Salvi, 2*). Pope Francis puts it another way: “Time is always much greater than space” and so we need never be robbed of hope (*Lumen Fidei, 57*).
- Pastoral and spiritual accompaniment of those considering assisted dying becomes a hikoī of hope most especially because it leaves open the way to an encounter with God; as an expression of an enduring commitment to care. Our prayer and ministry with the dying need never know human barriers. Instead, through perseverance, we “stand with God” (*Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi, 9*) in the knowledge of God’s grace at work in all situations.
5. Brothers and Sisters, e te whānau whakapono, prior to preparing this statement we surveyed members of our Catholic community – priests and laity – who are working with and ministering to the dying, sick and vulnerable. The responses we received were overwhelmingly characterised by a desire to show compassion in the face of complexity, combined with a profound respect for the Church’s teaching on euthanasia. We do not need to deny the objective wrong of euthanasia in order to accompany, with consolation and hope, those who might feel drawn or pushed towards this type of death.

As we enter a new era of secular history in Aotearoa may we be reminded by the tenacious Saint Paul that even in the most troubling of circumstances and places we are called to remain present, remembering the mercies of God and humble in the knowledge of our own faults (*Romans 12:1-3*) in order to pray “hoping against hope” (*Romans 4:18*).



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Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish Music Coordinator/ Leader

Sacred Heart Metropolitan Cathedral Parish, Wellington, seeks applications for our new, part-time position of Music Coordinator/Leader. This is a part-time, 15 hours-a-week, fixed-term, 10-month contract.

The successful applicant will be responsible for coordinating the music requirements across all the parish's liturgies, including the establishment of a voluntary choir to regularly lead the congregation at the Sunday morning service. The position requires flexibility and includes weekend work. Applicants should have musical training to tertiary level or equivalent professional standard, and ideally be familiar with Catholic liturgy.

For enquires and a copy of the job description please contact Debbie Matheson. Please email written application, enclosing a curriculum vitae to: the Parish Leader, d.matheson@wn.catholic.org.nz

Applications close 30 November 2021.

The truth of the kingdom

The Church celebrates the Feast of Christ the King – also called Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe – on the last Sunday of the liturgical year. The Feast was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925 with his encyclical *Quas primas*, to respond to a world that was rejecting Christ and was being dominated by secularism and pessimism.

Originally, it was celebrated on the last Sunday in October, immediately preceding the Feast of All Saints. But in the revised liturgical calendar promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1969, it was moved to the last Sunday of Ordinary Time – immediately preceding Advent – where its theme of Christ’s ‘dominion over all aspects of our lives’ made it a fitting end to the liturgical year. This year, the Feast is on Sunday 21 November.

Fr James Lyons

Terrorist attacks have become a feature of the early years of the 21st century.

No country, not even our own, has been safe from the whim of crazed extremists. The whole world, it seems, is being targeted by the bitter, the misguided or the insane.

There is also a growing concern over climate change. It’s no longer a theory that thousands of homes and businesses near our coast lines are under threat from rising sea levels.

Then along comes Covid, a pandemic that has locked down countries, threatened health, livelihoods and national economies, and is in no hurry to leave.

Such a chaotic state of affairs creates a feeling of helplessness among whole populations. The reaction, *what’s the world coming to*, gets overridden by, *what’s the point of even trying – nothing I do will make a difference!*

Truth

When Jesus told Pilate he’d come to bear witness to the truth, he knew he’d sealed his fate.

Pilate’s response, *What is truth?* is the response of a person whose mind is wearied from alternatives and compromise and closed to the possibility of finding the key to a completely satisfying life.

Jesus could not reply with any hope of breaking through the hardened shell of cynicism and non-belief. He admitted before Pilate that he was a king. That must have sounded phony and stupid. His rough appearance, his ragged band of followers, his detractors labelling him a trouble-maker: Pilate couldn’t possibly take Jesus seriously.

The human side of Jesus made him think the same of himself – to the point where, on the cross, he almost despaired of God, crying out *My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?* [Matthew 27:46]

“Jesus says, ‘I am the way, the truth, the life.’”
– John 14:6

Faith

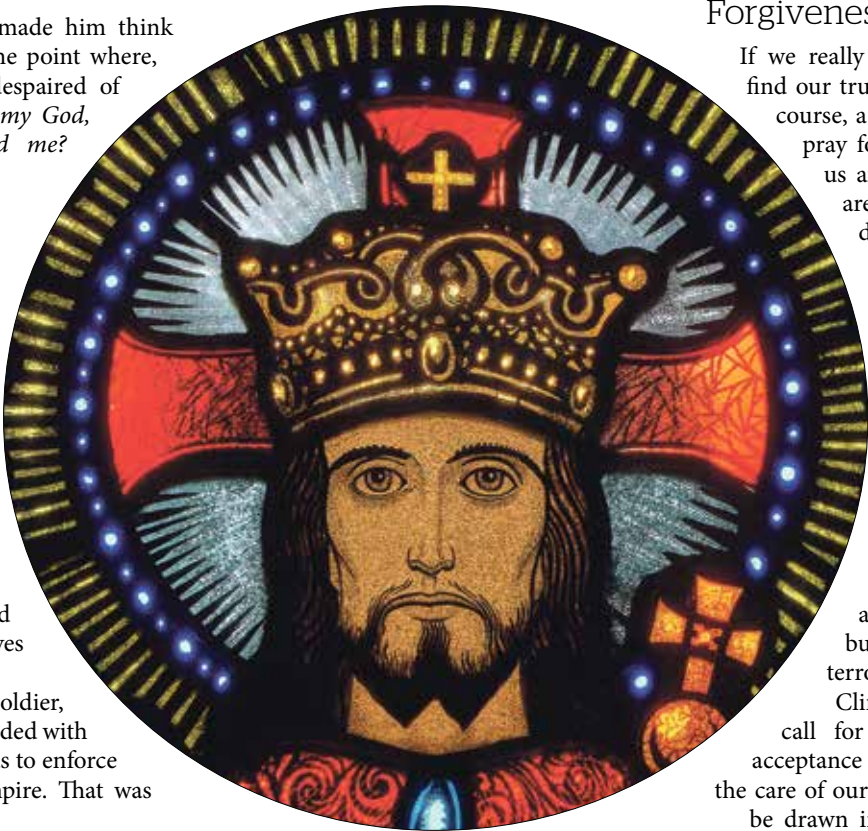
What sustained him was the conviction that his kingdom was not of this world, so he couldn’t expect to be understood or accepted by anyone who did not see with his eyes, the eyes of faith.

For Pilate, a professional soldier, a kingdom is built and defended with brute force. His mandate was to enforce the rule of the Roman Empire. That was his truth.

Jesus described the kingdom with a variety of images:

- a seed growing into a sheltering bush;
- a net cast into the sea gathering all kinds of life;
- a woman rejoicing over the discovery of a lost treasure;
- a father throwing a party for his returning wayward son.

There was always a gentleness, a welcoming theme and a sense of celebration in his understanding of ‘kingdom’. Healing



‘Christ the King’, stained-glass window, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Palmerston North. Photo: David Lupton

and forgiveness, service and sharing were the insignias by which his ‘army’ would be identified.

Those who are on the side of truth listen to my voice. The truth within each of us is that we want to live peaceful, contented and fulfilled lives. Jesus says, *I am the way, the truth, the life* [John 14:6].

Forgiveness and prayer

If we really listen to his voice we will find our truth with him. That means, of course, a readiness to be forgiving, to pray for those who curse or harm us and to stand with those who are hurt or suffering. This puts a different face on our response to recent world events.

While neither toleration nor encouraging those who show total disregard for human values, we must pray for both victims and those guilty of abuse. And, knowing that the Islamic extremists do not represent the Muslim faith, we must seek ways of bringing together all faiths and cultures as a spiritual buffer to prevent the virus of terrorism spreading further.

Climate change and pandemics call for a similar response – an acceptance of personal responsibility for the care of our common home, a refusal to be drawn into conspiracy theories that misdirect and hamper efforts to put things right, and a hope-filled attitude that allows an active faith to play its part.

The truth of Jesus, he assures us, will set us free. Helping to heal, forgiving, serving and sharing are the keys that unlock fear and usher in the reign of justice and peace, health and happiness.

Gospel Reading: Sunday 7 November 2021

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
MARK 12:38-44 [OR 12:41-44]

³⁸ In his teaching Jesus said to the crowds, ‘Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, ³⁹ front seats in the synagogues, and places of honour at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour the houses of widows and, for show, recite lengthy prayers. They will receive a very severe condemnation.’

⁴¹ He sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² A poor widow also came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a few cents. ⁴³ Calling his disciples, he said to them, ‘In truth I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the others who have contributed to the treasury. ⁴⁴ For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she in her poverty, has contributed all she had, all she had to live on.’

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Kate Bell

This end of year, there is always a tendency for red to be appearing on the petrol gauge of our energy levels. How are we going to make it to the end of the year, so much to do and we are running on empty?

This week two widows of ancient times – the epitome of all of those familiar with loss and grief, those on the edge in every sense, without advocates or hope of protection are placed before us. Their jars are almost empty.

‘Do not be afraid!’ is Elijah’s word of encouragement. Pour yourself out – don’t hold back – and in that moment it is the Lord who will keep faith! Every Sunday evening our parish witnesses this action of

complete trust and faith, as one of our parishioners digs into his jacket pocket and pulls a worn plastic bag of coins – the remainder of his sickness benefit for that week, he opens the bag and its entire contents gently tumbles onto the plate.

In the Gospel Jesus gives us warning! Beware look out for power and prestige, that insists on respect, that uses long robes and prayers as a façade.

I pray that we will have a sense of Jesus sitting, watching, and accompanying our communities as we enter and engage in our synodal process. May the gathered bishops in 2023 share Jesus’ ‘upside down’ vision. They will need Jesus’ acute listening, to hear the weight and carat that is placed before them, that could easily be dismissed as coppers.

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Cathedral Corner: Covid still calling the shots!



Fr James Lyons.



Remember, cathedrals do not belong to the parishes in which they are located but symbolise the whole Church in a particular diocese; the preservation and upkeep of our cathedral should be the concern of every Catholic in this diocese. It is our cathedral and, with the Bishop, our centre of worship.

The second postponement of the Cathedral Restoration Dinner made it 2-nil to Covid in the race to raise funds for Sacred Heart Cathedral!

Both August 19 and October 11 coincided with national lockdowns and 170 paying guests had to be advised that their evening would not happen. A third date has been set for Wednesday, February 9, 2022.

The combined dinner/auction could potentially raise \$40,000 to \$50,000 so is considered a major event on the funding calendar.

Covid-19 is contributing to several difficulties facing the Archdiocese and Cathedral Parish in their efforts to ensure the reopening of the cathedral, which has been closed since July 2018.

The lengthy lockdowns, school closures, job losses and general uncertainty as the pandemic spreads its tentacles, are making it inappropriate – or at best extremely awkward – to approach potential donors.

Also, some Trusts and Foundations have shifted their funding focus to supporting community groups particularly hard hit by Covid.

A total of \$3 million is still needed to fully complete our project. Nearly \$1 million of this needs to be raised in order the reopen the cathedral mid-2022 and this is our immediate goal.

No one should think their offering too small. The 'Give-a-Little' initiative has often shown how a substantial amount can grow from small individual gifts. The offer, in WelCom last month, of Real Estate agent, Anna Geremia-Young, to donate from her commission is an example of one person deciding to help.



Wellington's Hill Street, Thorndon, is closed off as construction crew work on the cathedral roof.

Photo: Annette Scullion/WelCom

You can donate to the Cathedral Restoration Fund by Internet Banking to – Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish A/c: 02 0506 0138488 025

Reference your surname and initials and 'Reopen'.

Lutherans and Catholics reach landmark Baptism agreement

Catholic and Lutheran churches in Aotearoa New Zealand have approved a statement recognising the unity of each other's baptisms. The statement – *Baptised Together in Christ* – will be especially helpful for families wanting to baptise their child where one parent is Lutheran and the other Catholic.

The baptism agreement is the first major work of the Roman Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue Commission. The commission has held regular meetings since being created by Lutheran Bishop Mark Whitfield and Catholic Cardinal John Dew in 2017. It was set up that year as part of New Zealand services marking the Reformation of European Christianity that began in 1517, when Martin Luther published his *Ninety-five Theses* in Wittenberg, Germany.

Bishop Whitfield says: 'Catholic and Lutheran baptismal rites have much in common, and this work is a welcome opportunity to learn from each other's practices.'

Cardinal Dew says: 'This statement honours our commitment to seek the unity that draws us together, to be transformed by our encounter with one another, and to promote further expressions of our unity across our churches.'

The statement says: 'The Catholic



and Lutheran churches can learn from one another and speak with a common voice on issues of concern in modern society, with the conviction that they share one baptism and one faith.'

Acknowledging there are differences in understanding and emphasis between the two churches, it adds, 'Catholics and Lutherans both assert that through baptism a person becomes a member of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. A parent couple that includes both a Catholic and a Lutheran partner are encouraged to bring their child

for baptism in the church of their choice. They may seek to have both of their pastors/priests participate in the baptismal service.'

The statement also says: 'Christians are encouraged to speak of being baptised into the Christian church, into the Christian faith, or into Christ. They may say they were baptised in the Catholic or Lutheran church but are discouraged from saying that they have been baptised Catholic or baptised Lutheran.'

Members of the dialogue commission are Pastor Jim Pietsch, Assistant Bishop LCNZ (chair); Fr Tom Rouse, St Columbans Mission Society (secretary); Fr James Lyons, Parish Priest Emeritus; Sr Kathleen Rushton, Sisters of Mercy; and Dr Petrus Simons, lay member LCNZ.

The statement is online at: www.catholic.org.nz/assets/Uploads/1-Final-Baptised-in-Christ-web.pdf

A Lutheran-Catholic ecumenical service to celebrate the statement is being held on **Sunday 28 November**, 5pm, St Paul's Lutheran Church, 12 King St, Mount Cook, followed by a Fellowship Tea. Please bring finger food to share. RSVP with numbers planning to attend to email: wellingtonnz.lutheran@gmail.com or ph: 021 022 99380.

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‘Open the Doors of My Heart’

“The poor will always be with us, yet that should not make us indifferent, but summon us instead to a mutual sharing of life.” – Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of the Poor 2021



Lisa Beech

The Fifth World Day of the Poor will be observed on 14 November 2021. This year’s theme ‘Open the Doors of My Heart’ is a summons to responsibility and commitment as men and women who are part of our one human family, as we can read in Pope Francis’ message, online at: tinyurl.com/World-Day-Of-Poor-2021

In place of an international gathering in France, the Archdiocese of Wellington had been asked to be one of 50 featured dioceses around the world holding local gatherings to facilitate encounter and dialogue with people on the peripheries.

In Wellington – in place of planned Archdiocesan World Day of the Poor 2021 working bees – an online gathering on **Sunday 14 November** will share experiences in the Archdiocesan Benefit Impacts. Wellington Catholic Social

Services and the Archdiocesan Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission had been planning working bees in two communities. However, these have been postponed. They will be held when it is safe to do so, regardless of the date.

In their place, this year the Archdiocese will host a webinar on the Fifth World Day of the Poor. This will focus on experiences and perspectives from recent Archdiocesan Benefit Impacts. There will be short presentations from organisers of the Benefit Impacts, and an opportunity to chat directly in breakout rooms with community advocates who took part.

At Benefit Impacts, beneficiaries are invited to check benefit entitlements with locally trained community advocates, who then accompany them to Work and Income offices. Archdiocesan Benefit Impacts have been held at Upper Hutt in 2016, Lower Hutt in 2016, Kāpiti in 2019, and in 2021 three Benefit Impacts were held at Levin, Ōtaki and with the Deaf community.

There is no cost to attend, but registration is required to help with planning.

When: Sunday 14 November, 2pm–3pm

Where: Online webinar

Registration:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7842860373>
or contact Lisa Beech l.beech@wn.catholic.org.nz to have the link sent to you.

All are welcome.

Baptised Together in Christ

St Paul’s Lutheran Church invites the leaders and members of the Catholic parishes in the Wellington region to an ecumenical service celebrating together the grace of our baptism and affirming the joint statement: Baptised Together in Christ.

Sunday 28 November, 5pm. St Paul’s Lutheran Church, 12 King St, Mount Cook. The service will be followed by a Fellowship Tea. Please bring food to share (finger food). RSVP: an indication of numbers planning to attend will be helpful. Ph: 021 022 99380, email: wellingtonnz.lutheran@gmail.com

ALL EVENTS LISTED SUBJECT TO COVID-19 ALERT LEVELS



Michelangelo – A Different View’, exhibition, 3 January–30 January 2022, Hunua Rooms, Aotea Centre, Auckland. Under license from the Vatican Museums, this exhibition offers the most complete and authentic reproduction of Michelangelo’s beautiful ceiling frescoes of the Sistine Chapel to be shown outside the Vatican. Early Bird tickets on sale now \$39 (plus service fees) until Christmas Day. Book via Ticketmaster. More at: www.aucklandlive.co.nz/show/michelangelo-a-different-view

DATES AND EVENTS – WHAT’S ON IN THE TWO DIOCESES

To list what’s on in your parishes and schools across our two dioceses in **December/January WelCom**, please email details to: welcom@wn.catholic.org.nz by **Monday 15 November**.

Friday 5 November

Taizé Prayer – reflective time with songs and scripture to bring stillness and silence, 7pm–8pm, The Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay. Ph (04) 383-7769.

Thursday 11 November

Quiet Day with Suzanne Aubert – a time for gentle reflection on insights from life and works of Venerable Suzanne Aubert, 10am–2pm, The Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay. Simple lunch provided or bring own. No fee but koha appreciated. Registration required at sr.sue@compassion.org.nz or ph (04) 383-7769.

Friday 12 November

Day of Reflection with Joy Cowley – hosted by CWL Archdiocesan Council, 10.30am–2pm, at Our Lady of Kāpiti Church, 20 Milne Dr, Paraparaumu. All welcome, but **you must be fully vaccinated** and have registered at archdio.sec@gmail.com by Monday 8 November. Numbers limited to 100 participants and masks to be worn. Please bring packed lunch and drink bottle. Koha on entry. Enquiries to Karen Saunders at archdio.sec@gmail.com or ph (04) 476-0044.

Saturday 13 November

World Day of The Poor – The Compassion Soup Kitchen is marking World Day of The Poor with a week of sponsored meals for guests they serve hot meals to twice a day, six days a week! If you would like to sponsor a meal, please contact the Compassion Soup Kitchen at email soup@compassion.org.nz or ph (04) 385-9299.

Sunday 14 November

World Day of the Poor – Archdiocese of Wellington is hosting an online webinar. All are welcome. Register at us02web.zoom.us/j/7842860373 or contact Lisa Beech l.beech@wn.catholic.org.nz to have the link sent to you. (See story this page).

Sunday 14-Saturday 11 December

Patris Corde, ‘With a Father’s Heart’ – a festival about St Joseph. The month-long events are free but a koha is appreciated. Visit www.marriageandfamily.org.nz for more information and to register, email info@marriageandfamily.org.nz or ph 0220289737.

Saturday 27 November

‘Waiting With Love’ – afternoon of prayer, reflection, discussion and hospitality hosted by Greenstone Doors, 2pm–4pm, Chanel Family Centre, cnr Fergusson Dr and Bernadette St, Upper Hutt. Share thoughts on to ‘wait with love’ in times of uncertainty, such as the beginning or end of life. No cost and all welcome. Contact Wendy Hill manager@greenstoneddoors.co.nz or Natalie Murphy nataliem@hotmail.co.nz for more information.

Sunday 28 November

- ‘Baptised Together in Christ’, ecumenical service, 5pm, St Paul’s Lutheran Church, Wellington. (See p 18 and this page.)
- Christmas Craft Day – family-friendly day of crafting to mark beginning of Advent! Children of all ages welcome to join us to create a wreath in preparation for the festive season. All materials and light refreshments provided. 12pm–3pm, Our Lady’s Home of Compassion, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay. Registration required on Eventfinda – search ‘Christmas Craft Day – Wreath Making for Children!’ Koha appreciated.

Sunday 6 February, 2022

St Patrick’s School, Kaponga – centennial. Join us to celebrate 100 years of St Patrick’s School. Day starts 8.45am with Mass at St Patrick’s Church, visit to the school with photos and memorabilia on display and light luncheon. Celebration dinner starts 5.30pm with a ‘mix and mingle’ and main meal 6.30pm. For more information contact Rose Kelbrick, principal, St Patrick’s School, ph (06) 7646-563, and check our website. To register interest to attend visit: www.stpatrickskaponga.co.nz or email centennial@stpatrickskaponga.school.nz

General events

Christian Meditation – an hour of Christian meditation. Mondays 7pm–8pm, and Thursdays 11am–12pm, The Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay. Ph (04) 383-7134 or (04) 383-7769.

Craft Gathering at the Home of Compassion

– bring your handheld craft project and lunch, or purchase refreshments from Cloister Café. Wednesdays 12pm, Suzanne Aubert Heritage Centre, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay. Email Events@compassion.org.nz or ph (04) 383-7134.

Miha – Māori Mass for all, Sundays 11am, The Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay. Ph. (04) 383-7769.

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The enduring Irish influence

Michael Fitzsimons talks with Ireland’s first resident Ambassador about the strong ties which still bind Ireland and New Zealand.

I am standing at the window with Irish Ambassador Peter Ryan on the 10th floor of a high-rise in the heart of Wellington. The Embassy of Ireland, Te Aka Aorere o Airangi, has a glorious view of the harbour, St Gerard’s monastery to the right, shining in the morning’s lone shaft of sunlight. On the other side of the building is St Mary of the Angels where Peter and his family – wife Teresa and three daughters – are parishioners.

He loves St Mary’s traditional gothic style and appreciates its history, reflecting that ‘St Mary’s has been a place of refuge for generations of Catholics since Bishop Liston first laid the foundation stone.’ Bishop Liston was famously tried for sedition because of a St Patrick’s Day address in which he questioned the Anglo-Irish treaty and described the Irish rebels of 1916 as having been ‘murdered’ by ‘foreign’ troops.

Irish connections in New Zealand are everywhere. ‘When I first arrived,’ he tells me, ‘I stayed in a place in O’Reilly Avenue right beside St Mary of the Angels.’ You don’t expect such immediate familiarity 18,000 miles from home.

I promise him our chat will only take 30 minutes but, the Irish being who they are, we are still going 90 minutes later. Peter and family came to New Zealand three years ago following stints in Japan, Singapore, Korea, Hong Kong and New York.

‘We’ve got around a bit,’ he says. ‘It needs to be a family effort to sustain that period of time overseas, you can’t do it on your own. Teresa and the kids have been really committed to it as well but we love it, it is an immense privilege.’

The figures tell the story. There are 20,000 Irish-born people in New Zealand but a far greater number of New Zealanders have Irish heritage, one in six of us in fact.

‘It’s really important to us to connect with the Irish community here in a way that reflects modern Ireland and helps them find their point of connection, whether that be people or history or culture or



Irish Ambassador to New Zealand, Peter Ryan, The Embassy of Ireland, Te Aka Aorere o Airangi.
Photo: Michael Fitzsimons.

sports. New Zealand Irish people have a different perspective than the Irish-born or the Australian Irish – the mission for this Embassy is to find new ways to celebrate the connection of New Zealand Irish with Ireland.’

The Irish community today

Recent research from the University of Otago’s Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies gives the first comprehensive view of the Irish in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand.

‘We have mapped our community in New Zealand for the first time and we know who they are, where they are, and what they are doing,’ says Peter. ‘We asked people to tell us their Irish story and over 3,000 people responded. That tells me that those connections are very deep in New Zealand. Many of the stories we received have been passed down from generation to generation. In some cases the New Zealand-born Irish might not have yet been to visit Ireland in person

but they still have a very deep connection to the place.’

Working in foreign affairs, Peter has direct experience of the vast Irish diaspora and its rich influence around the globe.

‘We talk about “Friends of Ireland”. We are extremely fortunate that we have the historical legacy of this extraordinary reach around the world. Being in New Zealand has been an eye-opener for me. I have been struck by how proud our community is of the contribution Irish people have made to New Zealand – in education, caring for others, health and welfare, social care. It’s really remarkable, an outstanding track record. I think it comes from our history, the empathy and deep faith that generations of Irish people have brought with them.’

Catholic upbringing

Peter comes from a devout Catholic family with Mum and Dad very involved in the life of the Church. ‘Of course we [kids] were irreverent about the whole

thing,’ he quips. He was educated by the Christian brothers at Synge Street College in Dublin, named after playwright John Millington Synge. George Bernard Shaw once lived in the same street. He finished his secondary schooling with the Jesuits at Belvedere College, the Irish writer James Joyce’s old school.

‘Both schools were founded at a time when people like me would not have had access to education without the brothers and the priests.’

Growing up, Peter had a Christian brother and Jesuit in the extended family, which has a strong missionary and teaching tradition. ‘Education has been one of the routes for Irish people to begin to achieve at least some of our potential in a very oppressive environment that didn’t offer a lot of opportunities.

‘One of the interesting facets of the Irish church was its global outlook, because of the diaspora and the missionary tradition. It brought a very different dimension. We had an empathy with countries where our missionaries were, we needed to stand with people to help them on their journey the way people had stood with us. That global outlook probably gave me an interest in foreign affairs.’

‘The influence of the Jesuits shaped my life. If you were lucky enough to get some benefits in life, you didn’t sail off into the sunset with those benefits. You stayed in your community and shared those benefits as best you could. That was a strong motivation for me to join the public service.’

Optimism for the future

Peter is impressed with the New Zealand church and its leadership, and optimistic for its future. It has a rich diversity which the Irish church has not traditionally had and he admires the army of volunteers who turn up to places like the Home of Compassion’s Soup Kitchen and are ready to take the lead in many areas of church life. That is the future of the Church, he says.

There are some fundamental attitudes that come with being Irish, says Peter. Irish pioneers brought a love of education, ‘maybe they didn’t always welcome authority’, and they had compassion for the underdog. He has seen for himself the tremendous legacy which Irish educators have left around the world.

‘The Catholic schools in Hong Kong, for example – I could fill Sky Stadium with the past pupils from the schools founded and managed by the Irish missionaries there, and they did it without seeking any recognition. There are no plinths or flags or buildings named after them. They inspired so many people by their service. Now there are only four Irish-born missionaries left there.’

“When I look at the Church and the people they are working with, you have to give gratitude for it because who else is going to go marching in like that?”

‘They walked the talk and they just got on with it. You don’t go and tell everybody what you’ve done, but other people benefit from your work. That’s very Irish and very New Zealand too I think.’

‘So somebody walks in and they’ve got a hundred caps for the All Blacks and they’re sitting there in the corner and in Ireland somebody walks in and he’s won an all-Ireland medal for County Meath and he sits there quietly, and there’s no big sign over his head, nothing like that. That’s where your mana comes from and that’s how people live their lives, committed to their family and community.

‘When I look at the Church and the people they are working with, you have to give gratitude for it because who else is going to go marching in like that to work with people on the margins of our society, the most needy? I’ve seen it in Ireland and I’ve seen it all over this country when I meet New Zealanders of Irish heritage and hear of the issues that concern them.’

Parting shot

“The promise was that when the glass was full, it would overflow, benefiting the poor.

What happens instead is that when the glass is full, it magically gets bigger, but nothing ever comes out for the poor.”

– Pope Francis

Pope Francis is pictured during his general audience in the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican, October 13, 2021. Photo: Paul Haring/CNS

