

NATIONAL SYNOD SYNTHESIS



WHAT THE NEW ZEALAND CHURCH SAYS

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WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



SEASON OF CREATION

PAGES 14 AND 15

THE CHURCH THAT JOSEPH BUILT



BOOK LAUNCH

PAGE 13

NauMai

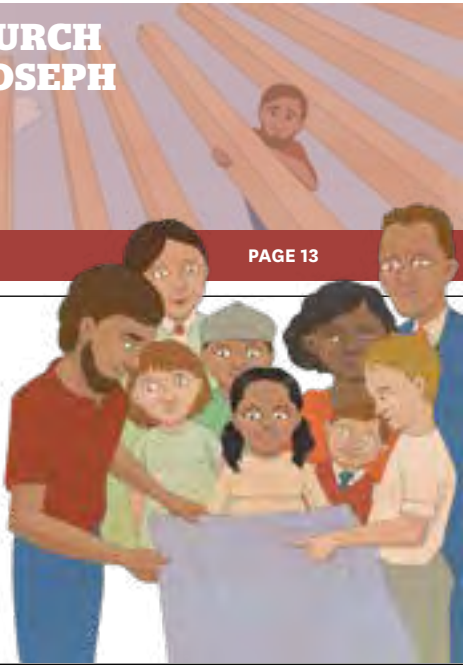
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MAHURU 2022
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WelCom

A newspaper for the Wellington and Palmerston North Catholic Dioceses

www.welcom.org.nz



WELCOM CELEBRATES MĀORI LANGUAGE WEEK – TE WIKI O TE REO MĀORI, 12–18 MAHURU 2022 | 12–18 SEPTEMBER 2022 – KIA KAHA TE REO MĀORI



Ndakafara – I Rejoiced...

Muzita raBaba
In the name of the Father
Nero Mwanakomana
And of the Son
NaMweya Musande
And of the Holy Spirit
Amen.

“Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.” – Psalm 122:2

Members of the Catholic Zimbabwean Community, Wellington, sang the opening prayer in Shona language to the beat of drums, at a gathering for various cultural groups at Ss Peter and Paul Church in Lower Hutt last month. The many groups came to hear the results of a small survey in which they had participated.

Photo: Annette Scullion/WelCom

» Cultural gathering at Ss Peter and Paul Church, Lower Hutt, p 8.

St Mary of the Angels dedicated as National Shrine to Mary

A large gathering of the Catholic community came together for the Mass of Dedication of St Mary of the Angel’s Church as the National Shrine to Mary, Mother of God, Assumed into Heaven.

The century-old landmark St Mary of the Angels was full almost to overflowing with the colourful diversity of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand for the special Mass on Sunday 14 August, the Feast of the Assumption.

It was the finale of a year of celebration that began at the church the same Sunday a year ago with a rededication of the country to Mary, followed by a hikoī of the specially commissioned artwork, Ko Hāta Maria, te Matua Wahine o te Atua – Holy Mary, Mother of God around the country’s six dioceses.

The artwork icon – by Rangiora artist Damien Walker of the Studio of St Philomena – will be on permanent view at St Mary’s as part of the national shrine.

‘This was an important event and

everything happened so smoothly thanks to the enormous efforts put in by so many, many people,’ said Cardinal John Dew, President of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference.

In his homily, Cardinal John noted sacred sites were found in many places around the world, such as cathedrals, temples, war memorials, Ground Zero in New York, and in Wellington the tomb of the Venerable Suzanne Aubert and a memorial to the Wahine disaster.

‘Sacred sites all over the world are visited by thousands...they may be natural sites or designed and built by human beings. These places often hold deep meaningful messages, are awe-inspiring, they prompt us to reflect on life, on where we are with God, stir up feelings of awe and reverence and draw us close to God.

‘St Mary of the Angels is already a sacred place and has been for 100 years. Now this icon of Mary Mother of God Assumed into

Heaven is here permanently...we hope and pray that in time this becomes one of those sacred sites.’

The country’s first Catholic Bishop, Jean-Baptiste Pompallier, dedicated the country to Mary Assumed into Heaven when he celebrated the first Mass at Totara Point in the Hokianga in January 1838. Last year’s re-dedication was inspired by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The centenary of the current St Mary of the Angels Church was also celebrated on the same weekend. Archbishop Paul Martin sm was lead celebrant at a special centenary Mass. Other highlights of the weekend were a Mass of Healing, a concert honouring the rich musical tradition at St Mary’s, and a talk by Jessie Munro on Suzanne Aubert’s connections with the Church.

» Mass of Dedication of St Mary of the Angel’s Church as the National Shrine to Mary, Mother of God, Assumed into Heaven, pp 10 and 11.

Photo: Supplied



From the editor

Annette Scullion

More than a year ago, Pope Francis launched the Synod on Synodality to hear what ordinary Catholics think should be the future direction of the Church. This extensive consultation was a worldwide event and attempts have been made to include Catholics who have left the Church as well as ecumenical and interfaith communities.

The Synod consultation was carried out throughout New Zealand at parish and diocesan level – during the ‘diocesan level’ of the Synod process. In August a national hui was held at St Catherine’s College in Wellington to bring together the key threads from the six diocesan Synod syntheses. The resulting National

Synod synthesis has now been completed and sent to Rome.

The National Synod synthesis provides a fascinating snapshot of issues facing the New Zealand Catholic Church. Six key themes emerge – Inclusion, Gathering, Leadership, Education and Formation, Mission and Synodality and Change. The role of women, biculturalism and abuse in the Church cut across those six themes.

Syntheses from around the world will be used as the basis for the first edition of the *Instrumentum Laboris* which will be further refined during a ‘continental process’. A final version will be used at the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be held in Rome next year. See page 20 for story on New Zealand’s Report to the Synod.

Te Wiki o te Reo Māori

Te Wiki o te Reo Māori has been celebrated in Aotearoa since 1975. In 2022 Māori Language Week takes place 12 to 18 Mahuru, September. This week is an opportunity for the concentrated celebration and promotion of te reo Māori, helping to secure its future as a living, dynamic, and rich language. The 50th anniversary of the presentation of the Māori language petition and Māori Language Day will be commemorated as a major anniversary this year. This year also marks 35 years since the Māori Language Act saw te reo become an official language and the Māori Language Commission, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, was established.

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Editor: Annette Scullion. Ph: (04) 496 1712. welcom@wn.catholic.org.nz
Advertising: Ph: 0274 898 017. welcomads@xtra.co.nz
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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.

Email to: welcom@wn.catholic.org.nz

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‘Draw every kind of grace for them’

On August 12 Cardinal John Dew welcomed Archbishop Paul Martin sm at a Liturgical Reception at St Teresa’s Pro-Cathedral, Karori. Those gathered prayed the Evening Prayer of the Church. Here is his address (slightly abridged).

+ John A Cardinal Dew

Archbishop of Wellington Archdiocese

Apostolic Administrator of Palmerston North Diocese

In 2008 I was privileged to welcome and instal Archbishop Paul as the Rector of St Patrick’s College, Kilbirnie. In 2018 I ordained him as the 10th Bishop of Christchurch.

Tonight, I am delighted on behalf of the Archdiocese to welcome Archbishop Paul as the Coadjutor Archbishop of Wellington, who will eventually succeed me and become the 8th Archbishop of Wellington. I have joked with Paul over the last few years because when he was ordained Bishop of Christchurch, he publicly said that he was ‘no longer a wandering religious’ and went on to say that he was ‘settling into Christchurch and was there to stay.’

Well now he is in Wellington, and I presume he is here to stay. Paul was told on the 4th Sunday of Advent 2020 of his appointment as Archbishop of Wellington – he was on his way home from Mass when Archbishop Novatus contacted him and told him of this appointment. The Gospel that day was the story

of the Annunciation, the story of Mary’s surprise at the appearance of the Archangel Gabriel who announced to her that she was ‘to conceive and bear a Son who was to be named Jesus.’ After asking the angel how this could possibly happen, Mary’s response was ‘I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me.’

With those words of Mary ringing in his ears, Paul heard the message of the Apostolic Nuncio and made the same response, ‘let what you have said be done to me.’ He has spoken of this often. Paul, thank you for responding with the same generosity as Mary, whom as a priest of the Society of Mary you have imitated. Now, you are no longer a wandering religious, you are in Wellington. You are home and you are most welcome.

We have just sung Mary’s song of praise. We sang in prayer the words ‘My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, My Spirt sings to God my saving God.’ We may not always feel like singing, our spirit may not always be ready to sing to God our saving God, but we do so tonight in a spirit of deep gratitude.

In the homily for the Ordination of a Bishop in the Roman Pontifical we

hear the words: *‘Pray and offer sacrifice for the people committed to your care and so draw every kind of grace for them from the overflowing holiness of Christ.’* They are beautiful words.

There are many things a bishop is asked to do...we are also reminded that the title of Bishop is not one of honour but of function and that we should strive to serve rather than rule. One of the ways that we serve the people of God and know we are privileged to do, is to draw every kind of grace for them from the overflowing holiness of Christ. We are privileged to see people touched by grace, by the Spirit of God, by the example of gentleness and compassion of Mary the Mother of God.

As we welcome you Paul, we also assure you our prayerful support and we ask that Mary’s prayer will always accompany you. We also pray that together as the people of God in this Church of Wellington we will know the graces that flow from Christ to us and will all sing together ‘My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, My Spirit sings to God my saving God.’

» ‘God’s ways are not our ways’, Archbishop Paul Martin, p 4



Archbishop Paul Martin, Cardinal John Dew and Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa, Apostolic Nuncio, prayed the Evening Prayer of the Church at a Liturgical Reception at St Teresa’s Pro-Cathedral, Karori. Photo: WelCom

Taranaki Whānui Whānau

Wellington South Parish are currently progressing through the sale of St Bernard’s church in Brooklyn to Taranaki Whānui Whānau, with the sale due to settle in September. A hui was recently held with Taranaki Whānui Whānau, to meet one another, whānaungatanga, discuss ancestry and history and how the relationship between church and iwi might develop into the future.

At the time of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the iwi living in the Wellington Harbour area originated from the Taranaki region of the North Island. The collective name given to these iwi is Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika (Taranaki Whānui). Their occupation at the time and continued residence gives them the rights and duties of mana whenua – traditional guardians of the Wellington Harbour and associated lands.

Chrism Mass

The archdiocesan Chrism Mass for 2022 will be at 7pm on Wednesday 14 September, at St Teresa’s Pro-Cathedral. Parish representatives will receive the Holy Oils and take them back to their parishes.

Consistory of cardinals



Cardinal John Dew is in Rome until 8 September, attending a Consistory, in which 21 new cardinals are being created, and a two-day meeting that Pope Francis has requested with all the cardinals. Following the Consistory, the cardinals will meet to discuss the new Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia, ‘*Praedicate Evangelium*’, promulgated on 19 March.

Priestly ordination

Alfred Tong will be ordained to the priesthood at the Church of St Joseph’s, Upper Hutt at 11am on Saturday 24 September. Please keep Deacon Alfred in your prayers as he prepares for priestly ordination.

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St Joseph’s Home of Compassion elder care facility to close

After nearly 100 years of operation in the Upper Hutt area, St Joseph’s Home of Compassion elder care facility has announced its closure, to be effective in four months [from 17 August 2022].

Across New Zealand, aged-care providers have been seriously impacted by the global nursing shortage, with the New Zealand Nurses Organisation recently stating the health sector in New Zealand was more than 4000 nurses short.

St Joseph’s currently has 87 beds, 16 of which are dementia care, with the rest a mix of elderly and hospital level care. To operate, the centre requires 15 registered nurses to ensure, and provide, appropriate safe care to residents.

From before the Covid-19 outbreak, it has been increasingly challenging to recruit and retain nurses and caregivers at the centre, and the last six months have been especially difficult, says Dr Chris Gallavin, Tumu Whakarae – Co-Executive Director, of the Sisters of Compassion group.

‘Unfortunately, we can no longer staff our home to the levels necessary to provide the quality and safety of care that we all expect, and that they deserve’, Dr Gallavin said.

‘We know we have been facing a nationwide problem for some time, so over the last three years, we have been working as innovatively and creatively as possible to address the decline in staffing resources, not only of registered nurses, but also of caregivers and support staff,’ he added.

‘We have advertised nationally and internationally, working with agencies, exploring options for staff, including delaying retirement, and even trying to convince others to come out of retirement. But now we find ourselves unable to staff



St Joseph’s Home of Compassion elder-care facility is to close at the end of this year.

Photo: Supplied

the centre adequately’, Dr Gallavin said.

‘We are so sorry that it has come to this,’ said Dr Gallavin. ‘This is not a problem we are able to fix by spending more but it is a reflection on where our health system is at.

‘It is a very sad day for our residents, their whānau and families, our staff and everyone in our community who have been involved in our operations over many decades’, said Dr Gallavin.

‘I appreciate this will come as a great shock and it is a blow to the community – again, I am very sorry for that,’ he said.

Throughout this time, St Joseph’s has been constantly assisted by Te Whatu Ora, previously known as the DHB, who have helped by providing relief staff when possible. However, even with the ongoing help of Te Whatu Ora, getting the necessary staff to continue operating has not been possible.

The Home will not close overnight but has committed to remain open for four months to help with the transition of residents and staff.

Families will be assisted in re-housing their loved ones through the local Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) organisation. ‘Residents and families will not be left alone; we are here to work with them and Te Whatu Ora in their ongoing care and accommodation’, said Dr Gallavin.

This difficult and painful decision means closure to a story that began on 19 February 1933, when a home was first built in Upper Hutt, to replace a care home run by the Sisters of Compassion in Buckle St, Wellington, which had been caring for the elderly and disabled since 1901.

Since that time, St Joseph’s Home of Compassion in Upper Hutt has been dedicated to providing care for the elderly in need. Highly regarded for its level of care and for accepting many people for whom no other options existed, the centre opened a state-of-the-art 16-bed dementia wing in 2009. The reconstructed elderly care wing, the ‘Aubert wing,’ opened in 2015.

Response to flood and slip damage

Hundreds of people at the top of the South Island remain severely impacted by last month’s devastating floods, torrential rains and slips across Marlborough, Nelson, Tasman and Buller regions. Fr Michael McCabe, parish priest, Our Lady of the Sea Parish, Marlborough, said there has been major damage to roading, and dramatic slips in isolated areas are preventing accessibility for many. ‘The St Vincent de Paul down here is very grounded and are taking practical steps to support people.’

The SVdP Area Council President for Nelson, Jos Pattison, said the Society is in the process of donating \$20,000 to the Nelson/Tasman Flood and Slip Relief Fund. You can donate to The SVDP Nelson Area Council online bank account at: **030-703-039-4763-00**

You can also donate through Caritas Aotearoa for the Nelson/Tasman/Buller/Marlborough relief funds, online at: www.caritas.org.nz

Support Life Sunday

The theme for this year’s Support Life Sunday on 9 October, is ‘You are not alone: Accompanying and caring for people living with mental illness’. The National Liturgy Office is providing resources for prayer and liturgy, and the Nathaniel Centre is producing resources including a social media campaign for the week leading into Support Life Sunday and through the following week.

The campaign will present some basic facts about mental illness in Aotearoa and will give a ‘voice’ to various people who have first-hand experience of mental illness. ‘Mental ill-health is quickly becoming the greatest cause of disability and our aim is to get Catholics reflecting on and talking about this important issue – which will affect most of us at some point in our lives – and hopefully to lessen the stigma and discrimination which still surrounds mental illness,’ says John Kleinsman, Nathaniel Centre Director.

The campaign will overlap with Mental Health Awareness Week which, this year, focuses on the importance of people reconnecting with the people and places that lift them up. ‘Our parishes and faith communities should be places that lift people up and we want to encourage people to reflect on the extent to which that is the case as well as ways of becoming more uplifting,’ says Dr Kleinsman.

REMAIN IN ME

6 Day silent Ignataian guided retreat

September 11 (6pm) – September 17 (12.30pm)

Burns Lodge, Holy Cross, Mosgiel.

Companions: Fr Mark Chamberlain, Katie O’Connor, Joy Cowley.

Cost: \$790

Register: info@ignatianspirituality.nz

Pope Francis’ Prayer Intention

During the month of September 2022 Pope Francis’ intention is: *for the abolition of the death penalty.*

We pray that the death penalty, which attacks the dignity of the human person, may be legally abolished in every country.

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St Patrick’s College Wellington

New Zealand’s oldest Catholic boys’ college

Congratulations to Year 13 students: Ruben Manz who represented the College at the New Zealand Physics and Mathematics Competition finals in July and was placed 4th overall. Ruben was the highest placed Wellington competitor, and to Ben Brown who represented the College at the 10th annual Youth Parliament during the holidays and gave a speech about the Minimum Wage.

Sectare Fidem – Hold firm to the Faith



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‘God’s ways are not our ways’

At his Liturgical reception, held at St Teresa’s Church in Karori on August 12, Archbishop Paul Martin sm reflected on the unpredictable path of his priestly vocation. Archbishop Paul is Coadjutor Archbishop of Wellington and will be installed as Archbishop of Wellington when, in due course, Cardinal John Dew retires.

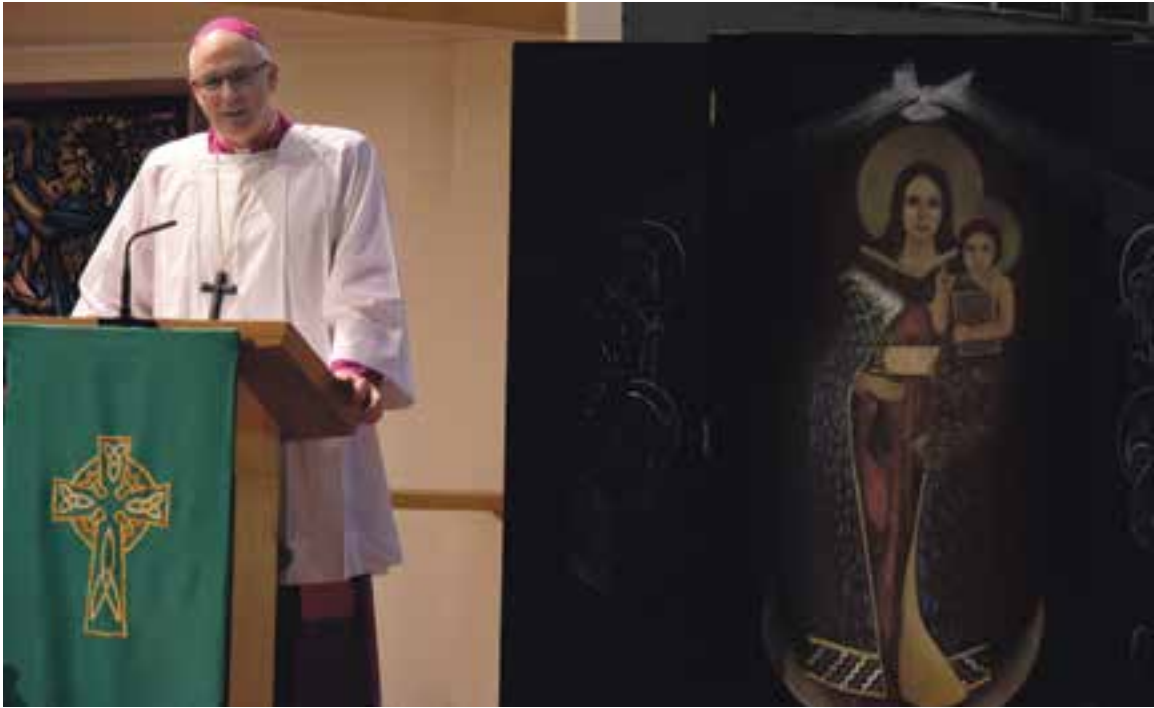
Kia ora e te whānau. Tena koutou katoa.

I want to begin by thanking you for being here this evening – I appreciate you taking the time to come to pray together and to acknowledge this appointment of Pope Francis of me as the co-adjutor archbishop of Wellington.

One of the things that I have come to realise in the latter years of my life is that God does indeed work in ways that are not our ways. We hear that said in the scriptures and it can roll off our tongues very easily, but the lived effects of it can be somewhat more challenging.

That has certainly been the case in my life in the last ten years. For 20 years I worked in schools as a Marist priest and found great satisfaction and sense of mission about that. Then I was elected to the provincial council of the Society of Mary and was asked to work full time in this ministry – it was a big wrench to leave the education apostolate. Two years after doing that I was asked to go to Rome to be the bursar general, and six weeks later I found myself living in Rome and preparing for a possibly long stretch living out of New Zealand. Two years later I received a call from the Nuncio telling me that the Holy Father had appointed me Bishop of Christchurch. That was not something I had ever envisaged, and I had to pack up and return to New Zealand and to live in Christchurch, and get my head around being a bishop and being in that diocese for the next 25 years. And then three years later I get another phone call... and here I am 18 months later having this formal reception as coadjutor archbishop.

I have learnt finally not to make



Archbishop Paul Martin speaking to the congregation at his Liturgical Reception at St Teresa’s Church in Karori, which was held in the presence of the icon of Mary Mother of God assumed into heaven.

any more predictions about what might be and that perhaps the best way is just to take each day as a gift from God to be lived with him. Yet when I look back on my life, my

“It is not something I ever desired, or thought would happen, but I do trust that God’s wisdom is greater than our wisdom, and that this is his work which I am being invited to cooperate with.”

family upbringing, my education, my calling to be a Marist, the people I have worked with, met, ministered to and with, the places I have been, I realise that I was being prepared for what God has revealed as his plan for me to be a bishop and now to be the coadjutor archbishop of this diocese, Wellington.

It is not something I ever desired, or thought would happen, but I do trust that God’s wisdom is greater than our wisdom, and that this is his work which I am being

invited to co-operate with. It is very humbling to be called to this role in the Church, and I am very aware of my own shortcomings and inadequacies. But seeing you here in prayerful support reminds me that this is not a CEO job, or a promotion or a step on the career ladder. This is a calling of leadership

in faith for and with God’s people, and that the grace and strength that I will need to do this comes from God and from the support and prayer from his people. For this I am deeply grateful.

Last Sunday’s Gospel finished with the scripture quote that makes me most nervous: ‘When a person has a great deal given them, a great deal will be demanded of them; when a person has a great deal given them on trust, even more will be expected of them.’ I know I have been given a great deal, and I am deeply grateful. I am more concerned that I will, in turn, not be found wanting in what is expected of me and then delivered by me. This is why your prayers are so important, and what I have truly

come to value so deeply as a bishop, the faith and prayer of the members of the Church for their bishops. I do want to do justice to all I have received and to what is being asked of me.

In many ways coming back to Wellington is a return to a ‘home’ place, for I have lived in this city the most in my priestly life. It is wonderful to meet many people again that I have known from the past. I look forward to reconnecting with them and to meeting all the Catholic community of the archdiocese as we continue the mission of bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to our world. I know we are living in challenging times, but I also believe we are all people of our time, that God created each of us to be living in this time and in these places. I am deeply grateful for those who have gone before, bishops, priests, religious and the people of God of this diocese who have worked so well to make the archdiocese what it is. I particularly acknowledge Cardinal John who I have the privilege of working with at the present time as coadjutor. I look forward to the journey we will continue to have, helping one another to grow more in love with Christ, strengthening our faith communities and deepening our sense of mission, sharing the Good News. We are all playing our part now in God’s plan for this country of Aotearoa New Zealand, and for our archdiocese of Wellington.

May you be blessed for your faith and trust in God, and your presence and participation in the life of his Church. Please continue to pray for me as I live out this calling as your coadjutor archbishop.

No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.



Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa, Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See in New Zealand, read to the congregation the Papal letter of appointment with the Holy Father’s greetings and apostolic blessing ‘to Venerable Paul Martin, sm, called to be Coadjutor Archbishop of Wellington. The appointment was made on January 1, the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God. The Pope’s words included: ‘We wish you to inform the clergy and the people of this Ecclesial Community of Our Decree, and We exhort all to receive you with a devoted sense of affection... Venerable Brother, may God the Father be kind and see to it that this flock, strengthened by your example of love, may blaze with mercy in service of the Church of Christ, and pursue zealously whatever makes for peace and justice.’

Photos: Annette Scullion/WelCom



Wellington Sexual Abuse HELP

We support individuals, whānau and communities affected by sexual violence. Our free 24/7 crisis support line, social work and counselling services are available to everyone – regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or sexuality.

For immediate support call **(04) 801-6655** (press 0 at the menu).


To find out more about our services visit www.wellingtonhelp.org.nz or email support@wellingtonhelp.org.nz

Male Survivors Wellington The Road Forward Tāne Whai Ora

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We provide peer support to male survivors of sexual abuse through individual and group peer support, therapist-led workshops, referral to counsellors and other agencies as needed.

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Tel: 021 118 1043
www.theroadforward.org.nz**



The **S**urvivors **N**etwork of those **A**bused by **P**riests (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

Caritas CEO Mena Antonio visits the Holy Land

Caritas Chief Executive Officer Mena Antonio returned to Aotearoa New Zealand last month from a visit to the Holy Land and Rome. It was one of the first overseas visits Caritas has been able to undertake since our borders reopened. Mena shares highlights from her visit below.



Mena Antonio visited Caritas Jerusalem as well as Laura Vicuna School and Bethlehem University.



The Israeli West Bank wall, a separation barrier built by Israel, cuts deep into Palestinian land, and preventing access to Jerusalem.



Mena (far right) with Caritas Jerusalem staff at their offices in the Old City Jerusalem.

Photos: Supplied

The main purpose of my visit was to build relationships with our partners in the Holy Land. We also visited projects Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand support there. I visited Caritas Jerusalem, and Bethlehem University. Both these partners are very appreciative of the support they receive from Caritas and from our New Zealand-based supporters as we work for peace and justice. I also visited two of the projects we support. Laura Vicuna School in the Crimesan Valley in West Bank near Bethlehem; and Bethlehem University – our scholarship project which some of our regular givers support.

One of the things that

struck me was the region’s rich culture and history. The tremendous diversity of religious views, the open expression of faith, the sounds and the different places of worship. It was also wonderful to be able to get a glimpse of the birthplace of our Catholic faith.

I had time with a woman working at Bethlehem University. She lamented that her son, who is six years old, asks every morning to go and visit the sea. But she can’t give him that simple activity. It’s something we in New Zealand take for granted. It was very clear to me the Palestinian people I spoke with were very young, filled with ambitions, dreams, and aspirations

but their freedom of movement is very confined to within the walls.

Caritas Aotearoa is actively involved, through supporting Laura Vicuna School [run in part by Salesian sisters] by way of our youth programmes. Caritas, with the help of New Zealand Catholic schools, has raised funds to repair the toilet block at the school, which will help provide greater access to education for more students. Laura Vicuna School sits in what’s called Area C. That’s the area of the territory under Israeli rule. The boundary line of Area C goes right down the middle of the school. This would mean that you would have a Palestinian Christian School of

which half would sit on the Israeli side and the other half in Palestine. They sit in a space where the future is filled with great uncertainty.

To help make improvements, we are supporting schools, because we can’t change things on a national level. We want to be in spaces where we can influence and make changes for the better.

We also had an opportunity to visit Rome and to meet with Caritas Internationalis (CI) and the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, which influences a lot of the work we do for things like World Day of the Poor and Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants.

Caritas Internationalis is a

confederation of 162 Catholic relief, development and social service organisations operating in over 200 countries and territories worldwide. Collectively and individually, their missions are to work to build a better world, especially for the poor and oppressed.

CI was very well informed about our work and specifically mentioned the State of the Environment for Oceania report that Caritas has been producing for several years. It was encouraging to see our work being taken seriously on the other side of the world as we work together for the care of our common home.

To Tātou Whakaponu Our Faith – New Religious Education Curriculum

Annette Scullion

A new national curriculum for ‘Religious Education in Catholic Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand’ is being introduced to principals and teachers of religious education in Catholic primary schools and colleges. Titled ‘*To Tātou Whakaponu – Our Faith*’, the new curriculum has been approved by the New Zealand Catholic bishops.

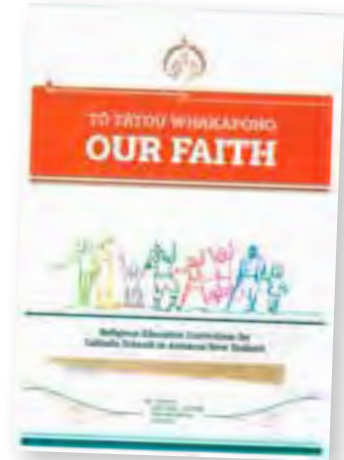
In preparation for the curriculum’s commencement throughout Aotearoa New Zealand in 2023/24, Colin MacLeod, Director Te Kupenga National Centre for Religious Studies, and his development team have been running a series of workshops.

There have also been opportunities for the wider Catholic community, including priests, lay pastoral leaders and board members of schools and colleges, to hear from the developers of this curriculum.

The workshops have introduced a comprehensive document that explains the new curriculum and how it presents learning about the Catholic faith. It sets out Catholic understanding as Te Rama Whakaponu, the Light of Faith, and Te Rama Aroha, the Light of Love.

‘The light of faith and the light of love are two critical areas of the themes,’ says Colin, ‘as is living, breathing religious education in our schools and growing in faith’.

‘The curriculum presents a coherent and seamless religious education from years 1 to year 13,’



Colin says. ‘There is a greater emphasis on connecting to the lives of children, their spiritual journey, a personal call to holiness – and wholeness – and their role in the mission of the Church. It reveals each child made in the image of God, an encounter with Christ, learning the place of Scripture, connecting through Church history and the supportive role of teachers.’

Themes and content areas include discipleship and mission, sacramental living, Catholic social teaching, morality and ethics, faith and culture and Christian hope.

In August, Colin and his team facilitated workshops at Bishop Viard College in Porirua and St Joseph’s in Nelson for principals, directors of religious studies and religious education staff from the Catholic primary and secondary schools across the Archdiocese of Wellington.

‘The current primary RE curriculum is 20 years old,’ says Kelly Ross Vicar for Education, Archdiocese of Wellington. ‘While some aspects of it are dated, the content is relevant even though the nature of teaching and the makeup of New Zealand classrooms have changed significantly in the past two decades. However, in response to the needs of teachers, young people and parents in today’s context, a new curriculum was needed,’ she said.

‘The new curriculum aims to provide a framework for the purpose, content and journey of religious education in our Catholic schools. It guides rich learning about God, good news, our story and being Church and connects this to the lived experience of grace, holiness, wisdom, justice and prayer, all in a context of each of us being on a hikoī wairua spiritual journey. It is an essential document for Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic schools, and weaves together from the heart of the Catholic faith so this knowledge may connect with the lives of the young people in our care.

‘Feedback from principals and directors of religious studies at the workshops was of excitement and they were impressed with the resources being created by NCRS to support ākonga learning. They are looking forward to immersing themselves in professional development to gain a good understanding of the new curriculum with their RE advisers over the next year,’ Kelly said.

Video clips about *Tō Tātou Whakaponu – Our Faith*, describing the journey, themes and content, as well as resources are on the NCRS website at: tekupenga.ac.nz/ncrs/

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Pope calls for ‘covenant’ with the environment



A man walks on the dry riverbed of the Sangone River, a tributary of the Po River, in Turin, Italy. Italy is experiencing its worst drought in 70 years.

Photo: Massimo Pinca, CNS/Reuters

Pope Francis has called for ‘a covenant between human beings and the environment’ to combat climate change. Humanity can no longer ignore the cries of the earth that is suffering due to greed and the excessive consumption of its resources, the Pope said.

In his message for the upcoming World Day of Prayer for Creation and month-long Season of Creation, the Pope said the current climate crisis is a call for all people, especially Christians, to ‘repent and modify our lifestyles and destructive systems’ in a collective effort to rein in climate change and save ecosystems and people on a planet he said is reaching ‘a breaking point’.

‘The present state of decay of our common home merits the same attention as other global challenges such as grave health crises and wars. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience,’ he wrote in his message.

The theme of the World Day of

Prayer for Creation, which will be celebrated September 1, is ‘Listen to the voice of creation.’

The Pope said the earth has fallen ‘prey to our consumerist excesses’ and to a ‘tyrannical anthropocentrism’, an attitude in which people think they are the centre of the universe. Such an attitude is at odds ‘with Christ’s centrality in the work of creation.’

Exaggerated self-centeredness, he said, has led to the loss of biodiversity and has greatly impacted the lives of the poor and vulnerable Indigenous populations.

‘As a result of predatory economic interests, their ancestral lands are being invaded and devastated on all sides, provoking a cry that rises up to heaven,’ he said.

Furthermore, the Pope said, younger generations feel ‘menaced by short-sighted and selfish actions’ and are ‘anxiously asking us adults to do everything possible to prevent, or at least limit, the collapse of our planet’s ecosystems.’

Pope Francis has called for bolder actions from nations at two major international environment

summits later this year. The Pope proposed that an ecological conversion must occur not only among individuals but within ‘the community of nations’, with particular attention to United Nations conferences focused on addressing climate change and rapid biodiversity loss.

Presenting the Pope’s message at the Vatican press office, Canadian Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, said Pope Francis’ message served as a call for bolder action by world leaders.

‘While countries under the Paris Agreement agreed to work to limit average global temperature rise to 1.5°C, the planet has already heated at least 1.1°C since preindustrial times, yet new fossil fuel projects every day accelerate our race toward the precipice,’ Czerny said. ‘Enough is enough. All new exploration and production of coal, oil and gas must immediately end, and existing production of fossil fuels must be urgently phased out.’

Source: *Crux*

Debate continues over *Humanae Vitae*

The Vatican’s top body on life issues has caused a stir for suggesting that one of the Church’s most influential and controversial magisterial documents, *Humanae Vitae*, is not covered by papal infallibility.

A tweet sent from the Pontifical Academy for Life’s official Twitter account suggested that St Pope Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical was not covered by the doctrine of papal infallibility. This means it can be subject to change.

‘History records by Archbishop Lambruschini confirmed that Paul VI said to him directly that *Humanae Vitae* was not under infallibility,’ the Pontifical Academy’s official Twitter account said on 6 August.

The academy’s now-deleted tweet generated considerable backlash and speculation online. Many commentators interpreted

the statement as suggesting the landmark encyclical could become the subject of papal review or reform.

The debate began last month with the publication by the Pontifical Academy for Life of a new volume titled *Theological Ethics of Life: Scripture, Tradition, Practical Challenges*. In the book, some theologians appeared to suggest that in certain limited circumstances couples might be justified in choosing artificial contraception or methods of artificial reproduction.

The academy defended the volume, saying its role as a pontifical academy is to facilitate dialogue among the top theological thinkers of the day about contemporary issues.

However, critics argued it was inappropriate for an official Vatican entity to include voices questioning

some of the Church’s core moral teachings.

Ever since *Humanae Vitae* first appeared in 1968, there’s been an active debate over exactly what level of authority it possesses and, by implication, whether one can dissent from it and still be a good Catholic.

In general, conservative theologians say no, insisting the mere fact that the ban on birth control has never been formally declared as infallible doesn’t mean it’s not. In 1997, a Vatican office termed the ban on birth control ‘definitive and irreformable’.

Liberal theologians, on the other hand, insist that had any pope since Paul VI wanted to declare *Humanae Vitae* infallible he could have, but none did.

Source: *Crux* now, *Cath News*

Vatican cardinal’s shared history with Edith Stein

Eighty years after Edith Stein’s death at Auschwitz, August 9, 1942, a Vatican cardinal has said Mass in her honour near the former death camp.

Raised as a Jew, Stein was an atheist philosopher who converted to Catholicism in 1921 when she was 30. She became a Discalced Carmelite nun in 1938 and took the name Sr Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. She was canonised in 1998.

On the anniversary of her death, Cardinal Michael Czerny joined with her Carmelite sisters and celebrated a Mass for St Teresa Benedicta near Auschwitz.

Like her, members of Cardinal Czerny’s family were also arrested and sent to concentration camps. Some were sent to Auschwitz. Cardinal Czerny’s homily recounted St Teresa Benedicta’s story and how it intersected with his maternal Czechoslovak family. ‘With Edith Stein, I share Jewish origins, the Catholic faith and a vocation to religious life...’, he said.

Stein wrote that her ‘first encounter with the Cross’ took place in 1917. She was visiting a recently widowed friend who told her about her late husband’s conversion and her own. The friend explained that the peace she received at her baptism prevailed even during this time of loss.

Stein ‘was struck by the serenity that the woman maintained in spite of tragedy,’ Cardinal Czerny said. ‘No human force could account for or explain such peace,’ Stein later wrote: ‘It was the moment when the light of Christ, Christ on the cross, shone.’

In 1933, Stein wrote to Pope Pius XI urging him to speak out against all expressions of antisemitism.



Edith Stein, circa 1920, also known as Sr Teresa Bendicata of the Cross – a German Jewish philosopher, a Carmelite nun, and a saint of the Catholic Church – was put to death in Auschwitz-Birkenau on August 9, 1942 (aged 50).

Image: Wikipedia

It wasn’t until 1998 the Church formally apologised for not taking more decisive action to challenge Nazism and the so-called ‘final solution’ to the ‘Jewish problem’.

By the end of the war, Cardinal Czerny’s family was scattered or dead. His grandmother and her children were considered Jewish as his grandmother was of Jewish descent. His grandfather refused to divorce his Jewish wife, so he was arrested too. Only his grandfather and mother survived.

Sources: *American Magazine*, *AP News*.



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Falling numbers a ‘wake-up call’

The Church’s falling support in Australia is a ‘wake-up call’ for Catholics, says Archbishop Timothy Costelloe sdb, Archbishop of Perth and president of the Australian Bishops’ Conference.

Catholicism is battling to balance its convictions with the realities of an increasingly secular nation.

Forty per cent of the population identifies as having no religion and only 20 per cent identify as Catholic. That’s down from 22.6 per cent in 2016, according to Australia’s latest census results.

‘I think it’s a very clear indication to us of the direction our society is going,’ Archbishop Costelloe says. ‘It’s not surprising but it’s a bit of a wake-up call to remind us we can’t be complacent.

‘We know the way we understand the meaning of life and the way we look at life is not shared by everybody; we do not want to

impose it on anybody, but we do want to offer it. It is a gift we can bring to our society but like any gift you can take it or leave it...we want to offer it as openly and as generously as we can.’

Archbishop Costelloe says the Church needs to be faithful to its core principles and believe in the ‘gifts’ Catholicism has to offer, including a way to make sense of the world and the call to live life with integrity.

He says the recent Plenary Council in Australia spent much time debating what approach to take to claw back its diminishing flock.

‘A lot of our discussions have been about this idea of the Church being a church that goes out to people, meets them where they are, offers them the gift we bring and leaving it up to them to decide if they want to take it up.’



‘The Church needs to be faithful to its core principles and believe in the “gifts” Catholicism has to offer, including a way to make sense of the world and the call to live life with integrity,’ says Archbishop Timothy Costelloe.

Photo: Catholic Church, Australia

Redesign for Notre Dame surroundings

An overhaul of the area around Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris will open it up toward the Seine River and help millions of visitors flow through more easily while also mitigating the effects of climate change, according to city officials.

Notre-Dame, which was ravaged by a devastating fire in 2019, is closed to visitors and is still being rebuilt, with plans to partially reopen in 2024. Roughly 13 million tourists visited Notre-Dame every year before the fire, snaking in long haphazard lines in front and crowding narrow streets around it.

The redesign of the area surrounding Notre-Dame, which leaves the long, rectangular stone square in front of the cathedral mostly intact, will not radically alter the neighbourhood. But Paris officials said that the planned

changes would improve visitors’ experience and make the city more resilient in the face of rising temperatures.

Mayor Anne Hidalgo of Paris said that Notre-Dame ‘had to be left in its beauty and have everything around it be a showcase for that beauty.’ But, she added, ‘a city like ours can no longer think outside of climate change.’

The redesign includes removing fencing to extend and merge parks around Notre-Dame, making neighbouring streets more pedestrian-friendly and planting over 30 per cent more vegetation in the area, including trees to provide additional shade. Plans also call for transforming a parking lot that is currently underneath the cathedral’s main square into an underground walkway that opens

up onto the banks of the Seine and provides access to a welcome centre and an archaeological museum, officials said.

The new design includes a cooling system that will send a five-millimetre-thin sheet of water streaming down the square in front of the cathedral during heat waves, enough to lower temperatures by several degrees without flooding the area – and to give tourists a shimmering backdrop for their photos, officials added.

Paris City Hall will pay for the project, with a budget of 50 million euros. The area will be reopened in 2024, when the bulk of the cathedral’s reconstruction is scheduled to end. But the revamping of the cathedral’s outskirts is not expected to be finished until 2027.



The new design of the area around Notre Dame Cathedral includes a cooling system and 30 per cent more trees and other vegetation in the area.

Photo: Studio Alma, via Agence France-Presse/Getty Images

Counter toxicity in social media, says Pope

Pope Francis has called on Catholics to counter toxicity in social media, and to engage in dialogue and education to help deal with ‘lies and misinformation.’

The Pope has addressed this message to the participants of last month’s 2022 World Congress of SIGNIS in Seoul, South Korea. The 2022 Congress explored the theme of ‘Peace in the Digital World’ both on site and digitally from August 16–19. SIGNIS is the World Catholic Association for communication professionals. It holds a World Congress every four years.

In his message, Pope Francis says, ‘the use of digital media, especially social media, has raised a number of serious ethical issues that call for wise and discerning judgment on the part of communicators and all those concerned with the authenticity and quality of human relationships.’

‘Sometimes and in some places, media sites have become places of toxicity, hate speech and fake news,’ the Pope added.

He encourages Catholic communicators to persevere in efforts to counter these, ‘paying particular attention to the need to assist people, especially young people, to develop a sound critical sense, learning to distinguish truth from falsehood, right from wrong, good from evil, and to appreciate the importance of working for justice, social concord, and respect for our common home.’

The Pope also draws attention to ‘the many communities in our world that remain excluded from the digital space, making digital inclusion a priority.’

In doing so, Catholic communicators provide a ‘significant contribution to the spread of a culture of peace grounded in the truth of the Gospel.’

Volunteering on the wane

Community and charity groups in Australia are dealing with declining rates of volunteering. Reports compiled by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) show the number of volunteers has been falling steadily in recent years. It estimated there were 3.3 million volunteers in 2020, and the census found just over 2.9 million people had done voluntary work in 2021, or about 14 per cent of those who answered.

Charities Minister Andrew Leigh says the problem is broader than volunteerism. Australians are now less likely to be a member of a community organisation, go to religious services, be a union member, play a team sport, give blood, and don’t have as many friends or know as many neighbours as they used to.

Zelenskyy grateful to Pope

Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said that he has spoken with Pope Francis over the phone and thanked the Pope for his prayers and humanitarian support. In a tweet posted on August 12, Zelenskyy said: ‘Our people need support of world spiritual leaders who should convey to the world the truth about acts of horror committed by the aggressor.’ Andrii Yurash, Ukraine’s ambassador to the Holy See, reported that this is the third time that Pope Francis has spoken with Zelenskyy since Russia invaded Ukraine nearly six months ago.

Pope hopes Agreement will be renewed

The Pope says the Holy See’s Provisional Agreement with the People’s Republic of China ‘is going well’ and that he hopes it can be renewed in October. Thanks to the Provisional Agreement signed in 2018, the text of which is currently confidential, the situation of the Catholic Church in China was remedied by bringing bishops who had been installed without papal mandate back into full communion with Rome. The Agreement gives the Pope the final word on the appointment of new bishops, while providing a shared path to arrive at an agreement on episcopal nominations.

Journalist to stand trial

Luka Binniyat, a Catholic human rights reporter, is facing prison after writing an article in which the Nigerian government was criticised for its inaction in the face of an ongoing threat to Christian communities. Binniyat reported on the mass killings of Christians by armed herdsmen in two Southern Kaduna villages last year.



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Our Church in a multicultural society

The opening prayer was sung in Shona language to the beat of drums and the voices of the Zimbabwean community, the blessing of the meal was done in Tokelauan and the closing prayer of the day was done by the local Samoan community.

These were aspects of a meeting of various cultural groups at Ss Peter and Paul Church in Lower Hutt on August 6. They came to hear the results of a small survey in which they had participated. The survey began in late 2020 as part of a review of such chaplaincies requested by the archdiocesan synod of 2017. The survey's purpose was to better understand the groups, their size, activities, leadership structures, financial activities and relationship to local parishes.

While the review is not complete, the richness of the gifts and perspectives was evident. There was a sense of vitality and joy in the participants, some who had been in Aotearoa a long time and others much more recently. A key initial activity was the sharing of foods from the different communities – a chance to sit and talk as important as any other 'business'.

The reality of growing cultural diversity in parishes is evident but not new. In 1976 a major sociological survey of the New Zealand Church (The Church in a Multicultural Society) looked at the presence of Māori and Polynesian people. The timing followed the large-scale migration of people from other Pacific Islands to Aotearoa in the 1960s and 1970s.

That 1976 survey showed that often newcomers were not made welcome in parishes and that parishes had little understanding of the challenges faced by recently-arrived peoples. Cardinal Williams

instituted a pastoral policy goal for the variety of cultural groups: that they be welcomed and integrated into ordinary parish life without losing their identity nor being excluded because of language or cultural background – the opposite of a policy of assimilation.

Since 1976 the places of origin of migrants – and refugees – has changed. There is greater presence of people from Asia, Africa and South America. The age make-up of these groups is predominantly youthful which suggests they are both the present reality and future of the Church in Aotearoa. However there is still the need to make new migrants and cultural groups welcome, to recognise their gifts and talents and open pathways to participation and leadership including on parish councils.

Mons Gerard Burns and Maya Bernardo – seconded from the Church Mission office – presented the results of the survey and the groups discussed those results and made suggestions for the future. There were various responses but a significant one was also these groups expressing concern for their younger members in terms of their participation in the ordinary life of parishes and Masses as well as the myriad attractions of other Churches and/or the various challenges that all young people in Aotearoa face today.

The hui took place on the feast of the Transfiguration. 'Fittingly, by coming together, sharing food, talents and dreams, we experienced the transfigured Christ and a transfigured Church,' said Mons Burns. 'The Archdiocese is blessed with the gift of many different cultures in our communities. We pray that this wonderful gift be nurtured and celebrated.'



Members of the Myanmar Catholic community with Fr Don Hornsey of the Columban Mission Society (second left) and Shawn Wong a visiting Singaporean Seminarian of ICPE (far right), at the gathering at Ss Peter and Paul Church, Lower Hutt.

Photo: Annette Scullion/WelCom

Life commitment in truth, peace and love



Congregational leader Monica Cavanagh rsj (l) received Adrienne Gallie's rsj (r) vows as a Sister of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

Sue Seconi

Religious Sisters, family and friends gathered in a spirit of joy and hope at St Mary's Church Whanganui on 23 July to celebrate with Adrienne Gallie rsj, her life commitment as a Sister of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. Congregational leader Monica Cavanagh rsj from Sydney received Adrienne's vows.

The Mass, led by Emeritus Bishops Peter Cullinane and Owen Dolan, was live-streamed.

A kererū on a harakeke branch on the sanctuary represented Adrienne's 10-year journey. 'Being from the dove family, the kererū can identify times of reconciliation and joy. It's a carrier of the olive branch and always finds the way home. They speak of living from the heart,' Adrienne said.

After Sr Monica gifted Sr Adrienne a ring symbolising her life-long commitment in love as a Religious Sister in the Josephite tradition, she said it also reflected a fresh binding of her life in God's truth, peace and love.

Born and educated in Whanganui, Adrienne returned in 1992 from Australia to raise her sons and to be near her family after her husband Sean was tragically killed.

Those years also provided her the opportunity to take part in retreat and workshop days and personal development courses at the Josephite Retreat Centre in Whanganui, where she eventually became the manager. Working closely with the Josephite Sisters, Adrienne was inspired by their wisdom, friendship and hospitality, which developed a hunger in her own spiritual life.

Following a pilgrim experience in retracing the footsteps of founders St Mary MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods, coupled with her own resonance with the Josephite charism, an invitation came to live as a Sister in Community. Her sons were by then independent adults.

In June 2012, Adrienne was welcomed into Te Hikoi Emaio – the Emmaus Journey (Luke 24:13-35) at the Josephite Retreat Centre, which is a spiritual 'marker' on the pathway towards final profession. Taking first vows in January 2014 in Sydney, Sr Adrienne began the 'Widen the Space of your Tent' (Isaiah 54) stage.

'I immersed myself in Josephite spirituality, customs, deepening my appreciation of Scripture and studied contemporary documents on vowed religious life. The journey has not been without its anxieties and struggles, but the overriding feeling has been one of deep inner joy and confidence that I am on the right path. I feel at home,' she said.

'Where in a previous era it was mainly young women and men entering religious life, these new pathways open up the possibility to many people in different stages and ages of life [of] being called to live as prophetic presences in the world.'

Adrienne has spent several years as a financial mentor in some of New Zealand's most impoverished communities. Currently based in Wellington, Adrienne's ministry is walking alongside, mentoring and advocating for people navigating complex government policy and financial systems that can create inequalities and injustices.

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Papers of Eileen Duggan

Cardinal John Dew met with Seán McMahon, Curator of Manuscripts at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, last month, to mark the transfer of the papers of Eileen Duggan from the Archdiocese into the Turnbull. Of Irish heritage, Duggan was a prominent New Zealand Catholic author as a poet and a columnist from the 1920s to the 1960s. She corresponded with many of the literary, political and Church figures of the period.

Her poetry is characterised by its religious dimension, which ranges from simple devotional writing, through poems that celebrate the sacredness of the created world, to more spare and sombre meditations on the moral implications of human actions.

Eileen Duggan was the first New Zealand poet to gain an international reputation; she was admitted to the Gallery of Living Catholic Authors in 1939, appointed an OBE in 1937, and made an honorary fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1943.

At her death in 1972 all papers were bequeathed to the Archbishop, Cardinal McKeefry. Now 50 years



Cardinal John Dew met with Seán McMahon at the Alexander Turnbull Library, to mark the transfer of the papers of Eileen Duggan.

Photo: Supplied

on it was felt that the records and Duggan's legacy would better be served by their becoming part of the national literary collection. Here it is hoped they will be more widely known and more accessible

to researchers. To learn more about Eileen Duggan go to: teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4d23/duggan-eileen-may

Our Lady of Kāpiti - Chapel Window

Glen McCullough

Our Lady of Kāpiti Church complex was completed in August when the 'Risen Jesus' stained-glass window in the chapel was blessed by Fr Michael McCabe, the previous parish priest.

The original concept for the window came from artist and parishioner, Johannes Sijbrant. It was completed by Olaf Wehr-Candler at Pukerua Glass Studio and Rachel Pfeffer of Totaranui Glass Studio.

In the window Jesus is wearing traditional robes, including the small prayer beads at the hem, and has the stigmata marks on his hands. Fr McCabe said the window was like an icon in that it comes to a point in our hearts. He thanked everyone who had contributed to the window, in particular the late Keith and Nola Banks who were the major donors and in whose memory the window is dedicated.

Fr Michael read the gospel passage from John 20:11-17 in which Mary Magdalene encountered Jesus after he had risen. This gospel passage had been the inspiration for the design. It is our prayer, he

said, that anyone who came here to this silent, sacred space in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament would be inspired by the window to hear Jesus say, as he did to Mary Magdalene, 'who are you looking for?' Because Mary Magdalene is the first witness to the risen Lord, Pope Francis has called her 'the apostle to the apostles'.

The risen Lord calls us all by name. Can you hear Him?



The 'Risen Jesus' stained-glass window at Our Lady of Kāpiti chapel, blessed by Fr Michael McCabe, completes the church complex.

Photo: Bernie Velasco

Abrahamic affiliations create friendships and understanding

Fr Ron Bennett

A group of members of Wellington's Abrahamic Council were warmly welcomed to a weekend retreat last May at Kopua Monastery in Central Hawke's Bay.

The Abrahamic Council is a group of Jews, Christians and Muslims who seek to have a better understanding among one another, with Abraham as a common figure in each of their traditions. Members enjoy fellowship and learning about one another's religious views.

At Kopua, the group attended the Offices, a religious service at 4am and Sunday Eucharist. They spent time with Fr Niko Verkley oco before breakfast and talking around a warm fire in the evening in the peaceful atmosphere of the guesthouse.

This year, we have held three public events – a climate-change workshop, a Peacenic and an Abrahamic meditation day. Over 55 people attended the workshop in June at Victoria University, discussing principles and action plans for ourselves, our places of worship, and in wider society. Our annual Peacnic (picnic for peace) in February created new friendships

over shared food and conversations among fellow Abrahamic peoples.

Every month through 'Sharing our Scriptures' we meet virtually or face-to-face, to explore themes from text snippets from the Tanakh, the New Testament, and the Koran. These small, informal discussions in people's homes are delightful, and are open to anyone who would like to attend. Check out our website at abrahamic.nz or contact Dave Moskovitz at dave@abrahamic.nz if you're interested in learning more.

The Wellington Abrahamic Council is a member of the Christchurch Call Advisory Network, created by the governments

of France and New Zealand following the Christchurch terror attacks in March 2019. Our purpose is to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online. Local member Canon Jenny Chalmers (Anglican) was recently elected the Vice-Chair of the International Council of Christians and Jews, of which our council is a member. It's wonderful to have a New Zealand voice among this highly-respected international organisation.

Appreciating what we share with each other as Abrahamic peoples not only helps us to understand others from different traditions, but also appreciate more deeply the divine gift we have been given.



Pictured with Fr Niko Verkley of Kopua Monastery are the group from the Wellington Abrahamic Council who visited the Abbey of Our Lady of the Southern Star.

Photo: abrahamic.nz

Religious Diversity Day



Members of religious communities in Palmerston North gathered to pray for 'Care of the Earth' at Pit Park wetlands.

Photo: Supplied


Nick Wilson

The Palmerston North Interfaith Group in collaboration with the Palmerston North City Council facilitated a Religious Diversity Celebration Day last month. The theme was 'Care of the Earth' with a focus on our collective and sacred responsibility.

The theme resonated with approximately 50 people who attended from Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Baha'i, Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Society of Friends religious communities. There were prayers and blessings from each community for the 300 native wetland plants planted at Pit Park.

The theme of reflecting of the care our common home resonates with Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si, which is an important priority for other faiths too.

For Catholics, interfaith dialogue is an important tenet of the faith, informed by the Vatican II document Nostra Aetate – 'The Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions'. It focuses on what we have in common and draws us to fellowship. There is a Vatican Dicastery for Interfaith Dialogue (dicasteryminterreligious.va); and in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Catholic Bishops have mandated their Council for Interfaith Relations to work in this area.



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O Meri ki te Rangi – kua a whā Hāta Maria o ngā Anahe Mary Assumed into Heaven Church dedicated a



Whakawahia te Wharekarakia o Māra hei Wāhi Tapu ā-Motu Māra – St Mary of the Angels as a National Shrine



The landmark St Mary of the Angels Church in Wellington was dedicated as a National Shrine to Mary Assumed into Heaven at a special Mass on Sunday 14 August 2022. It follows all of Aotearoa New Zealand being solemnly rededicated to Mary by our bishops a year ago at a Mass for the Feast of the Assumption at St Mary of the Angels on 15 August – the country’s patronal feast.

Following last year’s rededication Mass, a nationwide hīkoi of the Aotearoa-themed Mary artwork commenced. The artwork is titled Ko Hāta Maria, te Matua Wahine o te Atua – Holy Mary, Mother of God. The hīkoi ended last month with the icon’s arrival back at St Mary of the Angels, just before the start of the dedication Mass. The artwork will be on permanent view at St Mary’s as part of the national shrine.

The dedication of St Mary of the Angels as a shrine was a national celebration with representatives from the six dioceses, the Apostolic Nuncio, the New Zealand bishops, priests, religious, kaumatua, cultural and community leaders, and a full congregation.

Before Mass began, college students helped Korty Wilson – kaitiaki during the hīkoi – carry the artwork into the church and up to the Sanctuary. Fr Chris Skinner sm sang *Hata Maria* as children laid flowers offerings across the altar.

The celebrants, the cross bearer and the candle bearers assembled to the sounds of the pūtātara and proceeded down the aisle at the call of the karanga. The kaumatua gave a short blessing as the celebrants took their seats at the altar to begin the Dedication Mass. St Mary of the Angels choir and musicians, Te Ngākau Tapu choir, as well as members of the Samoan choir led the chants, singing and music.

Cardinal John Dew was the main celebrant and gave the homily and led the Renewal of Baptismal Vows and the Prayer of Dedication. He blessed the people with Holy water as he moved across the church to each of the wall crosses to bless the building. Bishop Michael Dooley blessed the congregation seated around the perimeter of the church. Returning to the sanctuary Cardinal John completed the dedication prayer.

Mons Gerard Burns, Vicar General of the Archdiocese gave a reading, college students led the prayers of Intercession with multiple languages, and members of the Samoan Community brought up the Offertory Procession.

The five New Zealand bishops, the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Rugumbwa, parish priest St Mary of the Angels Fr Kevin Mowbray sm and Deacon Alfred Tong, distributed Holy Communion as *Vincent’s Trumpet Solo* and the song *Ave Maria* rang out. The prayer after Communion was from the Mass of the Assumption.

Following the blessing and dismissal, the cross bearer, candle bearers and bishops proceeded down the main aisle to the church doors to the recessional hymn *Ka Waiata ki a Maria*.

Cardinal John said in his homily: ‘Sacred sites all over the world are visited by thousands. These places often hold deep meaningful messages, are awe-inspiring, they prompt us to reflect on life, on where we are with God, stir up feelings of reverence and draw us close to God. St Mary of the Angels is already a sacred place and has been for 100 years. Now this icon of Mary Mother of God Assumed into Heaven is here permanently. We hope and pray in time this becomes one of those sacred sites.’

Prayer of Dedication of St Mary of the Angels As the National Shrine of Mary, Mother of God, Assumed Into Heaven

*E te Atua aroha mā te whakapuaki
i tō mātou whakapono*
Loving God. In professing this faith in which we are united as your people we unite ourselves with the yes of your Mother Mary, the first disciple.

*E te Atua, te Puna o ngā mea ora katoa,
te kaihomai o ngā mea pai katoa*
O God, Source of all life, giver of all that is good
To whom this sacred place is today dedicated
to begin its second century as the national shrine
of Mary Mother of God, Assumed into Heaven.
We, your people of Aotearoa New Zealand
Meet in the bonds of your love.
Keep us faithful in our response to your love
with Mary patroness of our land.

*E te Atua aroha, ka karangahia houtia mātou
e koe ki ngā hua o te ora*
Loving God, you call us anew to the abundance of life
for which we have been created.
In our life with you we mature
in relationship with you,
with one another, and with our land.
We repent the harm we have caused in this holy place
to our sisters and brothers and to our land.
In humility we turn to Mary,
Mother of God, Assumed into Heaven,
and in confidence pray.

*E te Atua, mā roto i te korowai o Maria
te whāea o tāu tamaiti, tō mātou whāea anō hoki*
O God, under the patronage of Mary,
the Mother of your son, and our Mother,
we are united with those gathered in the Hokianga in
January 1838,
with the leadership of Jean-Baptiste Pompallier,
first Catholic bishop of our land,
to dedicate this house of God,
St Mary of the Angels, as the national shrine
of Mary, Mother of God, Assumed into Heaven.

I tenei wā, ka whakahoungia e mātou tēnei oati tapu
We now dedicate this shrine
as with renewed fervour
we turn to Mary, in union
with her Son Our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. Amen

1. St Mary of the Angels Church Wellington dedicated as a national shrine. 2. The bishops, cross bearer and candle bearers assembled to the sounds of the pūtātara before proceeding down the aisle at the call of the karanga. 3. *Vincent’s Trumpet Solo* rang out during Holy Communion. 4. Cardinal John Dew blessed people with Holy water as he moved across the church to bless the building. 5. The artwork, Ko Hāta Maria, te Matua Wahine o te Atua – Holy Mary Mother of God, will be on permanent view at St Mary’s as part of the national shrine. 6. Mons Gerard Burns, Vicar General Archdiocese, swung the censer with burning incense before giving the first reading in the Liturgy of the Word. 7. Members of the Catholic Samoan Community made the Offertory Procession.

Young Catholics

Young New Zealand pilgrims sought for World Youth Day Lisbon 2023



Young people from around Aotearoa New Zealand are invited to join a pilgrimage to World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal, next year and maybe see Pope Francis himself there.

The Catholic bishops’ Council for Young People – made up of representatives from Catholic youth ministries across the country – has published a draft itinerary for Kiwis wanting to attend the Lisbon event.

It is a full itinerary of 24 days leaving Auckland on 15 July for Paris, then on pilgrimage to such places as Lyon and Lourdes, and Fatima for six days, before reaching Lisbon on 31 July. Lisbon will host many official events from 1 August to World Youth Day itself on Sunday 6 August, which climaxes with a Mass that Pope Francis is expected to celebrate in person.

Council for Young People chair, Alex Bailey of Hamilton, says the indicative cost of the pilgrimage including travel and accommodation is about NZ\$6500.

The draft itinerary is subject to change but will be confirmed when registration opens in this month. Alex says the suggested age range is 18 to 35.

‘The pilgrimage has a particular emphasis on the spiritual life,’ Alex

says. ‘As such, daily Mass will be available throughout the pilgrimage and several chaplains will be joining the journey as spiritual guides.’

World Youth Day is every three or so years and is a gathering of young people from all over the world with the Pope. It is also a pilgrimage, a celebration of youth, an expression of the universal Church and an intense moment of evangelisation. Although a Catholic event, World Youth Day opens its doors to everyone, no matter how close to or distant from the Church they are.

The Lisbon event was originally planned for August 2022 but was postponed a year because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The first World Youth Day was in Rome in 1986. Others have followed in Buenos Aires, Santiago de Compostela, Czestochowa, Denver, Manila, Paris, Rome again, Toronto, Cologne, Sydney, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro, Krakow, and most recently Panama in 2019.

The itinerary has a full list of diocesan email contacts for further information. Download it in PDF at: catholic.org.nz/assets/WYD23-ITINERARY.pdf

The official World Youth Day website is: lisboa2023.org/en/

Synod reflections

Two young people share insights from their involvement in the diocesan phase of the Synod 2021-2023.

When I heard about the 2021–2023 Synod I was excited to contribute, although many young people did not share my enthusiasm and didn’t care. But as a school leader it was my job to collate youth voices.

Taking part in the first stages was difficult due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, through the internet I was able to participate in the session at my school, and organise a synod Zoom call with the leaders of four other schools from the Palmerston North diocese. There was much call for change as many young people don’t feel Church is a place to belong to. Several said there was need for greater inclusion of everyone, such as LGBTQ+, and they had an appreciation for other types of gatherings such as youth groups and Bible studies.

When I was invited to the Palmerston North diocese hui and the National Synod hui, I wanted to share what I had heard about the Church in New Zealand. But it was discouraging to be one of only a handful of youth representatives. Youth voices were sought during the Synod consultation and those of us who did participate wouldn’t have represented the spectrum of young opinions.

The hui were welcoming and I felt free to share my thoughts. The submissions and diocesan synthesis documents were interesting to read and to discuss with all sorts of people.

The ideas had a common thread – we need to make a change and ‘burn the bush to let the new



Claudia Chan (far right) a student from New Plymouth with other young participants at the Diocese of Palmerston North hui in May.

Photo: WelCom

seeds grow’. There is much to do as a Church and as young people to travel together with God.

– Claudia Chan, Special Character Leader, Sacred Heart Girls College New Plymouth.

As a member of the Synod team for the Wellington archdiocese I have been involved through reading submissions, attending the archdiocesan synodal gathering in April, and contributing and hearing from others. I have observed a concern for youth to engage more fully and confusion about how to help that happen.

As a young person and a youth minister, I was glad to hear people want to invest in us. They notice when we aren’t there, they want to build a relationship with us and create a welcoming place, but don’t seem to know how.

When I reflected on my experience in the Church and what contributed to my journey

of leaving, I didn’t understand the Mass – it felt foreign and I became disengaged. I didn’t have a community of people helping me build my faith. When Church became boring, or better options came up, there was nothing holding me close to Christ and it became easy to slip away.

Then, when I came into a youth group and a faith community who invested in me and my relationship with God, my faith changed and grew as did my excitement for Mass, the Sacraments and discovery of Jesus’ love. I often hear we need to create a church full of great speakers, lights and music to attract young people. But, from my experience, and that of other young people, it is a sense of community, Mass as a welcoming place, and understanding our faith that keeps us connected.

– Louise Lloyd, Archdiocesan Young Church Co-ordinator.

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Rangatahi Katorika

The Church that Joseph Built

St Joseph’s School, Upper Hutt, has launched a new book created especially for the students about the history of St Joseph’s church and the school as well as the local environment and the Catholic values that underpin the school community.

‘The Church that Joseph Built’ tells the story of how Joseph, the father of Jesus on earth, used his special talents to build St Joseph’s Church, which led to the building of St Joseph’s School.

‘The book was developed as a creative way to share some of the key information about our kura with our new whānau,’ says principal Andrew Herrick. ‘The book introduces the local area of Ōrongomai with the Remutaka mountain ranges and Te Awakairangi featuring in Joseph’s travel to the future school site. It then introduces the school vision and values, our Catholic social justice programme, the historic Catholic figures, which our school houses and syndicates are named after and the Charism of Mercy that shapes our special character.’

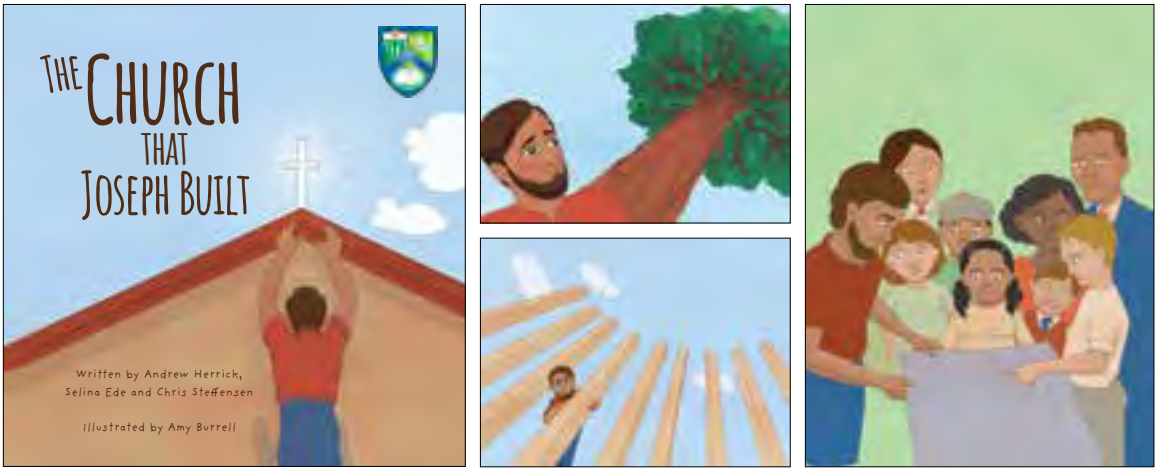
The story was developed over a six-month period. It began with the construction of the storyline by St Joseph School’s senior leadership team – Selina Ede, Chris Steffensen and Andrew Herrick using feedback

from the Board of Trustees and staff members to settle on the final storyline.

‘Once the bones of the story had taken shape, we engaged the services of Amy Burrell to bring the story to life with her amazing illustrations. Eventually the first draft was produced for final checking before production of the finished product we have today,’ says Andrew Herrick.

‘The story is included with our enrolment acceptance letters for any new whānau members joining the St Joseph’s community.’

Upper Hutt Mayor, Wayne Guppy, joined the staff and junior students for last month’s book launch and reading. An Upper Hutt resident and a former student of St Patrick’s College Silverstream, Mr Guppy said the book teaches the children how very special Catholic education is. ‘The book is very easy for the children to read and understand. Being able to learn about Catholic values in the school setting sets them apart.’



St Joseph’s School students with their teacher, principal Andrew Herrick (centre rear) and special guest Upper Hutt Mayor Wayne Guppy at the book launch of ‘The Church that Joseph Built’. Photo: Annette Scullion

A joyous occasion

Stephanie Harris-Stevens

Hato Mere (St Mary’s) Pukekaraka Parish in Ōtaki, was delighted to see two of their younger members receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from Archbishop Paul Martin sm, at the 10am Mass on Sunday 24 July.

It was very moving to see Ella Clarke and Felix Lewin come forward and ask Archbishop Paul

if they could be confirmed. The children’s parents had prepared them for the Sacrament. On the day they were supported by parish priest Fr Alan Roberts sm, along with their families, sponsors, friends and parish community members.

We look forward in the parish to seeing them grow and develop in the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, and we ask God’s blessing upon them both.



Ella Clarke and Felix Lewin with Archbishop Paul Martin and Fr Alan Roberts after receiving their baptismal candles at their Confirmation. Photo: Supplied

The logo for Compassion te pūaroha, featuring a stylized heart with a cross inside.

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World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation: September 1

Pope Francis has established 1 September as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, encouraging the Catholic community around the world to pray for our common home.

The day is inspired by Pope Francis’ landmark encyclical *Laudato si’*, which calls on ‘every person living on this planet’ to care for our shared Earth.

‘Listen to the voice of creation’ is the theme and invitation of this year’s Season of Creation. In his message for the World Day of Prayer 2022, Pope Francis calls us to use the season to ‘cultivate our ecological conversion’ and to pray together in ‘the great cathedral of Creation’. He warns we are reaching ‘a breaking point’ and must act decisively so that ‘we and future generations can continue to rejoice in creation’s sweet song of life and hope.’

Read the full text of the Pope’s message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation at: tinyurl.com/Care-For-Creation-2022



This World Day of Prayer also falls at the beginning of the Season of Creation, which runs until 4 October, the feast of St Francis of Assisi. This is an ecumenical season dedicated to prayer for the protection of creation and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles. The following articles are inspired by *Laudato si’* and support World Day of Prayer for Creation and the Season of Creation.



An ethical challenge to environmental conversion

Jim McAloon

September 1 is the World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation, and it begins the month of Care for Creation, concluding on 4 October, the feast of St Francis of Assisi. Care for our common home has been a consistent theme for Pope Francis, notably in his encyclical, *Laudato si’*. The earth is crying out, he wrote, as he again reminds us in his message for the Day of Prayer.

Francis recalled that St John XXIII had addressed all people of good will about the imminent danger of nuclear war in his 1963 encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth). The ecological crisis is no less grave, no less urgent. In the last few weeks we have seen 40-degree temperatures in Britain, major European rivers running extraordinarily low, and European glaciers shrinking rapidly. In June, Bangladesh endured the worst floods in a century, displacing 4 million people. In July, there was severe flooding across the Philippines.



John McAloon. Photo: Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington

We all know that very recently, the upper South Island, especially the Nelson region, has been devastated by flooding and slips. Other Pacific Islands are threatened even more than Aotearoa me Te Wai Pounamu by climate change. July’s Pacific Islands Forum emphasised ‘the urgency to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees through rapid, deep and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions’.

There are several ways we can

reflect on care for creation. We might dwell on nature’s beauty, favourite places, or noticing our region’s birdlife. That’s important. But St James asks, ‘how does it help, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works?’ How, he asks, can it be right to say to someone in need ‘Go in peace...’ without giving them the bare necessities of life? Likewise, what good is it to praise God for the beauty of creation without accepting that faith calls us to action?

around climate change and the ecological crisis. Local councillors and parliamentarians need to be encouraged to do the good that they might wish to do.

We also need to remember some sectors of our society may be able to move more quickly, while others will need support to change. Everyone’s situation will be different. Businesses, including farming, will also need support. The important thing is to be realistic about what we can do, and to look for public policy approaches that

Pope Francis reminds us in his message: ‘As persons of faith, we feel ourselves even more responsible for acting each day in accordance with the summons to conversion. Nor is that summons simply individual’. In *Laudato si’*, he noted: ‘the ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion’ (para 219). We need to think about how we can support each other in communities – faith is lived in community; we have other communities too which are also important. And many of us would

“As citizens, we have the right and the duty to make our voices heard. As we approach the local government elections, it would be well to consider candidates’ positions on ecological issues.”

We are encouraged to do what we can as individuals, families, and households. Many of us will be using our cars less, walking or using public transport when we can, changing diet, taking care to waste no food, reducing rubbish, and so on. ‘A person who could afford to spend and consume more but regularly uses less heating and wears warmer clothes, shows the kind of convictions and attitudes which help to protect the environment. There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions...’ (*Laudato si’*, para 211).

However, action at all levels of government, state, and economy, is required, including internationally. As citizens, we have the right and the duty to make our voices heard. As we approach the local government elections, it would be well to consider candidates’ positions on ecological issues. Likewise, we should not be shy about letting our members of parliament know of our concerns

are based in social justice as well as ecological justice – hearing, as Pope Francis puts it, the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

In light of this, it’s noteworthy – and welcome – that the New Zealand government has announced a \$1.3 billion International Climate Finance Strategy to assist decarbonisation and manage the consequences of an already warming climate, and to support biodiversity and the health of the oceans. As the foreign and climate change ministers acknowledge, the consequences of climate change are disproportionately felt by less wealthy nations and communities, and the government recognises that climate change is ‘an existential threat’ to Pacific nations, and at least half of the fund will go to other Pacific nations, with a strong focus on communities and partners leading the work. Significant sums have already been allocated to initiatives in Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, and Niue.

do well to listen to indigenous, especially Māori, voices.

The challenge is ethical, not only scientific or technological. The American feminist Catholic theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether wrote of creation as both covenant and sacrament. Creation as covenant, extending back to the Hebrew scriptures, suggests that creation is a gift of God and we humans have a responsibility to care for it. Creation as sacrament, simply, is a sign or manifestation of God’s great love. Care for creation is inherent in faith.

Jim McAloon is a professor of History at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations. Jim is also chair of the Wellington Archdiocesan Commission for Ecology, Justice and Peace.



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New regional strategy addresses Pacific Islands’ challenges

The Pacific Islands Forum, held in Suva for regional heads of governments in July, launched a new long-term strategy to address present and future challenges faced by Pacific peoples.

Mena Antonio, Chief Executive of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, said Caritas is ‘pleased the Pacific Islands Forum has supported the need for Pacific regional unity,

particularly on matters such as climate change, Covid-19, vulnerability to debt and security.

‘The Pacific leaders declared the Pacific is facing a Climate Emergency that threatens the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of its people and ecosystems. We would add our voice to the growing chorus of voices calling for a ban on Deep Sea Mining as

well as urgent practical actions to reduce carbon emissions.

‘We also congratulate the Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders on their inaugural meeting. This is an important step forward in the movement towards a fairer balance of views and perspectives.’

Mercy Sisters mount global response to *Laudato si'*

Natalie Murphy rsm

Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand have been engaging with Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter *Laudato si’* since it was published in 2015.

Laudato si’ was a gift to us for the Extraordinary Year of Mercy. In 2016, Mercy Congregations and companions around the world participated in the Mercy International Reflection Process (MIRP). Based on LS, sisters and companions-in-mercy were invited to discern globally their response to ‘the cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor’, LS49.

Within Aotearoa New Zealand and Samoa, 29 groups explored issues that harm Earth and her suffering people and committed to a variety of actions. The groups included sisters, Mercy partners, school students, parishioners, work colleagues and friends. Two fundamental issues became clear: degradation of Earth and displacement of people.

A two-year Mercy Global Presence (MGP) programme was formed. Sisters in New Zealand, Tonga and Samoa created resources and connected worldwide. These resources are available online: mercyworld.org/about/our-initiatives/mercy-global-presence/

In 2017, sisters met in Samoa to deepen their understanding about the reality of the MIRP directions for their region. Sisters from Asia Pacific nations and a sister from the Mercy International Association Mercy Global Action office, also gathered at the UN in New York. Sisters from each country spoke of the devastating effects of climate change on their homelands and people. Hope came from experts who outlined programmes already assisting with climate resilience and sustaining livelihoods, natural heritage, and culture.

From 27 June to 1 July this year, we took part in the Global Mercy Oceans Campaign in tandem with the UN Oceans Conference in Lisbon. Sisters from various nations prepared videos for prayer and action. A Samoan-born and a Tongan-born sister were present on behalf of our congregation. From Samoa we heard, ‘Our hopes and dreams are to uphold and save our identity, our land and our roots. Our ancestors are buried in our land. If the land or water is lost or damaged then our people’s identity, home and culture are lost for good.’

We also heard the call for the protection of humpback whales prevalent near Tonga, described as ‘ecosystem engineers that maintain the health and stability of the



oceans and can literally slow down climate change’. On 25 May 2021 the *Laudato si’* Action Plan (LSAP) was launched by the Vatican.

Over the next seven years religious congregations, families, dioceses, parishes, educational and health groups are invited to explore its seven goals:

- response to the cry of the earth
- response to the cry of the poor
- ecological economics
- adopting a simple lifestyle
- ecological education
- ecological spirituality

- community resilience and empowerment.

A group of sisters is working to discern our response to these goals and our commitment to action them. It is a work in progress of prayer, education and consultation involving our whole congregation.

Let us all pray in wonder and awe of God’s creation and commit to seeking solutions to our world-wide environmental and social crises.

Listen to the Voice of Creation SEASON OF CREATION 2022

The NZCBC National Liturgy Office has posted online resources to help liturgy groups prepare for the Season of Creation from 1 September to 4 October. Parishes, schools and households are invited to participate in a variety of ways to renew our relationship with our Creator God and all of Creation through celebration, conversion and commitment together.

The resources online page is: nlo.org.nz/news-and-events/media-releases/season-of-creation-2022/

A video describing the Season of Creation 2022 is online at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7VNncdIC4E

Thursday 1 September is a Day of Prayer for Care for Creation.



‘Mary our nurturer, our hearth, our wellspring’

Peter Healy sm, Te Whānau Pukekaraka

*E te Whaea Tapu, Hine nui o te Ao Katoa,
te ūkaipō,
te ahi ka,
te puna oranga.
Manaaki mai, whakatau mai, whakamahana ai.
He kākano o tōu one.
Awhinatia mai, kia tupu ai.
Mary, Holy One, woman of light and peace for the whole world,
we acknowledge you as our nurturer, our hearth, our wellspring.
Raise our dignity, ground us, warm our hearts.
As seeds in your soil, assist us to grow.*



‘Maria Mundi’ Cosmic Mary artwork, painted by Peter Healy.

In celebrating the feast of the Assumption we are always honouring Mary’s humble origins. We are remembering a woman of the small village of Nazareth. We acknowledge her as a homemaker and gardener. She knew a full participation in the life-sustaining rhythms of seed saving, tending, and regenerating the place she loved and depended on. Caring for her home and family involved a presence to soil, fertility and fruitfulness. She knew what was required for the seeds of life to flourish in her own heart and home. She engaged with seasons and preserving, with husbandry and nutrition. Mary’s life was close to family and land. The well-being of soil, produce and people was an intimacy learned over generations. Mary encourages us to reconnect, to find our place in our own backyards and neighbourhoods. She invites us to develop hearts of tenderness for where we live and for the wholeness of life. Her values challenge the damage our industrial world inflicts. She is our help and guardian as we come to know our place and draw down our harms. Mary has been raised on high and assumed into a place of Queenship because she proved herself at the intersection of the small and the local. She has a place of importance now because she fashioned such a place in her Nazareth beginnings. We look to Mary today, our model and mother, seeking inspiration for the renewal of our world.

*Mā te Whaea Tapu koutou e tiaki, e manaaki, e arahi.
Mary our Mother watch over us, bless us and lead us.*



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Catholics Thinking

Like charity, Christian unity begins at home

This article, in three parts, by **Bishop Peter Cullinane** coincides with Pope Francis' desire for our parish liturgies to be as they as they should be, and for the Catholic people to receive on-going liturgy formation. Pope Francis' most recent Apostolic letter, *Desiderio Desideravi* - 'I have desired with a great desire' (Lk 22:15), published on June 29, 2022, deals with this. It is a follow-up to his letter, *Traditiones Custodes* - 'Guardians of the Tradition', issued nearly one year earlier on July 16, 2021, in which he called for the Traditional Latin Mass to be terminated.

Part 2: Points of Clarification



Bishop Peter Cullinane.

1. Wasn't the Traditional Latin Mass the 'Mass of the ages'?
Yes, which is why it adapts to the different ages. We have only to read St Justin's beautiful description of the Mass dating from c. 155 AD to realise that the form of the Mass does change. The Mass St Justin knew would eventually live on in the revised Missal Pope Pius V promulgated after the Council of Trent; (the 'Traditional Latin Mass'). And that Mass now lives on in the revised Missal promulgated by Pope Paul VI after the Second Vatican Council. Both Missals have resulted from revisions of previous texts. That is the sense in which we can speak of 'the Mass of the ages'. And that is the sense in which Tradition lives on even as small traditions come and go.

2. Was the 1962 Missal 'abrogated'?
No, but that only means it was not annulled, and so it can still be validly used when the Pope authorises it to meet special needs. It was withdrawn from normal use. Pope Paul VI made it clear that the revised form of the Missal *replaced* the unrevised form.

3. Why did the Second Vatican Council require the Missal to be revised?
Historical research contributed to the reform which gave us the 'Traditional Latin Mass'. Likewise, the Second Vatican Council's reform had at its disposal updated scholarship based on ancient Christian sources even more recently discovered.
According to Pope Paul VI, the Council intended

- (i) to make it easier for people to see the meaning of the various parts of the Mass and the connection between them, and easier for people to participate;
- (ii) open up the scriptures more abundantly; and
- (iii) restore elements of the Mass which, through the accidents of history, had become obscured. (For example: reflecting the influence of Jansenism, the unrevised Missal still instructs the priest what to do *if anyone* wants to receive Holy Communion; whereas reflecting the later influence of Pope St Pius X, the revised

Missal *expects that most of the congregation will be receiving Holy Communion.*)
The Council taught that 'full, conscious and active participation in the liturgical celebrations is required by the *very nature* of the liturgy' (Liturgy 14).

4. Who celebrates the Mass?
Our previous formation left many of us with the impression that the priest celebrated the Mass and the rest of us 'attended' Mass. People adjusted to this understanding, so that while the priest prayed the prayers of the Mass, they often filled in the time with their own prayers. The reality, however, is that Mass is celebrated by the whole congregation (cf *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1140). That is why it requires their 'full, conscious and active participation', whether by word, song, gesture, or stillness and deep silence – but acting as 'one body, one spirit in Christ'. The way we participate is not determined by 'personal preference', (which is what contemporary secular culture emphasises).
The priest's role is still special: he does not act on Christ's behalf because it is Christ himself who acts – through the priest who has been ordained to act in his Person. But this does not make him the only 'celebrant'. According to the prayers of the Mass itself, '*offerimus*', that is, '*we offer*'.

5. Reverence:
Reverence is body language par excellence. It is the demeanour that comes naturally when we are aware of being in God's presence. But there are different ways of being in God's presence, and different expressions of reverence. For example, the reverence proper at a graveside; the reverence proper to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, etc. Each is important in its own circumstances.
The kind of reverence proper to liturgy corresponds to the ways Christ is really present. According to the Council (Liturgy, 7), Christ is present:

- in the congregation ('where two or three are gathered...');
- in the word (where 'Christ is speaking to his people' – present tense);
- in the ministry of those ordained to act in the name of Christ;
- and especially in the Sacrament.

These four different manifestations of Christ's real presence invite different ways of responding. *The appropriate*

way of responding to each is the appropriate way of being reverent.
And so, for example: how we respond to Christ present in his word is different from how we respond to his presence in the Sacrament, and how we acknowledge His presence in the gathering. Greeting one another before Mass begins, followed by a period of silence, helps to form the community that is about to worship as one body. The way we relate to people who have 'gathered in his name' is different from the ways we relate to people who have gathered for social occasions.
To require only one way of being reverent (for example, the reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament), excluding the others, is against the nature of the liturgy.

6. Posture
In the liturgy, postures and gestures are statements of faith. They are ways of saying – with our whole self – what we believe and what we are doing. They *em-body* and *en-act* our inner dispositions, and deepen them. That is why we don't just 'do' them; we need to really mean them – make them mean what our minds and hearts want to say. They also enable the congregation to act as one body.
For example, the presence of Christ is beautifully acknowledged when the book of the Gospels, symbolising Christ, is brought into the assembly, accompanied by song – and in some cultures, dance – and the congregation rises to its feet.
The custom of kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer is regarded as 'laudable'. But it is important to understand the early Christians' practice of standing. Eucharistic Prayer I, originating around the




A sacramentary on the altar during a traditional Latin Mass, St Josaphat Church, New York City. Image: Gregory Shemitz/CNS

***Traditionis Custodes* – 'Guardians of the Tradition', Pope Francis' July 2020 motu proprio on the pre-conciliar Mass, supports the theology, validity, implementation and reception of Vatican II and its liturgical reforms, with tradition and participation dynamically understood.**

year 375, refers to the congregation 'standing around' ('*circum-stantes*' – currently translated as 'gathered here'). The even older Eucharistic Prayer II, originating around the year 215, refers to our being counted 'worthy to stand in Your presence' (currently mistranslated as 'being in Your presence').
At Benediction, we are adoring Christ, for which the appropriate body language is 'down in adoration falling...' That is not mainly what we are doing during the Eucharistic Prayer. The Eucharistic Prayer is addressed almost entirely to the Father. The appropriate body language is that which best corresponds with what the Eucharistic Prayer is saying. For

those early Christians, standing was body language for acknowledging that in Christ we have been raised up.
That is why St John Chrysostom forbade his people to kneel during the Easter season; so did St Augustine. The Council of Nicea forbade kneeling for prayer on Sundays; and when in the ninth century kneeling became more common, it was only on non-festive days, never on days that commemorate the resurrection of Jesus, that is, Sundays and feast days. Standing is still the posture in the Eastern Churches.

Part 3 will conclude Bishop Cullinane's article in the October edition of WelCom.




"I see the Church as a field hospital after battle."

POPE FRANCIS

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There’s nothing ‘up there’ about heaven!

Fr James Lyons



Fr James Lyons.

Every culture has a ‘creation story’ attributing power to what are called the ‘gods’, to explain the origin of things and our part in it all.

Sixty years ago, human beings became space travellers. The first was Russian, Yuri Gagarin. He returned to Earth and scored some points for atheists, saying he didn’t see any ‘God’ up there!

The fascination with the source of our existence and whether or not there is a Creator or God, took another step last month with images from Nasa’s Webb telescope suggesting insights into the origin of the stars and galaxies formed over 13 billion years ago!

All this new knowledge doesn’t really help. It only makes us feel even smaller and totally not in control!

The simplest approach for humans across the centuries has been to put the ‘gods’ in their own realm, separate from us; the ‘gods’ in charge, our destiny determined by our behaviour.

But we humans are proud creatures and like to be the ones in charge; so there has been a long history of ‘takeover bids’. We have tended to forget or deny our ‘dependence’ and act as though we are indeed the ones with all the power.

A belief system emerged about 2000 years ago that offered a new explanation. God was no longer ‘up there’, beyond reach, but had come to be with us, as one of us. Heaven was not a separate entity but actually planted within us.

This God had promised such a revelation for a long time, preparing people through prophets and signs, and the ‘Christ’, a name that means the Promised or Anointed One, came in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

As Christians we have heard his words and been told his teachings; we say we follow his way. However, many, if not most of us, still retain the distinction that heaven and earth are separate and that God is way beyond where we are.

Language doesn’t help. When Jesus speaks of ‘storing up treasure for yourselves in heaven’ or tells of the ‘rich man and Lazarus’ ending up in too different places, we immediately think of heaven as a place we’ve yet to reach.

A better approach is to appreciate that ‘heavenly things’ relate to love which, once begun, lasts forever. It is the earthly part of us that withers and dies. The God that came to our human world in Jesus came to open our eyes to see the treasure within us: the creative spark of God’s loving presence.

Ours is a wonderful faith. We don’t have to search in the shadows or struggle with fears about what happens next – we just have to strengthen our awareness that we already live in the presence of God. The love we feel within us is the seed bed of our eternity.

The terror that currently grips our world is trying to push love aside, to make it feel impotent in the face of hatred and prejudice. Terror cannot triumph because, for those bonded by faith in Jesus Christ, heaven and earth are one.

Our baptismal liturgy endorses this. The newly baptised person is dressed in new clothes, having ‘put on Christ’, becoming a new creation. Heaven and earth combine, the baptised entering the reign of God, eliminating the distinction between heaven and earth, even between life and death.

There is no need to search for God in the heavens. The promise of Jesus to be always with us should remove any doubt concerning God’s location.

Nor must we waste time worrying about where ‘Heaven’ and ‘Hell’ are. We just need to be true to ourselves, to be there for each other, to celebrate our dependence by trusting and living faithfully. Then we will have found the recipe for Paradise!

Well-known author, Joy Cowley, has a book called *Made For Love*. It’s a series of spiritual reflections for couples. A recurring theme is the spiritual essence of love with its beautiful energy to create, to bring people together, to heal, refresh and restore.

Joy writes that ‘Love has no political structure’. Love’s strength is ‘being true to oneself’. With typical simplicity she says, ‘God does not make cardboard hearts’. How great to know we’re not recyclable!



NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope reveals first images of previously unseen universe – cosmic cliffs, glittering landscape of star birth.
Image: NASA, ESA, CSA, and STScI.

Gospel Reading: Sunday September 4, 2022

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – LUKE 14:25-33

²⁵ Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. ²⁶ ‘Anyone who comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ No one who does not carry his cross and come after me can be my disciple. ²⁸ ‘And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work,

anyone who saw it would start making fun of him and saying, ³⁰ “Here is someone who started to build and was unable to finish.” ³¹ Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who was advancing against him with twenty thousand? ³² If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. ³³ So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple without giving up all he owns.’

‘We are in rangapū – partnership with God’

Nick Wilson

Jesus is clear – no earthly attachment to person or thing should keep us from following God.

God is continually calling us past where we have arrived to in faith thus far; challenging us to make our own relevant sacrifices in order to take up the Cross more truly and deeply. Make no mistake – being a disciple of Jesus and living the Kingdom is increasingly challenging in post-Christian Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is of this kingdom, that Pope Paul VI in 1975 noted in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* n.8, that the Church exists to proclaim the Kingdom of God and therefore everything else is relative. Do we know this in our heart to be true? We, the people of God, the disciples of Jesus, are the Church and it costs! What non-sensical reasons exist for us to avoid this? Maybe we rely on the agency of the administrative Church? Maybe we used to, but not anymore! We are in rangapū – partnership with God in the mission!

Word on the street is that ‘pray, pay and obey’ is long dead. Yours and my desire and subsequent lived conviction demonstrates ownership of our faith. Living the Kingdom

incorporates everyone especially when it difficult; it is where the rubber hits the road. This precept is inclusive across all cultures, socio-economic statuses, and abilities.

Recently, our national synod syntheses indicated that this mahi – work is before us: inclusion, welcome, mission focused! The Spirit has been clear. Now we intentionally pursue this renewed Kaupapa – purpose.

Jesus went to great pains to teach us to pray for the kingdom and Luke is speaking to God’s intention today; we cannot be lukewarm.

Jesus went to great pains to teach us to pray for the kingdom and Luke is speaking to God’s intention today; we cannot be lukewarm.

No reira, kia kaha! kia māia! kia manawanui te mihana i ngā wā katoa – be strong, be bold, be of great heart in the mission at all times!

Nick Wilson, Pou Ārahi o te Mana Whānau Mana Taiohi Diocesan Young Catholics Team Leader, Diocese of Palmerston North.

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Celebrating a life of priestly mission in PNG

Fr Philip Gibbs svd, originally from Lower Hutt, and now President of Divine Word University (DWU) in Madang, Papua New Guinea, recently celebrated his 75th birthday and 50 years of vows to the priesthood.

After leaving St Bernard's College Lower Hutt in 1964, Philip began his studies at Holy Name seminary in Christchurch but soon recognised his calling was for missionary work in Oceania. Ordained in 1978 in Hamilton, Philip's first assignment was in the remote Porgera-Paiela region in the Western Highland province of Papua New Guinea.

From there he balanced academic studies with practical grassroots ministry over many years. Philip completed his PhD in Theology at the Gregorian University in Rome in 1995. This led to several teaching roles in Manila, to Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, and an internship with VIVAT International at the United Nations. [VIVAT is an NGO with more than 25,000 sisters, brothers and priests from 11 Catholic Religious Congregations, working in 120 countries promoting human rights through advocacy at international and local levels.]

Philip's life has taken him to every continent including Antarctica where he had the honour to bless the Air New Zealand memorial on Mt Erebus. Over more recent years Philip has been involved in research field work for HIV-AIDS and Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV). In 2019 he was awarded an OBE for his dedicated work with the peoples of PNG.

Now as President of DWU he considers that it's a real challenge and a privilege being in charge of a young multicultural university in a developing country. There are serious financial and social issues to deal with. Philip says, 'Each day I am encouraged knowing we are providing an educational opportunity on five campuses



Fr Philip Gibbs SVD at his recent 75th birthday celebrations, Divine Word University, PNG.



Fr Philip Gibbs SVD renewing his vows.

for some 4000 students. In our publications we contribute to new knowledge. Our earliest SVD missionaries who arrived on this land 125 years ago in 1896 witnessed to the Word in isolated villages. Here we are today witnessing to the Word at a university with internet access to the educational resources available in the global village.'

DWU is a leading tertiary institution that is ecumenical, co-educational and privately governed, with some government support. The university's educational philosophy is rooted in the Catholic tradition

and well-articulated in a charter in which it states, 'the institution should be a Christian community based on love for all people for each other, because each is a child of God'.

The university motto: *Sic currere ut comprehendatis* (Run to win) calls for success — not in a ruthless competitive way but as an honest effort to achieve one's full potential. Students come from all twenty-two provinces of PNG and from abroad including Solomon Islands. DWU has special interest to advance opportunities for individuals from isolated rural communities to help build the economic and social capacity of the region.

In a country with very high levels of gender-based violence DWU has a special interest in providing educational opportunities for women. Parents favour the university as a place where their daughters can grow and mature in peace, safety and respect. Of more than 1700 students currently enrolled at the Madang campus, more than half are women.

The university has invested significantly in information communication technology. They have pioneered the 'one laptop for staff and students' policy so that everyone is issued with a laptop at the beginning of their time at the university.

Philip has travelled the world encountering rich and deep experiences as well as building an impressive academic record. His visits to New Zealand are infrequent but provide opportunities to gain some 'R&R' before returning to the country he now considers 'home'.

Source: Catherine Gibbs

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For more information contact
Steve 027 356 9555



Celebration Sunday Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert

'A woman of great faith' will be the theme of the Celebration Sunday Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert on Sunday, 2 October.

The celebration will take place during the 11am Sunday Mass at The Chapel of Our Lady's Home of Compassion, Rhine St, Island Bay. It will be a time to reflect on the life of this remarkable woman, he wahine whakapono nui. Liturgy resources will be available. All are welcome.

Vincentians celebrate St Vincent de Paul

On Sunday 25 September, Vincentians from Wellington, Hutt-Wairapapa and Kapi Mana Areas will gather at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Tawa to join with parishioners in celebrating the feast day of St Vincent de Paul at the 10.30am Mass. We are pleased to have Cardinal John Dew lead us in this celebration.

This year is very special as Covid-19 made it impossible for the last two years to gather and celebrate St Vincent de Paul as our model and patron. Right from the beginning in 1833, our founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, insisted we follow the example of St Vincent in our work of loving our neighbour through practical assistance to the poor.



St Vincent de Paul has been an essential part of parish life in New Zealand for over 150 years and celebrating in a parish give us a chance to thank people for the assistance that makes our work possible.

Gerard Stevens, Area President Kapi Mana, Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand.

DATES AND EVENTS - WHAT'S ON IN THE TWO DIOCESES

Saturday 10 September

Come and See Vocations Morning – meet other like-minded young men, talk to priests and seminarians, and ask questions about a vocation to priesthood, 9am–11.30am, St Teresa's Church, Karori. Mass at 9am, followed by breakfast, fellowship and discussion. For catering purposes, contact l.hensel@wn.catholic.org.nz or text 021 164 580 to confirm you are coming. Visit us at wellingtonpriests.org

Sunday 11 September

Prayer Walk at Te Awakairangi – join Care for Creation event at several gathering points along river trail, with parishioners from five parishes of valley and friends from other denominations. 'All day' walk begins 9am, Harcourt Park, Upper Hutt, ends at dusk at Petone river mouth. Go to Facebook 'River Prayer Walk' or email riverprayerwalk@gmail.com for more information. All welcome.

Wednesday 14 September

Archdiocese of Wellington Chrism Mass – 7pm, St Teresa's Pro Cathedral, Karori. Parish representatives collect Holy Oils for their parishes. Oils for South Island parishes will be sent after Mass. Due to Red Light setting for Covid during Holy Week it was not possible to have usual archdiocesan Chrism Masses for the South and North Islands.

Friday 16 September

eXaLT – Relevant Worship, Adoration, Fellowship, for youth and young adults, 7pm, St Joseph's Church, Mt Victoria. All welcome.

Sunday 18 September

Kaitiaki at Ōtari – 'Appreciating and Caring for Creation', an ecumenical, family-afternoon walk and BBQ, 4pm–6pm, Troup Picnic Area along easy flat track. Reflection, scavenger hunt, scripture, song, prayer and ideas. Start Ōtari-Wilton Bush Northern Picnic Area, Wilton Bush Rd, Northern Carpark entrance from Churchill Drive Road, 40m from carpark. Ends with BBQ (koha for food appreciated). Contact Estelle Henrys at ev.henrys@gmail.com for further information.

Saturday 24 September

Ordination – Deacon Alfred Tong ordination to priesthood, 11am, St Joseph's Church, Upper Hutt.

Sunday 2 October

Archdiocese of Wellington and Ecology Justice and Peace Commission have signed up to Laudato si' Action Platform. Learn more at Sacred Heart Cathedral 10.30am Mass, St Thomas More Church, 30A Worcestor St, Wilton, last Sunday in Season of Creation 2022.



Tertiary Study Scholarships



The Catholic Foundation offers eight scholarships to students living in the Wellington Archdiocese and who are in their final year of secondary education. The scholarships, worth \$2,000 each, are to help with study in a student's first year of tertiary education. Applicants are invited to apply online by **30 September**.

Go to catholicfoundation.org.nz/grants-and-scholarships/ to read the scholarship conditions and information, and to apply.

For more information, please contact the Catholic Foundation secretary at admin@catholicfoundation.org.nz or ph (04) 496-1721.



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Child Safeguarding Week

Child Safeguarding Week, 4–10 September, is held annually in Aotearoa New Zealand to raise awareness of child abuse prevention wherever children are – at home, the community, places they go. Organised by Safeguarding Children - Tiakina ngā tamariki, the objective is to raise the profile of issues connected with child abuse prevention and child protection. This year Safeguarding Children are celebrating 11 years in existence, having trained over 33,000 of the workforce in child protection. Safeguarding Children has organised a petition to change the Children's Act (2014) to ensure better protection for children. Go to childsafeguardingweek.org.nz for information.

'Please consider signing the petition,' says Catherine Jones smsm, Safeguarding Adviser, Archdiocese of Wellington. 'It is endorsed by the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, of which the Catholic Church is a member. Let us unite prayer and action for the safeguarding of our children and vulnerable adults.'

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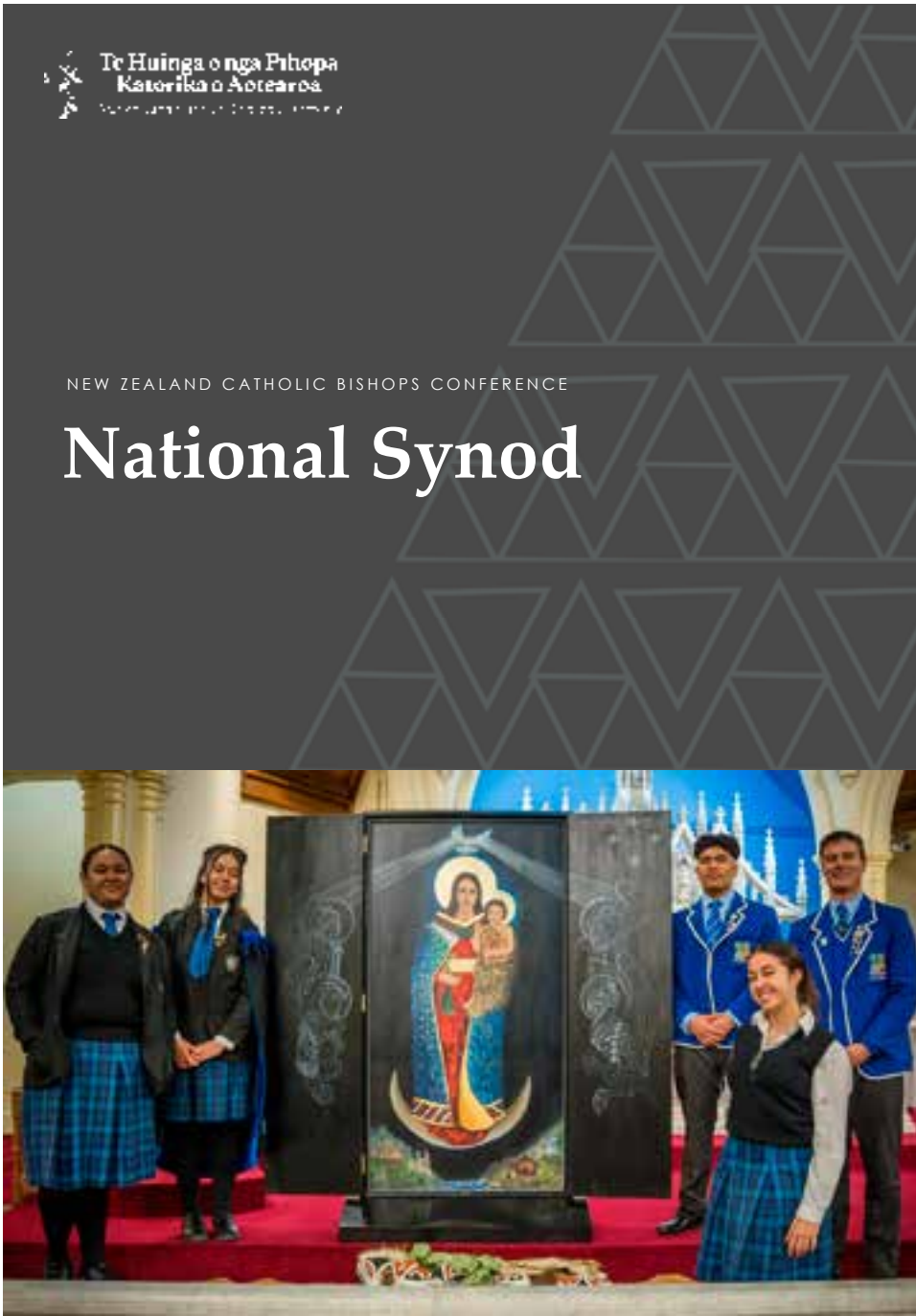
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National Synod synthesis – what the New Zealand Church has to say

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference has compiled a national syntheses document from the diocesan phase of the Synod 2023 process and the national hui held in Wellington in July to synthesise (bring together) the diocesan documents. The national document has been sent to Rome as part of the Pope Francis’ synodal path to the Church’s future, which will culminate in the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in October next year.

Six strong themes and women, biculturalism and abuse feature in the New Zealand national Synod synthesis.



The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference National Syntheses document was sent to Rome in August.

Six strong themes have emerged from the diocesan and national Synod processes undertaken in the Catholic Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. The themes are:

- Inclusion
- Gathering
- Leadership
- Education and Formation
- Mission
- Synodality and Change.

The role of women, biculturalism, and abuse in the Church cut across those six themes.

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference has compiled a national syntheses document from the diocesan phase of the Synod 2023 process and the national hui held in Wellington in July to synthesise the diocesan documents.

The national document has been sent to Rome as part of the Pope’s synodal path to the Church’s future, which will culminate in the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in October next year.

Similar national documents have been compiled by bishops’ conferences around the world. They will be used by the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops to draft a working document called the *Instrumentum Laboris* in preparation for the October 2023 synod. Bishops’ conferences will also take part in ‘continental’ gatherings – in New Zealand’s case a gathering of Oceania conferences, which will include Australia and Pacific island states.

In the introduction to the national synthesis just completed, the bishops say many of the people who took part in the New Zealand synodal process at parish, diocesan and national levels expressed great appreciation of the opportunity to reflect on the journey together.

‘They spoke positively and with love about the place the Church has in their lives. They want the Church to be a life-giving and active presence in the world, an outward-looking servant Church; a welcoming, inclusive and transformative presence for individuals and communities. They see the synodal process itself being as important as the outcome, because in listening to one another the Holy Spirit is present,’ the introduction says.

‘For some people, especially those participating as individuals rather than in groups, the process provided an opportunity to express anger, cynicism, hurt and rejection of the Church due to past experiences. The Church was named as a place of alienation, and irrelevant, especially in its teaching on human sexuality. The responses from those who feel ignored, excluded or who have been deeply hurt made painful reading, but their desire to be part of a welcoming Catholic community was clear. Their responses are valued and we are learning from them.’

Pope Francis launched the two-year synod process – the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in the Catholic Church – in 2021 to hear what ordinary Catholics from around the world think should be the future direction of the Church.

Points from the six main Aotearoa New Zealand themes:

- Inclusion – We want the Church to be a non-judgmental and safe place of welcome and belonging. Church teaching which excludes some people from the Eucharist is causing pain and hurt. Awareness of those who feel marginalised or excluded can lead to new attitudes and action. Action on inclusion must be part of our synodal journey.
- Gathering – There is great love for the Mass, but also concerns about inclusion and lay participation. A new English translation of the Roman Missal is needed. Homilies must help people to encounter Jesus in the reality of their lives. If lay people are allowed to give homilies, they must have good formation. Small groups for prayer, formation, scripture study, and mission are needed.
- Leadership – Collaborative ministry should become the norm, with greater sacramental involvement for lay people. Co-responsible leadership with barriers to lay participation in decision-making should be removed. Women should participate equally in decision making and have greater participation in liturgical roles.
- Mission – Formation is needed for mission and help with engaging in mission collectively. Ecumenical activity and interfaith dialogue need to be embraced as part of mission. Shame related to abuse in the Church makes evangelisation difficult. Prophetic leadership is needed in the community on social justice, ecological and bicultural issues. The only public voice of the Church for many is on euthanasia and human sexuality.
- Education and Formation – Further formation is needed for both lay people and clergy in discernment and synodality. There is a need for catechesis in Church teaching. Education and formation in safeguarding is essential for both lay people and clergy. Seminarians’ formation should involve more community engagement and include biculturalism and cultural sensitivity. Both clergy and laity need formation in collaborative ministry and co-responsible leadership.
- Synodality and Change – The Synod process is exciting and transformative. We want to bring back those who are missing. Synodality and discernment can help us change while holding on to what is central to our faith. We want to learn to journey together in a synodal way.

The NZCBC National Syntheses document as sent to Rome in August is online at: catholic.org.nz/assets/NZCBC-National-Synod-Synthesis-Aug-2022.pdf
The six diocesan Synod documents synthesis documents published on the NZCBC website in June are online at: catholic.org.nz/news/media-releases/diocesan-synthesis/