



Finish line in sight

At work on the interior upper-level walls of Sacred Heart Cathedral are traditional stone masons Nicolas Peveteau (l) and Callum Johnson (r) of Le Maçon Stone Mason Company, with cathedral restoration project site manager Tony Gormley of LT McGuiness.

The classical-style cathedral in Hill St, Thorndon, completed in 1901, was closed in 2018 because of earthquake risks. Major repair work has been underway since 2020, including seismic strengthening to the roof and walls and interior and exterior restoration.

The cathedral project is expected to be completed next year enabling the Category 1 historic building to once again be able to serve the Catholic congregation and the wider community of Wellington.

Coadjutor Archbishop Paul Martin sm, who is closely involved with the restoration project, says, 'My desire is to see the Church community support people in faith and help others to know Christ,' which will be enhanced with the newly restored cathedral.

Photo: Annette Scullion, WelCom

» Cathedral restoration project close to completion, p 20.

Pope tells people of Ukraine: 'your pain is my pain'

Nine months from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Pope Francis has sent a letter to the Ukrainian people praying for peace and saying he shares in their suffering, especially that of the children, the elderly and women who have endured violence.

'The absurd madness of war has been unleashed on your land for nine months. In your sky the sinister roar of explosions and the disturbing sound of sirens resound without stopping – your cities are hammered by bombs while showers of missiles cause death, destruction and pain, hunger, thirst and cold.

On your streets, many have had to flee, leaving their homes and loved ones. Alongside your great rivers flow rivers of blood and tears every day. I would like to unite my tears with yours and tell you that there is not a day in which I am not close to you and I do not carry you in my heart and in my prayers. Your pain is my pain.

'In the cross of Jesus today I see you. You who suffer the terror unleashed by this aggression. Yes, the cross that tortured the Lord

lives again in the tortures found on the corpses, in the mass graves discovered in various cities, in those and in many other bloody images that have entered our souls, which raise a cry: why? How can men treat other men like this? Many tragic stories come back to my mind that I come to know about. Above all those of the little ones: how many children killed, injured or orphaned, torn from their mothers!

'I cry with you for every little one who, because of this war, has lost his life, like Kira in Odessa, like Lisa in Vinnytsia, and like hundreds of other children: in each of them the whole of humanity is defeated.

'Now they are in the womb of God, they see your troubles and they pray that they will end. But how can we not feel anguish for them and for all those, young and old, who

have been deported? The pain of Ukrainian mothers is incalculable.'

Pope Francis then underlined the courage of the young people who are fighting for Ukraine: 'I think then of you, young people, who in order to courageously defend your homeland you had to take up arms rather than the dreams you had nurtured for the future; I think of you, wives, who have lost your husbands and biting your lips continue in silence, with dignity and determination, to make every sacrifice for your children; to you, adults, who try in every way to protect your loved ones; to you, elders, who instead of having a peaceful sunset were thrown into the dark night of war; to you, women who have suffered violence and who carry heavy weights in their hearts; to all of you, wounded



'Your pain is my pain. On the cross of Jesus today I see you, you who suffer the terror unleashed by this aggression,' writes the Pontiff in his letter to the people of Ukraine on 24 November, nine months after the eruption of war in Ukraine.

Photo: Vatican News

» Continued on p 2

From the editor

Annette Scullion

Tena Koutou katoa

The Synod on synodality has been a major event for New Zealand Catholics this year, as it has been globally. Its significance is still to unfold but it will surely lead to a more collaborative and inclusive model for decision-making and leadership in the church.

The Synod has now reached the continental stage. Some 50 theologians, pastoral workers and bishops gathered from 22 September–2 October at Frascati near Rome to draft the working document for the continental phase of the Synod. The Synod Office received 112 submissions from the 114 Bishops Conferences in the world, which is unprecedented.

The Document for the Continental Stage was published on 27 October and is now the subject of reflection in the continental gatherings. In our part of the world this involves the four Bishops Conferences of Oceania.

These gatherings will each produce their own document, which will then be used to draft the working document for the October 2023 Synod Assembly. Pope Francis recently announced there will be a second Synod

Assembly in Rome in 2024.

In this edition of WelCom there are many issues to engage us. The Pope’s Letter to the People of Ukraine (see story p. 1), expressing his grief at their enormous suffering due to ‘the absurd madness of war’, reminds is of the need for compassion and humanitarian action for all those who suffer. Pope Francis’ sensitivity to injustice and the sufferings of the most vulnerable is a model for all of us, wherever we live, whatever our circumstances.

In other stories, the Hikoi of Faith (pages 10 and 11) visits the parishes of South Wellington where faith communities are adapting to parish amalgamations. Restoration work at the Sacred Heart (pp. 1 and 20) is regaining momentum, with the exciting prospect of an opening later next year.

WelCom would like to wish all readers and our advertisers a happy and holy Christmas. It has been a difficult year for many, with Covid still around and so many aspects of life still to return to normal. Let our faith be a source of peace for ourselves and all those we encounter this Christmas season.

Ngā mihi.

‘A very blessed, peaceful and happy Christmas to you all’



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

As we come to the end of what seems to have been for many a tumultuous year, and as we seem to be hurtling towards Christmas faster than ever, it is time for me to say THANK YOU to everyone around the Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North. It is also time to stop and reflect once again on what it means to have our God living among us, present to us and walking with us.

For everyone the year has been challenging. We are not over Covid, many people are still wary, and cases are increasing again. Please continue to keep yourselves and others safe. People everywhere are affected by the cost of living and life is very hard for many people, so let’s look for ways to care for and support those who are really struggling. Some parishes are still challenged with property issues, and with how in these times our faith communities can be vibrant and alive, prayerful and reflective, caring and kind.

It is very challenging to work with far fewer priests, and it is time to grow in awareness that we all have gifts to offer, and we are all called to work together.

The Catholic Centre in Hill St

had to be closed at the beginning of this year because it is an earthquake risk. This has made it very difficult for the staff who work to support parishes, schools and other Catholic institutions in the archdiocese. I want to assure all WelCom readers this is still our mission, and we will continue to work hard to be supportive of you all.

Our Cathedral is still closed as work continues to strengthen and renovate it. Please think of how you might be able to support the call for financial help to complete the remaining work that needs to be done.

In the midst of all of this, we have been travelling together on the Synodal journey. I thank very sincerely all those who have taken part in the ‘Spiritual Conversations’ as part of the Synod process, and those who have organised them. Pope Francis has reminded us that ‘In Mary, we learn how to travel as a synodal Church. We learn to be at home in the world and to make a home for all those who are seeking home, a place of welcome and refuge, healing and salvation, a place of reconciliation, peace and the assurance of eternal life.’

“We learn from Mary, and a Synod reflection document reminds us that one of the oldest and most venerated icons of Mary, mother of God, is known as the ‘hodegetria’: she who shows us the way.”

We do learn from Mary, and a Synod reflection document reminds us one of the oldest and most venerated icons of Mary, mother of God, is known as the ‘hodegetria’: she who shows us the way. Mary is the one who accompanies the Church on this journey, on life’s journey. In many icons Mary directs attention away from herself to her Son, to Jesus the source of our salvation, the One in whom we hope. Mary does not



A Hodegetria or Virgin Hodegetria (Our Lady of the Way) is an iconographic depiction of the Virgin Mary holding the Child Jesus at her side while pointing to him as the source of salvation for humankind. ‘The Madonna and Child Enthroned’, by Guido of Siena, 1285–95, Church of San Regolo, Montaione, Florence, Italy.
Image: Public Domain

speak. She does not need to. She simply directs our gaze to her Son.

“We learn from Mary, and a Synod reflection document reminds us that one of the oldest and most venerated icons of Mary, mother of God, is known as the ‘hodegetria’: she who shows us the way.”

As I use this column to wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas. I thank you for your contribution to the Church throughout this year. I pray that Mary will continue to point out the way for us to Jesus our Saviour, to him who is the source of our life and hope. May this be a blessed a peaceful and a very happy Christmas for you all.

» Continued from p 1

in body and soul.

‘I think of you and I am close to you with affection and admiration for how you face such hard trials – and I think of you, volunteers, who spend your every day for the people; to you, Shepherds of God’s holy people, who – often at great risk to your safety – have stayed close to the people, bringing God’s consolation and the solidarity of brothers, creatively transforming community places and convents into lodgings where you can offer hospitality, relief and food to those in difficult conditions.

‘I am thinking of refugees and internally displaced persons, who are far from their homes, many of which have been destroyed.’ The pontiff continues the letter with a thought ‘to the Authorities, for whom I pray: they have the duty to govern the country in tragic times and to make far-sighted decisions for peace and to develop the

economy during the destruction of so many infrastructures vital, in the city as in the countryside. Dear brothers and sisters, in all this sea of evil and pain –ninety years after the terrible genocide of the Holodomor – I am in awe of your good ardour.

‘Despite the immense tragedy it is undergoing, the Ukrainian people have never been discouraged or abandoned to pity. The world has recognised a bold and strong people, a people that suffers and prays, weeps and fights, resists and hopes: a noble and martyred people. I continue to be close to you, with my heart and with prayers, with humanitarian concern, so that you feel accompanied, so that you do not get used to war, so that you are not left alone today and above all tomorrow, when perhaps the temptation will arise to forget your sufferings.’

Source: Crux; Vatican News; Nova News

Although exact numbers are impossible to obtain, it is estimated roughly 100,000 Russian troops have been killed or wounded since the war began, and Ukrainian military have suffered similar casualties, with the number continuing to grow daily.

According to United Nations estimates, around 6,500 civilians have so far been killed, however, this toll only counts deaths once a name and other identifying details have been confirmed. Ukrainian officials estimate the real number of civilians killed is closer to 40,000.

Meanwhile, some 7.8 million people have fled Ukraine since February and are living abroad as refugees, according to the UN Refugee Agency. Millions of others are internally displaced within Ukraine, marking the largest displacement of people in Europe since World War II.

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Sending articles to WelCom

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

Contributed 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 including your name, address and phone number. Articles may be edited for length or clarity at the editor’s discretion.

Photos should be in original format (unedited, uncropped), large file size of at least one megabyte (MB) and attached to your 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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From Shed 5 to the Soup Kitchen

Michael Fitzsimons

When Sam Johnson saw an advertisement for a kitchen manager at the Compassion Soup Kitchen in Tory Street, he knew it was time for a change.

Originally from Yorkshire, he had done quite a bit of travelling before settling in Wellington with his Kiwi wife about seven years ago. On his travels he worked as a chef, and went on to work in Wellington restaurants such as Shed 5, Penthouse Cinema and Plum Café.

‘I was getting to the stage with hospitality where it felt like the same grind every day. When I saw this job come up, the idea of helping people appealed to me and it was something that was missing from my general happiness.

‘Stepping into this role filled the void – having the opportunity to interact with these guys who come to the Soup Kitchen and seeing the difference you can make. They all come from interesting backgrounds. Some have had really tough times and others just decide to live the way they do.

‘I’ve been here for about four years. I’ve just fallen in love with the whole organisation and working with the Sisters who are

incredibly special.

‘Suzanne Aubert was such an incredible lady. She comes from France, starts up a hospital and a soup kitchen and all the rest. It’s a great testament to the Sisters that 121 years later it’s still going strong.’

Sam came on board as kitchen manager but these days has wider responsibilities for staff, support workers and day-to-day operations. There are about 10 regular staff and about 200 volunteers are on the roster.

Being able to keep the Soup Kitchen going during the Covid-19 lockdowns was very satisfying, says Sam.

‘During lockdown we saw our numbers go through the roof. We provided about 250 takeaway meals a day – there were lines of people queueing up along the street. There was nowhere else for them to go. They were such uncertain times and we didn’t know how serious it was all going to be. It was very special to be able to continue to operate and serve these guys.’

Sam says the Soup Kitchen is looking to expand its services in response to a growing need and the rising cost of living. There has been a 33 per cent increase in demand for Soup Kitchen meals

over the last year, with more than 60,000 meals served to guests and nearly 10,000 meals delivered. A sit-down dinner and breakfast are offered six days a week, as well as takeaway meals.

‘We also deliver lunches twice a week out to Waiwhetu Marae and Kokiri Community Hub in Naenae and we are looking at how we can do more. There are families who have to choose between food and accommodation – hopefully we can bridge that gap so they don’t have to make that choice.’

The Soup Kitchen relies heavily on public donations and the massive support of food rescue organisations, such as Kiwi Community Assistance and Kaibosh.

‘Around Christmas we get lots of support from the public – monetary donations and food and lots of hams. The donations mean we can buy some special items to go alongside the donated food. I love it. It’s a busy but really joyful period. We will be one of the small handful of places that will be open over Christmas.

‘We do get a lot of support and people are generous with donations but with growing needs we still need more.’



Sam Johnson, Deputy and Kitchen Manager of the Compassion Soup Kitchen.

Photo: Michael Fitzsimons

Compassion Christmas Appeal

The slowing of the New Zealand economy and the rising cost of living has affected all New Zealanders in 2022 which is why the Sisters of Compassion have an ever greater need to raise funds this Christmas.

‘Hunger is not just an issue for the abject poor,’ says Dr Chris Gallivan, Tumu Whakarae of the Sisters of Compassion group.

‘Across New Zealand, hard-working Kiwi families are now finding it incredibly difficult to put a hot meal on the table. At the Compassion Soup Kitchen, we are committed to helping whoever needs it – no questions asked.’

As well as providing food through the Soup Kitchen, the Sisters of Compassion provide housing to over 200 tenants in

Upper Hutt, Levi, Foxton, and Shannon. As part of the migrant community programme, around 40 people have been welcomed as refugees this year and been accommodated at Our Lady’s Home of Compassion in Island Bay.

You can support the works of the Sisters of Compassion by donating to the Christmas Appeal on their website: www.compassion.org.nz

Marriage Encounter closes in New Zealand



Fr Ron Bennett and Neil and Francie Ivamy of Tararua cut the 40th anniversary cake in October 2018 for Marriage Encounter celebrating its 40 years of mission in New Zealand since arriving in 1978. Photo: Supplied

Fr Ron Bennett

There is season.....

The Book of Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 talks about the seasons of life. This year the season of Marriage Encounter came to an end in Aotearoa-New Zealand – at least the giving of Marriage Encounter weekends. Its mission lives on in those who have experienced a weekend, and its influence in their lives.

Marriage Encounter came to New Zealand in 1978, as a gift from Australian couples and priests. A team of three couples and a priest would come from one of the Australian States, arriving in Auckland in June 1978 for an ME Weekend, and then drive down to Wellington to convene a weekend there. Each month, a team from a different State would arrive to give weekends. In a short time, we had our own New Zealand Marriage Encounter team.

Forty-four years later, in July this year, Marriage Encounter formally came to an end on these shores, due mainly to a shortage of couples to give the weekends. In that time, many couples and priests have taken part in an ME Weekend.

Marriage Encounter is unique in that it seeks to renew both the sacraments of Marriage and Priesthood in the Catholic Church. That was one of the strengths of the movement. Both sacraments are calls to be Lovers – a couple’s love for each other, and a priest’s love for his people. It also provided a bond between these two sacraments.

Its message is for happy couples, who love each other deeply and want to spend quality time together to celebrate their love, away from any distractions. It is also for priests, as they see their people’s love for them, and reignite their love for their people. It has also given birth to Retrouvaille, for marriages at risk, and Engaged Encounter, for couples preparing for marriage. Retrouvaille has ceased in New Zealand, but Engaged Encounter continues in Wellington.

Fr Ron Bennett, parish priest for the Catholic Parish of Otari, Wellington, has been closely involved with Marriage Encounter since it began in New Zealand 44 years ago. The mission of Worldwide Marriage Encounter is ‘to proclaim the value of Marriage and Holy Orders in the Church and in the world’.



St Patrick’s College Wellington

New Zealand’s oldest Catholic boys’ college

Congratulations to St Patrick’s College Dux for 2022 – Ruben Manz and to joint Proxime Accessit – Dimitri Economou and Joshua Sison. Congratulations also to our Victor Ludorum – Samuel Navarra. St Patrick’s College Junior Prizegiving will be held on Friday 9 December at 10.00am in the O’Shea Performing Arts Centre.

The staff of St Patrick’s College wishes you all a wonderful Christmas and safe and relaxing holiday period. May we all remember the message of the Angels “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward all people”. Meri Kirihimete me te tau hou.

Sectare Fidem – Hold firm to the Faith



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Bishop appointments

Following recent media enquiries about the expected timeframe for the appointment of bishops to the two dioceses of Palmerston North and Hamilton, Bishop Steve Lowe, Bishop of Auckland, Secretary of the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference issued the following statement to clarify the process.

‘When a diocese requires a new bishop, the Apostolic Nuncio [the papal representative in New Zealand] starts a process of consultations with a range of lay people and clergy to look at the pastoral needs of the diocese and suggest names of potential candidates. The Nuncio passes this information on to the Vatican, which confirms a short list of candidates called a terna. The Nuncio then starts a second consultation process with a wide variety of people on the specific candidates who are being considered. These people are also asked to suggest others who might be consulted. When this process is complete the Nuncio sends his report to the Vatican and ultimately to the Pope who is the one who appoints bishops. When the Pope nominates a new bishop, the Nuncio informs the nominated priest and asks whether he is willing to accept. The process of appointing a bishop is not fast, and this can lead to frustration and speculation on what is happening. Behind the scenes, however, the process is happening.’

Royal Commission and Tautoko

The Royal Commission’s Public Hearing into the responses of faith-based institutions to abuse in their care, took place from 13–21 October. The hearing examined witnesses from particular faith institutions, including the Catholic Church, on matters set out in the Royal Commission’s Terms of Reference, focusing on failures by faith institutions to prevent and respond to abuse in faith-based care. This was the last public hearing in which representatives for the Catholic Church will need to appear.

Te Rōpū Tautoko is the group co-ordinating the response of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care. Tautoko’s work will now focus on the commission’s various reports including the Final Report that is due in June 2023, and interacting with the Crown Response Unit, which is charged with putting the commission’s recommendations into action. Tautoko has released a roadmap of the changes the Church needs to make in anticipation of the Commission’s final recommendations. The roadmap is on Tautoko’s website at tautoko.catholic.org.nz/roadmap

Archdiocesan offices

Because of the Wellington Catholic Centre being classified as an earthquake risk earlier this year everyone had to move out of the centre. Now, all Archdiocesan offices are located on Level 2 of 204 Thorndon Quay, Wellington. The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference Office and Caritas Aotearoa are located on Level 5 of the same building. The New Zealand Catholic Education Office is located at the Mercy Centre in Guilford Tce, Thorndon.

COP27 on climate: ‘Tangible action not promises to pay required’

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is deeply concerned carbon-cutting commitments under the Paris Agreement on climate change still leave the world facing a 2.5°C temperature rise – and that’s if countries deliver on their promises.

‘It seems the “1.5 to stay alive” call from the Pacific has still not been taken on board,’ Caritas Director Mena Antonio said following the end of the COP27 UN climate change conference in Egypt last month. ‘There is no timeline for countries to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and fossil fuel subsidies that are causing damage to our common home, and no increased ambition to cut emissions – only a repetition of promises to “accelerate efforts”.

‘While we welcome the agreement to establish a special loss and damage fund – this fund needs to deliver for those bearing the brunt of climate change – both in quantity and quality,’ said Ms Antonio.

‘Unless properly drawn up with input from those who are already suffering loss of land, livelihoods and cultures, this new fund runs the risk of becoming just another climate fund that will be inaccessible to local communities and not meet the urgent needs

of those impacted the most.’

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand contributed to a joint Caritas Oceania/Jubilee Australia report on climate finance and debt launched shortly before COP27. The report *Twin clouds on the horizon* called for reform of the global climate finance structures to address barriers to access, including mechanisms to deliver finance directly to local communities.

‘Affected local communities need to be empowered to deliver, monitor and evaluate climate-related projects. The needs of the poorest and the most vulnerable – such as women, girls and people with disabilities – need to be prioritised for access,’ Ms Antonio said.

Caritas commends the New Zealand Government for its expanded climate finance strategy, and consultation with Pacific Island leaders and civil society for effective delivery through new mechanisms and looks forward to more detail in the New Year.



‘Twin clouds on the horizon’ Caritas Oceania/Jubilee Australia joint report on climate finance and debt, launched ahead of COP27, calls for reform of the global climate finance structures to address barriers to access.

Kainga Pasifika Services Trust officially opens



Kainga Pasifika Services founders Deacon Tevita Faka’osi and Malcolm Byford address the guests alongside Debbie Lucy and other KPS Trust staff.

Photo: Supplied

A new initiative to provide support services for Pasifika Communities in the Hawke’s Bay was officially launched in Hastings last month. Kainga Pasifika Services Trust was formally opened on 24 November at a ceremony at the Aubert Centre in Flaxmere, the base of its operations. The Aubert Centre is owned by the Catholic Parish of Hastings, which leases the premises to Kainga Pasifika.

KPS Trust became a registered charitable

Trust in November 2020. Jointly founded by Deacon Tevita Faka’osi and Malcolm Byford its mission is to promote and support safe and healthy relationships and to provide services to benefit all Pasifika in Hawke’s Bay.

KPS Trust now employs six full-time and five part-time staff and has contracts with a range of agencies, including Ministry of Social Development, Pasifika Futures Ltd, Oranga Tamariki and connections for the

Driving School.


Over 70 guests attended the opening including representatives of local churches, Iwi, the City Council, and government agencies.

Guest speaker Charles Ropotini gave an informative history of the Aubert Centre and Suzanne Aubert’s work in the Hawke’s Bay and linked the work of the Sisters of Compassion in Flaxmere to the Trust. ‘The Aubert Centre in Flaxmere, Hastings,’ he said, ‘is now the base for Kainga Pasifika.’

Co-founder and KPS business leader Malcolm Byford said the foundation and establishment of KPS is based on the quality of the relationship between its two founders – himself and Rev Deacon Tevita Faka’osi. ‘The crucible for this was DOVE Hawke’s Bay when in 2012, we were both appointed to positions within the organisation, Tevita as Co-ordinator of Pacific Services and me as General Manager. We were both committed to a service “by Pasifika for Pasifika” with a focus on family violence. Over time a trust between us grew that enabled our vulnerabilities and strengths to intertwine and allow for the emergence of the models and practices that KPS is built on today.

‘Kainga Pasifika looks forward to 2023 as a time of continuing its services and for cementing long-term partnerships with government agencies for the delivery of support for the Pasifika Communities of Hawke’s Bay,’ said Malcom.

After the official launch Fr Anthony Htun formally blessing the building, and guests were invited to view the premises before proceeding to lunch.



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

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Renaissance - The Age of Genius exhibition

An immersive multi-media experience featuring masterpieces of the 10 most famous Renaissance masters, will be showing as an enhanced digital projection at Auckland's Aotea Centre in January.

Titled 'Renaissance - The Age of Genius' the masterpieces will be displayed for the first time in a single exhibition, says Stewart Macpherson of the Stetson Group, co-presenting the exhibition with Auckland Live.

The gallery space will be transformed from floor to ceiling into an impressive synchronisation of masterworks by Giotto, Sandro Botticelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Caravaggio, Titian, Pieter Bruegel, Lucas Cranach and Albrecht Durer, all seen from different angles using sophisticated high-tech video projection, accompanied by exquisite polyphonic compositions of the Renaissance era.

Dr Christopher Longhurst, lecturer in Theology at Te Kupenga Catholic Leadership Institute will be conducting VIP tours. His speciality, 'theological aesthetics', is about 'the interdisciplinary study of theology and aesthetics'.

He says the exhibition is not just about beautiful paintings and

fine music, but inspiration and transformation. 'During Europe's Renaissance, these artworks changed the way people felt and saw the world. They made people think and feel differently, which led to ground-breaking discoveries and new social movements and political systems.

'To achieve this, the Renaissance went back to the past to gather wisdom for the future. They turned to ancient civilisations that existed more than a thousand years earlier. New and enlightened solutions were found in the world's ancient wisdom, producing a thriving civilisation with one foot in the past and the other foot in the future. Connecting the present with the past for the good of the future caused more innovative ideas to emerge. Other movements were born such as the Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, and Scientific Revolution. It all started with art.'

Renaissance art holds clues to surpass the achievements of the past, as the Renaissance itself surpassed the achievements of classical antiquity, says Dr Longhurst. 'Therefore, this exhibition provides an opportunity for us today to look back in order to craft our world for the future,

which is actually the meaning behind a famous Māori whakatauki 'ka mua, ka muri' ('walking backwards into the future').

'In revisiting these Renaissance masterworks today, we can find insights and inspiration from the past to deal with current issues. They show us how every present moment can benefit from the past; that the past is tired to the future, inspiring us to move forward looking back at what went before us. Otherwise, we could forget the greatness gone before us.'

The exhibition runs from 4-29 January 2023, 10am-5pm daily. VIP evening visits include a 30-minute live unscripted presentation before entering the gallery space for a 40-minute immersive experience.

Tickets online at [Ticketmaster.co.nz](https://www.ticketmaster.co.nz) or at the Aotea Box Office or at the exhibition.

Madonna del Granduca, Raphael, c 1506-1507, oil on panel, Uffizi, Florence, one of Raphael's most famous and best-loved works, in which he shows his skill in representing holy subjects in an immediate, human manner. The exhibition will feature flawless Madonnas by Raphael.



New Zealand Catholic bishops welcome new Te Rōpū Māori

The New Zealand's Catholic Bishops Conference (NZCBC) welcomed the Church's new Te Rōpū Māori to their November meeting.

The new group's purpose is to work with the bishops on NZCBC's agenda items of importance to Katorika (Catholic) Māori.

Cardinal John Dew, Archbishop of Wellington and NZCBC President, said Te Rōpū Māori was recently formed to sit alongside the NZCBC in discussing and giving advice on matters of particular pastoral interest to Katorika Māori.

'The aim is they provide a well-grounded voice for Katorika Māori and work in partnership with the NZCBC, embodying a more synodal way for the Church,' Cardinal Dew said.

Te Rōpū Māori's inaugural delegates are from each of Aotearoa-New Zealand's six dioceses. They include Manuel Beazley, Auckland; Fr Gerard Paterson, Hamilton; Kory Wilson, Palmerston North; Deacon Danny Karatea-Goddard; Wellington; Kathy Simmons, Christchurch; and Sharne Parkinson, Dunedin.

Cardinal Dew said Te Rōpū Māori is in its early stages.

The bishops have been wanting to establish a Māori group since a 2019 meeting they had with of the long-established Te Rūnanga o te Hāhi Katorika ki Aotearoa - an advisory council to the NZCBC, with representatives from each diocese and expertise that advises on the use of Te Reo Māori in a Catholic context.

They acknowledged the need for a Māori voice at the NZCBC meeting table and for a forum to be provided for Māori working

in Māori Church communities to come together. It is a synodal way of doing things.

However, the recent formation of Te Rōpū Māori is not related to the 2023 Synod on Synodality. The timeline to the establishment of the new groups shows the NZCBC was planning for it before the Pope announced the Synod but organising it had been delayed by Covid-19 restrictions on meetings.

During the NZCBC meetings Te Rōpū members sit at the same table as the bishops for discussions of relevance. They may take part

in these discussions. They were present, for example when the bishops heard from other agencies visiting the November meeting, including Caritas, Te Kupenga-Catholic Leadership Institute and the Catholic Education Office.

Te Rōpū Māori members will attend a scheduled meeting of Te Rūnanga o te Hāhi Katorika ki Aotearoa advisory group in February to reflect on refinements for the future and they will attend relevant parts of each of the four scheduled meetings of the bishops' conference next year.

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Meat-free Fridays reduce carbon emissions, study shows

One in four Catholics in England and Wales changed their eating habits after the Catholic bishops asked them to return to foregoing meat on Fridays, saving more than 55,000 tonnes of carbon a year, according to a new study led by the University of Cambridge.

Researchers say that, in terms of CO₂ emissions, this is equivalent to 82,000 fewer people taking a return trip from London to New York over the course of a year.

Lead author Professor Shaun Larcom and colleagues from Cambridge's Department of Land Economy combined new survey data with that from diet and social studies to quantify the effects of a statement issued by the Catholic Church for England and Wales re-establishing meat-free Fridays as a collective act of penance from September 2011 onwards after a 26-year hiatus.

Commissioned survey results suggest that 28 per cent of Catholics in England and Wales adjusted their Friday diet following this announcement. Of this segment, 41 per cent stated they stopped eating meat on Friday, and 55 per cent said they tried to eat less meat on that day. For those who said they just reduced consumption, the researchers assumed a halving of meat intake on a Friday.

The researchers now argue that if the Pope reinstated meatless Fridays across the global church, it could mitigate millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases annually.

'The Catholic Church is very well placed to help mitigate climate change, with more than one billion followers around the world,' said Professor Larcom.

'Meat agriculture is one of the major drivers of greenhouse gas emissions. If the Pope was to reinstate the obligation for meatless Fridays to all Catholics globally, it could be a major source of low-cost emissions reductions.'

Sources: *The Tablet*, *The Croix International*



Researchers point out that if Pope Francis were to reinstate meatless Fridays across the global Church, it could mitigate millions of tons of greenhouse gases annually.

Image: The Croix, UK

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Christian youth find their voices at COP27



Christian youth protest 'false solutions' at COP27.

Photo: UCA News

They sang, they danced and they clapped. As world leaders gathered in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt for the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, faith organisations found their voices through protest.

Christian youth from across the world came together to dramatise the hurt the environment was going through, and with it, the entire human race.

Joe Bongay of the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa told Catholic News Service (CNS) the protests were meant to draw attention to the need to care for the earth, in line with Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si': on Care for Our Common Home*.

'When you sing about it, when you clap about it, it reminds people of their moral obligations toward caring for what we all share, which is the common earth that we all live in,' he said.

He told CNS how a changing climate was affecting ordinary people across Africa, citing the drought in East Africa, where the United Nations has predicted more than 50 million people will suffer from acute hunger by the end of the year.

'We are struggling to survive in terms of food, in terms of hunger, and so many other problems brought about by climate change. Africa is at a point where it can't even feed itself,' he told CNS.

Nigerian Catholic activist Lucky Abeng talked about the devastating floods in his country that killed more than 600 people in October alone and displaced more than a million more. 'Climate change is here with us,' he said.

Rita Uwaka of Friends of the Earth Africa expressed discomfort with the presence of fossil fuel lobbyists at the COP27 event, as the climate conference is known.

'Many corporations are taking over the climate space, hijacking and manipulating the negotiation process, and we feel that these criminals who are fuelling climate crises need to be kicked out,' she told CNS.

She blasted leaders for seeking what she called 'false solutions' to the climate emergency, citing carbon markets as an example.

'Take carbon credits for instance. It means you have to keep polluting in the developed countries, and then you come to Africa to plant trees to absorb the carbon, but you are not stopping pollution at the source. That is a false solution, and we reject it,' she told CNS.

She complained that agro-commodities companies 'are in the negotiation space; they are fueling a lot of land grabs in Africa – taking over forests, cutting them down and replacing them with plantations. And this increase in deforestation as a result of agro-commodities expansion is fueling climate change. But here, they are putting it as a solution.'

Rita Uwaka said local communities in Africa and other developing countries should be leading the search for solutions in which accessible and affordable renewable energy is encouraged.


'We want solutions like agro-ecology, where you put food production in the hands of the people. We want community forest management methods that put the management of our forests in the hands of communities.'

Sources: *Earthbeat (NCR)*; *UCA News*

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Ancient Christian monastery found in Arabia

Archaeologists in the United Arab Emirates have unearthed the ruins of a Christian monastery on an island off the coast of the Umm al-Quwain emirate. Hidden for more than a millennium beneath a sand dune, the monastery may predate the rise of Islam across the Arabian Peninsula.

The emirate's tourism and archaeology department announced the find. Archaeologists discovered the remains of a church, a refectory (dining hall), cisterns, and cells for the monks where they spent time in solitude, according to The National, a Dubai-based news site. Carbon dating on pottery excavated at the site revealed that it was occupied between the late sixth century and the middle of the eighth century.

The Prophet Mohammed was born in the late sixth century, and it would take until the mid-seventh century for the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, to bring the entire Arabian peninsula under Islamic rule. Prior to this first Islamic conquest, Arabia was home to Christians, Jews, and tribes of pagan Arabs.

'It is an extremely rare discovery,' said Professor Tim Power, an archaeologist at the UAE University who took part in the dig. 'It is an important reminder of a lost chapter of Arab history.'

Professor Power explained that the monks probably weren't driven from the site by the forces of the Caliphate. Rather, 'the place was slowly abandoned.' Christians and Muslims generally co-existed for around 300 years after the rise of Islam, he continued, adding that 'there was no sign of devastation or



An ancient Christian monastery uncovered on Siniyah Island in Umm al-Quwain, United Arab Emirates, 14 March 2022. Photo: Department of Archaeology and Tourism of Umm al-Quwain



Sheikh Majid bin Saud Al Mualla of the Umm Al Quwain Department of Tourism and Archaeology and Noura Al Kaabi, UAE Minister of Culture and Youth, visit the ancient Christian monastery on Siniyah Island in Umm al-Quwain, United Arab Emirates, 3 November 2022.

violence or burning' at the monastery.

Professor Power's team discovered glass chalices used for mixing wine, a cistern potentially used for baptisms, a kitchen and an oven used for baking communion bread.

The monastery is the second such early Christian site discovered in the UAE. Archaeologists working on Sir Bani Yas Island off Abu Dhabi in 1990 discovered a Christian monastery dating from a similar period. Six ancient monasteries in total have been discovered along the shores of the Arabian Gulf.

Source: RT World News

Interfaith dialogue 'a priority for world peace'

Interfaith dialogue is of the utmost priority for world peace, says Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna.

Together with 200 religious leaders and research scientists, the cardinal took part in the two-day 'Bahrain Forum for Dialogue' at the invitation of the President of the Supreme Council for Islamic affairs, Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Khalifa, from 3–5 November.

All religions have three fundamental things in common, Cardinal Schönborn said. They share a common source, have a relation to transcendence and a common responsibility for justice and peace.

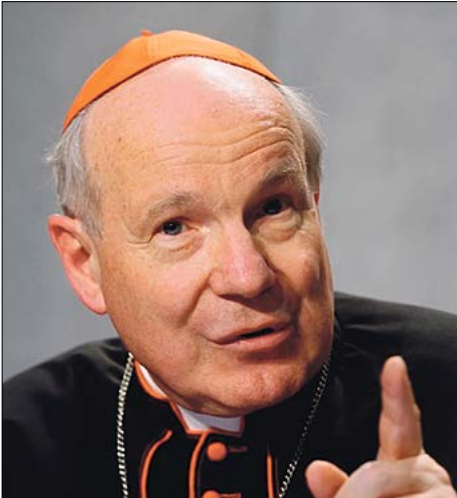
'Different cultures and different languages are, in the final instance, only a differentiation within one family', Cardinal Schönborn pointed out. Pope Francis had emphasised this in *Fratelli tutti*, his third encyclical, he

recalled, but it had already been underlined in 1937 by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*, in which the Pope had sharply criticised all forms of racism.

All religions related to transcendence which created a broad base for dialogue, said the Cardinal. And they also had a common responsibility for peace and justice. The idea that we will all finally have to take responsibility for our actions is common to all religions, he added.

After attending the forum, Cardinal Schönborn joined Pope Francis for the ecumenical prayer for peace in Our Lady of Arabia Cathedral in Awali and at the Mass in Bahrain stadium. Pope Francis is the first Pope to visit Bahrain.

Sources: Crux, BBC News.



Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schönborn. Photo: Paul Haring/CNS

Exposition of St Francis Xavier's relics

India is preparing to celebrate a solemn exposition of the relics of St Francis Xavier, which is expected to draw millions of people of all religions to the archdiocese of Goa. In accordance with a long-standing practice, the exposition of his sacred relics occurs once every 10 years.

Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao, Archbishop of Goa and Daman, announced the seven-week-long exposition of the 16th century Spanish Jesuit saint whose body is placed in a silver Mastrillian casket in the Basilica of Bom Jesu in Old Goa, the former capital of colonial Portuguese India. The colonisers used Goa, a Portuguese enclave from 1510 to 1961, as a political and missionary springboard for activities in Asia.

The exposition will begin on Thursday, 21 November 2024, and end on Sunday, 5 January 2025.

During the exposition, the relics of St Francis Xavier, one the co-founders of the Society of Jesus, will be placed on a podium so as to better allow pilgrims to see the relics.

'The decennial event gives the faithful an opportunity to reflect on the faith journey

of St Francis Xavier and to emulate his zeal for the Gospel,' said Fr Barry Cardoza, director of the Diocesan Centre for Social Communication Media.

Close to four million people came to the Basilica of Bom Jesu when the last exposition of the Spanish missionary was concluded in January 2015. It is expected that like last time, more than 1,000 pilgrims, mostly Hindus and Muslims, will walk for eight days from the neighbouring Maharashtra and

Karnataka states in western India to reach the archdiocese. On their way, the pilgrims make nightly halts at villages, where they will interact with local people before resuming their journey on foot the next morning.

St Francis Xavier, popularly known as Göycho Saib (Lord of Goa), sowed the seeds of the Catholic faith throughout the East and was canonised on 12 March 1622.

Source: La Croix International



Known as the Apostle to the Indies and to Japan, St Francis Xavier (1506–1552) was born in Spanish Navarre, the youngest in a large family. He studied at the University of Paris, where he met St Ignatius of Loyola, and was among the first seven Jesuits who vowed to be spiritual soldiers for Christ. They were ordained as a group in 1537. For 11 years, from 1541 until his untimely death in 1552, after only two weeks on the Chinese coast, Francis evangelised in the East Indies, Mozambique, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Japan. Francis is the patron saint of missionaries, Borneo, the East Indies, India, Pakistan, Japan and Outer Mongolia. His feast day is 3 December.

A engraving of St Francis Xavier. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Papal knighthood for Rabbi

Rabbi A. James Rudin, the long-time inter-religious affairs director for the American Jewish Committee, has been made a Papal Knight of St Gregory. The order recognises personal service or unusual labour in support of the Catholic Church. A Reform rabbi and a writer, he has travelled widely, meeting with popes, presidents, Protestant denominational leaders and world-famous evangelists. His aim has always been to improve Jewish-Christian relations in the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust.

Cardinal admits sexual abuse of teenage girl

A retired French cardinal has offered to hand himself into the police after he admitted to abusing a 14-year-old girl nearly four decades ago. Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, who stepped down as Archbishop of Bordeaux in 2019, issued a statement confessing his guilt and expressing regret for the harm he had done to the victim. According to Reuters news agency, the cardinal said he would withdraw from any remaining functions in the Church and make himself available to statutory and ecclesiastical authorities. Archbishop Éric de Moulins-Beaufort of Rheims, president of the French bishops' conference, said charges have been filed with the attorney general and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in response to Cardinal Ricard's confession.

Irish priest numbers in sharp decline

New figures on clerical numbers in Ireland show that a quarter of all priests currently serving in the Irish Church are expected to retire over the next 15 years. The research, carried out by the Association of Catholic Priests, revealed that 547 priests of the 2,100 working priests in the Irish Church currently are aged between 61 and 75 and nearly 300 or 15 per cent of working priests are aged 75 or over. The survey also revealed that across all 26 Irish dioceses, 52 priests or fewer than 2.5 per cent of working priests are younger than 40 and there are just 47 seminarians in Maynooth.

Catechism podcast for 'the common person'

American priest Fr Mike Schmitz says he hopes people 'will not only grow in information but real transformation' through listening to a new Catechism in a Year podcast, set to launch on 1 January. The Catechism in a Year podcast from Ascension Press follows the Bible in a Year podcast, which has a global audience of more than 1.5 million people. The aim of the daily podcast is to make the Catechism accessible for the common person.

'The gentleman saint'

Pope Francis will mark the 400th anniversary of the death of St Francis de Sales, 'the gentleman saint' from Savoy, with a new letter planned for the end of the year. A native of Savoy, where he lived a large part of his life, Francis de Sales was appointed bishop of Geneva but was forced to live in exile because of the rise of Protestantism in the Swiss city. He became an important figure in the Counter-Reformation, preaching tirelessly on abandonment to God. He opposed violence all his life, preferring to call for charity and witness. He was canonised in 1665 and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1877. At a general audience in 2018, the Pope referred to St Francis de Sales as a 'model of meekness'.

Catholic school principal to Palmerston North deputy mayor

Palmerston North’s new deputy mayor, Debi Marshall-Lobb, is a former Catholic school principal, including at Hato Pāora Catholic Māori Boys’ College and Masterton’s Chanel College.

Mayor Grant Smith sees a positive future for Marshall-Lobb (Rangitāne and Ngāti Rangi), who is fluent in New Zealand’s three official languages – English, Te Reo and New Zealand Sign.

Despite being a first-term councillor, Smith says the former Catholic school principal would bring mana to the deputy mayor’s role.

‘Debi’s appointment is a real milestone for Palmerston North, with this triennium being the first time our city has had Māori ward councillors and the first time we have a wāhine Māori as deputy mayor.’

Smith said Marshall-Lobb’s previous leadership and governance experience chairing the NZ National Teacher’s Council and as a school principal would be assets.

‘She has a passion for education and a real commitment to bringing people together and strengthening communities. Debi is the perfect fit for a deputy mayor, and I look forward to working with her.’

The mother of four is currently the acting head of Māori department at Palmerston North Boys’ High School.

Marshall-Lobb says the 133 ethnicities represented in Palmerston



North is a real tāonga.

Asked what she would like to achieve in the next three years, she says she hopes she’ll be able to look back and see people were not afraid of ‘things Māori’ and could see the Treaty partnership had benefits for everyone.

All the councillors voted in at the election were officially welcomed in October with a pōwhiri in Te Marae o Hine. Following that ceremony, the councillors were sworn in and the inaugural council meeting was held in the council chamber.

Marshall-Lobb’s appearance in the council chamber for the swearing-in of the new council was personally poignant. Her mother was a city councillor from 1989 to 1995.

‘I know my late mother, Yvonne Marshall, would be looking down and smiling as I follow in her footsteps,’ Marshall-Lobb says.

Source: Stuff

Workshop about film on Pope’s vision for the environment

To mark World Day of the Poor on November 13, Dr Mary Eastham and Dr Mary Nash held a workshop at Palmerston North’s diocesan centre about *The Letter* – a new documentary, directed by Emmy-winner Nicholas Brown. The film premiered at the Vatican on 4 October and can be viewed online at theletterfilm.org

The letter of the title is Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, addressed to ‘all people of good will’ and urging an interconnected vision for humanity and the planet. The film is about Pope Francis’ letter of invitation to five people involved in different spheres of climate action.

The 80-minute feature focuses on how people at the grassroots level can bring about change. A diverse group of climate activists, Indigenous people, scientists and faithful meet with Pope Francis to talk about the environment.

In support of the Palmerston North workshop, the parish had held three preparatory screenings of the film. About 20 people took part in the workshop with Julie Randall providing additional support and music.

Following an opening prayer and hymn, participants said they hoped to learn more about *The Letter*, climate change and ways to contribute to saving mother earth.

In the documentary, the five recipients were filmed as they received the Pope’s letter. They were Arouna Kandé, a climate refugee from Senegal; Ridhiria Pandey, a voice of youth; Chief Dada Borari, from the Amazon in Brazil and ‘kaitiaki’ for the region; and two scientists, Robin Martin and Greg Asner, studying the health changes in coral in Hawaii.

Pope Francis spent time with each of them, passionately discussing the issues they brought to him, and in doing so he addresses all who watch documentary.

Mary Nash says, ‘I encourage everyone to watch *The Letter* on YouTube. Pope Francis’ words are inspiring. We plan a follow-up session. In the meantime, we encourage people to join groups



The Letter workshop facilitators, l-r, Dr Mary Eastham and Dr Mary Nash. Photo: Supplied

already working in areas they are concerned about.’

For more information contact: Dr Mary Nash, egmanash@gmail.com or Dr Mary Eastham, maeastham23@gmail.com

Sources: Vatican News, Reuters



Five climate activists from grassroots share their concerns with Pope Francis in *The Letter* film. Image: theletterfilm.org

Eucharistic Adoration

Before the start of Holy Week in April this year, on 8 April about 100 parishioners spent time in silent adoration during a 13-hour night vigil. Adoration was enhanced with

rosaries, hymns, bible readings and prayers for divine mercy. It was an opportunity to place heartfelt prayer intentions and thanksgivings to Our Lord, which were offered

during Mass.

The prayer intentions were deeper personal relationship with HIM; deliverance of humanity from the Covid-19 pandemic; recession of the war and human suffering in Ukraine and Russia and in the world. It was also an opportunity to offer food and koha for the local St Vincent de Paul Society foodbank.

Holy Eucharistic Adoration is conducted every week for an hour at 11am on Fridays at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Palmerston North, and at 6pm at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. ‘Come and see that the LORD is good.’

Eucharistic Adoration Team, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Palmerston North.



The power of silence – Eucharist Adoration at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. Photo: Supplied



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Memorial Masses for the departed



At Sacred Heart Church, Inglewood, candles and photographs of loved ones were placed at the foot of the altar during Mass. Photo: Supplied

Several parishes in our two dioceses celebrated their annual memorial Masses on or near 2 November – All Souls Day – to remember all those departed from their parishes during the past year. Here are some of their stories.

Sacred Heart Parish in Inglewood celebrated All Soul's Day at Sunday Mass on 6 November in memory of those departed. 'Following Mass, we went down to the local cemetery and had our annual cemetery blessing,' said Nicky Kuklinski, parish secretary/administrator.

Holy Family Nelson invited all

parishioners to come and remember 'all our departed loved ones, taking the opportunity to light a candle'. Mass was followed by supper.

Wellington South Parish celebrated its memorial parish Mass for Holy Souls on 2 November at St Francis de Sales Church, Island Bay, as 'a prayerful experience and a wonderful way to keep our deceased loved ones in our hearts'.

Parishioners, family members and friends of Our Lady of the Valleys parish in Heretaunga and Stokes Valley

gathered for their memorial Mass at St Francis Xavier Church in Stokes Valley on 2 November, 'to pray in a special way for those of our community whom God has called to himself'.

Extending an invitation to all families and friends who had lost a loved one over the past year, parish priest Fr Tony Kearns said, 'At this Mass we especially remember those God has called home in the past year, and we offer continuing support and prayers to those who are moving through stages of grieving. On behalf to the Parish Pastoral Council and the rest of your parish family I extend a warm invitation to you, your family and friends to attend this Eucharist to celebrate completed lives in our parish family'.

At the Mass, Fr Tony read out the names of each of the 19 members of the parish community who had passed during the year and invited family members and friends present to come up to the altar to light a candle in memory of and dedication to their departed loved one.



St Vincent de Paul feast day Mass

Members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul from Kapi Mana, Wellington and Hutt Wairarapa Areas gathered at Tawa parish's Our Lady of Fatima Church, on Sunday 25 September, to celebrate their annual feast day.

Area presidents, including National President Terry Jordan, and many members joined with Cardinal John Dew and parishioners in the Sunday Eucharist.

Cardinal John spoke on how becoming a priest St Vincent moved in the highest circles of the wealthiest families in Paris. One day he was asked to attend a dying man from a very poor family. Vincent was hugely changed by the man's faith and by how poor he was. From then on, he focused on doing what he could to help the poor by way of practical and spiritual help. Vincent found Christ in the poor.

At the end of Mass, Kapi Mana Area President Gerry Stevens thanked the people of Tawa for their practical and spiritual support. He explained how, out of that belief of



From left: Gerry Stevens, Kapi Mana President; Charles Bell, Hutt Wairarapa President; Cardinal John Dew; Terry Jordan, National President; Andrew Bridgeman, Wellington President. Photo: Supplied

St Vincent, 'our founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam some 200 years later began the Conference of Charity, dedicated to the care of our poorest neighbours. Shortly afterwards it became known as the Society of St Vincent de Paul'.

Gerry Stevens said the environments in which Vincentians work now are very similar to those

in the time of Blessed Frederic. 'They started by visiting the poor and bringing food and firewood and today we are still doing the same'.

Today SVdP it is recognised as a large international charity with members helping the world's poor in practical ways, one-on-one, bringing Christ into their lives, while growing their own personal spirituality.



Every year during the Season of Creation, the Catholic Parish of Hastings responds to Pope Francis' call to 'Listen to the Cry of the Earth'. The Pope's 2022 theme, 'The Burning Bush (Ex 3:1-12), Listen to the Voice of Creation,' challenges how we see and understand the world: the creative voice of God speaking through all creation *'the sweet song in praise of our Creator'*; and destructive power of human activity as it negatively affects our environment. The parish produced prayer leaflets for the World Day of Prayer for Creation, highlighting aspects of a Spirituality of Creation, Pope Francis' message, and suggestions for action. An expression of the Burning Bush, created by parishioner Carmen Testa, was at the centre of a display in Sacred Heart Church's gathering space.

Catholic Parish of Hastings Environmental and Social Justice Group.

Jim McAloon, chair of the Archdiocese Ecology Justice and Peace (EJP) Commission and a Sacred Heart Cathedral parishioner, welcomed Cardinal John Dew, EJP Commission members, friends and parishioners to a special Cathedral Parish Eucharist celebration on 2 October – the final day of the 2022 Season of Creation. The celebration marked the archdiocese signing up to the *Laudato si'* Action Platform. Seven years ago Pope Francis issued his landmark encyclical letter *'Laudato si'* – *Caring for our Common Home*, said Jim. 'The Vatican's Dicastery for Integral Human Development has established the *Laudato si'* Action Platform, working with everyone to address the ecological crisis. We have now signed up to it committing to working together to discern appropriate ways of achieving this.'

Sr Francesca Bourke – centenarian

Anne Burke rsj

On 19 December 2022 Sister Francesca Bourke rsj, of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart will be celebrating her 100th birthday in Whanganui. Family, Sisters and friends will be gathering with her to reminisce and be thankful for her long life.

Francesca hails from Irish parents and grew up on a farm in Taranaki. With her sisters she became a boarder at Sacred Heart College in Whanganui and entered the Congregation there in 1940. She taught in Catholic primary schools in Whanganui, Hastings and Feilding, as well as at Sacred Heart College in Whanganui.

From 1960 onwards, Francesca led the community at Sacred Heart, and from 1971 to 1981 was Congregational Leader of the Sisters of St Joseph of Nazareth in Whanganui. As she noted, 'that time provided me with many challenges and varied experiences, including involvement in the Australia-New Zealand Federation of the Sisters of St Joseph from its earliest years'.

After her years of leadership Francesca moved to Central Hawke's Bay where she was involved in parish pastoral work. Later came hospital and prison visitation, and



A life well lived – Sr Francesca Bourke rsj celebrates her 100th birthday in Whanganui on 19 December. Photo: Supplied

involvement in the Faith and Light community.

In 1998 Francesca was one of the original residents of Quinlan Court in Whanganui – a retirement complex for independent living. Francesca loved her time there as she lived with men and women from all walks of life 'growing old gratefully and gracefully'.

An interest in art developed into numerous paintings over the years and many were used in her ministries.

Francesca is now a resident in a Whanganui Rest Home where she enjoys visitors, and despite failing eyesight and hearing, she remains interested and eager to be part of the world around her.

Retreats on the rise

Christian Life Community

Sarah Dench

Christian Life Community Wellington offered Fr Michael Hansen sj's five-week retreat in daily life 'Inner Peace in Friendship with Jesus' over August and September. A group of 30 people – including through Zoom – met every Sunday afternoon at the Home of Compassion, Island Bay. The retreat was a grace-filled experience for participants and givers.

An unexpected blessing of Covid lockdown was the use of Zoom and Teams for Christian Life Community groups to meet online. The experience many of us have had with this technology encouraged the community to continue to offer this as a way to meet for those unable to attend in person due to distance or illness.

We are confident we can offer this 'hybrid' retreat form again in 2023.

Joshua men's retreat

Peter Woods

Forty-two men of Joshua Catholic men's fellowship groups from Palmerston North and Wellington gathered for a retreat on Saturday 29 October at the Home of Compassion, Island Bay. Titled: 'Peace, hope and healing through Jesus', Brendan Malone led the retreat.

Brendan, a father of five who lives in Canterbury, is noted for his online Christian social commentary and podcasts. He began by outlining the 'crisis of uncertainty the world is living through'. He said, that existing traditions and institutions have been 'attacked and displaced' by an ideology that promotes the idea of 'self before all else'.

Brendan contrasted objective truth 'giving rise to communal obligations and resulting in individual rights' with subjective truth 'promoting radical individualism which results in self-gratification'. People move from being made in the image and likeness of God to creating ourselves in our own image.

He said the Good News calling us

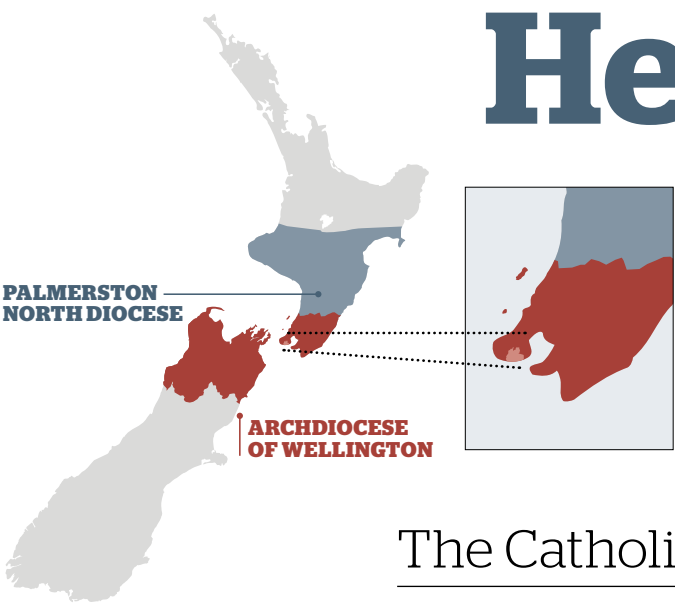


Joshua men discuss the Good News during a break in the Home of Compassion dining room. Photo: Supplied

to be 'salt and light' is more relevant than ever before. 'This leads to the self-giving love like Jesus showed us on the cross. We are made for friendship and called to build authentic communities based on Christ,' he said. Communities have a 'sacramental' aspect which relies on self-giving love. 'The family is one such community. Communities are always imperfect because they involve people but are the only way to go.'

Brendan reiterated that Christians can find Christ in the chaos by being open to goodness, the truth, and the beauty of creation. 'The more we participate in God's life, the more we heal and grow.'

He Hīkoi Whakapon



This month, WelCom visits the Catholic Parish of Wellington South. Close to the city centre, the parish area covers the southern part of Wellington - from the steep hills, embankments and parks of Brooklyn overlooking Wellington Harbour and Cook Strait; the ethnically diverse Newtown that attracts large numbers of students, young professionals and new immigrants, and is the location for Government House and Wellington Hospital; to the coastal suburbs of Island Bay, which holds the annual ecumenical blessing of the boats ceremony, as well as a heritage week that includes the legacy of Venerable Suzanne Aubert at the Home of Compassion. The parish has a rich heritage of meeting the pastoral needs of many immigrants and former refugees to New Zealand as well delivering Catholic education for decades by numerous priests and religious congregations and laity.

Photos: Supplied

The Catholic Parish of Wellington South

Parish team

The Catholic Parish of Wellington South came into effect on 1 February 2016 from the amalgamation of St Anne's Newtown, St Bernard's Brooklyn, St Frances de Sales Island Bay and St Joseph's Mt Victoria.

In February 2019 we were asked to reduce the number of our churches and presbyteries and on 18 April 2021, St Bernard's Church was closed. In August 2021 St Joseph's Church was separated and moved into the Parish of St Mary of the Angels.

Today Wellington South Parish

comprises two churches, three schools, one presbytery, two priests working in the parish – Fr Doug Shepherd and Fr Cirilo Barlis – and parishioners. Our name will change to 'Wellington South Parish of The Blessed Suzanne Aubert' when news of Venerable Suzanne Aubert's beatification is confirmed. The Sisters of Compassion live at the Compassion Centre in Island Bay.

We have a pastoral council, a finance committee and two Liturgy committees who come together for combined Masses.

During lockdowns parishioners organised their own 'Sunday Zoom Liturgies' so people isolating at

home could still feel a sense of community. Sr Elizabeth Julian rsm and parishioner Lesley Hooper worked hard to promote the Zoom experience, which remains as a tool for use if necessary.

The parish has over a long period of time given support to migrants and refugees coming to New Zealand. A group of Polish boys arrived in the late 1940s after some years in Pahiataua. They lived in Island Bay in a house that stood on the place of the current St Francis de Sales church/presbytery. During the 1970s St Francis de Sales supported Vietnamese refugees and had a house in Clyde St Island Bay.

in the 1980s the parish supported Iranian families and in the 1990s Ethiopian refugees. St Anne's has looked after refugee families from Hungary, Vietnam and Cambodia, Iraq and Ethiopia, Rwanda and Eritrea. Since 2016 the parish has collected household goods and help set up houses for former refugees.

Our parish council reflects a wide and diverse range of people and are committed to moving the Wellington South Parish forward towards sustainability and transparency. We strive towards bringing all church communities from Newtown, Island Bay and Brooklyn to be as One Parish.

BRIEF HISTORY

- 1885:** St Joseph's Church Buckle St opened Wellington southern and eastern Wellington.
- 1890:** Mercy Sisters opened St Joseph's parish School.
- 1892:** Vicar General, Fr Devoy, purchased two acres in Newtown for school and future church.
- 1893:** Archbishop Redwood blessed, opened new school building.
- 1897:** Chapel opened in Newtown; bigger school built.
- 1900:** Convent built for Sisters of Mercy in Newtown to live, teach and work in local community.
- 1902:** Fr John Ainsworth sm, administrator of St Anne's parish of Wellington South – Newtown, Island Bay, Miramar, and Seatoun.
- 1903:** St Anne's School opened and blessed; expanded in 1904 as St Joseph's high school.
- 1904:** Mass celebrated in Brooklyn, Healy family home, Washington St.
- 1905:** Sisters of the Sacred Heart opened Sacred Heart College and Convent (later Erskine) Island Bay.
- 1906:** Wooden St Francis de Sales Church built, Island Bay.
- 1907:** Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion built Home of Compassion, Island Bay.
- 1909:** Land bought on Tasman St and Adelaide Rd for Marist Brothers' school, blessed and opened by Archbishop Redwood in 1911. Br Justin in charge.
- 1911:** St Anthony's School Brooklyn opened.
- 1920:** Society of Mary withdrew from parish administration after establishing St Anne's Parish, chapels in Island Bay, Kilbirnie, Seatoun. Archbishop Devoy moved to Island Bay, St Francis de Sales Parish established.
- 1929:** Little Company of Mary opened Lewisham Hospital (Calvary, Wakefield), Newtown.
- 1933:** Blessing of Boats southern Italian tradition adopted in Island Bay.
- 1935:** St Anthony's School, Brooklyn, started with two Sisters of Mercy.
- 1946:** Land for new Island Bay parish church bought.
- 1949:** St Anthony's Church and school opened in Brooklyn.
- 1950s:** Post WW2 population growth and expansion of Catholic groups and gatherings. Polish Chaplains saying Mass in Newtown.
- 1955:** Catholic Samoan Community began in Wellington, monthly Masses at St Josephs, moved base to Newtown 1968.
- 1960s:** Society of Mary Marist Fathers provided chaplaincy to the Samoan community. CWL, Planned Giving, Sewing Auxiliary started.
- 1961:** St Bernard's, Brooklyn, independent parish from St Mary of the Angels.
- 1966:** St Joachim's Church built in Newtown for Polish community.
- 1970s and 80s:** Parish responded to pastoral needs of immigrant communities – Polish, Samoan, Cook Islanders, Vietnamese.
- 1973:** Sisters of Sacred Heart, Erskine, moved to Newtown to work among community.
- 1975:** New St Anne's Church opened.
- 1983:** St Anne's School amalgamated with Marist Brother's School, Tasman St.
- 1984:** Sisters of Our Lady of Mission established community house in Newtown. New St Anne's School opened.
- 1990s:** Parish focus on housing needs, social justice, supporting increasing numbers of refugees, particularly from Africa and Asia.
- 1995:** Marist Brothers moved from Tasman St into St Anne's parish, Adelaide Rod.
- 2001:** Society of Mary Marist Fathers bought properties in Adelaide Rd to house the provincial and his community.
- 2002:** St Anne's Church and School centenary celebrated.
- 2012:** Pastoral area joined with St Joseph's and St Bernard's to form pastoral area of Wellington South.
- 2016:** St Anne's, St Frances de Sales, St Bernard's, and St Josephs' merge to form new parish (St Joseph's separated, 2021).
- 2021:** St Bernard's Church Brooklyn closed.



St Anne's Church Newtown.



St Francis de Sales Church, Island Bay.



Fr Doug Shepherd with Fr Cirilo Barlis celebrates Mass for Venerable Suzanne Aubert.



The parish has a strong emphasis on involving youth in the parish.

Youth – we have a strong emphasis on children and youth with several groups operating in the parish. The Suzanne Aubert scout group meet every Monday night. Life Teen meets every Sunday night after 5pm Mass. The ecumenical Island Bay youth group meets every second Friday during term time. The Samoan youth group are also active in the parish.



Students at school Mass with Fr Doug Shepherd.

Schools – Fr Doug has a special interest in the faith formation of our Catholic school pupils. As an ex-principal and teacher, he understands the importance of nurturing a close relationship between parish and school. There is a buddy Mass system in place at St Francis de Sales, where each week an older class takes a younger class to a weekday parish Mass. Readings are undertaken by the students, and an understanding of the Mass is passed on. At St Anne's a different syndicate of children attend the parish Mass each week. At St Bernard's School a Mass is celebrated each week with the children in the school hall. From time-to-time a special school celebration is held to baptise any children who may have missed this special sacrament.



Confirmation candidates with Fr Cirilo Barlis, Monsignor Gerard Burns and Fr Doug Shepherd.

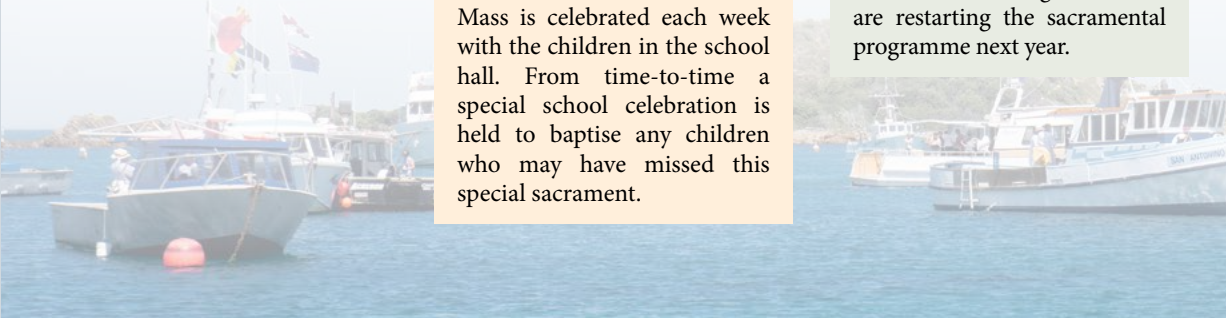
Sacramental programme – 2021 and 2022 were not kind to the sacramental programme at Wellington South and our parish paused the programme for 2022 due to the vagaries of Covid-19 and to keep the children safe. However, we completed two Confirmation programmes with Monsignor Gerard Burns. St Francis de Sales is a large church and social distancing was maintained. We thank our teachers and organisers Yelena Anderson and Treena Tiller as organisers. We are restarting the sacramental programme next year.

Aged-care Ministry – as there are several rest homes in the Southern area, a new initiative has seen a combined approach with the Central Wellington area. We are discussing new systems to ensure people requiring Holy Communion or anointing are visited. Our priests say Mass once a month at Vincentian and Te Hopai homes and once every two months at Village at the Park.

Social Justice Ministry – we have an active social justice group combined with St Mary of the Angels' and St Joseph's groups. We held a workshop on racism in September and a refugee and migrants' presentation in November.

Hospital support – we are the nearest parish to Wellington Hospital, so our priests are often called to administer last rights or to visit with the families of sick and terminal patients. The Hospital call-out phone is shared between the priests of the south and central areas.

Multicultural – our multicultural parish includes Pacifika, Filipinos, Chinese, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Eithiopean, Italian, Croatia, Greek, Latin American groups.



No: A Journey of Faith

Sisters of Mercy

Dr Elizabeth Julian rsm

The Sisters of Mercy came to Newtown in 1890. There were only two parishes in Wellington, St Mary’s Cathedral, Hill St and St Mary of the Angels, Boulcott St. An increasing Catholic population in the Newtown area prompted parents to ask sisters to staff a school for 100 children in a rented two-storeyed house in Adelaide Rd. Sisters walked 4.8kms from St Mary’s Convent in Guilford Tce, Thorndon, twice daily. Two years later land was purchased between Green and Daniell Sts for a larger school and eventually a two-storeyed convent was built on what is now Mercy Park.

Sisters remained there until moving to Rintoul St in 1989,

where today three sisters live in community responding to various social, liturgical, pastoral, educational, advocacy, board membership, formation and sacramental needs in the parish community and beyond. In addition, involvement in the school garden-to-plate programme and preparing students to proclaim the Scriptures at the weekly Thursday parish Mass encourages school-parish links.

Throughout the 132 years of Sisters of Mercy presence in Newtown, the Works of Mercy have guided and continue to guide their ministry. The Works of Mercy continue to demand a response, not tomorrow but today, as Catherine McAuley insisted. And the people continue to ask. The Sisters of Mercy come – if they can.



The Sisters of Mercy taught at and ran Catholic schools in Wellington South from the 1890s. St Anne’s School building, constructed in 1903 was demolished in 1984 when the current school was built. The Sisters left St Anne’s in 1973.

Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver

Sr Elcy sspc

The Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver come from all walks of life and from 18 nations. Our sisters came to Wellington with the permission of Archbishop McKeefry in September, 1950. Our convent at 1 Mersey St, Island Bay, was blessed and opened in 1953. We have four sisters living here and our main works include the posting of our mission publication, Echo, throughout New Zealand, corresponding with benefactors and organising mission information and fundraising events for our Congregation’s missionary work.

The Congregation of the

Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver was founded in 1894 by Blessed Mary Theresa Ledochowska, a Polish Countess, who died in 1922. Our patron is St Peter Claver, ‘Apostle of the African Slaves’, who – with his own hands – converted and baptised over 300,000 slaves. Our Mother House is in Rome and we have houses on all five continents.

One of our Congregation’s main works is to produce a missionary monthly publication *Echo from Africa and other Continents*. Containing letters and news from missionaries all over the world, Echo enables readers to participate more fully in the sisters’ work, to share their joys, their hopes and their sorrows.



Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver, Island Bay community, l-r: Sr Pia, Sr Elcy, Sr Anne, Sr Annie.

Here in Wellington, we also have an annual fundraising gala including a large raffle, an ethnic dinner and a concert.

Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion

Driven by a sense of the Gospel towards service of the poor and needy, Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert, arrived in New Zealand in 1860. At Hiruhārama Jerusalem, she founded The Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion in 1892. Today, the Sisters’ main congregational residence is Our Lady’s Home of Compassion in Island Bay, from where the legacy of Venerable Suzanne Aubert lives on.

In Wellington, Suzanne

established a home for the elderly and disabled, a Soup Kitchen still in operation, and a crèche. In 1907 a remarkable Home of Compassion was opened, initially for children and babies. Later, a surgical section was included to enable the sisters to be trained as nurses.

Today the sisters continue to live Suzanne Aubert’s vision to care for all people with faith and compassion in Aotearoa New Zealand, Fiji and Australia. This

includes social work, pastoral ministries, education ministry and care of the elderly.

Since Suzanne Aubert arrived in New Zealand, Māori had been part of her life’s meaning, and so had the wider mission of unquestioning Christian love for everybody, all creed and none. For Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert, Christ was in everyone.

St Anne’s School, Newtown

Emily Dickie, DRS

Caring for our Community – Learning for Tomorrow is our motto. It inspires our vision and celebrates our heritage and our faith. While many things have changed over the history of our school, the Mercy values embedded by the founding Sisters remain alive and strong.

The Newtown community was originally served by the opening of St Joseph’s Convent in Adelaide Road in 1890. St Joseph’s Convent quickly outgrew its capacity to cater for the ever-increasing Catholic population of Newtown. St Anne’s School was

opened in 1893 operating as a school during the week and as a church at the weekends.

Today, St Anne’s School continues to deliver a quality education to its diverse community.

Newtown has undergone many changes during this time, as reflected in the roll and the richness of culture experienced today. In 1983, The Marist Brothers’ School closed and was amalgamated with St Anne’s, adding to our richness and diversity.

There is a strong sense of community in all aspects of school life, enhanced and strengthened by our local Catholic Colleges – St Catherine’s and St Patrick’s in



Buddy reading between classes.

nearby Kilbirnie.

The guidance and support offered by the whānau, staff and our Board of Trustees, along with the ongoing involvement in parish celebrations, ensures St Anne’s School continues to serve the Catholic Parish of Wellington South well.

St Bernard’s School, Brooklyn

Lisa Small, Principal

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy, our school started life as St Anthony’s inside the church building on Jefferson St. It was moved to the current Taft St site in 1949 and renamed St Bernard’s in 1961. In 1973 Miss Doreen Barry became the first lay principal after the Sisters moved on. We continue to hold the Sisters’ values central to all we do: Mercy values in action, as we work towards our vision – te ara ki to ao – a pathway to the world.

Our strength is our size: ‘Small School – Huge Opportunities’. Our average class size of 15, means our children can be individuals, known by everyone, and access programmes tailored to their needs by amazing, dedicated teachers. We are one big family where everyone is friends. Our tuakana-teina bond is strong and allows students to develop Compassion and Service – two of our core values – as well as leadership.

We have a love and focus for science with weekly lessons that build knowledge and scientific thinking for inquisitive minds. Weekly art lessons by an art specialist develop student’s creativity through visual arts along with our music and drama.

Our language of the week and cultural events build a deeper understanding of the many cultures in our school, helping students to feel proud of who they



‘We have a love for and focus on science.’

are, and developing another of our values – Respect.

Our children experience a wide range of sports with dedicated coaches helping to develop their skills and teamwork. We are consistently told our students are the most respectful and focused students our coaches work with, showing another of our values – Excellence.

Yet another value is Hospitality – come and visit us to see how welcoming our children are. With a smile, a ‘Good morning and God bless you’, and a wish to tell everyone they meet how much they love St Bernard’s School, you won’t ever want to leave!

St Francis de Sales School

Mary-Angela Tombs Tumuaki - Principal

St Francis de Sales School is in the South Wellington coastal settlement of Island Bay – Te Mapunga Kāinga. There has been a rich history of Catholic education here since the Sisters of the Sacred Heart were in the bay from 1905. We have a wonderful connection to Te Upoko o te Ika (the head of the fish) as many of our ākonga descend from Italian fishers who settled here from the 1890s through to the 1950s.

We are part of the Wellington Catholic Schools Kāhui Ako and work alongside the other 12 Catholic primary and secondary schools in Wellington. Together, teachers strive to improve our effectiveness and equity across our diverse Catholic community of learners.

After a lengthy period of not being able to gather as a faith

community in our beautiful St Francis de Sales Church, we are working hard to strengthen the connection of our families with our faith community. Recently, we celebrated the sacrament of Baptism for six young people. Last term, we held a school community event to talk about wellbeing. All our families joined us for an evening barbeque, followed by entertainment and information to support wellbeing at home and at school. The families dressed in our house colours and joined in the fun.

As a Catholic school, our dedicated staff work as a community of learners to celebrate the uniqueness of every child. St Francis de Sales School’s vision is that each learner will develop to the best of their abilities, a love of God, love of learning and love of life. This resounds through the school, which is a vibrant place of fun, laughter, learning and care. We would love to share this spirit with you.



St Francis de Sales Yrs 7 and 8 students on their annual school camp.

Young Catholics

Young Church celebrates World Youth Day

World Youth Day on Sunday November 20 was a full day for the archdiocese's Young Church (YC) team with young people from across the diocese joining together for a range of events to celebrate all that's happening in the Young Church.

Events included 'SEEK', an invitation for young adults to explore their vocation and discern their role in the Church and in the world. It was followed by a World Youth Day Mass celebrated by Cardinal John Dew at St Mary's of the Angels Church. Organised by SMOA Young Adults and the YC team, Mass was followed by an evening of fellowship and celebration for World Youth Day.

On the Friday evening prior, the monthly XLT Youth Worship event was held at St Joseph's Mt Victoria. XLT has been growing in attendance throughout the year for teens and young adults to come together to experience the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, worship through music, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the gift of fellowship. Attendees from across the archdiocese were joined by a group who travelled from the Diocese of Palmerston North.

This month the YC team are running the Young Catholic Leadership camp in Ōtaki. 'Students who have accepted leadership roles within their schools for 2023, will explore faith, gifts they bring to their roles, and leadership,' says Louise Llyod of the YC team. 'We are excited about this year's camp!'

The Diocese of Palmerston North Catholic Leader (YCL) 2022 is running from December 12–16 at Highland Home Christian Camp in Pohangina Valley in Manawatu. YCL invites participants to take part in a variety of activities to encourage and form them in Catholic leadership and in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Young Church has had a blessed year and will have a lot to celebrate ahead.

To keep up to date with events and stories in 2023 in the two dioceses, follow @ADWYoungChurch and @DiocesanYoungCatholics on social media.



Young people from the Diocese of Palmerston North travelled down to Wellington to join the XLT monthly worship event in November.

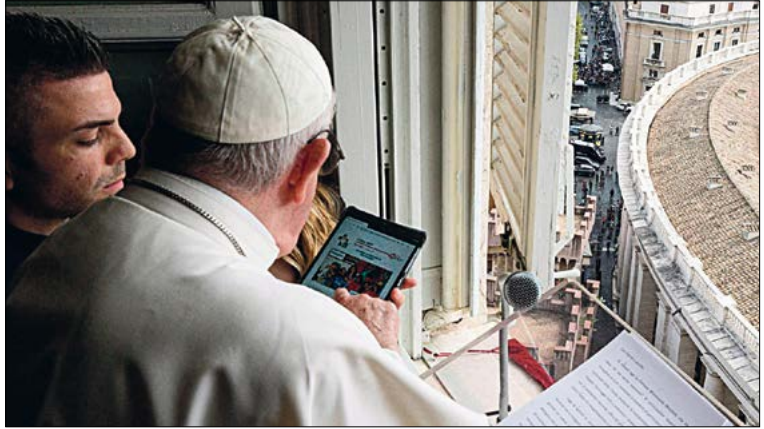
Photo: Supplied

Pope Francis registers for the next World Youth Day in Lisbon

At the conclusion of the Sunday Angelus, Pope Francis registered for the next World Youth Day to be held in Lisbon, Portugal, in August 2023. Assisted and accompanied by Portuguese university students studying in Rome, the Pope tapped his way to becoming the first officially registered pilgrim for World Youth Day. He encouraged young people around the world to now register for the international celebration of faith.

Pope Francis asked young people from Portugal to join him in the window of the Apostolic Palace for the announcement that registration is now open for World Youth Day 2023, the largest international Catholic youth gathering scheduled to take place 1–6 August.

The Pope said that after a long period, especially due to the pandemic, 'we will rediscover the joy of fraternal embrace between peoples and between generations,



Assisted by young Portuguese university students presenting a tablet for him, Pope Francis at the Angelus on Sunday 23 October, registers for the World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, August 2023.

Photo: Vatican News

which we need so much.'

Pope Francis recently released a third message for World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon, urging young people to follow in the footsteps of Our Lady, going in haste to others and dedicating our lives to Jesus.

'Now is the time to arise! Like Mary, let us "arise and go in haste". Let us carry Jesus within our hearts and bring him to all those whom we meet,' the pope said.

Source: Vatican News

Life Teen Summer Camp back on for January

The national camp established and run by Life Teen Aotearoa has been going since 2015 and held at Forest Lakes, Ōtaki. Now, the Life Teen team has partnered with the Hamilton and Auckland dioceses to take camp to Cambridge.

Though further up the country, the numbers of teenagers and Summer Missionaries (young adult leaders) attending camp in 2023 is strong, with over 60 from Wellington and Palmerston North dioceses planning to go.

'I've attended camp as a teenager, summer missionary and now chaperone, and every time I've encountered God in a new way and seen the lives of teenagers changed,' says Louise Llyod of Life



Young people from Nelson at a previous Life Teen Summer Camp.

Photo: Supplied

Teen Wellington South and the archdiocese's Young Church team.' The teenagers I'm escorting to camp in January are so excited to experience that environment again and what God will bring to their lives.'

Camp dates are 18–22 January 2023, St Peter's College, Cambridge. Visit lifeteen.nz for more information.



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Rangatahi Katorika

Solidarity toy and book sale for foodbank



St Brendan's students putting faith in action. Photo: Supplied

Rooms 6, 7 and 8 at St Brendan's School, Heretaunga, Upper Hutt, have been demonstrating their faith in action. The students have been learning about the Catholic social teaching principle of Solidarity, recognising others as our brothers and sisters and actively working for their good. Teachers and students organised a second-hand toy and book sale with funds going to the Upper Hutt Foodbank. They raised \$110 and spent the money to buy non-perishable foods.

Three students from each of the classrooms, travelled with year 2-3 teacher Mrs Chris Pullan to the Upper Hutt Foodbank and delivered the food. Mrs Pullan said, 'We received a letter from the Foodbank sharing how thankful they were and how the food would help families in our local community. The students really enjoyed the experience and displaying our school values, in particular being compassionate and having learnt about being active in their Catholic Faith.'

Batts at St Caths - Christmas toys for Vinnies

Yr 9's Junior Mercy Crew and Mrs O'Brien, DRS

At St Catherine's College, we have been holding a competition called BATTs - 'Bring a Toy to School', to go to Vinnies. The toys are aimed at all ages, from playdough and soft teddies for little children, to makeup

for teenagers. The gifts and toys we gathered during November will be given to Vinnies, for families in need to choose a free toy to give to their kids for Christmas.

At St Catherine's our value of the year is 'compassion and aroha', and we see this drive as being compassionate towards and helping our community.



St Catherine's College Junior Mercy Crew Anwyn, Nadia, Ania, Jaya and Hannah, with some of the donated toys for Vinnies. Photo: Supplied

New library for St James' School

The newly refurbished library building at St James' School in Palmerston North was blessed and opened in September under the name of 'Te Whakaruruhau - The Sheltering Place'.

Mons Brian Walsh blessed the building, which was opened by acting principal Christine Cosgrove. The eldest and youngest pupils Jahziel Eldhose and Samuel Curry cut the ribbon.

The old library was demolished in 2019. By contrast the new library building is innovative, bright, spacious, more accessible and opens onto the school's sacred space and Mary Garden.

Christine Cosgrove said the school board is committed to literacy and has invested in book purchases and resourcing. She acknowledged the support of the Diocese of Palmerston North and its

property manager Susan Zentveld for overseeing the project.

Nicci Smith, St James' learning and literature resource manager, said less than a third of New Zealand schools had adequate library space. She said she was 'grateful for the wonderful new space, and resources'.

The school encourages learners with recreational reading, timetabled visits to the library and senior leaders who offer service as librarians during break times. The library uses the Accessit library management software. Its streamlined day-to-day administration tasks enable teachers to prepare lessons and they can remotely access the schools' library catalogue online via their laptops. Nicci Smith, also a member of the local RealM group (Reading and Literacy in Manawatu) ensures St James' learners benefit from visiting authors in the area.



The eldest and youngest pupils Jahziel Eldhose and Samuel Curry cut the ribbon to open St James School's new library. Photo: Supplied



Sacred Heart Reefton

Archbishop Paul Martin sm visited Reefton on Saturday 5 November to administer the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation. Pictured, l-r, are the four candidates with their sponsors: Sam King, front with Dad Dan, Toby Parkinson with Grandad Barney Archer, Archbishop Paul, Ruby Webb with Christine Archer, parish priest Fr John Petit and Sacred Heart School principal Tony Webb with his sponsor Tony Fortune. It was an extra special occasion for school principal Tony Webb and his daughter Ruby when they received the Sacraments together from Archbishop Paul. The celebration was followed by a light supper at the school. Grateful thanks were given to Bernadette Snowden for preparing the children for the Sacraments.



Holy Family Parish, Nelson

Archbishop Paul Martin confirmed 31 candidates at their Confirmation Mass at St Mary's Church, Holy Family Parish, Nelson, on Saturday, 12 November.



Catholic Parish of Wairarapa

The Catholic Parish of the Wairarapa held two First Eucharist celebrations this year. A group of children from St Mary's school in Carterton and St Patrick's Church Masterton, celebrated on Sunday 13 November, with DRS/teacher Christine Connor and parish priest Fr Bruce England. Earlier in the year, a group from St Patrick's school celebrated their First Eucharist on 29 May at St Patrick's Church, with DRS/teacher Corey Kennedy and Fr Bruce. It was to have been celebrated last year but was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.



From top: Sacred Heart Reefton; Holy Family Parish, Nelson; St Mary's school, Carterton; St Patrick's school, Masterton. Photos: Supplied

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Remembering Sr Mary Marcellin CNZM (Marcia E Wilson) rsm

Stephanie Kitching rsm

A long-time member of Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand, Mary Marcellin (Wilson), went to God on 24 October 2022.

In August 1955, Marcellin entered the Congregation at St Mary’s Convent, Thorndon, professing her vows on 21 January 1959 with the motto: ‘Serve the Lord with Joy’, which she certainly did.

She began her teaching ministry at St Mary’s Primary School, Palmerston North. The following year she moved into secondary teaching. Over the years she was on the staff at St Catherine’s College, Kilbirnie, St Joseph’s High School, Palmerston North and St Mary’s College, Wellington. As well as teaching in the Religious Education, Commercial, Geography and Science areas, Marcellin had multiple extracurricular activities like the

Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

Speaking to past students in 2015 Marcellin said: ‘God is not an extension of the head teacher or your parent’s authority – God is within each one of you, energising you toward all the good in your lives, supporting you and affirming you as a woman – unconditionally.’

This is how she saw her students. Alongside teaching, Marcellin was also studying and graduated with a BA and then almost completed a BCom. Gardening nourished her spirit and many are the liturgical hangings and banners crafted by her which are still in use. She was most generous with her creativity. Or, if the whim took her, she could be seen fishing off Miramar wharf!

In the early 1990s Marcellin stopped teaching and began what many remember as the most energetic time of her life. Firstly, she was on the Tertiary Chaplaincy Team at Victoria University of Wellington. Then in 1997 she met Susan



Long-time member of Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand, Mary Marcellin (Wilson) CNZM, went to God on 24 October 2022. Photo: Supplied

Baragwanath from Porirua College who asked her to teach at He Huarahi Tamariki, a school for teenage parents in Cannon’s Creek, Porirua. Marcellin committed herself wholeheartedly and was much loved.

In 1997 also she accepted the position of Chaplain to Catholic Women’s League where she wielded her influence for good. She was also Chaplain to Ascent, warmly recognising and encouraging all those in this group. Her interest in women saw her doing chaplaincy at Arohata Women’s Prison.

Besides all these activities, Marcellin was involved in other outreaches regarding social justice and women’s issues, even presenting submissions to parliament around contentious issues. She served on many boards and committees, offering her passion and expertise, while at one stage she was a member of the Wellington Mercy Leadership Team.

Her work for the Cathedral

Parish was recognised in 2013 by the Archdiocese when she was presented with the John Patrick Fitzgerald Award for Service. The same year she was named ‘Wellingtonian of the Year’.

One of the ventures Marcellin was most proud of was the establishment of the Wellington Homeless Women’s Trust. She was pleased to see the first home open in 2013.

Marcellin said: ‘We concentrate on restorative work with our clients and aim to provide them with resilience and self-esteem. We then relocate them in their own independent units.’ This venture is still flourishing in Wellington today.

Throughout her life Marcellin looked outward, so was surprised to be awarded a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2022.

This valiant woman is at peace now but is encouraging all of us to continue her outreach.

In her words... ‘Where you see an injustice in society, especially against women – ACT’

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 8 December

Last month Cardinal John Dew wrote to parish leaders, ‘As has been the custom for many years an archdiocesan Mass will be celebrated on our diocesan feast day, 7pm, Thursday 8 December, at St Teresa’s Pro-Cathedral, Karori. The archdiocese will again be entrusted to the care of Mary under the title of the Immaculate Conception at this Mass. Parishes are asked to renew that Consecration on the following Sunday, 11 December, at All parish Masses.’

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception Wellington Catholics traditionally pray to Mary to protect them from earthquakes.

In 1855 Wellington experienced

a severe earthquake that rocked the southern part of the North Island. At magnitude 8.2 it was the most powerful ever recorded in New Zealand.

Bishop Viard – who had arrived in Wellington in 1850 as Vicar Apostolic of the Southern diocese, headquartered in Wellington, and was appointed Bishop in 1860 – was overseas at the time. He decided on his return to consecrate the Archdiocese of Wellington to the patronage of Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception. Every year since then, on 8 December, Wellington Catholics pray to Mary to protect the city from further earthquakes.

ACT OF CONSECRATION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE TO MARY

Prayer for 8 December

Mary, Mother of God, Christian people have always called on you in their hour of need and you have never failed them. We, the Church of Wellington, on this feast of your Immaculate Conception express our love for you and ask your help for our needs and the needs of the whole world.

[*Holy Mary, Mother of God . . . Response: . . . pray for us.]

We consecrate to you the Archdiocese of Wellington and its people. May we always admire and strive to live the virtues of your life. Watch over and protect the Church and be with Pope Francis and our bishops as they shepherd Christ’s pilgrim church. [*... Response]

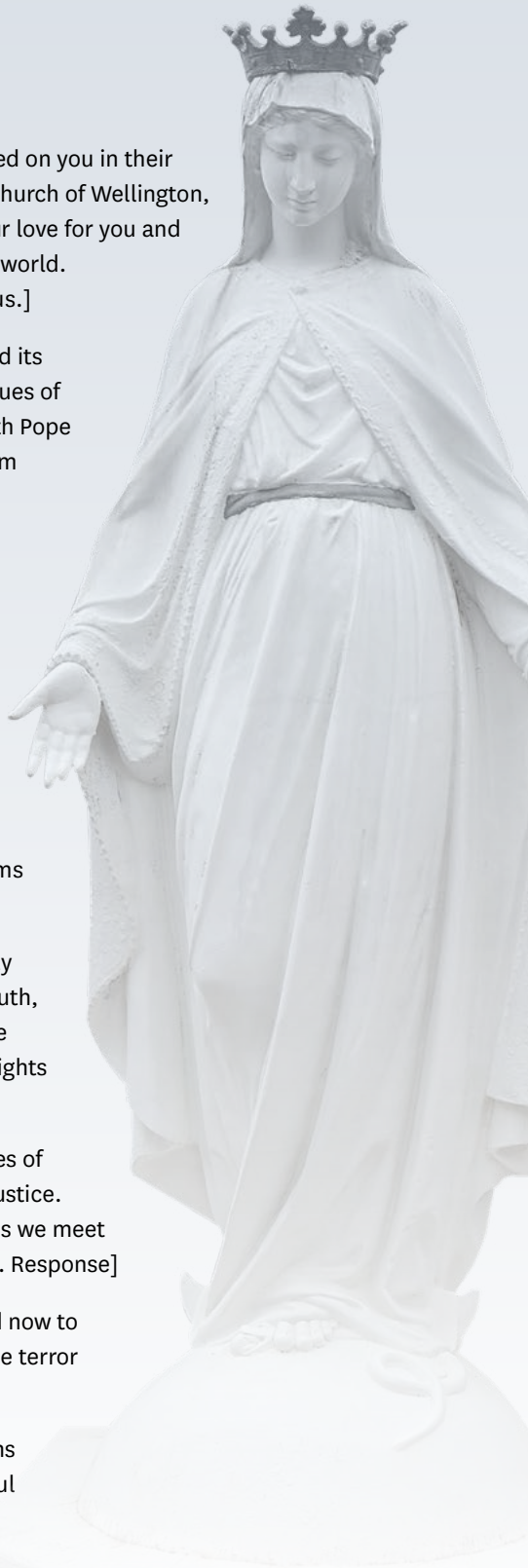
We pray for the peoples of the world, that they may learn to know your Son and banish all that is contrary to the Gospel. Inspire people to work for basic human needs and for understanding and mutual trust between nations. May your Son raise up men and women who will spend themselves in alleviating the needs of people in lands where there is suffering, hunger and disease. Have compassion on parents unable to provide for their families, on husbands and wives who are separated, and on children who are victims of ignorance or violence. [*... Response]

Mother of Mercy, through your intercession may the Holy Spirit change the hearts of all and turn them towards truth, justice and charity. Teach them to see that peace will be possible only when all obey God’s Law, respecting the rights and dignity of their neighbour. [*... Response]

We ask you especially to protect the parents and families of our land, that they may learn the meaning of love and justice. Strengthen us so that we may withstand the temptations we meet and reach our potential as unique creations of God. [*... Response]

God established the earth on firm foundations. Ask God now to remove from our land the danger of earthquakes and the terror and destruction they bring. [*... Response]

Mother of God, through your intercession may all nations turn from sin. Lead the nations to the loving and merciful heart of your Son, where alone they will find truth, life and peace forever. Amen.



This statue of Mary the Immaculate Conception stands in the courtyard of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, currently closed for restoration work. (See p 20.) Photo: WelCom



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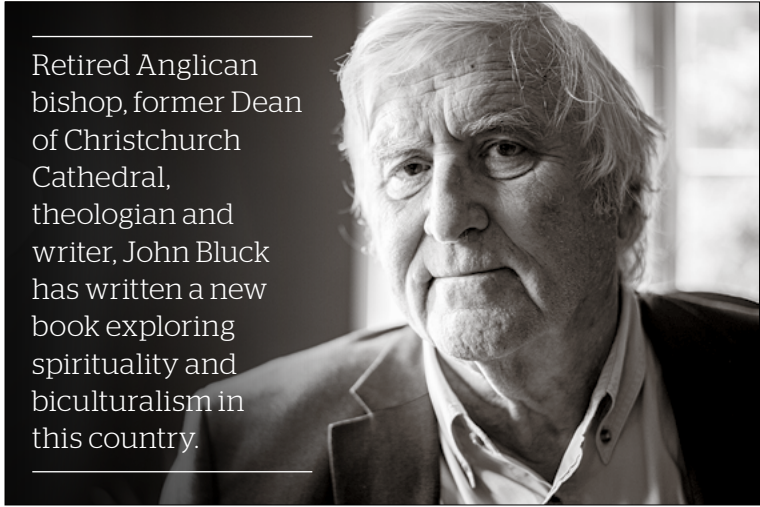
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Becoming Pākehā - an exploration of spirituality and bi-culturalism



Retired Anglican bishop, former Dean of Christchurch Cathedral, theologian and writer, John Bluck has written a new book exploring spirituality and biculturalism in this country.

After more than 200 years of co-existence under the umbrella of a unique treaty, you might think things would be better than ever he says. In his new book, John Bluck argues that Pākehā and Māori worlds grow ever more separate: the Aotearoa of today is a landscape of two predominant cultures, overlaid with so many others, fractured and more likely to erupt than Ruapehu. But has it always been this way?

Becoming Pākehā follows the author's life, growing up in the predominately Māori East Coast village of Nūhaka in the 1950s,

'*Becoming Pākehā* is frank about the failures of becoming an authentically bicultural country and the roadblocks that still hamper progress,' says Bluck. 'But it is above all a hopeful book about our future and the work that Pākehā can do to make it happen.'

'What drove me to write this book is my dismay, even despair, at the quality of our current conversation between Māori and Pākehā and our failure to apply even the most basic courtesies and conventions to ensure mutual respect and understanding.'

'If we communicate in our marriages and businesses as badly as we do biculturally we'd all be divorced or bankrupt,' he says.

Bluck says he has written the book in a secular language for a secular audience, which is the majority of New Zealanders. But he also talks a lot about spirituality. 'You can't fully understand the treaty if you don't understand the spirituality of the chiefs who signed it,' he says. 'We've been talking about the treaty for a long time now but we've been talking past each other.'

Becoming Pākehā makes a case for Pākehā spirituality that enables us to have an understanding of the treaty in a secular world.

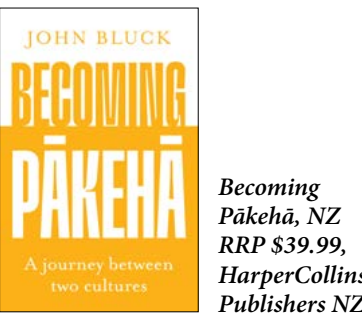
'Our Churches have been making statements about the treaty for decades. I think the Churches have been leaders in the bicultural debate and strong anti-racism progress in the last 40 years. We've been talking and advocating the underlying issues of justice and quality that are so essential for progress. Our track record as Churches has been pretty tremendous I think, but the Churches don't get the recognition they deserve for that.'

Bluck says co-governance is already working not only in our Church institutions but also in our parks, lakes, marae, music – and culture is leading the way.

'In anyone is ever in doubt about our country's bicultural future they only have to look at our Black Ferns playing England in the World Cup final at Eden Park the other day with 40,000 people singing Māori songs.'

Launched late last month, Bluck says that strong interest in the book shows there is a curiosity about the subject and an anxiety among Pākehā New Zealanders who are troubled by the tone of the current bicultural debate.

Becoming Pākehā is a book for older Pākehā frustrated with and bewildered by the current debates



over racial equity, co-governance and Pākehā identity. It is also a book for younger people who might be less bothered by the debate but will appreciate some accessible background.

John Bluck is a writer and broadcaster with a lifetime of working on bicultural issues. His earlier books include *Wai Karekare: turbulent waters*, *Hidden Country: Having faith in Aotearoa*, *Killing us Softly: Challenging the Kiwi culture of complaint* and *Seeking the Centre: living well in Aotearoa*.

Now living in Pakiri, north of Auckland, John Bluck has worked ecumenically all-round New Zealand and overseas, serving as Communication Director for the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

Catholic education highlights for 2022

The agreement to begin more transparent financial pooling schemes for Catholic schools in Aotearoa New Zealand and major improvements to school property have been highlights of 2022, says Dr Kevin Shore, Chief Executive of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office.

The national property pooling schemes have been under review for about five years and a new common good attendance dues scheme, Te Puna Waihangā, has been agreed to, says Kevin.

'This provides proprietors with a stronger involvement in the process and a higher level of transparency over decisions made.'

Also significant, says Kevin, is the development of an emergency fund to support a school community which suffers a catastrophic failure of a building or some other immediate threat to the health and safety of the community.

'This fund, which all participating proprietors will contribute to, will be built to a cap of \$20M and should be a significant support to schools and proprietors who find themselves in difficult circumstances.'

In 2021 the government made a decision to fund the acceleration of property maintenance work in state integrated schools through the



Dr Kevin Shore, CEO of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office – Te Tari Mātauranga Katorika O Aotearoa. Photo: Supplied

Essential Property Maintenance Programme (EPMP). \$52M was made available through this fund for property improvements.

'Catholic schools have benefitted to the tune of \$38M and significant progress has been made in 2022 in allocating these funds to school projects that are making a meaningful improvement to our Catholic schools,' says Kevin. 'It has been pleasing to see so much property work being undertaken that benefits the students and teachers in our schools.'

Reflecting on the year, Kevin Shore said there had been plenty of challenges for his staff in the current environment.

'Staff at NZCEO in Wellington spent almost three months at the start of the year working from home because of the parliamentary protests and then the immediate closure of our office building due to concerns over a seismic assessment. Add this to the pandemic and there was a strong feeling amongst staff that a plague of locusts was imminent!'

Kevin said he was very grateful to Te Kupenga and the Sisters of Mercy who offered them a permanent home within the Mercy Centre in Thorndon.

On the issue of school attendance which has received a lot of media coverage, Kevin said that Catholic schools have traditionally had higher attendance rates than state schools and he believed this is still the case.

'While some of our Catholic schools have been affected by student absence, particularly since the start of the pandemic, many of our Catholic schools continue to have strong support from their communities resulting in high attendance rates. For those schools which have been affected by increasing rates of student non-attendance, the solutions are not always easy to find.'

'I acknowledge that there

are a number of societal and whānau factors that impact on the capability, opportunity and motivation for students to engage in school and any solutions rely on strategies to strengthen community connections and buy in to the value of education.'

In November, NZCEO announced its 2023 Leadership in Catholic Education Scholarship Award Programme, for fees for graduate and postgraduate study of Catholic Leadership, Religious Education and/or Theology. Visit nzceo.org.nz for information.

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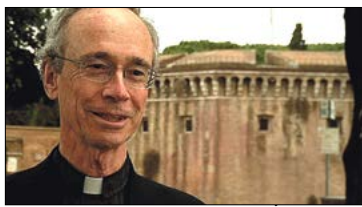
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Catholics Thinking

Synod on synodality: Where has it been and where is it going?



Fr Thomas Reese sj

With the calling of a worldwide synod on synodality, Pope Francis set in motion the most extensive consultative process the world has ever seen.

In recent months, each diocese produced a report on its listening sessions, which were then synthesised by their national episcopal conferences. The conference reports were sent to Rome, where they were in turn incorporated into a 'synthesis of syntheses' that was prepared for the next stage of the synodal process: a continental consultation.

For the millions of people who have participated in the synodal process, the synod is no longer an abstract concept but a lived experience. They have met together as brothers and sisters, shared their experience of listening to the word of God and reflected together on the future of the Church.

My guess is that for Francis, this lived experience is as important as, if not more important than, any proposals that come from the synod.

The 'Working Document for the Continental Stage', issued [October 2022], gives us a picture of where the synodal process has been and where it might be going.

The document describes 'the shared sense of the experience of synodality lived by those who took part'; its authors wrote, including 'the hopes and concerns of the People of God from across the globe.'

This material will allow participants in the continental assemblies to listen to voices from every part of the world. The cultural, political, economic and religious experience of the Church is very different in Africa, Europe, Asia and North and South America.

These continental assemblies will then draw up a list of priorities for the first session of the Synod of Bishops to begin next October.

The first section of the document reports that there was great appreciation of the opportunity to

speak and to listen to others in the Church.

'What emerges', according to the working document, 'is a profound re-appropriation of the common dignity of all the baptised'. This theological foundation 'enables us to continue to promote and make good use of the variety of charisms that the Spirit with unpredictable abundance pours out on the faithful'.

The second chapter is organised around a quote from Isaiah: 'Enlarge the space of your tent!' where the tent is seen as a space for communion and participation, the necessary foundations of mission.

'Enlarging the tent requires welcoming others into it, making room for their diversity', says the working document.

At the tent's centre 'stands the tabernacle, that is, the presence of the Lord', explains the working document as it further develops the metaphor. 'The tent's hold is ensured by the sturdiness of its pegs, that is, the fundamentals of faith that do not change but can be moved and planted in ever new ground, so that the tent can accompany the people as they walk through history. Finally,

"If liberals want to win Francis' support for their reforms, they will need to show how the reforms allow the Church to better proclaim the Gospel and how they make us grow as a synodal Church."

in order not to sag, the structure of the tent must keep in balance the different forces and tensions to which it is subjected: a metaphor that expresses the need for discernment.'

The third chapter describes the Church as needing to live 'a Christological paradox: boldly proclaiming its authentic teaching while at the same time offering a witness of radical inclusion and acceptance through its pastoral and discerning accompaniment.'

Rather than behaving like gatekeepers, we are called to a 'vision of a Church capable of radical inclusion, shared belonging, and deep hospitality according to the teachings of Jesus.'

The path toward greater inclusion requires 'listening deeply and accepting being transformed by it'. Obstacles to such listening include hierarchical structures, clericalism and socioeconomic differences.

In the listening sessions, many spoke of the need for the inclusion of many marginalised groups, including

young people, those with disabilities, those unhappy with liturgical change, those who have had abortions, people who have divorced and remarried, single parents, people living in a polygamous marriage, LGBTQ people, those who left ordained ministry and married, and 'women and eventual children of priests who have broken the vow of celibacy, who are otherwise at risk of suffering serious injustice and discrimination'.

Also listed were 'the poorest, the lonely elderly, indigenous peoples, migrants without any affiliation and who lead a precarious existence, street children, alcoholics and drug addicts, those who have fallen into the plots of criminality and those for whom prostitution seems their only chance of survival, victims of trafficking, survivors of abuse (in the Church and beyond), prisoners, groups who suffer discrimination and violence because of race, ethnicity, gender, culture and sexuality'.

The document recognises that 'the challenges of tribalism, sectarianism, racism, poverty, and gender inequality' exist 'within the life of the Church, as well as the world'.

In response to these challenges,

'the Church's mission is to make Christ present in the midst of His People through reading the Word, the celebration of the Sacraments and through all actions that care for the wounded and suffering. 'Peace building and reconciliation, as well as working for justice, are crucial parts of the mission. The Church's mission in many places in the world involves dialogue with people of different religions.

The liturgy, which brings the community together, was seen as important in making communion tangible, enabling the exercise of participation and nourishing the momentum toward mission with the Word and the sacraments.

Finally, the synthesis said, 'Almost all reports raise the issue of full and equal participation of women'. Many reports 'ask that the Church continue its discernment in relation to a range of specific questions: the active role of women in the governing structures of Church bodies, the possibility for women with adequate



Pope Francis meets with leaders of the Synod of Bishops' general secretariat in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican, October 14, 2022. Pictured with the pontiff are Xavière Missionary Sr Nathalie Becquart, Bishop Luis Marín de San Martín, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, Cardinal Mario Grech, and Jesuit Fr Giacomo Costa.

Photo: CNS/Vatican Media

training to preach in parish settings, and a female diaconate.'

But on the question of priestly ordination, 'much greater diversity of opinion was expressed', with some reports calling for it and others considering it a closed issue.

The fourth and final chapter of the working paper looks to the future, urging the participants to be a 'Church that learns from listening how to renew its evangelising mission in the light of the signs of the times, to continue offering humanity a way of being and living in which all can feel included as protagonists'.

There is much controversy surrounding the synod. Liberals see it as an opportunity to push for reforms blocked by Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI after the Second Vatican Council: married clergy, women priests, greater inculturation in the liturgy, acceptance of artificial birth control, a rethinking of sexual ethics, etc. Conservatives see it as an attempt by liberals to pressure the Church into changing its teachings.

Liberals point to public support for their reforms; conservatives counter by saying that the Church is not a democracy. (The synodal process certainly emphasised the importance of listening to the people of God, but bishops and the Vatican have also made clear that decisions will not be made by popular vote.)

Conservatives fear the pope will give in to public pressure; liberals fear that the hierarchy will once again reject their reforms. The working paper acknowledges these fears.

Francis, on the other hand, is focused on improving the Church's mission of proclaiming the Gospel and creating a more synodal church.

The introduction to the 'Working Document for the Continental Stage' of the synodal process states that the basic question guiding the entire process is: How does this journeying together 'allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to Her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?'

If liberals want to win Francis' support for their reforms, they will need to show how the reforms allow the Church to better proclaim the Gospel and how they make us grow as a synodal church. If conservatives want to kill these reforms, they must show that the proposed reforms do exactly the opposite.

My view is that many of the proposed reforms would help the Church better proclaim the Gospel and make it a more synodal church, but I am uncertain what Francis will think. My guess is that he will adopt more reforms than conservatives want but that he will go slower than liberals want. Doing otherwise might destroy the very synodality he wants to foster.

This article was published in National Catholic Reporter, 8 November 2022, and appears in the NCR Synod on Synodality feature series: www.ncronline.org/feature-series/synod-on-synodality/stories

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Mary’s Joseph and the strength of silence

James B Lyons
Diocesan Priest, Wellington

In every Nativity tableau, the figure of Joseph stands out as a proud guardian and protector of mother and child.

The Christmas story casts him in a privileged role, a character with integrity, trustworthy and reliable. But without a word to say.

Joseph’s strength is in his silence.

Introduced in the Gospel of Matthew as betrothed, or engaged, to Mary, he is immediately faced with her unexplained pregnancy. We read: Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to prevent any public disgrace for Mary decided to quietly break the engagement... [cf Matthew 1:18-24].

He obviously struggled with his decision but, reassured through a dream, changed his mind and took Mary home to be his wife.

Throughout this extremely emotional process no words of Joseph are recorded. It’s as though he has nothing to say.

Again, when news comes that Herod has ordered the child to be hunted down and killed, Joseph escapes with his family to Egypt. There they stay till they learn that Herod has died. [cf Matthew, 2]

Such an ordeal, fleeing for their lives, becoming refugees in a strange land, not knowing how long they will have to stay, conjures

up all sorts of fears and threats. Yet we hear not a word from Joseph.

This silence should not disturb us. Joseph’s integral role in the gospel narrative shines through his actions. The few sentences describing what he does are more than enough to present Joseph as a person capable of great heroism, unafraid of challenge, loyal and true.

“Silence speaks its own language of calm, peace and presence. It does not demand attention but, instead, attends to situations through quiet reflection and positive listening.”

His caring nature gave Mary confidence and supported the child, Jesus, as he grew. His values helped form the independence, sensitivity and respect that Jesus would need in his ministry.

Silence speaks its own language of calm, peace and presence. It does not demand attention but, instead, attends to situations through quiet reflection and positive listening.

Joseph would not have ‘heard’ his dreams had he not been able to put aside the distraction of sound.

Of course, Joseph would have spoken. The decision to escape Herod or to join the census in Bethlehem would have been made in conversation with Mary. The enquiries for accommodation in the crowded Bethlehem town

would not have been without words.

Later, their anguish and disappointment in losing the young Jesus on their visit to Jerusalem, would certainly not have been met with silence!

There is much we can learn from Joseph. Especially today, when our society seems intent on avoiding silence; when so much that is spoken is superficial and thoughtless!

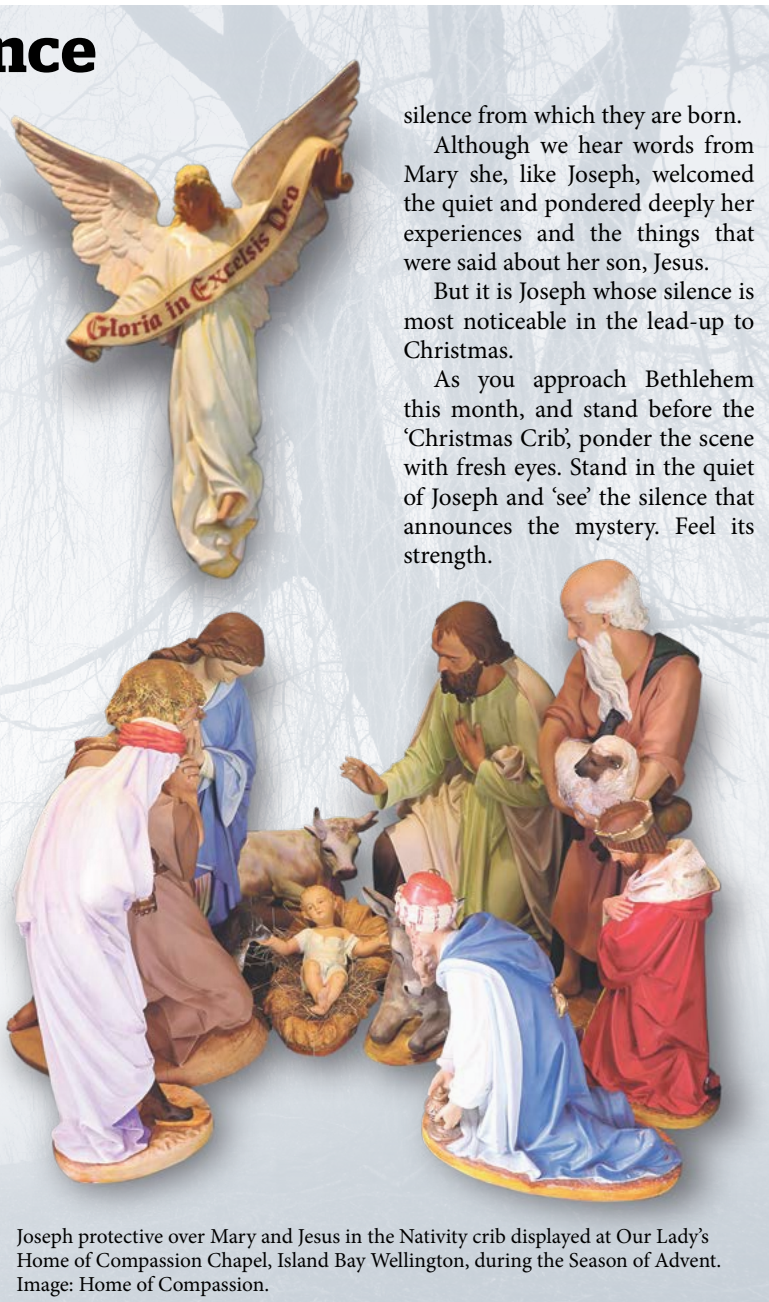
Music is a necessary constant in many homes and in most shops. Students find study difficult without music for company. Headphones are essential accessories to and from work. It would seem that filling life with sound makes life liveable!

The old adage, Think before you speak, is a timeless indicator of the importance of silence as an indispensable component in meaningful conversation.


The Irish poet, John O’Donohue, gives us a beautiful and powerful image: Silence is the womb of the word!

The best words, words that convey love and care and speak from the heart, arise from inner quietness, gently gestating before becoming, for the one to whom they are addressed, life-giving.

If our words are to be truly life-giving, we must give place to




Joseph protective over Mary and Jesus in the Nativity crib displayed at Our Lady’s Home of Compassion Chapel, Island Bay Wellington, during the Season of Advent. Image: Home of Compassion.



Pope Francis’ Prayer Intention

During the month of December 2022 Pope Francis’ intention is: *for volunteer not-for-profit organisations*

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Gospel Reading: Sunday 4 December, 2022

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – MATTHEW 3:1-12

¹ John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, ² ‘Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand!’ ³ This was the man that the prophet Isaiah had spoken of when he said: *A voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.’* ⁴ John wore clothing made of camel’s hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region

around the Jordan were going out to him ⁶ and as they were baptised by him in the Jordan River they acknowledged their sins. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming retribution?’ ⁸ Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to tell yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father,” because I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰

Even now the axe is being laid to the root of the trees, so that every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ ‘I am baptising you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² ‘His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.’

John the Baptist, today’s old-timer

Tom Gibson

In our reading today [Matthew 3:1-16] we have two extremes. John the Baptist, the last of the Old-Testament prophets, and Jesus who preached the new Kingdom of God through his apostles.

People wondered about John the Baptist. He came from the desert, he did not eat bread or drink wine but ate natural food – wild locusts and honey, as it fell from God’s hands. He did not wear the clothes of the day. Instead, he dressed in camel skin with a leather girdle around his waist. His teaching was hard hitting. He announced without hesitation, that God’s judgement was very near – that sinners would be cut down like a tree and thrown into a fire.

He may not have been clear about those who were not converted but was quite clear about those who were not baptised. Their future would be God’s wrath, God’s anger, God’s fury, and God’s vengeance. His message was sombre and grim, dark and heavy.

Jesus understood John the Baptist and went up to John to be baptised. However, John then became frightened. He said to Jesus, ‘No not by me!’ Jesus said, ‘Oh yes, by you!’ John then baptised Jesus, who became inspired by the prophetic impulse of John the Baptist, and rewarded by the Holy Spirit who came down on him.

John was right according to the Old Testament. After John, the Old Testament closed. Up

until then it was ‘the Law and the Prophets’. Since then, it has been the ‘Kingdom of God’.

John lamented. Jesus rejoiced. John sang a funeral dirge, Jesus an Alleluia verse. John refused to eat bread. Jesus broke the bread. John never drank wine. Jesus turned all the water at the wedding into wine. Where John warned people, Jesus invited people.

Let us be grateful then for the New Testament. We have escaped the days when John the Baptist lived. Jesus, by His death on the cross has assured our salvation.

Tom Gibson is a retired dairy farmer and a parishioner at Immaculate Conception, Stratford, Taranaki.

THE QUESTION

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asks you to be
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or joyous
or trembling,

asks you to step out
day after day
into a recurring beauty,
asks you to put your hands in the air
like any surrendering creature,

asks you straight,
hand on heart,

hey you
hey you with the piwakawaka
darting around your head,
what more can you do right now
with what you’ve got?



- Michael Fitzsimons



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LIAM HEHIR



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

If you would like your event listed on this page, please send an outline to welcom@wn.catholic.org.nz including name of event, date, time, location and contact.

Saturday 3 December

- St Francis Xavier, Memorial.
- Johnsonville Christmas Parade – the Combined Churches of Johnsonville will have a float and invite children who would like to take part to gather at Uniting Church, Dr Taylor Terrace, next to St Brigid’s Church, 9.45am. Come dressed as a member of nativity scene or borrow a costume supplied at Uniting Church on the day. Adults welcome to be part of parade.
- Parish BBQ – Sacred Heart Parish Waitara, 5pm–7.30pm, Sacred Heart Waitara. BYO food and maybe a chair.

Sunday 4 December

- St Patrick’s School, Kaponga – centennial celebrations with Mass at 10.30am following by mixing, mingling and meeting past classmates, teachers and friends, photos and memorabilia display, and time capsule to be planted. Light lunch available. Visit www.stpatrickskaponga.co.nz or email centennial@stpatskaponga.school.nz to register your interest. Contact Rose Kelbrick, principal, St Patrick’s School, ph: (06) 764-6563.

➤ Pot-luck luncheon – for all old girls of Sacred Heart College Whanganui and past pupils of Sisters of St Joseph (Taranaki Branch), at the Stratford Parish Centre from midday onwards. Please bring an item for the foodbank.

Monday 5 and Tuesday 6 December

Christmas Carols at the Cathedral – The Unity Singers present 2022 Christmas Carols at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Palmerston North, 7pm. Donation or item of non-perishable food for St Vincent de Paul Foodbank would be very much appreciated.

Wednesday 7 December

Ignatian Prayer – Sacred Heart Community, Rongotea, invite all to the Ignatian Prayer Group meeting, 7pm in Sacred Heart Church, 6 Mersey St, Rongotea 4476. All welcome to a lively discussion and reflection followed by a ‘cuppa’.

Thursday 8 December

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Solemnity and Archdiocese of Wellington Patronal Feast. An archdiocesan Mass will be celebrated, 7pm, at St Teresa’s Pro-Cathedra, Karori.

Saturday 10 December

Catholic Parish of Hastings Youth Group Christmas Concert – 6pm, Sacred Heart

Church. Food stalls, carols, raffles, song and dance, community spirit. A night for whole family! Entry donation/koha. All funds raised go towards Youth Bay Camp in January 2023.

Monday 12–Friday 16 December

Young Catholic Leader (YCL) leadership formation programme for 2023 Yr 13 students, Highland Home Christian Camp, Pohangina Valley. Emphasis a faithful Catholic leadership 24/7. Focus on prayer, service, collaboration, challenge and personal commitment, group building, Mass, and camp duties. Contact Nick Wilson, Diocesan Young Catholics Team Leader, at nwilson@pndiocese.org.nz for more information.

Sunday 11 December

St Benedict’s Hamper Mass – St Benedict’s Khandallah Hamper Mass, 9am, in support of families in the community, non-perishable goods suggested. Parishioners invited to bring hampers to church for Mass, to be placed in front of altar. Please contact Jo Mackenzie on 021 990 918 for information.

Thursday 15–Friday 23 December

Simbang Gabi – Christmas Novena Masses at St Anne’s Church, Newtown, starting Thursday 15 at 7pm and every evening

until Friday 23 December. This is the spiritual preparation for Christmas, in commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. Traditionally in Filipino culture, observing Simbang Gabi is a way of offering sacrifice for the Lord. All welcome.

Friday 16–Friday 23 December

Cribs on Kāpiti – Our Lady of Kāpiti Church, windows will be lit up from 8pm–10pm each night. A gold coin donation or a can would be welcome. All welcome to come and view the cribs, 1 Presentation Way, Paraparaumu.



Sunday 25 December

Christmas Day, Solemnity

Tuesday 14 February 2023

Valentine’s Day Mass – St Joseph’s Church, 152 Brougham St, Mt Victoria. Mass celebrated by Cardinal John Dew from 6.30pm, followed by refreshments.



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MEN'S MEETINGS

Joshua aims to encourage, support and strengthen men in their Christian calling. Come and join us.

Palmerston North
St Mary's Church Foyer, Ruahine Street
Tuesday 6 December, 7:00pm
No meeting in January
Contact: John 027 688 7750

Wellington
No meetings in December or January
Looking forward to seeing you all in February
Contact: Steve 027 356 9555

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Cathedral restoration project close to completion



Wellington Coadjutor Archbishop Paul Martin sm is calling on the Catholic community of the archdiocese to help bring the Sacred Heart Cathedral Restoration project to completion. A cathedral is the cornerstone of a diocese and a point of unity for everybody in the diocese, says Archbishop Paul.

'The Sacred Heart Cathedral of Wellington has a long and rich history. Our parents, grandparents and generations before, made immense sacrifices to build and maintain a cathedral which is a magnificent place to gather, celebrate and worship. The cathedral is also of significant heritage value and is an important part of the fabric of our city.

'We want to honour this legacy and continue it for those yet to come. It belongs to us all. My hope for the future is that the cathedral once again becomes the centre of life for the archdiocese, a living house of prayer where there are opportunities for people to gather and celebrate our faith, to praise God through music, work together to support others and deepen our own faith.'

The cathedral was closed in 2018 following a seismic report which assessed the building as an earthquake risk.

Archbishop Paul, who is closely involved with the restoration project and is a member of the restoration committee, is appealing to the Catholic community in the archdiocese to contribute to the completion of the Cathedral Restoration Project. The total cost of the project is around \$12m, of which \$2.5m still remains to be raised.

'We are close to the finish line. Your contribution to the restoration project will help us get there.

'Global events of the last three years have made it particularly trying and some momentum has been lost. We are conscious we need to bring this exciting project to completion,' said Archbishop Paul.

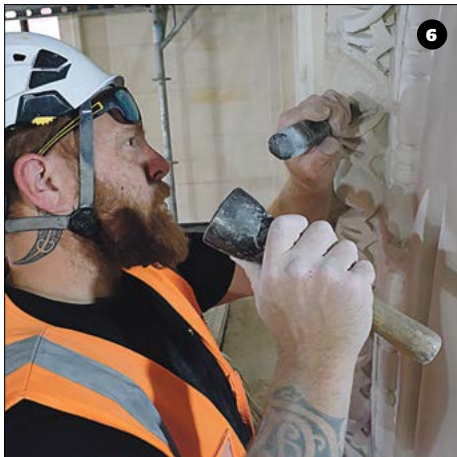
Covid-19 interrupted some fund-raising activities and there were also issues which arose once work was underway. It was discovered that the cathedral's stonework, which had been painted over, was capturing moisture and much of the paint has needed to be stripped back. It was also found that some of the materials used for the window surrounds had deteriorated due to the high moisture levels of the adjacent stone so window frames have had to be repaired and glass replaced where necessary.

Project architect Jane Kelly says the project team is working very hard to complete the project in 2023.

'The team has been very committed. There has been a lot of preparation and strengthening work going on and the results are starting to look amazing. The outside work will be slowly revealed over the next few months and the completed interior later next year. The stonework will have a natural finish with a natural warm glow. The finished cathedral is going to look beautiful. The big reveal next year will be something to see.'

Archbishop Paul expressed his gratitude for all the generous donors who have already contributed and supported the hugely significant project.

'We live in challenging times, where things of faith can feel quite fragile. The stability the cathedral provides and symbolises helps us to have a better sense of who we are and why we are here. It helps us renew our resolve to do what we can for others, to support the faith life of people within our community and to offer a place of welcome and discovery too.'



EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS

Please help us and little by little our goal will be reached. The old adage rings true: Every little bit helps! Donations, of whatever amount, will help and will be gratefully acknowledged.

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

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(Reopen)

1. Archbishop Paul Martin on site with members of the project's Arrow Scaffold crew, l-r, Jherson Villand, Joecris Tacardon and Marlon Martinez. 2. & 5. Project Site Manager Tony Gormley of LT McGuiness, the main contractor for the strengthening and restoration work, inspects stonework on the Portico columns and the gold lettering area across the gable. 3. 4. & 6. Stonemasons Callum Johnson and Peter Reily using traditional hand tools on the intricacies of the Oamaru stone of the cathedral interior walls. 7. Nicolas Piveteau of Le Maçon, the project's stonemason company, and Tony Gormley discuss repair work for a wall area. 8. Scaffolding and bracing erected throughout the cathedral interior. 9. Traditional stonework hand tools used on the job.

Photos: Annette Scullion/WelCom