



When he had finished eating, he said to Simon,  
“Launch out into the deep water and let down your  
nets for a catch”.

Luke 5: 4

## LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL) March 2023

Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand  
Journal and Newsletter for Lay Leaders and Ministers

Welcome to the March issue of LOL.

From having a change of Prime Minister, to the tribulations of cyclone Gabrielle, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine sadly reaching its first year, are among the significant events that took place since our last issue in November of 2022. It certainly feels like a lifetime ago.

The candidates, pastoral mentors and I still believe that the Launch Out Letters (LOL) fulfil an essential component in our formation and the development of the theology of the laity. Thank you to all who continue to support us. There is feedback that the issues have grown too long. We will keep to that as much as possible without sacrificing the quality of the articles. We also have moved the candidate’s Gospel reflection to the 2nd Sunday.

In this issue, **Jude McKee** leads the Gospel reflection on the woman in the well. A hopeful topic on water after the country’s devastation with cyclone Gabrielle—a fitting shift of imagery from deluge to a gentle drop. **Telesia Alaimoana**, our senior candidate, shares how her formation in Launch Out changed her. **Bridget Taumoepeau** indulges us with two pieces. First is a summary of the *New Zealand Discernment on the Document for the Continental Stage*. The recently concluded Oceania Continental Assembly Synod encourages the ‘widening of our tents’ to hear the voices outside New Zealand. Concomitantly, it also invites us to keep working on our progress towards synodality. We encourage readers to use this summary to share with their faith communities. Bridget tried to make it simple enough for translation by our ethnic communities. Finally, Bridget examines Francis’s use of silence in his leadership. It is a fitting lesson for lay leaders to learn, but it is also hard to learn. There is a growing literature on Silent Leadership, Francis and Bridget aptly suggest a pastoral perspective rather than just a strategic approach to leadership. In a world that expects leaders to be loud and proud, the prophetic way is often unassuming and gentle, like a gentle drop of water.

—Maya Bernardo, Launch Out Formator and Manager

### Wai Ora O Te Atua—What A Drop to Drink! 3rd Sunday of Lent (John 4:5-42)

By Jude McKee  
Launch Out Candidate



Picture from :  
*Woman At The Well* by Andy Shudall ([haikudeck.com](http://haikudeck.com))

Unlike Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s ancient mariner who was surrounded by water but could not benefit from it, we are gifted a living water from God that benefits us beyond anything we can gain from this world.

Water- such a powerful symbol! A woman who had made mistakes, who tried to stay out of sight, even collecting water in the middle of the day to avoid social contact with others, is an opportunity God has used to show us how our lives are healed through the living waters of God’s many graces and blessings.

Jesus was at a well near Sychar. He had sent his disciples to buy food. A Samaritan woman arrived at a time when she would not have expected anyone to be there. At that time in society Samaritans and Jews did not associate together, let alone converse with each other. But Jesus sparked up a conversation by asking the woman for a drink.

*Continues on Page 2*

The woman asked pointed questions of Jesus, and he responded. He knew her past and present situation. He knew she was an outcast. The woman asked Jesus directly was he the promised Messiah and he revealed to her who he was. He offered her 'living water' that would make her life new. When the disciples returned the woman ran from the well. She ran back to her town and told people of her experience. She may well just be the first Christian witness. Her words made an impact and "many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony" (v. 39).

Jonathan Parnell, an American Pastor, suggests that we should pray for four graces when we read the Bible. He uses the acronym IOUS : Incline (my heart); Open (my eyes); Unite (my heart); Satisfy (me) (refer Psalm 119:36-40). When we read our Bible, we should pray to be moved and transformed in this way. Each of us will hear and see a different message - the one that God's spirit knows our heart needs. Today's Gospel passage displays a God who loves each one of us no matter our situation or our background.

In his General Audience in St Peter's Square in May 2013 Pope Francis said that man is like a traveller who, crossing the deserts of life, has a thirst for living water, gushing and fresh, capable of quenching his deep desire for light, love, beauty and peace.

As Jesus answered the woman at the well, he also speaks to us. God alone can give living water, water that satisfies every thirst.

The great example of being a living witness to Christ is front and foremost in my mind. Look at the difference this one woman made, this outcast. Her heart was inclined, her eyes were opened, her heart was united with God, and she was satisfied by God's offer of living water that satisfies every thirst. What a transformation. And, what a beautiful response of thanks she showed by her courage to witness her experience to her townsfolk.

We won't always know how God wants to use us in this world. But by our witness we can share the God of love, the God of forgiveness, and the God of healing who is available for all who drink deeply from the living waters, the wai ora o te Atua – and what a drop it is to drink!

*Image in the background copied from : <https://www.pexels.com/photo/water-drop-40784/>*

### List of Candidates and Pastoral Mentors for 2023

CANDIDATES	PASTORAL MENTORS	PARISHES
Margaret Bearsley	Susan Apathy	Holy Trinity Parish
Vicky Raw	Susan Apathy	Star of the Sea
Bonita Tasele	Cecily McNeill	Holy Family Parish, Porirua
Jude McKee	Mary Jackson Kay, rc	St. Theresa's Plimmerton
Bernadette Patelesio	Bridget Taumoepeau	Te Wairua Tapu
Telesia Alaimoana	Maya Bernardo	Our Lady of Hope

**Spiritual Directors:** Neil Vaney, sm, Clare O' Connor, rc and Regina Daly, pbvm

Get to know our candidates from the Launch Out webpage at the ADW website:

<https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/launch-out-formation-programme/>

*Please pray for us*

March 13, 2023, marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope Francis. His election prompted people to comment that it represented many 'firsts' – Jesuit; South American; called Francis; etc. Reflecting upon his pontificate, another quality comes to mind - the role of silence and how Francis has demonstrated it.

As a Jesuit, Francis has practised and promoted the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, which, traditionally, are taken over 30 days of silence. As Pope, he has talked frequently of the importance of discernment, connected to silence and prayer.

Francis has demonstrated his ability to silence himself. Famously, after allegations that he was aware of the sexual abuse perpetrated by then-Cardinal McCarrick, he announced that he would remain silent in response. Despite obviously disputing the claims, his silence limited the potential damage and division caused by that allegation. However, the issue was not ignored as an inquiry was set up.

In response to the five *dubia* (questions) set by four cardinals after the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love). Francis ignored their questions, remaining silent and letting the document stand. We hear little of those objections now.

Most striking, however, has been the almost total absence of the silencing of theologians during this pontificate. There has been a long history of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (or its predecessors) preventing theologians from publishing or teaching. These restrictions were often done in an authoritarian way, with the 'defendant' having virtually no right of reply etc. Ironically many of these theologians are now accepted as important and orthodox.

In learning to silence ourselves, we should thank Francis for demonstrating the link with the Gospel. [Turning the other cheek by turning away when we are 'assaulted (Mt 5: 38-40)'; and knowing we are blessed when we are persecuted for righteousness's sake (Mt 5: 10)]. Regarding others, he acknowledges that silencing never works. It is perhaps wiser and more productive to listen and learn.

All lessons for us to learn when we find it hard to silence ourselves, yet easy to demand the silence of others.



Copied from *Quotefancy* <https://quotefancy.com/>

## ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Food for Faith** <https://foodforfaith.org.nz/>
- **What's in a word?** When Vicky Raw presented a word cloud of the synod submissions between the entire Archdiocese and the Star of the Sea parish during her pastoral presentation, we were surprised by the number of similarities. This article presents a more stringent word analysis of synod submissions across different countries around the world. It is interesting to see the results for New Zealand <https://www.pillaratholic.com/vocabulary-of-a-synod/>
- **Better than Netflix.** Margaret and Vicky have been following **The Chosen** <https://watch.thechosen.tv/> for quite some time. This show is available for free online. They said you'll fall in love with Jesus all over again.
- **The Good Pope.** A free movie on the life of Pope John XXIII. Bridget recommended this. It's available in YouTube, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlaJV0UZqxo&t=6344s&ab\\_channel=Film%26Clips](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlaJV0UZqxo&t=6344s&ab_channel=Film%26Clips)



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

## BIRTHDAYS

### January

5 Neil Vaney

22 Bridget Taumoepeau

27 Telesia Alaimoana

### February

12 Joan McFetridge

21 Kaisa Beech

22 Bonita Tasele

23 Joe Green

26 Bernadette Patelesio

27 Telesia Alaimoana



*Copied from shutterfly.com <https://www.pinterest.nz/pin/410179478563045862/>*

# From Dragon to Peacemaker, My Launch Out Journey

By Telesia Alaimoana  
Launch Out Candidate

Launch Out was borne out of the 1998 Synod, where the people opted to have lay pastoral leaders instead of deacons to be more inclusive to women. I was part of that Synod but didn't think much of it then. Little did I know that I would be part of a revolution that the 1998 Synod began.

I joined Launch Out in 2016 after returning from a trip to Samoa to take my elderly mother back home after several years of living with me and my siblings in Wellington. I was sitting at home when I suddenly felt the house's emptiness as the children had gone to school, my husband had gone to work, and my mother was no longer around for me to cook and care for. I picked up the phone and contacted a friend who completed the Launch Out programme and asked him for the contact details of the person in charge (Joan McFetridge at that time). An appointment was set, followed by an interview with a panel; the rest, as we say, is history. It was a journey that I had no idea where it would lead me. I did not know what I wanted to achieve out of this.

Before I joined Launch Out, I had a reputation for being the 'dragon', especially among my family. Significant events happened in my life, involving my parents' separation, my wedding, the passing of my father, my three older siblings and later, my mother. Most of my siblings felt that I had made some decisions unilaterally without considering them. I had turned a blind eye, trying to justify my words and actions. To this day, the painful implication of my decision still affects my relationship with my family.

After six years in Launch Out, I see how I have learnt and grown. Launch Out has helped me come to terms with my past decisions, a better understanding and compassion for others, and a greater awareness of the presence of God in my life. My outward journey is a mirror of my inward search for God. The Launch Out formation was undoubtedly instrumental to my transformation from dragon to peacemaker. This change is noticeable to my family, who commented that I am much more relaxed, considerate, and respectful. My family now calls me to mediate and sort out potential conflicts. The dragon in me is still there but does not drive my decisions and actions as often as it used to. Launch Out, in a way, helped me accept this side of me and, by doing so, helped me manage my actions better.

I compare my LO journey to the story of "the Road to Emmaus" (Luke 24: 13-35). The Emmaus story helped me understand God's presence, whereas I often experienced His absence. The Holy Spirit graced me with the wisdom to understand better who God is and how he acts in my life. 'God's ways are not mine' (Isaiah 55:8-9). My conversion has also reinforced the importance of the sacrament of Holy Communion, where I feel the real presence of God. Receiving Holy Communion every week opens my eyes and heart to experience Jesus in his fullness.

I am genuinely grateful for the positive support, encouragement, and genuine understanding of those who taught me—mentors, tutors, spiritual directors, and the candidates I journey with. Their support and companionship keep me on my vocation path as a lay leader.

Indeed, when God called me to Launch Out, when I was pretty much a dragon, God could have already seen His vision of me as a peacemaker.

# UPDATES



**Pastoral Presentations 2022.** We held our Pastoral Presentation Day at Pa Maria Spirituality Centre last 19 November 2022. It has been a great day for all of us. We also remember Brian Cummings, sm, during our stay there. Thank you to the *Marist Fathers* for allowing us to use the facility and to *Mary-Ann Greaney* for giving us this memorable group picture.

The **pastoral projects** carried out this year were: an adult formation programme for lay ministers (Telesia); an adult formation programme on the Eucharist for young parents (Jude); designing and leading a bereavement liturgy and engaging with parish leadership to

start a sacramental program (Bernadette), a reflection on the synod discernment of a parish (Vicky), and preliminary groundwork to run prayer sessions with parish leaders using a liturgy derived from *Evangelii Gaudium* (Bonita). Margaret had a year of reflection. We thank Bridget Taumoepeau, Susan Apathy, Cecily McNeill, Mary Jackson Kay, rc and Catherine Gibbs, our Pastoral Mentors, for guiding and supporting all of us through the hills and valleys of our ministries.

**Those were the days...** After the presentations, we went out for drinks and had our simple Christmas celebration. I asked us to share a picture of us in the 1980s. We get to know each other a little bit more seeing our younger selves. Had we seen ourselves being in Launch Out and living the lives we are now 30 years ago?



## Start of Year Gathering 2022 (SYG 2022)

Last 11 February 2022, we met at the Home of Compassion to pray. Thank you, Telesia for leading us for prayer and reflection in the morning. In the afternoon, we shared last year's gains and provided feedback for going forward in 2023.



## A New Launch Out Graduate

Lisa Beech completed Launch Out by December 2022. Lisa finished with a specialisation in Pastoral Ministry for Social Justice.



## Farewell to MIKAELA TEOFILO- Lay Pastoral Leader of the Samoan Chaplaincy

Mika worked as a microbiologist and transfusion scientist when he responded to the call to join Launch Out in 2003 and later headed the Samoan Chaplaincy in 2010. Last 28 Feb, Mika stepped down as lay pastoral leader to retire. His journey was wrought with many challenges. He persevered and left behind a lay-led chaplaincy and a unifying force among the different Samoan communities.



## For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission

New Zealand Discernment on the Document for Continental Stage



New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference  
Te Huinga o ngā Pihopa Katorika o Aotearoa  
Synthesis of responses to *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent*,  
the Document for the Continental Stage  
December 2022

## A SYNTHESIS

By Bridget Taumoepeau

Pastoral Mentor, Launch Out Formation Programme

### BACKGROUND

In 2021 Pope Francis announced that there would be a Synod on Synodality. The original timelines were extended from 2 to 3 years, now due to finish in October 2024. The theme of the Synod is about the very nature of the Church, the specific way of living and operating as a church together. Synodality is often described as ‘walking together’. Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation and ongoing learning. The process started at the local level. Many people, including Launch Out candidates, participated in or led small groups. Individual personal contributions were also accepted. Local synopses were submitted to the Archdiocese and used at the Diocesan discernment level at Our Lady of Kapiti. The synopses from that meeting were collated for the National Synodal meeting at St Catherine’s College, Kilbirnie, Wellington. New Zealand then submitted the critical themes that emerged to Rome, where a group produced a document (The Document for Continental Stage – DCS) entitled ‘*Enlarge the space of your tent,*’ which, in turn, invited comment from the New Zealand Catholic community. These comments were considered by the Oceania group, which met in January 2023 and whose summaries then went to the meeting of the bishops of Oceania in Fiji in February, who prepared the final Oceania document for Rome. The New Zealand document included the demographics of New Zealand and the Church’s journey with the Royal Commission on Abuse in State and Faith-based Care.

### THEMES

The document identified fifteen themes. Below is an attempt to provide a summary:

**Receptivity to the Synod**—The process was generally a positive experience as it allowed people to speak freely and do prayerful listening. There was a powerful sense of new happenings in the Church, a recognition of the presence of the Holy Spirit. There was an appreciation of the gentleness of the process and amazement at the shared themes worldwide. A few concerns were expressed about change, and some wondered if their voices would be heard.

**Inclusion and the tent** – The tent was compared to a *fale*, a communal place. Welcoming, being open to all and being inclusive is essential, as well as emphasising engaging with people.

**Awareness of the Global Church** – The relevance of subsidiarity, as well as solidarity, was recognised. There is an awareness of the situations for Catholics in other parts of the world. They believed the Synod allowed many voices to be heard. We recognise that we are part of a diverse global Church, which is wounded. We need to face up to difficulties and accept change.

**Baptism** – This is the basis for participation in ministry and mission. The links between synodality, baptism and VCII were underpinned. The document reiterates the importance of the People of God, as laid out in VCII and that all the baptised are called to participation and service. There is a need for enhanced roles for the laity, which consequently calls for more and better formation for priests and laity.

**Women** – Considerable concern was expressed about the absence of women in conversations affecting the life of the Church. It recognises Canon Law’s role in shaping women’s place in the Church. The document highlights the importance of using women’s gifts. Suggestions that women be involved in the marriage tribunal and assessing candidates for the priesthood. There is concern about women being discriminated against in many areas – ‘cheap labour’ in parishes, male domination of Church teaching on sexuality, and the abuse and marginalisation of divorced and remarried women.

**Young people** – The reduced participation of young people is global, not just local, but is concerning. This shows the fragility of the Church as active members age. Thus, the Church needs to change. An interesting dynamic shows young people's lack of interest in the institutional Church while having 'God in their hearts'. Young people feel misunderstood and judged; the Church does not seem to share their concerns, e.g., climate crisis and sexuality. Catholic schools are a good interface with the Church, but keeping them engaged post-school is of great concern. The inaccessibility of DCS (this document) to young people due to unfamiliar language was raised.

**Change** – Interesting quotes from this theme are: 'To survive and live, we need to change'. 'We should not be afraid of change'. 'Some things are brought to death, that others may rise'. There is a need to talk about the Church's governance and structure; some felt individual conversion was essential and the need to face up to issues and differences.

**Embedding the synodal process**—As a sign of hope and joy, people are given permission to speak, which leads to healing. Some still see it as a threat to the Church. There are concerns that the process will become the property of the bishops. Suggestions include making the synodal process a normal process in parishes etc. There is also caution against those in power taking over the synod process.

**Church teaching** – Many feel unwelcome due to their relationships and/or sexuality-- LGBTQIA+ feel particularly excluded; using the term 'disordered' is very hurtful; divorced and remarried people feel misunderstood and excluded. Sacraments should not be rewards but food for the journey. Specific issues were raised as necessary to examine, such as contraception, (the rules of which are archaic and are largely ignored); the ordination of women deacons, priests, and married clergy; and the adverse impact of current teachings on the participation of youth. There is a need to engage in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and increase the use of the Third Rite of Reconciliation. Church teaching has changed in the past and needs to continue to change; acknowledgement of the tension between enlarging the tent and remaining faithful to the Word.

**Authority, governance, and leadership** – There is a clarion call to change the leadership style to allow all the baptised to participate fully. The current leadership model of the Church is at odds with the way many organisations are run. Reforms are needed to allow lay people to contribute, assist stretched clergy and encourage collaborative leadership, with lay, religious and clergy having equally important roles. There must be a cultural shift and formation to achieve co-responsibility between the laity and clergy. The current power of bishops and priests excludes the laity, especially women. Among the suggestions was the idea of a less opaque method of appointing bishops. Finally, the Canon Law is seen as restrictive and powerful.

**Pastoral ministry** – All the baptised are called to pastoral ministry. There were suggestions made specific to some ministries: prison chaplains would like to be able to confer the Sacrament of Anointing; the Marriage Tribunal should have more lay participation; Sunday Eucharist should be more participatory on the part of the people; parish structures should change to allow more ministry to the disadvantaged and excluded. Notable mention of prison chaplains not feeling supported by parishes, especially in providing outreach for released prisoners. This gives the impression that parishes are only for the perfect. Some sacramental roles should be given to the laity, currently restrained under Canon Law.

**The ecological crisis** – *Laudato Si'* stresses the urgent need for action on the ecological crisis and economic justice; the Church must actively participate. Church teaching is clear, but the formation is required. We need to 'listen to the cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth'; there are many written resources, but we need to put them into action; who are our activists, apart from Pope Francis?

**Formation** – This is required for all, laity and clergy alike. It also has to be ongoing, including cultural formation, particularly Māori, and also formation in synodality. Such formation should be joint between the clergy and the laity to address 'the knots of conflict'. There should be more laity involved in more service-oriented priest formation. The need to address formation for busy and disadvantaged people in the Church was also mentioned.

**Mission** – There is a need for a better understanding of this concept, which could be considered as the 'fruits, seeds, and weeds' of synodality. Some parishes are uncomfortable with the mission of prison chaplaincy. Priests are overburdened with meeting the pastoral needs of their parishes, with little time for 'mission'. Priests and laity need to address the concept of mission and any current impediments.

**Priorities** --The following were identified as essential issues to be addressed: the embedding of the synodal process; the ecological crisis; leadership; pastoral ministry; church teaching; women.