

WelCom

NauMai

A newspaper for the Wellington and Palmerston North Catholic Dioceses

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FREE



The Catholic Church has launched a National Appeal to support those who have suffered 'unimaginable damage' in the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle.

Appeals launched for Cyclone Gabrielle

The Catholic Church has launched two Appeals for donations to support those who have suffered 'unimaginable damage' in the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle.

A National Appeal is being organised by the Diocese of Auckland through its Catholic Caring Foundation. Funds donated to this Appeal will go to all areas affected by Cyclone Gabrielle. The Palmerston North Diocese, which includes the flood-stricken areas of Hawke's Bay, has also launched an Appeal.

In a letter to the Catholic community, Bishop Steve Lowe of Auckland said that 'the recent Auckland floods were bad enough but nothing could have prepared us for Cyclone Gabrielle. With you, I have watched the news with sheer disbelief as I see how our brothers and sisters' lives have been turned into turmoil after the catastrophic Cyclone Gabrielle has decimated Northland, Hawkes Bay and Tairāwhiti/East Coast.

'The stories of anguish and despair that we are hearing every day from those who have escaped, has been harrowing. Our hearts go out to the families who have lost their loved ones, especially the young children swept away in the rising flood waters.

'They need our help not only immediately but also in the months ahead.'

» Continued on p 3

Oceania bishops call for 'deeper ecological conversion'

Michael Fitzsimons

The Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania has spoken out on the need for 'deeper ecological conversion' and to embrace 'the challenge of integral ecology'.

A statement, entitled 'The oceans of the world are interwoven with the future hopes of all peoples,' was prepared during the FCBCO's assembly in Fiji in February.

In the statement, the bishops said: 'The nations and peoples of the Oceania region are facing some of the world's greatest uncertainties with growing anxiety, but with faith, hope and resilience.

'Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, human and

economic insecurity, compounded by exploitation and pollution threaten the survival of many communities. The decisions we make today will determine the region's tomorrow, and how the vaka (canoe) of our peoples is held by the oceans.'

Bishop Anthony Randazzo, the newly elected president of the FCBCO said: 'The unique face of Oceania has called us together for deeper ecological conversion and to respond from the heart. Embracing the teaching of *Laudato si'* and the challenge of integral ecology, we recognise that our economic systems need to be in balance with the pulse of life.

'We are hearing the cry of the land and water, we are hearing the cry of the poor, we are hearing

the cry of the ocean. We are also hearing the Holy Spirit present in all these moments. As disciples of Christ, we commit ourselves to His mission to bring life to all, reconciliation and healing of all the many relationships of which we are part – with God, with our fellow human beings, with sea, earth and sky,' Bishop Randazzo said.

The assembly, which is held every four years, brought together dozens of members of the bishops' conferences of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands and the Pacific Islands.

Wellington's Monsignor Gerry Burns was a participant observer at the assembly. He said there

» Continued on p 2



The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference was represented by (pictured above in Suva from left) Bishop Michael Gielen, Christchurch; Bishop Steve Lowe, Auckland; Archbishop Paul Martin sm, Wellington; and Bishop Michael Dooley, Dunedin. Photo: NZCBC

From the editor

Annette Scullion

Kia ora koutou katoa

Greetings to you all.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all our fellow New Zealanders so badly impacted by the devastating destruction of Cyclone Gabrielle, particularly in the Hawkes Bay, Gisborne–Tairāwhiti, Wairarapa, Coromandel, Auckland and Northland regions. Cyclone Gabrielle’s brutal aftermath has left thousands of people homeless, businesses in ruins, and children’s routines and schooling yet again disrupted. These regions will take a long time to recover.

The Catholic Church in New Zealand has launched two appeals for donations to those who have suffered ‘unimaginable damage’ in the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle, details page 1 and 3.

Talking with people in parishes and schools in the Hawkes Bay and Wairoa, a common response is gratitude for the support and prayers being offered. But while people have been immediately responsive, help and support – particularly financial – will be needed for the long term.

Last month we wrote of the devastation to parts of Auckland, Coromandel and Tairāwhiti after the extreme weather events brought about by Cyclone Hale causing flooding, swollen rivers, landslides, erosion, sedimentation

of rivers and foreshores. Once again along the East Coast and elsewhere, dumped logs and debris, damaging or destroying roads, bridges, farmlands and private properties has occurred, with Cyclone Gabrielle bringing ruin to the environment and decimation to local economies. Last year we saw destruction and devastation brought about by severe weather events to people in parts of the South Island.

Climate change is now a reality and we are experiencing it firsthand. It is time for a complete reset in New Zealand – economically, socially, politically – to be clear about we want for our country and how we are to get there for the longer term. There has been so much neglect of maintenance and lack of investment to key infrastructure across all sectors over decades and we are now collectively paying a heavy price.

Let’s capitalise on the goodwill of our people that we have seen in response to this latest trauma and build back better for the long term.

New Zealand has led the world in many areas – let’s lead the world again in our response to managing climate change for a better future.

Aotearoa New Zealand is God’s own paradise – let’s not become paradise lost.

Ngā mihi.

WelCom

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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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As part of the global Catholic Church, WelCom sources a range of news, articles and opinions from local, national and international sources. Views and opinions published are those of the author and don’t necessarily reflect the policy or position of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand.

‘Speak the truth in love’



+ John A Cardinal Dew

Archbishop of Wellington Archdiocese

Apostolic Administrator of Palmerston North Diocese

“Pope Francis tells us everyone has the responsibility to communicate with an open heart.”

In a talk he gave in Argentina before he became Pope, Francis said, ‘we cannot understand the dynamic of encounter, which brings forth wonder and adherence if it has not been triggered – forgive me for the use of this word – by mercy. Only someone who has encountered mercy, who has been caressed by the tenderness of mercy, is happy and comfortable with the Lord.’

Pope Francis believes we all have the opportunity to help whoever we are talking to or communicating with, in some way we are able to help them encounter the mercy and kindness of God.

“Be who you are and be that well.” – St Francis de Sales (1567-1622)

We are reminded, therefore, in this Message, that everyone has the responsibility to speak with an open heart. The message is not just for those who work in communications, it is for all of us. He also shares some words about the importance of discernment. I read an article recently about someone who was interviewing him. The person said you could ask him a question, and he could well spend up to 10 minutes in total silence while he prayed and discerned the answer to the question. That’s why he tells us ‘it is only by listening and speaking with a pure heart, that we can see beyond appearances and overcome the vague din in our world which does not help us to discern in the complicated world in which we live’.

There is a wonderful paragraph in the Message which reads, ‘communicating, in a cordial manner, means that those who read, or listen to us, are led to welcome our participation in the joys, fears, hopes, and suffering of the men and women of our time’. Those words very clearly reflect the first words the Second Vatican Council document *Gaudium et Spes*, which says: ‘The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.’ (GeS 1). The challenge for us is to always try to speak ‘in a cordial manner’.

The Pope praises St Francis

de Sales and speaking of how he offered communicators (all of us) a worthwhile example, he writes: ‘His meek attitude, humanity, and willingness to dialogue patiently with everyone, especially with those who disagreed with him, make him an extraordinary witness of Gods, merciful love’. Do we think of our various ways of communicating as being ‘an extraordinary witness of God’s merciful love’?

The theme of this Message invites everyone not to ‘fear to state at time uncomfortable truth that finds its foundations in the Gospel’. The theme offers the importance of non-hostile, communication and promotes ‘communication open to dialogue with the other’. Everyone working in the field of communications is called upon to see their profession ‘as a mission for building a more just, more fraternal and more human future’. That is the mission for the media. That’s the mission for every one of us, to build a more just, more fraternal and more human future. We do that when we ‘speak from the heart, and live the truth in love’.



St Francis de Sales (1567-1622). Shortly after his ordination to the Catholic priesthood in 1593, he began dangerous work in the Chablais region, France, attempting to reintroduce the Catholic religion in the midst of the Protestant Reformation. He developed a great reputation as a writer, preacher, and debater in defense of the Catholic faith. He is the official patron for authors and journalists. He also is patron saint of the deaf because he developed a method for teaching a young deaf person the catechism.

» Continued from p 1

were three main points of business for the assembly: the role of the Church communities in the care of the earth, especially the oceans; the Oceania response to the continental stage synod document; and how the FCBCO can further develop its good functioning.

‘Bringing life to this process was participation in vibrant, enculturated liturgies, visits to sites of ecological damage (gravel mining and coastal erosion), scientific and theological input, times of prayerful listening to the Spirit, animated meal-time conversations,’ he said.

‘As a participant observer it was a privilege to observe the bishops thinking about, debating and wrestling with various parts of the business at hand, relaxing, praying together and celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation keeping in mind the healing and reconciliation needed with others, creation and God.’

Dunedin’s Bishop Michael Dooley was adamant that action from the Church and its leaders on climate issues was necessary.

‘I think, as a Church, we need to speak on behalf of those people, the

vulnerable people who often don’t have an opportunity to have their voices heard.’

Auckland’s Bishop Steve Lowe echoed this view when he celebrated Mass on Wednesday. In his homily he asked the bishops to advocate for the poor, and the earth, to be ‘a breath of life’.

From their meeting in Suva the Catholic bishops of Oceania sent a message of prayerful condolence and solidarity to Church and civic leaders in Turkey and Syria as the countries suffer the effects of devastating earthquakes.

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>> Continued from p 1

Appeals for Cyclone Gabrielle

Huge strain

Speaking to *CathNews* from Napier in the days following the cyclone, parish priest Fr Barry Scannell sm acknowledged the devastating impact of the cyclone on the lives of many.

He said that those who were able to attend Mass on the Sunday following the cyclone were very mindful of the loss of life, those missing and the suffering of many.

‘Cyclone Gabrielle will put a huge strain on the community and take a long time to recover,’ he said.

He said he was grateful for his trusty old transistor radio, but it was not until he could see the pictures and get back into the community to visit people, that Cyclone Gabrielle’s devastation became very real.

Fr Scannell said that washed-out bridges and roads in and out of Napier, and initially no electricity, mobile phone or internet communication, isolated people from family and people elsewhere in the country and around the world.

In the aftermath of the cyclone everyone was pitching in and helping one another, he said.

Further up the east coast, Wairoa parish priest Rob Devlin sm said senior priest Pā Karaitiana Kingi sm needed help to evacuate his home which was ‘red stickered’, and his car was full of silt.

Fr Devlin said the devastation seriously impacted the low-lying areas of the town – around twenty per cent of the town, including the Tawhiti-a-Mau Marae, which was about a metre deep in water and mud. St Therese Church at the marae also had significant water damage.

Outstanding generosity

Palmerston North Diocese Administrator, Fr Craig Butler encouraged people to contribute to the relief appeal, saying it was the diocese’s responsibility to reach out to those impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle.

A significant portion of the area on the east coast of the North Island is in the Palmerston North diocese, and in the absence of a bishop, Fr Butler is administering the diocese.



Palmerston North Diocese Administrator Fr Craig Butler has encouraged people to contribute to the relief appeal, saying it was the diocese’s responsibility to reach out to those impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Photo: Catherine Groenestein/Stuff

‘People’s suffering is very real and they need our help. As a diocese we have a responsibility to show we care,’ said Fr Butler.

He said there had been outstanding initiative already shown in supporting the community.

St John’s College, Hastings, for example, notified the diocese that on the Monday after the cyclone it would be opening as a community centre to provide food and showers to their students, family and community.

Ironically, in one of the nation’s food-producing centres, there was a food shortage and the college reached out for urgent assistance from the diocese. Over the weekend following the cyclone the diocese had a small team working on a practical response including food, drinking water, washing powder, toiletries, toilet paper, soap, shampoo, torches, batteries and rubbish bags. Three commercial vehicles and trailers full of provisions arrived at the college.

Fr Butler said people’s generosity had been outstanding.

Those wishing to respond to the Appeals can make an online donation. Donations will be used by the various agencies of the dioceses in the cyclone-stricken regions.

Sources: Supplied, *CathNews*

CYCLONE RELIEF APPEALS



You can make a donation through the Catholic Caring Foundation’s donation page <https://caringfoundation.org.nz/donate-3/> or online to the Foundation’s bank account:

BNZ 02-0100-0242648-00

Please use your surname and initials as reference, and Cyclone as a particular.

To receive an emailed receipt please email info@caringfoundation.org.nz to let us know you have made your donation.



You can also donate to the Palmerston North Diocese Cyclone Relief Appeal to the Catholic Charities Foundation. Parts of the Diocese of Palmerston North, in particular the Hawkes Bay and Wairoa regions, have been significantly impacted. To donate to this appeal, payments can be made directly online to the Catholic Charities Foundation by direct bank transfer using the following information:

Bank Account:
02-0630-0237950-010

With references: ‘Cyclone’ and ‘your surname and initials’.

Please email reception@pndiocese.org.nz with your email details for a receipt.

Palmerston North Diocese has more information on its website about community and prayerful support at: <https://pndiocese.org.nz/news-and-events/cyclone-relief-help-support/>

Rallying for the community

Maria Neville-Foster
Principal Sacred Heart College, Napier

On the Monday after the cyclone, we had a team from the Palmerston North Diocese bringing supplies for our community. We have been using these supplies to give morning tea and lunch to all our students every day during that first week and the next. We have also had a huge donation of food from Bidfood Hawkes Bay to allow us to supply hot lunch every day this week. For some of our families, supplying lunch has been a real challenge and this has helped to take the pressure off and to know the students are looked after. We supply uniforms

and stationery to anyone who needs them and have lots of offers for support from our immediate community.

We have also had support and prayers come through from other Catholic schools around New Zealand and our sister school SHC Oakley in Australia. All these offers of prayers have helped keep our spirits up. The key thing we need now is the financial support as the need in this area is great, so I encourage people to donate through the Catholic Foundation Donation Fund.’

Donations can also be made through the Palmerston North Diocese Relief Appeal, details this page.



Napier’s Sacred Heart College students have been well looked after at school following the devastating interruptions of Cyclone Gabrielle.
Photo: Sacred Heart College, Napier

Prayer for those affected by Cyclone Gabrielle

God our refuge and hope. We pray for all who are suffering because of recent flooding in our dioceses and in other parts of our country. Give them strength when they’re weak, reason for hope in times of despair and the grace to know you are with them.

Bless the work of emergency and aid workers and keep them safe as they risk their lives for others. Bless too the work of local government and our nation’s leaders. Grant them wisdom in their decision-making, and special concern for the poor and vulnerable.

Fill our hearts with compassion for those who are in great need. Open our hearts to see them as brothers and sisters and make us generous in our response.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



St Patrick’s College Wellington

New Zealand’s oldest Catholic boys’ college

Congratulations to our three scholars. Ruben Manz, Noah Jefferson and Osa Uili. A special mention to Ruben Manz who gained three scholarships in Calculus, Physics and Religioius Education. Noah for Drama and Osa for Samoan language. Ruben was also Dux of the College last year. Thank you to each of the individual teachers who supported and worked alongside our students.

Sectare Fidem – Hold firm to the Faith



A reader's response

Last month's WelCom featured an article by David McLoughlin, entitled 'Bethlehem University: an oasis of peace', about Br Peter Bray's recent national tour of New Zealand on behalf of the Catholic bishops. Brother Peter was speaking about issues in Palestine today. **David Zwartz ONZM**, a member of the New Zealand Jewish Council and a founding member of the Wellington Interfaith Council, has written the following response.

There are important historical facts omitted from David McLoughlin's article 'Bethlehem University: an oasis of peace' in February's WelCom, which I would like your readers to be made aware of.

Mr McLoughlin writes of 'the United Nations drafting a scheme to divide the region [the British Palestine Mandate] between a Jewish Israel and an Arab Palestine.'

This scheme was put to the UN General Assembly as Resolution 181 and passed on 29 November 1947. The Jews accepted the Partition Plan; it was rejected by the Palestinian Arab Higher Committee, the Arab League and other Arab leaders and governments.

On 14 May 1948, the day before the British withdrew, the State of Israel was declared. Had the Arabs accepted UNGA 181, they could have declared the State of Palestine as they were fully entitled to, in the same way and at the same time as the Jews declared independent Israel. This Arab rejection of the UN Partition Plan is withheld from WelCom readers.

As Mr McLoughlin writes, 'Israel was established in 1948, and after wars then, and in 1967 and 1973, the Palestinians lost most of their own lands.' The important historical fact omitted in this sentence is that these wars were instigated by the Arabs. On 15 May 1948, now observed by the Palestinians as Nakba Day, five Arab armies (Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Egypt) attacked new-born Israel. The Arabs lost that war and all the subsequent wars.

Nakba was indeed (as it name means) a disaster and catastrophe for the Palestinian people, caused by their leaders rejecting statehood alongside the State of Israel in 1948, and also since then by both Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas.

Salvation Army State of the Nation 2023 report provides snapshot of social realities

Social pressures in New Zealand are rising, according to the Salvation Army's sixteenth annual 'State of the Nation 2023' report.

These pressures are hitting people from several directions.

The report points to the escalating cost of living, increased household debt, lack of affordable housing and worsening education outcomes. It notes ever more young people are reporting psychological distress.

The State of the Nation report pulls together existing data to provide an annual snapshot of New Zealand's social progress as a nation.

'The report acknowledges the very real pressures increasingly and significantly affecting people's lives as inflation begins to bite and people struggle to feed their whānau, to find work and secure warm, dry affordable accommodation,' says Lt-Colonel Ian Hutson, director of The Salvation Army's Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit.

The six sections of the report cover Children and Youth, Work and Incomes, Housing, Crime and Punishment, Social Hazards and Māori Wellbeing.

Lt-Colonel Hutson notes the employment market remains 'disturbingly ineffective' at finding work for young people, Māori and Pasifika people.

Last September, the unemployment rate was more than twice as high for Māori (6.8%) and Pasifika workers (6.4%) than Asian and European workers.



Financial disparity is also clear, with one in five Pacific households reporting having not enough money.

Māori households were twice as likely as European or Asian households to be trying to survive on insufficient resources.

That adds pressure on those people's lives in particular. 'The lowest income households are among the hardest hit,' Hutson says.

Our social wellbeing is not just about money either. There are other pressures too – again especially negatively affecting Māori and Pasifika people.

The research found about a fifth of rangatahi Māori aged 15 to 24 years were not in employment, education or training. That's over twice the non-Māori rate.

Alcohol consumption is at hazardous levels for one third of Māori.

The report theme also hints at a broader collective set of costs a society needs to take into account.

'These need to support people to live fulfilled lives – and avoid the very real social and economic costs of inequality,' says Hutson.

The Salvation Army hopes the election year will find political leaders taking action to address social disparities and support communities to meet the 'costs of living'. This includes an emphasis on enabling legislation and effective policy in housing and stronger regulation around gambling-related harm.

While child poverty and hardship have been reducing, child poverty rates are still high – especially Māori and Pasifika children.

The proportion of young people aged 15 to 24 years are reporting high levels of psychological distress. Education outcomes have worsened. School attendance rates have declined.

For some, housing has improved, but the rental market remains tight and in general rents have steadily increased.

Worryingly, average household debt – driven by housing debt along with consumer and credit card debt – has increased to its highest level in more than 15 years.

The report also notes crime and punishment has increased in the past year, although the number of alleged offenders and proceedings against them by police declined significantly. Pandemic-related backlogs and increased jury trials contributed to the highest proportion ever of people on remand – 41 per cent.

Positive outcomes

Fortunately, the report's findings aren't all negative.

Hazardous drinking has declined in general; cannabis and methamphetamine convictions have declined; and people are withdrawing their KiwiSaver savings for hardship reasons.

Māori are seeing improvements in some areas: a sharp reduction in the Māori infant mortality rate and a reduction in the large gap between offending rates for rangatahi Māori and non-Māori.

There's also been an increase in the proportion of Māori who report being able to speak more than a few words and phrases in te reo.

The full report can be found at: <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sotn2023>

Sources: Salvation Army; CathNewsNZ; Stuff

New director for Catholic Enquiry Centre

Rebecca Taylor-Hunt has been appointed to the new position of Director of the Catholic Enquiry Centre. CEC is the agency for the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference dedicated to evangelising in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Rebecca has a background in writing, business and education. She was previously Director of Religious Studies at Sacred Heart College in Lower Hutt. She lives and worships in the Parish of Te Awakairangi in Lower Hutt with her husband and their teenage daughters.

Based in Wellington, Rebecca brings a fresh approach to evangelising.

'I'm looking forward to expanding the Catholic Enquiry Centre's reach using social media, digital publishing and by getting out and about, visiting communities,' she says.

You can contact Rebecca at

rebecca@catholicenquiry.nz

The Catholic Enquiry Centre helps to make the Church more alive and make Christ more known by informing and inspiring people inquiring about matters of faith. It is a point of contact for non-Catholics or people with no religious background searching for more; for those who were once Catholics finding their way back; or Catholics looking to deepen and be more active in their faith to share it with others.

CEC Chaplain retires

Fr Neil Vaney sm, who was appointed as CEC Chaplain in 2016, retired at the end of last year. He was joined by friends and colleagues at a farewell luncheon at Pā Maria, Thorndon. CEC was launched in 1961, but, said Fr Neil 'there has been more change in the last five years than the 61



Rebecca Taylor-Hunt, newly appointed Director of the Catholic Enquiry Centre. Photos: Supplied



Fr Neil Vaney sm at his farewell luncheon at Pā Maria, last December.

years before – from the Board and Director, temporary manager, to an Advisory Board, the shift to a digital platform and organising key events such as the Vatican's Chief Astronomer Guy Comensoli's visit to New Zealand and Te Ara a Maria pilgrimage. I leave with a huge

sense of gratitude to all here and to God's providence for giving me five years of a fascinating job with wonderful people.'

Visit Catholic Discovery, the digital wing of the Catholic Enquiry Centre: www.catholicdiscovery.nz




Wellington Sexual Abuse HELP

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

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

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



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

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

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

www.snapnetwork.org

Male Survivors Wellington

The Road Forward

Tāne Whai Ora

Abuse takes place in isolation – recovery works well with others.

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

Contact Richard Brewer:
support@theroadforward.org.nz
Tel: 021 118 1043
www.theroadforward.org.nz

Honorary doctorate for university leader overseeing ‘oasis of peace’ for young Palestinians

The Australian Catholic University has awarded Br Peter Bray fsc an honorary doctorate for his commitment and inspirational work with students at Bethlehem University. Br Peter, from Waitara in Taranaki, recently undertook a speaking tour of Aotearoa New Zealand’s six Catholic dioceses. Br Peter was speaking about issues in Palestine today and how New Zealanders can help bring peace to the Holy Land. He was here at the invitation of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference to elaborate on their statement on Palestine issued in July 2022, as well as being supported by Caritas Aotearoa and the Catholic Enquiry Centre.

The Vice-Chancellor of the only Catholic university in the Holy Land has accepted an honorary doctorate from Australian Catholic University (ACU).

Br Peter Bray, a De La Salle Brother originally from Taranaki, New Zealand, received the Doctor of the University (Honouris Causa) on 17 February 2023 for embracing the values and principals of education in the Catholic tradition and for significant contributions to education and educational administration in Australia and overseas.

Br Bray became the eighth Vice-Chancellor of Bethlehem University in late 2008. During his 15-year tenure as Vice-Chancellor, he has committed to making Bethlehem University an ‘oasis of peace’ for young Palestinians.

Established in 1973 as a joint venture between the Vatican and the De La Salle Brothers, Bethlehem University is the first registered university founded in the West Bank, and the only Catholic university in the Holy Land.

Whilst less than one per cent of Palestine’s population is Christian, the university, under Br Bray’s leadership, is committed to providing quality higher education for the people of Palestine, including the 20 per cent of students who are Christian.

“They can take my house, they can take my land, they can take my freedom, but they can’t take my education.”

When asked about the personal experiences and challenges his students face, Br Bray speaks of a male student who came to him after his home, located in the West Bank, was demolished for a second time.

‘And’ his student said, ‘they can take my house, they can take my land, they can take my freedom, but they can’t take my education.’

Br Bray said, ‘I’m particularly aware of the suffering our students are experiencing in just existing, so I really admire the fact their resistance is expressed in a nonviolent way by just getting on and doing the ordinary things.’

Br Bray accepted the honorary doctorate from ACU on behalf of his inspirational students.

‘By ACU recognising Bethlehem University through me is showing the young people of Bethlehem University they are not forgotten, and that is a really important part

of helping to keep hope alive,’ Br Bray said.

‘I’m deeply, deeply grateful to ACU for enabling us to keep hope alive among our students.’

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Zlatko Skrbis said Br Bray’s approach to leadership was inspirational.

‘Despite the challenges he faces at Bethlehem University each day, Br Bray is always mindful of putting the present and future needs of his students first,’ Professor Skrbis said.

‘His commitment to education in the Catholic tradition is bound by the duty he feels to help people to realise their full potential. His

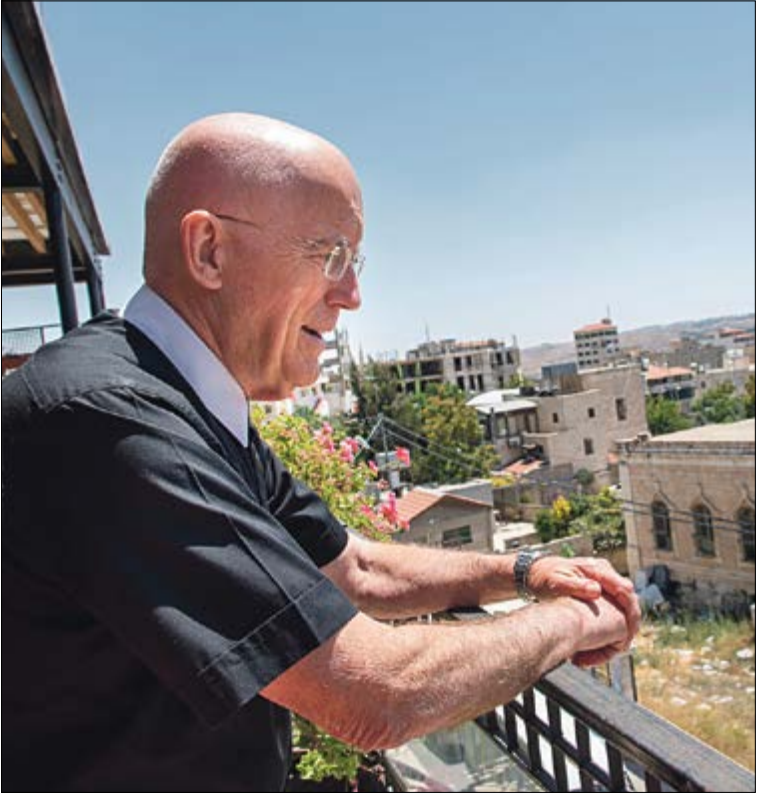
Wellington Catholic Education Centre in New Zealand.

Despite having over 40 years’ experience in Catholic education as a teacher, consultant, administrator and expert educational leader, his personal experience of high school was the complete opposite.

A life in academia was far from his mind but Br Bray eventually went on to not only complete secondary school but eventually attend Macquarie University in Sydney, obtain a master’s degree from Massey University in New Zealand and then a Doctorate at the University of San Diego.

He was assigned as principal

“During his 15-year tenure as Vice-Chancellor, Br Peter Bray has committed to making Bethlehem University an ‘oasis of peace’ for young Palestinians.”



Br Peter Bray, pictured above overlooking Bethlehem, has received an honorary doctorate from Australian Catholic University for his commitment and inspirational work with students at Bethlehem University. Also pictured are students on campus at Bethlehem University.

Photos: Supplied and Bethlehem University

ultimate vision to instil hope in his students is inspiring and should be at the heart of the mission of all educational institutions.

‘ACU is proud to bestow the Doctor of the University on such a humble leader.’

Br Bray’s honorary doctorate also recognises his instrumental role in leading the creation of ACU’s Master of Education Leadership and the utilisation of online delivery for the centre’s educational programmes, established while he was Director and CEO of the

of several Catholic secondary schools, before becoming the Vice-Chancellor of a Catholic university. His work as a teacher and education consultant has taken him around the world.

Of all his education postings, he said being Vice-Chancellor of Bethlehem University was the most difficult but also the most rewarding.

Br Bray’s honorary doctorate conferral coincides with the Golden Jubilee of Bethlehem University in October 2023.

Kopua Monastery formally welcomes three new brothers



The community at Kopua Monastery in Central Hawkes Bay, has celebrated the ‘change of stability’ of Aelred, Anselm and Gregory, three brothers originally from the Philippines, who officially became monks of Kopua on Sunday 19 February.

Photos: WelCom; supplied

Br Jonathan Craven

Southern Star Abbey or Kopua is a Cistercian monastery tucked away in the rolling hills of Tararua in Central Hawkes Bay. Seclusion is part of the monastery’s nature and purpose.

Recently our community celebrated the ‘change of stability’ to Kopua Monastery of three brothers. Aelred, Anselm, and Gregory – originally from the Cistercian Monastery of Our Lady of the Philippines, Guimaras Island – officially became monks of Kopua on Sunday 19 February.

‘Change of stability’ sounds like a contradiction! Cistercian monks make a vow of stability, committing to a place and community for life. On rare occasions a brother may change his stability for a greater good; in this case it’s to bolster the numbers of the community here at Kopua.

Since they arrived in late 2018 the brothers have already made their home here, contributing in a variety of ways to our life.

Br Aelred has turned our unused and overgrown vegetable garden into a very productive source of nutrition for everyone, even expanding its size. And he’s built a chicken coop to house a small number of chickens who supply us fresh eggs and provide music to our ears in the morning with the

roosters crowing. Since he’s been here Br Aelred has also learnt to play the organ and fills that role during the Divine Office.

Br Gregory is studying for the priesthood and is one of our cantors leading the singing when we’re in choir. Br Gregory is also a great cook who keeps us well fed.

Br Anselm brings a wealth of knowledge and experience. He was formerly an Augustinian before joining the Cistercian Order and has studied for four years in Rome. He helps to maintain the grounds amongst other necessary tasks that keep things running smoothly.

All of the brothers have made a wonderful contribution to the monastery and brought great joy to the community. Their presence has reminded us of the significance of the vow of stability in Cistercian life. Rather than joining ‘the Cistercians’ we join a particular Cistercian monastery or abbey. This deepens our commitment to place and community, as we together seek the Lord.

Part of the Cistercian charism is to offer hospitality through the monastery guest house, and all visitors and guests are welcome to the seven times of prayer, which punctuate the monks’ day.

Visit kopuamonastery.org.nz for more about the Cistercian brothers and Kopua monastery.

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Antioch largely destroyed in earthquake



Buildings demolished by the earthquake in Antioch.
Photo: Ibrahim Oner/Zuma Press (MAXPPP)

The city of Antioch, where believers were first called Christians, has been all but wiped out by the February 6 earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria.

The earthquake, which registered 7.8 magnitude, was the deadliest earthquake this century.

As the death toll passes 50,000 victims from the massive earthquake in Turkey and Syria, people in the Turkish city of Antioch – one of the oldest places connected with the spread of Christianity – are staring at a pile of rubble.

‘Antioch is experiencing an enormous disaster,’ Bishop Paolo Bizzeti said. The 75-year-old Jesuit is Apostolic Vicar of Anatolia.

Antioch’s two Latin Rite priests are alive, as well as some 60 Catholic families, but about 70 per cent of the city was razed to the ground.

It is hard to imagine this ancient city in ruins, both for its inhabitants and for the country’s Christians, who represent only 0.1 per cent of the Turkish population. In the first century, Antioch was home to St Paul and St Barnabas, who followed the call of Christ to evangelise the surrounding areas.

‘Barnabas then left for Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him he brought him to Antioch. And it happened that they stayed together in that church a whole year, instructing a large number of people,’ we read in the Acts of the Apostles.

‘It was at Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians”. While they were there, some prophets came down to Antioch from Jerusalem, Acts tells us (11, 25-27).

‘The Church as we know it today was born in Antioch,’ noted Fr Jean-Marie Humeau, episcopal vicar of the Ordinariate for Eastern (Rite) Catholics in France. Indeed, along with Rome and Alexandria, Antioch was one of the first patriarchates established in the first century.

In the first century, Antioch was a place where Greeks and Syrians lived side-by-side. It quickly became the centre of Hellenistic Christianity, while turning towards the East. St Paul settled in Antioch for several years, using it as the base for his apostolic travels throughout the Mediterranean region.

Source: La Croix International

Thousands of refugees to be granted permanent visas

Thousands of refugees across Australia who have lived ‘in limbo’ for years will be eligible to stay in the country permanently as the Labor Government moves to enact a pre-election commitment.

As of 13 February, about 19,000 refugees who arrived in Australia before Operation Sovereign Borders started in 2013 will be able to apply to transition to a permanent Resolution of Status (RoS) visa.

The move affects people who hold Temporary Protection Visas (TPV) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEV) which Labor promised to abolish at the last election and have been described as cruel by human rights groups.

Those granted a new visa will have the same rights and benefits as all other permanent residents, and will be immediately eligible for social security payments, access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and higher education assistance.

They will also be permitted to apply to become citizens once they meet the necessary citizenship requirements and will be able to sponsor family members to come to Australia.

Immigration Minister Andrew Giles made the long-awaited announcement, saying thousands of people who have contributed to Australia had endured a decade of uncertainty due to policies of former Coalition governments.

‘TPV and SHEV holders work, pay taxes, start businesses, employ



Thousands of refugees to be granted permanent visas as Australia’s Labor Government moves to fulfil election promise. Photo: ABC News

Australians and build lives in our communities — often in rural and regional areas,’ he said. ‘Without permanent visas, however, they’ve been unable to get a loan to buy a house, build their businesses or pursue further education. It makes no sense — economically or socially — to keep them in limbo.’

Source: ABC News/CathNews Australia

Pope’s peace pilgrimage to Africa

Pope Francis’ trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan was a pilgrimage of peace to countries with long-running violent conflicts that have largely been forgotten by the rest of the world.

It also reflected the rising importance of Africa to the future of the Catholic Church. The visit was from 31 January to 5 February 2023.

It was the first papal visit to the

DRC since 1985, a country where almost half of the 95 million people are Catholics. Africa is the fastest-growing location for the Church, with more than 200 million worshippers.

On his visit to South Sudan, the Pope was accompanied by Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury and Rev Iain Greenshields, moderator of the general assembly of the Church of Scotland. The Church leaders

hoped their ecumenical visit would encourage warring leaders to live up to the commitments they have made in a series of accords and finally offer their people peace. Archbishop Welby said all three leaders shared a desire to ‘stand in solidarity’ with the South Sudanese people.

Speaking at his regular weekly public audience following his trip, Pope Francis reported on his voyage to Africa, ‘where I said “No” to violence, “No” to resignation, “Yes” to reconciliation and hope.’

The Pope said he had long wanted to visit ‘the green heart of Africa,’ which ‘together with Amazonia, are the two lungs of the world.’


He decried the exploitation of Africa’s rich natural resources, and the warfare that has bloodied the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. The latter, he said, is ‘a victim of the old logic of power and rivalry.’

The pontiff said his ‘ecumenical pilgrimage of peace’ to South Sudan had continued an effort to foster dialogue in that country. He also condemned the corruption that mars African politics, and the arms trafficking that exploits violence.



Pope Francis greets the crowds before celebrating Mass in Kinshasa, Congo, on Wednesday 1 February. Photo: Jerome Delay/Associated Press


Sources: NPR, Vatican News.



Pope Francis’ Prayer Intention

During the month of March 2023 Pope Francis’ intention is:
for victims of abuse.

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Jean Vanier’s L’Arche hid ‘mystical-sexual’ sect

An independent commission has concluded that dozens of women were violated by Jean Vanier and his mentor under exploitative spiritual disciplines.

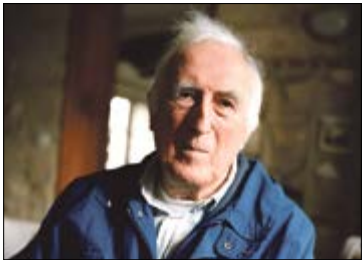
A 437-page report, published after a two-year investigation commissioned by L’Arche in 2020, exposes the shocking details of how L’Arche’s founder, Jean Vanier, created a secretive ‘sect’ within the Catholic Church. The investigation shows that the secret was ‘carefully maintained for decades’.

An interdisciplinary team of scholars consulted 1,400 private letters of Vanier’s, including hundreds from a secret folder. They interviewed 89 people, including eight of Vanier’s victims.

According to the report, Vanier used seduction, manipulation, secrecy, and coercion to initiate as many as 25 young women into mystical-sexual practices and abused them sexually and spiritually.

Sr Veronique Margron, the president of the conference of religious orders in France, expressed her shock at the findings. She has called for a re-examination of the Catholic Church’s ‘entire ecclesial, theological, and pastoral culture’.

In a statement, she criticised the secrecy and ‘great silence’ of the Vatican that allowed Vanier and his spiritual guru, the Rev Thomas Philippe, to abuse with impunity. Pope Francis has also commented on the issue, acknowledging that the Catholic



Jean Vanier, formerly revered founder of the L’Arche movement.

Photo: Tiziana Fabi/AFP/Getty Images

Church still has a long way to go in dealing with the abuse of vulnerable adults and that more transparency and speaking out is needed.

Sources: Christianity Today, CathNews

Family martyred by Nazis to be beatified

The beatification date has been announced for a family of nine who were killed by the Nazis for hiding a Jewish family in their home in Poland.

The Archdiocese of Przemyska announced that the entire Ulma family – Józef and Wiktoria Ulma and their seven children, including one unborn child – will be beatified on 10 September.

Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, the prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, will preside over the beatification ceremony in Markowa, the village in southeast Poland where the Ulma family was executed in 1944.

Pope Francis recognised the martyrdom of the couple and their children in a decree signed in December. The World Holocaust Remembrance Centre has honoured the Ulmas as Righteous Among the Nations for the sacrifice of their lives.

Early on 24 March 1944, a Nazi patrol surrounded the home of Józef and Wiktoria Ulma on the outskirts of the village of Markowa in southeast Poland. They discovered eight Jewish



Wiktoria Ulma with six of her children.

Photo: The Ulma Family Museum of Poles Saving Jews in World War II/CNA

people who had found refuge on the Ulma farm and executed them.

They then killed Wiktoria, who was seven months pregnant, and Józef. As children began to scream at the sight of their murdered parents, the Nazis shot them: Stanisława, 8, Barbara, 7, Władysław, 6, Franciszek, 4, Antoni, 3, and Maria, 2.

Fr Witold Burda, the postulator for the Ulma family, has said that a Bible was found inside the

Ulma house in which the parable of the Good Samaritan had been underlined in a red pen.

‘They built their family on the foundation of faith with fidelity to the two essential commandments: the commandment to love God and the commandment to love one’s neighbour,’ Fr Burda said.

Source: CNA News

Demand remains strong for Catholic marriage

Demand remains strong for sacramental marriage and Catholic marriage preparation courses according to new data from Accord, the Catholic Marriage Care agency in Ireland.

According to Accord’s latest figures, the numbers undertaking sacramental marriage preparation courses are back to pre-Covid levels, said director Tony Shanahan. In 2019, Accord provided 285 marriage preparation programmes to 4,610 couples. In 2022 it hosted 4,610 couples on 297 programmes.

Speaking ahead of St Valentine’s Day at the shrine of the patron saint of romantic love in the Carmelite Church on Whitefriar Street, Dublin, Mr Shanahan said: ‘When we consider that, for 2021, the Central Statistics Office reported that religious ceremonies accounted for 57 per cent of all marriages in the state and the 6,721 Catholic marriages that year amounted to 39 per cent of the total figure, then Accord’s data of today paints a positive picture in terms of the numbers who are planning a Church marriage in the future.’

Accord’s data shows that the majority of couples choosing a



The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, Denis Nulty, blessing couples at the shrine of St Valentine.

Photo: John McElroy

Catholic marriage have been in a relationship for over six years and are aged between 31 and 40. A quarter of the couples were already parents with children.

‘Accord welcomes everyone and journeys with them, whether

they already have children or don’t have children – whatever their circumstances, they are most welcome. Our preparation programme is a programme for life, not just for a day,’ said Bishop Denis Nulty, President of Accord.

Anglicans explore gender-neutral language

The bishops of the Church of England are launching a new project to explore the use of gender-neutral language for God in church services. A spokesperson for the Church of England said, ‘Christians have recognised since ancient times that God is neither male nor female, yet the variety of ways of addressing and describing God found in Scripture has not always been reflected in our worship’.

Myanmar junta torches church

Myanmar junta forces have continued their attacks on Christian communities by torching a more than century-old Catholic church in a predominantly Christian village. The 129-year-old Assumption Church in Chan Thar in Ye-U township in the north-western Sagaing region was set ablaze on 15 January, along with many villagers’ homes. The church was completely destroyed in the inferno. However, there were no human casualties as villagers managed to flee before the army arrived.

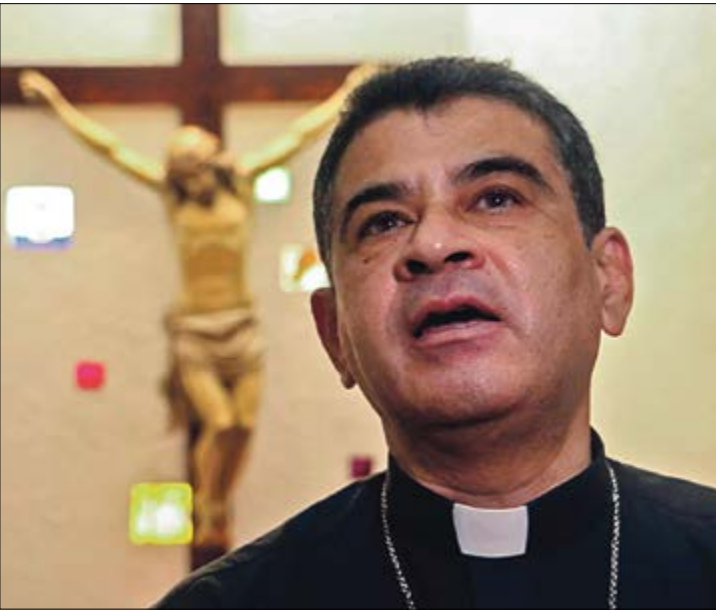
Lightning strikes famous statue

The Christ the Redeemer statue, a landmark of Brazil since it was completed in 1931, was struck by lightning in February. A photographer named Fernando Braga was in the vicinity to capture the electrifying moment. Located atop the Corcovado mountain, the sculpture is 98 feet high and presents itself as if Jesus Christ is overlooking Rio de Janeiro. Its monumentality and symbolism, as well as the unbeatable views one can get from the lookout, draw about 2 million visitors each year.



Nicaraguan Bishop sentenced to 26 years

Pope Francis has decried the imprisonment of Nicaraguan Bishop Rolando Alvarez and the expulsion of 220 dissidents, including several priests and seminarians. Bishop Alvarez has protested against the regime of President Daniel Ortega, and was sentenced for what a Nicaraguan court called treason and ‘undermining national integrity’. Bishop Alvarez has been sentenced to 26 years in prison.



Bishop Rolando Alvarez.

World Youth Day cuts costs

The organisers of World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon say they have lowered the cost of the main stage which will be used as an altar for the final Mass, following an outcry over the price of the construction. Concerns were raised in late January when it was announced that the infrastructure for the stage would cost over €4.2 million (NZ\$7.2 million). Specifications have been revised and the new cost is €2.9 million (NZ\$4.9 million).

Waitangi Day Mass

Martin de Jong

More than 120 people attended the annual Waitangi Day Mass at St Mary of the Angels Church, Wellington, on 6 February. In his homily, Cardinal John Dew said the Mass was ‘to pray for this land and all who dwell here under the guardianship of the Treaty’. Looking around the church he said, ‘we are people of many nationalities gathered here from many parts of the world, led here

by God’s good choice.’

A feature of the Mass was the combined choir of about 50 people drawn from both St Mary of the Angels and Te Ngākau Tapu parish for Māori in Porirua, and under the guidance of William McElwee. They led prayers and hymns sung in Māori, English and Latin, while Prayers of the Faithful were offered in nine different languages.

Cardinal John Dew was assisted by Fr Frank Bird sm, who read the Beatitudes from Matthew’s Gospel.



Kelly Keane-Tuala reads the Prayers of the Faithful in te reo Māori. Photo: Supplied

How the Waitangi Day Mass started

Robert Oliver

When I began at St Mary of the Angels in 1999 as Director of Music, I had the idea we could bring together Māori waiata and chanted karakia, with gregorian chant – two powerful streams of spiritual music. I asked the choir members if they knew anywhere in Wellington where there was a congregation celebrating Mass in Māori, and was told about the parish of Te Ngākau Tapu.

I contacted then visited Fr Colin Durning, the parish priest, to discuss whether this was going to

be practical. He liked the idea, and in the course of our conversation he quoted some James K Baxter writings. I retorted I had known Jim quite well, from my days in the ’60s when I was a postie while I studied for my degree. I hadn’t clicked that Pā Colin was indeed Colin Durning to whom the Jerusalem sonnets were dedicated. Thus began a friendship that continued up to his passing last year.

I visited the congregation, and they were very prepared to entertain the idea, because of the affection and respect which they held Pā Colin. So from time to time,

in company with other members of the choir, we would visit them for their Rosaries, which were at that time held on Tuesday nights, often in someone’s home.

One of those members was the enthomusicolgist and long-standing friend of mine, Allan Thomas. As we considered how to put this idea into practice, he pointed out we couldn’t bring them all the way into St Mary of the Angels, just for a few moments within a Mass. So why didn’t we make it a big occasion, like a special combined Mass on Waitangi Day?

This was such a good idea, well received by the Te Ngākau Tapu congregation, and subsequently by the pastoral team at St Mary of the Angels. The result was the first Mass on Waitangi Day in 2003 for the combined congregations, since when it has become an annual event, often, as this year, celebrated by Cardinal John Dew.

We thus celebrate our diversity as Catholics, but in a way which is unique to Aotearoa New Zealand. Since my retirement from St Mary of the Angels I have been a parishioner of Te Ngākau Tapu, where the congregation have made me very welcome, and my te reo slowly develops.

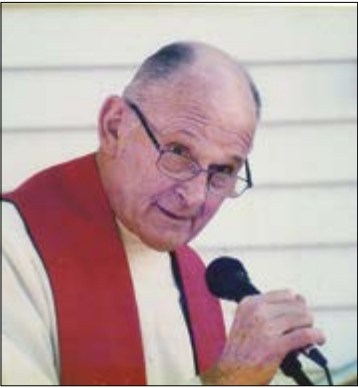
Sadly, over the 20 years, many of that original congregation have passed on, as have both Pā Colin and Allan Thomas. But the tradition continues, and I trust the partnership we have forged will continue to develop as a powerful shared spiritual expression.

Farewell to Monsignor John Carde

John Ellis Carde was raised in Whanganui district. His early education was at the Holy Infancy Convent, Aramoho, and the Marist Brothers Whanganui, then on to Secondary School at St Joseph’s College Masterton. At school he was a talented rugby player and was selected to captain rep teams. Aged 18, he went to Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, to study for the priesthood. He was ordained in July 1958 at Whanganui by Cardinal Peter McKeefry.

John served in various parishes in Taranaki, Palmerston North, Wairoa (Māori Mission), Nelson, Lower Hutt, Mount Victoria, Seatoun and Paraparaumu before retiring to Summerset Aotea, Silverstream Home of Compassion and Vincentian Home where he died on 30 January, 2023. He was a gifted sportsman, first in rugby, then golf, and latterly enjoying walking and aqua jogging. A noted preacher, his pastoral work reached many.

John spent six years as an army chaplain, including time in Singapore and Vietnam. He received various medals for his time in the army and Vietnam including an MBE (Military) 1974, for services as a chaplain.



Monsignor John Ellis Carde MBE, R215456, priest of the Archdiocese of Wellington, 23 October 1933 – 30 January 2023. May he rest in peace. Photo: Supplied

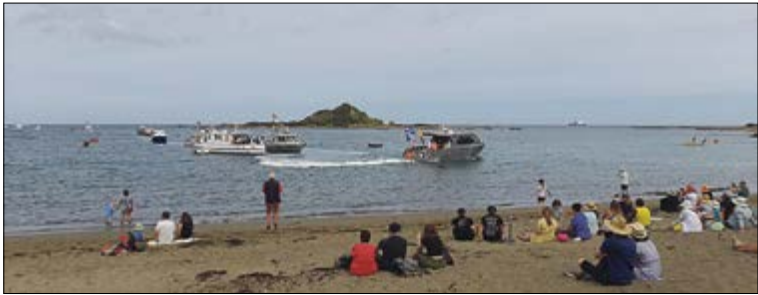
John Ellis Snook, John Carde’s nephew said at his funeral: To his family John was son, brother, uncle, great-uncle. Fun-loving and adventurous, he enriched the extended Carde whānau with his spirit. Generous to a fault, somewhat argumentative (which just meant that he fitted in well!) and patient (I know this personally as he taught me how to play chess). The family would like to thank his friends and caregivers who visited him over the last few years of his life – he loved those visits.

Blessing of the boats

Wellington’s Blessing of the Boats ceremony took place on Sunday 12 February as part of the annual Island Bay Festival. The ceremony is a southern Italian tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century. It has been adopted in Island Bay by its Italian community since 1933. Local clergy bless a fleet of fishing boats and other sea-craft in this traditional ceremony to grant

them ‘safe carriage and plentiful bounties’. Boats are decorated with flags and blessed by a priest to protect the crew from the sea and to bring good fortune.

Carrying out the blessing this year were Fr Doug Shepherd, parish priest of Wellington South, and Fr Jeff Drane sm, accompanied by Rev Nathan Parry and Bishop Justin Duckworth.



The annual Blessing of the Boats ceremony is part of the Island Bay Festival. Photo: Supplied

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Revised JPDE Commission envisioned

A Justice Peace Development and Ecology Commission (JPDEC) is a commission appointed by the bishop in each diocese to promote concerns about justice, peace, development and ecology in line with the Gospel. It can operate as an advisory body to the bishop and it can take initiatives directly on JPDE issues. For example, to advocate, influence policy making and effect practical action and solutions on key social justice and human rights issues in the community. Ideally the JPDEC works with and advises parishes to ensure parishes are supported, such as with Caritas resourcing, to be able to respond independently on important issues. Palmerston North's JPDEC went into abeyance from August 2020. However, since then, two 'think tanks' comprising about 12 members who are representative of all the geographical areas of the diocese and representative of Māori, Administrator, priest, deacon, religious and laity, have met twice a year to resolve the future of the JPDEC for the diocese. The group unanimously agreed

the diocese should have a JPDEC and over the last 12 months a steering group has been working on its formation. The commitment, presence and action of a JPDEC in every diocese is very important. 'Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.' – Para 6, Catholic Bishops 1971 World Synod meeting. The steering group wants to hear from anyone interested in becoming part of the PN JPDEC; and, if not at

a diocesan level, then to participate and contribute locally to their own parish or regional area. At a local level, they would be involved in 'Reading the Signs of the Times', reflecting on them in the light of the Gospel and taking appropriate transformative action. Further down the track the Commission would envision reaching out to other Christian church groups and Inter-Faith groups – to share and learn from one another in areas of justice, peace, development and ecology. Please contact kevin.campbell@xtra.co.nz for more information and to let the steering group know if you would like to be involved with PN JPDEC developments.



The steering group met in Palmerston North last month and were joined by Bishop Peter Cullinane. (L-r): Nick Wilson, Sr Liz Hurley rsj, Bishop Peter, Kevin Campbell, Dr Mary Eastham, Br Kevin Dobbryn fms. Absent: Teresa Edwards.

Photo: WelCom

Moving forward in courage

Joe Green

'As we move forward to a changed St Francis of Assisi Ohariu Parish it is my hope, we take our St Andrew's spirit with us. That each and every one of us will join with our fellow parishioners from St Benedict's and Ss Peter's and Paul's as a vibrant, culturally-diverse, faith-sharing, and prayerful congregation. That by working together we will continue to form and grow a strong community, committed to the Gospel teachings of Our Lord, Jesus Christ,' Anna Mika-Hunt Walsh said at the closing of St Andrew's Church on Saturday 11 February 2023. The following week on 19 February, with considerable celebration, the Catholic Parish of St Francis of Assisi Ohariu reopened its now centralised parish church at 37 Doctor Taylor

Tce, Johnsonville, Wellington. The interior of the church is significantly changed – the altar, pews and lectern come from St Benedict's Church, Khandallah; the tabernacle and cross from St Andrew's Church, Newlands; some of the pews have been replaced by individual seats; the stations of the cross are retained; the altar rostrum has been removed and the altar is now on the same level as the seating; the altar and the lectern face each other from opposite ends of the central aisle. A banner depicting St Francis of Assisi hangs against the now white wall behind the altar. Initially seating is 'in choir' – facing across the church. New AV has been installed with large screens visible from all parts of the church, including the overflow space in the hall. A children's space has been

created in the hall area. Books and colouring in materials are provided. While the closing of a community church is soul wrenching in its sadness, the refurbishment of the parish church and the way it includes items from all three churches, and the energy with which this has been done by all involved, reflects the huge amount of hope and aspiration as the three northern Wellington suburbs' church communities combine into one. The reopening was celebrated with a community meal, the central feature of which was pig on a spit! We move forward in courage as a people filled with hope and trust in the Lord. Joe Green is a Lay Pastoral Leader and Parish Director of Mission, Catholic Parish of St Francis of Assisi.



Parishioners of the Catholic Parish of St Francis of Assisi Ohariu reopened their now centralised parish church in Johnsonville with 'considerable celebration'. Photos: Supplied

Workshops explore *The Letter – a message for our Earth*

'What is the relationship between ecology and evangelisation?' Pope Francis asks in *The Letter – a message for our Earth*, a recently released film about climate action leaders who journey to Rome to meet the Pope to discuss with him his encyclical letter *Laudato si'*. Pope Francis' question in *The Letter*, was addressed at two workshops in Palmerston North facilitated by Dr Mary Nash and Dr Mary Eastham. Dr Eastham is a trustee on the Religious Diversity Centre Aotearoa New Zealand and a member of their Climate Action Committee. The first workshop, held in November, pondered the stories from film's climate change activists – from Africa, Brazil, India and the United States – who shared their concerns with the Pope. The second workshop, held at the Palmerston North Diocesan Centre on 26 February, addressed the Pope's question with reference to the recent climate-induced devastation in Auckland, the Coromandel, Gisborne and Hawkes Bay regions caused by Cyclone Gabrielle.

The workshop featured six successful climate call-to-action projects, which people can get involved with. Speakers about the six projects included: Robert Van Bentum on water and waste management; Beth Lew on growing gardens and sustainable living; Mike Stone on restoring biodiversity at Kopua; Therese Petersen on becoming an eco-school; Jaspreet Singh on 'Pit Park People' restoring habitats; and Nelson Harper on the Palmy plastic pollution challenge. The diocese has provided funding for Mary Nash and Mary Eastham to offer the workshop throughout the regions. Please contact Dr Mary Nash, egmanash@gmail.com for more information. *The Letter* explores Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudato si'*, which encourages us to see how 'everything is connected'. The way we treat the Earth, our common home, is a reflection of how we treat each other. Caring for each other means caring for the home we share. *The Letter* is on YouTube at: www.theletterfilm.org/watch/



Climate-action speakers at *The Letter* workshop on 26 February, (l-r) Robert van Bentum, Therese Petersen, Mike Stone, Beth Lew, Jaspreet Singh and Nelson Harper. Photo: Supplied



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Catholic College Dux and Special Character

Diocese of Palmerston North

Cullinane College, Whanganui



Ngakura Ponga
Dux 2022



Benjamin Cranshaw and Graceyn Wylie
Joint Proxime Accessit 2022



Faith Solomona
Geoff Lott Special Character 2022



Daniel Hiroti and Victoria Arrowsmith
Head Boy and Head Girl 2023

Sacred Heart Girls' College, New Plymouth



Annie Whaley
Dux 2022



Holly Kleinsman
Proxime Accessit 2022



Briar Dravitzki
Special Character 2022



Head Girl Team 2023: (l-r) **Magdalene Herlihy**, Deputy Head Girl Student Council; **Angel Lepasana**, Head Girl; **Bethanie Luke**, Deputy Head Girl Special Character.



Student Leaders 2023: (l-r back) **Aimee O'Connor**, **Nina Syrus**, **Claudia Read**, **Katrin Visser**, **Isabella Coogan**, **Charlotte Stokes**, **Molly Powell**; (l-r middle) **Libby Francis**, **Isabella Moffitt**, **Sydney Burnett**, **Magdalene Herlihy**, **Angel Lepasana**, **Bethanie Luke**, **Lillian Brown**, **Ahi Hutchings**, **Rilee Spooner**, **Isla Robinson**; (l-r front) **Ally McFetridge**, **Pascoe Wells**, **Lola Potter**, **Libby Hopkirk**, **Libby Delehanty**, **Macy Edwards**, **Lucy Howarth**, **Ella Butterworth**, **Emily Shelper**.

Sacred Heart College, Napier



Mia Anderson
Dux 2022



Lyriisa Fontaine
Proxime Accessit 2022

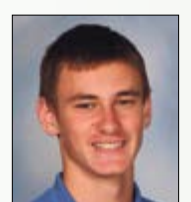


Neila Story
Pat Faulkner
Memorial Cup for Special Character 2022




Student Leaders 2023: (l-r back) **Charlotte Halpin**, **Abbie Gardiner**, **Reese McKinley-Rhodes**, **Caitlyn Lane**, **Victoria Thompson**, **Amelia Murphy**, **Acacia Tamihana-Joe**, **Ava Teddy**; (l-r middle) **Georgia Dallas**, **Te Amokura Watson**, **Isabella Briggs**, **Hannah Rich**, **Taiana Vaai**, **Iriaki Peri**, **Piata Toomer**, **Ila Pasikalia Muagututia**; (l-r front) **Georgie Chapman**, **Cailin Marlow**, **Eva Wright** (Deputy Head Girl), **Lucia Urquhart** (Head Girl), **Alisa Onuma**, **Charlotte Lyall**, **Marie-Claire Mullins**.


Hato Pāora College, Feilding



Waaka Poutu
Dux 2022



Te Aorere Murrow-Rewi
Head Boy 2023



Otaki Mihaere
Deputy Head Boy 2023




Student Leaders/Prefects 2023: (l-r) **Puhi Te Aewa Robson**, **Naumai Amohanga**, **Otaki Mihaere**, **Te Aorere Murrow-Rewi**. Absent: **Mai te Rangi Arahanga**.



St Joseph Māori Girls' College, Napier

Due to the impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle to St Joseph's Māori Girls College, Napier, photos of the student achievers and leaders will feature in a later edition of WelCom. We wish all the staff, students and whānau every blessing. Arohanui.

St Peter's College, Palmerston North



Darcy Donaghy
Dux 2022



Kyle Limlengco
Proxime Accessit 2022



Tupou Siu, Kasilita Seko, Veronica Casaberg
Medallion for Service to Special Character 2022



Denz Shinoy and Isabelle Robertson
Head Boy and Head Girl 2023

Melanie Seko and Aaron Balm
Junior Head Girl and Junior Head Boy 2023



Student Leadership Team 2023: (l-r back) **Adrian Makiwa**, **Carson May**, **Sam Mullin**, **Kezia Goodwin**, **Ciaran Flanagan**, **Joseph Hunt**, **Kiwa McLachlan**, **Jacob Marlow**; (l-r middle) **Ella Hickman**, **Paige Creahan**, **Aria Lyons**, **Heather Skiffington**, **Isabelle Robertson**, **Nadia McLeod-Sands**, **Zoe Moore-Smith**, **Addira Collett**; (l-r front) **Farrah Richdale**, **Chayille Collette**, **Charlotte Bateman**, **Agnes Joseph**, **Ivy Cao**, **Motuhia Fapiano**.

Francis Douglas Memorial College, New Plymouth



Johann Torres
Dux 2022



Oliver Cayley
Proxime Accessit 2022



George Bish
Special Character 2022



Zac Perrett
Head Boy 2023



Student Leaders 2023 (l-r): **Zac Perrett**, **Gabriel Gerente**, **William Poole**, **Logan Smith**, **Liam Drought**, **Samuel Taylor**, **Cooper Goodeve**, **Jax Morgan**, **Jake MacLean**, **Jack Kelsen**, **Ethan Davis**, **Achim Hanne**, **Sam Corlett**, **Breyan Wright**. Absent: **Maaka Normanton**, **Fynn Collier**.

St John's College, Hastings



Rajveer Singh
Dux 2022



Seth Howes
Proxime Accessit 2022



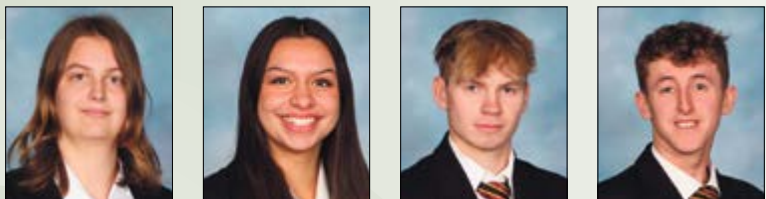
Head Boy and Deputies 2023: (l-r) **Carter Frame-Tavita**, Deputy Head Boy; **Harry Unwin**, Head Boy; **Thomas Jenson**, Deputy Head Boy.

[Group photo of St John's College Student Leadership Team 2023 unavailable due to interruptions of Cyclone Gabrielle.]

er Awards 2022 and Student Leaders 2023

Archdiocese of Wellington

Garin College, Richmond, Nelson



Grace Robson
Dux 2022

Vianne Wessels
Proxime
Accessit 2022

Billy Powick
Catholic
Foundation, Special
Award 2022

Jesse Sherlock
Archbishop's
Award 2022



2023 Student Leaders 2023: (l-r back) Harry Pugh, Theo Simone, Evie Pearce, Lisa Harmonie, James Ivamy; (l-r front) Bella Goomes, Cherry Moore, Sarah Cools. Absent: Maddie Hall; Julia Kersten.

Sacred Heart College, Lower Hutt



Jarrin Ahmed
Dux 2022

Krisha Raju
Proxime
Accessit 2022

Elizabeth Leitch
Archbishop's
Award for Catholic
Leadership 2022

St Catherine's College, Kilbirnie



Mariana Sola
Dux 2022

Jasmin Chung
Proxime
Accessit 2022

Ella Cessford
Head Girl 2023

Maia Bouras
Deputy Head
Girl 2023



Student Leaders 2023: (l-r back) Konesetasia Aukusitino, Tessa Bell, Vanessa Singh, Maia Bouras, Ava Saulbrey; (l-r middle) Dhara Patel, Ella Cessford, Eunice Quito, Nescy Dela Cruz, Isla Richards; (l-r front) Mila Moriarty, Bianca Blanch, Khushi Patal, Michalea PcPhee. Absent: Antoninia Volpicelli, Shaily Nana.



Student Leaders 2023: Hailey Elya, Josie Tapa, Annie Watson, Lydia Sa'u, Stephanie Portugal, Gabrielle Cabauatan.

Chanel College, Masterton

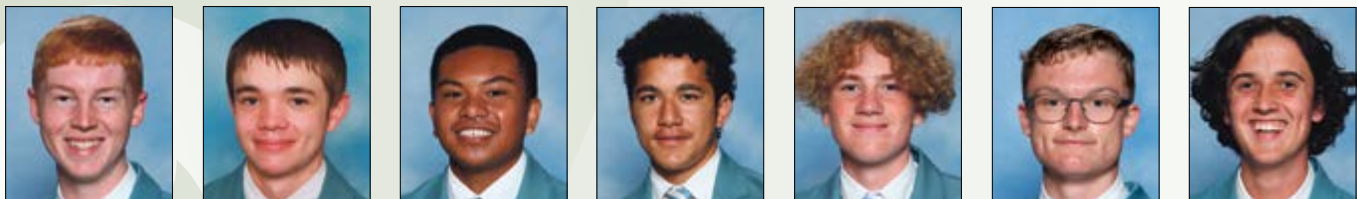


Mackenzie
Murray
Dux 2022

Charlotte Murray
Proxime Accessit
2022

Armand Du
Preez
Head Boy 2023

St Patrick's College, Silverstream



Alexander
Heffernan
Dux 2022

Jason Scanlon
Proxime
Accessit 2022

Aaron Eslera
Award for Catholic
Leadership 2022

Maui Winitana-
Patelesio
Head Boy 2023

Michael Brophy
Deputy Head
Boy 2023

Jacob Hoult
Deputy Head
Boy 2023

Noah Greaney
Deputy Head
Boy 2023

St Mary's College, Wellington



Sarah Hay
Dux 2022

Maya
Dmochowski
Proxime
Accessit 2022

Regina
Fernandes
Special Character
2022

Logan Vaoliko
Head Girl 2023



Student Leaders 2023: (l-r) Anna Comeskey, Hannah Sema, Sonik Lea-Russel, Kahurangi Douglas, Logan Vaoliko, Shaelyn Howard-Vallance, Alysse Saipani, Bridget Janes, Kaihautu Mills, Maria John, with Andrew Murray St Mary's College Principal.



Nikita Johnstone
Head Girl 2023

Kiara Lacaden and Carys Williams
Heads of Special Character 2023



Student Leaders/Prefects 2023: (l-r back) Jude McCullough, Maynard Rono, Clifford Rowe-Penny, Cameron WestGarth, Jacob Siemonek, Armand Du Preez, Mirror Bannon; (l-r front) Nikita Johnstone, Sapphire Chantung, Briana Jacobs, Carys Willimas, Nidhiu Prakash, Malisa Clark, Kiara Lacaden, Renee Soriano.

St Bernard's College, Lower Hutt



Angus Johnson
Dux 2022

Ieti Ah Young
Proxime Accessit 2022

Zephaniah Leaupepe
Special Character 2022

Duncan Ah Young
Head Boy 2023

Nathaniel Graham and Lewis Collins
Deputy Head Boys 2023

St Patrick's College, Wellington



Ruben Manz
Dux 2022

Dimitri Economou and Joshua Sison
Joint Proxime Accessit 2022

Nathan Quito
Archbishop's
Award for Catholic
Leadership 2022

Joseph Asfaw
Manu Taupua
Matua – Head
Boy 2023



Manu Taupua Matua and Deputy Manu Taupua – Student Leadership Team 2023: (l to r) Conor Chesney, Joseph Asfaw, Constantine Saunoo-Tasele, Ryan Mallon.

Bishop Viard College, Porirua



Lesina Taulalai
Dux and Proxime
Accessit 2022

Mannfred Sofara
Dux and Special
Character Award 2022



Head Students 2023 (l-r): Jeremiah Frost, Madelyn Faraimo, Madison Setefano, Sio Letele, Gairilaina Gaina, Keiran Birnie, with Fr Andrew Antonio (centre), parish priest, Holy Family, Porirua East.

Young Catholics

Tuākana 2023 – Archdiocese Youth Ministers

The Archdiocese of Wellington has been running its Tuākana Youth Ministry programme since 2020. It is a year-long, paid programme where a team of young people are each assigned to one of the archdiocese’s nine Catholic colleges, to walk alongside students and support them on their faith journeys. During their assignments the Tuākana are a part of the archdiocese’s Young Church group and their work is coordinated by Louise Lloyd and her team.

In 2023 four young people are on the programme – Nia Foliaki, Tim Ale, Nick Meli and Sofia Mendoza. Nia and Tim were on the programme last year and have returned for a second year to continue the work they started as they ‘could still see opportunities to make a difference’.

If you would like to apply be a Tuākana this year, there are still vacancies. Please contact Louise Lloyd at youth@wn.catholic.org.nz for more information.

Photos: Supplied

The four 2023 Tuākana – Youth Ministers



Nick Meli – Bishop Viard College, Porirua: ‘This year I’m hoping to break down barriers with students who I know don’t always feel comfortable with expressing themselves, especially with pressures like social media. Some of the things I enjoy sharing are artwork, music and singing.’



Tim Ale – Chanel College, Masterton: ‘I only came in halfway through last year and I wanted to continue to walk alongside the students. My main hopes for this year are to support students to continue to grow in their own space and to create a comfortable space for them to do that.’



Sofia Mendoza – Sacred Heart College, Lower Hutt: ‘I decided to apply for this role after being part of the Youth Mass in Petone in 2022 when my youth group was called to be the choir. Then at the Mass, Louise Lloyd spoke about the Tuākana role and my friends said, “That sounds just like you!” so I decided to apply.’



Nia Foliaki – St Catherine’s College, Kilbirnie: ‘I could still see opportunities for me to make a difference after being at the college in this role last year. I was approached by the Head Girl for 2023, Ella Cessford, who asked me to support her to build a faith community with more collaboration alongside St Patrick’s College, Wellington.’

Vatican launches School of Arts and Trades for artisans of the future

The Vatican body that oversees the conservation and maintenance of St Peter’s Basilica has launched a new School of Arts and Trades to offer technical formation for future stonemasons, carpenters and marble craftspeople.

Twenty students attended their first day of classes on in January this year at the Fabric of Saint Peter as part of the new School of Arts and Trades.

The Fratelli Tutti Foundation helped set up the school in collaboration with the Fabric of Saint Peter, which oversees the conservation and maintenance of the Vatican Basilica.

The new students – 12 young men and eight young women – hail from Italy, Peru, Germany, and Belarus.

They will train to become stonemasons, marble workers, plasterers, interior decorators, and carpenters.

Each of the students has already received technical and artistic training, and the course aims to complete their formation through the expertise of the Sanpietrini, as the conservation experts of the Fabric of Saint Peter are known.

According to Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, President of the Fabric and Archpriest of St Peter’s Basilica, the School of Arts and Trades seeks to transmit centuries of practical know-how to younger generations.

‘The school will help us plant a seed in the soil of human promotion, of formation aimed at service to culture, to the women and men of our time and to the Church,’ the Cardinal said.

Students will reside at the ‘Villa Aurelia’ residence run by the Dehonian Fathers for the entire period of the six-month course.

The course objectives include the professional and personal growth of young artisans and the development of manual skills, along with formation in art history.

Teaching activities consist in cycles of lectures, seminars, guided tours, and study visits to various locations throughout Italy.

As apprentices, the 20 students will receive a full immersion in the technical and spiritual details of St Peter’s Basilica, the largest and arguably most important Christian church in the entire world.

Source: Vatican News

Catholic Foundation Scholarships 2023

The Catholic Foundation of the Archdiocese of Wellington congratulates the eight recipients of its scholarships for the 2023 tertiary studies’ year and wishes them well in their chosen courses. The scholarships worth \$2,000 each, are awarded for the first year of a student’s tertiary study.

The awards were presented at college prize-giving events at the end of 2022. The Foundation also recognises the applicants who were not successful but who were of equally high calibre and wishes them well in their future studies. The 2022 scholarships for the 2023 tertiary year were awarded to the following students.



Regina Fernandes, St Mary’s College, Wellington
Attending Victoria University to study a double LLB and Bachelor of Music (Jazz Performance).



William Powick, Garin College, Richmond, Nelson
Attending University of Canterbury to study for a Bachelor of Commerce Sports Management.



Mirna Isa, St Catherine’s College, Kilbirnie
Attending Victoria University to study for a Bachelor of Commerce Sports Management.



Hannah Beamish, St Catherine’s College
Attending Massey University, Palmerston North, to study for a Bachelor of Commerce Sports Management.



Charlotte Murray, Chanel College, Masterton
Attending Otago University to study First Year Health Science.



Jessica Pattison, Kaikoura High School
Attending University of Otago to study for a double degree in Law and Marketing.



Zephaniah Leaupepe, St Bernard’s College, Lower Hutt
Attending Victoria University to study for a Bachelor of Science (Ecology, Biology, and Environmental Health).



George Dalton, St Bernard’s College (the Margaret Ryan Scholarship for teaching)
Attending Victoria University to study for a Bachelor of Education.

Come and See

Cardinal John Dew and Archbishop Paul Martin sm extend an invitation to young people to a vocations’ morning this month, which they will be hosting from 8.30am to 11.30am, Saturday 18 March. Called ‘Come and See, the morning will begin with Mass at Connolly

Hall, Hill St, Thorndon, followed by a gathering that explores discernment and vocation.

To register, please email Lucienne Hensel at l.hensel@wn.catholic.org.nz or text 021 164 5800.



Every year a gathering is hosted for young people in the archdiocese to explore discernment and vocation. Pictured is the Come and See gathering hosted by SEEK at St Mary of the Angels last November. Photo: Supplied

Rangatahi Katorika

Archdiocese of Wellington Young Church Life Teen Summer Camp 2023

Kaisa Beech

Around 50 teenagers from Wellington joined other teenagers from around New Zealand at the 2023 five-day Life Teen Summer camp held at St Peter's School in Cambridge in January. The camp was held for the first time since 2020.

The Wellington contingent included LifeTeen parish groups from Wellington South, Te Awakairangi, St Joseph's Levin and Our Lady of Kāpiti. Fifteen Summer Missionaries from Wellington accompanying the teenagers, coordinated activities and they supported parishes in the lead up to and throughout the camp.

At camp, activities included faith-based formation sessions, the Sacraments, daily Mass with reconciliation, Adoration, and fun events that included nights of worship, dance parties, messy games and other team building activities.

Archdiocese of Wellington Young Church coordinator, Louise Lloyd, chaperoned the LifeTeen Wellington group. The highlight she said, was watching her group



Wellington participants at the 2023 Life Teen Summer Camp held in Cambridge in January. Photo: Supplied

members come out of their shells throughout the camp. 'It was amazing to see them supporting each other in their faith, going to reconciliation, journeying together and bringing our parish group together. When they returned home they created group chats and set up beach catch ups and bible study groups.'

Louise said there was great value in the camp activities and flow-on events starting up again after Covid had paused so many events. 'One teenager from my group was so enlivened by the experience she wants to start her own small group with her friends and run some of Youth Group nights.'

Young Catholic Leaders Camp

The Archdiocese of Wellington Young Catholic Leaders' Camp was held at Forests Lakes camp near Levin last December. Eighty student leaders from Catholic colleges from across the archdiocese attended.

The archdiocese's Church Mission team led the camp with sessions about leadership and activities to practice the skills learnt. 'It was cool to see the students mingling with other schools, and bonds

between students from their own school growing throughout the camp,' said Louise Lloyd Young Church coordinator. 'I'm excited to see what the students achieve in the new year.'

Meeting the person of Jesus

Jess Jackman, Hearts Aflame

In the silence of a candle-lit school hall at midnight on 1 January, 120 young Catholics from all over New Zealand celebrated the New Year in a 'counter-cultural' way. They were deep in prayer. They were participating in the 10-day Hearts Aflame Catholic Summer School 2023, held at Ngā Tawa School in Marton, a rural town in the Manawatū-Whanganui region.

This year's camp was especially significant for Hearts Aflame ministry as the team celebrated their summer school's 30th anniversary, which has been running since 1992.

For three decades Hearts Aflame has been helping young adults develop a deeper understanding of their faith and to be open to a close, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. More than 2,500 individual participants, 1000 hours of prayer and the many vocations to married, priestly and religious life have been sown or strengthened through Hearts Aflame.

The theme for the 2023 school was 'Wrestle and Rest', based on the passage in Genesis where Jacob

wrestles with an angel. Like Jacob, the participants were challenged to be real and to wrestle with the Lord – wrestling with the Word in *Lectio Divina*, wrestling through prayer and through discernment of the deep desires of their hearts.

Participants were also challenged to rest and find inner healing through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, silent Adoration, prayer teams, praise and worship, and the joy of spending 10 days in community with other young Catholics 'on fire' with their faith.

Highlights included a competitive group carnival and quiz, diocesan hang-out time, world-class lectures and a visit from Archbishop Paul Martin sm.

In his homily Archbishop Paul reminded everyone that, 'We need one another to challenge and support us to overcome our fears and insecurities so we can meet the person of Jesus and be open to the fullness of God's love and plan for each one of us.'

We return to our dioceses encouraged to continue to witness to our faith in daily life and contribute in our parishes to build up the Church.



This year's Hearts Aflame participants celebrated the 30th anniversary of the annual summer school, which has been running since 1992. Photo: Supplied



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Cathedral corner:

Both restoration and renovation in the story of stone



Fr James Lyons
Priest of the Archdiocese



There is a big difference between restoration and renovation!

This is emphasised by French-born stonemason, Nicolas Piveteau, whose skill has engaged him with Sacred Heart Cathedral for the past year.

'Restoration,' says Nicolas, 'is working to bring a building, or parts of it, back to its original condition. Renovation, is replacing whatever is beyond repair.'

A stonemason works in both dimensions, and both are proving integral to breathing new life into our Cathedral.

Nicolas took me for an on-site tour to help me understand the specialised nature of the work. It doesn't take long to be very impressed.

It was part-time work with a skilled stonemason in France that got 15-year-old Nicolas Piveteau interested in the trade. He describes stonemasonry as 'doing the best with what you have.'

After completing the necessary study, he came to New Zealand in 2007. He now has his own business, La Maçon, with a staff of five. Major Wellington projects have included the Lambton Quay Public Trust building and strengthening and re-modelling the iconic



Nicolas Piveteau's skill in stonemasonry has engaged him with Sacred Heart Cathedral for the past year. 'Restoration,' says Nicolas, 'is working to bring a building, or parts of it, back to its original condition. Renovation, is replacing whatever is beyond repair.' Both dimensions are proving integral to breathing new life into our Cathedral.

Photos: Supplied



'Stewart Dawson's Corner' on Willis Street.

Oamaru stone provides much of the support structure for the Cathedral and this is very porous material. Over time, paint and cement have locked moisture into the stone, resulting in significant weakening and, in places, irreparable damage.

The paint has to be removed by hand, a painstakingly slow and dust-filled task, using wooden brushes fixed with steel blades. These are shaped to suit their purpose – for example, flat surfaces, arches, swirls, corner twists, carvings....

Where new stones are needed, they are cut and shaped on site, with attention to detail ensuring an exact match.

Completed sections reveal a fresh and bright finish that will certainly enhance the beauty and grandeur of the building.

Aware that some, critical of the cost factor, have argued that the Cathedral should be demolished, I asked Nicolas for comment.

He pointed to our youthfulness as a nation, suggesting we have yet to appreciate the real value of national treasures and heritage buildings. Coming from Europe, he is more conscious of the importance of safeguarding the past for the future, so as not to forget where we came from.

With the Cathedral still covered with protective sheeting, and interior access not possible, the work of Nicolas and his team is mostly unseen. Do not think that nothing is happening.

There is great activity by people dedicated to excellence. The end result is still some time away but, from my observation, it will be well worth the wait.

A sad anniversary

On 22 February 2023, almost a year after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and 'the beginning of this absurd and cruel war', the Pope at the General Audience dwelt on this 'sad anniversary'.

One year of war in Ukraine, has seen Pope Francis' sorrow and tireless appeals for peace.

'The toll of dead, wounded, refugees and displaced persons, destruction, economic and social damage speaks for itself. Can the Lord forgive so many crimes and so much violence? He is the God of peace. Let us

remain close to the tormented Ukrainian people, who continue to suffer. And let us ask ourselves: has everything possible been done to stop the war? I appeal to those in authority over nations to make a concrete commitment to end the conflict, to achieve a cease-fire and to start peace negotiations. The one built on rubble will never be a real victory!'

Do not resign yourself to war
Throughout these twelve months of war, Pope Francis has always asked not to forget the

martyred Ukrainian people, to find ways of dialogue and peace. Gestures, tears, words, appeals, questions to not resign oneself to war and to not remain indifferent.

Pope Francis with Ukrainian children.

Photo: Vatican News



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**"I am the light
of the world"**

- John 8:12

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2023

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AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

The Catholic Agency for Justice,
Peace & Development

Caritas stands in solidarity with Turkey and Syria

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is accepting donations to help the people of south-eastern Turkey and northern Syria, seriously impacted by the 7.8 magnitude earthquake and aftershocks of 6 February. The earthquake destroyed thousands of buildings and killed over 50,000 people.

Caritas Aotearoa is accepting donations through its emergency fund to support the efforts of Caritas Türkiye (Turkey), Syria and other affiliated organisations on the ground, which have been providing immediate help. The Caritas Internationalis Confederation is supporting and coordinating their efforts to assess needs and deliver

ongoing assistance to people affected. The earthquake hit areas already in a difficult humanitarian situation and the harsh winter temperatures and the destruction or severe damage to structures – including several hospitals – and roads, further complicates humanitarian operations.

If you would like to donate, you can do so online through the Caritas Emergency Donation tab at: www.caritas.org.nz/donate-online (please specify your donation is for Turkey/Syria Earthquake) or donate via the Caritas bank account 03-0518-0211216-00 (please include first and last name and put Turkey/Syria as the code).



Caritas staff distribute coal to families living outside in tents after earthquakes destroyed their homes. Photo: Caritas Türkiye

Please keep the people of Turkey and Syria in your prayers as they face widespread devastation and loss of life.

Dear God,
Through dark and difficult moments, we know that You are always with us. Today we come to You in prayer to ask You to bring comfort, healing and hope to the communities that have been devastated by this disaster.
Let the people of these nations rest in the comfort of knowing that You are with them and that you will provide for their needs as You always have.
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Tonga eruption one year on

Amanda Gregan
Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand

The eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai underwater volcano on 15 January 2022 caused widespread devastation across the dispersed island nation of the Kingdom of Tonga, Tongan Fakatu’i ‘o Tonga. Estimates indicated the disaster affected 85 per cent of Tonga’s population, with businesses, homes, workplaces, schools and telecommunications infrastructure impacted by the eruption or subsequent tsunami.

The support of Caritas’ One World Partners meant Caritas Aotearoa could act swiftly to help our brothers and sisters in need. In the spirit of solidarity and subsidiarity, we listened to our partners on the

ground and responded to their needs and the communities they support. Your continued generosity enabled us to assist the recovery through food parcel and crop provision, strengthening of emergency shelters, water security measures and psychosocial support.

To mark the first anniversary of the Tongan eruption and tsunami, we spoke to Caritas Tonga Director Suliana Falemaka about the devastation and on-going rebuild.

Effects on Tonga

As it has been reported, some infrastructure like the airport, the wharf, hospital, and some community health facilities were affected, including the loss of shelters and a great impact on livelihoods such as agriculture.

The disaster continues to impact the lives of our people. The people of

Tonga are still living in fear; thunder and lightning have become alarming to many as it brings back memories of the most frightening and terrifying event in the history of our small nation.

Caritas Tonga response

Caritas Tonga and its partners in humanitarian response were able to assist the immediate response to affected communities through mobilising our prepositioned stock. This response included the distribution of NFI (non-food item) kits and clean water in some communities. The prepositioned stock was very helpful for first responders, and mobilising the stock was a relief for those in need. Caritas Tonga also deployed the Hala ki ‘Emeasi counselling team to Kanokupolu, a severely impacted community in the North of the mainland, to provide

trauma counselling immediately after the event.

Priorities

In addition to work that will strengthen facilities to act as emergency shelters in the future, and supporting the water security of impacted populations, Caritas Tonga has identified it is critical to provide psychosocial support not only to the affected communities but the whole of Tonga.

Many local people have been impacted psychologically, so Caritas Tonga has conducted Psychosocial Empowerment outreach in communities throughout the year, starting with those most affected. These measures seek to uphold the dignity of those affected and enhance their lives so they will be resilient and well prepared now and into the future. Our Disaster Risk Reduction plan aims prioritise psychosocial empowerment because if people know how to better manage risks in their everyday life it will be helpful in response to any disaster.

The displacement of communities greatly impacted by the eruption and tsunami is ongoing. Relocation of the village of ‘Atata Island has been completed, with the population now residing on the main island of Tongatapu. The community of Mango Island has been given temporary shelter on ‘Eua Island while construction of their shelters is underway.

Caritas head of programmes

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand appointed Nina Tu’i late last year as its new head of programmes to lead international development and humanitarian work.



Announcing the appointment Caritas Chief Executive Mena Antonio said, ‘Nina brings 15 years’ of experience leading international development projects in the Pacific and developing relationships with diverse stakeholders to achieve joint objectives. Nina also has experience with international disaster response, emergency management, and financial management.

Nina is a graduate of Massey University where she gained a Master of International Development with Distinction. She lived in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji for 12 years and led the work for the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific, the Pacific Community (SPC) in relation to educational research. As well as leading community development projects in the Pacific Nina’s experience also includes managing international development projects for the New Zealand government.



Destruction of buildings on the Western coast of the main island Tongatapu. Photo: Supplied



Caritas Tonga Director Suliana Falemaka, in front of the Catholic church in ‘Eua. The church will receive strengthening to ensure it remains an appropriate emergency shelter for the future. Photo: Supplied

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Pope: Synodal and Lenten journeys require effort, sacrifice, focusing on God

In his Message for Lent 2023, 22 February–6 April, Pope Francis highlights the relationship between the Lenten journey and the synodal journey, which are both rooted in tradition and open to newness.

Christopher Wells
Vatican News

Personal and ecclesial ‘transfiguration’ is the goal of the ascetical journey of Lent, and similarly of the synodal process, writes Pope Francis in his Message for Lent 2023.

The message, signed on the Solemnity of the Conversion of St Paul and released on Friday, 17 February, bears the title ‘Lenten Penance and the Synodal Journey’.

Our Lenten journey is synodal

Pope Francis takes his inspiration from the Gospel account of the Transfiguration, proclaimed each year on the Second Sunday of Lent [see *Gospel Reading and Reflection*, p 17]. As with the chosen disciples at the Transfiguration, Jesus ‘takes us with Him to a place apart’ during the season of Lent.

‘Lenten penance,’ he writes, ‘is a commitment, sustained by grace, to overcoming our lack of faith and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross.’

This requires effort, sacrifice, and concentration, which are also requirements for the Synodal Journey; and therefore we can say that ‘our Lenten journey is



Pope Francis gives ashes to a woman as he celebrates Ash Wednesday Mass in St Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican, 10 February, 2016.
Photo: Paul Haring/CNS

“synodal” since we make it together along the same path, as disciples of the one Master.’

‘Both in the liturgical journey and in the journey of the Synod, the Church does nothing other than enter ever more deeply and fully into the mystery of Christ the Saviour.’

Helping us understand God’s will

Like the journey of the disciples up Mount Tabor, Pope Francis acknowledges that the synodal process can seem arduous and lead to discouragement.

Yet, he says ‘what awaits us at the end is undoubtedly something

wondrous and amazing, which will help us to understand better God’s will and our mission in the world.’

Pointing to the appearance of Moses and Elijah – representing the Law and the Prophets – at the Transfiguration, Pope Francis says, ‘In a similar way, the synodal journey is rooted in the Church’s tradition

and at the same time open to newness.’ He explains that ‘tradition is a source of inspiration for seeking new paths and for avoiding the opposed temptations of immobility and improvised experimentation.’

Listening and daily effort

In order to reach our goal of personal and ecclesial transformation or conversion, Pope Francis proposes two paths inspired by the Transfiguration of Jesus.

The first is listening to God’s Word and to our brothers and sisters. The Pope reminds us that listening to Christ often takes place in listening to our brothers and sisters in the Church.

The second path involves facing the reality of the daily struggles of life, without getting caught up in extraordinary events and experiences. Pope Francis reminds us that neither Lent nor the synodal process are ends in themselves, but are leading us to the experience of Easter.

‘Let us go down then, to the plain,’ the Pope says in conclusion, ‘and may the grace we have experienced strengthen us to be ‘artisans of synodality’ in the ordinary life of our communities.

Source: Vatican News



The New Zealand Bishops’ National Liturgy Office has prepared substantial parish and personal Lent resources, as well as a link to the important Caritas Aotearoa Lenten Appeal. The resources are online at <https://www.nlo.org.nz/news-and-events/media-releases/lent-week-one-2023/>



Lent is upon us: ‘Believe in the Gospel’

Ash Wednesday opened the 40-days Season of Lent, emphasising both our equality before death and the possibility of doing good during our earthly life.

Dominique Greiner

We enter the season of Lent [Ash Wednesday, 22 February] with the rite of the imposition of ashes on our foreheads... The two formulas to choose from that ceremony deliver its meaning.

‘Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return’ (Gen 3, 19). The imposition of ashes reminds us of our human condition. We are transients, pilgrims on this earth. In this, we are all equal: no one can claim to be superior to others. This simple reminder is beneficial: it puts everyone in their place.

At the same time, knowing that we are all mortals has something soothing about it: ‘Can any of you, however much you worry, add a

single cubit to your span of life?’ asks Jesus (Lk 12, 25). It is useless, therefore, to make all kinds of efforts in the belief that we can escape our mortal condition. On the contrary! If our time is short, let’s go to the essentials! Is this not what the second formula used in the Liturgy of the Ashes tells us: ‘Repent and believe in the Gospel’ (Mk 1, 15)?

This call to conversion can be understood as an invitation to accept and fully inhabit our finite condition. It’s a condition that Christ freely embraced by becoming ‘as human beings are’ (Phil 2, 7).

During his earthly life, Jesus never ceased to show that human finitude does not prevent us from behaving as good people. The Gospel is therefore an invitation to




do the same by using our capacities to do good. They are capacities that come from God and that we discover and maintain through prayer, fasting and sharing. Happy Lenten journey!

Dominique Greiner, of France, a moral theologian and Assumptionist priest, is a senior editor at La Croix.


Source: La Croix

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Keep the beginning in sight

Fr James Lyons



Fr James Lyons.

Do you have a beginner’s mind?
A child starting school comes home excited by the newness of it all. The first days in a new job bring an eagerness and freshness to life. As a relationship opens to love, there is a profound joy that you can’t wait to share with the whole world. But, with time and routine, excitement fades, eagerness pales

and joy loses much of its shine. You have to keep at it!
It’s exactly the same with our faith.
In several of our parishes people who have expressed interest in Catholicism are being prepared for baptism and/or reception into the Christian community at Easter. The programme usually followed is known as RCIA – the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.
Prayer and discussion guide their journey. They will tell you that while they have not lived in darkness they each knew there was something more for them to see.
Excitement and eagerness are evident as candidates gradually become more acquainted with the

God revealed in Jesus Christ. There is palpable joy through the whole community as baptism is celebrated and the Eucharist empowers the newly baptised to be messengers of peace and hope to all.
It’s all very wonderful. But how long does it last?
Richard Rohr, an American Franciscan priest (born 1943) and renowned spiritual author, is strong on the need for all believers to maintain ‘a beginner’s mind’.
To do so, he says, we must not neglect the gift of spiritual discernment. This requires us to ‘be willing to respond and change because we are aware of our own mixture of good and evil.’ [Everything Belongs, Richard Rohr, Crossroad Publishing, 2003, p.40]

Surrounded as we are by multiple distractions, the fresh, sparkling eyes of faith can be easily dimmed. We have to keep refreshing our faith – keeping our awareness alert, sharp enough so as not to lose sight of the end of the journey.
A few years ago, I was fortunate to benefit from cornea transplants, saving my eyesight, certainly in one eye. Full, healthy living requires good eyesight. That’s just to see what’s around us. Our faith also needs clear eyesight, or we will never see the truth within us or the wonder of being a child of God.

A beginner’s mind

*A beginner’s mind
Caught in the wonder of newness
And the sure sense of more to come
Lifting your vision to sights yet unseen
Entering life anew*
*A beginner’s mind
Catching the freshness and joy of good news
Harvesting seeds now freed of the dark
Eager to grow, yearning to share
Gifts bathed in light*
*A beginner’s mind
Open and trusting filled to the brim
Spilling out to develop and take more light in
Hold fast the moment and often recall
The start of it all*

Fr James Lyons

There’s an expression in business: what you see is what you get! But like all clichés and clever-sounding comments, it’s rarely completely true. We associate seeing with what’s immediately visible – what’s on the surface; but basing all judgement at that level will bring much disappointment.
The season of Lent is an ideal time to look within, to check your spiritual ‘insight’ and reconnect with your beginner’s mind; to see again the excitement of discovering

God in your life and re-set your course with an eager joy to share what you are seeing.

This year, Lent takes place from Wednesday 22 February to Thursday 6 April 2023, while Easter takes place on Sunday 9 April.

Fr James Lyons is a priest of the Archdiocese of Wellington.



Image: Unsplash

Gospel Reading: Sunday 5 March 2023

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT – MATTHEW 17:1-9

¹ Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² There he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. ³ And suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, and were talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, ‘Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’
⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from

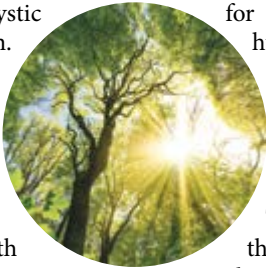
the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’ ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and do not be afraid.’ ⁸ And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.
⁹ As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus gave them this order, ‘Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.’

Shine like the sun A reflection on Matthew 17:1-9

Mary Eastham
According to biblical commentators, the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ powerfully revealed His divine nature and His glory. That Peter, James and John were the only ones to receive this revelation prompts me to ask the question: was this because they were his favourites, or rather because only they had the eyes to see?
Mystics and poets speak of a *third eye*. I have read that the third eye is opened in one of three ways: when one is near death and thus totally open to God; when one has experienced trauma, and thus totally vulnerable; or through deep contemplative prayer. In

other words, when we live close to God through prayer, or realise that we are not in control through suffering, we are able to see what is truly important.
My favourite mystic is Thomas Merton. In his classic work, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, he shared a vision of human solidarity that he experienced at the corner of Fourth and Walnut Street in Louisville, Kentucky, in the centre of the shopping district. He saw that he was connected to everyone everywhere; experienced an enormous outpouring of love for

them and saw everyone in his path walking around shining like the sun. Imagine that!
We are living in an age of human emergency, which calls for the emergence of a new human being who sees the Earth and all humanity as sacred, shining like the sun; the way that Peter, James and John saw Jesus; the way that Thomas Merton saw the throng of people crossing a busy street. Then everyone everywhere could make the changes necessary to make it possible for every person to have what they need to live a decent life on this Earth, God’s sacred gift to us.



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The Feast of the Annunciation

25 March, Solemnity

The Feast of the Annunciation on 25 March is one of the most important in the Church calendar. The biblical account of the Annunciation is in the first chapter of the Gospel of St Luke, (Lk 1:26-39) which describes the news given to Mary that she was to become the mother of the Incarnation of God, and records the ‘angelic salutation’ of Gabriel to Mary, ‘Hail, favoured one! The Lord is with you.’ It is the origin of the repeated ‘Hail Mary’ prayer of the Rosary; and Mary’s response to God’s will, ‘Let it be done to me according to thy word’. Her exultant hymn, the ‘Magnificat’, is found in Luke 1:46-55.



Annunciation (c 1472–1475), is thought to be Leonardo da Vinci’s earliest complete work. Image: Wikimedia Commons

Hail Mary,
Full of Grace,
The Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of death.
Amen.

Awe Maria e ki ana koe,
e te keretia,
kia koe e te Ariki,
kia whakapainga koe.
I roto i nga wahine ae whakapainga hoki.
A Hehu te hua o tou kopu.

Hata Maria te Matua wahine o te Atua
inoi koe mo matou mo te hunga
e hara ana aiane i a te hoara o toku matenga rawa.
Amene.

A Pray for Our Earth

Encyclical: *Laudato si'*: On Care for Our Common Home
Pope Francis

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognise that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Pope Francis,
Laudato si'



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DATES AND EVENTS – WHAT’S ON

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

Sunday 5 March
➤ Day of Prayer for all children – Te Rā o Nga Tamariki | Children’s Day New Zealand.
➤ Second Sunday of Lent.

Tuesday 7 March
Census 2023 – chance to represent ourselves, families, whānau, religion, communities, and cultures.

Wednesday 8 March
International Women’s Day

Sunday 12 March
Third Sunday of Lent.

Monday 13 March
Ten-year anniversary of election of Pope Francis.

Tuesday 14 March
North Island Commissioning Mass – the Commissioning Mass for Catholic schools in the archdiocese’s North Island region, has been rescheduled to take place at 5.30pm at St Mary of the Angels Church, Boulcott St, Wellington. All are welcome.

Friday 17 March
Feast of St Patrick.

Saturday 18 March
Come and See – Cardinal John Dew and Archbishop Paul Martin sm invite young people to a vocations’ morning they will be hosting from 8.30am to 11.30am. The morning will begin with Mass at Connolly Hall, Hill St, Thorndon, followed by a gathering that explores discernment and vocation. To register, please email Lucienne Hensel at l.hensel@wn.catholic.org.nz or text 021 164 5800.

Saturday 18-Sunday 19 March
St Joseph’s Catholic School, Stratford – 125th Jubilee. Contact: admin@stjosephs-stratford.school.nz for more information and to register.

Sunday 19 March
Fourth Sunday of Lent.

Monday 20 March
Feast of St Joseph, Husband of Mary, Solemnity.

Friday 24 March
Current of Grace Conference 2023 – 7pm, Friday 24 March to 2pm, Sunday 26 of March, El Rancho, Waikanae. Registration \$135, online at www.currentofgraceconference.info closes 8 March. Go to www.charisnz.com and facebook.com/charis.nz/ for more information.

Saturday 25 March
Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

Sunday 26 March
Fifth Sunday of Lent.

Sunday 26 March
Young Church Mass – 5pm, St Mary of the Angels. Join us for the first Archdiocesan Youth Mass of 2023. The Mass will be celebrated by Archbishop Paul Martin sm.

Sunday 2 April
Palm Sunday.

Thursday 6 April
Holy Thursday, Triduum.

Friday 7 April
Good Friday, Triduum.

Saturday 8 April
Easter Vigil, Triduum.

Sunday 9 April
Easter Sunday, Solemnity.



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Apply by providing a cover letter along with your CV and provide referees with contact details to:

The Principal
Sacred Heart Girls’ College
PO Box 3241, New Plymouth 4341
or email: dst@shgcnp.school.nz



Come and See

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- Ask the questions you’ve always wondered about.
- Join us for Mass at 8:30am in Connolly Hall, followed by breakfast and a time of fellowship and discussion at Viard House.
- To register, text 021 164 5800 or email l.hensel@wn.catholic.org.nz



Correction
In last month’s WelCom, this photo from the story about the whānau coming together in Wairoa for the unveiling of Richard Tiki Te Aroha Puanaki’s headstone, was inadvertently replaced with a duplicate of another photograph from the same article. Here is the correct photo and caption. We wish all the whānau in Wairoa and beyond our thoughts at this time in the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle.

Pā Arthur Tootle baptises Henare and Rhea Puanaki’s son Karamu with Holy Water.
Photo: Annette Scullion/WelCom





EVENTS CALENDAR

2023



Miha
📅 12 FEB - 17 DEC 📍 CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF COMPASSION
Sunday 11:00 am



Morning Prayer/ Mass
📅 15 FEB - 13 DEC 📍 CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF COMPASSION
Every Wednesday and Thursday 8:30 am



Christian Meditation
📅 13 FEB - 11 DEC 📍 CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF COMPASSION
Monday 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Thursday 11:00 am - 12:00 pm



Quiet Days
📅 09 MAR - 12 OCT 📍 MEET AT RECEPTION 📄 REGISTRATION REQUIRED
Second Thursday of every month 10:30 am - 2:30 pm



Taizé
📅 03 MAR - 01 DEC 📍 CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF COMPASSION
First Friday of every month 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm



Craft Group
📅 15 FEB - 13 DEC 📍 CLOISTER CAFE
Every Wednesday 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

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10 years with Pope Francis

13 March 2013 – 13 March 2023



Pope Francis, the bishop of Rome and the leader of the Catholic Church (2013–present) is the first pope from the Western Hemisphere, the first from South America, and the first from the Jesuit order. He was elected Supreme Pontiff on 13 March 2013. The 10th anniversary of his pontificate will be celebrated on 13 March 2023.

“Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change.”

– Pope Francis, 2015



Pope Francis’ ten-year tenure has seen his battle to reform the Catholic Church as well as the challenges he has faced in shaping the Church to be forward thinking in its outlook and positioned to address past injustices while at the same time focusing on helping the most vulnerable in society.

During an interview at his Vatican home at the Casa Santa Marta, on 18 February, about the 10 years of his pontificate, Pope Francis recalled his election.

‘Poor Peter, what a successor he found himself!’ he exclaimed,

laughing. ‘I never imagined such a thing for my life.’

In an American Catholic magazine article published last month, titled ‘10 years as pope: Francis pushing the Church to bring the Gospel to the world’, Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago said the best description of Pope Francis was, ‘He’s free.’

‘He’s free in the sense of wanting to listen to different voices in the life of the Church. He’s free in being imaginative, but also he has the kind of freedom that really allows him to be joyful in this ministry.

‘John Paul II told us what we should do. Benedict told us why we should do it. And Francis is saying, “Do it”. Pope Francis is leading by example in how he cares for the poor, sees God at work in people’s real lives and reaches out to people often overlooked by the Church.

‘I think history will look back on this pontificate as historic, as pivotal in the life of the Church,’ Cardinal Cupich said.

Sources: Vatican Media; UK Tablet; CNS



‘Viral’ celebration to mark 10th anniversary of Francis’ pontificate

A Hail Mary for Pope Francis – say a prayer on 10th anniversary of Pope Francis’ pontificate.

A special prayer initiative for the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis’ pontificate has been launched by the Vatican in which the faithful are invited to pray one or more Hail Marys for him.

The Vatican Digital Synod has launched the online prayer initiative to mark the tenth anniversary on 13 March 2023.

To highlight this milestone anniversary in a ‘viral’ manner, the Digital Synod has launched a special online map [www.decimus-annus.org/site/index] featuring virtual lighted candles representing the prayers of the faithful worldwide for him.

According to a Vatican press release, ‘The Petrine ministry is a great grace that Jesus granted to His Church and we must always be grateful for it. Therefore, prayer must be our best gift, so that God may support the service of the one He has chosen for this ministry because on this rock He builds His Church in time and history’.

Anyone who wishes to join the initiative will find an invitation on the website to pray one or more Hail Marys on 13 March.

‘In the end we will send the Holy Father the map with the ‘little candles’ which represent the Hail Marys that are prayed for him, thanking God for His Mercy’, the press release concludes.

Source: Vatican News



“Dear young people, do not be afraid of making decisive choices in life. Have faith; the Lord will not abandon you!”

“Prayer makes us brothers and sisters.”



“In prayer, God keeps calling us, opening our hearts to charity.”

“Joy springs from a grateful heart.”

“Let us pray for peace: peace in the world and in each of our hearts.”

“God is present in every one of you, in each one of us.”

“Let us care for one another and let us be loving custodians of creation.”



Resigning not on the Pope’s agenda

The resignation of a pope should not become the norm within the Catholic Church, and that prospect is not ‘on my agenda,’ Pope Francis, 86, said in a recent interview.

Francis met with Jesuits in Congo and in South Sudan during his visit to the two countries in late January-early February this year.

He made the comments on 2 February during a question and answer session with 82 Jesuits as part of his visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The pope was commenting on a recent revelation that he had prepared a letter of resignation in case he became too ill or infirm to carry out the duties of the papacy. Two months after his election, he wrote the letter and delivered it to Cardinal Tarcisio

Bertone, but he is unsure of the letter’s current location.

However, Pope Francis said that resigning popes should not become a common occurrence, and he believes the pope’s ministry is ‘ad vitam’ (for life).

When asked if he was considering resignation, he replied, ‘No, it has not crossed my mind.’

He cited the surprise resignation in 2013 of his predecessor, Benedict XVI, who ‘had the courage to do it because he did not feel up to continuing due to his health.’

‘I, for the moment, do not have that on my agenda. I believe that the Pope’s ministry is “ad vitam”’, Pope Francis said, adding that ‘historical tradition’ was important.



POPE FRANCIS’ MAJOR DOCUMENTS

Lumen Fidei, 2013 – Encyclical the Light of Faith

The first encyclical of Pope Francis, issued on the Solemnity of Sts Peter and Paul, 29 June 2013, the encyclical focuses on Christian faith in the third millennium.

Evangelii Gaudium, 2013 – Apostolic Exhortation on the Joy of the Gospel

A 2013 apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis on the Church’s mission of evangelisation in the modern world. It aims at overcoming complacency at every level of the Church’s hierarchy and in the life of every Christian.

Laudato si’, 2015 – Apostolic Exhortation on Care for our Common Home

An encyclical of Pope Francis published in May 2015. It focuses on care for the natural environment and all people, as well as broader questions of the relationship between God, humans, and the Earth.

Amoris Laetitia, 2016 – Apostolic Exhortation on the Joy of Love

An apostolic exhortation that addresses marriage, family, divorce and other important modern issues. The groundbreaking document asks the Church to meet people where they are, to consider the complexities of people’s lives and to respect people’s consciences when it comes to moral decisions.

Gaudete et Exsultate, 2018 – Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness in Today’s World

The third apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, ‘Rejoice and be glad’, addresses the universal call to holiness, with a focus ‘to repropose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time’.

Fratelli Tutti, 2020 – Encyclical on Fraternity and Social Friendship

The third encyclical of Pope Francis proposes fraternity and social friendship as the ways indicated to build a better, more just and peaceful world, with the commitment of all: people and institutions.