



ARCHBISHOP OF WELLINGTON

2 June 2023

Tēnā koutou katoa

It is my privilege to be writing this to you for the first time as the 8th Archbishop of Wellington. I am conscious that I have been in the Archdiocese for just under a year but there are many of you who I have yet to meet, or whose parish or schools I have not yet visited. My hope is that in the coming year I will be able to come and meet the various communities which make up the Church of the Archdiocese.

I am sure that you appreciate, as I do, that we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. For me it begins with my parents and wider family who handed on the faith to me and supported me in my faith journey. It is all the various communities that I have belonged to over the course of my life. It includes the Society of Mary, who formed me and whose ministries I worked in for 24 years. It also includes the people of the Diocese of Christchurch whom I had the privilege of being shepherd to for four and a half years. Now it is this Archdiocese, with the Archbishops who preceded me, and all the faith communities, religious and priests who have gone before. It is humbling to be asked by Pope Francis to lead the Archdiocese now.

I want to acknowledge Cardinal John and his faithful service to the Church here for so many years. I know that he was a very pastoral shepherd and one who wanted his people to grow in their relationship with God and for the Church to be a place for all. I know you will continue to keep him in your prayers as he enjoys the fruits of his labours.

When someone new comes along we often wonder what their agenda is, or what they are going to be like. That is normal and it takes a while to get know someone, their way of operating, the perspective they take on things. That is part of the journey that lies ahead for me and for you as we work together for the good of the Church and the sharing of the Good News with others. I am looking forward to this journey with you all.



One of the great gifts of our Church is that we have a structure that allows us to know where we stand and what we believe. There may be times when we might struggle with some of this, but the strength is in our unity of belief, prayer and teaching. It isn't my personal opinion that actually decides things, it is what the Church believes and teaches, and this is actually a protection for us. In our highly individualistic society the Church does hold universal truths that are not dependent on the whims of the age. It can be a challenge for us to live and proclaim this, but that doesn't stop the truth of it. In this light each of us, especially those who are in positions of authority or have a responsibility for an area of Church life, have to keep asking ourselves are we teaching and living what the Church believes? A Catholic institution, if it is going to bear that name, needs to be faithful to what that means. Each of us needs to ask ourselves if we are witnessing to this in our ministry, leadership and participation.

One of the things that I hope we might embark upon in the Archdiocese is a renewal in our spiritual lives. If I am not in love with Jesus Christ then I won't be motivated to build the Christian community or be a proclaimer of the Good News to others. If I am to fall in love then I need to know Jesus and share in his life and allow the Holy Spirit to set me on fire. That can be very challenging and frightening, it might take me out of my comfort zone. I want us to be people who know how to pray, who spend time in prayer with God each day, not just for an hour on Sunday. We need to nourish ourselves with the Sacraments of the Eucharist and to make the most of the wonderful gift of Reconciliation, to read spiritual books, articles, or listen to podcasts - to feed our soul and our minds. If we do this then hopefully we will be motivated to build community and be evangelizers. This is especially true for those of us who have leadership roles in our Church. I hope we can do much more in this way to help one another grow in our faith and relationship with God.

I am very aware that there are many good people who are working for our Church community, often not acknowledged or perhaps even unknown to many. They are living witnesses to faith and show what it is to truly believe. I invite you, if you know people like this, to take the opportunity to thank them and encourage them in what they are doing.

Finally, for me this is a long journey that we are on together. I have been called to play my part in this for the next 19 years, God willing, in the Archdiocese. Some of you will have been members of the faith community of the Archdiocese all your lives, others, like me will have come to the diocese, some will have been Catholic all their lives, others for a shorter time. Whatever the circumstances this is God's work that we are doing. We are cooperating with his plan for the world and for the Church in the Archdiocese and beyond. Our forebears in the faith have played their part, we do ours now, and that is a wonderful reality and one that frees us from having to shoulder the burden alone. We do it together and we trust in the one who walks with us in this journey, Jesus Christ, and in his Holy Spirit, whose coming we celebrated again last Sunday at Pentecost.

May God bless each of us as we live our Christian lives within our Catholic community.

In Christ



+Paul Martin SM

"Trust witnesses who are willing to sacrifice their lives" (Pascal). It is a false notion that we can convince someone of a truth of faith simply by persuasive argument alone. Yet sometimes, after a conversion, we may think it is that easy. This is an excessive confidence in the power of reason. Believing is never the result simply of reasoning to a conclusion. Faith's initial flame catches fire when grace penetrates beyond merely rational understanding and provokes a deep attraction for the mystery of God. A choice to believe must occur. A soul must stand face to face before the *mystery* of Jesus Christ, because even in believing not all matters are comprehended. When a person receives the grace of faith and responds to it, another form of persuasion has ordinarily been at work.

The entry into faith takes place most often by the impact of *one soul* upon another. An encounter with the heroic generosity and deep faith of a religious person is the most striking testimony to the truth of the Gospel. The spiritual vibrancy of persons who have intense faith, their generosity and full attention to the souls around them - these are more convincing arguments for the truth of Jesus Christ than any intelligent words. Those who give up everything for God have always been the most powerful proof for the truth of Christ as a personal presence. But there is a corollary to this. In a time when Christianity does not attract so strongly, must it be that souls giving their lives sacrificially to God are far fewer in number or perhaps simply more isolated, less visible, less able to influence? It is love alone in generous self-giving that consistently draws others to the truth of Jesus Christ

Fr Donald Haggerty

Notes

- Monsignor Gerard Burns has been appointed by me as Vicar General. I am grateful to Mons Gerard for his willingness to carry on in this role. He brings good continuity and pastoral wisdom.
- Congratulations to Sacred Heart Lower Hutt and St Patrick's Silverstream on their sharing the O'Shea Shield this year. It was great to see our Catholic Colleges joining with those of Palmerston North diocese to contest the Shield for the 75th time. St Mary's College generously hosted the event since Sacred Heart Napier was not able to after cyclone Gabrielle.
- The Archdiocesan General Manager John Prendergast is completing his time in this role and has a new position as DEO of Trust House Ltd in the Wairarapa. We are grateful for John's service to the Archdiocese and his calm approach to matters. Please pray for the recruitment process that is taking place at present for a new GM.
- My installation as the 8th Archbishop will be at 11am on the 17th of June at the Pro Cathedral St Teresa's Karori. There will be official invites to people representing the various communities in the Archdiocese but it is a public event.
- Please remember in your prayers all our clergy. The frail and those who are experiencing ill health at present are Frs Frank Maguire, Peter O'Connell.
- We pray for Fr Manus Lyons, Sr Maria Pijfers RC, who have died in the last month. May they rest in peace.
- Congratulations to Sr Margaret Anne Mills DOLC who has been re-elected as Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Compassion, and to the current leadership team who were also reelected. Please remember the Sisters in your prayers as they plan for the future of the Congregation.
- St Mary's school in Blenheim is celebrating its 150 Jubilee on the weekend beginning 30 June. We are grateful to the Sisters of Mercy and all who have been and are involved in that school. I look forward to joining the community there for the celebrations.

My intention is to produce a newsletter at the beginning of each month. It is also my intention that it won't be as long as this one is!

Anniversary of Ordination June	
17	Tom O'Brien (1962) Alan Roberts (1972)
18	Julian Wagg (1972)
20	Ramesh Songa MOF (2012)
21	Peter Healy SM (1991) Leone Iosefo (1991)
23	Kevin Mowbray SM (1976)
24	Bruce England (1978) Alfred Tong (2022)
29	Owen Sinclair (1963)

We pray for our Dead June	
2	John Durham (1994)
7	James McDonnell (1999)
9	Thomas Little (2013)
14	Alexander Taylor (2009)
15	Cyril Donoghue (1979)
17	Jeremiah McGrath (1978)
18	John Roberts (1996)
20	Basil Hayes (1989)
26	William Heavy (1988) John McLaughlin (1988) David Monaghan (2000)
30	Malcolm Sherrard (2012)