



## Te Hao Nui- LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL) June 2023

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

Luke 5: 4

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

Welcome to the June issue of LOL!

I was unaware of how the Eucharist was counterculture to many world beliefs about God and divinity when friends from different religions confronted me about how they were perplexed by why (my) God has to become human only to suffer and die. It would have daunted them even more why we ‘eat and drink’ Jesus’ body and blood in the Eucharist. I realised right then how bizarre my faith looks to others and how fortunate I am to have it.

For this issue, we have **Margaret Bearsley** leading the Gospel reflection on the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Margaret manages to approach this rather complex and heavy Gospel with masterful simplicity. The core thesis of the Eucharist as Jesus’ body and blood, embodied in bread and wine, expresses the very mission and identity of Jesus. And the inexplicable love of God that longs to be in ‘communion’ with us.

The 18th of June is the World Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants. We have **Vicky Raw** share her reflection as a migrant and making our parishes a welcoming place for migrants. **Bridget Taumoepeau** begins a series articles on Catholic Social Teaching and its implication for pastoral ministry. She starts off this issue with the principle on *Human Dignity*.

I wrote a **synthesis** of the ***Oceania Discernment on the Working Document for the Continental Stage***. We have to keep the conversation about the Synod going. Feel free to print and share it around in your parishes.

As a Eucharistic people, may we be transformed by what we consume and be instruments of building God’s kingdom.

Maya Bernardo

Formator & Manager, Te Hao Nui- Launch Out Programme

### The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ <sup>1</sup> John 6:51-58

By Margaret Bearsley  
Launch Out Candidate



<https://www.homilyhub.com/homily-for-the-feast-of-the-body-and-blood-of-christ-year-b-2/>

Technology was very useful during the Covid lockdowns that saw us unable to join together physically for meetings or Mass. Going back further in time, do you remember when Skype first became available and we all discovered the ability to connect, especially with people overseas? It was free and we could see each other—almost as good as being there, we all said.

But we are always acutely aware of the drawbacks of meeting virtually: the screen freezes, the internet drops out, conversation is stilted, and we all look 10 kilos heavier than we really are! The reality is, there’s nothing like *actually* being there. We need to hug, to be in the real presence of each other, to have the spontaneity and spark of real life.

After celebrating Easter, the Church’s Liturgical Year runs through a kind of flip chart of Jesus’ movement of, as John’s Gospel puts it, drawing all people to himself, going back to God and of sending the Spirit. So, we have the lengthy Easter Season, the Ascension, Pentecost, then the Feast of the Holy Trinity, and then the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. And then we move into Ordinary Time.

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The Gospel readings during this big Easter and post-Easter period are from John, for whom the Passion of Jesus provides the culmination of all the major themes covered in that Gospel.

The very hallmark of John's Gospel is the presentation of Jesus as the revelation of God. Every facet of Jesus' existence—his person, his mission, his destiny, reveals who God is and what God's stance towards the world is. In a cosmic sense, for John, Jesus' whole mission is as the Word of God: incarnated, he brings God's message of love to a stricken world. That "word" of God is expressed in multiple ways—through Jesus' signs of power and compassion, through his electrifying discourses, and in his bold and confident commitment to his mission.

Indeed, Jesus bears the very name of God, "I Am", *ego eimi*, the name that God had told to Moses. Jesus' actions are the very work of God. And if that doesn't surprise and amaze us, we have lost our sense of the real! There is nothing virtual about God!

For John's Gospel, no "word" of Jesus is more eloquent, no sign more transparent, no testimony more compelling than that of his death. Even before the Passion begins to unfold, Jesus had clearly interpreted his impending death as an act of love and of power. He was the grain of wheat that had to fall to the earth and die in order to bear fruit. As death tightens its grip, Jesus himself knows that this is the "hour", the moment of truth when all the work he had set out to do was now completed. His final words: *It is finished*, are words of achievement.

Instead of viewing death as a termination, a stopping of the flow of life, the Gospel portrays Jesus' death as a glorious beginning, as a portal through which Jesus passes from this world to the next, a homecoming into the loving arms of God.

The Jesus that John portrays is always ironical and shocking, so we can assume that this tells us something about God's own self. Well, of course it does, because Jesus enfleshed God into the world.

The passage from the sixth chapter of John follows immediately on from Jesus having said "*I Am (ego eimi) the Bread of Life*". Now he moves to one of the most shocking explanations of himself (and therefore of God) in the whole New Testament. Those who heard Jesus were disgusted. They were repulsed. Jesus says he is living bread that came down from Heaven, and that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood to have eternal life.

Thinking about those words today, they still sound disgusting. To Jesus' own people, these words were worse than disgusting. For Jews, the drinking of blood, or eating of flesh with blood still in it was prohibited. This was due to blood representing life, and life was in God's domain. So, the consumption of blood was expressly forbidden.

Undoubtedly, Jesus' listeners quarrelled amongst themselves—that's probably an understatement of their reaction, and indeed, only a few verses later, John tells us that many of Jesus' disciples stopped following him because his words were too hard to accept. For, in response to their quarrelling, he didn't soften his words at all, rather, he intensified them. This is indicated by a change of the verb used for 'to eat' in Greek. So, he didn't say, '*Oh come on, I mean this in a spiritual way; I just mean that you need to read the Scriptures and pray*'. No. He said, effectively, '*When I said 'eat my flesh', I meant gnaw on it, chew it up and swallow it! Really, drink my blood!*'



<https://emmanuelpublishing.org/article-categories/eucharist-living-evangelizing/saint-oscar-romeros-eucharistic-transformation-in-word-sacrament-adoration-and-gethsemane/>

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There has never been a time when the Church taught Catholics to think of those shocking words of Jesus in a merely spiritual way. Christ is truly present in the Scriptures proclaimed, in the priest, and in the people gathered, and we Catholics believe that he is really and truly present in the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

So, we have Jesus, whose whole mission is to reveal God to the world, telling the world, telling us, that we must eat his flesh and drink his blood.

There's nothing virtual about it. We are told to chew up and swallow the Jesus who is God, and in that unique way, to touch, see and feel the spontaneity and spark of the real life of God, coming in Church and Tradition, to rest in just little old me.

#### References

<sup>1</sup> D Senior CP *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (The Liturgical Press: Collegeville) 1991 pp 144-148; <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/homily/my-flesh-is-real-food-my-blood-is-real-drink/728/> ; <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/blog/one-mothers-day-there-will-be-bread/27412/>

<sup>2</sup>Sacrosanctum Concilium, 7.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Food for Faith** <https://foodforfaith.org.nz/>
- **Oceania Discernment on the Working Document for the Continental Stage** [https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/continental-stage/final\\_document/FCBCO.pdf](https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/continental-stage/final_document/FCBCO.pdf)
- In case you are looking for a good explanation of a theology of the **Pentecost**, Bridget Taumoepeau recommends this article <https://wherpeteris.com/the-mystical-theology-of-the-transforming-grace-of-pentecost/>
- Resource on the **Catholic Social Teaching** recommended by Bridget [social-spirituality.net](http://social-spirituality.net)
- **Oceania Catholic Bishops Response Synod of Bishops document** [https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/adw\\_community/oceania-catholic-bishops-publish-response-to-synod-of-bishops-document/](https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/adw_community/oceania-catholic-bishops-publish-response-to-synod-of-bishops-document/)
- **Pastoral Orientation on Intercultural Migrant Ministry** <https://migrants-refugees.va/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/POIMM-EN-Legal-stampa-1.pdf>. A Vatican released guidelines for parishes.



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



## BIRTHDAYS

June

7 Maya Bernardo

12 Cecily McNeill

16 Susan Apathy



<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-12/pope-francis-on-lesbos-stop-this-shipwreck-of-civilization.html>

The Bible recounts many stories of refugees and migrants, starting with Abraham through to the people of Israel wandering in the desert for 40 years, to their exile to Babylon to the story of the most famous refugee family – that of the Holy Family - and flight into Egypt when Jesus was a young child. Migrants usually move to another country to find work, study, or live in a more secure environment. Some are migrants by choice; for others, there is no choice due to political, religious and or economic pressures. Refugees are people who have to flee from

a country as ‘they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution’, and asylum seekers are those who have left a country and are seeking protection from human rights violations in another country but have not yet obtained refugee status <sup>1</sup>.

New Zealand is founded on migration; firstly, with those who journeyed from Hawaiki in their wakas, followed by European traders and whalers, the British settlers and finally, the waves of different peoples over the last two centuries.

I am proud to say that I am a migrant. I have been a migrant ever since I was about 20 as I have lived in Scotland, France, Chile, Portugal, and Australia. I have lived and worked for over 23 years in New Zealand. I am a PIWI – half a Pom and half a Kiwi (by nationality). But to get this far I had to go on a metaphorical journey with Immigration New Zealand (INZ), which I never wish to repeat. The road to residency is definitely not an easy one. For the many thousands of people who go through the process it is one of the most stressful, irritating, difficult, and expensive things that they will do. It is like trying to piece together a Wasgij (backwards, crazy jigsaw) with no idea where the pieces fit nor what the picture is.

As a migrant I have a home in two places – where I was born and here. Despite living here for so long I continue to have feelings of being torn between the two places of wanting to be in two places at the same time. The wrench of saying goodbye at the airport to those I love is terrible. For many years I did not understand the rollercoaster of emotions that I went through on my return to NZ. And even though I now understand it to be part of the reality of being a migrant, it never quite goes away. This experience will be different for everyone, but I suspect that for each, there is often a sense of displacement regardless of how ‘settled’ in NZ one feels. There will be emotional differences for those who came here as adults compared with their children who were born here.

For many migrants, not having family close by can be especially hard, particularly on momentous occasions such as births, marriages, deaths and the first day of school. Until recently, the only forms of communication were by letter or awfully expensive phone calls. Thankfully, the likes of WhatsApp have enabled these moments to be shared, but we still crave the physical presence of those we love to be here. The absence of family is also hard when it comes to the mundane things of picking up kids from school, helping when someone is sick, shopping or just the trivial things like going to the cinema or having a coffee at the spur of the moment. The taste of ‘home’ foods can also leave a hole in one’s heart.

Living in NZ, I have been fortunate not to have to overcome a language barrier. However, this was different when I lived in other countries. Speaking another language was not simply hard but frustrating when I did not notice the nuances. And at times, the cultural differences made me want to hit my head against a brick wall! As a migrant, I have had to go outside my comfort zone and talk to strangers. I can remember standing in the corner of a crowded hall full of students greeting each other at the beginning of the academic year, and I did not know a soul. I suddenly wanted to get in my car and leave, but something told me to stay. Over the next few weeks, I gathered the courage to ask the person beside me if I could borrow their notes. This was a segue way to making friends, and having to say goodbye to them after a year was gut-wrenching. But migrants are incredibly resilient. Banding together with people from 'home,' joining church and school communities and going to work help make life good.

When we welcome the stranger, we welcome Jesus. Pope Francis has made it his mission to speak out against the horrors refugees face. He washed the feet of migrants and refugees on Holy Thursday; he went to see for himself the plight of the refugees that arrived in Lesbos, Greece, where he spoke out, saying that migration is a 'humanitarian crisis that concerns everyone' and 'problems are not resolved and coexistence improved by building walls higher, but by joining forces to care for others.' On another occasion, he said 'Also, those who "do not have a job, a house, a just wage," or those who are discriminated against because of their race or faith, "are all forms of 'nudity' before which we as Christians are called to be attentive, vigilant and ready to act" <sup>2</sup>.

As leaders in various communities, we must walk alongside many people. We need to be aware of those on the cultural and language peripheries. We must extend the tent to encompass them and make them feel at home. If our communities are to be people's new homes, then we have to go out of our way to make it happen. What can we do in our parishes? Have simple things like a regular 'cuppa' where people can mix, catch up and be introduced to each other; organise multi-cultural masses; create fun social activities such as parish picnics; celebrate national days; regularly proclaim the Word and sing hymns in different languages. This will help migrants to have a sense of belonging. All these and more will nurture EVERYONE liturgically, spiritually, and socially and will make our communities vibrant places.

References:

<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, 2021 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/#:~:text=Who%20is%20a%20migrant%3F,not%20asylum%20seekers%20or%20refugees.>

<sup>2</sup> Brockhaus, H. 2016. To welcome the stranger is to welcome Christ, Pope Francis says. Catholic News Agency. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/34813/to-welcome-the-stranger-is-to-welcome-christ-pope-francis-says>

## UPDATES

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

Learning Day with Jeff Drane SM, 03 June, Home of Compassion



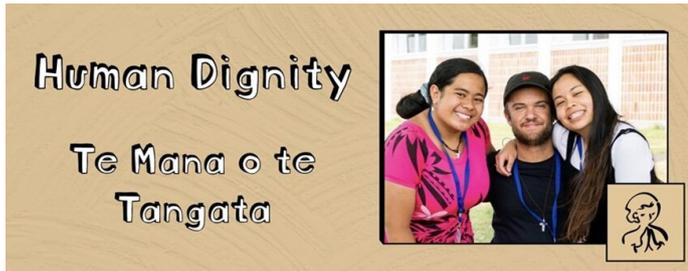
It was a day of deep and fruitful discussions, silent reckoning, and understanding the nature of conflict and the price of peace. Thank you, Jeff for a memorable day.

#### Directed Retreats at Pā Maria

**Fr. Neil Vaney SM** will be offering 1, 2 or 3 day directed retreats Mon-Thurs at Pā Maria retreat house: 78 Hobson St. Thorndon, Wellington, 6011.

Costs: 1 day (\$50); 2 days (\$125) and 3 days (\$175). Includes accommodation. Tea, coffee, milk provided, otherwise self-catered; supermarket 5 minutes walk away.

Enquires: [neilvaney45@gmail.com](mailto:neilvaney45@gmail.com)



<https://www.caritas.org.nz/catholic-social-teaching/human-dignity>

Last month we read the commentary by Pa Gerry on the ‘*Doctrine of Discovery*’ in the context of the Vatican’s repudiation of this philosophy. As a colonised country, this document and the subsequent statement by the Vatican, that it is not part of the church’s official teaching, has special significance.

Reflecting on the attitude of the Church from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the era of colonisation, with political and church leaders working hand in hand to subjugate non-European cultures and communities, brings to mind the development of Catholic Social teaching (CST) and particularly the principle of human dignity. This principle is based on the fact that each of us is made in God’s image, and as such cannot have our dignity taken away.

Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience are all sources of Catholic ethics and the Church’s teaching on social justice issues.

**Scripture** is not just a set of rules to which we should abide, but many parts of the Bible tell us about living justly. Psalm 82:3 tells us “Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.” And again, in Isaiah 1:17 we are instructed to “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression.” Loving our neighbour as ourselves, is a call to justice. Since the Second Vatican Council (VCI) scripture has been given more importance with the document *Dei Verbum*, and has been recognised as an important source for CST.

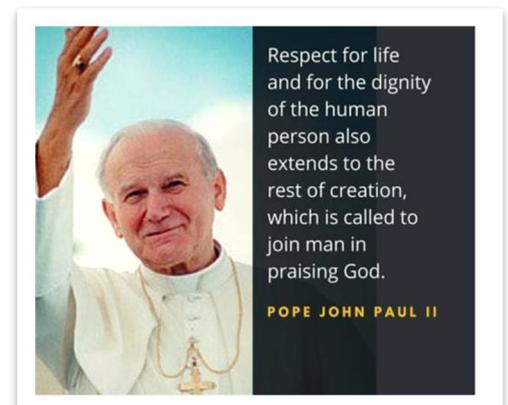
**Tradition** does not mean that we should just continue to do things as they were done in the past. (Pope Francis is particularly strong on this point.) Tradition is about drawing on the previous reflection and teaching of the Church. We see evidence of this in the fact that, since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Popes have written on CST as it applies to the world of their time. (cf. ‘*Synodality and Catholic Social Teaching*’ in LOL April.) Tradition also encompasses the witness and writings of people throughout the history of the church, as well as the experience of Christian communities dedicated to living out the Gospel values.

**Reason** implies that we can understand God’s will for us, using our reason to examine the world. This should include analysis of the situation, and leads us to be able to enter into ethical conversations with others. The idea of See; Judge; Act flows from our ability to use reason to examine situations where justice is required.

**Experience** is a powerful tool. God communicates with us through people, places and events in history. We often comment, about ourselves, that we have learnt from experience. The examination of history, particularly situations of lack of respect for humanity, as well as examples of justice, compassion and healing are powerful tools in helping us promote the dignity of all people.

As you ponder on the importance of dignity, it may be helpful to recall what passages of **scripture** have touched you, as illustrating the call to respect all people; what you have learned from the history and **tradition** of the church; the way you have applied **reason** to assessing a situation where justice must be applied; and what knowledge you have of historical examples of both injustice, leading to a denial of the dignity of people, as well as programmes or communities that uplift people and rejoice in the dignity that is the right of all.

**Reference:** social-spirituality.net



<https://ignatiansolidarity.net/blog/tag/pope-john-paul-ii/>

## Oceania Discernment on the Working Document for the Continental Stage:

### A SYNTHESIS

The Federation of Catholic Bishops Conference of Oceania (FBCO) comprises four episcopal conferences—the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (CBCPNGSI); the Conferentia Episcopalis Pacifici (CEPAC); the New Zealand Bishops Conference (NZCBC); the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC); and representatives of the Eastern Catholic Church (ECC) (#4). The countries in Oceania are: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna (#5).

There are generally positive responses to the synodal process (#33). The main apprehension is the fear that the synodal work will not make any real difference in the end (#36).

This synthesis will be limited to the *Fruits of Discernment and Priorities*. There are 11 Common Themes, Issues and Insights identified:

**Tent Metaphor:** In the larger countries of Oceania, the image of the tent (Isaiah 54:2) was received with enthusiasm as it symbolises those who are baptised and involved in the Church. However, care is needed to ensure that the image of the tent does not exclude people for whom it has little resonance or for whom it has an unwelcome image because of their life experiences. Among them are Pacific people who relate more to the imagery of the boat, and for refugees, a tent symbolises impermanence and lack of safety. It also needs to consider those who feel excluded by the Church—the LGBTQ+ community. The Church is also a place of social division between—the rich and the poor and ethnic communities (#39,#40,#41,#42,#43, #45).

**Baptism and Sacraments:** The responses affirmed Baptism as the source of shared identity and the centrality of the Eucharist to the experience of community and what it means to be a Church. There are obstacles to people's realisation of the call for Baptism, such as the lack of participation of the laity, especially women. Similarly, some people are marginalised in fully participating in the Eucharist, such as same-sex, divorced and remarried couples and prisoners. Polygamous marriages are a social reality in some Oceania countries (#47, #49, #55, #56,# 57).

**Inclusion:** Responses refer to the Church being more inclusive in allowing people to receive the Eucharist, especially people with disabilities, the poor and marginalised and isolated, non-practising Catholics, unbaptised people, people with diverse experiences of sexuality and gender, and indigenous people. Inclusion also means having an environment of hospitality and welcoming Catholics from different liturgical rites (e.g. Syro-Malabar, Maronite, Armenian, etc.) (#59, #60,#61, #64).

**Church Teaching:** Participants raised various concerns about the rules and regulations of the Church, which were at odds with the Gospel message. This refers to the concept of priesthood and the role of the laity, women's ordination and involvement in the leadership of the Church. It also included teachings on sexuality, contraception, divorce, and intercommunion with other Christian denominations, which can cause people to walk away from the Church and keep them from returning (#66).



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**Authority and Decision-Making:** There is a need for structural change in Church leadership, particularly in governance and decision-making at the parish, diocesan, national and global levels, where clericalism abounds. The laity is equally responsible for enabling clericalism. There was a perception that canon law creates a power imbalance between bishops, clergy and laypeople. It also affirmed the ability of the laity to take ownership of the pastoral ministry and governance of their local Church. The responses also include gratefulness for the pastoral care of the clergy and an awareness of the challenges they face. (#70, #71, #72, #77).

**The Challenges of Mission:** There is a need for a shared understanding of what mission means. Mission is the responsibility of all the baptised. The mission activity of the Church is hindered by 'discrimination based on matrimonial/relationship status, financial status, customs/traditions (gender and age status) and disability status. There is also a lack of formation in understanding the call to evangelise. The diversity of liturgical rites and cultures in Oceania was seen as an essential contribution to the mission of the Church. The richness of the synodal experience should ultimately lead to the experience of Jesus within the Church and to sharing the good news with others (#83, #85, #86, #87).

**Ecological Crisis:** Climate change is the cause of many natural disasters in the Pacific, including typhoons, heat waves, drought, and flooding. The ecological crisis must be understood as a mission field in which the whole Church strives to preserve our planet and its life and provide economic justice for its people (#89, #92).

**Inculturation and Localisation:** It is important to emphasise the importance of cultural diversity to the life of the Church: "We must start by being fully ourselves. Only in our distinctiveness can we make any kind of contribution to the larger society. Only by being what we are can we retain a reason for existence at all" (#98).

**Women:** The theme of women's roles resonated strongly across Oceania, though women's experience varies across the region. There is a strong concern about women's lack of participation in Church leadership and governance structures; a minority concern is a barrier for women to the permanent diaconate and ordained ministry. Some responses were concerned about women being treated as "cheap labour". There was a call for more emphasis on "using the gifts and experience of women in discerning and providing advice, guidance and challenge in decision making beyond the managerial and parish roles many women occupy, as well a need for greater listening, particularly to the realities and needs of the poor, marginalised and neglected women (#99, #101, #102).

**Young People:** The absence of young people participating in the Church features in nearly all the Oceania responses, which reveal great anguish and profound worry about the future. Some young people feel they are inside the tent but invisible and ignored. Their local parish can appear to be "owned" by older people, with power being exercised in ways that alienate young people. Other young people feel being pulled away from traditional youth formation programmes by secular activities, social media, and modern technology. Young people see the urgency of the ecology crisis but do not see its urgency being recognised by the Church. The Church's teaching on LGBTQ+ issues and other aspects of sexuality is a significant barrier for many young people maintaining their connection with the Church. Some young people expressed concern that DCS (this document) is largely inaccessible regarding language and practical application (#103, #104, #105, #106, #109).

**Formation:** There are calls for the formation of various kinds throughout the region. The formation of seminarians and priests received particular attention as needing to be holistic. Formation for marriage for family life and Catholic educators were also mentioned. Whether "formation" meant the same thing across the documents/region is unclear. A synodal Church will need participants formed in listening and dialogue. The formation on servant leadership for Church leaders was also mentioned (#112, #113, #114).

The document includes sections on Gaps and Omissions in the DCS, Priorities and Call to Action and the Pastoral Reflection by the Bishops of Oceania. Read the entire document from [https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/continental-stage/final\\_document/FCBCO.pdf](https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/continental-stage/final_document/FCBCO.pdf)

Summary written by: Maya Bernardo