



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

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

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

Welcome to the July issue of LOL!

**Telesia Alaimoana** leads the Sunday Gospel reflection on God’s ways of loving through Jesus. Her reflection is centered around the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She underpins that our faith as Christians made us fortunate to understand the mysterious heart of God through Jesus. Our own search to understand God’s love, is in itself God’s love.

The focus of this month’s issue is on the elderly and the spirituality of ageing. This is in support for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on 23 July. I think it is fitting topic for us in active ministries in parishes. More than half of those who fill the pews and keep our churches going are in the ages 65+. Often is said about the value of young people in our Church but we shouldn’t forget the elderly who is keeping the church-home fire burning while most of the young is busy sorting their careers, families, etc. We have **Neil Vaney** who shared on the spirituality of ageing in his article. This followed up with an excerpt of **Mary Kay’s** eulogy for **Maria Pijfers** who offers inspiration for the struggles of being debilitated by sickness such as dementia. Mary’s article also provides an example of the spirituality which Neil writes about.

**Bridget Taumoepeau** writes about ecumenism and what we can learn about other Christian churches.

How can we fathom the breadth and depth of the heart of Jesus? As Telesia notes in her reflection, it is not an intellectual exercise. It is a pursuit that pursues us for the rest of our lives, as we learned from Neil, Maria and Mary. One way of understanding that heart is to live in community with others as Bridget shares. Our contributors unwittingly lead us to the wisdom, that what is most important is to realise that we are the ‘heart of the heart’ of Jesus’ sacred heart.

Maya Bernardo  
Formator & Manager, Te Hao Nui- Launch Out Programme

### The Heart of Jesus 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time

By Telesia Alaimoana  
Launch Out Candidate



Copied from <https://www.ncregister.com/news/usccb-sacred-heart-of-jesus-is-open-for-you-despite-bitter-affliction-of-coronavirus>

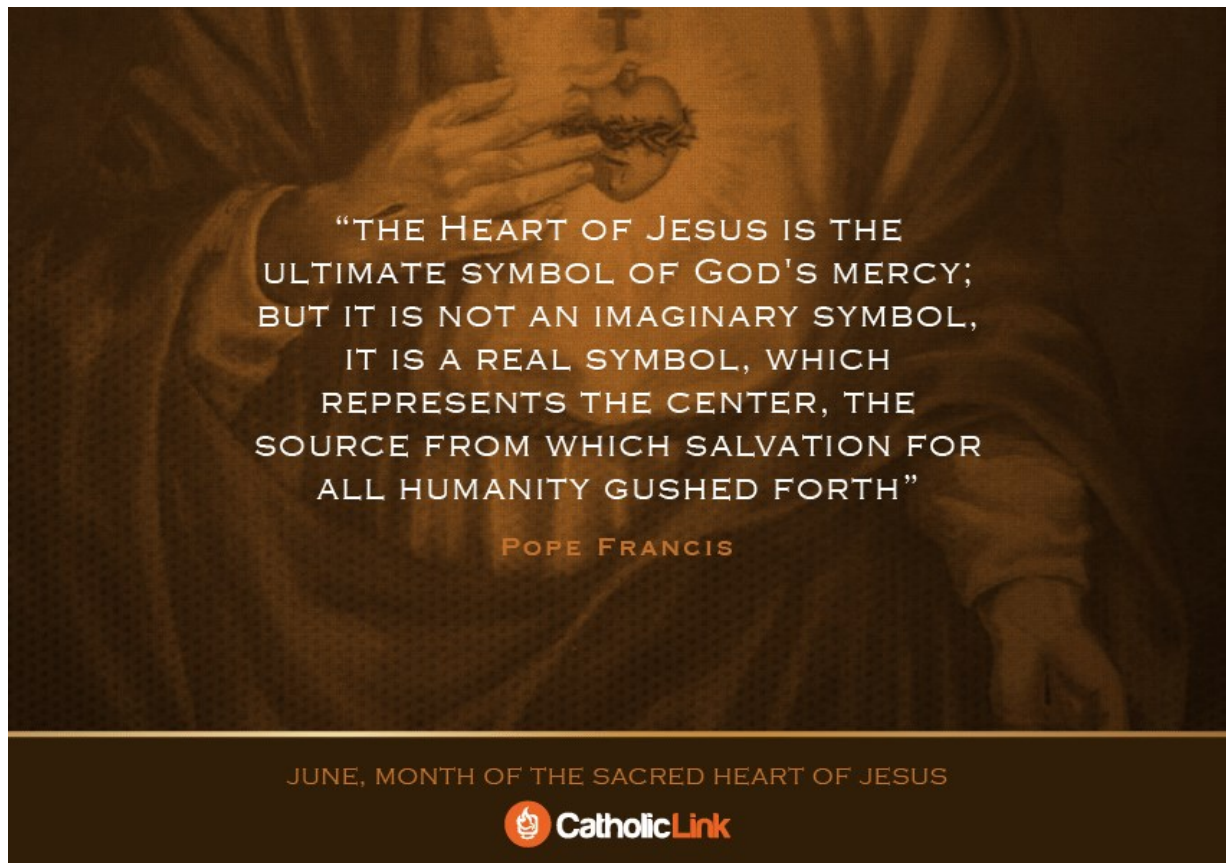
This Gospel brings to mind the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We’ll take this chance to glimpse into the heart of Jesus through this Sunday Gospel. Jesus shows us what God is like “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Jesus knows the true nature of the Father and fully reveals Him. Thus, only Jesus can reveal God’s mind, heart, attitudes, and attributes.

The Gospel opens with Jesus’ thankfulness for the Father and the Father’s thankfulness for the Son. In this expression of gratefulness, we are taken into the intimate chambers of God’s heart. Jesus’ death on the cross was for our salvation, but it was also an expression of his total and free giving of love for the Father. Jesus then emphasised his preference to reveal the truths of God to the “little ones”. This childlike state consists of nothing less than a pure heart that allows us to recognise the face of God in Jesus. It is keeping our hearts as simple as children, without the presumptions of those who think they do not need God or know God completely. Jesus emphasised the need for humility and dependence to receive His message. Jesus says that children dependent upon someone else for their needs illustrate God’s delight in those who will humbly depend upon Him. This delight is in communicating God’s grace to the humble in heart with childlike, simple faith in Him.

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Jesus concluded the Gospel with an invitation to the weary and burdened. Jesus invites all those who are tired to find rest in him. Jesus sends the invitation of divine wisdom to all those who seek it, to those who are oppressed, to find rest in him. He is gentle and humble, capable of relieving and consoling those who suffer and feel tired and depressed. This invitation reveals a very important characteristic of God – tenderness and acceptance—which consoles, gives life to people and leads them to feel well. What a beautiful invitation from Jesus!

Understanding the heart of Jesus is not an intellectual exercise. To know the heart of Jesus is to trust that we are cared for and looked after despite our failings. As Pope Francis nicely says, “it is more difficult to let God love us than to love Him! The best way to love Him in return is to open our hearts and let him love us”.



Copied from <https://catholic-link.org/images/gallery-quotes-on-the-sacred-heart-of-jesus/>



## BIRTHDAYS

July

8 Christine

14 Chris Duthie-Jung

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Food for Faith** <https://foodforfaith.org.nz/>
- **Resources on Spirituality of Aging**
  - <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/five-gifts-of-ignatian-spirituality-for-the-aging/>
  - <https://uscatholic.org/articles/201408/embracing-lifes-second-act-getting-older-with-grace/>
  - Joan Chittister's The Gift of Years [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DfWSzfQaKU&ab\\_channel=30GoodMinutes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DfWSzfQaKU&ab_channel=30GoodMinutes)
- **Indigenous Women doing the work of deacons** recommended by Bridget <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2023/06/06/women-deacons-indigenous-pope-francis-meeting-245437>
- **Bishop Barron's "The Mass"** consists of 6 episodes of around 25 minutes each that explain the Mass. Ideal for parish formation. Highly recommended by Catherine Gibbs <https://videos.wordonfire.org/themassepisode1>
- **Video recording of Archbishop Paul Martin's installation** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XYKI3R8saw&ab\\_channel=CatholicArchdioceseofWellington](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XYKI3R8saw&ab_channel=CatholicArchdioceseofWellington)
- **Global Synod Discernment Working Document- Instrumentalis Laboris** [https://www.catholic.org.nz/assets/ENG\\_INSTRUMENTUM-LABORIS.pdf](https://www.catholic.org.nz/assets/ENG_INSTRUMENTUM-LABORIS.pdf) . Please take time to read. We'll pick this up on the next issue.
- Articles on **Ignatian Spirituality** recommended by Bridget Taumoepeau– [31 Days with St Ignatius](#)



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

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### Making Jesus known in the midst of life- Spirituality of dying and ageing

By Mary Jackson Kay, rc  
Pastoral Mentor



Maria Pijfers is a Cenacle sister who, 18 years ago developed a form of dementia that first affected her physical mobility. This meant Maria required full-time care. Thus began Maria's long journey of dependency on others for all her needs. She recently passed away and her unassuming way of evangelising, even when most of her faculties were taken away is worth sharing. Maria has something to share about the spirituality of ageing. Below is an excerpt of the eulogy I gave at her funeral last 27 May 2023.

A few years ago, I asked Maria: "How can you find the courage to be so full of gratitude even though you are unable to walk or do anything for yourself?" She replied, gesturing with her hand, she pointed to her heart: "It's God deep inside me that makes it possible".

*Thank you, Maria, for inspiring us!*

When we were packing up her room at Queen's Ave while looking for her clothes, we found in her wardrobe and drawers, where you'd expect her clothes to be; instead, we found books.... obviously well-read books in Dutch and English on theology, spirituality, and scripture.

Ngairé Roil reminded me that when we were in the Novitiate with Maria at Lower Hutt, we had what we called 'morning employments' which we did in silence. One morning Maria threw down her mop, sat on the stairs and said something like "It's not right we are spending time doing housework instead of learning!"

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Our Novice Mistress Jean found us sometime later, all on strike breaking the silence! We don't remember what trouble we were in, but it reminded us of how faithful Maria has been to learning and updating herself.

***Thank you, Maria for always encouraging us to keep learning!***

When Maria lived in the Brisbane Cenacle, she would catch the ferry to this tiny island called Coochiemudlo in Morton Bay and sit on the beach and unwind. For her, it was a place to be in the beauty of creation and to relax. Then at the end of the day, she would return to the Cenacle Retreat House renewed again.

***Thank you, Maria for teaching us how to take time out!***

Anytime I asked Maria, "Is there anything you need?", despite being dependent on others for all her needs, she would reply: "I have everything I need thank you very much!" During the first Covid 19 lockdown, we were meeting on Zoom with our Cenacle Companions. Sheryl James, a Mercy Sister Chaplain, generously came online with Maria. Maria looked intently at all of us, and during the session, eventually, I asked Maria whether she wanted to say anything to us. She was silent for quite a while, and then she said, "Keep talking to one another".

***Thank you, Maria, for reminding us to keep talking to each other.***

In the last six months, Maria has probably spoken less than 30 words. Yet we have been humbled to experience the love that the staff at Sevenoaks Hospital have shown Maria. Somehow, she has been able to touch people with her serenity, even amid her struggles.

***Thank you, Maria, for showing us ways to make Jesus known and loved in the midst of life.***

Maria had a gift for people who were struggling. One woman described it as "Maria always kept an eye on me". One time Maria became quite agitated when I asked her if she have any clothes or shoes to respond to an appeal following a Cyclone in Fiji. I asked what the matter was and was saying that after the Second World War, some Western countries had sent clothes to Holland. She recalls that they sent their cast-off ballgowns...clothes that were of no use to them especially in the cold winters. Maria's reaction made me realise that we need to listen deeply to people about what they really need and not dump unwanted things on them!

***Thank you, Maria, for your anger to call us to really listen.***

Mark Chamberlain, one of our Cenacle Companions, when he was a Deacon at Lower Hutt preparing for Ordination, remembers Maria giving a homily at the Lower Hutt Cenacle on "the vine and the branches" to quote Mark: "Maria held up a vine branch and reminded us of how we are grafted into Jesus. Maria was the first woman preacher I experienced. Her love for Jesus glowed."

We have had many messages, especially from Religious and Priests still full of gratitude for their retreats with Maria. Gerard Whiteford SM wrote, "Her contribution to the ministry of spiritual direction within Aotearoa/NZ (and Australia) is inestimable."

Alan Roberts, a Diocesan priest from our retreat team, said: "Maria always greeted me with a beautiful smile and positive interest and energy. We need to be in the company of people like Maria, whose company always does you good!"



*This was taken during her birthday celebration on Jan 8 of this year. When we began to sing our Cenacle song "My heart embraces the world", she opened her hands and sat with the most contemplative gaze.*

Maria, you truly believed and lived knowing you had found Jesus as your treasure. Our Community would now like to celebrate you our brave loving Sister by singing "You found a treasure in Jesus."



<https://www.wallpaperflare.com/brown-maple-leaf-fading-brown-leaf-photo-leaves-fall-depth-of-field-wallpaper-tco>

### The Paradoxes of Ageing

If you watch a little television you might have noticed a gentle but remorseless battle going on. It is a fight to the death over the one expanding and high-demand service in our community : rest homes and retirement villages. Bupa, Summerset, and Ryman portray an endless good life for their clients: companionship, stimulating entertainment and exercise, and exquisite personal care. Some high-end facilities resemble gated communities for the wealthy select few.

Move on a year or two and you enter the world of geriatric care. What a contrast – so lovingly and realistically portrayed in the 2022 English film *Allelujah*. Set in a small Yorkshire geriatric hospital, St Beth's, it is battling against imminent closure by the NHS. The local community decides to fight the government by inviting a film crew to put together a documentary to show the high-quality care of its patients.

Without pretence we are immersed in a world beset by incontinence, loneliness, cranky patients still holding onto fragments of past lives, and relentless routine. At moments I could not help but recall Shakespeare's devastating picture of old age in the seventh and final verses of the seven ages of man in *As You Like It*,

... Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
In second childishness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Yet, paradoxically, the film is marked by compassion and the patient, loving and meticulous care of the medical staff. If you get a chance to see this classic, leap at it.

### The Struggles and Graces of Ageing

Now at 78, I am stunned at how rapidly the last twenty years, the most active and satisfying of my life, have melted away. This is a good time, as I move into semi-retirement, to reflect on the lessons that I recall from my own experience, and from sharing the joys and struggles of my older spiritual directees. My main point will be to depict how critical it is for all of us to lay the foundations in our 60's and 70's for the final decades of our lives.

### Various Battles

In 1973 Ernest Becker published his classic work, *The Denial of Death*. It earned him a Pulitzer prize. The book explores the fears and strategies that the majority of people take on in facing up to the inevitability of their own demise. The strength of his observations is confirmed by the relentless battle against signs of ageing promoted by drug and cosmetic firms: anti-wrinkle creams, weight-control diets and drugs, exercise machines and cosmetic surgery; any one of these might be appropriate at some stage but each of them can also act as a blinker averting gaze from the inevitability of bodies and minds that wear out and run down.

Denial of the reality of ageing is sometimes marked by a refusal to slow down or give up demanding tasks. Slowing down or saying no to requests are seen as a capitulation to time, and acknowledgment of weakness.

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Another strategy for avoiding living in the present is constant re-runs of the past: dwelling on past successes or rebuffs, turning conversations to important acquaintances or positions that gave our life significance or boosted our sense of personal identity or importance.

All of us have suffered bad choices or moments of failure in our past. For some people, constant reliving and agonising over such moments never stops. For others, there is a refusal to learn from such failures, and the same blindness to reality and clinging to the past are embraced over and over.



<https://unsplash.com/s/photos/fruit-tree>

### **Gifts That Age Brings**

On the other hand, later years can be fertile fields for seeds planted in earlier days to bloom and flourish. This can be especially true of prayer. In times of unending demand from work and family, it may seem impossible to fit in prayer and little fruit seems to come forth. Yet modest strategies can grow deep roots – practices such as quick pleas for love and kindness and petitions for hope as we move from room to room or from task to task; a background of repetitive prayer or a reflective spiritual podcast as we drive to work; reading an extract from one of the gospels or a letter of Paul with insights from a good biblical commentary during a lunch break; or best of all, a 5-10 minute examination of consciousness before going to bed, asking where was the gift of God’s love and presence hidden in my day? Did I acknowledge and respond to it? As we age, time expands and slows down. Such seeds of prayer sink deeper ,and deeper roots can burst forth in rich and unexpected fruit.

So much of our listening to colleagues and children is taken up with consideration of how I should respond, or to partly switching off from what I believe will be well beaten paths and complaints. Age expands the space and capacity to listen. We realise how rich and interesting are the lives and experiences of friends and colleagues. Surveys show how easy it is to let friends drift away during the busy middle years. Suddenly children and wider whanau have moved to Australia or further afield and are busy about their own lives. Maintaining links and friendships in midlife can yield a rich harvest of leisurely visits and even more leisurely meals shared in our later days.

Less cluttered days are also times ripe for reflection on our lives. Ruminating on our past and God’s presence in both good and bad moments open up a rich vein of gratitude allowing us to detect gems once hidden and passed over. Just as marriage counsellors stress how couples need to store up and recall their moments of joy together (‘money in the bank’), so too do we need to recognise and give thanks for the unexpected graces that have dotted our lives (‘treasure hidden in the field’).

Finally, ageing is a time of forgiveness and letting go. The first task is to forgive ourselves, as God has forgiven us, for our past mistakes and failures. It is a time to ask God to pour healing balm on our wounds from the past, so that we become men and women of peace and gratitude, embracing the past and entrusting ourselves to whatever future God has in store for us.

*“As we age, time expands and slows down. Such seeds of prayer sink deeper, and deeper roots can burst forth in rich and unexpected fruit.”*

It is so easy to get fixated on searching for the perfect retirement village or on constant vigilance for the least sign of declining health (or the spectre of dementia!). Far deeper peace and serenity come from opening up to growing companionship with God.

# UPDATES

## Installation of Archbishop Paul Martin 17 June 2023, St Theresa's Church, Pro-Cathedral



*From the left: Margaret, Ria de Leon (Chair, Filipino Chaplaincy/ former LO), Bernadette, AB Paul Martin, Bonita, Maya and Jude. Attended but not in photo: Susan Apathy (sang in choir), Bridget and Telesia.*

### What We Can Learn From Each Other...

By Bridget Taumoepeau  
Pastoral Mentor

Over the last year or so, we have been immersed in the idea of synodality and what it really means. Listening to each other and spiritual conversations have become familiar themes. We are aware that something very special is happening in the church and that we can all be part of it. It is often stated that VCII was the biggest meeting in the world, and that the gatherings on synodality were the biggest consultation process ever seen. There is a sense of evolution from the discussions and documents of VCII to the preparation for the Synod on Synodality. For me, as described below, the significant themes that emerged in VCII, especially the idea of the importance of all the baptised - the people of God; and the emphasis on ecumenism, are particularly relevant.

Recently I attended a family funeral in Auckland. The deceased wife (Malia\*) was Catholic and her widowed husband Methodist, both deeply involved in their respective churches. Two services were held – a Vigil and a Requiem Mass. The attendees at the services were from both Catholic and Methodist churches and maybe other denominations as well.



The content of the Vigil, in particular, was shared between the two traditions. The Rosary was recited, not only because of tradition, but because it was a much-loved prayer of Malia. Reference was made to her devotion to Mary and her daily recitation of the Rosary. After the Rosary, her sister-in-law, a prominent Methodist minister, preached on Proverbs 31: 10-31, which had been read by Malia's relatives. This is a beautiful passage about the qualities of a good woman – verses 10-31 are headed 'Ode to a Capable Wife'.

\*A pseudonym.

<https://hello6528.wordpress.com/2020/11/29/ecumenism/>

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The preacher referred to Malia's qualities and compared them to the various verses of the reading. The passage does not just refer to domestic excellence, although that is certainly a theme, but also to doing good; leadership; financial acumen; care for the poor; creating items of beauty; wisdom; kindness; hard work; and, above all, love of the Lord which brings great reward.

I personally was not familiar with this Scripture passage, but it is now forever engraved on my heart, and since returning home I have re-read it and pondered over its importance. Clearly it is a prescription for women to aspire to, but it is also a reminder to men of the gift of a woman's skills and devotion in their lives.

What struck me overall about the service, however, was the melding of two Christian traditions. We had the opportunity to listen to each other; to acknowledge that the emphases for each was different; to learn from each other. The Catholics contributed the beautiful ancient tradition of meditation on the major events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, with a prayer that has its origins in Scripture; the Methodists showed us the beauty and depth of a scripture passage, in this case from the Old Testament, and its relevance to our everyday lives.

So here was an example of how ecumenism has progressed since VCII and how our current work on synodality has the potential to bring us all closer – not only within our Catholic tradition, but within the wider family of churches. What could be better?

Ecumenical relations it is important not only to know each other better, but also to recognize what the Spirit has sown in the other as a gift for us.

Pope Francis

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