

Te Hao Nui- LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL) November/ December 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 combined November and December issue of LOL.

November is usually crunch time for myself and the candidates, so we rather combine November and December.

This issue is mostly to wrap up the year. We have Bridget sharing our closing message which centres around kindness. We then share the highlights of the Pastoral Presentation Day last 25 November, and a flashback on the significant activities Te Hao Nui had this 2023.

We thank everyone who contributed to the Launch Out Letters this year and for those who follow our publication. Thank you for your support. Our issue for 2024 begins on March.

Have a blessed Christmas and a New Year full of hope.

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

The strength of kindness

By Bridget Taumoepeau
Pastoral Mentor



Recently a friend sent me a link to a speech that was given at an American College. The speaker reminds us that our first reaction to coming across someone who is different from us, is that of fear or judgement. He relates this to evolution, where previously we would survive by being suspicious of things with which we were not familiar.

However, time has moved on and we are taught (hopefully) to be kind and compassionate. In order to do so, we must shut down our animal instinct and think differently. We have to evolve into kindness and compassion, which will, in turn, lead to imagination and creativity. He points out that this seems at odds with what is happening in the world, where cruelty has been employed to gain power and where empathy and kindness have been considered weak. The vulnerable are used or exploited for the powerful to pursue their ambitions.

Pope Francis has talked of the importance of meekness. In homilies, especially during the Covid epidemic, he preached on the famous texts, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Mt 5:5); “the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor 10:1); and on the meekness of the Good Shepherd, especially during his passion and death. (1 Peter 2:20-25.) Here the Pope refers to being meek as meaning sweet, docile, gentle, devoid of violence. What beautiful qualities, yet often not valued in society.

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Instead, we hear insults, criticism, derogatory remarks, negativity, all of which are forms of cruelty. There is an irony in this, in that we are hurt when we are the subjects of such abuse, yet we still continue to inflict these opinions on others. The internet has facilitated such attitudes, as it is very easy, and cowardly one could say, to write on social media in a cruel way, and we have seen the damage that this has done, especially to vulnerable young people.

Even worse is the proliferation of war, the epitome of cruelty, in several countries in the world. As the Pope, and Popes before him have said, nothing good comes of war. Only destruction, death, further hatred, and division.

The promotion of meekness would seem to be a rather neglected teaching. For some reason we still consider it a form of weakness, yet some of the people I have most admired in our parish and my local community could be described as meek. The sort of people we describe as 'not having a mean bone in their body.'

People often talk of kindness as something that has moved them, especially at times of trouble or sadness. There are accounts of dramatic changes in people's lives when they have been shown kindness.

So maybe in this troubled world, where we have seen hatred and division proliferate, we should turn our minds to the Gospel, to the Beatitudes, to the idea of Jesus as a kind and gentle Shepherd. This could be our resolution for 2024.

UPDATES



Matthew White, Launch Out Graduate and former Lay Pastoral Leader of Sacred Heart Parish, Petone was ordained deacon on 12 November, at the St. Theresa's Pro-Cathedral. In the picture, he is with other Launch Out Graduates, from the left: Lucienne Hensel, Debbie Matheson, Joe Green, Mary Ann Greaney and Margaret Luping.

Deacon Matthew will be assigned to the Wairarapa to assist new Parish Priest, Fr. Denis Nacorda.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Food for Faith** <https://foodforfaith.org.nz/>
- Pope Francis' idea of the synod started in his ministry in Latin America. Read this interview of **Cardinal Baretto on what the Church can learn from the Amazon and Latin American synods**. Recommended by Bridget <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2023/11/18/cardinal-baretto-peru-synod-amazon-246543>
- The attack of Hamas on Israel came unexpectedly. The Palestines in Gaza are caught in the crossfire. See article by **Dr Christopher Longhurst** on [Do's and Don'ts on Interreligious Dialogue](#)
- Read **Vicky Raw's** reflection in the Passionist' Daily Reflection for 29 November <https://www.passionists.com/daily-reflection-november-29-2023/>
- In case you missed it, here's the link to Timothy Radcliff's retreat reflections during the Synod <https://www.synod.va/en/highlights/retreat-for-the-participants-of-the-synodal-assembly.html> (click on Meditations 1 & 2 of each of the 3 days). There are also videos available in YouTube.



BIRTHDAYS

November

10 Jude McKee
15 Lucienne Hensel
23 Barbara Rowley



Highlights of the 2023 Pastoral Presentations



Stops and Starts, Theo versus Ego

Margaret Bearsley of Holy Trinity Parish shares her attempt initially to make her parish a social media sensation by producing videos about parish life. When that hit a wall, she regrouped and had a good talk with Fr Bill Warwick on the real needs of the parish that she could work on as a pastoral project. She was led to find ways to connect the parish schools with the parish. This led to conversations with Colin McLeod of the National Centre for Religious Studies, Chris Duthie-Jung of Church Mission, and Kelly Ross, ADW Vicar for Education, among others. She finally identified working on the Building Families of Faith (BFF) formation programme developed by Church Mission next year. The BFF aims to accompany parents of new students to encourage them to encounter Christ in their lives, and ultimately to connect with their local parish, and, especially to give them the skills to accompany their children in their faith journey. This project will draw on Margaret's experience in leading the OCIA for many years, as well as her knowledge of theology. Her several attempts to attend a session of BFF with the ADW facilitator were cancelled due to Covid. Thus, she'll be carrying on this project for 2024.



Learning to Walk Together as a Parish



Bernadette Patelesio of Te Wairua Tapu parish, coordinated the Sacramental Programme. Te Wairua Tapu parish has 4 churches: St Patrick's Wainuiomata, Eastbourne, Waiwhetu and Petone. It has 3 schools namely: St Claudine Thevenet, Wainuiomata; Our Lady of the Rosary, Waiwhetu; and Sacred Heart School, Petone. Previously, each school would run its own sacramental programme. This year Bernadette attempted to get all the schools to work together with the parish as a team. The end result was that two of the three schools still ran the program in their school, with Bernadette as coordinator for dates and resources. The remaining children were a mixed group from one school and children not attending a catholic school. Bernadette formed a team to prepare 24 children for their reconciliation, confirmation and first communion. The parents gave favourable feedback on the following: The Sacramental Programme (SP) was well managed and organised; the SP helped them to understand and appreciate the Catholic faith better; the SP prepared them well to teach and support their child in learning about the sacraments.; and their cultural values, practices and traditions were respected and welcomed.



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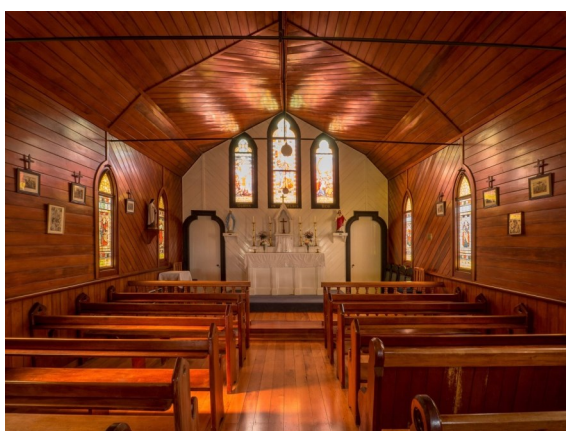
Starting a Renewal and Discipleship Programme

Vicky Raw of Te Whetu O te Moana (Star of the Sea), Marlborough ran a parish renewal program using the resources and programme produced by Sycamore (<https://www.sycamore.fm/>). This pastoral project was drawn from the need for the parish to rebuild as a community after Covid, grow in faith together, prepare for Lent and to socialise. Sycamore is an informal course about the Christian faith from a Catholic perspective using our traditions, teachings, scholars, and saints to reflect on topics such as the existence of God, the Holy Spirit and the Church, prayer, the sacraments, Mary and the Saints, Catholic Social Teaching, the community of the Church. It is engaging, thought provoking and contemporary, based on filming done recently in 2019. It has a very good website. Videos can be downloaded. A 'taster session' was run in February to gauge interest and thereafter during the six weeks of Lent. The feedback from the participants showed that the programme gave them a new understanding of the Christian and Catholic faith, it helped them in their personal and spiritual formation and some said it they enjoyed meeting other parishioners and were open to further ministry.



God Is In Charge!

Jude McKee from St. Theresa's, Plimmerton, shared with us that 2023 didn't turn out how she expected it to. Initially wanting to address the needs of the parish post-Covid, realising that participation is not the same as it was pre-Covid. Her question was "how do we, as a parish, bring the 'life' back?" Before she even began, she tested positive for Covid and the effect on her was severe fatigue ; it took most of the year to recover. Despite this, she was able to continue her own regular parish ministries, and continued running children's



liturgies for the local Catholic primary school, assisted in the sacramental preparation programme, prepared special liturgies for youth, prepared young Proclaimers of the Word, and visited the hospital-bound in Kenepuru with Holy Eucharist. On top of all this is her full-time role in overseeing the Hurricanes and Wellington Rugby offices. Most importantly, visiting her mum every day in her rest-home. However, doing a real pastoral project was not feasible. Reflecting on her year, Jude saw that God's love and faithfulness carried her through – achieving nothing more and certainly nothing less. God is, indeed, in charge!

Bonita Tasele of the Holy Family Parish unfortunately was not able to join us during the Pastoral Presentation. Her pastoral mentor Cecily McNeill gave a brief description of the work she has done in in the parish. Bonita ran a prayer module of *Evangelii Gaudium* with a multicultural group and the youth in her parish.

Telesia Alaimoana officially graduates from Launch Out and presented her valedictory. Telesia had 8 years of formation, finished her studies plus started her Bachelor's in Divinity from Te Kupenga. Those 8 years were filled with many struggles working in the parish, but God sustained her and now she leaves behind an adult formation programme for the lay ministers of Our Lady of Hope Parish, which she worked on for 2 years as her pastoral project. She will continue with her ministry in her parish and with the Samoan Community and is open to the next step God has in store for her. She wrote a piece about her formation journey on our [March issue](#).



**OUR LADY OF HOPE PARISH
TAWA - TITAHI BAY**



Catherine Gibbs, a beloved mentor for eight years is leaving. We gifted Catherine with a koru necklace that most of us blessed. It represents her mahi in the Church. Catherine is known for either driving or pioneering ministries within the archdiocese of Wellington and the country as well. Even in retirement she set her sights this time to being a good ancestor by responding to the call of “Laudatu Deum” which is an echo-call from Laudato Si.

We thank **Archbishop Paul Martin** for his presence and insightful observations about the presentations. I and the candidates are deeply moved by his attention and the guidance he shared.

We thank the presence of all pastoral mentors: **Susan Apathy, Catherine Gibbs, Bridge Taumoepeau, Mary Jackson Kay and Cecily McNeill**; and **Spiritual Directors: Clare O’ Connor, Regina Daly and Neil Vaney**.

We thank our guests from Church Mission: **Chris Duthie Jung and Christine Walkerdine**. We also had **Debbie Matheson**, Pastoral Leader of the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and **Mary Ann Greaney**, a Graduate and strong supporter of Launch Out.

We also have our new candidate, **Jerry Sparks** and **Rutger Keijser** who is considering applying and came to observe. Finally, **Mary Peters**, rc, a visiting Cenacle sister from America. We also have friends and whānau of the Candidates: **Juliana**, daughter of Bernadette, **Simati**, husband of Telesia, **Mika and Tea Teofilo**, friends of Telesia and from the Samoan Chaplaincy.



This is an excerpt from my opening remarks during the Pastoral Presentation Day last 25 November 2023 held at Pā Maria Spirituality Centre.

The Pastoral Presentation Day is Launch Out's biggest day of the year. It is a day when the Candidates share their pastoral experiences for the year. These experiences are about running their pastoral projects or their personal journey for the year that has profound effect on their ministries. Their presentations give a good glimpse of parish life and how formation for the laity looks like in the Archdiocese of Wellington.

There are three insights for this year that I would like to share as the Formator and Manager:

First, the Synod principles of participation, communion and mission can be gleaned by the leadership the candidates exercised in running their pastoral projects. I believe that Launch Out's involvement in the 2017 and 2020 diocesan synod is instrumental to that. Many of the organisers, facilitators, and scribes of these synods were Launch Out's candidates, pastoral mentors, spiritual directors, and graduates. The language of collaboration is deepened by the language of synodality. We learned to listen to the Holy Spirit as it speaks to us and to those we journey with. We are learning and demonstrating what Pope Francis means by "graduality", that real transformation can only happen within the context of right relationships. And right relationships can only happen with authentic listening. And this unfolding takes time or better yet in God's time.

Second, I observe a widening of the candidates' view of their pastoral ministry from a one-project a year to having a global view of the parish and intentionally developing ministries that could sustainably address parish needs. There were candidates who spent this year preparing the ground for a long-term and greater impact pastoral projects. Telesia who will graduate today leaves behind an adult formation programme for Our Lady of Hope Parish that took over two years to plan and organise. Now the programme will continue to run even after her time in Launch Out and could run even without her.

I would like to thank the pastoral mentors- Mary Jackson Kay, Bridget Taumoepeau, Susan Apathy, Cecily McNeill, and Catherine Gibbs, who guided and supported the Candidates through the ups and downs, stops and starts of leading pastoral projects. I believe that having Pastoral Mentors who themselves are actively involved in Church and ministry, who have their pulse in the ground make a huge difference.

Lastly, I would like to underpin the direct link between consistency in attendance to spiritual direction with personal well-being, commitment to pastoral ministry. The crux of formation is the integration of the spiritual, pastoral, and theological exercises. This movement of integration is significantly facilitated within the process of spiritual direction, where the inner work of the soul is unpacked. We all know that this *mahi wairua* is the hardest work and also the easiest to escape. This year, all candidates have been consistent in their spiritual direction and are reaping the benefits. I like to thank Clare O' Connor, Neil Vaney, and Regina Daly for their accompaniment as spiritual directors.

This year, we received Launch Out's te reo name "**Te Hao Nui**", which literally means casting a net yielding a large catch. When **Te Kahu o te Rangī** or the Māori Pastoral Council was discerning our name, they reflected on **Luke 5: 4-11** which is the genesis of the name 'Launch Out'. They were led to choose a name that identifies the vocation of Launch Out as well the promise of its fruit.

Te Hao Nui- casting a net, yielding a large catch. The symbolism of Te Hao Nui couldn't be more prophetic.

It is almost rhetorical to say that today, the Church, the world and all of creation are facing uncertain waters. Taking cue from our name, **Te Hao Nui**, we are called to cast our nets wider and deeper....and we can trust that the God who called us from our familiar shores, will deliver a bountiful catch.



2023: A Bountiful Year



22 April, **Prayer Day with Lucienne Hensel**, Home of Compassion, Island Bay



28 April, **meet and greet with Archbishop Paul Martin**, Atura Rydges, Thorndon



17 June, **Installation of Archbishop Paul Martin**, St. Theresa's Church, Karori, Pro-Cathedral



03 August, **Safeguarding Course**, St. Mary's of the Angels



03 June, **Conflict Resolution Seminar Workshop with Jeff Drane**, sms, Home of Compassion, Island Bay

19 August, **Leading and facilitating sacramental programs with Joe Green**, Ohariu Parish Hall



14 October, **Prayer Day with Fr. James Lyons**, Home of Compassion Island Bay



27 October, **Annual Meeting of Pastoral Mentors**, Cenacle House, Waikanae



May you see the presence of God in all of creation.
May those who encounter you, feel that God is among us.
May your Christmas be Christ-filled,
with blessings pouring generously upon you and your family.

From the Te Hao Nui- Launch Out Community

