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SOLEMNITY OF THE **IMMACULATE** CONCEPTION

8 DECEMBER

DECEMBER 2023 ISSUE 419



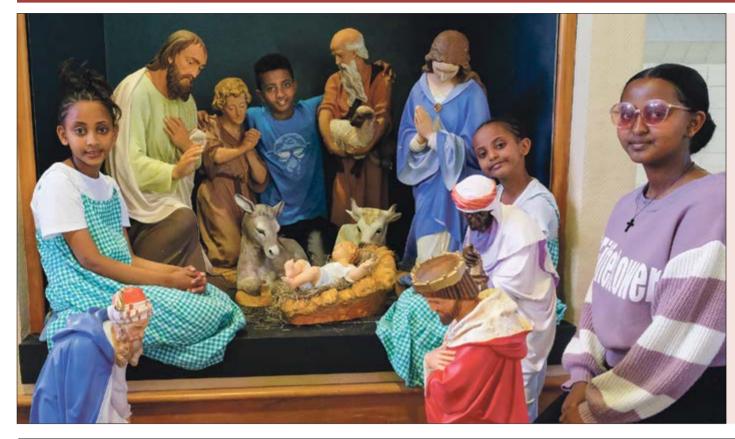
Nau Mai

A newspaper for the Wellington and Palmerston North Catholic Dioceses

Mel Gom

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WINNER OF THE 2023 AUSTRALASIAN CATHOLIC PRESS ASSOCIATION (ACPA) AWARD FOR BEST LAYOUT AND DESIGN FOR A PRINTED PUBLICATION



"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."

- Isaiah 9:6

Helping the Sisters at the Home of Compassion to set up the Christmas crib in the chapel for Advent are brother and sisters from the Chine family of Island Bay (l-r) Gelila (10), Minab (13), Asgedet (7) and Luwam (15). The three younger children are students at St Francis de Sales School and Luwan attends Wellington East Girls College. The children arrived with their parents and older siblings from Eritrea to settle in Wellington earlier this year. Photo: Annette Scullion

>> The Season of Advent, 3-24 December 2023 Te Wā o te Aweneti, 3-24 Hakihea 2023, pp 10 and 11.

Architectural gem almost fully polished

Fr James Lyons

The revitalised columns and frontage of Sacred Heart Cathedral, signal the approach of the long-awaited reopening of this Archdiocesan treasure.

'Seeing these beautiful columns without the scaffolding and protective cover, is a great highlight for me after a journey of more than five years,' project architect, Jane Kelly, told me in an interview, mid-November.

Another personal highlight for her was having the interior carpet installed.

'This was purchased two years ago to avoid price increases and with the hope it would

properly complement the rest of the design. It does so wonderfully well, exactly as I'd hoped.

'There'll be so much joy when people see their spiritual home, glittering and sparkling

Jane Kelly like a gem is meant to be, she assures. 'And our

cathedral is certainly an architectural gem.'

I asked Jane for her impressions of the overall project, especially as its original focus, when the cathedral was closed in 2018, was on earthquake strengthening.

'The task was seen as a commitment of about two years and the parish was sure it could manage the fundraising, she explained. But all that changed when the

strengthening work exposed other damage. It became an archdiocesan project.

The cathedral qualified for government assistance through the 'Shovel Ready Grant' initiative to counter job insecurity caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

'This enabled us to attempt to more completely repair the cathedral, although we knew this would mean a longer closure.'

As an example, much of the interior painted masonry had a moisture content of 90 per cent. The paint had to be stripped by hand to enable a drying process. Asbestos was found in some of the window sealings, which meant all the windows required testing. Both time consuming and labour intensive.

Other factors, pushing the closure of the cathedral to more than five years, were the Covid national shutdown, the later requirement to work only in small separate groups and the scarcity of quality tradespeople.

'We were bringing engineers from Christchurch for several months.

Jane has been a Sacred Heart parishioner for over 20 years and this has helped her through the long process, supporting her professional role.

'I know how the building is used and I know what parishioners expect,' she said, while admitting the closure has been difficult for people and many are now absent from the parish Masses transferred to Wilton, Karori and Connolly Hall.

But she has also picked up a growing sense



Sacred Heart Cathedral's revitalised columns and frontage.

of excitement as signs of completion can now

'Yes, it will probably be close to six years when we finally reopen, but I'm very positive about the outcome, both as project architect and as a keen parishioner,' Jane smiles.

'The time has not been wasted. We've had a unique opportunity to future-proof a building highly rated for its religious and cultural significance.'

Jane Kelly was recently appointed Chair of Team Architects, a group of nine independent architect companies. Her speciality is in the restoration of heritage housing. Sacred Heart Cathedral is blessed by the skills of someone greatly valued in her profession and, as a parishioner, personally committed to the project.

The official re-opening for the newly restored Sacred Heart Cathedral is scheduled for the weekend of 7, 8, 9 June 2024.

He Tirohanga | Insights 2 HAKIHEA 2023 NAUMAI

From the editor

Annette Scullion

Tēnā koutou Greetings to everyone.

In this edition of WelCom we celebrate and illustrate the Season of Advent, the Immaculate Conception, and the feast of Christmas through the eyes of children, to bring a quiet sense of stillness, hope and peace as we prepare for the birth of Jesus on

Christmas Day. What the world needs at this time, amidst so much conflict, uncertainty and so many problems that are out of the realms of most people's ability to solve, is a faith-filled solution.

Bishop John Adams writes in his column on this page: 'If we are continually immersed in the urgent, in the unfolding of one disaster after another, of the thought that everything is unravelling, our culture starts to feel thin and brittle.' He goes on to say, 'Surely this then is an opportune time for the Catholic Church to bring her power and beauty to this marketplace of urgent concerns. As Western civilisation's oldest institution we have something great to offer this time in history.

This month, the world witnesses a significant and historic milestone for the Catholic Church and wider as Pope Francis attends COP28 in Dubai,

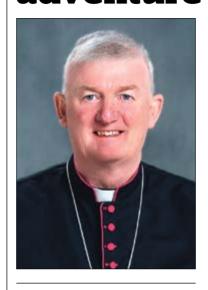
making him the first pontiff to attend a UN climate conference. The Pope has made climate and the environment a central focus of his papacy. He will deliver a keynote speech at the summit and hold bilateral meetings while he is in Dubai, from 1-3 December, amongst global political leaders and religious figures.

WelCom invited the UAE Ambassador to New Zealand, His Excellency Rashed Matar Alqemzi, for his perspective on the profound significance of Pope Francis' invitation and acceptance to attend COP28 in his country. His Excellency's article is on p 3.

Advent is a time of preparation and reflection. Looking back over the year and as we begin to slow down as 2023 comes to an end, we would like to thank you our readers and our advertisers for your ongoing interest and support in WelCom. Our special thoughts to all those who have been adversely affected by extreme weather events. We wish you all every blessing for a safe, Happy and Holy Christmas and New Year.



Divine logic opens the way to an adventure of faith



Bishop John Adams Bishop of Palmerston North

I have always loved the story that is told about Mother Teresa - that she would pray an hour's adoration every morning unless she was really busy, in which case she would pray for two hours.... We might call this divine logic, a logic that exists in the world but has a supernatural origin.

During my recent reading I have come across a phrase I hadn't heard before. It was the comment that we are currently living 'a state of permacrisis'. 'Permacrisis' - what

an interesting term, and equally interesting is the further observation that if there doesn't seem to be a crisis we can 'find' one.... In other words, being in a state of crisis serves some greater purpose other than the particular issue at hand. And again the further thought that being time for the Catholic Church to bring her power and beauty to this marketplace of urgent concerns. As Western civilisation's oldest institution we have something great to offer this time in history. Isn't this the time for us to rest the arms of the spiritual giants of our Catholic

'As Western civilisation's oldest institution we have something great to offer this time in history. Isn't this the time for us to rest the arms of the spiritual giants of our Catholic tradition.'

in a crisis 'absolves ourselves' of responsibility, which in turn opens the path for blaming others....

I have no doubt there are various legitimate crises in the world at the moment, although I would also observe that the Church herself has been living with crisis right from its beginnings. Indeed from the moment that Judas left the table at the Last Supper. However, the acceptance of 'permacrisis' surely does us spiritual damage. If we are continually immersed in the urgent, in the unfolding of one disaster after another, of the thought that everything is unravelling, our culture starts to feel thin and brittle. Time for considered debate in the public square is put to one side and is replaced by false refuge in the world of polemic.

Surely this then is an opportune

tradition. To propose that another logic exists apart from this theory or that. And that this divine logic opens the way to an adventure of faith, which is full of hope and joy, a hope and joy that is just as real as any threat of global warming or economic collapse or political implosion.

Why wouldn't we be prepared to enter into the public square at this time? It seems to me that we have lost confidence, and we labour under the false understanding that our faith is private. No, our faith is not private, personal yes, but not private.

Mother Teresa had it right I think, her antidote for the activism of our age was not to endlessly dislocate our lives but to go to the author of time itself and to petition Him for relief.

www.welcom.org.nz

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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

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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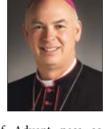


Christmas Message

Archbishop Paul Martin sm Archbishop of Wellington

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

want to take the opportunity to wish you all a blessed and holy Christmas.



These days of Advent pass so quickly in the busyness of the end of our year. I encourage you to make some decision to do something extra in preparation for once again celebrating the birth of Our Lord. It might be to read the daily Mass readings, to call into the

Church to pay a visit for a time of prayer, to perhaps take a little more time for family prayers or grace at meals. Whatever it is if we are able to prepare our minds and hearts for this great celebration it will help us appreciate more deeply this great feast.

It has been a significant year for our two dioceses and our Church with two new bishops and the Synod in Rome. I know that Bishop John and I both look forward to next year as we all continue to work to bring Christ to our world and to support one another in faith.

I pray you will have a restful time with family and friends, and we are grateful for all those who work over these holidays so that others may have a time of relaxation.

Ngā mihi nui

Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa

Apostolic The Nuncio Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa suffered a severe stroke in October and has been seriously ill in hospital. The Nunciature has advised that Archbishop Novatus was recently transferred to Kenepuru Hospital to begin his rehabilitation.

Due to the intense rehabilitation work that he has to do, visits are not advisable for the moment.

Please continue to pray for Archbishop Novatus.

An 'offer' from Bishop John to diocesan staff to begin their day in prayer

One of the spiritual maxims of our scriptures and the great spiritual faith is that genuine renewal in the Church is always a supernatural phenomenon. Therefore, when we speak of the renewal of parish life it can only proceed with an increased docility to the Holy Spirit. As I begin my time as the Bishop of Palmerston North, I know this applies to me also. Unless I accept the truth of John 15:5 '... for without me you can do nothing...' my own strength will surely be insufficient.

As a bishop I have the privilege of offering Mass each day and the chance to immerse myself in the traditions of the Church when I pray my office. However, my own diocesan staff do not necessarily have this same opportunity - they have the responsibilities of their own vocations and the demands of their work. This has prompted me to make the offer, for those who wish, to begin their day in prayer, and to do so 'on the house'. In other words, for those who would like to, their official workday could begin in prayer in the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, which is immediately adjacent to our diocesan offices. This offer

will coincide with the gradual opening up of our cathedral after the recent arson attack and the offering of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the cathedral each morning. Of course, how particular individuals decide to pray is over to them.

My hope is that as we begin to focus our diocese on the great commission to 'Go out and make disciples of all the nations' our endeavours as a diocesan team will become more and more anointed and therefore more fruitful.

The world must unite in faith to tackle climate change

On the eve of Pope Francis' historic attendance at the UN climate change conference COP28 in Dubai, 30 November to 12 December, **His Excellency Rashed Matar Algernzi**, UAE Ambassador to New Zealand, writes for Wel*Com* on the profound significance of Pope Francis' invitation and acceptance to attend COP28.

H. E. Rashed Matar Alqemzi UAE Ambassador to New Zealand



Climate change is truly the defining challenge of our generation – a threat to all of us that transcends political divisions, country boundaries or differences in religion. And its impact is clearly visible: from floods in Libya to heatwaves across the Northern Hemisphere, climate change is causing extreme weather events that are increasingly impacting all corners of our planet.

These devastating weather events have been described by Pope Francis as the Earth's 'cries of protest' – cries that can no longer be ignored in good faith. The decision by His Holiness to attend the COP28 conference in Dubai – the first time a pontiff has participated in the UN environmental summit since they began in 1995 – is recognition of the need for people of all faiths to unite in climate action.

It is through faith in God that we learn to safeguard the Earth and support all persons on it, especially the poorest and those most in need. This was expressed in the 'Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together' issued by His Holiness and His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, in 2019 – and the pontiff has returned to the theme of safeguarding the Earth in his recent apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum* (Praise God).

Through these principles of stewardship, compassion, and reverence for creation, faith leaders can help inspire climate action around the world – a world that may be nearing its breaking point, as Pope Francis warns us. To prevent such a fate will require the engagement of all levels of society, which is why making COP28 fully inclusive is one of the key pillars of the COP28 Presidency.

As a fully inclusive COP, it is fitting that COP28 will be the first to have a Papal presence – and the attendance of His Holiness is not the only faith 'first' for COP28. The conference will also feature the first Faith Pavilion, which I am proud to say will now be inaugurated by Pope Francis.

Hosted by the Muslim Council of Elders in collaboration with the COP28 Presidency, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the Holy See, and a coalition of faith partners, the Faith Pavilion aims to convey a message of peace to the world. It will be a hub for faith communities to share information and strategies aimed at persuading governments to take more decisive climate action.

The recent Global Faith Leaders' Summit in Abu Dhabi, which brought together 28 faith leaders to sign 'The Abu Dhabi Interfaith Statement for COP28,' demonstrates that our faith leaders have a shared concern to address the escalating climate impacts that imperil our cherished planet and



COP28 President-designate, Dr Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber (3rd from right), meets with Pope Francis at the Vatican to discuss faith leaders' crucial role in advancing climate agenda and invites the Pope to COP28 in Dubai.

Photo: Vatican Media



Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, addresses the Global Faith Leaders' Summit, 7
November 2023, in Abu Dhabi.

Photo: Courtesy of Muslim Council of Elders/NCR

to support the most vulnerable members of our global community.

While we are at a critical moment for climate action, there is still time

to act – if we stand together, we can overcome the worst impacts of climate change. And we will. I have

>> Inaugural 'Faith Pavilion' for COP28, p 6.

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faith in that.

St Patrick's College Wellington

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Congratulations to St Patrick's College Dux for 2023 – Daniel Barber and Proxime Accessit – Timothy Yip. St Patrick's College Junior Prizegiving will be held on Friday 8 December at 10.00am in the O'Shea Performing Arts Centre.

The staff of St Patrick's College wishes you all a wonderful Christmas and safe and relaxing holiday period. May we all remember the message of the Angels "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward all people."

Meri Kirihimete me te tau hou.

Sectare Fidem – Hold firm to the Faith



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Neuro specialist addresses post-Cyclone Gabrielle trauma issues

Nick Wilson

The Diocese of Palmerston North in collaboration with Frontiers of Hope Director Michael Hempseed, brought neuro and trauma specialist Dr Andy Harkin to Napier for a workshop, for mental-health practitioners working with people affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Dr Harkin led the two-day workshop in October, which was generously hosted at the Mission Centre of the Catholic Parish of Napier. Dr Andy, a GP and a psychotherapist in Australia, is leading the development and implementation of a new modality of therapy called Deep Brain



Trauma specialist Dr Andy Harkin speaking at the two-day workshop in Napier for mental-health practitioners working with people affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Photo: Supplied

Reorienting (DBR).

DBR is a gaining momentum to treat PTSD and trauma. Early research indicators suggest the modality is having significant success with patients.

The attendee practitioners wish to thank the Catholic community donors for their generosity to the Cyclone Relief Fund because it meant that they – mental-health practitioners, therapists and counsellors – could attend this event at no cost.

The workshops examined the neuroscience and neuroanatomy behind trauma and PTSD and applied this understanding and treating people experiencing the symptoms

of threat response and trauma through DBR. The practitioners who attended, work in person and online with people affected by the Cyclone Gabrielle event.

The Diocese and Frontiers of Hope are looking to bring Dr Andy back to the Hawke's Bay in 2024.

The Palmerston North Diocesan Cyclone Relief Fund has an allocations' committee that is providing ongoing support to the community post-Cyclone Gabrielle. If you are from the cyclone-affected areas and would like to request support, please contact Nick Wilson at nwilson@pndiocese.org. nz in the first instance.

Ukrainian Eparchy launches 'good news' website

The Ukrainian Catholic Church in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania has launched a new website, which Bishop Mykola Bychok, Eparch of Melbourne, invites everyone to visit at: *catholicukes.au*

The bishop said the Church must continue to use its online presence to proclaim the work of God, encourage the spiritual growth of its people and strengthen connections within the community.

'For us Ukrainians, this task is twice greater because of the war, where we must be witness to the truth behind the events that take place,' he said. 'Today, people are especially hungry to hear good words – and most of all, the word of God.'

The Ukrainian Catholic Church is an Eastern Church in communion with Rome. The Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Ss Peter and Paul Melbourne covers Australia, New Zealand and the rest of Oceania. The Eparch has jurisdiction in all these places. Ukrainians immigrated to New Zealand after the Second World War, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and of course now. A Ukrainian parish was established in Auckland in 2015, which caters for the whole of New Zealand. It is on the new website.

Te Kahu o te Ora: A Consistent Ethic of Life

The landmark New Zealand bishops' teaching document *Te Kahu o te Ora: A Consistent Ethic of Life* is now available online as an easy-to-read flip book, reached from a button on the NZCBC home page: *catholic.org.nz* or from: *catholic.org.nz/resources/te-kahu/*

Te Kahu o te Ora is a revised and

much-expanded version of a 1997 bishops' statement and reminds us that all life is a gift from God.

NZCBC President and Bishop of Auckland Bishop Stephen Lowe says the bishops want every Catholic to read Te Kahu o te Ora.

Go to: *tinyurl.com/tekahu-flip* for more information.

Knights celebrate centenary

Two men from the Wellington Archdiocese were honoured at the Knights of the Southern Cross New Zealand (KSCNZ) centenary celebrations, held at St Francis Friary in Auckland in August.

Patrick Heaphy from the Nelson branch and Norman McPhee from the Napier branch were among the knights honoured with life memberships.

The weekend centenary celebration included a retreat guided by KSCNZ Auckland chaplain Fr Ezio Blasoni sm, two Masses, including a centenary Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral, a whakatau delivered by Auckland Diocese Vicar for Māori Manuel Beazley, and presentations to several knights.

Supreme Knight Neil Rutherford told those gathered for the centenary dinner that, 'as we reflect on the last 100 years, we are reminded of the countless lives touched by the Knights of the Southern Cross. Our mission, rooted in the values of faith, unity and charity, has been a guiding light for generations of members who have selflessly devoted themselves to helping those in need.'

'Tonight's celebration is not just about the Knights of the Southern Cross – it is about the people we



Knights of the Southern Cross New Zealand celebrated their centenary in August. Patrick Heaphy from the Nelson branch and Norman McPhee from the Napier branch were among the knights honoured with life memberships.

Photo: Supplied

serve, and the communities we have uplifted and continue to do so. Together, we have become a beacon of hope, a force for good, and a source of comfort for those who face hardship and adversity, Mr Rutherford added.

'Let us stand united to make a positive impact, to lend a helping hand, and to be a voice for the voiceless.'

Auckland Bishop Stephen Lowe gave the keynote address at the centenary dinner in which he urged the knights to find other young men to be knights of the future. He asked them to repeat their own foundation story in their parishes today.

'Invite eight men, sit them down, have a conversation, maybe have some material prepared about the knights, sit down and have the conversation, talk about what the knights have done for you, the importance of this work, and inspire other men to carry on this work.'

The Knights of the Southern Cross of New Zealand is a society of Catholic men in New Zealand actively involved in supporting the Church and each other through practical works, fraternity and promotion of the Gospel.

Source: NZ Catholic





Diaconate ordination of Matthew White

Annette Scullion

Seminarian Matthew White was ordained a deacon by Archbishop Paul Martin sm on Sunday 12 November at St Teresa's Pro-Cathedral, Karori.

Members of Matthew's family, friends, clergy and several parishioners from his home parish Te Ngākau Tapu in Porirua and from Ōtari parish in Wellington were all there to

Responding to a karanga Matthew was processed into the church with supporting clergy for his ordination to begin.

The ordination was Archbishop Paul's first in the Archdiocese of Wellington.

Archbishop Paul said in his homily, 'On this day we reflect on what it is Matthew is taking on when he is ordained to this order in the Church. For while we know he will in the future go on to be ordained priest, the order of deacon has a fundamental nature that will sit with him for the rest of his life, and hopefully shape how he will think and act.'

 $Referring to the Gospel \, reading, Archbishop \,$ Paul said, 'In taking on this ministry, Matthew is being asked to be prepared for whatever the Lord has in store for him, to be alert, and to help others to be alert as well. Because the deacon is here to help others in all their needs, not just to care for himself.

'The deacon's fundamental role is to be a person of service, in the sacramental and communal life of the Church. He is called to use his gifts for the service of the Gospel. The role of the deacon has also had a clear expectation of caring for the temporal needs of the people, not to just stay in the sanctuary, but be immersed in the real human needs of the community. It is a calling that creates a heart for others, to see where the need is and to do all that is possible to ensure those needs are met.'

At the end of Mass, Matthew thanked everyone who had done so much to prepare for the ordination Mass, including MC Fr Patrick Bridgman, Whaea Katarina, Whaea Rangi, the music team, Mons Charles Cooper for his support and mentoring role and Fr Brendan Ward formerly of Holy Cross Seminary.

'To Archbishop Paul, thank you for ordaining me today. I'm delighted to be your first ordination here in the Archdiocese of Wellington. I pray I am the first of many more to come.

'To the clergy who have come to support me, thank you. To Fr Ron Bennett and Tikoua and to all of you in the Otari parish who have been so kind and supportive, especially our morning Mass whaanau thank you. To those who have come from my home parish Te Ngakau Tapu in Porirua, Tena koutou.'

Matthew also acknowledged the readers, altar servers, those who set up for Mass and the Filipino group for preparing refreshments, to which he invited everyone to share after Mass.

Matthew grew up in Whanganui where he attended St Joseph's primary school, Marist Intermediate and St Augustine's College. Matthew says he was brought up with a belief in God and his love for him. 'My Dad was a strong Catholic so the family would always







1. Mons Gerard Burns, Archbishop Paul Martin, Deacon Matthew White, Fr Alfred Tong. 2. Whaanau from Te Ngākau Tapu parish in Porirua. 3. Matthew White, seminarian Kinh Nguyen and Archbishop Paul Martin during the ordination. Photos: Annette Scullion

attend Sunday Mass. As I got older, I wanted to know more about my faith, so I started to attend Church study groups and retreats. I became a youth group leader so I could help young people learn about the good news of God's love for us.'

Matthew went to Massey University in Palmerston North and completed a degree in Te Reo Māori. He spent a year at Teachers'

College and was appointed to his first teaching job at Tawa College in Wellington.

After some years teaching, Matthew felt God calling him to be a priest and serve his people. He says many people - priests, parishioners, family - helped him in his discernment and encouraged him to the priesthood. 'God has called me to serve and to give His love to His

Archbishop Paul Martin sm presented with symbolic Metropolitan's pallium

Archbishop of Wellington Paul Martin sm received his Metropolitan Archbishop's pallium and also blessed the iconic Holy Mary Mother of God artwork during the same 5pm Mass at St Mary of the Angels Church in Wellington, on Sunday 5 November.

The pallium – a white band of lamb's wool adorned with black crosses and worn over the shoulders and chasuble - is the traditional, historic insignia of a metropolitan archbishop of the Catholic Church and is bestowed by the Pope.

A metropolitan archbishop wears the pallium whenever he is present at a liturgical ceremony as Metropolitan. He also wears



Archbishop Paul Martin wearing his new pallium in greetings with parishioners after the Mass. Photo: Supplied

it for archdiocesan ceremonies such as the Chrism Mass and any major ceremonies at the Metropolitan Cathedral.

The rite was simple. After the formal process into the church, Bishop Stephen Lowe sat in a chair in front of the altar. Archbishop Martin knelt before him, professing his faith and taking the oath of fidelity. Bishop Lowe placed the pallium over Archbishop Martin's shoulders. The Mass followed with Archbishop Martin presiding.

Speaking to the crowded church in his homily during Mass, Archbishop Martin said, 'The pallium represents the unity of the Church coming from the apostolic succession

of St Peter. The Metropolitan has some particular roles to play under the pastoral authority of the Pope. It's an ancient part of our Church tradition and I am extremely humble wearing it today.'

Five of the country's six Catholic bishops took part in the Mass. With Archbishop Martin and Bishop Lowe were Bishop-elect Richard Laurenson (Hamilton, who will be ordained on 8 December), Bishop John Adams (Palmerston North) and Bishop Michael Dooley (Dunedin).

Source: NZCBC



HAS ITS INFLUENCE ON OTHERS (ROMANS 14:7)

The season of Advent opens us to the great gift of God's love, made visible in Jesus Christ. His life, death and resurrection point the way for every person. Following him gives purpose to our living and to our dying and ensures the influence we have on others is always one that gives great hope.

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6 HAKIHEA 2023 NAUMAI

Pope calls for an 'outgoing' theology

Pope Francis recently issued a short apostolic letter motu proprio titled 'Ad Theologiam Promovendam'. The text introduces new statutes for the Pontifical Academy of Theology and, in so doing, captures some of the essential reforms Francis has initiated.

The Pope has called for a 'paradigm shift' in Catholic theology that takes widespread engagement with contemporary science, culture, and people's lived experience as an essential starting point.

Citing the need to deal with 'profound cultural transformations', Pope Francis presented his dramatic vision for the future of Catholic theology in the new motu proprio issued in November.

The ʻAd Theologiam Promovendam' or 'to promote theology' document revises the statutes of the Pontifical Academy of Theology (PATH) 'to make them more suitable for the mission that our time imposes on theology'.

'Theology can only develop in a culture of dialogue and encounter between different traditions and different knowledge, between different Christian confessions and different religions, openly engaging with everyone, believers and nonbelievers, the Pope wrote in the apostolic letter.

Pope Francis wrote that Catholic theology must experience a 'courageous cultural revolution' in order to become a 'fundamentally contextual theology'. Guided by



Pope Francis speaks to visitors gathered to pray the Angelus in St Peter's Square at the Vatican 29 October 2023. Photo: Lola Gomez/CNS

Christ's incarnation into time and space, this approach to theology must be capable of reading and interpreting 'the Gospel in the conditions in which men and women live daily, in different geographical, social, and cultural environments'.

The Pope contrasted this approach with a theology that is limited to 'abstractly re-proposing formulas and schemes from the past' and repeated his longstanding criticism of 'desk-bound theology'. Instead, he emphasised that theological studies must be open to the world, not as a 'a tactical attitude' but as a profound 'turning point' in their method, which he said must be 'inductive'.

Pope Francis emphasised this

bottom-up re-envisioning theology is necessary to better aid the Church's evangelising mission.

'A synodal, missionary, and "outgoing" Church can only correspond to an "outgoing" theology', the Pope wrote.

Pope Francis also wrote that priority must be given to 'the knowledge of people's common sense, which he described as a 'theological source in which many images of God live, often not corresponding to the Christian face of God, only and always love'.

The Pope said that this 'pastoral stamp' must be placed upon all of Catholic theology.

Source: Catholic News Agency

Inaugural 'Faith Pavilion' for COP28

Pope Francis is set to speak at the inauguration of the first-ever 'Faith Pavilion' during the upcoming 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates.

As political leaders from across the globe gather from 30 November to 12 December to assess how well they are addressing climate change, religious officials — including Pope Francis, who is both a head of state and the leader of the worldwide Catholic Church — will have a new place of prominence.

The Pope will also deliver a speech at the summit and hold bilateral meetings while he is in Dubai from 1-3 December.

This gathering of global political leaders will include a strong presence of religious figures.

The Faith Pavilion, co-hosted by the UN Environmental Programme, the Muslim Council of Elders, the Interfaith Centre for Sustainable Development, the Episcopal Diocese of California and various faith-based groups, will serve as a hub for religious communities to address climate change collectively.

Anglican Bishop Marc Andrus, leader of California's Bay Areabased diocese, highlighted the imperative for unified voices to combat the urgent effects of climate change.

'The Pavilion is really a physical embodiment of our commitment to really be an active sector in climate change work, Bishop Andrus

Rabbi Yonatan Neril, executive director of the Interfaith Centre Sustainable Development, expressed enthusiasm Pope Francis' involvement in the inauguration. Neril emphasised the significance of this interfaith movement in addressing the climate emergency.

The Pavilion will host 65 sessions focusing on how major religious groups are contributing to climate change mitigation.

The religions represented in the Faith Pavilion are Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Judaism, Baha'i, Buddhism, Hinduism, Indigenous religions Zoroastrianism.

'Most of the world's population and many of the political negotiators at the COP affiliate with a religion,' stated Neril.

'Yet for the first 27 UN climate conferences, senior religious figures have seldom shown up. At COP28 in Dubai, we have worked to significantly increase the presence of high-level religious leaders and seek to do so at future COPs.'

Sources: Earthbeat, National Catholic Reporter, CathNews NZ



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Caritas pleads for peace in Gaza

The Catholic aid agency, Caritas Internationalis, joined international appeals for a ceasefire in Gaza.

In a statement titled *Now is the time* for peace, the central confederation of Caritas aid agencies across the world called for unimpeded humanitarian access to the 2.3 million people still in Gaza, while urging Hamas to release the hostages taken from Israel on 7 October.

Alistair Dutton, the secretarygeneral of Caritas Internationalis, said that 'through our common humanity, all human life is equally sacred, and none can be written off as necessary collateral damage'.

international He said humanitarian law must respected, and that required observing distinctions between civilians and combatants.

More than 12,000 people, including 5,000 children, have been killed by Israeli operations in Gaza since early October, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

More than 700 people sheltering in the compound of Gaza's only Catholic parish were 'filled with terror and fear', according to reports. Pope Francis has telephoned the parish daily to talk to them and give his blessing.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has already rejected any suggestion of a ceasefire, insisting it would allow Hamas to regroup, but has said he would consider 'tactical little pauses'. Regional directors of UN agencies have repeatedly called for international action to stop attacks on hospitals in Gaza.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) said in a statement: 'We are horrified at the latest reports of attacks on and in the vicinity of Al-Shifa Hospital, Al-Rantisi Naser Paediatric Hospital, Al-Quds Hospital, and others in Gaza city

and northern Gaza, killing many, including children?

Premature and new-born babies on life support were dying due to power, oxygen, and water cuts at Al-Shifa Hospital, it reported.

According to the UN, at least 197 Palestinians, including 48 children, have been killed and more than 2,600 injured in the occupied West Bank, amid mounting violence since the war began, including an attack by Israeli forces on an antiwar vigil in Nazareth. More than 1,100 people have been displaced from their homes.

Rabbis for Human Rights are working to help Palestinian farmers' access their land in the West Bank, so they can conduct the olive harvest safely.

Sources: The London Tablet; UN



Catholics in Jerusalem lit candles at the end of a prayer vigil for peace on 9 November.

Ken Loach champions solidarity with Pope on migrant crisis

Renowned British filmmaker Ken Loach, whose work is characterised by its focus on social issues, has called for solidarity with the Pope's work for migrants. Loach met with the Pope at the Vatican earlier in the year.

When asked by *La Croix* to comment on the Pope's recent denunciation of the 'fanaticism of indifference' towards the migrant crisis, Loach responded: 'Solidarity with the Pope! Migrants are drowning; who can be indifferent? It is our duty to help them. The Pope reaffirmed that the rights of the earth and labour must be respected. He also spoke of the need to rediscover the revolutionary truth of the Gospels.'

'Isn't it written there that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God"? How does one become rich? Not by



Ken Loach at the 67th San Sebastián
International Film Festival, 26 September,
2019. Photo: Claude Medale/Corbis

being a carpenter but by making money from the labour of others. This has a long echo in the

English Christian tradition, which challenges the notion of ownership and denounces the exploitation of man's labour by man.'

Loach was responding to *La Croix* in an interview that deals largely with the themes of his work and his latest film 'The Old Oak'.

Loach's work often addresses themes such as poverty, inequality, and the struggles of ordinary people and is characterised by its focus on social issues and the human condition. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential and respected directors in the history of British cinema.

Many of his films have received critical acclaim and won numerous awards, including the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

Source: La Croix

Pope to publish autobiography

Pope Francis will publish an autobiography next year in which he recounts memories of historical events ranging from the outbreak of World War II to the collapse of the Twin Towers on 11 September, 2001.

HarperCollins Publishers announced on 7 November 2023 that it will publish the Pope's book, *Life, My Story Through History*, in the northern Spring 2024 in the US, Europe and Latin America.

'In this book we tell a story, the story of my life, through the most important and dramatic events that humanity has experienced over the past eighty years, Pope Francis said in a statement released by the publisher.

'This book was written so that people, especially younger people, can listen to the voice of an elderly person and reflect on what our planet has experienced, so as not to repeat the mistakes of the past.'

The book was co-written by Vatican journalist Fabio Marchese Ragona, who interviewed Pope Francis for Italian television specials in 2021 and 2022.

According to HarperCollins, the book will feature the Pope's recollections of the

start of World War II, the Nazi campaign to exterminate the Jews, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the collapse of the Twin Towers, the great economic recession of 2008, the resignation of Benedict XVI, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Pope's book, which is not classified as a memoir, will also touch on current global issues, including abortion, racial discrimination, climate change, atomic weapons, war, and social inequalities.

Source: National Catholic Register

Notre Dame du Rugby

The Rugby World Cup may be over, but the Notre Dame du Rugby remains.

Step inside this medieval chapel and you'll soon realise this is no ordinary church. Sunlight filters in through gorgeous stained-glass windows, all of which centre on an activity certainly not mentioned in the Bible: rugby. The glass artwork shows Jesus huddled in a scrum, throwing a ball, and even depicts him as a young child clutching a rugby ball while settled in his mother's lap.

Chapelle Notre-Dame-du-Rugby, situated in the town of Larriviere-Saint-Savin in the Landes region in south-western France, has been welcoming visitors for more than 50 years. The tiny chapel rededicated to 'Our Lady of Rugby' by the Bishop of Dax in 1967 draws pilgrims through its small wooden doors every day of the week.

The whole building is a shrine of sorts to the region's favourite sport. In 1956, Michel Devert, a rugby fan, was sent as parish priest to the region, which also happens to be a part of France where rugby is revered. He found the old ruins of the church hidden beneath tangles of brambles.

Later, after three young rugby players from the area died in a car accident, the friar became determined to honour their memories and protect other players of the region's beloved sport. He got to work renovating the abandoned chapel, slowly building it into the rugby haven it is today.

Creating this unique chapel was a community-wide endeavour. Regional rugby teams helped raise money to support the project, and players from various local clubs built the road leading up to the building.

Inside, rugby kit donated by players around the world lines the walls. A guest book lies open on the altar, its pages full of messages honouring lost rugby players, pleading for a particular team victory, or praying for loved ones to recover from rugby-induced injuries.

The chapel, also has its own prayer, a part of which roughly translates to, 'Stand beside us to give us strength and desire in our quest for victory. But also stand beside us in the



'The Virgin at the Line-Out' stained-glass window, Notre-Dame-du-Rugby. This medieval chapel is now a shrine to the region's favourite sport.

Photo: Notre Dame du Rugby, Larrivière-Saint-Savin

terrible scrum of existence until we emerge victorious in the great game of life.'

Devert himself died aged 88 in 2012 and is buried at the chapel, which continues to be maintained by Les Amis de Notre-Dame du Rugby.

Abortion a 'preeminent priority'

The United States bishops will continue to highlight the threat of abortion as a 'preeminent priority' in the introduction to a guide they'll disseminate to Catholic voters ahead of the 2024 election. The introduction also lists euthanasia, gun violence, terrorism, the death penalty, and human trafficking as 'other grave threats to life and dignity of the human person'.

Catholic-Protestant friendship in Scotland

Pope Francis has commended the deepening Catholic-Protestant friendship in Scotland during a recent meeting with leaders of the Church of Scotland. Historically the Church of Scotland, a Calvinist Presbyterian denomination, and the Catholic Church had a strained relationship. The leaders of both denominations stressed the importance of Christians uniting in today's world.

Outspoken critic of Pope removed

The Vatican has announced that US Bishop Joseph Strickland has been removed from the leadership of his Texas diocese. Bishop Joe Vásquez of Austin has been appointed as apostolic administrator until a new bishop is named. A staunch conservative and papal critic who has all but accused Pope Francis of heresy, Bishop Strickland and the Tyler Diocese were the object of a Vatican apostolic visitation earlier this year. Bishop Strickland has repeatedly criticised Pope Francis' Synod of Bishops on Synodality, as well as various other aspects of Francis' pontificate.

Chinese nun honoured as 'moral role model'

Sr Zheng Yueqin, a Catholic nun from the Diocese of Nanjing, was given the 'Good Person of Nanjing' award by the local Communist Party



Photo: Courtesy Fides

Committee in recognition for her work with disabled children. This recognition is bestowed upon citizens who stand out for their significant contributions to the community. Sr Yueqin serves as the vice-president of the Nanjing Catholic Charitable Foundation and is the founder of a special education centre affiliated with the foundation.

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8 HAKIHEA 2023 NAUMAI

Dannevirke celebrates 125 years of Catholic faith

Sue Seconi

In a spirit of joy, parishioners, religious and clergy connections to St Joseph's parish in Dannevirke, gathered over the weekend of 14-15 October to salute 125 years since early settlers established Catholic faith practice in the area in 1898.

Bishop John Adams presided Eucharist on Saturday morning, assisted by Emeritus Bishop Peter Cullinane (his

childhood parish), parish priest Fr Marcus Francis, Mons Brian Walsh, Fr Chris Martin sm and Fr Vince Onesi.

Lunch in the parish hall was followed with Sr Annette Young rndm and Bishop John jointly cutting the jubilee cake. It featured an edible image of the church prepared by Sr Carmel Cole rndm. The young voices of St Joseph's School students sang a delightful bracket of songs and parishioner Sela Byrne performed a traditional Tongan song and dance at the

conclusion. Then, led by Fr Marcus Francis, it was on to the historical cemetery to bless the graves and acknowledge the parish's forebears.

On Sunday, everyone gathered around the altar for Eucharist. Mass was followed by morning tea where another special cake was presented - it was made by Gemma Barrow a direct fifth-generation descendent from early settlers, and cut by Eleanor Roberts, chairperson of the pastoral council.

Marie Streeter of the organising committee said, 'It was a wonderful

weekend; and the first official occasion of Bishop John since his ordination.

Prior to the jubilee weekend, other celebrations held in June this year included a concert, quiz and movie night. A final jubilee celebration will be an ecumenical blessing of Advent wreaths on 2 December.

Sr Annette Young and Bishop John Adams cut St Joseph's Dannevirke jubilee cake.

Photo: Supplied



'Landing the Waka' recommences

After a four-year break, the archdiocesan induction programme for incoming clergy from overseas, 'Landing the recommenced in October.

Five newly arrived priests, Frs Akuila Taliauli, Raja Kommareddy and Uili Uvea (svds), Ravi Kumar Voliganti and Nicholas Phone Myint mf, joined Church Mission staff and Vicar General Mons Gerard Burns, for a three-day retreat at the Magnificat Centre in Cross Creek, South Wairarapa.

The priests spoke about their homes and experiences and what they bring to their new postings to the archdiocese. The number of languages spoken by the preists was impressive with at least two in the groups speaking more than six languages.

Experiences of the ongoing civil war in Myanmar and mass burials in Argentina during the Covid-19 pandemic were just two examples of the varied ministry experience the men bring with them to parishes here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

They said they are delighted to be here and look forward to getting to know their new communities.

The group will continue to meet monthly throughout 2024 to share pastoral experiences, learn more about the New Zealand context and to prepare for parish pastoral



Newly arrived priests Frs Akuila Taliauli, Raja Kommareddy, Uili Uvea Ravi Kumar Voliganti and Nicholas Phone Myint, with Church Mission staff Lucienne Hensel (centre), Mons Gerard Burns, Maya Bernardo and Photo: Supplied Chris Duthie-Jung.



KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Annual Grant Invitation

The Knights of the Southern Cross, Wellington, Charitable Trust Board is seeking applications from organisations based in, and operating primarily within, the Archdiocese of Wellington who need financial assistance to carry out religious or charitable or educational works.

Requests for application forms can made to: patrickmcgill46@gmail.com

Applications for grants should be made by Thursday 25 January 2024

and should be sent to: KSC Wellington, Charitable Trust Board PO Box 56029, Tawa, Wellington 5249 or email to: patrickmcgill46@gmail.com

Bishop John welcomed to Whanganui Parish and River

The noise of coming from the church hall from parishioners watching the Rugby World Cup final on the big screen saw Bishop John Adams join them as he arrived at St Mary's Church before his official welcome that morning.

Kohurangi Simon Kaiwhaiki said during his kaikorere at Bishop John's official welcome to St Mary's Church, 'I acknowledge God our Father above embracing us with his great cloak for us today as we welcome our new bishop to Whanganui and the River.'

Delighted to welcome Bishop John to Whanganui and the diocese, parish priest Fr Craig Butler said, 'this is your new home now'. 'We've waited for a long time

for a bishop. Don't do everything at once, but know you have our love and support,' he said.

In his homily, Bishop John recalled when he was asked to be

Bishop of Palmerston North, that Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa had advised him to be a teacher of the faith and not a theologian. 'God loves us far more than we ever imagined. Everything we do in response to that love, is grace.'

Morning tea followed Mass as Bishop John mingled with parishioners.

Words by Sue Seconi.

Farewell from Marist Sisters

Jane Langham

A farewell afternoon tea was held for Srs Francine McGovern sm and Margaret Vaney sm, at Our Lady of Hope, Tawa, on 28 October. The Sisters are the last of many Marist Sisters who have ministered in the Archdiocese of Wellington over the last 70 years, including in Tawa for 27 years.

Several parishioners, past and present, along with Sr Margaret's brother Fr Neil Vaney and their sister, gathered to hear tributes from parish priest Fr Rico de la Torre and parishioner Eileen Mackey. Sr Francine and Sr Margaret spoke with affection of their many years in Tawa.

Marist unit leader for Aotearoa New Zealand, Sr Jane O'Carroll, who was unable to attend, sent her thoughts that were read out.

'The story of the Marist Sisters in the Archdiocese of Wellington has its roots in 1940 when the Karori-Northland parish was formed. The Marist Sisters were invited to

respond, but being wartime, their arrival was delayed. They arrived in Wellington on 31 January 1942, the Saturday before school opened. A house in Karori was made available to the Sisters. They staved in the area of St Teresa's School Karori until the early 2000s. Four Sisters moved to Tawa in October 1996. October 2023 - twenty-seven years later, we are about to leave. Time flies so fast!

'King Solomon made a profound statement in Ecclesiastes 3:1 that there's "a season and a time for every purpose under heaven"!

'That verse is like the fabric of our Marist religious life, lived out in mission and ministry, wherever we are and with whomsoever God sends.

'We are missionary by the nature of our Marist charism - it is a life of being in a place and with people for a while and then moving on as needs change.

'I thank God for Assumptionist and present clergy and parishioners, past and present, in our parish of Tawa. You have all been a tremendous blessing to



Sr Margaret Vaney sm and Sr Francine McGovern sm were farewelled after many years in Tawa to begin their next stage in life with the Marist Sisters in Auckland.

Photo: Supplied

Francine and Margaret and to all the Marist Sisters who have been here. I'm sure their hearts are full of memories and I know they appreciate you all very much.

The parish of Our Lady of Hope wishes Sr Francine and Sr Margaret every blessing for their next stage of life with the Marist Sisters in Auckland.

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Canonical Bodies meet

Lucienne Hensel

Every year in November, the archdiocesan Canonical Bodies meet with the archbishop to share reports about the year passed, and their vision and strategies for the year ahead. They include the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC), the Board of Administration, the Council of Priests, and the Directors of the Archdiocese.

This year's meeting on 18 November marked several new beginnings over the past few months, including welcoming to the archdiocese of Archbishop Paul Martin sm, General Manager Reuben Norris, Finance Director Roshan Abeyesundere, the newly formed Council of Priests as well as several new members of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. Together, the groups looked at how to continue to support our Church in mission, in a spirit of synodality and stewardship.

The previous day, Archbishop Paul and the APC visited St Joseph's Parish in Levin. At a gathering with over 40 parishioners, they learnt of the many and varied ministries that keep this parish vibrant in its liturgies and active in the community. The gathering concluded with a time of synodal listening in small groups. Looking ahead, the APC members hope to visit other parishes and continue to find new ways of living synodality in our local Church.



St Joseph's parishioners Levin in 'synodal listening' groups. Photo: Supplied

Christmas toy drive for 'Grandparents Raising Grandchildren'

Every Christmas season, the Benjamin Hughes Hair Salon in Te Whare Manaaki Makawe Ōtaki, embraces the spirit of joy and hope by organising a toy drive for a worthy cause.

This year, the salon has chosen to join hands with 'Grandparents Grandchildren', Raising organisation dedicated supporting grandparents are raising their grandchildren. The decision to partner with this organisation was driven by the recognition of the remarkable work these grandparents do, especially in the Kāpiti Coast area says salon owner, Benjamin Hughes.

'As many may not be aware, the Kāpiti Coast is home to 58 families where grandparents are raising some 96 children. The sheer number of families taking on this responsibility in such a relatively small area is quite substantial, says Benjamin.

This commitment to family and community struck a chord with Benjamin, who has many clients who are themselves raising their grandchildren.

Over the years, I have engaged in heartfelt conversations with them, gaining insights into the challenges and hardships they face. These conversations have deepened my understanding of the immense dedication and love the grandparents pour into their role as primary caregivers.'

With this understanding in mind, the Benjamin Hughes Hair Salon is calling upon its clients and the wider community to participate in its Christmas toy drive. 'The salon is seeking new, unwrapped toys and new clothing suitable for children in the age range of 6 to 16 years. Given the prevalence of teenagers in the Kāpiti Coast, these age groups are particularly in need of support during the holiday



Plunket Nurse Ryanna Gardiner with Benjamin Hughes gathering toys at the salon at last year's Christmas toy drive for children.

Photo: Supplied

season,' says Benjamin.

Commencing 20 November and running through to Sunday, 17 December, people are encouraged to drop off their toy donations at the salon, 6/200 Main Highway, Ōtaki. The new toys and clothing will be donated to the families in time for Christmas.

generosity community will go a long way in brightening the holidays for the children and their grandparents,' says Benjamin.

As a way of thanking the community's generosity, for every donation made during the toy drive, individuals can enter a competition to win a hair makeover says Ben.

'In the spirit of Christmas joy and hope, we are looking forward to seeing the community come together to help make a difference in the lives of these children and their dedicated grandparents. By giving the gift of joy and support, we can help to ensure every child's Christmas on the Kāpiti Coast is filled with love and happiness.'

Book

Secrets of the Land

Writer: Kate Mahony Publisher: Cloud Ink Press

Themes of wrongdoing, repentance and reparation weave seamlessly through Wellington author Kate Mahony's newly published novel, Secrets of the Land. The author, a former reporter/feature writer for Catholic newspapers, Zealandia, NZ Catholic and WelCom has set the story in Taranaki, the region where Kate grew up, on a farm in Hawera.

The inspiration for the novel was her great-grandmother's brother who had come from Ireland to work the Otago gold fields in the 1860s and was then recruited to join the Taranaki Militia.

Kate Mahony says the character in the novel, however, is fictional as is his story. The novel spans three time periods, from 1864 when two young Irishmen join the British army in its fight against the Taranaki Māori, 1975 when a family arrive in Taranaki

fleeing trouble in Ireland, to 2018 when a young Australian woman in Melbourne learns she has a grandfather in coastal Ōkato, who someone is trying to frighten off

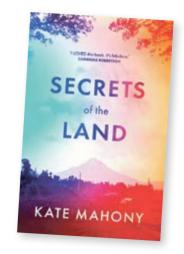
A major character is the land, says Kate.

'What's happened on the land, like a history that can't disappear. The ramifications of things that have happened have come down through the time period. The land has a story of its own.'

For the book, which Kate describes as a mystery, she had to do a lot of research about the different eras both here and in Ireland. And about the New Zealand Wars.

'I also went back and forth to many sources - from stories I heard in Ireland to Te Ao Māori experts and farmers I know."

The novel draws parallels between the domination of Ireland by the English in the 19th century and colonialism in Taranaki during the time known as the New Zealand



Wars. David Hill, in a review of the novel in the New Zealand Listener wrote, 'Injustices past and present are acknowledged, and Mahony works hard to ensure the messages don't clog the movement.' The novel, he wrote, 'is attentively researched and respectfully rendered'.

Secrets of the Land is available from most bookshops for \$29.99 and from the publisher Cloud Ink Press: cloudink.co.nz

Anointing Mass a 'nourishing' event

Cathie Bell

The Sacrament of anointing with oil gave a sense of community, healing and the Lord's presence to those gathered at St Mary's Church, Blenheim, for a special mid-week Mass in July.

Richmond's Fr Cirilo Barlis joined Star of the Sea parish priest Michael McCabe to celebrate the Mass, organised by the St Vincent de Paul Blenheim Conference.

After the spiritually strengthening



Parishioners at St Mary's Church for Mass of the Anointing celebrated by parish priest Michael McCabe and Fr Cirilo Barlis. Photo: Supplied and nourishing Anointing Mass, the SVdP Conference catered lunch for 80 parishioners and volunteers. Local butcher Mike Newman of Meaters donated and carved the ham and volunteers cooked vegetables. SVdP Conference Secretary Ann Moore made a delicious apple crumble.

SVdP's Lorraine Walker said there was a wonderful atmosphere of fellowship evident and parishioners enjoyed the opportunity to socialise after the Mass.

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The Season of Advent

3 December - 24 December 2023

During the four weeks of Advent, we prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth through prayer and reflection and we look for practical ways to observe the holiness of the season in our everyday lives.

SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER

First Sunday of Advent "Brothers and sisters: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.'

1 CORINTHIANS 1:3-9

MONDAY 4 DECEMBER

"I rejoiced because they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD." **PSALM 122: 1**

TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER

"May his name be blessed forever; as long as the sun his name shall remain. In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed; all the nations shall proclaim his happiness."

PSALM 72: 17

WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER

"Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come.

PSALM 23: 6

THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER

"Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

MATTHEW 7:24

FRIDAY 8 DECEMBER

"Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women." **LUKE 1:28**

> **SATURDAY** 9 DECEMBER

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand." **MATTHEW 10:7**

SUNDAY **10 DECEMBER**

Second Sunday of Advent "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."

LUKE 3: 4

MONDAY 11 DECEMBER

"Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth will spring from the earth; justice will look down from heaven."

PSALM 85: 11,12

TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER

"And Mary said: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my saviour."

LUKE 1: 46, 47

WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER

"Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

MATTHEW 11: 28

THURSDAY 14 DECEMBER

"Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a Saviour.

ISAIAH 45:8

FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER

"Those who follow you, Lord, will have the light of life."

JOHN 8: 12

SATURDAY 16 DECEMBER

"Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved."

PSALM 80: 4

SUNDAY 17 DECEMBER

Third Sunday of Advent "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor."

LUKE 4: 18

MONDAY 18 DECEMBER

"Blessed be his glorious name forever; may he fill all the earth with his glory."

PSALM 72: 19

TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER

"My mouth shall be filled with your praise, and I will sing your glory."

PSALM 71: 8

WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

LUKE 1: 38

THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

LUKE 1: 45

FRIDAY 22 DECEMBER

"Mary said, 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my saviour."

LUKE 1: 46; 47

SATURDAY 23 DECEMBER

Lift up your heads and see; your redemption is near at hand.'

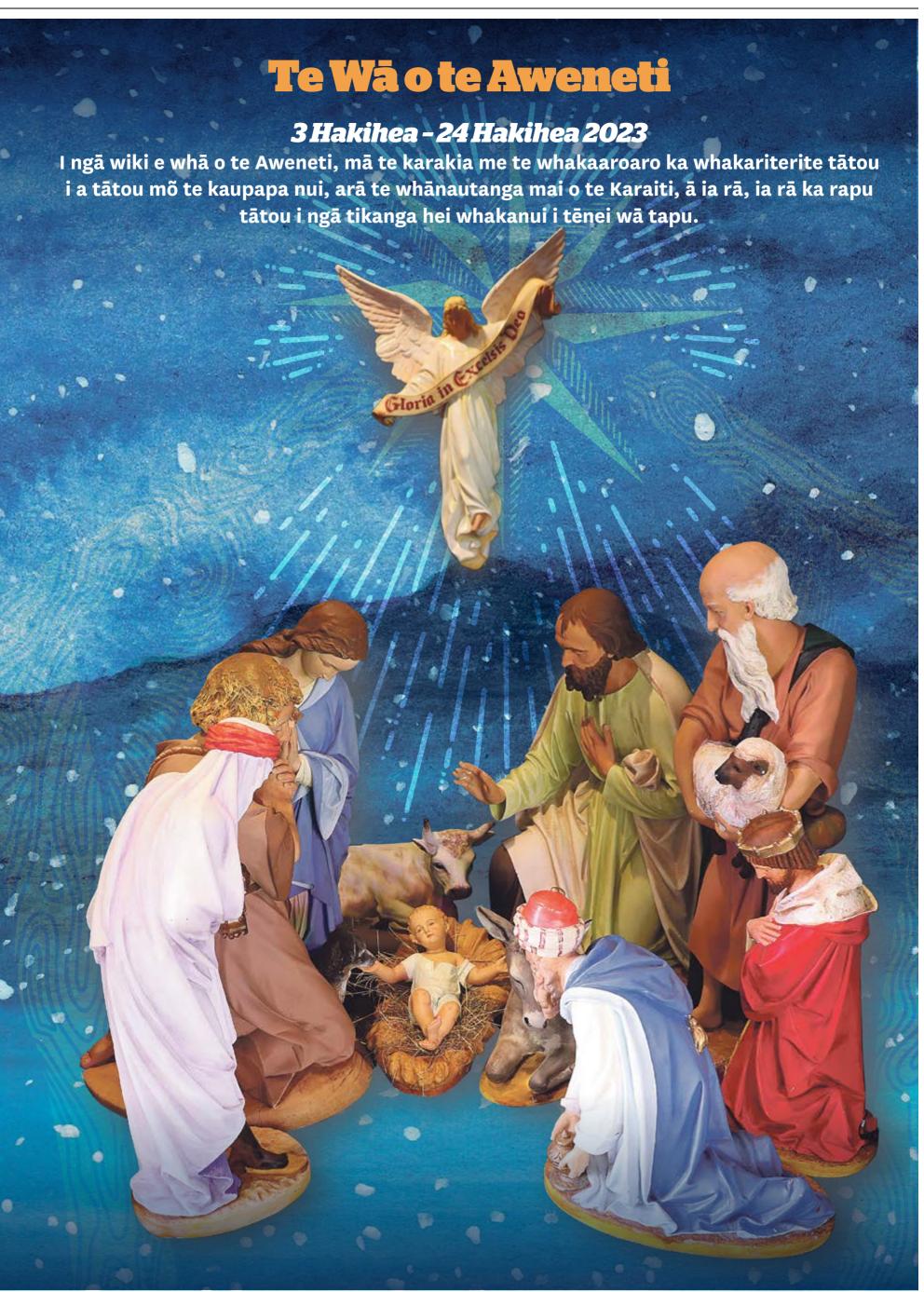
LUKE 21: 28

SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER

Fourth Sunday of Advent "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." **LUKE 1: 38**

WelCom's 2023 Advent calendar is for whānau to reflect on each day during Advent Season. It is available in pdf format on our website and can be downloaded for printing as a poster at: welcom.org.nz

Image: Nativity Crib, Home of Compassion



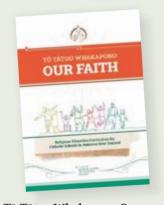
Young Catholics

Introducing Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith

A new Religious Education curriculum is being introduced to Catholic schools in New Zealand. By 2026 all primary and secondary schools will be using the new curriculum throughout their Religious Education teaching programmes.

Colin MacLeod

Director/Kaitohu Te Kupenga - National Centre for Religious Studies, explains.



Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith - new RE curriculum.

Catholic schools in Aotearoa New Zealand have a new Religious Education (RE) curriculum called Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith.

The National Centre for Religious Studies (NCRS), an agency of the NZ Catholic Bishops' Conference and a part of Te Kupenga - Catholic Leadership Institute, has written the curriculum with the help of over 25 groups. The groups include diocesan Religious Education Advisers, Te Hokainuku (supporting Katorikatanga), a broad cultural community reference group, and our bishops.

By 2026 all Catholic schools will be using the curriculum throughout their RE teaching and learning and many schools have started already. Meanwhile NCRS is working hard to produce resource material for each curriculum level.

Background

There were several reasons for producing the new curriculum.

- 1. Both the primary and secondary curricula were 20+ years old. While they had received significant revision over the years, teachers were calling for something new and more engaging, and that could speak particularly to the lives and experiences of young people in Catholic schools in Aotearoa New Zealand today.
- 2. There was a need for a single year-1-to-year-13 RE curriculum. There was no cohesion between the Primary RE curriculum and the Secondary Understanding Faith curriculum, which were completely different from each other. While primary and secondary students have

different capacity, maturity, and needs, there was also opportunity to create a seamless flow for those who enter Catholic schools at age 5 and leave as 17- or 18-yearolds. At the same time, $T\bar{o}$ Tātou Whakapono Our Faith is designed to provide appropriate entry and exit points for children who enter a Catholic school for the first time at year 7 or year 9, or who leave at the end of primary.

3. Increase knowledge supporting faith. RE must be of the highest quality because it is relevant to every child, irrespective of their personal faith stance, as 'specific education in a body of religious knowledge, skills and values which forms a major part of the wider school curriculum and provides a learning platform from which the living-out of

faith in families and the parish community may be understood and embraced.1 Opportunity and support to encounter Christ is at the centre of every Catholic school, and the responsibility to nurture this - to grow and practice faith (Catechesis) - is supported by RE knowledge but is the whole school's responsibility.

The name 'Τō Our Whakapono captures two important elements in this regard: a) it is the sharing of our Church's faith, without assuming (or judging) the faith of the young people in our schools, or their whānau, in the powerful Christian hope that; b) it will already be, or will soon be claimed, as 'our faith' by the young people as they experience their own Hīkoi Wairua Spiritual Journey.

Feedback is overwhelmingly positive from teachers and young people, largely due to the quality of the resources and the structure of the curriculum design.

While the new curriculum is still being developed, NCRS invites everyone to read more on our website www.ourfaith.nz and perhaps even incorporate some of the themes, cross-themes, and/or touchstones into your own parish or family life.

This new curriculum is a gift to the 66,000 young people in our Catholic schools each year, from broad discernment and wananga across Aotearoa over several years. It is also a gift to the Catholic Church in New Zealand and a challenge for every Catholic to embrace the knowledge of our faith

in new and powerful ways. Please go to our website to read more about the new RE curriculum at www.ourfaith.nz or www. totatouwhakapono.nz

Our Faith (p 8)

THEMES

There are four main themes to be covered each year, referred to as:



Te Rama Whakapono the Light of faith: Learning about God - Te Atua God



Learning about Scripture

– Te Rongopai **Good News**



Learning about Church History – **Ā Tātou** Whakapapa **Our Story**



Catholic (Sacraments, Catholic Social Teaching, etc) – *Kia Noho* Hāhi Being Church

CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

Each theme involves five cross-themes, referred to as:



Te Rama Aroha, the Light of Love: God's constant presence -Mana Tapu Grace



The Call to Holiness – Aroha Pūmau **Holiness**



The Wisdom of God and of the Church Whakaaronui

Wisdom



The Call to be People of *Tika* Justice



The Place of **Īnoi** Prayer

As young people journey through their religious education, they focus on eight Ngā Kōhatu Touchstones modelled in Jesus and his call to discipleship.

- Whakatau Welcomed
- Aroha Mai Aroha Atu Loved
- Oho Ake Inspired
- He Iriiringa Called
- **Tūhono** Connected
- Whakawhirinaki Trusted
- He Wero Challenged
- Tono Sent

1 NCRS (2021) Tō Tātou Whakapono

Lennox Finnigan (l) and Micah Gut (r) recently made their First Holy Communion at St Patrick's Parish Church, Kaponga.

Photo: Supplied/Rose Kelbrick

Catholic college quiz night for charity

Gabrielle Dominique Cabauatan

The annual Sacred Heart College and St Bernard's College quiz night fundraiser was held in August at the SHC Performing Arts Centre in Lower Hutt.

This year's fundraiser was for the Little Miracles Trust, a charity that provides a range of free services to whānau of premature and sick babies. The trust has worked with families for over 30 years to help 'make a difficult start to life a little bit easier'. We were inspired by their mission and wanted to support them to continue their work for the little ones and their families. We were blessed to have Samantha, the fundraising manager, speak about the trust and their work.

The fabulous Friday evening was

full of fun quiz categories, music performances, food, auctions, raffles, and amazing people. With all the support we were able to raise over \$2000 for the Little Miracles Trust!

We are grateful to everyone who

Gabrielle Dominique Cabauatan is Student Head of Special Character

helped make this event possible and

cannot wait for next year's quiz.

2023, Sacred Heart College.



The Sacred Heart College and St Bernard's College quiz night raised over \$2000 for the Little Miracles Trust. Photo: Supplied

Rangatahi Katorika

Te Tai Potuini Kapahaka champions 2023

Leah Marris

Principal, St Canice's School

St Canice's School Westport won the West Coast Primary Schools Kapahaka competition, hosted this year by Reefton Area School, in September.

We took out the competitive whakaeke (opening song); waiata tira (choral); haka; whakawatea (finishing song); male lead – and we were the overall winners of the primary section to make us the 2023 Te Tai Potuini (West Coast) Kapahaka champions.

We have 69 students in our ropū. However, for competition we took 35. We have been practising for three years as Covid-19 has taken a couple of performances out and we didn't attend the festival day in Hokitika last year.

Our school does full school kapahaka in Term 1 every year and then tamariki choose to enter into our weekly practises for Term 2. In Term 3, we have a couple of long practises where we fine tune our stage performance.

It all came together on stage. Our leaders were stunning, our voices sweet and our energy on point! It was awesome. They all knew when they came off the stage they had



Congratulations to St Canice's students – Te Tai Potuini Kapahaka champions 2023.

Photo: Supplied

given it their all.

The best part of the day was 680 tamariki and rangatahi from across Te Tai Poutini being all together to celebrate all things Māori. Reefton Area School and all involved in organising the day provided an amazing opportunity come together as a hāpori of performers, to share all of their hard mahi and to celebrate the wonderful things going on across kura on the West Coast.

St Anthony's School Centenary

Charlotte Kempton and Harry Frampton

Students at St Anthony's School

St Anthony's School in Seatoun celebrated its centenary over the weekend of 13, 14 October. St Anthony's has been running since the 1920s to the 2020s!

On the Friday, students showed alumni, past teachers and community a snapshot of our history. We had been learning about the different decades during the term. Students presented learnings about each of the decades, starting from when St Anthony's was built in the 1920s. Activities included role plays, quizzes, old-time games, and even some aerobics. One of the teachers made tunics like girls used to wear and some of our juniors wore them.

On Saturday at the centenary Mass, we met people who came to the school from the 1940s to the 2010s. Talking to them was really special because we got to hear about what it was like and what they did.

At the end of Mass, our principal Mrs Johnson invited all the alumni to have their photo taken by the altar.

Something special to me {Harry] was how my brother Liam Frampton was able to be the photographer. As well as taking photos, he also helped with the filming and editing.

Something special to me [Charloette] was seeing everyone smiling and having fun and remembering their good times at St Anthony's. It was awesome hearing them talk about how different their learning and classrooms were. They were amazed at the cool learning spaces we have now and all the digital stuff like robots.

Mass on Saturday was performed by two priests, Fr Bill Warwick and Fr Doug Shepherd. It was followed by luncheon in the senior block – Te Aroha. It was packed! Lots of people were talking and laughing. Then the oldest person there who had gone to St Anthony's cut the first slice of the cake. Her name was Dawn Proctor and she came to school here in the 1940s. The oldest pupils who were to have come were twins who had gone to St Anthony's in the late 1930s. However, they unfortunately got sick and couldn't attend so Dawn took on the job of cutting the cake.

We all had a great time celebrating, with



Dawn Proctor, who went to St Anthony's School in the 1940s, cut the centenary cake.

Photo: Supplied

the adults having a final big dinner on the Saturday night – more talking and laughing.

We would like to end by saying a big 'thank you' to all the people and old students who attended. It really did make the day one hundred times better.

New RE consultant and TKP lecturer

Maria Fouhy has been appointed to the Secondary Religious Education Consultant, Te Kupenga lecturer position and began in October. Maria was previously St Mary's College Wellington's Director of Religious Services. Announcing Maria's appointment in September, Archbishop Paul Martin sm said: 'We look forward to Maria joining the team at Catholic Schools Education Services and to sharing her experience and enthusiasm for Catholic education with the Catholic education community in the archdiocese.'

Young Catholic Leaders Camp 2023

The Archdiocesan Young Catholic Leaders camp will be held from 6–10 December. The camp is where students who have been elected to leadership positions within their colleges for 2024, attend for a week of reflection, leadership training and networking.

Life Teen Aotearoa Summer Camp 2024

Life Teen Summer Camp 2024 will be held at St Peter's School Cambridge, 1716 Cambridge Rd, 16–20 January 2024. This 8th year of camp offers opportunities to connect with Jesus through keynote sessions, group discussions and fun.

NZCEO Convention 2024

The New Zealand Catholic Education Convention, 19–21 June 2024, at TSB Arena and Shed 6, Te Whanganui-A-Tara, Wellington, is for Catholic proprietors, principals and schools, and interested parties. The theme is 'Tühono Whakapono: Together, one faith community'. Registration opens early 2024. Early-bird registration rate is \$675 (inc GST). Standard-delegate registration rate is \$725 (inc GST). Go to cathedconvention.co.nz for information.

Tuākana announcements 2024

In January a new intake of Young Church Tuākana College Youth Ministers for the Archdiocese of Wellington will be appointed to six of our nine Catholic colleges.

Students win awards at 'Design, Make and Model' competition

Three Sacred Heart College students have won several awards at a Design, Make and Model competition in Hawke's Bay.

Year 11 students Smriti Nijjar, Adalyn Homar and Emma Ritch spent months designing and creating their garments before walking the runway at the Hawke's Bay A & P Show, in October.

Smriti won first place in the Intermediate Section (Year 11) for her top – 'Persian for Milk and Sugar'. Adalyn came second, and Emma third.

Smriti initially designed her top for the wellbeing category. She says the seersucker fabric she used reminded her of the milk and sugar in baking with her sisters. 'It took me back to those fun times.'

Emma also won the wellbeing category

for her entry – a blue halter-neck top – which best reflected emotional, physical, spiritual aspects of wellbeing.

'The blue represents the ocean because it is a very safe space for me. I've grown up around the sea and like swimming. The laces at the back represent the people in my life that keep me together like my parents and my family.'

Emma grew up sewing with her mother and her grandmother. 'My grandmother gave me her sewing machine that she had when she was a child, so it's been passed on,' she said

Adalyn designed a pink dress with hidden pockets, inspired by the movie *Barbie*.

'It was a lot of trial and error. But it was fun to be able to create something from scratch.' All three girls found their love of design when they started doing the Textiles class at Sacred Heart College.

Teacher Anna Grapes says, 'They did so well. I am just so proud of what they made and they looked beautiful. It takes guts to get up on the stage and they had to speak about their garments too.'

Mrs Grapes says she was blown away by the result, having not entered any students previously due to Covid-19 cancellations.

'We have wanted to enter for a couple of years now, so this is the first year that we have been able to, and it is a fantastic result.'

Sacred Heart College Napier students Smriti Nijjar, Emma Ritch and Adalyn Homan with their winning garments.

Photo: Supplied



Climate of fear grips West Bank

The New Zealand-born vice chancellor of Bethlehem University, Br Peter Bray fsc, says a climate of fear has enveloped the West Bank as violence there threatens to explode in addition to the war on Gaza.

'In my 15 years living here I've never experienced Palestinians being so frightened,' he told the Australian Catholic newspaper, *The Catholic Weekly*, in an interview by Zoom from Bethlehem, which is under lockdown.

'They are just so conscious of the brutality underway in Gaza and the lack of any respect for life there. And the thinking is, ok once they've finished with Gaza, what's going to happen on the West Bank?'

One of Br Peter's third-year students, Khaled Al-Muhtasibb, was killed in Jerusalem on 12 October and both the president of the student senate and a security guard were arrested on different occasions but later released amid tightened security measures and clashes with authorities.

The university has lost contact with all of its graduates in Gaza but Br Peter learnt through the Latin Patriarchate's office that a number of students of a new online course had been recently killed.

'There's a notice in Jerusalem that if any Palestinians supported anything on social media they can be arrested,' Br Peter said.

'It's an attempt to keep them under control I think and to avoid hyping people up about the brutality of the occupation.'

He said people were worried at the news that Israel's security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir had begun issuing thousands of assault rifles to civilian 'security teams', including members of the illegal 'settler' movement throughout the West Bank, amid increasing clashes and



Vice-Chancellor of Bethlehem University, Br Peter Bray FSC, in a file photo. Photo: Supplied

reports of Palestinians being driven from their homes and properties.

'And so often the settlers are accompanied by soldiers to protect them. So it's a chaotic and incredibly disempowering experience for Palestinians,' Br Peter said.

Around 170 Palestinians are reported to have been killed in the West Bank including 46 children, 2,500 injured, more than 2000 arrested and more than a dozen communities displaced since the 7 October terror attacks by Hamas on Israeli military and citizens.

The university's eighth vice-chancellor had signalled his desire to retire in December before violence broke out.

In the meantime, Br Peter said the

university remains an 'oasis of sanity' and safe but mostly empty – with Bethlehem's entry checkpoints sealed, all classes have moved online

Counselling is being offered but it is a struggle to engage students and faculty on academic matters when they are worried about their relatives and friends in Gaza, and grieving deaths, Br Peter said.

With the tourism and pilgrimage industry stopped and work permits for Palestinians now useless, many West Bank families are also without an income for the foreseeable future.

Source: The Catholic Weekly

Caritas NZ launches appeal for Holy Land

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes donations to its special fund for the Holy Land, which goes towards emergency relief and development. Donation details can be found on the Caritas website *caritas.org.nz*.

'We call upon our supporters and people of goodwill to help provide a glimpse of hope, and help put love into action by supporting the provision of basic humanitarian needs like food, medicine, and essential supplies,' says Mena Antonio, CEO of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

Caritas provides assistance to all who are in need regardless of nationality, religious belief, gender or ethnicity.

Caritas has called for an end to attacks on civilians in the Holy Land, for all parties to cease fire and for the creation of a humanitarian corridor for the supply of water, food, medicines and essential supplies to reach civilians in need in Gaza.

With over a million displaced persons across the Gaza strip, the crisis continues to escalate, and needs have become greater and more urgent.

'We have been in communication with our partners on the ground,' says Mena Antonio. 'Caritas Jerusalem is providing support for shelters and medical assistance in Gaza as best they can with the very limited resources available. What is urgently needed now is access to supplies through a humanitarian corridor.'

Caritas Aotearoa NZ is the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' agency for justice, peace and development.

UN expert tells Wellington Catholics Israel-Palestine tragedy has 'simple solution'

Nothing will ever be the same in the Holy Land after the 7 October Hamas attack on Israel and Israel's apocalyptic response, Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, told a Catholic audience in Wellington on 22 November.

But the Israel-Palestine issue has a simple solution, she says: Israel needs to end its military occupation of the West Bank and its blockade of Gaza. An international peacekeeping force then needs to move in to protect civilians for as long as it takes to reach a permanent solution.

Ms Albanese said this 'two-state solution' was where the international consensus lay, but that could not happen until Israel ended its occupation of the Palestinian territories it seized in the 1967 war with its neighbours.

Governments around the world needed to stop tip-toeing around the issue and pressure Israel to withdraw.

'It's very simple. The solution cannot start without ending the military occupation, removing the soldiers and tanks. There should be an international force there to ensure stability and peace for the Palestinians and protection of the Israeli settlers [in the West Bank] until they withdraw and give back the land they have stolen,' she said.



Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Photo: Wel*Com*

'We need to go to a place where these two people live in peace, and when it happens, it will be the most beautiful place in the world. That is my hope.'

Ms Albanese, an Italian human rights lawyer, was appointed the Special Rapporteur in May last year. She has been making a brief visit to New Zealand. The Ecology, Justice and Peace

Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington invited her to speak about the war between Israel and Hamas that started on 7 October when Hamas, the group that controls Gaza, attacked Israeli civilians on a public holiday, killing 1200 and taking more than 200 hostage. The Israeli response of declaring war on Hamas has led to a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with thousands killed and more than a million people displaced.

'The seventh of October has been a ground zero moment,' Ms Albanese said. 'The status quo between Israel and Palestine is gone. Nothing will ever be the same.'

Israel had the right to self-defence but it was illegal to wage war against a civilian population. 'It is an inferno on Earth. I don't know anyone who would identify with the massacre Hamas did, but Palestinian civilians should not have to atone for what Hamas did.'

The war was apocalyptic, she said. Twelve thousand people had died and almost 30,000 injured. Some 1.6 million people had been displaced by Israel emptying 60 per cent of Gaza's small area. The UN had lost a record 100 staff. Forty-five journalists had been killed. Gaza had been bombed for 46 days, with entire residential areas flattened. There was no water, no food. People were recharging their phones from bicycle-wheel generators.

'An ethnic cleansing will happen if Israel is not stopped,' she said. 'You can understand my shock when I hear Western leaders struggle to say the one word that can stop all this – ceasefire.'

Mons Gerard Burns of the Archdiocese Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission, said Ms Albanese's particular knowledge of the issues was helpful for local Catholics' understanding, preaching and action.

'As members of Christian Churches we have a special interest in what happens in the lands Jesus walked,' he said. 'The conflict in those lands over the last 100 years, but especially since 1948, is deeply painful for all involved. It has also been a special concern of the UN, being so closely connected to the first steps of that organisation. The land is important to three great faiths, which is why the UN, in 1947, proposed a special status for Jerusalem and Bethlehem.'

Source: NZCBC

Footnote: The Catholic Church and bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand have been closely concerned about events in the Holy Land. Go to the bishops' website at: *catholic.org.nz/news/media-releases* for recent commentaries and articles.



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During the month of December 2023 Pope Francis' intention is: *for persons* with disabilities.

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation.

The Christmas message



Ian Munro

It seems to me that each year it gets that little bit more difficult to engage with the Christmas message, to cut through the commercial hoo-ha that surrounds it; hoo-ha that, these days, can start to build as early as September.

The Christmas trees, decorations and lights remind us that Christmas is coming and the marketing machine urges us to purchase ever new and ever more expensive gifts. 'Buy! Buy! Buy! Now! Now! Now!

Pope Benedict XVI, in an Advent homily in 2005, talked of joy being the true gift of Christmas rather than expensive presents, which demand time and money. Joy is something we can give 'with a smile, with a kind gesture, with

some small help, with forgiveness. Let us give this joy and the joy given will be returned to us'.

Pope Francis added to this in his 2022 Christmas message: "Two thousand years after the birth of Jesus, after so many Christmases spent amid decorations and gifts, after so much consumerism that has packaged the mystery we celebrate, there is a danger. We know many things about Christmas, but we forget its real meaning."

Only one message

When you look back over the years the papal Christmas messages are, for obvious reasons, similar in theme, after all there is really only one message: 'To you is born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.' [Lk 2:11]

As far back 440 we find that Pope St Leo I's first Christmas sermon, one of the earliest recorded papal Christmas messages, was about how Christmas was a time of joy and that God coming to Earth as man is one of the greatest gifts he could have given us.¹

It's interesting, too, to see some of the words that crop up again and again in these messages. They are few but recurrent: humble, humility, poor, poverty, peace, love, compassion, kindness, light, joy, tenderness, true gift, true wealth, opening our hearts, harmony, children, and manger.



The Three Wise Men, by Henry Ossawa Tanner, 1925.

Image: Wikimedia

Each Christmas I find it grounding to stand in front of a nativity scene and think about what it is I'm looking at. And I see a small new-born child, wrapped in swaddling cloth who's been lovingly and tenderly laid down in a rough, wooden, animals' feeding trough. There are no bells, no triumphant fanfare, no twinkling lights, no 'ho ho ho', no Bing Crosby, no brand managers wondering how they can pitch this.

Francis asks us to pray in front of the crib with our family and be touched by the tenderness of the child born poor and fragile among us, to give us His love. 'This is the true Christmas! If we remove Jesus, what remains of Christmas? An empty feast. Do not take Jesus out of Christmas! Jesus is the centre of Christmas. Jesus is the true Christmas.²

And this is the problem. So often, even without thinking, we celebrate a Christmas where we put ourselves at the centre and Christmas really does become a celebration of consumerism, pointless gifts, and superfluous waste.

It will be Christmas if...

"...it will be Christmas,' Francis says, if, like Joseph, we give space to silence; if, like Mary, we say "here I am" to God; if, like Jesus, we are close to those who are alone; and if, like the shepherds, we come out of our

enclosures to stay with Jesus. It will be Christmas if we find light in the poor grotto of Bethlehem. It will not be Christmas if we seek the dazzling lights of the world, if we fill ourselves up with gifts, lunches and dinners but do not help at least one poor person, who resembles God, because at Christmas God became poor.³

As he said on the occasion of the lighting of a Christmas tree in 2014: 'In turning on the light of the Christmas tree, we wish for the light of Christ to be in us. A Christmas without light is not Christmas. Let there be light in the soul, in the heart; let there be forgiveness to others; let there be no hostilities or darkness....Let there be the beautiful light of Jesus.'4

Ian Munro is a writer and columnist. He is a member of the Archdiocese of Wellington's EJP Commission's Integral Ecology Committee and a parishioner at Our Lady of Hope Parish, Tawa.

Endnotes

- 1 Pope St Leo I, Sermon 21, 25 December, 440
- 2 Pope Francis, Address in St. Peter's Square to birthday well-wishers, 17 December, 2017
- 3 Pope Francis, General Audience, Vatican, 19 December, 2018
- 4 Pope Francis, Address of His Holiness Pope Francis on the Occasion of the Lighting of the Christmas Tree in Gubbio, 7 December, 2014

Pope's peace day message to focus on ethical concerns over AI

Signalling the Vatican's growing engagement in efforts to ensure the ethical development of new technologies, the Vatican has announced 'Artificial Intelligence and Peace' will be the theme for the next World Day of Peace, on 1 January, 2024.

'The remarkable advances made in the field of artificial intelligence are having a rapidly increasing impact on human activity, personal and social life, politics and the economy,' the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development said in a statement released on 8 August 2023.

'Pope Francis calls for an open dialogue on the meaning of

these new technologies, endowed with disruptive possibilities and ambivalent effects, the statement said.

The Pope, it continued, 'recalls the need to be vigilant and to work so that a logic of violence and discrimination does not take root in the production and use of such devices, at the expense of the most fragile and excluded; injustice and inequalities fuel conflicts and antagonisms.'

The World Day of Peace was inaugurated by St Paul VI in 1968 and is celebrated on 1 January every year. In recent editions, Francis has used the world day to call

for inclusive ways of overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic, creating dialogue between generations, promoting a culture of care and ecological conversion.

In March this year, the Pope met with tech industry leaders, ethicists and theologians at the Vatican to consider the ethical development of AI, and in January he addressed industry leaders from companies such as Microsoft and IBM as well as members of the Jewish and Muslim communities during a Vatican conference on ethics in AI.

At the end of the conference, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim representatives signed a declaration calling on AI researchers to engage with ethicists and religious leaders to develop a framework for the ethical use of AI.

The Vatican's 8 August statement underscored that 'the urgent need to orient the concept and use of artificial intelligence in a responsible way, so that it may be at the service of humanity and the protection of our common home, requires that ethical reflection be extended to the sphere of education and law.'

It added human dignity and a concern for fraternity are 'indispensable conditions for technological development to help contribute to the promotion of justice and peace in the world.'

In an interview with the Spanish magazine Vida Nueva released on 5 August, the Pope said, 'All these issues of Artificial Intelligence go over my head because of the complexity they are reaching,' but said he is being 'guided' by officials and experts working with the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

Yet, he added that 'new technologies have great potential; they are a gift from God and can give good fruits, but they need to have heart, they need to be humanised.'

>>> AI and Religion – Wellington Abrahamic Council seminar, p 16

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Artificial Intelligence and religion

The Wellington Abrahamic Council hosted a public seminar last month on the ever-increasing impact of technology on religions and how to adapt in the post-AI age.

Questions included: What are our religions' positions on

technology in general, and AI specifically? How could AI impact our religious beliefs and practices? Can a machine be conscious or have a soul? How do we mitigate potential threats AI poses to humanity, to religion and to God?

Keynote speakers offering perspectives from the three Abrahamic religions included Dave Moskovitz (Jewish) – Jewish Cochair of the Wellington Abrahamic Council and a software developer also involved in AI initiatives in education; Harisu Abdullahi Shehu (Muslim) – a data scientist with MSD and an adjunct AI researcher with VUW; and Petrus Simons (Christian) – a Lutheran member of the Roman Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue Commission,

whose PhD thesis is on the impact of technicism and economism on agriculture.

An abridged version of Petrus Simons' presentation is below.

A Christian perspective on Artificial Intelligence

Petrus Simons

The release at the end of 2022 of OpenAI's ChatGPT, where GPT means a *generative pre-trained transformer* for a Large Language Model (LLM) caused quite a stir. The power of these models to produce a wide range of texts from databases, which are hardly indistinguishable from originals, raised many questions. As they learn very fast, their increasing power, it seemed, might be used for evil as well as for good purposes. What if we became completely dependent on them?

Geoffrey Hinton, known as the godfather of AI, was one of those sounding alarm. He feared that humanity faced an immediate threat of a super-power AI. As he put it: 'My intuition is: we are toast. This is the actual end of history. We may end humanity in twenty years.'

We should see this within the perspective of the Industrial Revolution, which took off around 1785 with James Watt's perfection of Newcomen's steam engine, amongst other things by equipping it with an automatic speed-regulating device.

This has initiated a process of constructing a 'sixth continent' of mechanical and automatic systems of transport, production, distribution and administration. This artificial system requires huge volumes of raw materials and energy, which must be supplied by the five real continents. Pollution, global warming and declining biodiversity are the prices we pay.

The mechanisation of Western civilisation began during the Renaissance of the 16th century, with Copernicus' discovery that the earth orbits the sun. This was seen as a mechanical process, which can be described in mathematical equations.

'The Enlightenment of the 18th century appreciated sciences as potential sources of technical innovations to achieve progress. The new science of economics became part of this.'

Already in 1972, he believed that human thought was not just logic, but rather linguistic, represented by words. As a thought is: 'just a great big vector of neural activity', he believed that a model of the human brain and its neural networks would be able to reproduce human language. An algorithm (a step-bystep procedure) should be able to learn by adjusting the connecting strengths between artificial neurons in response to new data.

In 1986 Hinton had helped develop algorithms that could reweight the connections in a neural net, so that a machine could in theory begin to learn on its own. AI would catch up with the brain eventually. Recently, he said: 'I didn't think it would overtake it that quickly'.

Hinton's pessimism is not shared by all his colleagues, although they have concerns too. Michael Luck, for instance, mentioned last April that existing AI systems trained on datasets full of unexamined biases, are shaping major decisions that companies take, ranging from job applications to the approval of loans.

In general, the new models come at the end of almost a century of attempts to computerise data processing ranging from making fast calculations, problem solving to Internet, digitisation, and cell phones.

The philosopher and mathematician René Descartes (1596–1650) has been a key figure with an enduring influence on the mechanisation of the world. I quote:

Knowing the force and action of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies that surround us, as distinctly as we know the various crafts of our artisans, we might also apply them in the same way to all the uses to which they are adapted, and thus, render ourselves the lords and possessors of nature. And this is a result to be desired, not only in order to invent an infinity of arts, by which we might be enabled to enjoy without any trouble the fruits of the earth, and all its comforts, but also and especially for the preservation of health...

Descartes believed that the human body, including the brain, as well as plants and animals are all physical mechanisms, robots, or automata. As humans we stand apart because God has lodged an immortal rational soul into our body.

Thinking, Descartes believed, should be done methodically, using four steps:

- 1) Exclude all grounds for doubt.
- 2) Divide difficulties into as many parts as possible.
- 3) Commence with the simplest



Nicolaus Copernicus (b. 1473), Polish astronomer. The mechanisation of Western civilisation began during the Renaissance of the 16th century, with Copernicus' discovery that the earth orbits the sun.

Image: New Mexico Space Museum

and easiest elements and ascend step by step to the knowledge of the more complex.

4) Make enumerations as complete as possible (Discourse Part II, p.15, abridged).

We would call this method an algorithm. He saw it as a means of rationally re-constructing reality.

The Enlightenment of the 18th century appreciated sciences as potential sources of technical innovations to achieve progress. The new science of economics became part of this. The price mechanism should direct the pattern of production and consumption to maximise profits. To keep ahead of the competition producers should apply technical innovations as soon as possible, regardless of any problems that might ensue. This is what Egbert Schuurman [Dutch engineer, philosopher, politician, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy in the Netherlands] calls technicism, a huge over-estimation of science and technology.

Every sphere of life is being drawn into this mechanical, automatic, universe. Today's LLMs are now technicising language, scripture, literature, communication, words in short.

The way of Descartes has not been the only way, although we, including Christians, have made it our own. Another, more principled biblical way was shown by Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), but not followed. He too was a very gifted scientist and philosopher. After his death a piece of paper was found in

his coat on which he had recorded a vision, beginning with these words:

- FIRE
- God of Abraham, God of Issac, God of Jacob.
- Not of philosophers and scholars.
- Assurance. Assurance. Sentiment. Joy, Peace.
- God of Jesus Christ.

Whereas philosophers have been thinking of humans as subjects who see the world as objects, with the gap to be bridged by reason. Pascal found certainty, assurance and peace in the God of Abraham and his sons, the God who revealed Himself to human from our heart, by faith. There is no gap between us and the creation.

Instead, we have chosen to reflect idols.

The first Adam had to be removed from paradise, the garden entrusted to his care and protection, because he exalted himself to be God. Jesus Christ our Lord, the second Adam, humbled himself even to death on a cross, but is now seated at the right hand of the Father. He will make sure that history continues such that in the kingdom of God there will be a city-garden. The signs of this communal garden can be

observed here and now.

'As humans we stand apart because God has lodged an immortal rational soul into our body.'

beings in His word, in his creation and in His own Son, through whom He created the world as a wonderful cosmos. This God is the Sovereign Ruler, who has subjected the whole cosmos to His laws.

He led his people out of Egypt. He assured Moses (Exodus 3) that His name is I Am, the one you can trust, In the fullness of time he sent His Son, the Messiah, who died for the sins of the whole world.

We have been created in the image of God, as living souls, to reflect Him in all we are doing,

Chatbots will not terminate humankind. We are not toast, but our modern technicistic civilisation might well become toast. It is already crisis prone.

We may trust the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to show us a new way, a way of loving people, and all creation, even by means of technology. He will help us promote a responsible ethics for AI.

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MEN'S MEETINGS

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Palmerston North

St Mary's Church foyer, Ruahine Street Tuesday 19 December, 7:00pm No meeting in January Contact: John 027 688 7750

Wellington

No meetings in December or January Looking forward to seeing you all in February Contact: David 027 447 7280

'As for me and my house we will serve the Lord' - Joshua 24:15

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Whakaaro | Reflections WELCOM DECEMBER 2023 17

A Litany Revisited

Fr James Lyons continues his exploration of titles given to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the 16th century Litany of Loretto.

Refuge of Sinners

In the 15th chapter of the Gospel of Luke there are three stories emphasising the unconditional love of God for creation. These 'mercy parables' tell of the shepherd who loses and finds his sheep [vs 4-7], the woman who loses and finds her coin [vs. 8-10], and the father who loses and finds his son [vs 11-32].

These parables tell us that nothing is outside the love of God. The animal world (sheep), the material world (coin), and the human world (son), have a significant place in God's providence. It is not in God's plan that anyone or anything should be lost. In the beginning, God saw all he had made and indeed it was very good [Genesis 1: 31].

The goodness in creation is often marred by the creature God loves most, the one made in God's own image: the human person. Our negligence, our greed, our hatred, our jealousy, our wanting to be God, cause disharmony and disfigurement within and around us. This distortion of God's work is sin, a turning away from God, claiming independence - I don't need God! I know better than God!

Mary is our refuge. She comes among us as the purest of creatures, chosen as the mother of Jesus - the one who would save his people



'The Immaculata', José Madrazo, c. 1800.

Image: Public Domain

from their sins. Born of human parents, Mary is our sister in humanity. But as mother of Jesus, Son of God, Mary is also our stepping stone to God, and a shelter for those who slip, stumble or lose their way on the journey.

'Mary, as Refuge of Sinners, knows the fear that can capture hearts as they encounter God. She echoes the assurance that consoled her. Do not be afraid [cf Luke 1: 30] and gathers us in safe sanctuary, encouraging us to take the next step, to keep going.'

Mary, as Refuge of Sinners, knows the fear that can capture hearts as they encounter God. She echoes the assurance that consoled her, Do not be afraid [cf Luke 1: 30] and gathers us in safe sanctuary, encouraging us to take the next step, to keep going.

Mary, as Refuge of Sinners, also knows the intensity of the love of God that 'sent' Jesus into the world to seek out and save what was lost [cf John 3: 16-17]. She is the welcoming home for pilgrims, providing rest and refreshment, reassurance, and a chance to regain strength for the way ahead.

In a meditation on the parable of the two sons [Luke 15: 11-32], Cardinal Maria

Martini (Archbishop of Milan, 1980-2004 and a biblical scholar) notes that both sons had difficulty 'living out the truth' of their relationship with their father. 'Both of them rejected it in one way or another. It took a long journey for the younger son to truly meet his father, whereas we do not know even today whether the elder made the journey himself." [Return to the Father, 1999, p 14.]

Mary is a refuge for each one of us as we 'live out the truth' of who we are on our journey home to the God who made us, and to whom we belong.

Mary, Refuge, Shelter. Enclose us in your care. Warm us away from the cold winds of our selfishness. Shield us from our fantasies and fears. Heal us. Strengthen us. Renew us.

Turn our faces towards one another and set us more firmly homeward.

> Mary, Refuge of Sinners, pray for us.

Solace of Migrants

Pope Francis added this new Marian title to the Litany of Loreto in June 2020. 'May the Virgin Mary, Solacium Migrantium, "Solace or Comfort of Migrants", help us discover the face of her Son in all our brothers and sisters who are forced to flee from their homeland because of the many injustices that still afflict our world today.

'Every person is a migrant, leaving each day behind, a traveller, a sojourner, moving through life. And none of us will find the destination on our own.'

By the end of 2022, reported the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, there were 108.4 million people displaced worldwide resulting from persecution, conflict or violation of human rights. This includes 35.3 million refugees and 62.5 million internally displaced people.

Migration means 'a leaving behind'. There is also an expectancy, a looking beyond the here and now, a daring to hope for something better.

For migrants, there is an ending and a beginning and both are circled with uncertainty. Leaving the familiar without knowing exactly what lies ahead requires courage and preparedness, but these can be in short supply when it's no longer safe to stay and getting out is the only option - and likely a very dangerous one.

Destinations for migrants, notably those with refugee status, are not necessarily of their choosing. Wherever they go, they face a new culture, a new language, a new way of seeing the world. Their host country may be illprepared for their arrival. Misunderstanding, prejudice, perhaps open hostility can be part of their 'welcome'.

Vulnerable and desperate, migrants make easy prey for the unscrupulous.

Migrants have had to let go of much that was dear to them. Like a ship weighing anchor and setting sail, they leave the harbour they know so well and have to trust the open sea, exposed to all kinds of potential danger. 'Have we done the right thing?' 'Will it work out ok?' These and similar troubling questions travel with them.

Mary and Joseph were forced to flee their home to escape Herod's jealous rage [see Matthew, Chapter 2]. They knew the pain of separation and abandonment of those forced to leave homeland, family and friends.

In his Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (2022), Pope Francis echoes the cry of those suffering great loss and for whom hope and joy have become extremely fragile:

We now turn to you and knock at the door of your heart.... At this dark hour, help us and grant us your comfort. Say to us once more:



Madonna della Misericordia (1460-1462) Piero della Francesca. Part of the Polyptych of the Misericordia, this panel shows the mercifully protective gesture of the Madonna enfolding her followers in her Image: Public Domain

'Am I not here, I who am your Mother?' You are able to untie the knots of our hearts and of our times. In you we place our trust.... To preserve

the joy of the wedding feast you said to Jesus: 'They have no wine' [John 2:3]. Now, O Mother, repeat those words and that prayer, for in our own day we have run out of the wine of hope, joy has fled, fraternity has faded....

As Solace or Comfort of Migrants, Our Lady is best placed to be their intercessor. But all of us have a part to play in ensuring migrants are welcomed, helped to feel at home, given every security and means to build their lives anew.

Every person is a migrant, leaving each day behind, a traveller, a sojourner, moving through life. And none of us will find the destination on our own.

> There is no cause for certainty in any life. Migrants all we travel with strangeness. Courage counters caution praying hope will prevail. A new dawn bringing sight of a new home with welcome meaning more than welcome companionship rekindling joy partnership and peace. **Togetherness** creating a touch more certainty.

Mary, Solace of Migrants, pray for us.

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Gospel Reading: Sunday 3 December 2023

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - MARK 13:33-37

³³ Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come.

³⁴It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work to do, and he has told the gatekeeper to stay awake.

³⁵So stay awake, because you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, evening, midnight, at cockcrow, or in the morning.

³⁶ If he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. ³⁷ And what I am saying to you I say to all: "Stay awake!"

The Saviour who came two thousand years ago

Tom Gibson

What was the world like before Jesus was born about two thousand years ago? People were longing for a Messiah of some sort to save them from their physical hardships and despair, made worse by the controlling authorities of the day unsympathetic to the Jews. People were hoping for a king in the traditional sense who could take physical control of their world and make it a better place. People were longing for this on a daily basis.

Today the war being waged in Ukraine was instigated by President Putin and his Russian armies who thought it would result in a quick win. While in Israel on 7 October, Hamas, the militant group that controls Gaza, attacked Israel killing several hundred of their people and bringing war again to a

much-troubled Holy Land.

Although Christ was born two thousand years ago, the world is still a mess and the saviour 'who was supposed to fix it all', still hasn't arrived. Christ's message is that the real 'saving' can only happen to each person from within – when people begin to seek forgiveness and accept Christ as their personal saviour and start living to a different set of rules. These rules are about forgiveness, love, peace and hope, and only these rules can fix the human mess. A different type of Saviour gives us the freedom to live by these rules daily.

With this new perspective, let's re-think the human mess.

As a human race, we are so much better educated now than two thousand years ago. Yet with all our knowledge and ability to produce food, we lack the ability to distribute it. There are millions today who

lack the money, the ability and the wherewithal to feed themselves. This fault lies with us; we know of the millions who go hungry daily, but do we care? We understand how to care about hunger because we don't starve ourselves. What are we doing to bring peace into this world?

Today in Mark's first gospel of the year, Jesus warns us to 'stay awake', to be on our guard because we don't know what time, day, month or year our Lord will demand our soul from us. The real point of it is to not let our Master and Saviour find us sleeping.

To do this we need to allow our Saviour to live through us, and truly love our neighbour, which in the terms of the world issues discussed above, and re-thinking the human mess, means loving everyone on this planet. 'Staying awake' means actively doing this.

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Obituary

Rita Barker netball icon

Over 75 years of devotion to Convent Old Girls Netball Club and netball in the Hutt Valley were celebrated at the funeral Mass for Rita Barker (nee McNeil) at 'her' Ss Peter and Paul Church in Lower Hutt, on 27 July.

The youngest of nine siblings Rita was married to the late Peter for 64 years. She died at Shona McFarlane Retirement Village in Lower Hutt at the age of 92.

Rita was a prominent netball icon in the Hutt Valley with Convent Old Girls and a New Zealand Catholic Tennis player. She was a Catholic Women's League member throughout her life and an active parishioner at St Peter and Paul's Church.

Rita was one of Convent's greatest supporters and could be seen cheering on her beloved club every Saturday as COG took to the court. COG is the only original club still in existence in the Hutt Valley. It began in 1934 and was set up so the students leaving the college could continue their interest in 'basketball' and their association with the college. COG have won many Hutt Valley basketball and netball championships and went a number of seasons without a loss in the era of Hutt Valley Basketball Assn.

Rita became heavily involved with Hutt Valley Netball first as a player – she was selected in the NZ representative team, touring with them to Fiji in 1954. She served as coach, manager and committee member of both COG and the Hutt Valley Executive. In 1977 she received a NHV Service Award and in 1885 a HV Umpires Service

Award (she rose to the ranks of a NZ umpire). In 2008 she was made a life member of Netball Hutt Valley. She was also a recipient of the Lower Hutt City Council Civic Award in 1978 for her involvement with netball.

Rita along with her niece Catherine McLaughlin, Maureen Fairweather and Katie Harris, headed a group for the 75th Jubilee of Convent.

In his eulogy at Rita's funeral Mass, Rita and Peter's eldest son Paul Barker said, 'From Rita's Irish parents came the legacy of her Catholic faith. Mum witnessed to that faith in attendance at daily Mass, involvement in the Catholic Women's League, and as caterer to innumerable funeral teas at this church. She had a love of the Rosary. It's hard for today's generation to imagine putting down the knife and fork at the end of a meal and getting on your knees around the dining table for a few decades of the Rosary. That's what happened in our house?



Rita Barker shortly after her 92 birthday this year.

Known as 'Aunty Rita' to many, netball was her passion and Convent was her club. On Saturday 22 July, COG supporters wearing red and the senior team stood as one in a touching tribute to 'Aunty Rita' before their game at the Walter Nash Stadium.

Rita is survived by her children Paul, Diane, Catherine and Stephen, seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Source: Diane Barker



In July, COG supporters wearing red, and the senior team stood as one in a touching tribute to 'Aunty Rita' before their game at the Walter Nash Stadium.

Photos: Supplied

Our Wellington Catholic Future



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DATES AND EVENTS - WHAT'S ON

To list events free, email welcom@wn.catholic.org.nz with event name, date, time, location and contact details.

Sunday 3 December

- > Advent Sunday Season of Advent, 3 to 24 December. National Liturgy Office has substantial resources online at nlo.org.nz 'Come Lord Jesus', for all four Sundays of Advent - a time of preparing for celebration of Christ's birth through prayer and reflection.
- > Annual Sick and Retired Priests; special collection for Clergy Trust Fund - provides for wellbeing and care of priests in Palmerston North Diocese, including stipends, food, travel home for 'overseas priests', retreats and healthcare costs. 'The fund is struggling to meet growing medical costs. Giving to this collection is most appreciated, especially by our elderly priests. Many thanks and blessings to all who contribute to this special collection, - Mons Brian Walsh, Chairperson, Clergy Trust Fund, Diocese of Palmerston North.
- > Combined parish Christmas bbq - Waitara and Inglewood parishes, 6pm, Waitara Presbytery, 17 Nelson St. BYO food and beverages (postponement date 4 February 2024).

Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 **December**

'Christmas Carols 2023' presentation by Unity Singers, 7pm, Palmerston North Cathedral. Donation of non-perishable food for SVdP Foodbank appreciated.

Wednesday 6 December Senior Anointing Mass and Christmas Luncheon, 11am, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Palmerston North.

Thursday 7 December Catholic Women's Christmas luncheon – 12.30pm, Tea House on Lake (Kiosk), Pukekura Park, New Plymouth.

Friday 8 December Solemnity of Immaculate Conception - Archdiocese of Wellington patronal feast, see p 20.

Sunday 10 December Christmas pot-luck dinner - 6pm, Sacred Heart Inglewood parish hall.

Monday 25 December Christmas Day - Christmas Mass times across the archdiocese online: wn.catholic.org.nz/adw_ community/christmas-mass-times/

Tuesday 16-Saturday 20 January

Life Teen Summer Camp registrations closed but contact your parish about spaces.

Thursday 8 February Tomáš Halík – visit by highly regarded Czech priest, philosopher and theologian, 5.30pm-7.30pm, Pipitea Campus, Victoria University of Wellington. Collaboration between Archdiocese of Wellington, Te Kupenga-Catholic Leadership Institute, and VUW.

Tuesday 13 February Archdiocesan St Valentine's Day Mass - day before due to Valentine's Day falling on Ash Wednesday. Location tbc.

Sunday 3 and Sunday 10 March

Love is a Decision – registrations open for archdiocesan marriage preparation course for engaged couples, 10am-4pm, location tbc. Visit wn.catholic.org.nz/about/ church-mission/marriage-ministries for information and to register.

Saturday 16-Sunday 17 March

> Engaged Encounter - marriage preparation weekend for couples in Karori. Visit www.ceewellington.co.nz for information and to register.

Palmerston North Young Catholics

All 18-35-year-olds – after each Sunday 6pm Mass, are invited to the Cathedral lounge, 7.15pm, for great opportunity to meet like-minded people, form new friendships and get involved.

Archdiocese Church Mission programme 2024

Church Mission team has a range of formation programmes for 2024 to support parishes: creating and implementing a parish pastoral plan; hospitality 101; building families of faith; marriage and enrichment; place for young people (two parts); Pope Francis' writings. For information please email churchmission@wn.catholic.org.nz or ph (04) 496-1709.

Synod synthesis on 'synodality' report

The first session of the Synod on Synodality concluded with a report synthesising the discussions and reflections in Rome over the month of October. This report will go back to local churches around the world for further consideration and input for the next phase of the synodal process and the next session in Rome in October 2024. The report can be downloaded from: tinyurl.com/Synthesis-Report-2023

Multimedia version of Synod Letter

A multimedia version of the Letter to the People of God from the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops has been released to complement the Synod participants' text. The Letter gives thanks for the experience of the Synod, detailing their work and expressing the hope everyone will be able to 'concretely participate in the dynamism of missionary communion indicated by the word "synod". The Letter is available on the Synod website at: tinyurl.com/Synod-Letter-to-People-of-God

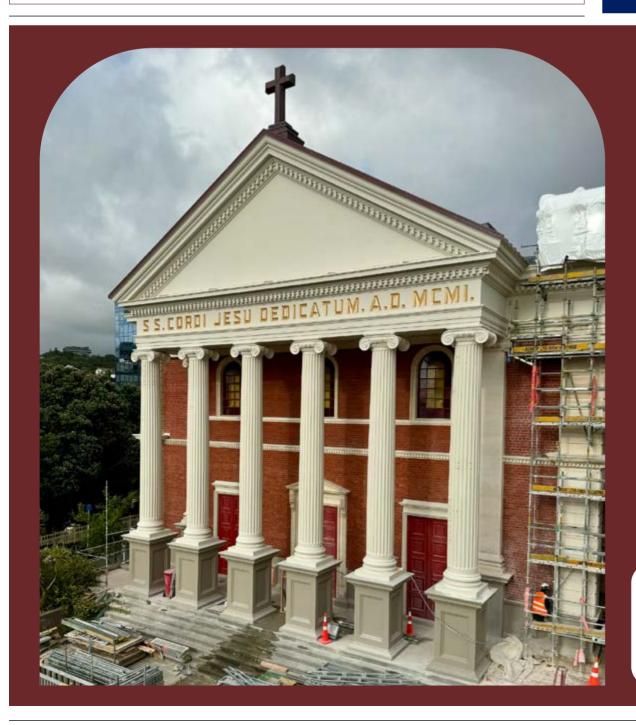


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20 HAKIHEA 2023 NAUMAI Ngā Kōrero | Feature

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception Ko te Rā Nui o te Whakaāhuatanga Harakoretanga 8 December | 8 o Hakihea

As has been the custom for many years, an archdiocesan Mass will be celebrated on the Archdiocese of Wellington feast day, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, 8 December. The Mass will be celebrated at St Teresa's Pro-Cathedral, Karori, at 7pm. The archdiocese will again be entrusted to the care of Mary under the title of the Immaculate Conception at this Mass. Parishes in the archdiocese are asked to renew that Consecration on the following Sunday, 10 December, at all parish Masses. The Act of Consecration of the Archdiocese to Mary, prayer for 8 December, is below right.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception is the day on which the Archdiocese of Wellington annually seeks Mary's guidance and protection with a special prayer of consecration.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December, celebrates the beginning of Mary's life, and her birthday is honoured nine months later on 8 September.

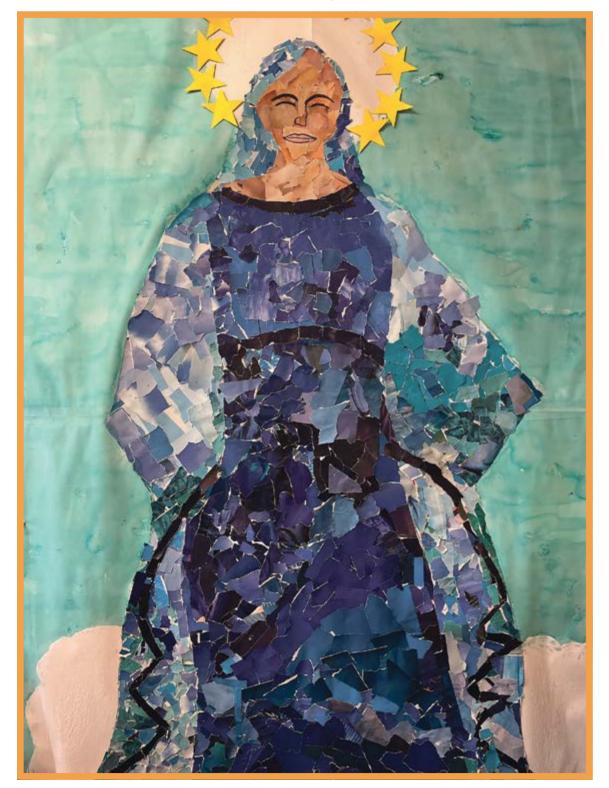
The Catholic Church believes and teaches that Mary was herself conceived immaculate – that is, without the stain of original sin – in her own mother.

This happened through the foreseen merits of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus. It was most fitting that she who was to be the mother of the Son of God should be free from the corruption that sin brought into the world.

Mary's parents – tradition names them Anne and Joachim – conceived and brought her to birth as any other parents, but within her own being Mary was preserved from anything aligned with sinfulness.

Since the 1850s our Archdiocese has been privileged to have this Immaculate Mother as patron.

Each year since then we reconsecrate ourselves, our families, our nation and our world to her protection, asking especially that she keep us safe from the destructive power of earthquakes. May we rejoice again.



This image of Mary was created by the Room 2 students of Sacred Heart, Reefton, who worked hard on their mixed media artwork 'Our Lady of Assumption' for the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, 15 August. Their picture of Mary now graces the school's foyer for all to appreciate.

Photo: Rose O'Connor

Act of Consecration of the Archdiocese to Mary

Prayer for 8 December

Mary, Mother of God, Christian people have always called on you in their hour of need and you have never failed them. We, the Church of Wellington, on this feast of your Immaculate Conception express our love for you and ask your help for our needs and the needs of the whole world. [*Holy Mary, Mother of God ... Response:... pray for us.]

We consecrate to you the Archdiocese of Wellington and its people. May we always admire and strive to live the virtues of your life. Watch over and protect the Church and be with Pope Francis and our bishops as they shepherd Christ's pilgrim church. [*... Response]

We pray for the peoples of the world, that they may learn to know your Son and banish all that is contrary to the Gospel. Inspire people to work for basic human needs and for understanding and mutual trust between nations. May your Son raise up men and women who will spend themselves in alleviating the needs of people in lands where there is suffering, hunger and disease. Have compassion on parents unable to provide for their families, on husbands and wives who are separated, and on children who are victims of ignorance or violence. [*... Response]

Mother of Mercy, through your intercession may the Holy Spirit change the hearts of all and turn them towards truth, justice and charity. Teach them to see that peace will be possible only when all obey God's Law, respecting the rights and dignity of their neighbour. [*... Response]

We ask you especially to protect the parents and families of our land, that they may learn the meaning of love and justice. Strengthen us so that we may withstand the temptations we meet and reach our potential as unique creations of God. [*... Response]

God established the earth on firm foundations. Ask God now to remove from our land the danger of earthquakes and the terror and destruction they bring. [*... Response]

Mother of God, through your intercession may all nations turn from sin. Lead the nations to the loving and merciful heart of your Son, where alone they will find truth, life and peace forever. Amen.

In 1855 Wellington experienced a severe earthquake that rocked the southern part of the North Island. At magnitude 8.2 it was the most powerful ever recorded in New Zealand.

The earthquake rocked Wellington and the Wairarapa at 9.11pm, on 23 January 1855. The earthquake was centred in the south-west Wairarapa along the Wairarapa Fault, about 25kms from Wellington.

Bishop Viard – who had arrived in Wellington in 1850 as Vicar Apostolic of the Southern diocese, headquartered in Wellington, and was appointed Bishop in 1860 – was overseas at the time. He decided on his return to consecrate the Archdiocese of Wellington to the patronage of Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception.