

# LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL)

Newsletter and Journal of Te Hao Nui– Launch Out Formation Programme  
Archdiocese of Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand

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Welcome to the June issue of the Launch Out Letters (LOL)!

This is our first issue with Pope Leo XIV as our pontiff. The transition from Pope Francis to Pope Leo has felt seamless, and the world has warmly embraced him as he hit the ground running. Many are intrigued by this (North and South) American pope and eager to learn more about him.

In this issue, **Catherine Gibbs** unpacks what it means to have Robert Prevost as pope. Having lived through seven pontificates, Catherine brings a seasoned perspective on the Church's evolution and the distinct imprint each pope has left on its mission.

**Terry McAuliffe** offers a reflection on the Gospel for Pentecost, inviting us into the apostles' experience in the upper room—a space where fear turned into faith, and ordinary women and men were transformed into bold disciples.

**Bridget Taumoepeau** reflects on the beauty of formation, both as a necessary process for discipleship and a grace that maintains us as one.

The turning points in the Church—and in our lives as Christians—often happen in upper rooms. The Conclave itself is an upper room experience. For those of us in ministry, this means embracing formation, including time set aside for spiritual retreats and prayer. Without the upper room, we risk reducing the Church to an institution, and ministry to mere occupation.

The gift of the upper room is fully revealed only when we step out into the world to share the Good News. When Pope Leo appeared on the balcony for the first time, he stepped out not just for himself, but for all of us—the Church. Like the apostles, we emerge from our own upper rooms, renewed by the Holy Spirit, ready to be hope-filled bearers of the Good News.

*Maya Bernardo  
Migrant Ministry & Formation Coordinator*

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

*Luke 5: 4*

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Visit the Te Hao Nui-Launch Out webpage: [https://](https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/launch-out-formation-programme/)

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# *From the Upper Room into the World*

Pentecost Sunday, [John 7:37-39](#)

Terry McAuliffe  
Launch Out Graduate



How does one respond after the sudden and unexpected death of a close friend? It can be a major shock. How did the first disciples and apostles cope, after the death and crucifixion of Jesus? I wonder what it was like, for them, as Jesus, their leader and teacher had been taken away, treated as a heretic, judged in the highest court in the land, then suffered such a shameful death. I am not sure that I would have been able to keep faith or would have stayed around in Jerusalem. We are told in today's gospel reading from John that "they were gathered together behind locked doors, because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities." (20:19). If the Jewish authorities could kill Jesus, their leader, despite his being held in such esteem by the people, surely the authorities could do the same to them? Some of the disciples must have thought this new movement was all over. It had been so exciting but now they would have to return to reality. There would not be a Messiah. There would not be a Christ. There would not be "a new heaven and a new earth."

The first reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, tells of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles- how they were set free of their fears of persecution. From then on, they were able to speak in different languages and were able to preach throughout the known world. How amazing and puzzling this must have been even for the apostles and, more so, for those who witnessed their change from ordinary humans to evangelizers!

It is worth wondering what went in the upper room in the fateful day of the Pentecost. We hear very little of what happened in that room. I wonder how they kept faith together. Perhaps during those moments, the memories of their time with Jesus comforted and enlightened them; those times become more than just remembering but an unravelling of the Good News that is to define their lives. As Jews, they were still straddling two worlds- the Judaism they know and Jesus' Good News. During that time, they would have been preparing for the Jewish festival of Shavuoth, commemorating the day Moses received the Ten Commandments in Mount Sinai. Instead, something much bigger has unfolded in the upper room--the fulfillment of the law of Moses and the beginning of a new life for the apostles, and inadvertently, the rest of the world.

We live in troubled and turbulent times. Who knows what some world leaders could do that threatens peace and world order? Who knows what tragedy awaits us? Perhaps the idea of keeping one's head down and avoiding challenges is the best path forward. I wonder if we Christians tend to retreat to the safety of the "locked room," where we feel safe and kept from seeing the painful realities of the world around us.

But our faith tradition is not a "locked room" but the "upper room" where we receive the Holy Spirit and prepare ourselves for mission. We can compare this to our spiritual practices of taking a prayer retreat to get away from the noise of the world to discern our call to mission or the next stage of our mission. In doing so, we can discern God's will in our lives. And together with the gift of discernment we receive the gifts we need to for the mission we are called to do (1 Cor 12: 7).

Recently, we have seen how our own leaders, our cardinals, gathered in Rome after the death of our beloved Pope Francis. The Conclave is an 'upper room' moment; it is more than just an election, but an exercise of intense prayerful discernment. The cardinals would have felt the huge weight of responsibility entrusted by the Church on them. The Holy Spirit guided them and led them to rightfully choose Cardinal Robert Prevost to be the 267th pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. An outcome that neither he nor the other cardinals, and the rest of the world, have foreseen; but as the time of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has guided the cardinals in their discernment. And like the first apostles, Pope Leo XIV, emerged from the upper room of the Conclave to face the colossal challenges of leading the Catholic Church in today's times.

The Feast of Pentecost is a reminder of our call to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit. St Paul in his letter to Timothy reminds Timothy, "The Spirit that God has given us is not a spirit of timidity; it is the spirit of power and love and self-control." (2 Tim 1:7). Listening and praying, in our own upper room, the Spirit of God will enable us to continue our mission to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We will carry the love of God for others in our hearts and show it by our actions. Let us leave the upper room and go out bravely into this troubled world, led by the Spirit of God.



Terry McAuliffe is a born and bred Cantabrian who moved to Wellington in 1978, to teach Mathematics and Economics at Tawa College. He taught there for 30 years, as well as at St Catherine's College, Kilbirnie and Wellington College. Terry completed the Launch out programme and has been a part of the St Joseph's parish and community for over 35 years, as a member of the Finance and Liturgy committees. He is currently involved in Ministry to the Elderly, being part of a team that visits Te Hopai rest home and hospital, taking Holy Communion as well as helping with the Liturgy of the Word service. He is supported by his wife, Trish. Terry and Trish have three adult children and a one-year-old grandson.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Food for Faith** <https://foodforfaith.org.nz/>
- **What happens in a Conclave?** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94NYUP\\_KOVs&ab\\_channel=EWTN](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94NYUP_KOVs&ab_channel=EWTN)
- **Who is Pope Leo XIII?** <https://international.la-croix.com/religion/who-was-pope-leo-xiii-the-inspiration-behind-our-new-pope>
- **Homily of Pope Leo during inauguration** <https://www.ncronline.org/vatican/full-text-homily-pope-leo-xiv-during-mass-inauguration-petrine-ministry>
- **HOPE AND RENEWAL SUMMIT:**—A national moment to rediscover mission, encounter renewal, and lead forward together. *Fr James Mallon* is coming to New Zealand to share what he's learned from helping parishes around the world move from maintenance to mission. This is a rare opportunity to be inspired and equipped for the future of your parish. 3-4 October | Palmerston North. Early bird ends 15 June – register now To Register: [www.hoperenewalsummit.com](http://www.hoperenewalsummit.com)
- Where to download the **official Photo of Pope Leo XIV** [https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/vatican/leone-xiv/Foto-Ufficiale-Papa-Leone-XIV\\_Copyright-VATICAN-MEDIA.jpg](https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/vatican/leone-xiv/Foto-Ufficiale-Papa-Leone-XIV_Copyright-VATICAN-MEDIA.jpg)
- It's here whether we like it or not. A good friend recommended this AI generated resource for reflection, called **Aiden Cinnamon Tea** <https://burnoutfromhumans.net/>. What do you think?





# UPDATES

## PRAYER DAY WITH ANNE POWELL, RC



It had felt like a long time since we were last together. So when we finally gathered again on 17 May. The day was made all the more special by the joy of shared presence and prayer. Though Cardinal John was originally scheduled to lead us, the Conclave kept him from being with us that day. We are deeply grateful to Sr Anne Powell, rc—poet and spiritual director—who graciously stepped in at short notice to guide us through the day.

Anne began by inviting us into a space of deep listening: to the quiet stirrings of our hearts and to the tender, personal ways God responds to each one of us. She encouraged us to listen with openness and gentleness—just as Jesus would.

Our prayer focus for the day was graced by the Jubilee Bear, lovingly brought by Rutger. In a moment that captured the spirit of the day, Rutger gifted the bear to Bonita.

The 17th of May will remain in our hearts—a day touched by grace, by the kindness of one another, and by the gentle presence of Christ amongst us.

### JUNE

7 Maya Bernardo

16 Susan Apathy



# Pope Leo XIV: No Translation Needed

Catherine Gibbs  
Guest Contributor and  
Former Pastoral Mentor

*Ka Mua Ka Muri...Walking backwards into the future* -- Māori whakatauki.

As Pope Leo XIV stepped out on the balcony to greet millions around the world I was overjoyed. Here was a young looking, composed and humble new face. After watching an ailing, courageous Pope Francis living his vocation till his last breath, this new figure portrayed a surprising freshness. He will be the first pope younger than me! There have been seven popes in my lifetime. Thanks to Pope John XXIII and Vatican II we're in the early years of Church renewal. I'm reassured that no matter the hopes and anxieties of every age the Church in the world faces, we continue to receive

God's grace. Change is constant and essential. If we're to be the living body of Christ and saved by hope, then we must be open to the power of the Holy Spirit throughout life. *Ka Mua Ka Muri* helps me to appreciate how Pope Leo XIV is drawing on the past to inform his future actions. It's early days but already Pope Leo "is seen as a bridge between continents, cultures and ecclesial realities." Celine Hoyer. La Croix 14.5.25



Copied from <https://insidethevatican.com/news/newsflash/letter-45-2025-monday-may-12-first-press-meeting/>

## Catholic Social Teaching

In choosing the name Leo XIV, Cardinal Robert Prevost has cast his pontificate in a social light. Pope Leo XIII's social encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 was the first in a long line of encyclicals considered as the Church's social teaching. At their core, these texts affirm that human dignity must be the standard by which we organize our lives. Already Pope Leo is saying that he wants CST to speak to today's revolution: Artificial Intelligence, economic disruption and emerging threats to human dignity, justice and labor. This message resonates strongly within me after serving for over twelve years with Caritas.

## Missionary Outreach

Leo XIV is a pope for our time; coming from a richly multicultural American background he holds dual citizenship in Peru. Described as a Pan-American pope his influence in the global south, which now has the highest concentration of Catholics in the world, cannot be underestimated. As head of the Augustinian order he has travelled widely and knows the challenges missionaries face including war, malnutrition, and climate induced disasters. I'm inspired by his vision for "a universal but not uniform church, capable of holding together diverse geographies and ideologies." La Croix 14.5.2025.

My missionary brother in Papua New Guinea emailed:

*"I was happy to hear that Pope Leo has served many years as a missionary in Peru. Living and working as a missionary in PNG I imagine that the Pope will have learned personally about the challenges people face in developing countries, but also how the basic human needs of family, and care for children are universal. As a missionary one learns to be creative when it comes to proclaiming the Good News, and I imagine creativity might be a beneficial experience as he faces the unknown in the universal church."* Philip Gibbs SVD

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## Community, Critical Thinking, and Role of Women

I checked online to learn that Augustinians have inspired the world through their charisms of Community and Critical thinking. Pope Leo has already shown how important collegial governance is during many meetings in his first weeks in office. This is positive as both gifts are greatly needed in our modern world of individualism assaulted by social media's 'Tower of Babel.' More than anything he desires unity within the church. *"For our part, we want to be a small leaven of unity, communion and fraternity within the world. We want to say to the world, with humility and joy: Look to Christ! Come closer to him!"* Leo XIV Inauguration Mass 18.5.25.

During his years in Peru Cardinal Prevost demonstrated support for women by appointing them to leadership roles. He supported Francis' reforms to include women in church governance, such as naming three women to the office that selects new bishops. He opposed the ordination of women, as priests or deacons, warning it would risk "clericalizing" their vocation. In his view, laypeople should live out their baptismal calling without seeking clerical status. I'm in agreement and feel validated knowing I'm not on my own on this hot issue.

## Synodality

Leo XIV is a strong advocate for synodality by promoting active listening for the Spirit in every person. People who attended the synods reported how Cardinal Prevost demonstrated deeply respectful listening and was consistently a courageous voice for the vulnerable. When I heard him speak for the first time in English it was like a new door had opened. Without needing translation his communications will change the way the English speaking world understands papal messages. Consider this profound statement: *"What I am for you terrifies me; what I am with you consoles me. For you I am a bishop; but with you I am a Christian. The former is a duty; the latter a grace. The former is a danger; the latter salvation."* St Augustine of Hippo quoted by Pope Leo XIV.

## Committed to Caring for our Common Home

The conclave has chosen a pope who'll bring continuity to the work of Pope Francis. This includes the urgency outlined in *Laudato Si* and *Laudato Deum* for all humanity to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. While I'm comforted by Pope Leo XIV naming this as a high priority, I'm worried that so many distractions in our lives are barriers to the necessary critical changes. How has the decade old cosmic vision of interconnectedness made a difference to our collective choices? Can we lift our eyes to notice humanity raising hope by their caring, committed lives?

## Building Bridges to Peace

Leo XIV has made a point of building bridges which will help unify our differences. In an A I age he says: *"Humanity needs Christ as the bridge... Help each other to build bridges with dialogue, with meetings, uniting us all to be one people, always in peace."* Leo XIV First message 8.5.25. His opening blessing was a cry for 'Peace for all.' We must join him in praying for peace in our world especially in reaching out now as a bridge seeking peace in Ukraine and Gaza.

Pope Leo XIV brings a deeply spiritual Christ-centred vision in which Christians *"proclaim the wonders of the one who called you."* This is a spirituality which emphasizes unity. As we begin this Leonine era we've been invited to walk together as one people *"towards God and to love one another."* Leo XIV Inauguration Mass 18.5.25.

No translation needed. I'm energized as a pilgrim of hope.



Catherine Gibbs has worked in all levels of education until retirement in 2024. She has wide experience across music, arts, ecology, liturgy and theology. Born in Lower Hutt she returned there after 52 years away and enjoys re-connecting with people and places. Catherine is a member of Sts Peter and Paul community within the larger parish of Te Awa Kairangi. She keeps busy contributing in different ways to parish life including being a member of the liturgy committee. She participates regularly in a Christian meditation group. Five years ago she joined the Food For Faith online ministry team and works as their administrator. Along with earlier mentoring commitments to Launch Out, Catherine has maintained many national links from previous employment opportunities with Caritas, Te Kupenga, Ecology Justice and Peace, National Liturgy office, and Catholic schools. She is a member of the stewardship committee of St Joseph's historic church Pāuatahanui.

# From Clay to Vase

Bridget Taumoepeau  
Pastoral Mentor

There has been much talk over the last few years about different views of the Catholic Church - the terms conservative, progressive, liberal etc have been bandied around, despite the fact that they may not really be useful as descriptions of faith. The pontificate of Pope Francis has sadly polarised people, as any era of reform or change tends to do.



This has brought to mind the idea of the external symbols of Catholicism, as well as the internalisation of the true meaning of the Gospel and its message on how to live our lives. A well-known recent convert talked of his visits to the sacrament of reconciliation, confessing his failure to attend Mass from time to time, while apparently unaware of the fact that his everyday attitudes etc seem to ignore the message of loving one's neighbour as oneself; specifically, the teaching of the parable of the Good Samaritan, where someone from a traditionally despised community was the example of love and compassion. His attitude may not be as malign as it appears, but an example of an immaturity of faith and/or a lack of formation.

External signs of status within the Church, as well as ostentatious demonstrations of faith or piety were the norm until the Second Vatican Council. That Council's emphasis on the laity and the importance of the unifying sacrament of baptism, led slowly but surely away from the external signs of faith to an emphasis on the underlying principles preached by Jesus. Scripture took on a new relevance, as did the hallmarks of social justice. The return to the sources (*ressourcement*) promoted by the theologians and bishops of VCI, reminded us of the importance of the longstanding traditions (with a small t) of the Church, as opposed to the Tradition (with a capital T) that had grown up. It is difficult to equate the Sermon on the Mount or the Final Judgement with richly embroidered vestments or the need to confess having swallowed some water while brushing one's teeth before Mass. The latter was an example given by Pope Francis, of his own concern as a child.

The attachment to Tradition was slow to dissipate and the teachings of VCI have by no means been fully incorporated into the life of everyday Catholics. It was this situation that confronted Pope Francis over a decade ago, when he was elected as the Successor of Peter.

The changes are not simply a move to simplicity, or a giving up of habits and gestures that have grown familiar. It is the internalisation of the Gospel message. It can be seen as a maturing of one's faith, which leads me to the issue of formation. This is a term that I have found difficult to define. Religious formation is not usually included in the dictionary definition of 'formation', although I rather like the description 'the act of fabricating something in a particular shape – e.g. *The potter's skilful formation transformed the clay into a beautiful vase.*' Inadvertent biblical references there! And the use of the word 'skilful' seems particularly pertinent. Another specific description is 'the process of developing and shaping a person's understanding, faith, and practice of a religious tradition.'

Much has been commented on about the formation of our two latest Popes – Francis in the tradition of St Ignatius and Leo in that of St Augustine – and the importance of that formation in their practice of the faith. Closer to home, the

three pillars of the Launch Out formation would seem to be described in the definition – understanding is addressed by the theological study; faith by spiritual direction; and practice by the pastoral projects; all in all, the absorption into one's inner being, of the meaning and practice of the Gospel – the beauty of formation.

