

# WelCom

Newsletter of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand

ISSUE 1 - June 2025

## From Archbishop Paul

We have been living in a very graced time in the life of the Church. The death of Pope Francis on Easter Monday was so poignant, after he had gone to St Peter's Square the day before. It said so much about him; he wanted to be with his people as they celebrated the Resurrection, ignoring his own health limitations. It was a sign of the movement of the Holy Spirit and it was so fitting that the next day, his life on this earth came to its completion.

The outpouring of grief and gratitude for Pope Francis from all around the world, including in our own country, spoke of the impact his papacy has had in a fractured world. He was able to speak of things of which others were not able. He challenged ways of thinking and acting, while also showing the compassionate face of Christ. His leadership was what was needed for the life of the Church and our world.

The fascination with the conclave was also surprising. The film *Conclave* had made many aware of the nature of how the conclave

operated. But unlike the film, this was a time of deep prayer and calling upon the Holy Spirit for guidance. The cardinals' meetings were reflecting upon the needs of the Church at this time and what would be the characteristics of the next pope in light of this. While many talked of factions and of voting blocs, it was actually about discerning who was being called to be the shepherd of the flock of the Church.

It was therefore with great joy and assurance that, after four voting rounds, Cardinal Robert Prevost emerged as Pope Leo XIV. He was not top of the polls by experts, not well known by many in the Church, but the one the Holy Spirit had guided the cardinals to choose.

His initial days and the way he has conducted himself have shown us that he is a man of faith, a man who understands the enormity of the role he has been called to, but who trusts that God will give him the strength and graces he needs.

Each of us, in the microcosms of our lives of faith, can also draw strength from this. God



is at work in ways we so often underestimate. Many people who would never have thought of faith or religion are looking at the Church and they are wondering. Who will they turn to in order to have their questions answered? What will our responses be? How well do we understand our own Church and what it believes and teaches? What is our own witness of life and faith, so as to be able to engage with these people?

The wonderful thing is that it isn't too late. We can always deepen our life of prayer, our understanding of the Church, our participation in the life of the faith community. So many are looking for the truth that sets them free. We have found it in Jesus Christ, and as we continue this Jubilee year, as pilgrims of hope, this is not just for ourselves but for others. May we make the most of this graced time and allow it to form us as true missionaries of the Gospel.

Yours in Christ

+ P. B. Martin SM

+Paul Martin SM  
Metropolitan Archbishop

## WelCom

- Have an event coming up in your parish?
- Something you're proud of, or would like to get the word out about?
- Need volunteers or help with something?

Please let us know!

Info can be sent to

[b.mack@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:b.mack@wn.catholic.org.nz)

We look forward to hearing from you!



Please send us  
your stories!



## Pentecost blessings for neophytes

It was a very special evening at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Wellington on June 8. Not only was it Pentecost, but at the 7pm Mass several people received a special blessing from Archbishop Paul.

The people receiving blessings were neophytes – those who were Baptised, Confirmed, and received the Eucharist at Easter across the Archdiocese. Representing a variety of ages, countries and backgrounds, they were welcomed into the Catholic Church by an enthusiastic, supportive congregation.

The blessing of the Neophytes echoed the blessing brought down on the Apostles of the early Church. As Acts 2:4 says: “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Pentecost Sunday was also the Jubilee of Lay Movements. The Jubilee of Lay Movements is a special celebration in the 2025 Jubilee year during which groups of everyday Church members – youth, prayer, and community groups – gather to share their faith, energy and charism. This important event, held Sunday, June 8 in the Archdiocese (and around the world), featured activities, music, and prayer, all centred on our Cathedral complex. Organised by the Focolare Movement in the Archdiocese, the day was a great success.





# Catholic Schools Day brings joy

It was a blessed autumn day throughout the Archdiocese on Wednesday, May 28 for Catholic Schools Day. Schools across the Archdiocese celebrated the annual event in different ways.

St Brendan's and St Joseph's schools in Upper Hutt got together for the day with the help of some wonderful leaders from St Patrick's College Silverstream. There was a liturgy for younger tamariki, and a Mass for years 4 and up tamariki.

While everyone was together, the tamariki and adults added their thumbs to special canvases, to be displayed at each of the two schools to celebrate shared faith and togetherness.

Students celebrated Catholic Schools Day at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Wellington in many ways. There was a Talent Quest, stunning liturgy on Catholic schools

Shine like stars in the world."

Ākonga (students) took part in a variety of engaging activities, including designing personal and faith-based flags, creating mandala art, navigating a Sphero obstacle course, making dreamcatchers, taking on a Catholic trivia quiz, going on a treasure hunt and solving an escape room challenge.

Down on the South Island, St Joseph's primary school Nelson celebrated Catholic Schools Day with a special Mass in which students carried no fewer than 42 different flags to represent the nationalities in the school. Seventy students also visited with the Giants basketball team.

At St Peter Chanel in Motueka, one day just wasn't enough to celebrate Catholic Schools Day; there was so much planned that it was stretched



house games (held indoors thanks to torrential rain).

Thursday was Grandparents' Day. It began with a liturgy, then grandparents and special parish friends joined a pilgrimage – which, due to more rain, became a reflective indoor discussion about hope in their lives.

At St Canice's primary school in Westport, students visited themed rooms like the Pope Room and Rosary Room. There was also a Mass, and "spot the saint" scavenger hunt.

The theme of Catholic Schools Day 2025 was "Shine like stars in the world: E tīaho ana koe hei rama i te ao." As is the case every year, it was an opportunity to be a source of joy and love for communities across the motu, showcasing what Catholic education is all about.

***“E tīaho ana koe hei rama i te ao  
– Shine like stars in the world.”***

and the history of the schools, and beautiful staff reflection too.

St Brigid's in Johnsonville and St Benedict's in Khandallah had a wonderful time coming together. Students in years 1-4 gathered at St Benedict's, while years 5-8 were based at St Brigid's. The day began with liturgies centred on the theme "E tīaho ana koe hei rama i te ao –

out across the whole week.

Things kicked off with a liturgy on Monday, reflecting on the theme Pilgrims of Hope. Tuesday was a special moment for the community with the Baptism of a student, Zayne, during a school-parish Mass.

On Wednesday, a giant cake – delicious and inclusive of everyone's needs – was followed by



# Cardinal Dew on the word that changed one cardinal's life forever

One word. One word, which changed the life of one cardinal.

I knew I was going to hear a word – one word only – but I still waited with bated breath to hear it.

There had already been immediate applause as we cardinals counted the votes in the ballot on the afternoon of May 8. The counting had not been completed, but as it became clear that Cardinal Robert Prevost had enough votes to become the new Bishop of Rome, the applause that filled the Sistine Chapel was as deafening as it was enthusiastic.

We all knew that we had a new Pope, but protocol called for the voting process had to be completed.

Cardinal Prevost was then formally told that he had been elected and asked if he accepted the will of the gathered Cardinals.

Then came the one word: "Accepto."

I found it a very powerful moment. This man was one of us; yet, to me, it was very clear that this was the work of the Holy Spirit. With that one word, he was prepared for his life to be dramatically changed. He knew that this was to be his way from then on – to give his life in love and in service, both to the Church and the wider world.



With humility and gratitude, he accepted a calling which meant that his whole life would be public and would never be the same again.

Pope Leo's "accepto" calls us to pray for him and support him daily with our prayers. He is a man of deep holiness. Indeed, his knowledge of who he is in God's eyes enabled him to make his acceptance response.

This was now a renewed response to the original invitation he heard from Jesus many years ago when he heard the call of Jesus: "Follow me." [...]

While we were singing the Litany of the Saints, I was very aware that we were being accompanied in prayer by many people in New Zealand whom I had invited to pray the Litany of the Saints as we prepared to elect a new Bishop of Rome. I was overwhelmed by the generosity of people who responded to that invitation to pray to all the Saints, imploring their prayerful intercession. I knew that there were individuals, families, diocesan staffs, parish groups and many people who accompanied us with that powerful prayer. I take this opportunity to say, "Thank You".

As 133 of us processed into the Sistine Chapel, accompanied at that stage by the Sistine Chapel Choir, I was filled with gratitude and with the awareness that we were not on our own. The Spirit of God was guiding us, and many millions of people around the world were supporting us.

**This is an abridged version of Cardinal John Dew's reflection on participating in the recent conclave that elected Pope Leo XIV. Read the full reflection at [catholic.org.nz/news](https://catholic.org.nz/news)**

The image shows the CathNews New Zealand logo, which includes a green fern leaf icon above the text "CathNews" and "NEW ZEALAND" below it. Below the logo, it says "Sign up to receive Catholic news in your inbox twice a week..." and "cathnewsnz.com". To the right, a pair of hands holds a smartphone displaying the CathNews website, which features a green header and a photo of a person in a library or bookstore.





## Coadjutor Emeritus Bishop Owen Dolan RIP

The New Zealand bishops joined family and friends of Bishop Owen Dolan for the former Palmerston North Bishop's funeral Mass on May 6.

Bishop Dolan had been appointed Coadjutor Bishop of Palmerston North in 1995, when Bishop Peter Cullinane was unwell. He served with Bishop Cullinane, whose health improved, until the Pope accepted Bishop Dolan's resignation in 2004.

Bishop Dolan had last year celebrated 70 years of priestly ministry before his death on April 28 at the age of 96.

Bishop Cullinane's homily at the funeral Mass acknowledged Bishop Dolan's life of faithful service and his warm humanity.

"His love of storytelling, his humour, his respect for others and their views – these weren't passing traits," Bishop Cullinane said. "He was genuine, faithful and utterly without pretence."

Bishop Cullinane recalled how Bishop Dolan embodied his chosen episcopal motto: "Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus."

# Pope Leo XIV

*Get to know the new Holy Father*

**1955**

Born in Chicago  
on September 14

**1977**

Graduated with a **bachelor's degree in mathematics** from the Augustinian-run Villanova University

**1977**

Joined the Augustinians, making his **solemn vows** in 1981

**1982**

Gained **degree in theology** from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago

**1985**

Joined the **Augustinian mission** in Peru, serving there until 1999

**1999**

Elected **head of the Augustinians'** Chicago-based **province**

**2014**

Pope Francis appointed him Bishop of Chiclayo, in northern Peru

**2023**

Appointed **Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Bishops**, the department that recommends bishops' appointments to the Pope.  
**Elevated to the College of Cardinals**

**2001**

Elected **prior general** of the Augustinians worldwide, serving until 2013

**2025**


Elected **Pope** on May 8, becoming the 266th successor of St Peter. He chose the name **Leo XIV**, the first pope to choose the name since Leo XIII was elected in 1878

**The new pope speaks** English, Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese and can read Latin and German



Pope Leo XIV processes out of the Sistine Chapel after celebrating his first Mass as pope on May 9, with the cardinals who elected him. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)





*“The simple beauty of the Mass truly showcased Christ’s presence within each person”*

## Late Night Masses light up Wellington

By Regina Fernandes, Youth Coordinator

2025 has been a year of fresh starts for youth ministry in Wellington. I recently came into the role of youth coordinator in early March and have been able to take on some amazing initiatives, one of them being the Late Night Mass for Young People.

In a world where Christianity seems to be decreasing, an evening Mass in France proved otherwise. This is the candlelit Mass at Lille Catholic University, which brings together hundreds of young people on a Tuesday at 10pm. This initiative inspired Archbishop Paul and Fr Patrick Bridgman to start something similar here in Wellington. From that thought was born the monthly Late Night Mass for Young People.

On the first Friday of every month, young people from across Wellington are invited to gather to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. Celebrated in the Sacred Heart Cathedral chapel, the only light emanated from candles around the room, creating a calm and beautiful atmosphere.

The chapel filled up quickly, everyone kneeling and sitting in silent prayer before Our Lord. People from all over Wellington came together, from Wellington South

to Lower Hutt and all the way from Porirua. The simple beauty of the Mass truly showcased Christ’s presence within each person.

After the Mass, everyone is invited to meet in the foyer for supper and fellowship. Most people stayed and got to know each other, with conversations and laughter filling the room in minutes. For many, where their parish may be small or the schedule means they are usually in one spot, this Mass grants the opportunity to not only celebrate Mass with young people from across Wellington, but to meet and develop friendships with young Catholics.

The Late Night Masses for Young People have just started, and we hope for them to grow to fill up the Cathedral. So, save the date for each first Friday of the month and come celebrate the Eucharist with young Catholics from over Wellington. Additionally, if you would like to participate in the readings, offertory or music, please contact ADW Young Church on Facebook or Instagram.

I hope to see you all at the next Late Night Mass!



# O'Shea Shield warms up Whanganui

Whanganui was buzzing in mid-May. Late autumn may have been bringing a chill to the air, but inside Cullinane College things were heating up with the O'Shea Shield competition.

Seventeen Catholic secondary schools in the Wellington Archdiocese and Palmerston North Diocese competed to test their skills around a central topic, as they've been doing almost annually since 1946. This year's topic was "Pilgrims of Hope" – fitting, of course, since 2025 is a special Year of Jubilee with that very theme.

In battling for the Shield, about 300 students competed in events including debating, junior prepared speech, oratory, impromptu speech, religious questions, Scripture reading in English and in te reo Māori, and drama. Students came from as far afield as Hawke's Bay and Nelson.

St Patrick's College Silverstream won the top prize. Three colleges finished in second: Sacred Heart Girls' College in New Plymouth, St Patrick's College in Wellington and St Mary's College.

The last time Whanganui hosted the O'Shea Shield was 20 years ago, back in 2005. The only years the O'Shea Shield competition has not taken place since 1946 were in 1947, due to a polio outbreak, and 2020-21 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Well done to everyone who took part!



# Celebrating identity through art

St Brigid's School in Johnsonville recently engaged talented Wellington-based artist and illustrator Margaret Tolland to create a series of murals around the school grounds. This project aimed to refresh and enliven the school's outdoor environment, and followed the installation of a large barrel canopy in January – marking the final stage of this exciting outdoor transformation.

The murals reflect key aspects of the school's identity, including a tribute to patron saint, St Brigid,

a vibrant visual representation of the school values and a colourful celebration of the school team manu (birds): Titipounamu (years 0-3), Tūī (years 4-6), and Kākā (years 7-8) in Aotearoa New Zealand nature.

"The transformed space looks absolutely fabulous – full of life, colour and meaning. We are thrilled to celebrate the completion of this vibrant and inspiring addition to our school environment," said Principal/ Tumuaiki Jennifer Ioannou.



"We are incredibly grateful to Margaret Tolland for sharing her creative talents with us and for so beautifully supporting our vision to renew and enhance our outdoor spaces. Her work will undoubtedly inspire our tamariki for years to come," Jennifer added.

Margaret Tolland is a full-time artist and illustrator, with a background as a secondary school art teacher and art educator at Pātaka Art + Museum. In 2024, she illustrated the award-winning book *Nani Jo me ngā Mokopuna Porohiānga*, which received a New Zealand Book Award – a testament to her skill and passion for visual storytelling.



## Catholic Social Services welcomes new social worker

God has a plan for every one of us – even if that path sometimes leads us to places we never expected.

That was a takeaway from a mihi whakatau held on Monday, May 26 to welcome Catholic Social Services' newest social worker, David "DJ" Manuel.

DJ's time will be split between supporting the guests at Compassion Soup Kitchen and delivering whānau-centred services alongside the wider team at Catholic Social Services.

At the mihi whakatau, DJ acknowledged the support of his whānau, who encouraged him to step out and apply for the position, and who will continue to be a source of support in his new role. So, too, will his faith; he's looking forward to his role and helping people from all backgrounds often

living on the margins of society and finding themselves in need of a helping hand.

A packed room on the first floor of the building Catholic Social Services and the Sisters of Compassion soup kitchen share on the corner of Tory and Haining Streets in Te Aro in Wellington was the site of the event.

Sisters of Compassion Kaihautu Māori Gabriel Tupou and Pā Gerry Burns led the mihi whakatau, which also featured karakia, waiata, prayer and thanks to God for DJ's arrival.

Among the speakers was Catholic Social Services Director Chris Ward.

"God prepares us for these times," he said. "We're all on a journey together. He waka eke noa."

DJ also spoke, sharing his journey of how he came to Catholic Social

Services and the Archdiocese of Wellington. He spoke of how he trained as a hairdresser, and discussed the importance of helping others, sharing his own lived experience of homelessness in 1994 and the help the Sisters of Compassion gave him.

The event ended with morning tea – but not before DJ gave a rousing haka warmly acknowledged by everyone in the room.



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