

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 July issue for 2025!

The Gospel for the 15th Sunday of Ordinary Time is on the Good Samaritan. **Jude McKee**, in her reflection, invites us to shift perspective—to not imagine ourselves as the compassionate Samaritan but the man left beaten and broken on the road. This image of vulnerability—helpless, forgotten, and in need of compassion—can be deeply confronting. It's far easier to see ourselves as the Good Samaritan, offering help, than to acknowledge our own need for rescue and unconditional love.

Margaret Bearsley shares her insights on pastoral leadership after six years in *Te Hao Nui – Launch Out*. She highlights how leadership in ministry differs from leadership in secular contexts. The key distinction lies in discernment—the listening for and responding to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As Margaret beautifully puts it, *“The only authority the pastoral leader has is that of submitting to the power of the Holy Spirit.”* This surrender is both humbling and empowering, shaping leadership as a spiritual vocation rather than a position of power.

Bridget Taumoepeau reflects on Pope Francis's wisdom about joy—describing it as both a gift and a sign of God's closeness. She speaks of a longing for Francis, a feeling that is itself part of joy, mingled with the hope for what Leo brings. As Bridget notes, *“Joy is complicated.”* It is not always exuberant; sometimes it is quiet, aching, but always nourishing and encouraging.

Pastoral leadership is a tapestry that is complex, painful and joyful. We are sustained by the accompaniment and love of God who journeys with us through the Holy Spirit. At the heart of it, it is a leadership that calls us to be led by God, so God can lead through us.

*Maya Bernardo,
Migrant Ministry & Formation Coordinator*



*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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Pondering on who is my neighbour?

15th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Luke 10:25-37

Jude McKee
Launch Out Candidate

Today our Gospel takes us to that familiar lesson - the parable of the good Samaritan. An educated man asks Jesus what can he do to gain eternal life? This then suggests that he does believe eternal life is obtainable.



But as for ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ the answer is simple. It isn’t actually about what we ‘do’, it is about ‘by God’s grace’ that we inherit eternal life. But Jesus didn’t leave the well-to-do man without some instruction. After discussing what is written in the law which the educated man knew well, including that he should love his neighbour as himself. I wonder was he trying to trick Jesus when he asked him ‘who is my neighbour’.

And then came Jesus’ teaching. The parable of the good Samaritan who helped a Jewish man – a man who in any other circumstance at that time, his own people would not have stopped for, and would certainly not have cared for.

So here’s a different perspective for us. Imagine lying in that ditch. Wounded. Broken. Dying. We need to be rescued. We need to be saved. And the people we think would save us walk on by. They do nothing. In actual fact, they actually cannot save us. But along comes ‘someone’ who can help us. Someone whom we least expect. And not only do they bind up our wounds, but they take us to a safe place, and they ensure that our on-going care is met.

If the well-to-man, the scholar of the law, put himself in that ditch, imagine his surprise when he was saved by somebody he least expected would help him. Isn’t God amazing! God isn’t only looking out for the Catholics. God saves anyone who accepts the saving grace of God. God gives us eternal life. Nobody else – only God. When God sent Jesus to walk among us, to teach us, to be a guide for how we are to live our lives, God knew what he was doing.

And so now as we consider “who is our neighbour?” we should come to the conclusion that our neighbours are anyone God loves. What we are actually called to do is to see the person God sees. Make no judgement. That is not our role. So it must then be completely inappropriate to ask the question “Who is my neighbour?” in this context, because that suggests there are maybe some people out there we don’t need to love, and that is completely wrong.

The final instruction, that we should show mercy, is the clear indicator that there is no-one we should not be prepared to help. As God reaches out to save the wounded and broken, so must we reach out to our brothers and sisters – those we know and those we don’t know – and care for them – and by God’s grace they will be saved.



ONLINE RESOURCES

- **CathNews New Zealand** <https://cathnewsnz.com/> - An online resource produced by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference (NZCBC). Please sign and subscribe.
- Resource for Sunday homilies and reflection where Launch Out Candidates occasionally guests - **Food for Faith** <https://foodforfaith.org.nz/>
- **CRUX**. An independent online resource that covers the Vatican and Church news around the world. <https://cruxnow.com/category/vatican>
- New free Catholic online resource. Founders are: Dr Joseph Grayland, Michael Kelly SJ, John Murphy, SM and Professor Thomas O' Loughlin - **Flashes of Insight** <https://flashesinsight.com/>
- Much talked about documentary about Pope Leo XIV, '**Leon de Peru**' <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-06/watch-the-vatican-media-documentary-leon-de-peru.html>
- **Laudato si** Week - May 24-31 a celebration of 10 years of inspiration and action since the great encyclical was published. For amazing resources click here <https://laudatosiweek.org/>. And also check out some of these beautiful resources:
 - ◊ **Laudato si Book club** - a 6 session programme working through the encyclical.
 - ◊ **A Prayer for our earth** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbBYMlkCsi4>
- There are still many misconceptions about Synodality. Watch this video by Pedro Gabriel on **Synodality Explained: 4 Common Myths**
- A good video on **Baptism**, particularly for parents of children who are not enrolled in Catholic schools <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pD7kE8qUz5A>
- **Magisterium AI**- An AI app for Catholic church teachings, canon law, etc. This can be a useful alternative for Google search, for ministry-related work <https://www.magisterium.com/>



PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

A DIFFERENT KIND OF LEADERSHIP

Margaret Bearsley
Launch Out Candidate

For my most recent birthday, my identical twin sister sent me a card that I really love. My twin and me; we're alike, but different. *That's us.*



As I draw towards the conclusion of my Launch Out journey, I am reflecting on what makes leadership 'pastoral leadership'.

I think I must be almost totally task-oriented; I just think in terms of getting things done.

I am very familiar with business leadership. When I took up my first Chief Executive role in 2011, I had already been working for that public sector agency for around seven years. During that time, I had worked my way up to a senior position, so the change wrought by becoming CEO was mainly around the responsibilities that now all sat with me.

Let's call the responsibilities the 'hard' change. It was the 'soft' change that was the most difficult to deal with. Suddenly my former workmates were now my staff. Suddenly, I was their boss. The first year was tricky, due to the relationship change.

Fortunately, my demanding Board totally backed my professional development, and allowed me to attend all manner of leadership development courses and conferences. Thinking about all that training at a very high level, I guess it was all about how to use one's authority.

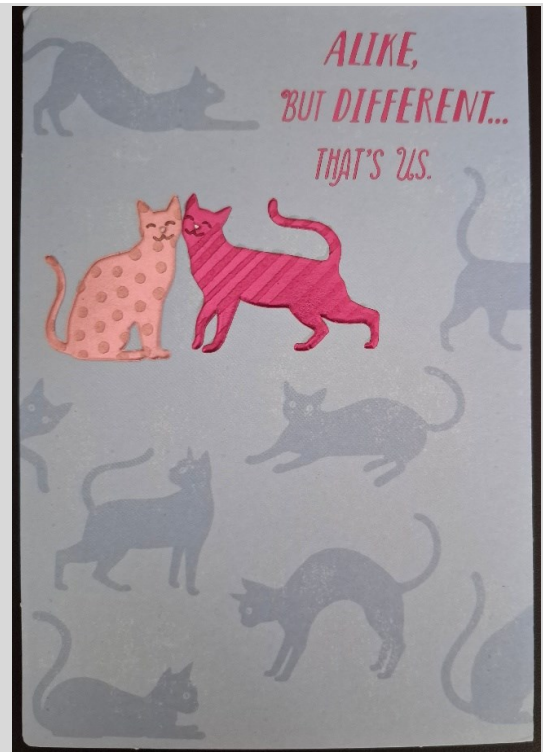
There was a lot of blatant sexism in the 2010s, and I don't mean the traditional kind in which women are put down or made to feel second class. It was the opposite, with everything male being denounced, especially 'their' leadership style.

The stand-out business leadership style that was being promoted, and still is valid, was the Servant Leader. That immediately strikes a chord for those of us from the Christian tradition, but in the business world it is not Christian so much as humanist.

According to Wikipedia: a servant leader shares power, puts the needs of the employees first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. To that I would add: the servant leader is prepared to do any task no matter how menial if other employees are expected to do such tasks—empty the dishwasher, take the recycling out, sign for deliveries.

But, like many (most? all?) people in leadership roles, I often feel a total fraud. It is the staff, especially the managers, who do the heavy lifting of the business operations. It is their success that makes me a successful leader. But my teams have generally always given me their total loyalty, support, and, I think, even love, because they can see the authenticity of my belief in them, and my acknowledgement of the real success being due to their work.

Having said all that, I very occasionally pull rank and require a reluctant staffer to do something they would rather not do.



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And right there, it seems to me, looking back over the past nearly six years of Launch Out, is the key difference between business leadership and pastoral leadership.

I have discovered through my various Launch Out parish pastoral projects that I have no authority at all in the parish, and I certainly cannot 'pull rank'. As I read over these words, by the way, it seems pretty clear that I think about pastoral leadership in terms of 'doing pastoral tasks' together with, or at least with the blessing of, our parish priest.

The parts of my business experience that have helped me with parish projects include organisational and communication skills and the ability to do public speaking such as short presentations at Mass.

The one thing I have learned that has made the biggest difference to my Launch Out projects was figuring out how to really connect with my parish priest—we have had a few since I joined my parish in the early 2010s.

When I started out with my first project or two, it was about getting the priest to 'let' me do the project. That involved meetings and explanations and clear outlines of what would be involved, including assuring him there would be no demands made on his own scarce time.

But it was a change in me that has resulted in the parish priest doing projects *together* with me. I can only say it was the movement of the Holy Spirit in my heart. I stopped doing, in my heart, the 2010s criticism of men's (i.e., priests') leadership style, and I started praying for my parish priest. Really praying, with love in my heart.

This has to have changed my demeanour in subtle ways. My current parish priest seems to be at ease with me, and not at all threatened. I guess I no longer behave in ways that may seem threatening.

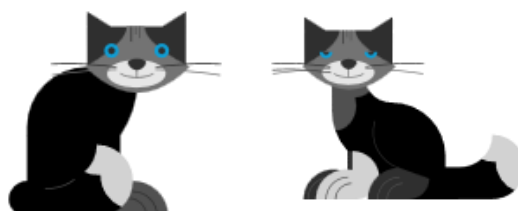
Another big step forward in his and my ability to achieve things together came about through a Launch Out learning day in mid-2022 on the Enneagram. I had a very powerful experience of self-discovery at that seminar: all my life I had thought a particular behaviour of the 6 personality type (second-guessing people's motives) was a strength, but it's actually an unhealthy trait. Now, when I catch myself doing it, I can stop myself and simply take people at their word; take them at face value, and I am much happier in all my relationships. It's incredible the difference this has made.

Using the insights gained from the Enneagram also enabled me to find appropriate and genuine ways to relate to my parish priest. I think this has helped him to trust that I am on his side. And he's right; I truly am. And when we work together, we are totally a team.

To sum up, pastoral leadership seems to me to work well when the Holy Spirit is at its heart. The only authority the pastoral leader has is that of submitting to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Recognising my parish priest's strengths and vulnerabilities, and authentically supporting him, has been just about all it's taken to be able to achieve projects, programmes, liturgies and meetings together in a real partnership. The rest is just good skills and doing the hard yards.

Business leadership and pastoral leadership; they're a bit like identical twins. Alike, but different.



An Explosion of Joy

Bridget Taumoepeau
Pastoral Mentor

The Gospel reading for the feast of the Ascension this year describes the disciples, after seeing Christ ascending into heaven, as worshipping Him and going back to Jerusalem 'full of joy.' This is all the more remarkable, as they might have been excused for feeling sad at the disappearance of their Lord, even though he promised that He would be sending down the Spirit to them.

And the day before, on 31 May, we had celebrated the Feast of the Visitation. Molly Cahill, writing for America magazine, describes Elizabeth's reaction to the visit from Mary as 'an explosion of joy.' In her article she compares the joy of those cousins, to that joy that arises from contact with her own family and friends.

These reflections on joy remind us that this was the hallmark of Francis' pontificate. He always linked joy to the Gospel, exemplified in his early Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* – The Joy of the Gospel, described by Massimo Faggioli as 'the manifesto of Francis' – the call to all of us to refocus our priorities, to experience pastoral conversion, leading to an open and missionary spirit flowing through the church. In this document, as well as many references to love, the poor, peace, justice and the common good, Francis uses the word 'joy' over one hundred times.

Pope Francis reminded us that true joy is different from happiness. It is not fleeting, but endures even in difficult times, a constant source of hope. It can be accompanied by many other emotions. On a recent train ride to Waikanae from Wellington on a beautiful winter day, with the sea calm and shimmering, I had an experience of the joy, and gratitude, of living in a peaceful country, surrounded by beautiful landscapes with the mystical island of Kapiti rising out of the sea.

And now we have a new pope – we witnessed the joy of those in Rome at seeing the white smoke and knowing that a Pope had been elected. Even before they knew who would be presented to them, there was another explosion of joy. Joy, accompanied by an outpouring of love. As one commentator pointed out, that love was expressed even before they knew who the next pope was.

Recently we have been able to watch the documentary, '*Leon de Peru*' which looks back at Pope Leo's time as a missionary, and later bishop, in Peru. Many people were interviewed and emotionally recalled many happy memories of the work of then Fr Roberto Prevost. Their obvious joy at his election as pope was accompanied by the sorrow of knowing that he was in some way lost to them.

And so, we see joy alongside gratitude, wistfulness, a lump in the throat, reminiscences, maybe even a little sorrow. Joy, a complicated, yet beautiful emotion, and, most importantly intimately linked to the Gospel message.

Conversely, we see many Catholics, especially those who are critical of any change in Church practice, and particularly perhaps of the notion of synodality, looking miserable and grim. They remind me of Pope John XXIII's reference to 'the prophets of doom' at the time of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. His desire was for a joyful Church that would open its windows to let in light, while he recognised the resistance of many to any sort of progress or adaptation of the Church to the world in which we all live.

Returning to Pope Francis – he has left us with much on which to reflect. His Jesuit practice of the daily examen is advantageous to imitate, assisting us with reviewing each day and acknowledging what has given us pleasure and joy. He reminds us that people will be drawn to God by seeing us as joyful people – such an attractive quality. We need to ponder on that – not only to give thanks for the extraordinary gift, from God the Father, of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, but of our responsibility to express our gratitude joyfully, drawing others to the realisation that God – a loving, caring, saving God, is present in their lives as well.