

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 August issue for 2025!

This month, it's my turn to lead the reflection for the readings and Gospel for the 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time. For this Sunday, the scriptures draw us to reflect on faith as a way of being 'ready'. This kind of readiness is not borne of meticulous planning which we rely on in our work to keep on top of our daily lives. Instead, it is based on faith— a readiness of the heart, that allows us trust in the God who calls us to step into the unknown, not with a map, but with a promise.

The contribution from **Vicky Raw** and **Bridget Taumoepeau** echo the same faith-driven readiness.

Vicky's journey into Launch Out and deeper parish involvement is a testament to the gentle unfolding of God's call. She did not seek it out with a blueprint; she responded to a stirring, a question no less from Cardinal John. And in her response, she discovered that God not only calls but also equips—and that joy and providence often follow those who responded to the call.

Bridget's regular reflections are meant to connect our local leadership conversations to the wider Church. In this issue, she shares her insights into the spiritual charisms of Ignatius and Augustine. These charisms—rooted in discernment, humility, and interior freedom—have shaped the leadership of Pope Francis and now Pope Leo. We can glean from her article how formation, as a way of spiritual preparation forms not just individuals, but also affects movements within the Church.

We cannot plan nor conjure God's call. It finds us—as a whisper in prayer, a restlessness in our souls, or a moment of unexpected clarity. We are called to respond in faith—to trust that God is already at work, preparing us for what we cannot yet see.

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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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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A different kind of readiness

A Reflection on the 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 12:32-48

Our lives unfold in rhythms of preparation. As children, we prepare for adulthood; as adults, we prepare for old age; and eventually, we prepare for our passing from this world. Even in the quiet, ordinary moments—often unnoticed—we are preparing: for conversations, for decisions, for responsibilities, for relationships. Life is not static; it is always moving us toward something. In a way, we are always preparing for something.



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Planning, then, becomes an important skill for whatever kind of preparation we are doing. In other words, to be ready, we need to plan. My late grandfather often told me, *“Always have a plan. Be ready. Start by knowing your goals and work out the steps to get there.”* His words shaped how I approached my studies and my work. I am grateful for the clarity and discipline his wisdom gave me. But as I grow in my faith journey, I am discovering another kind of preparation—one that doesn’t begin with goals or end with achievements. And it asks something very different of me.

The readings for the 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time invite us into a deeper awareness of what it means to be ready, by pointing to two pivotal moments in the history of the Jewish people. In the first reading, the Israelites are reminded of God’s salvation from the Egyptians during the night of the Passover. In the second reading, Paul’s letter to the Hebrews extols Abraham’s faith—faith that led him to leave everything behind for a promised land, and to believe in the assurance that he would be the father of many nations despite his old age.

In both narratives, Abraham and the Israelites had very little time to ‘prepare’ for a long journey with no certainty of where they were going or how long it would take. Instead, they were given a promise—and they held on to that promise because it was God who made it. Their stories became defining examples of what faith means: *“...the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.”*

The Gospel offers two images of what it means to be open to grace: servants waiting with joy for their master’s return, and a homeowner staying vigilant against a thief. Both are about readiness—a heart that is awake and watchful. Essentially, faith allows us to be open to the quiet, surprising ways God enters our lives.

We often rely on well-crafted plans to ensure success and to avoid or mitigate risks—and these have a necessary place in our lives. But there are moments when only faith is the way forward. Faith is about trusting what we cannot yet see, letting go of the need to know, and leaning into the mystery of not knowing—yet being known by God. It is not about having everything in place before we take a step; it is about taking the step because it is God who invites us and who journeys with us.

How do we nurture our faith? Jesus guides us by asking us to examine what we truly value: *“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* If our hearts are scattered by worry, we cannot be fully present to what matters most. Jesus calls us to be single-hearted—to love God with all our mind and all our strength (Mark 12:30), to focus on the mission (Luke 9:62), and to let go of anything that holds us back from following Him (Matthew 19:16–30).

We do not plan for God. God has a plan for us. God is already at work in preparing us. Our task is to be attentive, to be willing, to be faithful in the small things, and to live the present moment in view of eternity.

August 15 is the feast day of the Assumption. Mary is our model of faithfulness. To be ready in faith is to live with open hands and a listening heart. It is to believe that even in uncertainty, God is near—and that our readiness is not measured by our well-crafted plans, but by our willingness to say ‘yes’.

Maya Bernardo

UPDATES

Launch Out Learning Day Open to Parishes and Schools

"They too belong here: Investigating the relationship between Parish and Parish Schools in ANZ" by Colin Macleod, Director of the National Centre for Religious Studies.

Date: 06 September, 9:30am to 4:00pm

Venue: Connolly Hall, Metropolitan Cathedral of the Sacred Heart

Parishes and parish schools play significant roles in the Church's mission of evangelisation. Yet in practice, their relationship with one another is complex and frequently misunderstood or undervalued. In Aotearoa New Zealand, this relationship is further shaped by a Catholic education system that is globally unique, presenting both distinct challenges and opportunities. Colin MacLeod will initially share findings from his doctoral research, alongside insights from his experience as a Catholic educator and Director of the National Centre for Religious Studies (NCRS). The second session, after morning tea, will develop a practical overview of governance, leadership, Religious Education, and the school preference system.

This event is co-sponsored by Te Hao Nui- Launch Out with the Office for Vicar of Education

Launch Out Retreat with Murray Adams 11-13 July 2025, Magnificat Featherston

It's been two years since we had Murray accompany us in a retreat. Murray is a lay person like all of us. He is a husband, a father and a grandfather. He was a pharmacist for 45 years before the

unusual call to be a spiritual director came to him.

Murray is a master in Ignatian Spirituality, so as we reflected, we also learned.

In this retreat we were given time to physically rest, spend time in solitude and listen to each other. We thank God for this sacred time to accompany and comfort each other. And feel God's overflowing love through our community.

Moments we will fondly remember-- dinner with Joanne Oliver one of the founders of Magnificat, Rutger conversing with the cows, Bernadette's sumptuous Friday dinner, the smell of firewood and many more memories that we can lovingly reminisce about someday.



ONLINE RESOURCES



- Latest issue of **Welcom** https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/adw_community/welcom-issue-2-out-now/
- **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/>
- 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/>

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

My.UnexpectedJourney

Vicky Raw
Launch Out Candidate

Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.” (Matt 28: 18-19)

These are some of my favourite verses from the Gospels. In just a few words this is what Jesus is asking all of us who are charged with some form of leadership (be it official ministry, family life or work environments) to do – to go out to all those that we meet, to baptise, to teach and to proclaim the Good News that Jesus is with us forever. There is a lot to do!

To be honest I have never thought of myself as a ‘leader.’ I would have always considered myself as just ‘one of the gang.’ But things changed when Fr. John Pearce CP suddenly died in a plane that was just taxing out of Blenheim on 6 May 2019. He lived life to the full and had various missions on the go in Sydney, Rome as well as the recently



Free image from Liam Matthews of Unsplash

amalgamated parish of Star of the Sea, Marlborough and within the wider community in Blenheim. He certainly burnt the candle at both ends. I had got to know him well and enjoyed his big Aussie ways. His death was not just a shock but a reality check of the unbearable load of leading a parish and how we, the laity, expect so much from our priests.

It was after his funeral whilst talking with Cardinal John Dew that he posed me the pivotal question, “So what are you going to do about it?”

I didn’t have an answer at that moment but all I knew was that the laity have roles to play in the Church; that I had to seek them out and try and continue some of what John Pearce had started; that what I had been given in faith was to be shared with others; and that I was being invited to share in Jesus’ mission, whatever that might be.

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I am now in my last few months of Launch Out. And it is a time to reflect on what it means to 'do' pastoral leadership.

One of the very first images that came to mind was that of Pope Francis carrying a lamb on his shoulders and his call to those in any sort of ministry to take on the 'smell of the sheep.' His invitation was for leaders to be close to those that they serve so that they really get to know what is going on in their lives.

In Marlborough the site of sheep grazing in vineyards and fields is everywhere. They are 4-legged mowers that keep down the grass and weeds. Around many vineyards are electric fences and you have to know how to manoeuvre over them to avoid getting a shock. As soon as they hear you coming the sheep scatter in all directions, down the rows and leaping across irrigation lines (I have yet to see one trip or run into a post!). But every so often if I stand still they seem to gather again and carry on grazing.

And maybe this is a little like what Church leadership can be like. By going in with all the big guns blazing people run a mile and nobody is left.

Through my pastoral experiences both within the formal Launch Out projects and more generally in the life of my parish I have found that the most effective form of activity has been the accompaniment, the walking alongside people that has brought about growth.

The foyer area of our parish church in Blenheim is a very important place to be after Mass. Whether it is doing high -5s with young friends and finding out what they did during the school holidays, or a chat about the difficulties that a new migrant settler is having with learning English and learning to navigate how things are done in NZ, or the upheaval of having to move house, or job uncertainties these are the realities that many people are living. I may not be able to change the situation but by stopping to listen to their concerns is a way to be in solidarity. I seem to always be one of the last people to leave the carpark on a Sunday morning

But pastoral leadership does not stop there. Recently I had a couple of quick things to do in town. What should have taken me ten minutes, took an hour! As I walked past the library I saw a former colleague and her husband who I hadn't seen for ages. Do I walk on or do I stop? I felt called to stop. As we exchanged news I felt the joy of reconnection and of listening to their reflections on the importance of keeping active both physically and socially after retirement. I will cherish their wisdom.

My next stop was at the St Vincent de Paul shop. As I was paying I got chatting about how on weekend Masses the Our Father is being led in different languages. My friend wanted to know who to contact about it. I told her and then I encouraged her to ask some other relatively new parishioners to join her so that they could feel more connected and involved. She hadn't thought about this possibility before but said that it would be a good idea. Enabling others to share their gifts with others is what pastoral leadership is about. 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers to his harvest' (Matt 9:37).

My daytime job has got nothing to do with Church ministry. And yet there have been unexpected moments of pastoral ministry in the tearoom and even the lab. Never underestimate the power of a cuppa or mundane experimental tasks when we help out our colleagues. These have been moments of profound sharing and listening to people's faith stories and answering some of their questions such as 'what is baptism?' and 'what is the difference between Catholics and Protestants?' These are opportunities to engage and even if they don't understand the theological reasons I know that the Holy Spirit has given me the words that I needed.

Effective pastoral leadership can only take place with prayerful discernment and reliance on the Holy Spirit. The most formative moments I've experienced stem from those quiet moments of lifting every concern to God—especially before entering difficult conversations—allowing God's wisdom to take root. When we lead with aggression, conflicts only deepen. But each time I pause, invite the Spirit's guidance, and entrust the outcome to God, a profound peace settles over both the dialogue and my own heart.

Where would I be today if John Pearce's untimely demise didn't happen? I honestly don't know. But I thank him and Cardinal John for their wise pastoral leadership that has led me to where I am today.

From Joy to Peace

*Unpacking the Charisms of Ignatius and Augustine
and their influences on Francis and Leo*

Bridget Taumoepeau
Pastoral Mentor



Copied from <https://www.jesuits.org/stories/the-life-of-st-ignatius-of-loyola/>

It is now over two months since Pope Leo XIV was elected. I like to think of it as being chosen, rather than elected – the latter seems a very human procedure, whereas the former evokes in me much more of the role of the Holy Spirit.

The whole process was so complicated, and difficult to negotiate – seeing the decline in Pope Francis' health; the sadness on his death; the rapid move towards the General Congregation and Conclave; the anticipation and excitement of welcoming a new pope; the adjustment to never hearing Francis' voice again and wondering how we will receive Leo's teachings, to say nothing of some anxiety about how the Church in all its many faces, and all its divisions, will react.

The pope is not just 'The pope' – he is a man formed by life, study, experience, and the path he has taken on his journey to the papacy. It is interesting that our present Pope and his immediate predecessor are/were members of religious orders. Only 34 out of the 267 Popes have been religious priests and the last one, before Francis, was Gregory XVI (1831-1846), who was a Camaldolese monk.

Pope Francis was a Jesuit (a member of the Society of Jesus, founded by St Ignatius of Loyola in 1540), which is the largest male religious order, with over 10,000 priests and 800+ brothers as well as seminarians. When St Ignatius asked Pope Paul III for the Order to be recognised, he stepped away from some traditions, asking the pope to excuse them from wearing a habit and from singing in choir. The order is classified as an order of clerks regular - a body of priests organised for apostolic work and following a religious rule. Jesuits follow Ignatian spirituality, and over recent years this spirituality has been embraced by many lay people, including non-Catholics. Retreats are held using Ignatian principles and we have become familiar with phrases such as the Spiritual Exercises and 'consolation', 'desolation and discernment'. The form of prayer and the study of the life of Jesus, as it affects us in everyday life, is very accessible to us.

Pope Leo XIV is an Augustinian – an order founded in 1244, when Pope Innocent IV united various austere hermit like communities under the Rule of St Augustine, who had lived from AD 354 to 430, and is regarded as one of the great Doctors of the Church. They are a smaller group, having nearly 3,000 priests throughout the world. Augustinians are regarded as one of the main Mendicant orders (those who rely on the generosity of others for support) along with the Franciscans, the Dominicans and the Carmelites. Their rule emphasises a life of community, prayer and service. The common life, community, friendship and hospitality are highly valued qualities. The opening words of St Augustine's rule are that "we be of one mind and heart on the way to God". This principle would seem to be echoed in Pope Leo's motto "In Illo Uno Unum" – "In the One we are one".



Saint Augustin by [Philippe de Champaigne](#), c. 1645

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I think it would be fair to say that the Church, on the whole, and laity in particular, as more are familiar with Ignatian spirituality than with Augustinian spirituality. In New Zealand we have the added disadvantage of having no Augustinian communities here, whereas the Jesuits taught in the seminary and have recently opened a Jesuit High School in Auckland, to say nothing of the many people who have been trained as leaders in the Ignatian tradition.

Jesuits could be seen as more individualistic, more innovative perhaps. As well as being priests and missionaries, and especially teachers, many of them have retained their previous professions as doctors, journalists, architects, scientists etc. Augustinians, on the other hand, would follow a more traditional pathway, entering a monastery, living in community and then being assigned to the various activities of the order, such as education, missionary and pastoral work. The Jesuits are unusual in that they do not have a female branch, whereas Augustinian sisters are not only numerous, but consider their first foundation to be from the time of St Augustine himself. Currently there are contemplative Augustinian communities in many countries, as well as many separate communities engaged in active work in various fields. The Bridgettines and the relatively new order of the Sisters of Life, follow the Augustinian Rule.



Copied from <https://www.pontificalmissions.org/pope-leo-xiv-missionary-brothers/>

As well as their formation and chosen spirituality, popes come to their pontificates with very different personalities. This is evident when we consider Francis and Leo. Francis, who had appeared dour and serious as Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires, seemed to enter into his papacy with joy, a sense of humour and the ability to make whoever he was talking to, feel that they had his entire attention. He could be seen as a disruptor, determined to shake us up, always drawing us back to Jesus and the Gospels, challenging us to be intentional disciples, assisting us with stories and phrases that have stuck with us and bring a smile to our lips when we recall them. He knew that he had been elected to be a reformer, and he honoured that direction, in the

meantime suffering greatly from those who found change so difficult, while being embraced by so many who felt the attraction of his new broom sweeping through the Church.

Leo, on the other hand is always described as calm and a great listener. He has had such a wide experience of the Church – missionary; canon lawyer; bishop; superior general of his order; Prefect of the important and influential Dicastery for Bishops; Cardinal; and some one who worked very closely with his predecessor. As he gets accustomed to his role (the new job as he referred to it!) you see his warm interaction with the public; his great facility with languages which makes connections with people so much more meaningful; his decisions re his lifestyle that suit him and do not merely mimic those of Francis. He refers often to Augustine, but also to Francis, and it is clear that there will be considerable continuity with the initiatives of his predecessor, such as synodality, peace initiatives; concern for youth, among many others.

There is no doubt that Leo talks with a very different style – more theological, slightly more formal, and I do miss the idiosyncratic sayings of Francis. But this is another challenge – to be grateful for the past; to study more; to familiarise myself with Augustinian spirituality (I have started reading the Confessions of St Augustine, which has sat, unread, on my bookshelf for nigh unto sixty years, since before I was received into the Church!). Francis laid down so many challenges and it looks like Leo will help us to incorporate them into our lives, and our relationship with God.

Pedro Gabriel, physician, journalist, author and theologian, who contributes to the podcast 'Where Peter Is' writes of clues we can notice in the new Pope – his choice of name; his choice of motto and, something to look forward to, his first encyclical. We can look at the example of Pope Francis – his motto expressed his gratefulness for God's mercy; his name demonstrated that he wished to follow in the footsteps of a saint who loved the poor and creation; and his first document *Evangelium Gaudium* laid out his plans for his pontificate.

For Leo we know that he named himself after the father of Catholic Social Teaching, Leo XIII, and his motto, as mentioned above, is steeped in his Augustinian tradition and his prayer for the unity of the Church. We await with excitement his first writing, as we learn to listen and pray for our new Papa, the Servant of the Servants of God, who deserves our love, our attention and our thoughtfulness.