

HOLY CROSS SEMINARY NEWSLETTER



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- ✚ 31 Jan 2026 | Ryan Sy | Ordination to Priesthood | Auckland Diocese
- ✚ 08 - 12 Feb 2026 | Hikoi in Christchurch Diocese
- ✚ 16 Feb 2026 | Semester 1 Commences
- ✚ 04 May 2026 | Founder's Day Celebrations

Rector's Message

Dear friends of Holy Cross Seminary,

A man was once riding a galloping horse. As the horse and rider thundered past, a woman standing by a gate called out, "Where are you going?" As he flashed by the rider yelled, "Don't ask me, ask the horse!" This reminds me of how we can get caught up in non-stop activity and be led in a direction that we might be better not going in.

Thomas Moore, author of 'Care of the Soul' has written about the dangers of excessive noise and incessant activity: "If we are noisy and active all the time, we will never know the invisible world that is interior to us and to everything. It's no accident that a church or temple might be a place where you can discover the forceful strength and healing power of quiet and stillness."

Holy Cross Seminary seeks to form seminarians in interior silence. This is an important practice for spiritual growth, a deeper relationship with Christ and helping to teach others to pray. Jesus took time out to pray. We do not have to go into a church to pray; it could be somewhere quiet and peaceful where we are conscious that we are in the presence of God. By taking time to connect with God we will be better able to share the Good News that St Paul proclaimed to the Ephesians – "We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it." (Ephesians 2:10)

Wishing you and your families many blessings during the Christmas season and in the New Year.

Fr David Dowling
Rector of Holy Cross Seminary



A few words from Pope Leo XIV

"Since we live in a confusing society of noise, today more than ever we need servants and disciples who announce the absolute primacy of Christ and who keep His voice clearly in their ears and hearts." - Pope Leo to seminarians and others studying in Rome.



World Youth Day, Auckland | 2025

Over 1,500 young hearts on fire for Christ came together on 02 August 2025 for World Youth Day Auckland 2025! The Holy Cross Seminary community was right in the middle of it — serving, cheering, praying, and celebrating under the powerful theme: "The Sign of Hope." From vibrant liturgies to joyful moments of encounter, hope was not just a theme — it was everywhere. Let's carry that fire forward. Jesus is our hope, and the Church is young and alive!



**The Lord Almighty
The king of my heart
The king of glory**



Holy Cross Seminary | 2025 End-of-Year Cultural Celebration

The Holy Cross Seminary community gathered in joy and gratitude to celebrate the end of the year with a vibrant Cultural Night, sharing food, music, and traditions from Vietnam, Korea, India, the Philippines, New Zealand, Argentina, Tonga, and Samoa. It was also a moment of heartfelt farewell to Fr. Ron Bennett and to our brothers Tang Joesph Phan and Mineva Bob Fe'ao (as they begin their pastoral year), as well as Jack Fraser-Jones, who is spending next year in his diocese. We give thanks for their presence, service, and witness among us, and we accompany them with our prayers and best wishes.



Farewell and Thank You

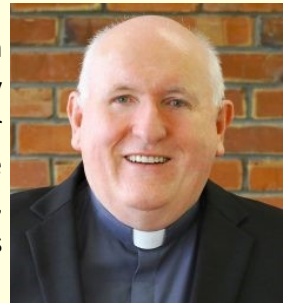
Fr Ron Bennett (*Senior Priest-in-Residence, Holy Cross Seminary*)

Fr Ron Bennett joined us at the start of 2024, after 52 years working in the Wellington and Palmerston Dioceses. He has been an integral part of the Holy Cross Seminary community and his joyful presence and servant leadership have been a shining example to the seminarians and staff alike. We are thankful for the stories he has shared of his experiences in priestly ministry, which have helped to guide and shape the seminarians in their formation journey. He will be greatly missed and we wish him every blessing as he heads back to the Wellington Archdiocese to enjoy his well-earned retirement.



Fr Merv Duffy SM (*Dean, Te Kupenga - Catholic Theological College*)

After 22 years teaching seminarians and other students of theology, Fr Merv has been elected provincial superior of the Society of Mary, in New Zealand. The seminary community is deeply grateful for Fr Merv's contribution to the intellectual formation of seminarians over many years. We will miss his presence and wise counsel, summed up in the following advice recently given to his students: "To be a disciple of Christ is to remain always teachable, always willing to be surprised by grace, always willing to discover more of the truth that sets us free. Keep reading, keep questioning and keep praying."



2025 Catholic Theological College Valedictorian - Gerson Badayos



Congratulations to Gerson Badayos, a fifth-year seminarian for the Archdiocese of Wellington, who was named valedictorian at the annual college graduation ceremony in October. In his valedictory address Gerson shared his gratitude for the support, encouragement, and prayers of so many people. Addressing fellow students he advised, "Allow yourselves to be challenged; it is mostly through difficulties and challenges that we discover and learn – not only about certain topics, but also about ourselves and about our God." Gerson concluded, "Inspired by the late Pope Francis and now Pope Leo, let us be reminded that our true success and achievement is perceived in our love and service to others, especially the poor."

Congratulations! | Ignatius Tung Tran and Gerson Badayos | Admitted to Candidacy

Congratulations to fifth-year seminarians Ignatius (Christchurch) and Gerson (Wellington) who were recently accepted by their bishops as candidates for ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood.



Pictured from left to right:

Dyester Abo-Abo, Fr Andrew Kim, Fr David Dowling, Archbishop Paul Martin SM, Fr Dyson Tharakan, Gerson Badayos

Pictured from left to right:

Matthew Clark, Deacon Linh Cao, Fr David Dowling, Ignatius Tran, Bishop Michael Gielen, Fr Thanh Tran, Fr Chris Friel

"Dear God, you taught: The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest (Matthew 9:37-38). Raise up for your Church, we pray, men after your own mind and heart, to serve your people with wisdom and courage, humility and strength, for the common good of all and the glory of your name. Amen."

— *Prayer for Vocations*



Congratulations to Emilio Capin (*Wellington*), Linh Cao (*Christchurch*), Ryan Sy (*Auckland*)
Ordained as Deacons on Friday, 26 September 2025, at Sacred Heart Church, Ponsonby, AKL
Bishop Michael Gielen, Bishop of Christchurch, presided.

NZ Diocesan Vocations Directors:

Auckland – Fr Marchellino Park aucklandvocations@gmail.com

Hamilton – Fr Adam Kirkeby vocations@cdh.org.nz

Palmerston North – Fr Trung Nguyen vocations@pndiocese.org.nz

Wellington – Fr Andrew Kim andlekis@hotmail.com

Christchurch – Fr Tien Cao vocations.chch@gmail.com

Dunedin – Fr Mark Chamberlain machamberlain61@gmail.com



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To all those who support Holy Cross Seminary, through prayer, supporting students in their pastoral placements and for those who support us financially. With your support we can train seminarians to be the future priests of New Zealand. We remember you all, in our prayers for all benefactors.

Individual Donations

Individual donations made directly to Holy Cross Seminary greatly aid necessary funding for staffing and student education, formation, accommodation, teaching and administration needs and costs. Such donations are very appreciated and gratefully received.

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Holy Cross Seminary Ponsonby

Bank Account - 06 0199 0093928 00

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