

# WelCom

Newsletter of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand

ISSUE 7 - December 2025

## New Catholic Social Services Director

Catholic Social Services has a new director – and she's keen to work with people and organisations to help make a real, positive difference in the lives of people in Wellington and beyond who need help.

Carmel McKee started her role on November 10. Having always worked in the social service sector, she left a long career in statutory child protection services before moving to Presbyterian Support Central to lead Family Works, their social work and counselling service covering the lower North Island.

A registered social worker, Carmel says she's committed to making a positive difference and being part of a wider system of support so individuals and their whānau can live happy, fulfilling lives.

"This role is a great opportunity for me to bring my skills into a new

environment," she says was part of the motivation for joining Catholic Social Services, adding she was raised in a Catholic family where social justice was very much at the heart of her home.

Carmel says she's loving the role so far. Being part of a committed CSS team and receiving positive feedback from external providers has been encouraging. She adds that the success of November's Catholic Social Services Annual Appeal, which not only saw more money donated than in 2024, but more donors overall, has also been terrific to see. Read more about the appeal on page 4.

"The graciousness of our supporters has been fantastic. It's really going to make a difference."

There's plenty of work to be done. Carmel says building relationships with clients, whānau, community, parishes and schools will be a sign



*New Catholic Social Services director Carmel McKee*

of success, as will be getting more funding to continue to make a positive difference in people's lives.

To that end, she encourages anyone who wants to find out more about what CSS does or to be involved in the CSS mahi to get in touch.

Carmel succeeds Chris Ward as Catholic Social Services director. She can be reached by email at [c.mckee@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:c.mckee@wn.catholic.org.nz)

## Congratulating Launch Out Graduates



On November 22, Margaret Bearsley (Holy Trinity Parish), Jude McKee (St Theresa's Plimmerton), Bernadette Patelesio (Te Wairua Tapu), and Vicky Raw (Te Whetu o Moana, Marlborough) made their final pastoral presentations, completing six or seven years of theological studies, pastoral training and spiritual formation in the Launch Out programme.

It was a beautiful day of reflection and celebration with mentors, spiritual directors and parish colleagues. Archbishop Paul also joined the graduates.

Please pray for them as they continue their mission of service!

# From Archbishop Paul

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ – tena koutou

My greetings to you as we come to the conclusion of Advent and the beginning of our Christmas season. I hope this Advent you have had a chance to prepare to celebrate the mystery of God coming amongst us in the child Jesus. There is so much for us to ponder and marvel in the Christmas events along with the chance to celebrate with our family and friends the joys of belonging.

We know that, for some people, Christmas is a difficult time. They may have lost loved ones this year and this is their first Christmas without them. They may have had traumatic things happen in the past at this time of year, and they dread these coming days. It may be that this time is when their isolation from others is highlighted and they are lonely and feel disconnected.

That little community that gathered around the Christ child – his parents, the shepherds and later the Wise Men – reminds us that we need one another and that when we see each other as Christ-bearers, created in his image and loved by him, then we have a responsibility to care for those who have no one.

I encourage you to be alert for those who are unloved, lonely or need some support. Are there people you can invite to join you for Christmas celebrations? Are there people you can call or contact over this Christmas period who might otherwise have no one to talk to? Are you able to share your resources of food and money through organisations that help people? These are all practical expressions of the Christmas miracle of Christ amongst us.

At the end of the month, we conclude our celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope in the Church. Pope Leo will bring it to a close in Rome on January 6, but everywhere else it finishes on December 28. We will be having a Mass at the Cathedral to mark this and I hope your own parish will do something as well.

This year has been a wonderful opportunity to give thanks for so many people and organisations within our Church community. Many people have taken this year as a time for some pilgrimage, or extra activities to reflect our belief and faith expression. As human beings we express what is important by our words and actions, and that is part of what a Year of Jubilee is about.



The call for a Jubilee of Hope has been a chance to see where God is at work in our lives and in the world. This builds within us the virtue of hope that his presence and grace is with us and will continue as we move through the journey of life towards eternal life. It is trusting in his plan, even when it isn't completely clear to us.

True hope asks something of us. It asks us to stay attentive to the presence of Christ in our midst; to speak words that build up; to choose actions that heal; to be a people who can recognise signs of new life even in challenging times. Hope draws us to trust that God continues to bless this land and calls us to be bearers of that blessing for others.

May the graces of this year be with you as we approach 2026. May the joy of the birth of our Saviour touch your hearts again this Christmas and may you have a safe and restful Christmas holiday season.

Yours in Christ,

+ P. B. Martin SM

+ Paul Martin SM  
Archbishop of Wellington



## Clergy Appointments 2026

### Our Lady of Kapiti

Parish Priest – Fr Pene Patelesio  
Assistant Priest – Fr Doug Shepherd

### Wellington South Parish

Parish Priest – Fr Biju Xavier  
Assistant Priest – Fr Tikoua Kautu

### Holy Family Parish, Nelson

Assistant Priest – Fr Raymond Soriano

### Notes

**Deacon Emilio Capin** – will complete his seminary studies mid-year and take up an appointment in July

**Seminarist Gerson Badayos** – will be returning to Holy Cross Seminary Auckland for his sixth year of studies.

**Fr Ron Bennett** – returning to the Archdiocese after his time at the

Seminary in Auckland. He will be in retirement.

**Fr Cirilo Barlis** – going to the Philippines to be incardinated in a diocese there.

**Holy Family Parish and Our Lady of the Bays parish in Tasman** will be amalgamating in April of 2026 and the priests working in the two parishes will be appointed to the new parish.





## El Señor de los Milagros Celebration at St Joseph's

It was a beautiful day of joy on November 1 at St Joseph's Church in Wellington's Mount Victoria. The reason: a public celebration for El Señor de los Milagros – Jesus Christ, the Lord of Miracles!

In addition to Mass, the Embassy of Peru hosted a culture fair. Guests enjoyed delicious Peruvian dishes and appreciated colourful and beautiful dances of Peru,

music and more.

There was also the unveiling of a image of the Lord of Miracles.

The event was celebrated at St Joseph's because it's where a monthly Mass has been held in Spanish – a longstanding tradition that's continued for years. The image was placed in the foyer to make it accessible for a devotional visit.



## 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!



## Changing Times for Wellington Religious Sisters

It's an end of an era for religious sisters in Wellington – but a new era has begun.

Srs Marie Gore and Philippa Dowling RSM have left the Cathedral parish after many years, marking the end of the presence of the Sisters on Guilford Terrace in Wellington.

A farewell was held for the sisters in November to recognise the very active role they played in parish life, including in music and serving as welcomers.

As Srs Marie and Philippa have left, new sisters have arrived. Srs Anna and Paula now live in the Sisters of Mercy house on Hawkestone Steet in Wellington. Both arrived this year. Sr Anna is doing her doctoral studies at Victoria University of Wellington.

## Farewell to a Servant Leader: Kay Tester Retires

by Kelly Ross

On December 15, Sts Peter and Paul Primary School in Lower Hutt farewelled Kay Tester as she retired after more than 40 years of devoted service to Catholic education.

Kay's leadership has been a beacon of faith and commitment. As a principal, she embraced the role of servant leader, guided by the Holy Spirit and dedicated to the growth and well-being of every student and staff member. Her vision transformed schools into communities where learning and faith flourished side-by-side.

Through her tireless efforts, Kay has shaped generations and strengthened the mission of Catholic education, leaving an enduring legacy of love, faith and excellence.

As she enters retirement, we pray her days are filled with peace and joy,



(L-R) Vicar for Education Kelly Ross, Archbishop Paul and Kay Tester

knowing her impact will be felt for years to come.

Thank you, Kay, for your extraordinary service. You will be deeply missed.

## Catholic Social Services Annual Appeal a Success

Thank you to everyone who supported Catholic Social Services' Annual Appeal in November! Not only did we raise more money than last year, but more people donated.

But behind the numbers is a chance to bring people hope – which our communities need.

Thank you again to everyone who supported. God bless you.



## Annual Grant Invitation

The Knights of the Southern Cross, Wellington, Charitable Trust Board is seeking applications from organisations based in, and operating primarily within, the Archdiocese of Wellington who need financial assistance to carry out religious, charitable or educational works.

Requests for application forms can be made to [patrickmcgill46@gmail.com](mailto:patrickmcgill46@gmail.com).

Applications for grants should be made by **Friday, 16 January 2026** and should be sent to:

KSC Wellington, Charitable Trust Board, PO Box 56029, Tawa, Wellington 5249.





# Plaque Celebrating Inspiring Hungarian Cardinal Unveiled at Sacred Heart

Hungarian music filled the warm, evening spring air at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Wellington on November 21 as a special plaque was unveiled to commemorate Cardinal József Mindszenty.

Dozens of people, including Hungarian Ambassador Dr Gábor Nagy, Apostolic Nuncio to New Zealand Archbishop Gábor Pintér and members of the Hungarian community in Wellington and the lower North Island, filled the cathedral for the unveiling of the plaque.

Also the Archbishop of Esztergom in Hungary, József Mindszenty was imprisoned by the Nazis in the Second World War. After the war, he was imprisoned again – this time by the communists who took over Hungary, who tortured and sentenced Mindszenty to life in prison in a show trial.

Freed during the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, Mindszenty took shelter in the U.S. Embassy, where he remained for 15 years. Finally allowed to leave in 1971, he spent the rest of his life in exile, and died in 1975. Shortly before his death, he visited Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch in December 1974.

An important and inspiring figure for the Hungarian diaspora around the world, one of his famous quotes is: "Goodness is the greatest truth."

Ambassador Nagy said Mindszenty's life is an example of speaking up for what is right, despite the persecution one might face.

"His name stands for courage, for truth and commitment to freedom," he said.

Archbishop Pintér, himself Hungarian, added Mindszenty represents perseverance after failure, and hope for



Apostolic Nuncio to New Zealand Archbishop Gábor Pintér (left) and Hungarian Ambassador Dr Gábor Nagy (right) unveiling the plaque

victory. He said Mindszenty chose light over darkness and that others, too, can choose light even in their darkest moments, and never lose their moral compass.

While not a saint yet (though his cause was opened in 1993), he was declared Venerable by Pope Francis in 2019.

The unveiling of the plaque, made in Hungary, was followed by a recitation of the Lord's Prayer in Hungarian, then the singing of the national anthems of Hungary and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Finally, everyone gathered in the cathedral foyer for Hungarian desserts generously made by the sisters in the Nuncio's office, including "Hungarian biscuits" called pogácsa.

The plaque can be seen next to a window in an aisle near the pews of the nave of the cathedral, towards the back of the space.



**METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL  
OF THE SACRED HEART**  
Te Ahurewa o te Ngākau Tapu

**CATHEDRAL PARISH**

**CHRISTMAS 2025 - JANUARY 2026**



<b>SATURDAY VIGIL &amp; SUNDAY MASSES</b> continue as usual	Vigil Mass: 5.30pm Saturdays 10.00am & 7.00pm Sundays	Mondays 29 Dec 2025 - 19 Jan 2026	No Rosary or services at the Cathedral
<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b> Wed 24 Dec 2025	11.30pm: Carols 12.00 Midnight: The Nativity of the Lord - Midnight Mass	Wed 31 Dec 2025	8.00pm Samoan New Year Vigil Mass
<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> Thu 25 Dec 2025	10.00am Christmas Day Mass	Thurs 1 Jan 2026 <i>Mary, Mother of God</i>	8.30am Mass
Tues to Sat 26 Dec 2025 - 19 Jan 2025	8.30am Mass	Sun 18 Jan 2026	1.00pm Filipino - Sto. Niño Fiesta Mass
		Mon 19 Jan 2026	8.30am Mass
		From Tues 20 Jan 2026	Normal Mass Times resume

All Masses will be at Sacred Heart Cathedral, 40 Hill Street, Thorndon.  
All are welcome. Please check our website for more information: [www.mcshwellington.org](http://www.mcshwellington.org)



# Video Series Highlights

## New Zealand Pilgrimage Sites

A new series inspired by the Church's Jubilee Year theme, Pilgrims of Hope, has been launched to showcase key places of pilgrimage throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

Produced by the Catholic Enquiry Centre, the videos highlight sites in each diocese that were nominated as local pilgrimage destinations.

"We can often find ourselves looking to the Holy Land or Europe for places of pilgrimage, which we should, but we have our own faith-filled and inspiring stories in our land," said CEC director Carly Mulqueen.

"We have sites of great significance, like places where Masses were first celebrated, but also some great figures like St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Meri Hohepa Suzanne Aubert and Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pompallier whose lives we rightly honour."

*"There are so many great insights contained in these videos, that people will learn new and exciting things about the Catholic faith in our country"*

Mrs Mulqueen paid tribute to her predecessor, Rebecca Taylor-Hunt, who was the series producer and writer, and Joanna Kearney, who presents the videos.

"Rebecca and Joanna gave so much of themselves to this project,



*Pilgrimage series presenter Joanna Kearney speaks with Fr Chris Denham about the history of the Cathedral of St Patrick and St Joseph*

inviting us all into these holy sites and the compelling stories of missionary disciples through the ages," she said.

live on the Catholic Enquiry Centre's YouTube channel.

The Auckland project focuses on the Cathedral of St Patrick and St Joseph and a range of sites in Northland – the site of the first Mass on New Zealand soil, the resting place of Bishop Pompallier and the mission house named for Pompallier.

Among the pilgrimage options in the Diocese of Christchurch are the parish in Temuka, with its beautiful church and the historic centre dedicated to St Mary MacKillop, who lived there; the Sanctuary of Fourviere at Leithfield; and Akaroa, the site of the first Mass and the first Catholic church in the South Island.

"There are so many great insights contained in these videos, that people will learn new and exciting things about the Catholic faith in our country," Mrs Mulqueen said.

Videos for the other four dioceses will be released in coming weeks.



Access the videos at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@catholicdiscovery9588>



# Historic Appointment

## ‘Chance to Shine Light on Pacific’

Mena Antonio, currently the Chief Executive of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, has made history with her appointment as Vice President of the global humanitarian network Caritas Internationalis.

She becomes the first New Zealander, the first Pasifika person and only the second woman to hold this role.

Speaking in Rome, where she had an audience with the Pope to discuss her new position, Ms Antonio said the appointment is an opportunity to shine a light on a part of the world that is often forgotten by the international community.

As COP 30 comes to an end, there is growing regional concern about the climate-driven challenges facing small island nations. Ms Antonio says that the appointment improves the profile of New Zealand and Pacific humanitarian, development and climate change action.

“My election gives the Pacific a stronger voice,” she said. “In a region where the impacts of the climate crisis are immediate, this role strengthens CANZ’s ability to raise issues such as Pacific climate debt, resilience and the disproportionate

burden borne by small island and coastal states. Our communities are among the first to experience the effects of climate change and among the least resourced.”

“In recent years, the harsh realities facing the communities in Oceania have become more widely known, thanks in part to the work of Caritas,” said Cardinal Soane Mafi of Tonga, President of Caritas Oceania. “To now have a daughter of Oceania taking on such a prominent role in the global Caritas movement is a source of pride and a recognition that every part of our world is important. We entrust Mena’s new role to the Lord, and we ask the great saints of Oceania to intercede for her.”

“We see Mena’s dedication and commitment to this integral part of the Church’s outreach and ministry up close,” said Bishop Steve Lowe, President of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference. “Mena’s strong advocacy and leadership here in New Zealand and Oceania has clearly been noticed around the world. Her talents will now be shared with the vast Caritas network, but we are very grateful she will continue to lead our national office.”



Ms Antonio’s election took place at the confederation’s Representative Council meeting in Rome. She will continue in her role as Chief Executive of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand. The Vice President’s role makes Ms Antonio the most influential lay person at Caritas Internationalis, whose president is Japanese Cardinal Tarcisio Kikuchi.

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand manages more than \$7 million worth of development programmes across the Pacific on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade – focusing on livelihoods, food and water security.

Caritas Internationalis is the second largest humanitarian organisation in the world. It is made up of more than 160 relief, development and social service organisations working in over 200 countries and territories.

## NZ Bishops Urge Care for the Poor in Local Contexts

New Zealand’s Catholic bishops are inviting people to consider how they might continue the ancient Christian practice of care for the poor in their own contexts.

In a pastoral letter marking the World Day of the Poor on November 16, the bishops noted that in his recent apostolic exhortation, *Dilexi Te*, Pope Leo XIV made it clear that the preferential option for the poor is essential to “the burning heart of the Church’s mission”.

“He reminds us that we are always at risk of replacing the truth of the Gospel with the so-called wisdom of this world – one that can sanctify greed and excess”, the bishops stated in the letter.

The bishops added that they “stand with Pope Leo in encouraging everyone to consider how we can each make care for the poor an integral part of our faith lived with authenticity and zeal”.

Pope Leo referred to the long and deep history of Christian charity and invited people to regain that spirit of generosity, and particularly the practice of almsgiving, the bishops noted.

“In our own national context,” the pastoral letter stated, “the Church has three primary organisations that strive to be the loving and compassionate face of Jesus to the poor in their everyday work,” – Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, MissionNZ and The Society of St Vincent de Paul.

While mindful of the many demands of modern life and the challenges of our current economy, the bishops issued an “invitation for each person to consider how their own context can be shaped by a spirit of Christian charity”.

The bishops suggested several ways in which people might be able to care for the poor – supporting a Vinnies group, joining or promoting a Catholic group that cares for the poor, donating an hour of waged income to support the Church’s charitable works, and giving items to a local foodbank.

“We encourage you to think of ways in which your giving can have a true sense of sacrifice; that you are forgoing time or money that could be used in other ways, to care for our brothers and sisters in need,” the bishops said.



# St Joseph's Nelson Returns Carving to Hato Paora

by Chris Bascand, Principal, St Joseph's Nelson

When Msgr Charles Cooper was musical director at Hato Paora College, he was so very loved and respected, that on his departure, the students there gifted him a carving. He then headed to St Mary's Parish, where the carving ended up being placed in the archives room.

Msgr Cooper passed away early in 2024, and knowledge of the carving never really emerged until September this year. What was discovered was that Msgr Cooper wished that upon his passing, this carving was to be returned to Hato Paora.

A plan was hatched to return the carving – in person – with representatives of St Joseph's School being the ones to undertake this

privileged role.

We left Nelson the morning of October 15, just after 6.30am, and headed for Christchurch before heading north to Palmerston North. We were represented by two of our year 8 Māori students – Mathew and Wiremu – along with Bernadette King Turner, our archivist. She was the person responsible for finding the carving that was gifted to Msgr Cooper, and starting the conversation on how to have this returned.

The carving is now home. We felt genuinely privileged to have been given the chance to visit one of our Catholic schools, and come away feeling richer for the experience.



## St Mary's School Mary Garden

by Karen Goodall, Principal

On October 16, the community of St Mary's School in Carterton had a very special whole-of-school Mass to bless the new Mary Garden we have created at the school. This garden is now the home to the statue of Our Lady that came from France and stood near the top of St Mary's Church in Carterton before it was sold and deconsecrated in 2022.

The Mary Garden features the statue under an archway that has been planted with jasmine. There are two Mary roses, sunflowers and friends and whānau of St Mary's School have painted rocks that

have been secured as part of the garden too. We are excited to see the plants thrive and grow in the next few years.

The Mass was held in the quad area, with Fr Matthew and Fr Pene. At the conclusion of the Mass, parishioners, school staff and students went to the garden where Fr Matt blessed the space. Senior students led the school waiata-haka *Tenei Matou* to thank all those involved in the creation of this garden. The students and staff of St Mary's are honoured to be the kaitiaki of this very special statue.





# Wellington South Milestones Coming up in 2026

The Catholic Parish of Wellington South is inviting former and current parishioners to a celebration of several historical milestones on Sunday, April 19, 2026.

The area's first Catholic church, St Francis de Sales in Island Bay, was built in 1906, 120 years ago, and the current church was blessed and opened on 17 April 1966, 60 years ago.

The weekend will also acknowledge 100 years since the opening of St Madeleine Sophie primary school – the forerunner of the current primary school of St Francis de Sales. A special Mass of remembrance and thanks featuring past and present priests will be followed by a lunch at The Pines, Houghton Bay.



Registrations of interest are welcomed by providing contact details at: [office@wellingtonsouthcatholic.org](mailto:office@wellingtonsouthcatholic.org)

## Farewell to Cardinal McKeefry School

Saturday, October 18 marked a heartfelt farewell to Cardinal McKeefry School as past and present pupils, staff, board members, PTA, parishioners and whānau gathered to celebrate its legacy. The school was alive with stories, laughter, photo displays and shared memories – tinged with sadness, but filled with aroha.

In his opening remarks, acting principal Kerry De Graff warmly welcomed everyone and drew attention to a meaningful Whakataukī displayed outside the back of the hall: "He tangata, he tangata, he tangata" – 'It is the people, it is the people, it is the people.' This powerful sentiment reflects the heart of the school community.

"Since the buildings were first opened for boys by Cardinal Peter McKeefry in 1970, and later became a co-ed full primary in 1987, it has always been the people – those who pass through the gates and fill the corridors

and classrooms – who make this place truly special."

Speakers from across the decades, including former principals, teachers and past pupils, reflected on the care, community and opportunities that shaped their time at the kura. Generous contributions from the parish and school whānau ensured everyone enjoyed delicious kai as part of the celebration.

The day concluded with a moving final School Mass at St Thomas More Church, celebrated by Archbishop Paul Martin SM, with Frs Joy and Tikoua. Current students and a vibrant music group led the singing with spirit and joy.

Cardinal McKeefry was never just a collection of buildings. It was a place of faith, learning, and compassion. Though the school may close, the friendships, values and memories will live on in the hearts of the people.

## St Bernard's School Closes After Nearly a Century

St Bernard's School has closed, after more than 90 years of Catholic education in Wellington.

A final Mass was held on Saturday, November 22 at the school. Students, both past and present, filled the school hall along with their families and members of the local community, as memories, joy and tears were shared.

St Bernard's School was originally opened and blessed in the Catholic Church at the top of Jefferson Street in the Wellington suburb of Brooklyn in 1911. After a meeting of parishioners, it was decided a Mercy Sisters convent school would commence in the church building. This was during the term of Fr J F O'Connor SM as parish priest of St Mary of the Angels, when Brooklyn was linked to St Mary's parish.

A later parish priest, Fr Paul Kane, procured land in Taft Street. The church was re-sited there in 1949 and a new



school built. The school was called St Anthony's, but this name was changed in 1961, and the parish and school became St Bernard's. The Sisters of Mercy continued to run the school until they withdrew in 1972.

# Volunteer as a member of the Ecology, Justice & Peace Commission

Are you motivated to contribute to work for justice and peace – inspired and informed by Catholic Social Teaching?

The Archdiocesan Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission and Committees (Integral Ecology, Social Equity, and Bicultural Relationships) invite applications from throughout the Archdiocese for membership. As a member you will work to promote the social teaching of the Church and shine a light on issues of injustice.

Activities of the Commission are diverse and include making submissions to Parliament, establishing a Housing Forum; organising events for Te Tiriti awareness, the Season of Creation and World Day of the Poor; and supporting movements such as the Living Wage Movement.



Find out more about the Commission at <https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/commission-for-ecology/> or contact Deirdre Meskill, the facilitator, at [d.meskill@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:d.meskill@wn.catholic.org.nz) or 021 2213944.

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

**WORLD DAY  
of  
THE POOR**

**DILEXI TE  
on  
POVERTY**

The Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission hosted a webinar on November 18 on Pope Leo's apostolic exhortation, *Dilexi Te*, and poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand in light of Catholic Social Teaching.

As part of the webinar, Jim McAloon explained what *Dilexi Te* is all about – and what it means for our local communities.

A video of Jim's talk is available online. You can watch it at the below address: [youtube.com/watch?v=erzQ11k3ihc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erzQ11k3ihc)

**ADW MARRIAGE  
PREPARATION COURSE  
2026**

**MARCH**  
SUNDAYS 1 & 8 MARCH

**JUNE**  
SUNDAYS 7 & 14 JUNE


**SEPTEMBER**  
SUNDAYS 6 & 13 SEPTEMBER

**NOVEMBER**  
SUNDAYS 1 & 8 NOVEMBER



Archdiocese  
of Wellington

[wn.catholic.org.nz](https://wn.catholic.org.nz)  
[marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz)



**HOLY LAND COMMISSARIAT**

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*San Damiano Friary • 8 Taylor Road • Mangere Bridge Tel (09) 636 8076 • Fax (09) 625 7384*

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30 October 2025

Dear Archbishop/Bishops

Herewith the details of the Holy Land Collection taken up in all the dioceses in New Zealand in 2025:

Wellington	\$26,953.11
Auckland	71,245.90
Hamilton	21,660.30
Palmerston North	18,309.50
Christchurch	25,188.10
Dunedin	3,268.90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$166,425.81</b>

Yours sincerely in Christ



Rev. Fr. Anthony Malone, OFM  
Commissary for the Holy Land  
Aotearoa/New Zealand



# St Martin de Porres Church Holds Final Mass

It was an emotional morning on Sunday, November 2 in the Hutt, as the final Mass of Thanksgiving was held at St Martin de Porres Church.

Celebrated by Archbishop Paul and Te Awakairangi parish priest Fr Raja Kommareddy SVD, the church was completely full as parishioners shared memories of St Martin de Porres' 65 years of serving Catholics in Lower Hutt.

"We come with lots of mixed emotions, but trusting in the power of God and his call to us to continue to be his witnesses in the world and in various places we find ourselves," Archbishop Paul told those assembled towards the beginning of the Mass.

An hour of Adoration with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and a relic of St Martin de Porres was held the day before the Mass. Parish families sought the blessings of St Martin de Porres during the late afternoon event.

Blessed Martin de Porres Church (known as St Martin de Porres from 1962) opened on May 1, 1960, as the parish church for the new parish of Avalon. It was the first Catholic church in Aotearoa New Zealand dedicated to Martin de Porres.

The long-time priest in Lower Hutt, Fr Leo Daly, had bought the property in 1940 with the needs of a future parish in mind. There was already a large house on the property which would become the presbytery.

The church grew for several decades, mirroring the growth of Catholicism

in the Hutt Valley. However, things changed in the 21st century. By 2013, it had become clear that with fewer priests and parishioners, and increased costs for insurance and seismic strengthening, the high number of parishes in the Hutt Valley could not all be supported.

In 2015, the eight parishes of the Hutt Valley Pastoral Area became two.

With the closure of St Martin de Porres, there are now three churches in Te Awakairangi Parish: Ss Peter and Paul in Lower Hutt, St Bernadette in Naenae and St Michael in Taita.

You can watch a video of the final Mass on Vimeo at the link below: [vimeo.com/event/5454297/d8d68bda18](https://vimeo.com/event/5454297/d8d68bda18)



(Above) The St Martin de Porres relic is now at Ss Peter and Paul Church in Lower Hutt.

(Below) St Martin de Porres Church's opening day was 1 May, 1960.



## New Seasons for Growth Trainings

Seasons for Growth is an evidence-based programme that helps children, young people and adults navigate change, loss and grief with confidence and hope. By becoming a Companion, communities become strengthened.

There are several trainings scheduled for 2026. Equip yourself to support others through change and loss. It's a great way to help whānau and your community

More information is available at: [catholicsocialservices.org.nz/seasons-for-growth-companion-training](https://catholicsocialservices.org.nz/seasons-for-growth-companion-training)



# YCL 2025 a Blessed Success

by Regina Fernandes

YCL 2025 marked the 21st year that YCL (Young Catholic Leaders) has been running for year 12s in leadership roles in all secondary Catholic schools within the Archdiocese. YCL focuses on helping students develop their leadership skills, as well as their spiritual life, to better equip them during year 13.

We kicked off Sunday afternoon with introductions to the leadership team and a few icebreakers. Sabrina was our MC for the camp and created a relaxed, laidback vibe that encouraged the students to

reimagined how teenagers typically think of prayer.

Rather than a mindless ritual, prayer is a conversation with God that is open. As referenced: "God doesn't want our perfection, He just wants our attention." All the students reiterated how relatable and beneficial this quote and talk was for understanding God and especially their personal prayer.

A beautiful part of YCL was getting to know the students and learning their purpose for YCL. Within the small workshops we ran, we helped

students each day either not even using their phones or calling their parents and immediately handing it in to go hang out with each other. There were constant games being played with volleyball in the gym, rugby in the pool and lines for the water and mud slide.

Students who had avoided each other on the first day were laughing, joking and chatting as if they had been friends for years.

On the last night, we had reconciliation night, where there was confession and prayer stations set up for students to talk to God. This was an emotional time that was filled with empathy and connection. Students comforted each other and sat down reading the Bible, praying the Rosary and sitting in silence outside. The silent atmosphere was filled with the Holy Spirit. After this beautiful moment, there was a bonfire with a riff-off that was filled with laughter and rambunctious singing.

The next day was bittersweet, with students exchanging socials to connect with each other later and thanking leaders for their experiences. It was amazing to see the growth over the past four days of each student and an overall beautiful experience for all involved.

***“God doesn't want our perfection,  
He just wants our attention.”***

interact with each other and build friendships. Each student was assigned to a service group – about 10 students from each college who worked together on different team-building activities such as the sandcastle and prep for YAFA (Youth Allowed Faith Aloud).

Each day was split between whole group sessions with one speaker, workshops for each service group, games and free time. One of the most well-received talks was presented by our St Bernard's Tuākana, Angelo. His talk on prayer

prepare them for their upcoming leadership roles with topics such as public speaking, team-building and dealing with difficult people. These were also accompanied by workshops to develop their spiritual life that focused on prayer, understanding, hope and charism. These workshops helped build the bond between the service groups and the leaders to get to know the students.

Each day we had two hours of free time where students were allowed back on their phones for around 40 minutes. It was great to see more



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