

WelCom

Newsletter of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand



North and South Island Chrism Masses

The spirit of the Lord was at both the Archdiocese's Chrism Masses during Holy Week.

The Chrism Mass for the South Island parishes was held on Tuesday, March 31 at St Mary's Church in Nelson.

The following day, Sacred Heart Cathedral was packed on a crisp, clear Wellington evening for the North Island Chrism Mass.

More than 50 priests and Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Gábor Pintér joined Archbishop Paul around the altar. Parishioners came from all the parishes of the lower North Island.

In his homily, Archbishop Paul said a Chrism Mass brings us back to the source – Christ, who is the anointed one. He said that Jesus is for today, for Aotearoa New Zealand, for Wellington, for all, and all flows from Him.

"This oil proclaims something powerful: no one is alone. Christ is there."

He added: "Christ continues to act, Christ continues to anoint and Christ continues to save."

A Chrism Mass is when the sacred oils used in sacraments throughout the year, and throughout the Archdiocese, are consecrated. It's a special, sacred time.

Archbishop Paul told attendees that the sacred oils remind us faith is not inherited automatically – but is received.

"When you carry these oils, you carry more than vessels," he said. "You carry the reminder that Christ is alive among us."

God bless everyone who volunteered, who received the oils on behalf of their parishes and all who attended Chrism Masses.



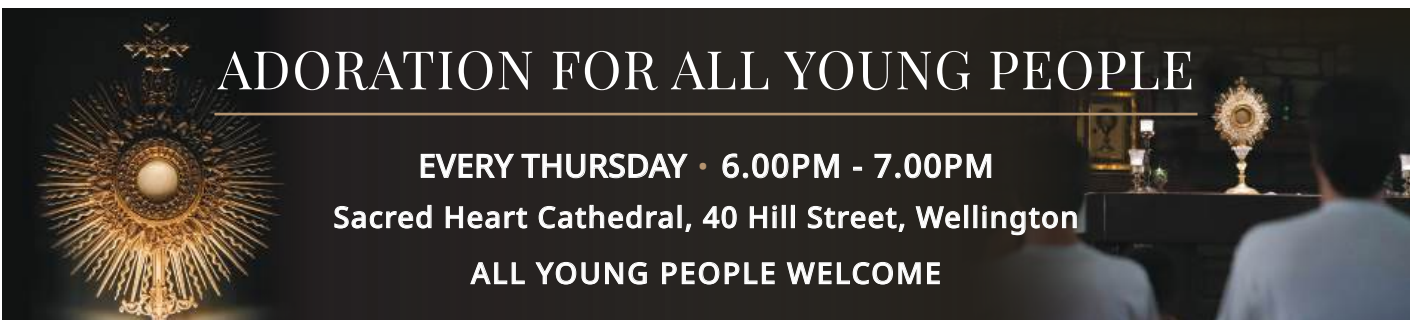
“Christ continues to act, Christ continues to anoint and Christ continues to save.”

ADORATION FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

EVERY THURSDAY · 6.00PM - 7.00PM

Sacred Heart Cathedral, 40 Hill Street, Wellington

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE WELCOME



From Archbishop Paul

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

Easter greetings to you as we celebrate this time of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It has been wonderful to hear of the participation and prayer in our parishes over Holy Week and in the weeks since. So many people have gathered for this time. There is a real sense of the Holy Spirit moving in the hearts of people and more and more people are seeking the Lord through our Catholic community. We are a communal religion, and we need one another if we are to live this life with Jesus well.

We estimate that throughout the country over 900 people joined the Catholic Church at Easter. That so many have been prepared to receive the sacraments says something significant about our parishes and the work that is done through the OCIA programme. Some wonder why it takes a year of preparation to join the Church? However, the OCIA process allows time for prayer, reflection on the Scriptures and learning about the Church and what it means to be a Catholic. We know it is a lifelong process for us all. One of the concerns is that people have an intense experience of OCIA and then afterwards there is nothing for them apart from Sunday Mass. It is one of the reasons why I ask parishes: what is happening Monday to Saturday to support the faith experience of Sunday?

As we move to larger parish groupings, it is important that there are smaller groups within the parish that people can belong to for faith support and companionship. However, these only happen when we are willing to give up our time to belong to them. Expecting someone else to do the work will not sustain us as faith communities. Each of us needs to ask: what am I contributing to the life of my parish?



What am I involved in? Do I just turn up and disappear again week after week? If we all do something, our parishes will be vibrant and outward-focused for mission.

You will find in this edition an article relating to the month for vocations. A sign of a vibrant Church is one where vocations to priesthood and religious life are flourishing. We are all called to play our part. Vocations begin in the home, with the formation in faith of the children. They are nurtured in a parish where people belong and are noticed and cared for. The community also encourages their young people to see if God is calling them and helps them to discern if this is what God asks. And the community also supports the financial costs relating to forming priests for the future. I would ask that you consider what you are doing to help to develop vocations in your parish and community.

On Sunday, April 19, I joined the parish communities of Holy Family Nelson and Our Lady of the Bays Tasman for a Mass to celebrate the creation of the new parish of St John Paul II. This area, rich in Catholic history, moves to another stage in its faith journey. I would ask that you pray for our sisters and brothers in the Tasman area as they bear witness to the Gospel in their new parish.

On June 6, we will be welcoming a relic of St Carlo Acutis to the Cathedral and it will be there until Wednesday, June 10. There will also be some displays which outline his life and why he is a saint of our Church. I encourage you to come to the Cathedral over these days if you are in the Wellington region. It would also be good to find out more about St Carlo and to talk with the young people you know about him and the call to live a holy life.

May this Eastertide be a graced time for you all.

Nga mihi nui

+ Paul Martin SM
Archbishop of Wellington

JOSHUA 40
CATHOLIC MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

CELEBRATION WEEKEND
14-16 AUGUST 2026 • KESWICK CHRISTIAN CAMP

Keynote Speaker: Robert Falzon
Leader of Australia's menALIVE
Author of 'Importance of a present dad'

ALL MEN WELCOME

Friday pm to Sunday midday
Meals & accommodation included

Contact: Mike Lobo - 021 280 9285
Greg Sullivan - 021 437 747

SPACES ARE LIMITED, BOOK IN EARLY

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

We look forward to hearing from you!

Futuna Chapel reopens

The Futuna Chapel in Karori has reopened. It was a busy day on Saturday, March 21 as the chapel reopened. There was a morning

blessing, followed by a Mass celebrated by Msgr Gerry Burns. Then later came an official unveiling from Wellington Mayor Andrew Little.

The Futuna Chapel first opened in 1961, and is a Heritage New Zealand Category 1 historic place.

The reopening was a long journey, and would not have been possible without a great number of dedicated supporters. Thanks also to everyone who came, and made the day possible.

The chapel is open to visitors on the first Sunday of every month between 11am and 3pm. It is located at 67 Futuna Close, Karori. Parking is available on Friend St, or take a Number 2 bus from the city to Karori.



Easter rising by Peter Mattiassi (April 2026)

A poem by a newly baptised Catholic

A fragile candle slowly wakes, arising gently
Easter breaks, with delicate touch the journey starts
And like the Saint we march forward, the flame becomes more sure, more sure
the blind will see the path tonight

We march in time, counting down, the wait is over now
Fathers' song from ages gone, takes us where past and present meet
the place where silence speaks, the softened heart hears and weeps
We kneel and brace, then inward face, as ferns protect this sacred space

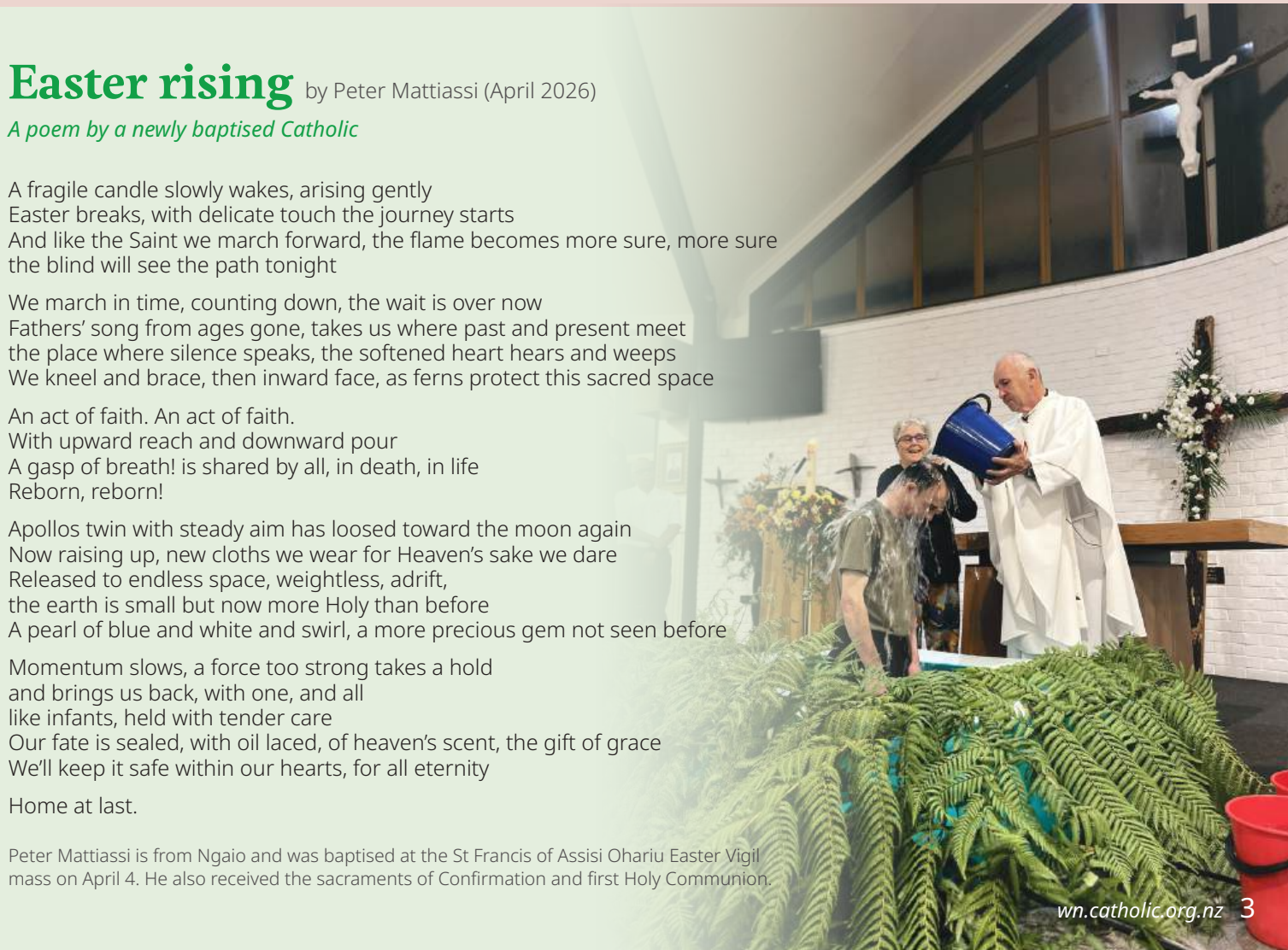
An act of faith. An act of faith.
With upward reach and downward pour
A gasp of breath! is shared by all, in death, in life
Reborn, reborn!

Apollo's twin with steady aim has loosed toward the moon again
Now raising up, new cloths we wear for Heaven's sake we dare
Released to endless space, weightless, adrift,
the earth is small but now more Holy than before
A pearl of blue and white and swirl, a more precious gem not seen before

Momentum slows, a force too strong takes a hold
and brings us back, with one, and all
like infants, held with tender care
Our fate is sealed, with oil laced, of heaven's scent, the gift of grace
We'll keep it safe within our hearts, for all eternity

Home at last.

Peter Mattiassi is from Ngaio and was baptised at the St Francis of Assisi Ohariu Easter Vigil mass on April 4. He also received the sacraments of Confirmation and first Holy Communion.





Youth ministry leaders inspired at Life Teen Convention

The Life Teen Aotearoa Leadership Convention 2026, held in partnership with the Diocese of Auckland, brought together 139 leaders of Catholic youth ministry from across New Zealand for a weekend of formation, connection and renewal.

The Life Teen Convention created a space for those involved in ministry to take a step back from the busyness of parish life and be inspired once again in their mission to lead teens closer to Christ. Through a mix of keynote sessions, practical breakouts and prayer, attendees were equipped with tools and ideas to invest in the lives and faith of young people.

Centred on the theme “Radiant Hope”, the convention invited participants to reflect on Christ as the source of enduring hope, Mary as an example of living with radiant hope and the call for youth ministers to be witnesses of that hope.

Keynote sessions explored ways youth ministry leaders can foster environments where young people encounter hope in Christ.

Practical breakout sessions covered a range of topics such as sharing the Gospel with young people, how to love Jesus deeply, the role of mission and vision in planning, and how to recruit, mentor and support younger leaders.

The event was supported by Life Teen International,

whose ongoing investment continues to strengthen local efforts. A highlight was having Randy Raus, president and CEO of Life Teen, sharing his heart for ministry during keynotes and breakouts.

Auckland Bishop Steve Lowe and 22 of the country’s seminarians joined the convention for Sunday Mass.

The Life Teen Aotearoa Leadership Convention, held every two years, is the largest national training event for those involved in Catholic youth ministry in New Zealand.

Participants spoke of the great benefit of the event in preparing them for their efforts at home.

“The time of prayer and praise, the workshops and keynotes all knitted together to create a wonderful, peaceful and enriching experience that has left me feeling invigorated in my youth ministry work,” said Emily Gorman.

“Youth ministry is a tough road, with ups and downs, but it’s so good to be reminded of why we do what we do and that we aren’t alone doing it.”

Dina Aziz conceded she was feeling somewhat “spiritually dry” ahead of the event, but she gained valuable insights in the sessions and felt God’s presence.

“After the convention I became on fire with the Holy Spirit and can’t wait to share it with our youth leaders and the youth,” she said.



Photography: Taila Burton



Shared indigenous experiences punctuate conference in NZ

Participants in the second International Conference on Catholic Indigenous were struck by the similar experiences and a common resilience across the four participating nations.

The conference, which was hosted in Auckland last month, saw delegations from the United States, Canada and Australia join a New Zealand contingent.

Each country led one day of the proceedings, outlining significant suffering and traumatic practices and policies, but also sharing stories of resilience, faith and hope.

Graydon Nicholas, a member of the Tobique First Nation in Canada, was at the first gathering in Washington, DC in 2023. He said the second gathering took the important conversations to another level.

"This is another stage in the journey that we as indigenous Catholics are on to become more fully involved with our Catholic faith," he said, something he has called a "spiritual quest".

"Even though we're all indigenous people from different parts of the world, there are a lot of common experiences, but there is also a lot of common good that is present."

Mr Nicholas said among his highlights of the Auckland conference were the Masses that incorporated components of indigenous liturgy, culture and spirituality.

Manuel Beazley, who chairs Te Rōpū Māori, an advisory group to the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, said he also was struck by the similarities of the experiences of people across the different countries.

Mr Beazley said one of the lessons he will take from the conference is the importance of a consistent approach to supporting indigenous Catholics. He believes that could be improved across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Doreen Flanders, who serves as deputy chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council in Australia, spoke of the pōwhiri at Tūtahi Tonu marae on the opening day as a high point.

"The welcome to country was absolutely amazing," Aunty Doreen said. "To be welcomed in the traditional way – I was looking forward to that, because it is such an important part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture."

She conceded that the stories of cultures lost, of people dispossessed and displaced, made for difficult listening, but stories of faith also shone through.

"It's so easy to make the connections about some of the social injustice that has happened to indigenous people," she said.

"The thing that's pricked my ears up, and I have thoroughly enjoyed, is how those communities and



individual people, how they have incorporated and embraced Catholic identity, Catholic faith to themselves and their communities."

Bishop John Folda of Fargo, in the US state of North Dakota, said identity – both as indigenous and as Catholics – was a strong thread through the conference.

"All are seeking recognition as not only part of society but also as integral members of the Church," he said.

"I think we're all looking in common for ways to serve our indigenous brothers and sisters and to support them in their lives – in the living out of their culture and the living out of their Catholic faith."

While acknowledging the smaller populations of New Zealand and Australia, Bishop Folda said he was struck by how closely connected Māori and Aboriginal Catholic advisory bodies are with their bishops' conferences.

The next International Conference on Catholic Indigenous will be hosted in Canada in 2028 or 2029.

Growing a culture of vocations

World Day of Prayer for Vocations (Good Shepherd Sunday)

by Lucienne Hensel

At the end of March, a group of young men discerning a vocation to the priesthood gathered at the Magnificat Retreat Centre in Featherston for a “Come & See” retreat weekend led by Fr Alan Roberts. Over two days of silence, personal reflection, communal prayer and fraternity, they stepped away from the noise of daily life to listen more deeply to the Lord’s call.

This spirit of deep listening echoes Pope Leo’s message for Vocation Sunday. He reminds us that a vocation is “God’s free gift that blossoms at the depth of our hearts”, yet this gift can only be discovered by the one who “pauses, listens, prays and welcomes the Shepherd’s gaze.”

In these busy and anxious times, how can we help our young people listen deeply and open their hearts to the Lord’s call? Vocation Sunday invites us to pray for vocations, but it also reminds us that more is needed. While vocation often begins in the family, it blossoms within the wider Church community. The prayer, witness and accompaniment of the parish family are essential for vocations to grow in our local Church. It is a responsibility we all share together.

Across our parishes, there are young people striving to grow as faithful



disciples and seriously discerning their vocation. How do we cultivate an environment where they can discover who God is calling them to be? For some, that call may lead to priesthood; for others, to marriage, religious life or dedicated service in the world. The seed of vocation needs good soil – communities that pray, love and live their faith joyfully; mentors who accompany; and opportunities for young people to encounter God in the silence and discern the deeper questions of their hearts.

How can you make a difference? **Pray** for the young people in your parish. **Invite** them to consider that God may be calling them to more. **Accompany** them as they explore what that “more” might be. **Encourage** them to take up the opportunities offered by the

Archdiocese to meet other young people who are discerning. Your word of encouragement may be exactly what someone needs to take the first step toward discovering God’s call.

This Vocation Sunday, Pope Leo invites us all to “commit (our)selves more fully to creating conditions that allow this gift (of vocation) to be embraced, nourished, protected and accompanied, so that it may bear abundant fruit”. Tomorrow’s vocations depend on the culture we nurture today.

The next “Come & See” vocations morning for young men discerning priesthood will be held on Saturday, June 6 at St Francis of Assisi Parish, Ohariu. For more information, please email l.hensel@cadw.nz



PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SEMINARIANS

Archdiocese of Wellington



Deacon Emilio Capin
Final Year



Gerson Badayos
Sixth Year



Kham Nguyen
Second Year



Dyester Abo-Abo
Second Year



Long Tran
First Year



Ele Minseok Oh
First Year

Landing the Waka: welcoming and supporting our newly arrived missionary clergy

by Msgr Gerard Burns, Vicar General

Imagine landing in a country you are not familiar with. Even if you know the main language, it might be spoken with different accents, local slang and there is a whole history of events and people you don't know. Possibly many reading this have had these experiences in migrating to Aotearoa New Zealand. I had similar experiences when working as a priest in Peru.

Across Aotearoa New Zealand in the last 20 years, we have received many priests from other parts of the world – mostly from India and the Philippines, but other places, too. This has been because our bishops have been faced with declining numbers of priests born and raised in New Zealand, and have sought to ensure that sacramental pastoral care is available to all.

Having priests from abroad is not new for Aotearoa. The first priests to come to the country were priests from France (although Wellington's first priest was an Irish Capuchin, J.J.P. O'Reily). The first priests had to learn te reo Māori as well as English. Bishop Pompallier later brought clergy from England and Italy, but it was Irish clergy who mostly came, as the growing Catholic settler population mostly had that heritage.

In the first decades of the Church here, local vocations were mostly sent overseas for their studies, until local seminaries appeared at the end of the 19th century. However, the flow of clergy from Ireland continued until about 1970. Mission to and with Māori – Pompallier's original objective – was largely continued by locally-born Marist Fathers and Mill Hill priests from England, Holland and Germany, working with various religious women.

Because of marginalisation of Māori in NZ social life following the wars of the 1860s, the Māori Catholic stream of Church life became somewhat parallel to the predominantly European stream made up mostly of people of Irish descent, with pockets of Polish, Scottish and English communities.

How all these priests from abroad managed their transitions would have been as various as today, depending on personal maturity, language/culture-learning adaptability, nature of the communities they were sent to, etc. Some didn't manage the change and returned home. However, until the 1970s, the variations within the Church in Aotearoa were less than they are today.

From the 1960s, New Zealand's ethnic mix began to change with the arrival of peoples from other parts of the Pacific – Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau, the Cook Islands – seeking better prospects for their children. Some clergy and religious came from these islands and, more so, to provide pastoral care in home languages. There was prejudice against the "newcomers", but parishes slowly adjusted.

In the 1990s came migrants from parts of Asia, mainly the Philippines and India – again, often to fill gaps in Aotearoa's workforce and again changing the face of parishes. Also coming were communities from South Korea, Vietnam, South America (particularly Colombia) and so on. Social changes have affected the "old" European-



descent community in terms of marriage, family, Church practice, etc. This has made pastoral accompaniment more complex for parishes and pastoral workers.

So, priests arriving from abroad find themselves facing this complexity: language, history, Church culture. While they might find communities of their own nationality in the Wellington Archdiocese, they are expected to look after all who come their way. How do we assist them to learn about this strange place?

One way is the Landing the Waka programme. It was begun in 2011 as an intensive, three-day live-in programme to introduce priests new to Aotearoa to aspects of social and Church life here. Topics include local history, Church history (including recent Archdiocese synods and policies), safeguarding, diocesan structures and offices, inclusive language and general cultural features of life here. Some specific aspects are Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the significance of Anzac Day, ways of celebrating major feasts here, sayings such as "sweet as", "bring a plate", "dodge a bullet", etc.

In the past year, the live-in intensive has had a monthly gathering added, because cross-cultural transition isn't completed in a few days; it takes several years. The process includes discussion and interchange of experiences and questions among the participants.

Our Church family is becoming ever more beautifully diverse, a living reflection of the Spirit who breathes life into all peoples and cultures. This growing diversity is a sacred gift. Yet, it also brings new challenges – for our missionary clergy who leave their homelands to serve and for our parishes as they learn to welcome and accompany them. And it requires all of us "long-termers" and newly arrived to adjust and learn from each other as we honour what has been and been established and the core of our common faith.

As Pope Leo reminds us, our diversity is not a burden but a strength. When we honour the gifts each culture brings, we reveal more fully the face of Christ among us.

I invite all our parishes to open wide their hearts to our newly arrived missionary clergy. Let us offer them hospitality, understanding and a shared sense of mission. In walking together, listening deeply and supporting one another, we help each other to "land our waka", trusting that the same God who calls us into this journey will guide us safely to the shore.

Taking action on issues of housing and homelessness

by Deirdre Meskill, Catholic Social Services

Issues of housing and homelessness continue to confront us in the news, in our communities and on our streets. The issues can appear at once simple and complex. Our treasury of Catholic Social Teaching helps us to understand that there is a human right to housing through principles such as human dignity, the common good and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.

The Archdiocese's Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission (EJP) maintains a focus on housing through the Social Equity Committee and its Catholic Housing Forum group, which was set up in late 2024 for people with an interest or involvement in housing. With many groups working in this space, the intent is not to duplicate the work of others, rather to collaborate on projects and to take action, informed by Catholic Social Teaching, at the system level.

Moved by Compassion on Move-On Orders

Across the night of March 29-30, people from across our Catholic communities joined with other Christians in an all-night Moved by Compassion vigil organised by Common Grace Aotearoa at St Paul's Anglican Cathedral. The vigil was held to oppose the Government's proposed "Move-On Orders" and to pray for alternative solutions to issues of homelessness.

The Move-On Orders propose that people aged over 14 who are rough sleeping, begging or displaying behaviour indicating an intent to inhabit a public space will face fines and prison terms if they fail to comply with Move-On Orders proposed by the Government under new legislation.

The event at St Paul's was filled with warmth and compassion – an example of what can be achieved when different Christian communities unite under the preferential option for those made poor. The Gospel reflection of "When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat" and the sheep and the goats was well chosen to represent the need for legislation and personal action to uphold the dignity of life, particularly for the most vulnerable.

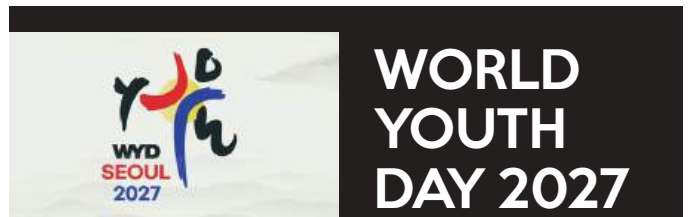


Speakers at the start of the evening made points illuminating the unambiguous opposition to the orders – that they criminalise poverty, break connections between people and offer nothing to solve the underlying problem of lack of housing and support services, especially in times where even the homed are struggling with daily life issues. Prayers on the hour, coupled with the sleeping sounds of snoring reverberating throughout the cathedral, made the vigil experience a poignant expression of the reality and needs of the dignity being human.

Members of the EJP led the Archdiocese's collaboration in the event, including providing a "Soup Team", first aiders and marshals. The EJP has endorsed and fully supports several statements made by Archbishop Paul, Catholic Social Services, Caritas, St Vincent de Paul and other community leaders against the Move-On Orders.

Pre-election Housing Forum 2026

The Catholic Housing Forum has planning underway for a Housing Forum held prior to the national election. This will be modelled on the successful forum held in 2017 with the voices of those experiencing housing issues amplified, members from across political parties invited to share their housing-related policies and Church leaders framing the event with a Christian approach to housing. The forum will provide information and raise awareness, enabling people to cast their vote from an informed position.



WORLD YOUTH DAY 2027

Expressions of interest

To register your expression of interest, please contact Regina Fernandes at rfernandes@wn.catholic.org.nz, or complete the form at: <https://forms.gle/tk41DJ2YDgFExPCVA>



Come and
celebrate with
Pope Leo XIV!



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