



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*

# LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL) December 2021

In the Philippines we start Christmas preparations by September (the ‘ber’ months) and end it by Three Kings. We may have the longest Christmas celebration in the world. My grandmother would have the tree up by August (to our chagrin); a survivor of WWII, celebrating Christmas is a sign that there is finally peace. Christmas also gives us something nice to look forward to regardless of what life brings. We can’t have it soon enough. Then here is *2021... oh what do I remember you by?*

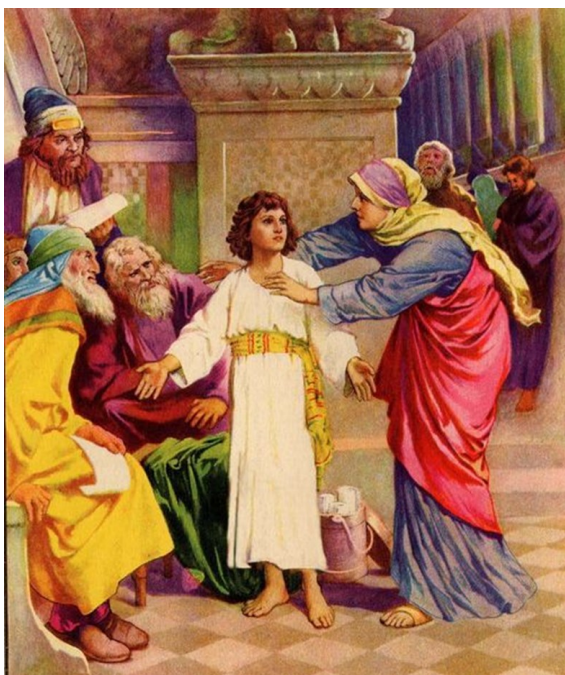
This December issue is one of looking back. We have **Bonita Tasele** leading us to the last Sunday reflection on the ‘Lost and finding of Jesus in the temple’, where she encourages us to retrace our steps back to God as a family. **Bernadette Patelesio** gives us an intimate view of the challenges the Candidates faced during the year. In a similar vein, **Bridget Taumoepeau**, takes a break from her academic hat and writes of her acedia. Her experience reflects the challenges some of us who have roots in different countries. Finally, we have **Joe Green** who shares the lesson he learnt as a Lay Pastoral Leader. His piece is a look back and a step forward. The ADW model of having an LPL is a model for many dioceses around the world. We are grateful to have *Joe, Debbie Matheson, Barbara Rowley, Mika Teofilo* and all the other LPLs who served the before them, for showing us and the way.

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis calls the evangeliser “The One who remembers”. His words made me aware that as a Christian, through Scripture and Tradition, I share the memory of prophets and saints. My story dates back long before my time. A history mired by tragedy, but defined by a witnessing to God’s faithfulness. *2021 (and 2020), what do I remember you by?* I will remember, as like every Christmas, the time God entered into our humanity and became one of us, to assure us, in the most consuming way that God is with us. I will remember, and as in the ANZAC tradition—lest we forget.

*Maya Bernardo, Launch Out Formator & Manager*

## Finding Jesus Reflection on Gospel Luke 2: 41-52

By Bonita Tasale  
 Launch Out Candidate



In this Gospel, I put myself in the shoes of Mary and Joseph. They are ordinary parents who had to do what most parents do. Joseph works hard to provide for the family and Mary looks after the needs of Jesus and keeps the homes fires burning. They must have had many of the same concerns of daily living as we have. When they travelled to Jerusalem the flurry of activities has made them too preoccupied to watch over Jesus. Perhaps there was nothing to worry about because they are travelling with family and friends. For me, this shows that they are just like any other parents. And even if they do know that their Son is “special”, they really do not know Him that well. The frantic search for Jesus and the finding of Him in the temple, by his distraught parents, compounded by Him telling them that they should have known where He was, must have certainly made Mary and Joseph realise that theirs would not be an ordinary parenthood.

[http://www.marysrosaries.com/collaboration/index.php?title=File:Finding\\_in\\_the\\_Temple\\_022.jpg](http://www.marysrosaries.com/collaboration/index.php?title=File:Finding_in_the_Temple_022.jpg)

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This Gospel reminds me of the times I feel I have lost Jesus. In those times when I feel too occupied with daily concerns or lured by the trappings of success and popularity. Even, if these were activities I did for the Church, I end up feeling exhausted and empty; feeling lost and looking for something I cannot name, until I realised, I need to encounter Jesus again. Like Mary and Joseph, I try to retrace my steps and go back to the place where I left Him—the Temple, in prayer.

One thing that struck me in the Gospel is that Mary and Joseph looked for Jesus together as a family. Our families can be just as special as Jesus' family. We need to take time to seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit on how we can best care for our families; how we can make sure no one is lost, and that we can all find our way home. I believe God will honour our efforts to make each of our homes a dwelling place for Him and He loves to bless all families.

Finally, the symbolism of the temple or the church is where we will find Jesus and a place where our families are reunited and made whole again. This may not just be the physical church, our homes, our families are considered the domestic church. It is a place of worship, peace, love, comfort, wisdom, and a place to encounter God. There is no better place for all of us than to be in God's house.

The Season of Advent is the beginning of the Church's liturgical calendar year. This is a time for reflection on the year that has been and a time for preparation as we welcome the Christ-Child into our hearts, our lives, and our homes. Advent is the time for all of us to give thanks to our God for all the opportunities, gifts and challenges God has put to us.

Following on with thanksgiving are the four weeks of preparation leading into Christmas. My question is-- "*What spiritual preparation are we doing for ourselves leading up to Christmas?*" This time can be busy. However, we need to consider time with our God, with our loved ones, and especially with ourselves; thinking about the essence of what Christmas is about. Let us invite and encounter the Christ-Child into our lives and our homes with love, peace, and joy.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, I consecrate my family to you and ask you to bless my home, especially my mother Telesia Falesa who is in the Rest home and everyone in that place, all the homes of my children, my grandchildren, brothers & sisters & their families, and friends. I trust in your love for all the members of my immediate and extended family, Cardinal John Dew and all the Clergy and Lay Pastoral Leaders, Spiritual Directors and Mentors, Manager Maya Bernardo & fellow-Candidates of Launch Out, friends, and everyone in this world, Give me the power and wisdom by your Holy Spirit, guide me in loving those who are closest to me. This I ask through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

**Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas  
and a Prosperous New Year.**

**IA MANUIA LE KKERISIMASI MA LE TAUSAGA FOU IA OUTOU UMA.**

**SOIFUA**

## Leaning into the wind and going forward

By Bridget Taumoepeau  
Launch Out Mentor



*Statue of Saint Ignatius the Pilgrim at Guelph from <https://ignatiancamino.com/about-the-ignatian-camino/>.*

2021 in New Zealand started out in a reasonably normal way, although we were aware of the world's problems with Covid 19. As a country of immigrants, most of us have links to other places, and we knew of separations, loss of life in our extended families or circle of friends. We rejoiced that we, as a small island nation, seemed to have beaten the plague and probably took a rather superior attitude towards other places that seemed to have mismanaged things with disastrous consequences.

Despite this apparently happy situation, there were many of us who were suffering. In the case of myself and my family, my husband was stranded in Tonga and the immigration situation had changed drastically. Our carefree system of commuting back and forth from

Tonga, in both directions – basically living in two countries, was completely disrupted and, as time dragged by, fear set in that we might not be able to see each other again. This produced very mixed emotions – on the one hand, we were grateful that Tonga was Covid-free, as otherwise the country would have been completely overwhelmed and we felt it was the safest place for Dad to be. On the other hand, we worried that if he became unwell, we would not be able to be there for him. In addition, there were significant family milestones that would be missed. But worst of all was the uncertainty – how long would this situation go on for?

And then our world was shattered by the first case of the Delta variant and lockdown began again. Even though I proclaimed that “I loved lockdown” (and that, to a certain degree was true – living at a beautiful beach; far from the madding crowd; good support services; retired, so no impact on income; heaps of hobbies to catch up on etc), there was still a feeling of dread. Would this ever end? Would my husband ever be able to come? Would my elderly sisters in Scotland survive? Would I ever be able to reconnect with my faith community, who are of enormous importance to me? Was there really a ‘normal’ way of life?

There was a sense of powerlessness and, accompanying that, the onset of what is called *acedia* – the feeling of listlessness, that is often accompanied by an attitude of not caring, with little concern for the world and what is going on. This is subtly different for depression, but an uncomfortable feeling. In my case, it manifested itself in a marked lack of motivation. I was studying by distance, and in some ways, there had been no changes in my study conditions, rather than the possible advantage of having more time to devote to it. Yet that did not translate into the enjoyment of reading and writing. I needed to apply for my husband's visa and that became a huge effort (mercifully with positive results); the joy that I had taken last year in making endless quilts seemed to have lost its attraction; I did not take advantage of being able to walk on the beach; my prayer life did not expand as I knew it could; all those things that I would now have time to do got ignored, and the lazy scrolling through Facebook and YouTube, while slobbing around in a dressing gown, seemed to fill the day.

A vicious cycle ensues – everything seems to be an effort. Despite reminders from the parish to keep in touch and contact friends, I would procrastinate, even though I knew that I greatly enjoyed such conversations. Ironically, when things started to open up, I was not enthusiastic, even resenting the perceived imposition on my time! The time that I had in abundance. It reminded me of what happens after a long retreat.

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In the past, my wise spiritual director had advised me that coming back into the world after the 30-day Ignatian retreat might be difficult, and, as a result, I organised a few days holiday on my own before joining up with family and friends. Even so, it was not an easy process and a part of me longed to be back in the isolation and silence of the retreat house with the certainty of a routine of spiritual direction, prayer, walks, meals, Mass and blessed sleep.

In the Covid world reconnecting to the world has also not been easy. In the interim things have changed – the whole vaccination debate has erupted; flaws in our relationships and society have been laid bare; individualism became even rife and many seem to have forgotten the idea of the ‘common good’.

But all was not doom and gloom – I think we have learnt to appreciate some things we took for granted. Recently one of my daughters and her husband visited. In the past, we would have seen each other quite frequently, but it seemed a long time since they had come to the beach. The visit was made all the more poignant because the Auckland branches of the family have not yet been able to see Dad - it is over 18 months since they met. Milestones are being missed, but we have worked out a way to celebrate differently – the Christmas season will have a day set aside for each of the occasions we have missed – Golden Wedding anniversary; grandchild’s 21<sup>st</sup>; other grandchildren’s birthdays etc. We have been a family that treasures our traditions, but now we have to think differently – maybe those ways will become the new traditions – after all, culture must change and adapt to survive!

We have learnt to communicate differently; to use social media to our advantage; to share our ups and downs (and our recipes); to photograph beautiful things like the spring flowers in our gardens; to be grateful; to marvel at the way our grandchildren are flourishing; to appreciate what is really important; even to embrace some suffering and know that Jesus, a Man of Sorrows, walks with us.



*This is my study/prayer room which saved my life! Called Hufanga'anga which means place of safety or refuge.*

We must adopt that model of accompaniment – walking with each other. After all, as Pope Francis says, we will not come out of this unchanged, but how we choose to change is up to us - for better or for worse. Let us lean on Mary, whose world was changed on so many occasions, yet her faith and beauty shone through. Let us imitate that.

# Empty hands

By Bernadette Patelesio  
Launch Out Candidate

2021 was an interesting year. My Launch Out Project did not come to fruition and with our presentation day looming, I had cause to reflect on my year, and my “empty hands.” The following is my reflection, taken from my presentation notes.



<https://photostockeditor.com/free-images/goldfish-jumping>

Early this year, I gave up my job to be home more, had health challenges, and reluctantly stepped away from my role as church musician to create space for Launch Out and studies. My husband also had a significant career change. I made the decision to change big things in my life. God was there with me, and I knew they were right. As well as this, COVID happened again and so my project could not go ahead. What I had not anticipated was the fallout from all this change, really struggling to find a new routine and, as it turns out, my new identity, and more deeply, my identity in Christ.

In Luke 18 we hear Jesus say, “*There is still one thing left for you: sell **all that you have** and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.*” As I look back over the year, I am reminded of the times Jesus has asked us to leave everything behind and follow him. But what is all that I have? Perhaps it is not only things we are asked to leave behind, it can be an invitation to let go of what we thought we knew, or who we thought we were.

I know that I am called to this place, to this moment in time, to Launch Out and to whatever that may mean 3,4 or 5 years from now. And I am a church musician, a wife, a mother a grandmother and a daughter. I have learned that Launch Out cannot be something I am doing on the side in my already busy life, that I can or cannot fit in. It is part of my self now.

On one of our Prayer Days, we heard the story of Zacchaeus. Jesus met my gaze directly that day and said Come. He does not want perfection, he just wants me, with my colourful family, my dear mother, my music, my parish whanau, and my difficulty settling myself enough to finish tasks. Being in Launch Out or, with my new understanding, being me, can be a bit like spinning plates! It is only when I lower my eyes that the plates start to wobble.



[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/zacchaeus-the-rich-man-gets-woke\\_b\\_584f3518e4b0151082221e3f](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/zacchaeus-the-rich-man-gets-woke_b_584f3518e4b0151082221e3f)

I know that my days now have a new order and I need a new resilience. And when it feels too much, I will not break, but be held up, and the things that cannot be finished, perhaps need not be finished.

I have realised too, that my hands are not empty. I did quite a lot in my parish during the year, but just as a parishioner, without my Launch Our Hat on.

Most of all this year, I needed to settle. And part of doing that was to hang up my church musician hat for a while. It has been good to do this, and when I can, I will return to Music Ministry, but it will be in a renewed way, responding to a real need that is more than notes on pages and lists of songs.

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In 1 Peter 4, Peter says “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God’s Grace in its various forms. And in using these gifts, we respond to the needs around us. In conclusion, 2021 was not smooth sailing for me, there were dark days. On reflection, I still find it difficult to stand before people and say that I am not doing so well, or that I am needed by my family. There is always very real tension there for me between admitting my own weaknesses (which you cannot see, because I am smiling after all) and being in the leadership positions I find myself called to.

So, things are somewhat unfinished, without a neat conclusion. And I have empty hands for my project, or do I? It has been a year of chaos, growth, longing, stillness, and peace, in mixed measures.



<https://catholicct.org/2019/10/24/30th-sunday-in-ot-c/>



## **BIRTHDAYS**

### **November**

- 10 Jude McKee
- 15 Lucienne Hensel
- 23 Barbara Rowley

### **December**

- 01 Felicity Giltrap
- 14 Frank Doherty

# UPDATES

## LAUNCH OUT PRESENTATION DAY 20 November 2022



Manager, John Pendragast, Joan McFetridge, former LO formator and manager and Mary Ann Greaney, LO Graduate, Mary Jackson Kay and Clare O' Connor.

This year's theme is "Empty hands" as we all grappled with the lethargy and sense of helplessness with the ongoing pandemic. In 2020, the lockdown was a novelty, in 2021 was like staring at the rubble of the life we knew before. On Presentation Day, we own up the highs and lows of our journeys, learnt from it and lift it up as an offering to God. The gift of the day is that we all left invigorated knowing that we can face the uncertain world with certainty of the love of God, who called us to Mission, and strengthens us through the love of our communities and families.

The Presentation Day is the summit of a Launch Out year. It is this time of the year when we share how our journey in formation went— the pastoral projects we ran, what we learn, and how we grew. It is also a time for gathering of the Launch Out community with Cardinal John, who has attended every single presentation day in the last 21 years! We were also joined by Mentors Susan Apathy and Catherine Gibbs, the Church Mission Team—Chris Duthie-Jung, Christine Walkerdine and Mika Teofilo (who helped with the hospitality and the IT). This year we have people who joined us by Zoom including Vicky Raw, parishioners, family members and the ADW General



## EXPRESSO-MARTINI

After the Presentation Day, we went to the Backbenchers for a debrief and our Christmas-gathering. We did our usual Christmas card-writing, which is the only time I can make you all sit in one place silently.



A pint later, it all turned *mama mia*. Forget about Covid 19 or the Church's struggle for

Synodality. Our greatest gripe, if I remember, is coming to terms with feeling 18 in our minds and being in the bodies we are in. We toast to life, love and mission! Happy times. Missing Vicky and Lisa, wishing they were with us.



## NEW CANDIDATE



Welcome FRANK DOHERTY, our new kid on the block! He works with the ADW Church Mission Team and the Most Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish. He starts with us soon and will join us in our 2022 activities.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- First meeting for the year is on 15 January 2022 at The Catholic Centre. Please have your Vaccine Certificate ready.
- Venue for 19 February 2022 Prayer Day is Home of Compassion. Facilitators we need to meet soon probably after our first meeting.
- Those still on their studies, don't forget to file your enrolment with Te Kupenga by end of the year or early next year.

## Lay Pastoral Leadership– lessons learnt

By Joe Green  
Lay Pastoral Leader



I walked through the door and the young parents threw themselves into my arms. As they clung to me in their grief, I knew why I was a Lay Pastoral Leader. I felt their pain. And it is in spaces such as this that I am grounded in my ministry.

Being a Lay Pastoral Leader is a vocation: a call from Jesus Christ to minister in his Church and to his People. I meet Christ in someone every day: in the bereaved, in the sick, in the children and their teachers, in those living rough, in parishioners willingly giving of their time, and indeed in

those in ordained priesthood whom I work alongside.

Reflecting on six years as a Lay Pastoral Leader some key things leap out as “lessons learnt”.

Formation as a Lay Pastoral Leader tells us that relationships are everything – they are! Way more than perhaps I realised at the outset. They’re important with everyone and anyone you interact with. And you’re not going to always get it right. I’ve learnt to make personal contact with those I’ve perhaps offended – and apologise.

To form relationships and exercise ministry you have to be with the people: priests, admin staff, parishioners, schools and those beyond the parish. I connect with most parishioners at Sunday Mass, so I go to a lot of Masses. I work hard to visit those who are dying, the seriously ill and every bereaved family. When I visit a bereaved family I take a small bag of groceries. It seems to be appreciated.

I attend many meetings, and I drink a lot of coffee as I catch up with parishioners during the week. Know someone in need? There’s considerable power in the words “let’s have coffee”.

I’ve learnt that being commissioned into the role by the Archbishop at a formal parish liturgy is essential—essential for the Lay Pastoral Leader and the priests they are to work with, and essential for the parish. It is here that the Lay Pastoral Leader, priests and parishioners are catechised into the role by the First Teacher for the Diocese. Participating in a commissioning liturgy reminds everyone of the teaching of Vatican II (Lumen Gentium, #33): that some are called to a more direct form of cooperation in the apostolate of the ordained minister, just as certain men and women assisted Paul the Apostle in the Gospel (Cf. Ph 4,3 Rm 16,3ff.).

Once commissioned to be a lay ecclesial minister, the Lay Pastoral Leader is mandated as a co-worker (to quote St Paul again), co-equal and co-responsible with the priests of the parish. I’ve learnt that commissioning needs to be repeated each time a new priest or Lay Pastoral Leader is appointed.

It took me a while to learn that being visible as a pastoral leader includes processing in alongside (next to, not in front of) the presiding priest at the Sunday Masses and other major celebrations in the parish. Parishioners can then see “co-equal”, “co-responsible”. I also take a role in the baptisms and receptions into the Church that I have prepared people for, and I lead as much of liturgies as the rites allows.

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I'd heard about "the fantastic Fr Dave" at an RCIA conference. He's a priest in Townsville. I spent a weekend with him. I learnt from Dave Lancini that everything you do is ministry, and is pastoral – including tasks that are sometimes seen as "administrative". Dave taught me much, and to the fore was the lesson that "anything that enables the people of God to be the People of God is a pastoral activity".

If I had my time again, I would just sit back, listen, observe, reflect, for some months after appointment. It's best not to rush in, to anything. Assume nothing you have been told about the parish or parishioners.

I've also learnt that in anything you do, bring the parishioners with you. I'm appreciative of the parishioners who have taken the time and the energy to gently teach me this.

The title "Lay Pastoral Leader" sometimes gets in the way. "Lay ecclesial minister" better explains the role. Each word has its meaning: "lay", from "laos", the "nation" or People (as in "People of God" – nothing to do with "not professional" as some might contend), not ordained; "ecclesial", an official Church mandated appointment to, in this case, the ministry of the ordained (see *Lumen Gentium* 33); "minister", because the role is one of ministry, within a team context. And, "lay minister" is easier to say and for people to understand.

However, I find that there are people who have their own expectations set by a medieval and Thomist theology of priesthood. They still expect "Father" to be the fount and source of all knowledge and authority. Pope Francis reminds us that priests are both clericalized and clericalize – you don't need to be a priest to participate in what he refers to as the sin of clericalism.

I find the words of Pope Francis reassuring: "Ecclesial life ... is fostered by the fruitful tension of these two poles of the priesthood, ministerial and baptismal, which despite the distinction are rooted in the one priesthood of Christ".

I have participated in a number of international webinars on Lay Ecclesial Ministry – not many are in the role of pastoral leader as Lay Pastoral Leaders are in Wellington. Given this we are going to get bruised, by priests and parishioners! As James Mallon points out in *Divine Renovation, Beyond the Parish* (p.308), "If you are in a leadership role, you have to take the heat. It is the pioneers, those forging ahead in a new direction, who often receive the arrows in the back". Monsignor Charles Cooper said something very similar to me.

One day I was feeling a bit sorry for myself. I took a walk up Riddiford St. It was a nice sunny day. From the steps of the former church near the intersection with Russell Tce came the slurred call, "hey mister, want a drink?", and a bottle of goodness-knows-what was held out for me. No rational conversation was going to happen, however the open generosity of Jesus Christ reminded me again of what I am called to. And I get on with it!



*The Road to Emmaus by Fritz von Uhde, from : [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fritz\\_von\\_Uhde\\_-\\_Der\\_Gang\\_nach\\_Emmaus\\_\(1891\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fritz_von_Uhde_-_Der_Gang_nach_Emmaus_(1891).jpg)*