

**NEW BISHOP OF HAMILTON**



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# WelCom

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**NauMai**

A newspaper for the Wellington and Palmerston North Catholic Dioceses

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WINNER OF THE 2023 AUSTRALASIAN CATHOLIC PRESS ASSOCIATION (ACPA) AWARD FOR BEST LAYOUT AND DESIGN FOR A PRINTED PUBLICATION



**“For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.”**  
— **Ephesians 2:14**

## “Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord; hear my voice”

The Anglican and Catholic Bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand jointly issued the following statement on Friday 20 October, on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

War is once again destroying people’s lives in the Holy Land. This new cycle of violence in this long conflict brings us new images of bloodied bodies and the anguished cries and faces of children, women and men – both Palestinian and Israeli. We’re seeing homes destroyed, lives shattered and hope for peace strangled.

The Anglican and Catholic Bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand, meeting together in Wellington this week, jointly express their horror at the latest acts of violence and join international voices in calling for an immediate ceasefire.



**THE ARCHBISHOPS AND PRIMATES OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND, AND POLYNESIA**



**Te Huinga o ngā Pihopa Katorika o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

protection. There are no winners in war: so often, it is innocent people who are maimed and killed.’

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is a wound that has continued to fester. Various diplomatic efforts to find a solution have failed because of the unwillingness to honour international agreements. Violence will never be a solution.

Bishop Steve Lowe, President of the

New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference said: ‘As Bishops, we endorse the work of those groups and institutions in Israel and Palestine who work for peace, justice, and reconciliation. Such work recognises our common humanity. This is the path that we advocate for peace in the Holy Land.’

The bishops jointly ask our government and diplomatic authorities to advocate for an immediate ceasefire and the opening and ongoing safeguarding of humanitarian corridors.

‘In this very emotional time, we cannot let anger lead us into antisemitism or Islamophobia. Let us remember that there are innocent victims on both sides of the conflict. To our fellow interfaith religious leaders, we ask: “Let us unite in prayer and action for a lasting peace.”

‘To the people of Aotearoa New Zealand; we urge you to pray for peace and to support aid appeals for those impacted by this humanitarian crisis.’

In Psalm 130 we hear: ‘*Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord; hear my voice. O let your*



**Pope Francis calls US President Joe Biden to discuss peace. (See p 5)** Photo: Vatican Media

*ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.’*

The bishops concluded: ‘May we too be attentive to those who call out to us from the depths of despair and destruction. May we commit ourselves to being instruments of peace.’



## From the editor

Annette Scullion

Tēnā koutou

Global events of huge significance dominate this issue of WelCom and call for our prayerful attention.

Pope Francis has called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza amid escalating violence and the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding since Israel launched retaliatory attacks on Hamas infrastructure in Gaza on 7 October. During his Sunday Angelus on 29 October the Pope said, 'We say "ceasefire, ceasefire". Brothers and sisters, stop! War is always a defeat, always.' He also renewed an appeal for the release of all hostages held by Hamas, following their attack on Israel.

In a jointly issued statement the New Zealand Catholic and Anglican bishops have expressed horror at the latest acts of violence and join international voices calling for an immediate ceasefire and peace in the Holy Land, saying, 'Let us unite in prayer and action for a lasting peace.' They go on to say, 'To the people of Aotearoa New Zealand; we urge you to pray for peace and to support aid appeals for those impacted by this humanitarian crisis.'

New Zealander Br Peter Bray fsc is the Vice-Chancellor of Bethlehem University in the

Occupied West Bank territory. In a message to the New Zealand Catholic bishops, he asked for prayers and said there was great uncertainty about what might happen from day to day. Peter provides his perspective on the unfolding crisis (p 5).

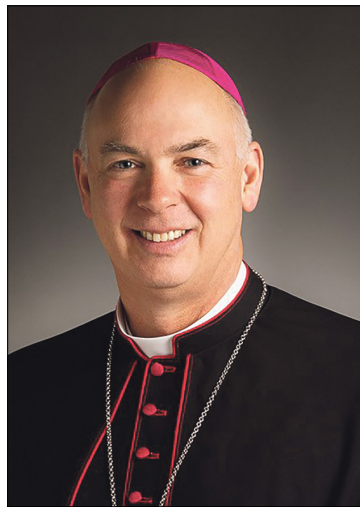
On the environmental front, Pope Francis has published a new document called *Laudate Deum*, which builds on his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. Its full title is: *Apostolic Exhortation Laudate Deum of the Holy Father Francis to all people of good will on the climate crisis*, (p 20.)

The Vatican has announced Pope Francis will take part in the UN's international climate summit in Dubai, COP28, which begins on 30 November. The Pope's attendance follows a meeting at the Vatican with the Sultan Ahmed al-Jaber, COP28's President-designate, to discuss the crucial role of faith leaders in advancing the climate agenda at COP28. Dr Al Jaber and Pope Francis also discussed aligning *Laudate Deum* with the COP28 Interfaith Declaration, to be signed after the global faith leaders' summit in Dubai this month (p 6).

In this WelCom we also have coverage of the eagerly awaited report on the month-long Synod on Synodality (p7). It provides important perspectives on what it means to be a Synodal Church.

Ngā mihi

## A time of listening to the experience of many



Archbishop Paul Martin SM  
Archbishop of Wellington

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

I am writing this in the last week of the Synod here in Rome. It has been a time of listening to the experience of many, of trying to see where the Holy Spirit is leading the Church and how to be faithful to our call to follow Christ from within our Catholic tradition.

Some people will be waiting for answers to some of the pastoral

questions that are a challenge to us in our modern western world. These have arisen and had some discussion, as part of a process of listening and discerning. This Synod was never intended to be a time for changing Church teaching at one meeting. We have tried to hear what are the ways we can be a Church more focused on our mission of proclaiming the Gospel, while also building up the body of Christ, which is his Church, for the sake of this mission.

That is a concrete reality for us in our two dioceses of Wellington and Palmerston North. How do we work to help one another fall more deeply in love with Christ? How do our faith communities support one another in the reality of our daily lives? How are we working to help those who are poor and in need? How are we proclaiming the Gospel by our lives? What does that look like in our individual parishes and in our dioceses? These are the starting points for us in our own reflection and planning. Hopefully the work of the Synod over this first session and the second one next year, will help us to do this more effectively.

One of the gifts to the Synod have been the talks of Fr Timothy

Radcliffe OP [English Catholic priest and Dominican friar]. He gave the retreat to us at the beginning of the Synod and during the meeting has been giving reflections as well. If you have a chance to watch or read them, I encourage you to do so. They are not too long and they provide matter for us to ponder in our call to follow Christ and to be a Church that is trying to be synodal in her way of operating. The links to his last talk on Monday, 23 October, is referenced below.

I encourage you to continue to pray for peace in those places of war and strife. Hearing people at the Synod talking about what is going on in their own countries has reminded me of how blessed we are to live in New Zealand and the responsibility we have to pray for peace for our brothers and sisters.

May you be blessed in your lives as we move towards the end of this year.

Ngā mihi nui

A Synod spiritual reflection by Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP can be read online via this link: [tinyurl.com/fr-timothy-radcliffe](https://tinyurl.com/fr-timothy-radcliffe)

## Prayers called for Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa

Bishop Steve Lowe, President of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference advised, on 28 October, that the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Rugambwa had been taken seriously ill the previous day. Bishop Steve wrote: 'Yesterday Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa, our Apostolic Nuncio, had a severe

stroke. He is in a serious condition at Wellington Hospital. Please keep him in your prayers.'

Archbishop Novatus was to have invested Archbishop Paul Martin sm with the Pallium on Sunday 5 November at St Mary of the Angels 5pm Mass. Instead Bishop Steve Lowe will now make

this presentation on Sunday 5 November at St Mary of the Angels 5pm Mass.

Please pray for Archbishop Novatus at this time.

# WelCom

[www.welcom.org.nz](http://www.welcom.org.nz)

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### Sending articles to WelCom

In our mission to communicate about news and events in the Wellington and Palmerston North dioceses, WelCom publishes information, stories and photos received from readers.

Contributed articles should be no longer than 300 words unless by arrangement with the editor. Please send as a MS Word document attached to an email or pasted into an email message including your name, address and phone number. Articles may be edited for length or clarity at the editor's discretion.

Photos should be in original format (unedited, uncropped), large file size of at least one megabyte (MB) and attached to your email as separate photo files - JPEG, TIFF, GIF or bitmap (BMP). Please include names for a caption.

Email to: [welcom@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:welcom@wn.catholic.org.nz)

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# First New Zealand priests' gathering in five years

A national assembly of Catholic priests was held in October for the first time in five years.

One hundred and seventy five priests attended the five-day event, which was held in Rotorua and was described as 'uplifting' and 'joyous' by those who participated.

In many respects, it has been a time of national trauma since their last gathering in 2018. The country has experienced such painful events as the mosque shootings, the Whakaari-White Island volcanic eruption, the major storms early this year and the three years of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fr Michael Hishon of Dunedin, chair of the 2023 National Assembly of Diocesan Priests organising committee, says he is very satisfied how all the many months of meetings and preparation culminated in the



Catholic priests from the six dioceses across New Zealand gathered at a national assembly of priests in Rotorua.

Photo: Supplied

successful assembly.

'The last five years have proven a kind of stormy and even at times demoralising period for us

all as priests attempting to make our way, and so this opportunity to gather has made for a really hopeful and joy-gilded five days of

companionship,' Fr Michael said at the assembly's conclusion.

Fr Michael said the formal welcome at Te Papaiouru Marae

on Monday, the formal dinner on Thursday night, and everything in between was a success.

Speakers included Archbishop of Brisbane Mark Coleridge, New Plymouth assistant parish priest Fr Vui Hoang, Whanganui parish priest Fr Craig Butler, Pakuranga parish priest Sherwin Lapaan, new Bishop of Palmerston North John Adams, Caritas chief executive Mena Antonio, Catholic Enquiry Centre director Rebecca Taylor-Hunt, Auckland Catholic couple Hannah and James van Schie, and Dr Therese Lautua and Lucienne Hensel, who took a leading part in the Oceania and diocesan phases respectively of the current Synod of Synod process.

Source: NZCBC

» Bishop Mark Coleridge, p 4.

# Fr Richard Laurenson appointed Catholic Bishop of Hamilton

Pope Francis has appointed Fr Richard Laurenson from the Diocese of Hamilton as the new Catholic Bishop of Hamilton.

The appointment was announced in Rome at 11pm New Zealand time, Wednesday 25 October.

Bishop-elect Laurenson replaces Bishop Stephen Lowe, who was appointed Bishop of Auckland in December 2021. It means all six New Zealand dioceses now have a bishop, following the recent ordination and installation of Bishop John Adams as Bishop of Palmerston North.

Bishop-elect Laurenson says he is looking forward to his new role with a mix of fear and peace and is praying that he does not disappoint.

'When I was ordained Deacon in December 1994, I gave my life to the Lord, singing a hymn of St Ignatius: "Take Lord, receive, all my liberty, my understanding, my entire will." I have reaffirmed that gift many times over the years. Being a sinner I often "take" the offer back, but I do intend once more to submit my will to his. This I resolved again to do when I was asked to by Pope Francis to become the bishop for Hamilton. Since then I keep moving between peace and terror, especially when I look at the future only known to God. Trust is an easy word, but difficult to live. I find it hard to believe that the Lord wants me to do this, I pray that I do not disappoint him too much.'

Currently the parish priest at All Saints by the Sea, Papamoa Coast, in the Bay of Plenty, Bishop-elect Laurenson was born in Hamilton in 1968. He was ordained as a Hamilton diocesan priest by Bishop Denis Browne in 1995 and has since



Bishop-elect Richard Laurenson has been appointed as the new Catholic Bishop of Hamilton.

Photo: Supplied

served as parish priest in many parts of the diocese, including St Joseph, Waihi; Immaculate Conception, Taumarunui; St Joseph, Fairfield; St Peter Chanel, Te Rapa; and Holy Cross, Hamilton North.

He is also currently diocesan Chancellor, Vicar for Marriage, a member of the College of Consultors and, since 2019, Defender of the Bond at the Tribunal of the Catholic Church in New Zealand. He was a

***"The worship of God is our number one reason for being Catholic, so the promotion of Good and Godly Liturgy will be a personal priority."***

Bishop-elect Laurenson attended Holy Cross Seminary in Mosgiel. He has a Baccalaureate in Theology from Otago University (1992) and studied for and obtained a Licentiate in Canon Law from Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome from 2007 to 2010.

judge and associate judicial vicar from 2016 to 2019. As a military chaplain for a decade, he served for a time with peacekeeping forces in Bougainville and Timor Leste.

Bishop Lowe, who is also President of the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference, says: 'I was

delighted to receive the news that Pope Francis had appointed Fr Richard Laurenson as the fourth Bishop of Hamilton. Bishop-elect Richard will be the first Bishop of the diocese who was born and grew up in the diocese [Bishop Max Takuiria Mariu, also a son of the diocese, was Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton 1988-2005]. Bishop-elect Richard brings a wealth of experience to the role and will be a blessing to the people and priests of the Diocese of Hamilton.'

Bishop-elect Laurenson says being a parish priest means always thinking parochially, with a nod to diocesan impacts.

'This change in my situation will take some getting used to, so I beg the indulgence of my brother priests and the good people of God in the diocese as we all get to grips with my new situation.'

'What do we need to be doing in the diocese once the dust settles?' asks Bishop-elect Laurenson. 'Given it is too early

to make pronouncements in this area, I have always had a passion for evangelisation and the RICA/RCIC [Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and Children], and this passion will continue.

'The worship of God is our number one reason for being Catholic, so the promotion of Good and Godly Liturgy will be a personal priority. To enable the right worship of God we need priests, holy priests, so calling our young men to a life of brave adventure with the Lord is more necessary than ever. One thing generally lacking in all our dioceses is widespread, good parish-based catechesis for our practising adults of all ages. This too is something that would benefit from our attention.'

Bishop-elect Laurenson is expected to be ordained on Friday 8 December, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, at a time to be determined.

Source: NZCBC



## St Patrick's College Wellington

New Zealand's oldest Catholic boys' college

St Patrick's College Parents and Friends Association are pleased to announce the upcoming Art Exhibition, *Aranga – Emerge*, to be held in the O'Shea Performing Arts Centre on Friday 3 November at 7.00pm. This is an amazing exhibition with well-known, established artists and student art on show. Tickets are \$35.00 and include a complimentary drink upon arrival, an array of nibbles throughout the night, and a cash bar will be operating. Link to purchase tickets is:

<https://www.trybooking.com/nz/events/10607/sessions/42294/sections/32798/tickets>

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# 'Fasten seatbelts for change' - Archbishop Coleridge

New Zealand's Catholic priests have been told to fasten their seatbelts for a journey of change and there is no going back.

In a keynote speech to the National Assembly of Diocesan Priests last month, Archbishop of Brisbane Mark Coleridge said the Catholic Church was in an Abrahamic moment, going somewhere with the destination unclear.

'The spiritual vitality of the Church is largely found in our immigrant communities,' Archbishop Coleridge told the 175 priests from New Zealand's six dioceses who met in Rotorua.

'The centre of gravity of the Church is passing to Africa, Asia and Latin America. We have a Pope from Argentina. It's fasten your seatbelts time. We are going somewhere and there is no way back.'

The biblical Abraham was told by God to go on a journey, which he set out on not knowing where he was

going, Archbishop Coleridge said.

'We are heading into a future the shape of which is unclear. But the act of faith is that there is one who does know where it is all leading. We must keep our eyes and ears on God. We have to be on the journey, assured of what we do.'

'What we teach as priests seems to be a nonsense to many people in Australia and New Zealand. The Gospels however provide us with that reassurance we need.'

'The stories in the Bible are often unfinished. Why? The stories in the Bible have to be finished in places like Hamilton, Dunedin, Naenae, even Brisbane.'

The Church today has fewer priests than in the past, said Archbishop Coleridge. It is a fact.

'We cannot sustain the current mode of provision of priests, with far fewer priests and fewer people. The shortage of people is the real problem. There are far fewer people who identify with the

Church or come to Mass. People like our schools. They ask why are our schools full and our churches empty? Institutionally we are diminished.'

The abuse crisis is another fact. 'It looms over everything. It's been astounding to me how my life as a bishop has been swamped by the abuse crisis. It's corrosive in a unique way. What has all this done to bishops and priests? We are almost afraid to look at the damage.'

Archbishop Coleridge said the administrative burden on priests has also become more complex and leadership is not as straightforward as it used to be.

'Think of the papacy. If you see footage of Pope Pius XII [Pope 1939-58], look at the rituals surrounding the papal court and compare it with what happens with Pope Francis now. In between those two popes there has been a dismantling of the papal court, thank God.'

Archbishop Coleridge told



'We must keep our eyes and our ears on God. We have to be on the journey,' Archbishop of Brisbane Mark Coleridge said at the National Assembly of Diocesan Priests in Rotorua.

Photo: Supplied

the priests they needed to be like Abraham and turn wandering into journeys. 'Journeying is hard work, but it is going somewhere, to paradise, to the Garden. We have to live between being pilgrim and settler.'

'The priest as pilgrim is someone who can say to all the wanderers,

"come on a journey". But the priest in a diocese is also a settler. The priest has a parish, and people are the community. We have to put down roots in a particular place, a parish. That's at the heart of what we consider to be spirituality.

## Progress on re-emerging social justice commission

Kevin Campbell

It is hoped the Palmerston North Diocese will soon have a Diocesan Justice Peace Development and Ecology Commission (JPDEC - Commission) up and running once again. Over the past 12 months a steering group (SG) has been working on the restoration and renovation of the PN JPDEC. It has formulated a constitution, terms of reference and a draft budget for Bishop John Adams' consideration and action.

The SG has canvassed the diocese for people who are interested and would be suitable to be considered as Commission members. Their names

will be provided to Bishop John.

The SG responded to a think-tank (T-T) that met over several months with the diocese's former Local Administrator Fr Craig Butler, and which unanimously recommended the continuance of a JPDEC. The T-T recognised the particular role of education and youth involvement in JPDE issues. The proposed constitution requires all regions within the diocese are represented on the Commission.

In keeping with the recommendations of all popes from Vatican II onwards, the SG has provided for both an ecumenical and inter-faith outreach within the Commission.

While it is envisaged the

Commission will assist the bishop in, at times, speaking out on issues of justice, peace, development and the ecology throughout the diocese, the SG strongly recommends that core action on Justice Peace Development and the Ecology springs from each and every parish, both large and small, within the diocese.

Rather than the Commission being a body 'telling' parishes what areas of JPDE the parish should be acting on, and when to act, the Commission is more open to listening and learning from each parish. Each parish is best placed to know what 'the cries of the earth and the cries of the poor' are in their own area, to read their own signs of the times and to take transformative

action for the common good in their own area in their own way.

The Commission is to be a resource and support to parishes, and, in turn, it is resourced and supported by Caritas. Hopefully, each parish too will work with other Christian communities and inter-faith groups within their own area in addressing JPDE issues.

Vibrant beating hearts attuned to justice, peace, development and ecology, in every place throughout the diocese is a sure sign of Pope Francis' 'new evangelisation' and effective mission. We pray for such renovation in the Diocese of Palmerston North and the Commission's contribution to it.



Kevin Campbell is a member of the Steering Group of PN JPDEC.

» Seek out the Poor! p 15.

## United call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

Concerned leaders across diverse religious communities joined by other individuals and organisations around the globe have been calling for governments to create a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT).

The proposal is to form a global alliance to govern the end to fossil fuel expansion, phase out fossil fuels, and ensure a just transition to non-fossil-fuel energy sources.

In the leadup to the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference COP28, in Dubai 30 November-12 December, Catholic leaders from Oceania and Asia have been amplifying the need for meaningful

change through the FFNPT initiative and for support to petition regional and global representatives at COP28.

The Religious Diversity Centre of Aotearoa New Zealand have been leading the call in this country. The centre's climate action work group says it is critical for New Zealand's representatives at COP28 to support the call for the FFNPT. They have been asking individuals and organisations to become signatories to the call and petition to New Zealand's COP28 delegation.

Archbishop Paul Martin sm and Wellington Archdiocese's Ecology

Justice and Peace Commission have become signatories. The Steering Group for the soon-to-be appointed Palmerston North Diocese JPDE Commission have also endorsed the call.

Estelle Henrys, of the archdiocese's EJP Commission, says Pope Francis' letter *Laudate Deum* released last month, 'emphasises the urgency of the climate crisis and recognises the most effective solutions will come through courageous political decisions at national and international levels' [LD 60].

'Our faith demands we nurture

and preserve all of God's Creation. Our ecological approach is an integrated one responding to the "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor".'

You can become a signatory to the call by emailing [admin@rdc.org.nz](mailto:admin@rdc.org.nz) or [rdc.org.nz/contact](mailto:rdc.org.nz/contact), says Estelle.

'Representatives from the Religious Diversity Centre will present these endorsements to the Government on 16 November for New Zealand's COP28 delegation.'

Visit [fossilfuel treaty.org/faith-letter](http://fossilfuel treaty.org/faith-letter) and [rdc.org.nz/fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty/](http://rdc.org.nz/fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty/) for more information.

## 'Life of Faith' podcast

A recent interview with Br Kevin Dobbyn fms on Hamilton-based 'Free FM' has been made into a podcast. Br Kevin, a Te Kupenga lecturer and course coordinator based in Palmerston North, shares something of his interesting life story. He also addresses overarching questions about the handling of abuse complaints within the Catholic Church. He speaks thoughtfully and well, offering a positive and creditable message. You can listen to the podcast titled, 'A Life of Faith - In Conversation with Brother Kevin Dobbyn' at: [tinyurl.com/Life-of-Faith](http://tinyurl.com/Life-of-Faith)

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# Watershed moment in the Holy Land

Michael Fitzsimons

The crisis in Gaza is a watershed moment that could have long-term impact on life in the Holy Land, says New Zealander Br Peter Bray fsc, the Vice-Chancellor of Bethlehem University in the Occupied West Bank territory.

In a message to the New Zealand Catholic bishops, he asked for prayers and said there was great uncertainty about what might happen from day to day.

Taranaki-raised Br Peter moved from Wellington to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, in 2008 to take up the vice-chancellor role. His work as a teacher and education consultant has taken him around the world. He made a speaking tour of New Zealand for the bishops early this year talking about the Israel-Palestine issue.

Bethlehem University was founded by Br Peter's De la Salle Brothers in 1973. It was the first registered university established in the Occupied West Bank territory of Palestine and is the only Catholic university in the Holy Land. It currently has 3,259 students (Muslim and Christian), 17,282 graduates and 214 faculty members. It is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year.

'I was not surprised by the attack on Israel by Hamas [7 October],' Br Peter said in his message to the bishops. 'While I do not approve

of violence as a response, given the ongoing and increasing violent attacks on Palestinians by the Israeli military and the settlers over recent months, as well as the provocative moves by settlers around Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem during the Jewish feast, I can understand why the Palestinians reacted in the way they did.

'With the extreme right-wing government in Israel and the stated priority of the expansion of settlements in the West Bank, the pressure on Palestinians has been enormous. There have been more Palestinians killed by the military and settlers this year than any year since 2006. It has been obvious that there has been a growing frustration among Palestinians that the international community has forgotten about them and let Israel do whatever it wants.

**"Here at Bethlehem University we are pursuing a position that the Church in the Holy Land has consistently taken of speaking about justice, peace, reconciliation, respect and a search for equality."**

'The steady expansion of settlements and forcing Palestinians off their land or out of their houses, as well as the continued pressure on Palestinians with home demolition, has left the Palestinians very aware that they are being driven off their land. Many of the settlers make it very obvious they want to take the whole land and do not want Palestinians around.

'The Palestinian Authority has

not been able in any way to contain what Israel has been doing, so the Palestinian frustration has boiled over through Hamas, who claim to be defending what remains of the Palestinian land and its people.

'What happened was a major embarrassment to the Israeli military because Hamas fighters were able to take over several military bases and settlements near Gaza and capture soldiers and civilians as hostages. There are real fears now that the Israeli military will strike back with significant violence in retaliation. I think this is a watershed moment that could have long-term impact on life here in the Holy Land.'

In a subsequent communication, Br Peter said a third-year student at Bethlehem University, Khaled Al-Muhtasib, had been shot and killed in Jerusalem.

Speaking of his own experience when visiting the university's online students in Gaza a few months ago, Br Peter said he was appalled at the conditions under which they were living.

'So much has changed since then and things have got so much worse. There are many people there who do not support Hamas, both Christians and Muslims. Bethlehem University has some



Br Peter Bray, FSC, Vice Chancellor, Bethlehem University, asks for prayers and says there is great uncertainty about what might happen from day to day.

Photo: Supplied

400 graduates from Gaza and we are deeply concerned about them. It was Hamas who orchestrated the attack on Israel, not all the people in Gaza! Yet despite that, Israel has cut off all water, power, medical, food and other essential supplies to all people there. This collective punishment of all people in Gaza is having a devastating impact.'

Br Peter said Israel has closed all checkpoints into Jerusalem and around Bethlehem, which meant 40 per cent of Bethlehem University's students from East Jerusalem were unable to get to campus.

'In addition, there are Israeli "flying" checkpoints south of Bethlehem making it impossible for students from Hebron and

villages around it to get to campus. As a result, Bethlehem University has moved to online classes in the meantime. How long this will last is uncertain.'

Br Peter said the situation there was tense and unpredictable with a heightened Israeli military presence in and around Bethlehem.

'The language that is being used by both sides dehumanises people with the result that everyone on the other side is an enemy. Here at Bethlehem University we are pursuing a position that the Church in the Holy Land has consistently taken of speaking about justice, peace, reconciliation, respect and a search for equality. It is an uphill task against the dominant words of hate and revenge!'



US President Joe Biden is pictured with Pope Francis during a meeting at the Vatican in 2021.

Photo: Vatican Media/CNA

## Biden and Pope Francis discuss 'durable peace' in Israel and Gaza

President Joe Biden and Pope Francis spoke by phone on 22 October 2023 to discuss the conflict in Israel and Gaza and facilitating a path to 'durable peace' in the region, according to the press offices of both leaders.

'The President condemned the barbarous attack by Hamas against Israeli civilians and affirmed the need to protect civilians in Gaza,' according to a readout of the call from the White House. It added the pair discussed the

president's 'recent visit to Israel and his efforts to ensure delivery of food, medicine, and other humanitarian assistance to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.'

'They also discussed the need to prevent escalation in the region and to work toward a durable peace in the Middle East.'

The Holy See Press Office said the conversation lasted around 20 minutes, and the Pope and the president spoke about 'situations of

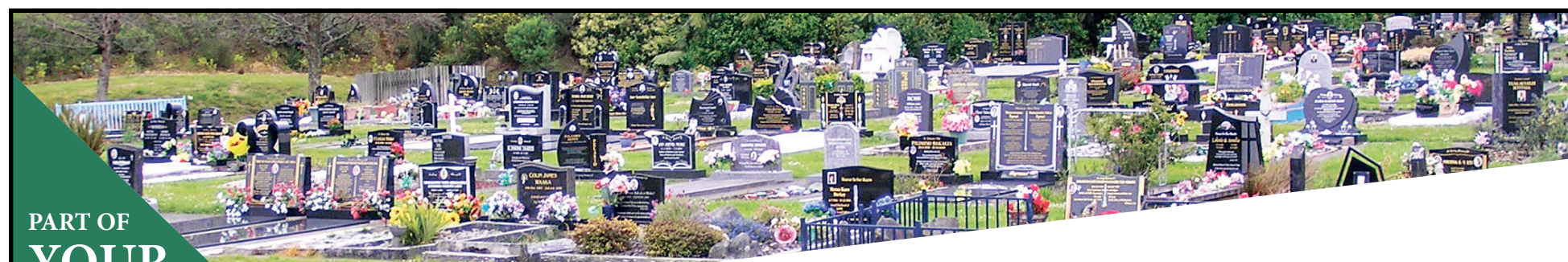
conflict in the world and the need to identify paths to peace.'

Earlier that same day at the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis called for peace in the Holy Land.

'I am very concerned, grieved,' he said. 'I pray and I am close to all those who are suffering, the hostages, the wounded, the victims and their families.' He appealed for more humanitarian aid for Gaza and said he also was praying for the suffering people of Ukraine.

Since the phone call an increasing number of humanitarian aid convoys have been allowed into Gaza from Egypt, bringing urgently needed medicines and food.

During his Sunday Angelus on 29 October Pope Francis called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza amid escalating violence and a humanitarian catastrophe in the enclave. He also renewed an appeal for the release of all hostages held by Hamas.



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# Pope Francis first pope to attend climate summit

Pope Francis will take part in the United Nations' international climate summit in Dubai, known as COP28, which begins on 30 November.

COP28 is being held in the United Arab Emirates' largest city, from 30 November to 12 December. The Pope's attendance follows an 11 October meeting at the Vatican between His Holiness Pope Francis and the Sultan Ahmed al-Jaber, the UAE minister of industry and advanced technology and the UN climate conference's President-designate.

Dr Al Jaber met Pope Francis to discuss the crucial role of faith leaders in advancing the climate agenda at COP28. During the meeting, Dr Al Jaber expressed gratitude to the Vatican for its climate action advocacy and invited Pope Francis to participate in the World Climate Action Summit at COP28.

The Pope is expected to travel to Dubai at the very start of the summit and will formally address the delegates.

The Pope and the 50-year-old sultan, who is also the managing director and group CEO of Abu Dhabi's national oil company, spoke in particular of the need for a 'detailed action plan' to implement the Paris Agreement. With that 2015 international treaty, the parties pledged to keep 'the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels' and to continue efforts 'to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels'. The mechanism was weakened in 2017 when Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the agreement.

The presence of a pope at a UN climate summit will be a first. Pope Francis almost went to Glasgow (Scotland) to attend COP26 in



**Pope Francis shakes hands with Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, President-designate of COP28.**

Photo: Vatican Media

November 2021. Despite very advanced preparations for the trip, he cancelled at the last moment when it became apparent the

summit would not be a success. It is believed the Pope preferred to back out, rather than risk appearing as a guarantor brandished by the

organisers to hide poor results.

This time, however, given the urgency of the situation, Pope Francis seems to have overcome such fears. The man that some have dubbed 'the green pope' felt the same sense of urgency in 2015 when he speeded up the publication of his ecological and social encyclical, *Laudato si'*, so that it could be made public before the Paris summit.

Eight years later, the Pope made a similar calculation when – on 4 October, 2023 – he signed a new text on the climate crisis, *Laudate Deum*. In this apostolic exhortation, he pleads for a binding agreement, speaking out forcefully against climate sceptics and urging world leaders to act.

Sources: *La Croix International*; *Gulf Business*

## Global summit for faith leaders

The COP28 Presidency has collaborated with the Vatican, the Muslim Council of Elders, and the UN Environment Programme to ensure inclusivity in the COP process by integrating faith organisations into climate discussions. The Presidency has designed a series of inter-faith initiatives in the run up to and

during the COP28 conference. One of these will be a global summit for faith leaders, 'the Confluence of Conscience', on 6–7 November in Abu Dhabi.

It will unite hundreds of religious leaders, academics and scientists to collectively address the findings of the Global Stocktake (an 'inventory' by countries and

stakeholders on their progress towards meeting the Paris Agreement) and sign a declaration to progress climate action at COP28.

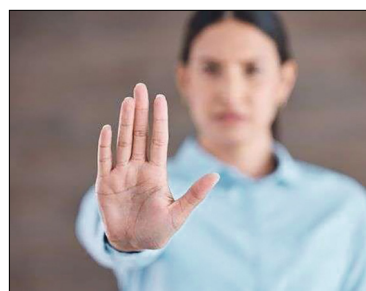
The gathering will discuss the ethical responsibilities of faith leaders in addressing the climate crisis and will call for increased ambition at COP28 and beyond.

Additionally, the COP28 Presidency will co-host the Faith Pavilion at COP28, marking the first-ever pavilion of its kind at a COP event.

The Faith Pavilion will host panels with religious leaders, scientists, and political leaders, as well as encourage intergenerational dialogue involving young

faith leaders and indigenous representatives.

During their meeting in Rome, Dr Al Jaber and Pope Francis also discussed aligning *Laudate Deum* with the COP28 Interfaith Declaration, set to be signed after the global faith leaders' summit.



**Figures show women of faith are more exposed to sexual violence, regardless of their religious affiliation.**

Image: Jesse B/peopleimages.com–stock

## Faiths join forces to combat sex abuse

Statistics show that women of faith are more exposed to sexual abuse than others, no matter what religion they belong to. A survey carried out in 2000 showed that 7.8 per cent of women with no religious affiliation were victims of domestic violence, while the figure rose to 9.1 per cent for Catholic or Protestant women, and 17 per cent for Muslim or Jewish women.

This reality led the Conference of Religious Leaders in France, which

was created in 2010, to meet in Paris in September 2023 for its first-ever study day on sexual violence.

'This is a major first. All religious denominations recognise that they are concerned by this scourge, and agree to reflect together,' explained Valérie Duval-Poujol, vice-president of the Protestant Federation of France and co-organiser of the day.

She pointed out that France's Independent Commission on

Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church (CIASE) and the Catholic Church have paved the way for this mea culpa. 'The Sauvé report is a historic milestone in the fight against sexual violence,' Duval-Poujol said in reference to the 2021 report produced by CIASE and its chairman Jean-Marc Sauvé.

Religions, in their various forms, appear to be 'massive weapons of submission' vis-à-vis women, which may be a start towards

explaining the 'aggravating factor' and greater violence against women of faith. The religious communities want to explore the issue with the French government, which was represented at the study day by Juliette Part, head of the central office for religious denominations at the interior ministry.

Source: *La Croix International*



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## Annual Grant Invitation

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or email to: patrickmcgill46@gmail.com

## New Catholic university in China

Hong Kong authorities are on the verge of granting official approval for a new Catholic university to be established.

This initiative has been announced several times by Bishop Stephen Chow, who was recently appointed a cardinal by Pope Francis.

According to the *Headline Daily* newspaper, the Caritas Institute of Higher Education, an educational institution of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong, primarily known for nursing education, has received the green light from the Council for Academic and Professional Qualifications Accreditation. This body has certified that it meets all the necessary requirements to elevate an institution of higher education to university status.

Now, only the final step remains, which requires formal approval from the government, led by Chief Executive John Lee.

If this permission is granted, it will be the first Catholic university in the region and not limited to the field of healthcare professions,



**Caritas Institute of Higher Education to be transformed to a university.**

Photo: CIHE

as the Caritas Institute of Higher Education is. The new institution will be named the University of San Francisco.

The establishment of a Catholic University in Hong Kong is a project that Cardinal Stephen Chow had previously been involved in when he was the local leader of the Jesuits before becoming a bishop. Initially, the idea was to build a new university from the

ground up in Fanling, an area near the border with mainland China. However, it was officially rejected by authorities due to urban planning considerations. Therefore, upon becoming the Bishop of Hong Kong, he revived the project and requested the transformation of the Caritas Institute of Higher Education into a university.

Source: *Zenit*



# Synod on Synodality strives for consensus

A final synthesis produced by Pope Francis' month-long Synod on Synodality offers no clear or concrete proposals on hot-button issues, but rather reflects a search for an 'ample and convincing consensus'.

'Ecclesial discernment, which is based on mutual listening to understand where the spirit is leading the Church, is based on the criterion of consensus,' said Maltese Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary general of the Synod of Bishops, who put the word 'consensus' in all-caps to underscore his point.

As a result, the synthesis did not express positions on issues such as women's priestly ordination, the female diaconate, or the welcome of the LGBTQ+ community, all of which were topics that arose during the synod discussion. Rather, the text spoke in broad strokes of the need to take further action in promoting women in leadership and in welcoming those who feel marginalised but offering no specific proposals.

The 42-page text was divided into three parts, 'the face of the synodal Church', 'all disciples, all missionaries', and 'weave bonds, build community', followed by a final section on 'to continue the path'.



Cardinal Mario Grech secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, and Pope Francis at the conclusion of the first assembly of the Synod on Synodality on 28 October 2023, in the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican. Photo: Vatican Media

***"The document, the synthesis of the assembly's work from 4-29 October, proposes a 'Synodal Church' that implements synodality throughout Church governance, theology, mission, and discernment of doctrine and pastoral issues. Each section was divided into points of convergence, issues that need to be addressed, and proposals going forward."***

The highly anticipated text was approved paragraph by paragraph by a vote of 344 Synod delegates, which for the first time included women and other non-bishops as voting members.

The document, the synthesis of the assembly's work from 4-29 October, proposes a 'Synodal Church' that implements synodality throughout Church governance, theology, mission, and discernment of doctrine and pastoral issues.

Each section was divided into points of convergence, issues that need to be addressed, and proposals going forward.

On women, the document said, 'it is urgent to guarantee that women can participate in decision-making processes and take on roles of responsibility in pastoral care and ministry.'

Noting that Pope Francis has named several women to high-profile positions within the Vatican, the document said, 'the same should happen at other levels of the life of the Church,' adding that 'canon law must be adapted accordingly', but providing no specifics on which changes might be necessary.

On the issue of women deacons, the document offered no clear position or proposal, but simply stated that pastoral and theological research on the female diaconate 'should continue,' drawing on research already done by the two commissions that the Pope has established to study the issue.

The document said the results of any further research on the topic ought to be presented during next year's final synod gathering.

It was noted that attitudes of clericalism, 'chauvinism,' and the abuse of power damage the Church's witness and communion, and the impact of sexual and financial scandals was also addressed.

The document underlined the need to avoid speaking about women 'as an issue or a problem' to be solved, but rather, to promote a Church 'in which men and women dialogue with the aim of better understanding the depth of God's plan, in which they appear together as protagonists, without subordination, exclusion, or competition.'

Exploitation of nuns was also addressed, with the text saying there is a need to address the issue of women religious who are often considered to be cheap workers and are hired with little or no pay. A call was also made to include more women in formation and theological studies programmes for priests.

Notably, despite repeated references to the LGBTQ+ community and the need to find ways to be more welcoming of those with same-sex attraction, the document made no mention at all of the terms, 'LGBTQ+', 'homosexuality,' or 'same-sex.'

***'Even where further clarifications are necessary, the behaviour of Jesus, assimilated in prayer and conversion of heart, shows us the path to follow.'***

While the issue of blessings for same-sex couples was a major source of debate prior to the synod's opening, the word 'blessing' did not appear in the document.

The issue was addressed in veiled language referring to issues 'such as those relating to gender identity and sexual orientation, the end of life, difficult marital situations,' and 'ethical problems connected to artificial intelligence.'

These issues 'are controversial in society, but also in the Church, because they pose new questions,' the document said, saying current 'anthropological categories' for these issues 'are not sufficient to capture the complexity of the elements that emerge from experience or scientific knowledge and require refinement or study.'

The text underlined the importance of dedicating the necessary time and energy to reflect on these issues, 'without giving in to simplifying judgements that hurt people and the Body of the Church.'

'Even where further clarifications are necessary, the behaviour of Jesus, assimilated in prayer and conversion of heart, shows us the path to follow,' it said.

In terms of those who have felt marginalised in the Church, a category which in synod discussion and in the working document included the LGBTQ+ community, the document said that listening to these voices 'requires unconditional acceptance.'

However, this acceptance 'does not mean abdicating clarity in presenting the Gospel message of salvation, nor endorsing any opinion or position,' it said, noting that Jesus in scripture 'opened new horizons to those he listened to without conditions and we are called to do the same.'

On the question of priestly celibacy, the document noted that different opinions were expressed on the issue, and that 'everyone appreciates (priestly) celibacy's value full of prophecy and the witness of conformity to Christ.'

'Some ask whether its theological convenience with the presbyteral ministry must necessarily translate into a disciplinary obligation in the Latin Church, especially where the ecclesial and cultural contexts make it more difficult,' the text said, saying, 'This is not a new topic, which requires further consideration.'

Formally opened by Pope Francis in October 2021, the Synod of Bishops on Synodality is a multi-stage process that will culminate with a second Rome-based gathering in October 2024.

Source: *Cruix, Vatican News*

## Letter to the People of God

Several days before the release of the Synthesis Report, participants in the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops issued a Letter to the People of God giving thanks for their experience. The Letter details the work of the synod, and expresses the hope that in the coming months, everyone will be able to 'concretely participate in the dynamism of missionary communion indicated by the word "synod"'. The Letter says that 'to progress in its discernment, the Church absolutely needs to listen to everyone, starting with the poorest. This requires a path of conversion on its part, which is also a path of praise.'

## Parishioners to preside at funerals

Church leaders in Ireland are hopeful more parishioners will step up and preside at funerals to ease the burden on overworked priests, with two dioceses already commissioning laypeople to take charge where there is no priest. More than 70 new lay leaders in Clogher and Down and Connor dioceses are undertaking training to preside over funerals. In the coming months, the leaders will be commissioned and begin their work in parishes across the two dioceses. Bishops have pledged their support to laity and parishes to develop 'new ways' of preparing for and celebrating funerals.

## Pope calls for dialogue on AI ethics

Pope Francis wants the next World Day of Peace, 1 January 2024, to focus on artificial intelligence's impact, opportunities and dangers as the technology develops and influences a growing number of fields, from information to warfare. He has called for 'an open dialogue on the meaning of these new technologies, endowed with disruptive possibilities and ambivalent effects,' says a statement from the Vatican.

## Papal visit to South Pole?

Pope Francis, who is known as 'the Pope of the peripheries', has suggested the possibility of travelling to somewhere no pope has gone before — the South Pole. In an interview, the 86-year-old Pope said he plans to visit his native Argentina, adding: 'Somebody said that if I go to Argentina, I should stop at Rio Gallegos, then head to the South Pole, land in Melbourne, and visit New Zealand. It would be a rather long journey,' he joked.

## 21 new cardinals created

At a September 30 consistory, Pope Francis created 21 new cardinals from 15 different countries. Eighteen of the new cardinals are under the age of 80 and are therefore eligible to vote in a conclave. The consistory was in continuity with Francis' steady geographic diversification of the College of Cardinals.

## Global Catholic population on the rise

New statistics released by the Vatican show that the global Catholic population is increasing. The annual report, released 22 October by the Vatican's Fides news agency on World Mission Sunday, covers the one-year time period comparing the numbers of 31 December 2021 to 31 December 2020.

There were 1.375 billion Catholics in the world, representing an overall increase of 16.24 million Catholics compared to the end of 2020. The increase affects all continents, except Europe. Increases were registered above all in Africa and in the Americas.

The global percentage of Catholics decreased slightly to 17.67 per cent. The number of bishops and priests is also decreasing. There are 5,340 in the world, mostly diocesan, with religious bishops decreasing as well. The total number of priests in the world decreased to around 407,872, a drop of 2,347 priests.

The continent that registered the largest decrease was Europe, with 3,632 fewer priests. Increases were registered in Africa and in Asia (1,518 and 719 respectively).

As the number of priests decreases, the number of Catholics per priest in the world increased, so on average there are 3,373 Catholics for every priest in the world, a rise of 59 people per priest.

There has been an overall decrease of women religious, with 10,588 fewer nuns. Here, too, Europe recorded the largest drop in consecrated women (7,804 fewer religious women).



# Forrestal House - a long way from convent days

Forrestal House and land has a long history with Sacred Heart Parish Inglewood. The future and ownership of the historic convent house and land is up for review as a committee of parishioners begins to explore possibilities. **Sue March** of Sacred Heart Parish, shares some of the history of Forrestal House history and invites WelCom readers to contribute ideas for its future development.

## Susan Marsh

The arrival of the Sisters of the Mission in 1906 to Inglewood, Taranaki, to staff the new school of St Patrick's, was to begin a long and eventful life of their new convent home. Although not the Sisters' first home, ultimately the site on an acre of land across from Sacred Heart Church, was their final home before they were transferred to other convents as their numbers dwindled.

The existing building – known as Forrestal House and named after the late Fr James Forrestal – was built in 1938. The new convent's spacious chapel was filled to capacity in September 1939, when 23 Sisters and their parents attended Perpetual Vows. The men and women of the parish spent endless hours fundraising and held working bees to keep everything maintained for the Sisters. Tiring of hedge cutting, in 1954 the men built a concrete wall around the section, which is still there.

The Sisters were part of the community in every aspect but eventually the convent was to close. On 11 December 1973, parishioners gathered at a Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sisters' 67 years of service in Inglewood. Some Sisters returned to carry out duties until the early 1980s when their links with Forrestal

House came to an end.

In 1983, the Archdiocese of Wellington purchased the property from the Sisters. Ownership was transferred to the Diocese of Palmerston North when it was formed.

In 1984, then-parish priest Fr Pieter Mul formed a management committee with parishioners from Inglewood, Stratford, Waitara and New Plymouth. There was no available funding and the building, already 50 years old, was in need of work. In 1988, the committee resigned as the complex became too difficult to operate. A new committee of just Inglewood parishioners was formed with Pat Julian continuing as chairman – a position he held until this year, spanning 39 years. The committee decided to buy back the property from Bishop Peter Cullinane. A price was agreed, and with a generous donation from The Burkitt Family, the purchase was secured.

Over the years managing the property has seen money being tight, never-ending applications, favours asked, as well as donations from some amazing people. Through dedication and commitment, heating has been upgraded, bedrooms relined, parish families taking doing up rooms, a new roof donated by the Taranaki Electricity Trust, and several

projects that have enticed some to want Forrestal House for their home and business.

Some leases required additional space, so a redundant building was purchased for \$13,500 from the Moa Nui Dairy Company. Another donation from the Burkitt Family saw the building – now known as the Manager's Residence – hoisted over the concrete fence and repositioned.

In June 2011, the new leasee saw the opportunity to use a large area of vacant lawn and asked the committee to fund and build a Community Foodbank Garden – the local Foodbank was already working from the 'old music room' on site. Volunteers from the parish and the local Lions Club built and planted raised gardens. With an extra burst this year of new volunteers, the gardens are looking wonderful and continue to help stock those families in most need.

The Forrestal House Management Committee are now looking to the future of this iconic site, and the possibilities that continued or new ownership may bring for its future use to either the Church, or other parties.

For example, Habitat Humanity has approached the committee with an option of gifting land in return for a couple houses, which the parish could sell or rent out.



Forrestal House and land use – under review for future use.

Photos: Susan Marsh

However, the committee wants to explore more avenues yet.

Whether the convent gets a makeover or needs to be demolished to make way for future development, the committee welcomes all interested parties to approach them and invites ideas from WelCom readers.

To find out more and to discuss amazing possibilities that could involve you with this site in the heart of Inglewood, please contact Susan Marsh [smarsh@xtra.co.nz](mailto:smarsh@xtra.co.nz) or the parish secretary [shparish@xtra.co.nz](mailto:shparish@xtra.co.nz). We look forward to hearing from you and your ideas.



Henare Walmsley and Kataraina Millin open Miha Māori with Ōtari and Te Ngākau Tapu parishes.

Photo: Supplied

## Bicultural journey in Ōtari Parish

### Carolyn Tait

Ōtari Parish of Wellington has been slowly integrating more te reo Māori into our Mass responses for some years.

Around 8.30am on Sunday 8 October, the sound of taonga puoro (traditional Māori instruments) echoed over Wilton's valley from St Thomas More Church. The pūtātara, conch shell, signalled the opening of Miha Māori with Ōtari and Te Ngākau Tapu parishes for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Pā Gerard Burns parish priest of Te Ngākau Tapu and Fr Ron Bennett

parish priest of Ōtari concelebrated. Māori and English were woven through the Mass – in the languages, music, and in the tikanga.

Matiu White gave a bilingual greeting/mihi. Henare Walmsley's (Katekita Māori) taonga pūoro and the St Thomas More music group lifted us with their sounds. Helen Fisher's Te Miha Tuituia Mass sung responses provided a familiar bridge across cultures. The call of Whaea Kataraina Millin, as Kaikaranga, during the Consecration provided special moments.

Pā Gerard's homily was about the idea of relationships within covenants. He said we bring a

history of covenants from the First Testament when we gather to worship, and that in Aotearoa, we also have a covenant with the first peoples of New Zealand with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Pā Gerard explained how a covenant looks towards the future as a living relationship full of possibilities and hope. He said Te Tiriti was founded on the 1835 Declaration of Independence, as providing a way for establishing relationships between new settlers and first peoples. He described how the terminology used in the two versions of the Treaty – te reo Māori and English – conveyed different

understandings. The Waitangi Tribunal has explored our histories since the Treaty signing, to provide a basis for better relationships between Tangata whenua and Tangata Tiriti. Pā Gerard said Te Tiriti can be seen as a covenant that provides possibilities for growth and hope.

After Miha we shared kai. Relationships were nurtured and new ones formed as Ōtari Parish continues its journey of understanding our role with this land and its people.

Carolyn Tait on behalf of the Ōtari Parish Justice, Peace and Development group.

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# St Michael's Taita Samoan community celebrations

**Lina Paulo-Sogialofa**

A double celebration was held at St Michael's Church in Taita of Te Awakairangi Parish over a weekend in September. On Saturday 23 September, St Michael's Taita Samoan Aulotu/community celebrated their 30 years' anniversary of establishment within the parish. The Sunday Mass celebrant Fr Alfred Tong celebrated his one-year anniversary as a priest.

Samoan Aulotu celebrations opened with a Mass at the church and led by Fr Mareko Api Tufuga, Fr Peter Timoteo mf, Fr Patrick Bridgman and pastoral leader Barbara Rowley. Members, parishioners, families and friends attended and took part.



**Top left: Mass celebration of 30th anniversary. Bottom left: Members of the Aulotu and families. Above: Catechesis Nive and Paulo Paulo FKS.**

Mass was followed with a luncheon reception at Naenae College Hall. The youth and Sunday school provided entertainment – the Aulotu Catechists Paulo and Nive Paulo FKS were proud to see how the Aulotu has grown and flourished. Members who had moved away came back for the weekend to celebrate and continue their work in spiritual care and guidance for the Aulotu.

The leadership team is run by Mr Leapai Malolo (president), Sogialofa Silago (vice president) Faau Taefu (Failautusi) and Selesa Tupu (treasurer).

The Aulotu were privileged to have Fr Alfred Tong join them the next day to celebrate Sunday Mass and his one-year anniversary as a priest.

# Delightful Dress-Up Day for St Peter Chanel School

**Margaret Campbell McCauley**  
Principal, St Peter Chanel School, Motueka

On 8 August, to celebrate St Mary MacKillop's Feast Day and as part of their Local Histories Curriculum, everyone dressed-up as children and teachers from the 1860s.

St Mary MacKillop's Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart founded our Motueka school in 1957.

The children enjoyed spending the day learning in the Victorian-school manner, cooking as people did in Victorian times and playing children's games of the 1860s such as marbles, hopscotch, skipping ropes, hula hoops and knucklebones.

St Mary MacKillop, and the nuns from her order known as the Josephites, founded schools in rural areas in both Australia and Aotearoa-New Zealand. Our teachers dressed as Josephite nuns

from the 1860s, as Catholic schools at that time were mainly staffed by religious orders.

The staff and school whānau are especially grateful to the Nelson Museum for letting them borrow some of their Victorian clothing and artifacts, and to local Motueka second-hand stores for loaning us items to help the children with their dress-ups.



The whole school at St Peter Chanel's in Motueka gathered with the children dressed as Victorian-era pupils and the teachers dressed as nuns. Photo: Supplied

# Mission Sisters celebrate 70th Jubilee

**Merle Hiscock rmdm**

It was with great rejoicing and gratitude we celebrated the 70th Jubilee of Religious Profession of Srs Mary-Ellen O'Sullivan rmdm and Valerie Lawson rmdm. Family, Sisters and friends gathered firstly in Notre Dame Chapel in Hamilton for the celebration of the Jubilee Mass. Rev Darren McFarlane and Rev Msgr Frank Eggleton were the celebrants.

As is our custom, Mary-Ellen and Valerie renewed their vows during Mass. Remembered in prayer were Srs Eleanor Corston RIP and Patricia Clark RIP, who were companions of Mary-Ellen and Valerie.

Afternoon tea and cutting the Jubilee cake followed and life stories were shared.

Both Mary-Ellen and Valerie have, over many years, contributed greatly in the field of education.

Mary-Ellen, with teaching and leadership in Catholic primary schools in Auckland, Taranaki and Hamilton. This was followed by 17 years teaching English, mainly to homeless teenagers, at Cardinal

Hume Centre in London.

Valerie, with teaching and leadership in secondary schools in Christchurch, Nelson and Lower Hutt receiving in 1995 the Queen's Service Order (QSO) awarded for services to education.



**Cutting their Jubilee cake at their 70th Jubilee of Religious Profession, (l-r) Srs Mary-Ellen O'Sullivan and Valerie Lawson.**

Photo: Anne Sklenars rmdm

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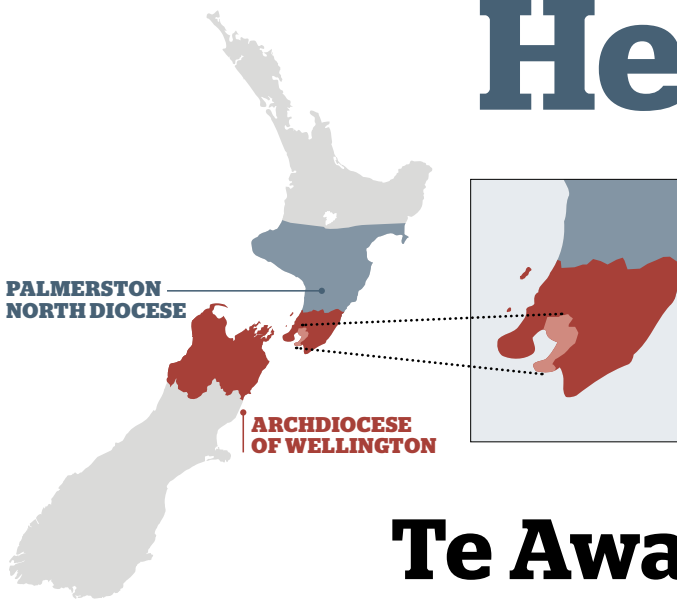
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# He Hīkoi Whakapon



WelCom's Journey of Faith continues this month to Lower Hutt's Catholic Parish of Te Awakairangi – a diverse community in ethnicity, age, spirituality and interests. Formed in 2015, the parish is composed of the churches of St Michael's, Taita, St Bernadette's, Naenae, St Martin de Porres, Avalon and Ss Peter & Paul, Lower Hutt. There are two Catholic colleges – Sacred Heart and St Bernard's; and three primary schools – St Michael's, St Bernadette's and Ss Peter & Paul. There are four religious communities. The parish covers the residential areas of Central Hutt, Avalon, Naenae, Taita, Fairfield, Alicetown, Maungaraki, Normandale, Harbour View and Belmont. Te Awakairangi is the largest of the parishes in the Wellington Archdiocese with approximately 3000 parishioners. Photos: Supplied

## BRIEF HISTORY

- 1838: Marist brothers and priests arrived in New Zealand with Bishop Pompallier.
- 1843: Lower Hutt within spheres of Wellington station.
- 1844: Lower Hutt part of Ōtaki Mission.
- 1850: Parish founded as Hutt River Mission, part of new Diocese of Wellington. Sited on over two acres in High St, bordered by Hutt River, Andrews Ave. Headed by French missionary Fr Jean Forest sm, Mission territory extended beyond Hutt Valley to Wairarapa, Kaikōura, Petone, Johnsonville-Western Districts, Naenae, Taita, Avalon, Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt.
- 1850: Fr Forest built first church of Ss Peter & Paul, and adjoining house.
- 1851: Bishop Viard consecrated Ss Peter and Paul Church.
- 1853: Fr Forest built first Catholic school in Hutt, continues today as Ss Peter & Paul School.
- 1883: French priests administered Hutt Mission until 1883, succeeded by Irish, English and New Zealand-born priests.
- 1909: Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions began, staffed Ss Peter & Paul School, later opened Sacred Heart Primary School, College, School of Music.
- 1912: Hutt Valley, Upper Hutt, Trentham, became separate parish.
- 1927: Ss Peter & Paul Knights Rd property, then farmland, purchased.
- 1929: Ss Peter & Paul School relocated to new two-storey building.
- 1938/39: Lower Hutt presbytery built.
- 1940: Original Hutt Mission church demolished. Most of High St land sold.
- 1943-1945: Rapid expansion of post-war housing in Hutt Valley, Fr Leo Daly, Lower Hutt parish priest 1924-49, foresaw need for new churches and parishes. Bought land in Naenae for church, school, presbytery and hall; 4.5 acres of land in Taita, which church, school and presbytery still stand on today; Park Avenue property in Avalon for later St Martin de Porres Church.
- 1945: New gothic-style Ss Peter & Paul Church built. Opened, blessed by Archbishop O'Shea.
- 1946: First Marist Brothers arrived in Lower Hutt, opened primary school; expanded to St Bernard's College secondary school in 1952.
- 1947: Fr Joe Leahy appointed first priest for St Michael's Taita. Catholic Men's Hut moved from Trentham Military Camp for church and school building.
- 1948: St Bernadette's Naenae became parish. Fr Vincent Callaghan parish priest.
- 1951: St Michael's buildings modified to also serve as school, staffed by first Order of Presentation Sisters in New Zealand.
- 1952: Taita became parish under Fr Joe Leahy.
- 1953: St Michael's School built.
- 1960: Avalon became parish, Fr Pettit, parish priest. St Martin de Porres Church completed, blessed and opened. Included faithful Polish community.
- 1961: St Michael's Church expanded, school, convent finished, presbytery completed.
- 1963: St Michael's church burned to ground, Mass celebrated in community hall, new church opened 1966.
- 2006: Mrs Barbara Rowley appointed Lay Pastoral Leader for St Bernadette's parish community.
- 2015: Lower Hutt rejoined with Avalon, Naenae and Taita to form parish of Te Awakairangi, inheriting multicultural diversity and gifts all parishes brought.

## Te Awakairangi Parish

The parish was given the name *Te Awakairangi* after Te Reo name for the Hutt River. Over time the name grew to be used as the name for the Hutt Valley. 'Te Awa' means the river, and 'kairangi' describes it as a precious river of divine nourishment. Our parish is intimately connected to our geographical area. Water is precious and holy. It symbolises grace, cleansing and life. As Catholics we are connected by the waters of our baptism.

Just on 100 priests have served the parish since it was founded in 1850. It is a busy parish with four services from Saturday evening to Sunday evening as well as weekday services. The parish choir

usually sings at one of the Sunday services. Many parishioners are involved in special groupings and organisations carrying out a wide variety of spiritual and other ministries in the parish community.

We celebrate our feast day on Good Shepherd Sunday.

### Vision

Ours is a community of communities. In our diversity we find unity and strength as members of the Body of Christ. We belong, grow and connect – working together for the good of the whole body.

Our leadership is collaborative and transparent, encouraging

active dialogue and applying the principle of subsidiarity – things that can be decided at the lowest possible level are decided at that level.

The identity of Eucharistic communities within the parish is respected and all voices are valued and listened to.

We have a preferential option for the poor, creating conditions for marginalised voices to be heard, to defend the defenceless, and to assess lifestyles, policies and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor. This calls us to strengthen the whole community to assist those who are most vulnerable.

### Logo

The shepherd's staff in the centre of our parish logo is a symbol of 'the Good Shepherd'. Jesus said 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep' [Jn10:11], and "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" [Jn10.27]. Jesus is our good shepherd, and he is the centre of our community. We are under his guidance and protection. We listen to his voice and follow Him.

The four shades of blue flowing water represent the Hutt River, communication, peace and our communities within the parish flowing in the same direction led by the Good Shepherd.



Part of our parish uniqueness is our multi-culturalism. All we plan or do, including our worship, is done by our four main cultures working together – Samoan, European, Tokelauan and Filipino.



At Te Awakairangi Parish amalgamation Mass in January 2015, four representatives from the four churches each take a light from one of four candles and together light the large candle in the centre.



Fr Patrick Bridgman  
Parish Priest



Mrs Barbara Rowley,  
Lay Pastoral Leader



Fr David Orange  
Associate Pastor



Fr Alfred Tong  
Assistant Priest

Today there are four churches within our parish, which represent part of the long and rich tapestry of the parish history. (See Brief History panel left.)



Ss Peter and Paul Church, Lower Hutt.



St Martin de Porres Church, Avalon.



St Bernadette Church, Naenae.



St Michael Church, Taita.





# Te Awakairangi: A Journey of Faith

Te Awakairangi parish is blessed with many groups and individuals who generously share their talents and missionary outreach across the community, offering fellowship, support to people in need and living the Gospel. Among them are groups for bereavement and visiting the sick, four religious communities, Catholic Women's League, adult faith formation, Alpha, SVdP and Vinnies, Youth, Literary committees, Passionist Family; Rosary; Samoan Aulotu, Syro Malabar Mission, Filipino Chaplaincy, Soup & Toast, Shona McFarlane Catholic Communion and Liturgy; annual Christmas concerts; and many more. The following highlight just a few of these many groups and activities across this vibrant, diverse and active parish.



**St Vincent de Paul Naenae** – has grown significantly over recent years in numbers and initiatives. There are about 32 members, associates and volunteers. Initiatives include twice-weekly bread drop offs to families, grocery vouchers to those in need, sponsoring children at college, help with school uniforms and books, referrals to budgeting services, food parcels at Christmas and operating a weekly food-distribution centre at the church hall. Our latest initiative is to provide monthly cooking lessons during the food distribution to encourage and teach people how to cook nourishing meals at a low cost, perhaps using food received at the centre. Many who help are people who originally came to receive food for their families but now turn up faithfully every week to give their time and to help others. The following reflection was written by one such person.

‘Today’s cooking lesson was again fabulous – rich nourishing soup as well as accompaniments of garlic buttered bread and iced-chocolate cookies. I love all the recipes we have been given, but the best thing about Cooking Day is the wonderful smiley atmosphere from participants – hands on, equally chopping, stirring, blending, slicing, tasting and doing whatever needs to be done, with everyone happy to participate or simply to watch and chat. It’s a real ingredient money can’t buy. It can’t be manufactured, it happens naturally from peoples’ hearts responding to an opportunity to learn, to help, create and be together. For me this is what is meant by communion – work of human hands. For me it’s the Vinnies prayer in action: “using skills to find ways through problems, grace to act compassionately, gaining joy from our tasks.”’

**St Martin’s Ladies** – was formed in July 2020 after the CWL Avalon Branch closed, to keep camaraderie going for the Catholic ladies of Avalon. Better than anticipated because of its relaxed format, at 10am on the first Thursday of each month several ladies converge on Boulcott Farm Café for coffee and fellowship. All new ladies who attend St Martin de Porres Church are welcome. Now in its fourth year, St Martin’s Ladies continues to flourish. Please contact Mary Heffernan at [mary.heffernan@extra.co.nz](mailto:mary.heffernan@extra.co.nz) if you would like to come along.

**Catholic Women’s League** – is a national organisation of Catholic women who contribute to the social, intellectual and spiritual life of the Church in New Zealand. Te Awakairangi Lower Hutt Branch, established 72 years ago, is very active and supports charitable works in New Zealand and the South Pacific. We are a welcoming group and meet on the fourth Tuesday every month. If you would like to join us, please contact Christina on 02102501649 or Lynette on 0272022929.



**Soup and Toast** – is an annual initiative during the winter months is the luncheon of free soup and toast for the community every Wednesday. Each week we serve upwards of 40 people a choice of three soups made by parishioners. Students from Sacred Heart College help with serving. This year bread

has been donated by a local baker along with pizzas, chocolates and other treats from parishioners. Notices advertising this popular outreach are distributed throughout the Lower Hutt community to organisations such as Foodbank, Greenstone Doors and Kainga Ora.

**Aulotu** – Samoan communities in Te Awakairangi Parish are the Ss Peter & Paul, St Michael’s and St Bernadette’s Aulotu. The three Aulotu are part of the archdiocesan Samoan Chaplaincy and are fully active members of our parish. The parish is enriched through their services, as Aulotu and as parishioners, contributing through such ministries as choir, liturgy, church committee, parish council, Sunday school, School Board of Trustees, monthly Samoan Mass and many other celebrations.



Ss Peter & Paul Aulotu 10th anniversary celebrations, 2021.



The Filipino Chaplaincy – of the Wellington Archdiocese holds a Mass for the Filipino community every first Sunday of the month at Ss Peter and Paul Church. The Mass, normally presided by a Filipino priest, provides an opportunity to sing Filipino hymns and listen to Tagalog readings. It is a place where new Filipino arrivals, visitors and longstanding residents gather and worship in a Filipino religious and cultural context.

**Ss Peter & Paul Bereavement Support Group** – has for the last 19 years, kept in touch with families who have farewelled loved ones from Ss Peter and Paul Church. The group will post a card, followed with a visit a few months later with an opportunity of outreach to let the family know they have not been forgotten in their grief. Each year we invite families to a Memorial Mass in November to reflect and come together for Mass and a cup of tea/coffee. It is beneficial to realise others are also coping with the loss of loved ones.

and Paul or in their own homes. People are grateful for the weekly opportunity of Holy Communion for continued spiritual strength and contact with the parish community. Priests also visit the rest homes regularly to say Mass and anoint or bless residents.



Members of Ss Peter & Paul Bereavement Support Group.

**Ss Peter & Paul Communion to the Sick and Housebound Group** – has 14 parish members who volunteer to visit local people in the three rest homes associated with Ss Peter



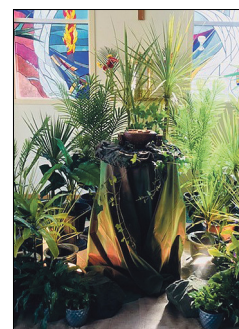
Fr Alfred gave a blessing to young people and their families before Te Awakairangi Youth headed off in their vans to go to Cambridge LifeTeen Summer camp January 2023.

**Adult faith formation series** – every Catholic has questions about their faith that they’ve never managed to get adequately answered. Recently, a series of evening forums were held in the parish to do exactly that. Covering topics from clericalism to sacraments, Jesus Christ to science and religion, parishioners young and old explored any aspect of these issues they wished. Many were relieved to address things

they’d always wondered about and are wanting more evenings. With a chance to clarify things as they arose, issues were explored that can’t easily be covered in a short homily to an entire church assembly. Everyone left the series pondering the richness of our Catholic Christian tradition and how there is always more to discover! The Pope’s new document, *Laudate Deum*, will be explored next.



Catholic Communion is held every Monday morning at Shona McFarlane Retirement Village in Avalon when 20 plus residents gather for a Liturgy of the Word and Communion. The community minister to each other with kindness and a warm welcome to newcomers. Along with prayers for the sick and those who have died, is a special prayer for vocations. Morning tea follows with friendly conversation. Several times a year an anointing Mass is held. ‘For me it is a grace-filled experience to lead this liturgy each week on behalf of the parish,’ says Mary Heffernan, St Martin de Porres parishioner.



Liturgy Committees – each church community have active and vibrant Liturgy Committees that enable Liturgies to be well celebrated. Pictured: Holy Thursday Garden of Repose, and the Resurrection Cross.



# He Hiko Whakapono: A Journey of Faith, continued

At Sacred Heart College in Lower Hutt we have two main Catholic groups – Special Character Council and Mission Council, which focus on building and celebrating the Catholic character of our kura.

Our Special Character Council meets once a fortnight to help organise events such as Masses, Liturgies, and Holy Week to promote the Catholic character around our school. Alongside this, the Mission Council promotes service in our community.

Some of the activities we have done this year include hosting the annual Vinnies Mass, running numerous fundraisers going towards schools affected by Cyclone Gabrielle, contributing to the Lower



Hutt Foodbank, Caritas Challenge, and hosting the annual St Bernard's College and Sacred Heart College Quiz Night.

We also work alongside the Ss Peter and Paul Parish for Sunday Mass and their Soup and Toast winter initiative.

Both Councils are led by our

DRS, Paula Davies, our 2023 Head of Special Character, Gabrielle Cabauatan, and our 2023 Tuakana, Sofia Mendoza.

This year three of our students were baptised and five confirmed in a Mass led by Fr Patrick Bridgman. We aim to bring the promises of Jesus to life in our kura.

**St Bernard's College** is an integrated Catholic Year 7 to 13 school for boys. It serves the Catholic community across the Hutt Valley and Wainuiomata area. With a maximum roll of 660 the college provides a full range of subjects and activities, while being small enough to ensure a caring, safe and personalised environment.

Our Vision is 'to be an inspiring Catholic Learning Community which

nurtures the growth of our sons.'

Our Goal is 'to empower our learners to achieve their full potential in the Way of the Gospel' and to grow a strong learning culture that inspires success in all of our students in partnership with whānau and community.

We strive to provide a modern teaching and learning environment that enhances innovation and quality. Learning pathways and opportunities



enable our students to fulfil their potential and become caring, informed and successful citizens.

**St Bernadette's School** – was opened by the Mercy Sisters in an army hut in 1948 for around 60 five- to eight-year-olds. The hut was a school from Monday to Friday and packed down to become a church for the weekend. The current school buildings opened in 1952.

The Mercy Sisters remained at the school for 21 years. In 1970, the Presentation Sisters carried on from where the Mercys left off. They led and staffed the school for the next 25 years. St Roisin O'Donnely planted the big chestnut tree as she left in 1995.

Our Mission Statement of



'Loving our Learning, Living our Faith, Knowing our God' respectfully takes us forward as part of the whakapapa of those who have gone before. We are proud of our school, our history, how we are now as a learning community, and as we move into the future.

Every day we endeavour to live our ART values – Aroha, Respect and Truth. We know we are each a work of ART created in God's image. Through this knowledge we always strive to live our values. This year we celebrated our 75th Jubilee.

– Jo Buckley, Principal

**Ss Peter & Paul School, Lower Hutt** – was opened by Archbishop Redwood in 1929, on its current site, with the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions teaching a roll of 170 children. Considered at the time an imposing, modern two-storied brick building, it served the families

of the parish well until earthquake risk closed its doors in 1975. A new look school, with its large open-plan buildings opened in 1976. Several changes have occurred to the buildings and grounds over the following years, designed to provide a great learning environment for

students and staff.

Ss Peter & Paul of today is a vibrant, multi-cultural Catholic primary school, mindful of its rich history and the dedicated efforts of all those connected to the school over many years. Set in the centre of Lower Hutt with easy access to a range of local amenities, the school aims to provide a rich and engaging education that encourages all students to flourish.

Our vision is to nurture independent and collaborative learners who are creative, critical, and caring in their thinking, strengthened by their Catholic identity. The values of aroha, stewardship, faith, and hope are well-embraced and shine through the interactions that occur day to day in the busy, engaging life of the school.

– Kay Tester, Principal

**St Michael's School** – is in the heart of Taita and caters for students Years 1 to 8. Founded by the Presentation Sisters 70 years ago, our school is proud of its rich history and constantly seeks to further enhance its Catholic character.

We have a strong set of values at the heart of our Catholic faith that guide us throughout the school.

We provide the best possible educational experiences for our students. Our caring, enthusiastic and dedicated teaching team, with professional support staff, are committed to making sure every child's needs are met.

In addition to the core curriculum, we provide opportunities for students to

succeed through programmes in faith, leadership, kapa-haka/pasifika groups, choir, dance, arts, music, sport and student-directed learning.

Opportunities abound for students through programmes in faith, leadership, kapa-haka/pasifika groups, choir, dance, arts, music, sport, and student-directed learning.

Several religious communities have lived and served in Lower Hutt over many years. Four communities reside in Lower Hutt today and are part of the parish.

**Columban Mission** – is a residential area and an office within the Columban Region of Oceania, which includes Fiji and Australia. Our office is 18 St Columbans Grove and we have five houses in Francis Douglas Way.

The five priests include Fr Tom Rouse, regional councillor for the region of Oceania, and Frs Michael Gormly, Don Hornsey, Pat O'Shea and Larry Barnett. Two other Columbans resident in Aotearoa-New Zealand are Fr Sean O'Connor, retired in Auckland, and Fr Paul Finlayson who is parish priest of Hastings.

We are a charitable trust and our principal work is fundraising for the Columban missionaries' work throughout the world. We do so through the distribution of our mission magazine *The Far East*, the sale of our Columban Art Calendar and our annual mid-year and Christmas appeals. We also maintain a website and a Facebook page.

Each weekday we celebrate Mass at our chapel with a number of people attending. Fr Don Hornsey also celebrates a weekly Sunday Mass for the Spanish-speaking community. We support the work of the parish of Te Awakairangi by saying Mass and being available to respond to hospital calls when requested.



**At home in Lower Hutt are Columbans (l-r) Frs Larry Barnett, Michael Gormly, Don Hornsey, Pat O'Shea, Tom Rouse and Peter O'Neill (regional director, Oceania).**

**The Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions' (rndm)** long association with education in Lower Hutt began in 1909, staffing Ss Peter and Paul School followed by the opening of Sacred Heart College and Primary School, and a School of Music.

Srs Valerie Lawson was awarded QSO and Pauline Leonard CNZM for services in education. The rndms' formal involvement in education ended with Srs Valerie Lawson at Sacred Heart College, retiring in 2000, Merle Hiscock resigning from Ss Peter and Paul School in 1988 to serve in Mindanao, Philippines, and Jo Kane resigning as DRS from Sacred Heart College for Leadership in our ANZ&S Province. More recently our emphasis has focused on Earth Care and ecospirituality.

Today we have six Sisters living in Te Awakairangi Parish, where we continue our Mission.

Sr Mary Paul resides in Aroha Care Centre for the Elderly and visits with co-residents as a caring and listening presence.

Sr Margaret Monaghan joined the parish community in 2021 as full-time RNDM Province Leader.

Sr Valerie Lawson and Sr Pauline Leonard enjoy mentoring

and supporting roles with SHC and visiting in the parish.

Sr Trish Boyd has recently returned from mission work overseas after 24 years in Senegaland 16 years in France.

Sr Merle Hiscock continues with a ministry in Spiritual Direction and Supervision and serves on RNDM Province Leadership Team.

**Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary (smsm)** – the Spirit of Mission blows through the Lower Hutt parish. From faith-filled families such as the Walshes, McAloons, Stewarts, Lees, Knox and Greshams, young women entered the smsm religious community.

Rose Philippine McAloon (pictured) answered this call. After making her profession at the training centre in Heretaunga she taught for more than 35 years in Samoa, then at Corpus Christi Teachers' College in Fiji. She returned often. Her last years were spent at Shona McFarlane Village and in the Burnside St community. Sr Rose died this year, aged 89.



For four decades Lower Hutt parishioners supported women at the smsm training centre and they continued when sisters were sent as missionaries in the Pacific and beyond. Parish groups such as the Catholic Womens' League, the Mission group and Garden

Party benefactors all contributed generously.

Sr M Dominica Knox was the first smsm to live in the parish. A qualified mental-health worker, she provided a safe temporary shelter at the Anawim Centre in Pt Howard. She later moved this ministry to Trafalgar St, Waterloo. In 1995 Heretaunga was sold and a community of smsm moved to Avalon, where they were active in the parish as pastoral visitors, Eucharistic ministers, and volunteers at Te Omanga Hospice. Our most recent move was in 2018 to Waterloo.

**Marist Brothers** – the first Brothers arrived in Lower Hutt in 1946, opening a primary school, which grew to a secondary school in 1952, called St Bernard's College. It was staffed initially by Marist Brothers then lay teachers. In 2000 the Brothers established a young adult community until 2013, called 'The Grove'. There are now three Brothers living in Lower Hutt, with a fourth in residential care in Taita. While 'officially retired' the Brothers activities include helping at the Petone SVdP shop, transporting food for the Food Bank, delivering bread around the Naenae parish, working with the parish SVdP Conference, and relief teaching at the English Teaching College. Br Doug Dawick says, 'while our ministry abilities have reduced, our witness value is still an integral aspect of our presence.'



# Young Catholics • Rangatahi Katorika

## Schools celebrate jubilees

### St James' School honours past with 65th jubilee

Andrea Cawood, DRS

St James' Catholic School in Palmerston North proudly celebrated its 65th Jubilee over the weekend of 9–10 September.

Celebrations included a pōwhiri, tours around the school, kai and 'catch ups', a display of historical photographs, a cultural performance and entertainment hour, and a special Jubilee Mass at Palmerston North's Cathedral of the Holy Spirit – reopened in time for the celebrations after a fire earlier this year.

St James' is a Mercy school established in 1958 and was run for many years by some amazing Sisters of Mercy. Today's roll stands at more than 150 pupils.

Among the school's first teachers was Sr Joan Manson rsm, who attended the Jubilee. Sr Joan started as an assistant teacher when St James' first opened. She taught junior students along with the aid of her puppet 'Monkey'. She later became principal. At the celebrations, Sr Joan reintroduced Monkey and gifted him to the school.

Sr Joan, now 95, has lived in Palmerston North for many years and soon after the jubilee she moved to Villa Joseph in Upper Hutt along with two other Sisters.



St Bernadette's cultural group performed to students and guests.

Photo: Supplied

### St Bernadette's School 75th Jubilee

Jo Buckley, Principal

St Bernadette's School Naenae celebrated its 75th Jubilee on the Feast of the Assumption, 15 August, with a beautiful Mass and singing. Songs included Our Lady of Knock, a community favourite hymn from when the Presentation Sisters taught here.

Morning tea followed Mass and everyone

gathered to plant a Jubilee tree. Marilyn, who came to St Bernadette's as a five-year-old several years ago and is now back from her retirement as a volunteer in our classes, led the tree planting with students. Lay Pastoral Leader Barbara Rowley led a blessing of the tree.

Students performed for guests and our culture group ended the official ceremonies. The students also led tours of the school.

It was great to have so many past pupils visiting and sharing memories of their time at St Bernadette's School with current pupils.



St James' 65th Jubilee celebrations included photographic displays of the school's history. As part of the new local histories curriculum St James' students interviewed past pupils.

Photo: Warwick Smith/Manawatū Standard



Sr Joan Manson rsm was a founding teacher at St James Catholic School.

Photo: Supplied

## Scripture competition

The Kapi-Mana Scripture competition was held at St Theresa's Catholic School in Plimmerton on 31 August. Students from St Joseph's Levin, Holy Family Porirua, St Pius X Titahi Bay, Our Lady of Kapiti Paraparaumu, St Francis Xavier Tawa and St Theresa's Catholic School Plimmerton proclaimed scripture in English, Māori and Samoan.

We are grateful to our judges Zita Smith and Carmel Keane, and thank Susan, Sophia and Peter Setefano from Bishop Viard

College, says Principal Donna McDonald.

'The students proclaimed the Gospels with reverence and it is encouraging to know we have students that are becoming confident and enthusiastic speakers of Scripture.'

Students from Catholic Schools at the Kapi-Mana Scripture competition.

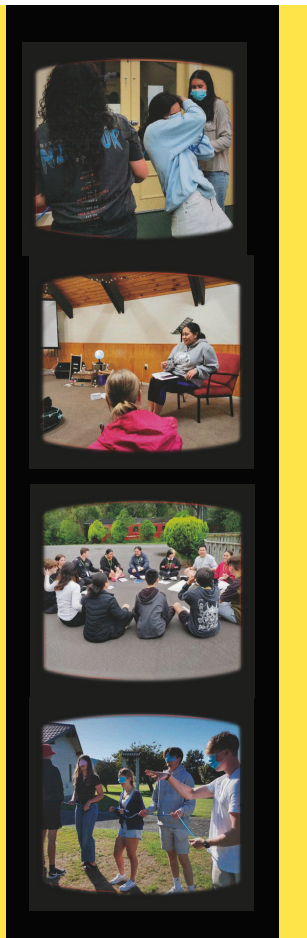
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# Ko te Rā mō te Hunga Pōhara - Rātapu 19 Whiringa-ā-rangi 2023 World Day of the Poor - Sunday 19 November 2023

## World Day of the Poor message: Don't look away!



**“Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor” – Tobit 4:7**

The World Day of the Poor is a Catholic observance established by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter, *Misericordia et Misera*, issued on 20 November 2016 to celebrate the end of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. The Pope asked for the Catholic Church to set aside a Sunday every year and ‘reflect on how poverty is at the very heart of the Gospel’.

His Holiness named this observance the World Day of the Poor and it is held on the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time each liturgical year (usually in November).

Pope Francis has declared

Sunday 19 November 2023 to be the seventh World Day of the Poor, with the theme of ‘Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor’ (Tobit 4:7).

In his message for the 2023 World Day of the Poor, issued 13 June, Pope Francis reflects on the example of Tobit. He considers how the Book of Tobit teaches us to be realistic and practical in whatever we do with and for the poor, writing that ‘caring for the poor is more than simply a matter of a hasty hand-out; it calls for re-establishing the just interpersonal relationships that poverty harms.’

Pope Francis begins his message by stressing that ‘a great river of poverty is traversing our cities and swelling to the point of overflowing; it seems to overwhelm us, so great are the needs of our brothers and sisters who plead for our help, support and solidarity.’

‘We are living’, he continues, ‘in times that are not particularly sensitive to the needs of the poor. The pressure to adopt an affluent lifestyle increases, while the voices of those dwelling in poverty tend to go unheard.’

In particular, he stresses ‘new forms of poverty’, such as ‘peoples caught up in situations of war’,



**‘A great river of poverty is traversing our cities’ – Pope Francis’ 2023 World Day of the Poor Message.**

Photo: Vatican News/AFP

the ‘inhumane treatment’ of many workers, and ‘speculation [misappropriation] in various sectors’, which he said had led to ‘dramatic price increases that

**“...whenever we encounter a poor person, we cannot look away, for that would prevent us from encountering the face of the Lord Jesus.” – Pope Francis, World Day of the Poor Message, 2023**

further impoverish many families.’

Faced with problems of this magnitude, Pope Francis writes, our responsibility is clear. We must heed Tobit’s words to Tobias: ‘Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor.’

‘In a word,’ he continues, ‘whenever we encounter a poor person, we cannot look away, for that would prevent us from encountering the face of the Lord

Jesus.’

Thus, ‘the parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. *Lk* 10:25-37) is not simply a story from the past; it continues to challenge each of us in the here and now of our daily lives. It is easy to delegate charity

to others, yet the calling of every Christian is to become personally involved.’

Pope Francis goes on to point out that this year is the 60th anniversary of the publication of Pope John XXIII’s landmark encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, in which he urged that ‘Every human being enjoys the right to life, to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, including food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services.’

How to act, Pope Francis asks, in the face of the failure of the political process to deliver these goods?

The answer, he says, is two-fold. There is, on the one hand, ‘a need to urge and even pressure public institutions to perform their duties properly’, but, on the other, ‘it is of no use to wait passively to receive everything “from on high”’.

Those living in poverty, Pope Francis stresses, ought also to be included in this search for ‘change and responsibility’.

Pope Francis’ 2023 World Day of the Poor Message: [tinyurl.com/World-Day-Poor-2023](http://tinyurl.com/World-Day-Poor-2023)

Source: Vatican News

## Archbishop Paul invites us to ‘reinvigorate and reorient our hearts’ among the poor

**Kamau Holland  
Catholic Social Services,  
Wellington**

Every year Pope Francis calls us to encounter with the poor; to be with the poor. In his World Day of the Poor message this year, he calls us again to seek out, listen to, and befriend the poor.

Our challenge is to grow our awareness of the poor and what it means to be poor, from beyond a day, to becoming an ongoing community of encountering and listening to those in need.

In the Archdiocese of Wellington, Archbishop Paul Martin SM invites us to consider how we can reinvigorate and reorient our hearts through the World Day of the Poor and reignite the aspirations of archdiocese’s 2017 Synod: ‘Go you are sent’. Instead of it being an annual one-off event,

he wants us to consider how we can grow the World Day of the Poor as a way of being an ongoing community of encounter – one that listens and befriends the poor.

Archbishop Paul encourages us to explore the spirituality of ‘meeting and talking’ to transform our understanding of being a follower of Christ and to change our narrative from ‘other’ to ‘us’.

The archdiocese Catholic Social Services (CSS) and the Environmental, Justice and Peace (EJP) Commission groups have been talking with people in the community to explore this deep invitation – to be still, to stop, to listen to one another and to befriend the poor.

Our conversations are discovering people who already live this way daily – by encountering others, sharing what they have and listening and responding to those of their community most in need.

Our discussions have included questions such as: ‘Who are our poor? How do you know? Is this word ‘poor’ appropriate for Aotearoa in 2023? And is doing good works or donating money enough to answer the invitation to encounter and befriend the poor? How do we know what is happening for one another? How do we discover what people really need?’

### Invitation to share your stories

CSS and the EJP Commission genuinely would like to involve you in our conversations and invite you to join us. Are you drawn to this kōrero [conversation] and would you like to share your story with us? If so, we would like to meet with you to listen and respond. Please contact Deirdre Meskill at [d.meskill@wn-catholic-social-services.org.nz](mailto:d.meskill@wn-catholic-social-services.org.nz) or ph (04) 385-8642.

## A spirit of encounter

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand invites you to take part in the World Day of the Poor 2023 on 19 November, as an opportunity to reflect on and renew commitments to walking together towards a fair and just world.

Pope Francis tells us that ‘those living in poverty must also be involved and accompanied in a process of change and responsibility’. To break down barriers that reinforce cycles of poverty and limit opportunities for some, we all must be involved. To encounter is to walk with others, with humility. Though we cannot walk with everyone, we each can contribute what we have. We meet each other exactly where we are and encounter one other with the intent of learning and growing.

We are called to recognise poverty is not something which simply exists, but rather it has varied causes. It can be built and reinforced through structures of inequality and systems of

indifference to people. It can take the form of spiritual, emotional or mental poverty as well as material hardship.

To mark World Day of the Poor this year, Caritas highlights the invaluable work of Bethlehem University that serves as a beacon of hope in the Holy Land.

As World Day of the Poor nears, Caritas invites you to consider how you can work to build a world where, Caritas invites you to consider how you can work to build a world where every person is cherished: ‘Join us in making a difference and breathing life into Pope Francis’ vision of genuine encounter.’

Caritas has created a variety of resources for the World Day of the Poor, including a discussion resource on what ‘encounter’ can look like in New Zealand. The resources can be accessed online at: [caritas.org.nz/world-day-of-the-poor](http://caritas.org.nz/world-day-of-the-poor)

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as he fulfils his mission,  
may he continue to accompany  
the flock entrusted to him,  
with the help of the  
Holy Spirit.



# 'Created goods should flow fairly to all'

**Jim McAloon**

It's a fundamental principle of Catholic Social Teaching that, as Vatican 2 said, 'God intended the earth and everything in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should flow fairly to all'.

We live in a country with much wealth and many natural endowments. How then do we make sure everyone gets what they need for a life of dignity?

Most would agree it is important for people to be able to support themselves through paid work, as they are able. For at least 130

years the Catholic Church has taught that the dignity of labour is only recognised when people are adequately compensated for their work, and the hours of work allow time for family, rest, and recreation. To what extent do each of us support policies which uphold worker's rights?

But paid work is far from the only criterion of human dignity and of participating in society. All of us will at one time or another not be able to support ourselves by paid work. How do we perceive those who rely on welfare benefits? As neighbours? Or as the 'other'? To what extent would we support policies which ensure that everyone has access to enough income to life with basic dignity?

A lot of us contribute to various social agencies, whether religious or secular. And we should. But this is discretionary: no one makes us do it. Can we organise our political affairs so that everyone has at least enough for a life of dignity?

It's not a matter of only relying on the state, or on other public authorities. But they are important. Catholic Social Teaching doesn't usually say a particular specific law or policy is the only way to do things. But as people of faith, we should be asking questions, and we should be listening to the voices of those who lack what is necessary to participate fully in our communities.



**Jim McAloon is chair of the Archdiocese EJP Commission and is a professor of History at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington.** Photo: VUW

## Berrigan House - a community of encounter

*'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.'* - Matthew 25:35

**Kamau Holland**

Berrigan House, a Catholic Worker Youth Ministry, opened its doors in 2016 on the footsteps of Victoria University Wellington's Kelburn campus. Its leadership has changed several times but the kaupapa [foundation, principles] has remained the same.

*'The manifesto of the Catholic Worker movement highlights a commitment to pacifism, personal responsibility for the welfare of our poor and destitute neighbour, the promotion of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as found in the Gospels, and the living out of the Beatitudes in daily life.'*

Jack Leason and his brother Finn began the Berrigan House ministry after Jack had returned to Aotearoa from his OE. He was inspired by his stays in Catholic Worker communities around the USA, and he had just finished reading *Laudato si'*. At first Jack and Finn squatted in an empty Wellington city building. After they were removed from that site, Chris Duthie-Jung and Fr Gerard Burns from the archdiocese offered them Berrigan House on Kelburn Parade.

Not long after they had moved into Berrigan, Jack and Finn were joined by others who shared their vision of living communally and opening their home to people who

needed somewhere to live, particularly those who were homeless and sleeping rough. They had regular meetings where everyone had a voice, and prayer and liturgies were celebrated together.

Jack said the process of bringing people who were homeless to their community was quite simple. 'It was just a low-key approach where I introduced myself and told them if they needed it, there was a bed at our place. Kevin and his dog were the first to arrive and it grew from there.'

The main learning for Jack living at Berrigan was about balancing the relationships. Living in a radical decentralised and family environment with people of diverse backgrounds required a commitment to the kaupapa and a wider political world view.

Here are shared thoughts from some of the people who have experienced Berrigan House hospitality and community.

*'Berrigan House is a place of belonging for people on the outskirts of both community and Church.'*

*'Community is the ultimate answer to loneliness and I have fulfilled both in the people who live there and those who seek refuge there.'*

*'People at Berrigan are actively involved in positive social change that often directly*



**Berrigan House is a Catholic Worker movement youth ministry house on campus at Victoria University of Wellington.**

Photo: Supplied

*impacts the people they serve. We are called as people of faith to be actively involved in God's outworking of justice and to do so in and out of love. There a few other places that exhibit this so fully than Berrigan House.'*

## Seek out the Poor!

All parishes throughout the Palmerston North Diocese will be invited to seek out the Poor and the causes of their poverty in response to World Day of the Poor on 19 November.

Material poverty can be obvious, but Pope Francis prompts us to seek out other less obvious forms of poverty and address their causes.

We are called to not only acknowledge every poor person but also every form of poverty.

Men and women devoted to care for the poor do more than give charity: 'they listen, they engage, they try to understand and deal with the difficult situations and their causes.' Getting to the causes of poverty can be difficult. Archbishop Helder Camera of Brazil was praised when he gave food to the poor but ridiculed and dismissed when he asked why the poor had no food.

Other forms of poverty arise from war, from economic and ecological speculation, inadequate wages, unsafe workplaces, a sense of hopelessness especially among our young.

We surely meet Christ in the poor and so we are cautioned 'not to turn our face away from anyone who is poor' and not to turn away from many situations causing poverty.

The Steering Group for the soon to be appointed PN JPDE Commission has invited parishes to identify the poor, and forms of poverty, in each parish and to determine the causes of such poverty. Parishes are asked to report back to the Steering Group on their findings.

- Kevin Campbell, Member of Steering Group PN JPDEC

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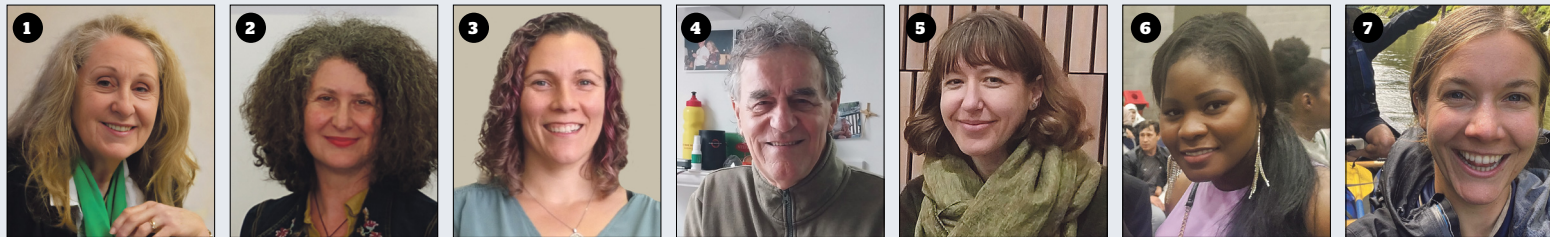


# Helping to make a real difference

Catholic Social Services (CSS) is the social outreach agency of the Archdiocese of Wellington. Its mission includes social work, clergy healthcare, short-term therapeutic interventions, prison chaplaincy, hospital chaplaincy, support for refugee resettlement, community advocacy and support for people going through loss and grief. All are welcome and services are available to people of all backgrounds and beliefs. Every year CSS holds its Kotahitanga Annual Appeal throughout the month of November to help it fulfil its mission to reach out and serve those on the margins. **Kamau Holland** and **Deirdre Meskill**, pictured below with some of CSS's team members and volunteers, describe how with your help CSS can make a real difference in local communities.

## Catholic Social Services

People helping people  
*āwhina tātou*



1. Kamau Holland, CSS Director. 2. Deirdre Meskill, CSS Community Facilitator. 3. Jess Ferroni, Seasons for Growth trainer. 4. Duncan Holland, volunteer facilitator of Game On Men's Parenting Programme. 5 and 6. Vera Wennekers and Mercy Viveros Angulo, volunteers with the Refugee Resettlement Project. 7. Tristana, volunteer for Women's Friendship Project.

Working with people on the margins and finding ways of collaborating with others to ensure great outcomes is what we do at Catholic Social Services.

We have a clear model of delivery consistent with the 2017 Synod and the call to us: 'Go you are sent...'

### Trends

We are often asked what trends and challenges CSS has noticed following the Covid-19 pandemic years. The challenges are the same as before but are more intense and complex. Finding affordable housing is almost impossible and emergency housing is at capacity. Mental-health services are stretched to their limits and helping our clients access appropriate services is distressing. One client told us, 'My son needs help now, not in six or 12 months' time. Each path we go down to get him help is totally log-jammed, we are desperate.'

Another emerging trend is that

more and more people are feeling scared, isolated and lonely. An online survey by Research First in 2023 supports this, but concerningly the findings also confirm loneliness is highest amongst our rangatahi [young people].

Some major issues facing all social agencies are recruiting qualified staff and the securing and retention of sufficient funding to maintain a high level of service. During the pandemic, the Government made significant funding available to enable communities to get the help they needed to survive the pandemic impacts. This led to some new organisations increasing their services. Now that that funding has stopped, these organisations are seeking funding to continue their services – there are more services but less money to support them. In light of these fiscal challenges, CSS has adopted three main approaches to ensure the growth and ongoing

delivery of our services.

Our **first** approach is to collaborate with parishes and other organisations with shared values. For example, Greenstone Doors, Changemakers Resettlement Forum, Upper Hutt Benefit Educational Services Trust, St Vincent de Paul, St Joseph's Parish Levin and Our Lady of Kāpiti Parish.

Our **second** approach is to develop a strong volunteer base. We owe a debt of gratitude to these remarkable people as they are a critical part of our CSS service-delivery model and make a real difference. Without them we could not do what we do.

### Introducing some of our many volunteers and their work

**Seasons for Growth** – our trainer and coordinator **Jess Ferroni** works two days a week, so we rely on volunteers to ensure we have sufficient coverage to meet the

growing demand for this excellent programme that addresses grief and loss. We work with Rev Sandra Williams from the Uniting Church in Levin who now offers training and companionship in the Levin area.

**Game On Men's Parenting** – our much-needed programme, which transforms families' lives, is run in collaboration with Greenstone Doors. Each organisation brings a qualified staff member to the programme. However, **Duncan Holland**, who volunteers as a senior facilitator, has trained all members of the team. Game On now runs in the Hutt Valley, Wellington and Levin. To be able to offer this programme to more men and to address the trauma many have faced in their lives, CSS needs to employ a therapist. We estimate in the next financial year we will need to raise \$140,000 to support this programme expansion.

**Refugee Resettlement Project** – this important project, which

welcomes refugees by turning houses into homes, has been running since 2015 with the support of many committed volunteers and parish communities. The programme was originally coordinated by a CSS staff member. Now we have two committed volunteers **Vera Wennekers** and **Mercy Viveros Angulo** who lead and coordinate this project in collaboration with the Anglican Movement. The number of former refugees arriving in Wellington from the Mangere Refugee Centre is 83 so far this year. More arrivals will continue next year.

**Women's Friendship Project** – runs in collaboration with Changemakers Resettlement Forum and has been established to address issues of isolation and loneliness. We have joined with several locally connected women who have given their time to befriend women from refugee backgrounds. Each day we hear of more and more people feeling isolated and alone. We have identified this project as a real and growing need in our communities. For CSS to develop this project to meet the needs of people who are lonely, we will need to employ a volunteer coordinator. We will need to raise \$80,000 to support this growth.

Visit [kotahitanga-appeal.my.canva.site/](http://kotahitanga-appeal.my.canva.site/) to read more about CSS volunteers.

### You can help

CSS needs to ensure we have resources to pay for volunteer expenses, to employ qualified staff and maintain resources to ensure our work is carried out safely and sustainably.

Our **third** approach involves you. Your gift to the Kotahitanga Annual Appeal helps fulfil our mission to reach out and serve those on the margins. There is great suffering and need in our local communities. Together, in unity and through collective action, we can make a real difference in our local communities.

Please make a gift of any amount on our Donate Page at: [wn-catholicsocialservices.org.nz/donate](http://wn-catholicsocialservices.org.nz/donate) or donate directly to our bank account **02-0560-0213864-00** with your Surname and Initials, **Code CSS23**, and contact **Phone Number**.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES | 1 - 30 NOVEMBER

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people helping people āwhina tātou



# A Litany Revisited

The unfolding story of the Litany of Loreto (16th century), honouring Mary, the Mother of Jesus, continues this month as **Fr James Lyons** reflects on the two titles, *Gate of Heaven* and *Morning Star*.

## Gate of Heaven

Jesus speaks of the *keys of the kingdom of heaven* [Matthew 16:19] which he gives to Peter – the Rock on which the Church is built. He refers to himself as *the gate of the sheepfold* [John 10: 7].

The images of key and gate have contributed greatly to our interpretation of heaven as a place, some site or destination towards which we are travelling. Peter has traditionally been cast in the role of gatekeeper, with discretionary power to unlock or seal the entrance. Such an approach invariably conjures fear or, at best, deep anxiety.

Perhaps, even more likely, it can feed the appetite of those who contend that ‘Heaven’ is simply make-believe, a tool to keep people in check: *You won’t get into heaven unless...!*

Mary’s precedence as the Mother of Jesus, gives her the title in Christian tradition, *Mother of the Church* (the Body of Christ). Scripture records the scene following the Ascension of Jesus, as the apostles and several of the disciples gathered in prayer to await the gift of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost). They gathered with *Mary, the mother of Jesus* [Acts 1:14]

As the one through whom the Word of God took flesh and entered our created world, Mary offers a way for us to enter the realm of God.

As *Gate of Heaven*, Mary does not usurp the role of Peter or Jesus. By her strong gentleness and tender, confident love, she eases the way for us to ‘see’ heaven, to bring it more within



**Pukekaraka, Ōtaki. The gate of heaven is open, never closed – there is similar symbolism in the carved wooden panels placed as an inverted V (^) at the entrance to a marae.** Photo: WelCom

reach, and thereby more accessible.

Nor should we think of a gate only as a barrier or checkpoint. In human history, the gateway to a town or settlement, while guarding the entrance was primarily a meeting place. It has been known as the spot where business was discussed, public affairs debated, even the site for a trading post or market.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, the Life. Through him, the gate, we enter the sheepfold [see John 10:7-9]. As a gathered people, a pilgrim people with a purpose, we journey homeward, following the call of Jesus, to the God from whom all good things come.

Mary, Gate of Heaven, stands with outstretched arms in welcome of her children.

Like a welcoming archway, she signifies shelter, safety, security and peace. There is similar symbolism in the carved wooden panels placed as an inverted V (^) at the entrance to a Marae.

The gate of heaven is open, never closed. We have that assurance from Jesus in his message to the merciful, the peacemakers, the pure of heart, the ones who seek always what is right and good [see Matthew, 5:1-11]. The reign of God embraces them.

He offers the same promise to those who stumble and fall, who struggle under heavy burdens [Matthew, 11:29-30]. The exhausted and lame are lifted in spirit to keep moving forward. Through this open gate can be

glimpsed, from no matter what distance, the happy excitement of preparations to receive the homecoming.

The Irish poet, John O’Donohue, describes heaven as ‘the home we never left’, dispelling the image of heaven as a place we’ve yet to reach. Catching this vision, that we each are on a journey of discovery, you will find yourself, as Mary did, joyfully and generously lighting the way for one another.

*O gates, lift high your heads,  
grow higher, ancient doors.  
– Psalm 24*

*Like an open gate  
your life calls welcome.  
To enter under your portals  
is to tread a sure way.*

*O Gate of Heaven  
draw us through you to Jesus.  
Protect the flock that  
shelters on your porch.*

*Sight of you gives  
hope and joy to all.  
Whole or wounded,  
wayward or wandering.*

*Open wide your arms.  
In welcome.*

*Mary, Gate of Heaven, pray for us.*

## Morning Star

Throughout the Jubilee Year 2000, Pope John Paul II (now Saint) often invoked Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as the *Star of the New Evangelisation*. He affirmed this in his Apostolic Letter, *At the Beginning of the New Millennium*, pointing to Mary as ‘the radiant dawn and sure guide for our steps.’ [NMI, 2001, n.58]

It was a star that guided the Wise Ones to the Christ child, stopping over the place where the child was [cf Matthew 2:9]. This is the role of Mary – a guide to Jesus. She stops where Jesus is, because there is no need to go further. All is complete, everything is fulfilled, in the One who came to ‘make all things new.’ [Revelations 21:5]

The morning star in our sky heralds the approaching day. The night is not completely gone, but you know the greater part is past.

The title, *Morning Star*, rightly belongs to Mary because of the courage and faithfulness she shows as mother and *handmaid of the Lord*, [Luke 1]. With her husband, Joseph, she sheltered Jesus at his birth, protected the child from those who sought to kill him and sought him out on the occasion he became lost. She was his star in his growing

years. She stood by him when other family members judged him insane.

At the foot of the Cross she accepted to be for each of us what she was for Jesus – a mother. After the Ascension, Mary gathered with the apostles and other disciples, her guiding and healing presence brightening their lives and rekindling their hope as the Church, the People of God, was born.

Perhaps Mary was the inspiration for Peter’s later advice and the strength of his witness: ‘You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts’ [1 Peter 1:19]. It seems apparent that Mary was the star that guided Peter back from his near despair.

The cluster of stars we know in New Zealand as *Matariki*, signal a new beginning – a time for planting, for renewing, for starting over. As our *Morning Star*, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, encourages us to sow seeds of gospel joy, to renew and strengthen faith, to see more clearly the way ahead.

In his reflection, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, Cardinal Basil Hume (Archbishop



**Morning Star** refers to the shimmering light of Venus when it appears in the east just before the sun rises. Mary then is like Venus whose appearance ushers in the sun, the light of the world, Jesus Christ.

of Westminster, 1976–99), compares faith to a star:

*It is in no way as good as the sun,  
but it is enough each day to be able to see  
perhaps just one step ahead. [p.137]*

### Morning Star

*A hymn to Mary*

*You appear before sunrise  
A herald from night  
A beacon to beckon the day  
You shine with a brightness  
Transforming the dark  
A glimmering splinter kindling hope*

*Morning Star  
A spark in a world of darkness  
A spot like no other  
A gift from the sun  
Guiding our way to see light anew.  
There is joy in your starlight  
Ushering dawn  
Showing the way to be free of the dark*

*Peaceful and tranquil  
Your work only done  
When tomorrow comes  
Morning Star...  
Star dust like gold dust  
Treasure that shines  
Sparkling freshness that keeps hope alive*

*Morning Star...  
Mary, Morning Star, our guide,  
our light, pray for us.*

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# Gospel Reading: Sunday 5 November 2023

## THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – MATTHEW 23:1-12

<sup>1</sup>Jesus spoke to the crowds and his disciples saying, <sup>2</sup>“The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. <sup>3</sup>Therefore, you must do and observe what they tell you; but do not follow their example. For they do not practise what they preach. <sup>4</sup>They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them.

<sup>5</sup>“Everything they do is preformed to be seen, like wearing broader headbands and longer tassels. <sup>6</sup>They love to take the place of honour at banquets, seats of honour in synagogues, <sup>7</sup>being greeted respectfully in the market squares and having people call them “Rabbi”.

<sup>8</sup>“You, however, must not allow yourselves to be called “Rabbi”. You have only one teacher, and

you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup>You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven. <sup>10</sup>Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ.

<sup>11</sup>“The greatest among you must be your servant. <sup>12</sup>Anyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be exalted.’

## Reflection for 31st Sunday’s Gospel

Kevin Dobbyn fms

We are well prepared for today’s gospel by the reading from Malachi, the last book of the Old (First) Testament that prepares us for the demands of the Gospel. His warnings are strident: And now, O priests, this command is for you... you have caused many to stumble by your instruction...I make you despised before all the people.

It would be a mistake to take this out of context, point to clerical sexual abuse and blame clergy and religious for the shame many of us have felt about being Catholic, as some media and governmental groups would like to reinforce somewhat judgementally. What Malachi addresses for us 21st century disciples, is the danger of

clericalism, not something specific to the ordained, but to certain leaders in a variety of ministries who relish power over others.

The community that Matthew was writing for was largely Jewish; it was to the leadership of those Jewish communities that he put on the lips of Jesus the harshest criticism. Pope Francis has been consistently insistent that good shepherds should have the smell of the sheep on them; Jesus reminds us that the greatest among us should be our servants. Present day scribes and Pharisees can pay too much attention to rules and rubrics dressed in black and white while ignoring the grey of life in the ordinary joys and sorrows of daily faithfulness to the Gospel I see in so many believers I am privileged to know.

Again echoing Malachi 2:10, Jesus in Matthew says: Call no one on earth your father since you have only one Father – in heaven since you are all brothers and sisters (Mt 23:8-9); an instruction conveniently forgotten in our major Catholic, Orthodox and sometimes Anglican churches, despite the urging of Cardinal John to stop calling our priests ‘Father’. Recognising the priesthood of our common baptism gives us a way out of the institutional shame and guilt. It is not enough to confess our personal sin; we must also confess our communal and institutional sin of Catholic arrogance that is not just post-Tridentine, but centuries old. Synodality is the Spirit’s wake up call which, to be effective has to be equally as local as it is presently global.

## Laudato Deum chooses life

On the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, 4 October 2023, Pope Francis published *Laudate Deum*, an Apostolic Exhortation building on his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato si’*. **Catherine Gibbs** reflects on the Pope’s letter and draws links to the New Zealand bishops’ recently published *Te Kahu o te Ora – A Consistent Ethic of Life*

‘...with the passage of time, I have realised that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point.’ – Pope Francis (LD 2)

Eight years after publishing *Laudato si’* Pope Francis has sent a sharp and urgent message about the climate crisis. In *Laudato Deum – Praise God*, he provides evidence our planet is in a state of emergency and how our poor attempts to solve the climate crisis are not working.

‘Pope Francis’ conclusion we are making no progress is taking us close to unmanageable risks has scientific support...We have the warmest temperature on earth this year over the past 100,000 years. Our latest science has mapped 16 tipping points for this year already...’ – Johan Rockstrom, Potsdam Institute.

Mistakes have been made in amplifying the solution as individual small sacrifices. The transition away from fossil fuels is happening too slowly. We must act now. We have failed to understand the core message in *Laudato si’* how everything is connected. The 1.5° warming threshold illustrates this. It is not a target. It is a high-risk number and at this degree of warming, we face an existential crisis where environmental collapse impacts health, security, migration,

food, water and more.

In Aotearoa New Zealand a new publication from the Catholic Bishops links closely to this understanding of interconnectedness. *Te Kahu o te Ora – A Consistent Ethic of Life* is grounded in all life as sacred and frames the reign of God ‘in terms of right and just relationships with other persons and the ecological wellbeing of creation’ (p 5). It applies a consistent ethic of life across multiple challenges including the integrity of creation; beginning and end of life issues; poverty; war and peace.

An urgent cry remains for a united humanity that will serve our suffering creation and heal the wounds of our world. We need to connect our head, heart and hands.

- Recognise with our heads the overwhelming scientific evidence of our planet in distress, with oil, gas, and coal [emissions] the root causes of the climate crisis.
- Ask with our hearts are we being good ancestors? Do we centre ourselves in core teachings of care for creation, human dignity and the common good?
- Take courage with our hands and actively work for personal and societal transformation, stepping out and supporting young [climate] activists.

‘A consistent ethic of life mirrors this rich notion of dignity in its central idea that everything is connected’ (p 4 *Te Kahu o te Ora*).

All creation is in tune but we’re out of tune. St Francis of Assisi intuited this relationship with creation recognising all creatures, human and otherwise, as siblings. This is the time to choose life in all its astounding forms.

» *Pope pulls no punches in Laudate Deum, p 20.*



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## Tuākana youth ministers showcase their journeys

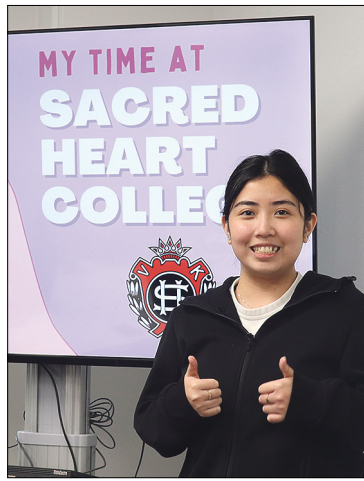
The Archdiocese of Wellington's Tuākana youth ministers recently gave end-of-year presentations to diocesan staff about their journeys throughout the year. The Tuākana have been based at Wellington area Catholic colleges throughout the school year to journey alongside and support students in their faith.

The presentations showcased activities such as facilitating and supporting school retreats, school Masses, events, YAFA, O'Shea Shield, social issues, prayer and religious education studies, and more.

The Tuākana highlighted strengths they brought to their respective roles in response to needs within their school. Timothy Ale set up a boy's support group

that met regularly throughout the year. Nick Meli created a space for students to celebrate their faith through creativity, making art or videos. Sofia Mendoza helped with events organised by students such as the Mission Group. Nia Foliaki, in her second year as a Tuākana, also focused on being present in her schools' extracurricular activities including sport. Their shared experience was 'showing up for students, being present for them, and being real'.

Tuākana applications for 2024 are open with paid part-time opportunities across Wellington and Nelson. Email Louise at [youth@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:youth@wn.catholic.org.nz) for an application form and further information.



Sofia Mendoza talks about her time as a Tuākana at Sacred Heart College, Lower Hutt.

## Give the Gift of Compassion this Christmas

For many, Christmas is a time of joy and happiness. At the Home of Compassion Christmas is a time of reflection and giving thanks for the goals achieved during the year, and to the support of donors and supporters of the sisters' work.

While the sisters' work over the last 12 months has made a positive

difference in the daily lives of many, the need is unrelenting and increasingly challenging. Lack of affordable housing, the increasing cost of living, and poverty continue to plague our community.

Sisters of Compassion has launched a campaign asking the community to 'Give the Gift of

Compassion this Christmas'. Starting 6 November, we will be accepting donations through the Compassion website to provide support for the most vulnerable people in our region this Christmas.

[compassion.org.nz](http://compassion.org.nz)



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## DATES AND EVENTS - WHAT'S ON

To list events free, email [welcom@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:welcom@wn.catholic.org.nz) with event name, date, time, location and contact details.

### Wednesday 1 November

All Saints Day

### Thursday 2 November

All Saints Day - Commemoration Masses for the Dead to remember beloved dead and pray for their eternal repose, include a special joint service between Metropolitan Cathedral of Sacred Heart and Wellington Cathedral of St Paul, 6pm, St Paul's Cathedral. St Paul Cathedral Choir will lead sung worship, to feature MIHA, new setting of Requiem Mass in Latin and Te Reo Māori by Auckland-based composer Takarei Komene.

### Friday 3 November

Meet Interfaith Committee - established 2009 to support NZ bishops' commitment to strengthening relationships between different faiths in New Zealand. Join kōrero about building interfaith relations, 7pm-8pm, Pa Maria, 78 Hobson Street, Thorndon.

### Friday 3-Friday 13 November

Safeguarding workshops - north-west South Island parishes: Holy Family, Our Lady of the Bays, Westport-Reefton parishes.

### Sundays 5 and 12 November

'Love is a Decision' - Sacrament of Marriage preparation course for engaged couples. Email Mely Lau at [marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz) or visit website at [bit.ly/3knqjD8](http://bit.ly/3knqjD8) for information and to register.

### Wednesday 8 November

AI and religion seminar - Wellington Abrahamic Council welcomes all to come and explore the ever-increasing impact of Artificial Intelligence and technology on our religions and

how we adapt in a post-AI age. Hear from three speakers who work professionally in AI and represent the three Abrahamic Faith religions: Dave Moskovitz, Jewish; Petrus Simons, Christian, Harisu Abdullahi Shehu, Muslim. Seminar starts, 7pm, Wellington Progressive Jewish Congregation/Temple Sinai, 147. Entry free or koha, but tickets are mandatory. Please book online at: [events.humanitix.com/artificial-intelligence-and-religion](http://events.humanitix.com/artificial-intelligence-and-religion)

### Friday 10 November

XLT - worship, adoration and reconciliation for youth and young adults, 7pm-9.30pm, St Anne's Newtown, Wellington.

### Sunday 12 November

Order of Deacons - seminarian Matthew White to be ordained a deacon by Archbishop Paul Martin sm, 2pm, St Teresa's Pro-Cathedral, Karori. All invited to Mass to support Matthew.

### Sunday 19 November

World Day of the Poor

### Sunday 26 November

Feast Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. World Youth Day.

> Seek - youth lunch at St Anne's Hall, Newtown, 12.30pm followed by a panel. Opportunity for young people to discern vocations - religious life, married life, a profession. Email or text Lucienne at [l.hensel@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:l.hensel@wn.catholic.org.nz) or 021 164 5800.

> Youth Mass and celebration - Archdiocesan Young Church's final Youth Mass for 2023, 5pm, followed by kai and fellowship. St Anne's, Newtown.

## Volunteer as an EJP Commission member

Are you motivated to contribute to the Church's work for justice and peace inspired and informed by Catholic Social Teaching? The archdiocesan Ecology Justice and Peace Commission and its committees for integral ecology, poverty, and bicultural relationships, invite nominations for 2024 membership. As a member you will help work to promote the Church's social teaching throughout the archdiocese and shine a light on issues of injustice.

The commission's diverse activities include making submissions to Parliament, organising events such as for the Season of Creation, and supporting movements such as the 'Living Wage Movement' and 'Death without Debt'. To learn more please visit [wn.catholic.org.nz/about/commission-for-ecology/](http://wn.catholic.org.nz/about/commission-for-ecology/) or contact Deirdre Meskill at [d.meskill@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:d.meskill@wn.catholic.org.nz) ph 021 2213944 to express your interest to help in 2024.



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# Pope pulls no punches in *Laudate Deum*

Pope Francis has published a new document on the environment. On Wednesday 4 October 2023, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, as the Synod Assembly opened in Rome, Pope Francis published *Laudate Deum*, an Apostolic Exhortation building on his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. The *Laudate Deum* Latin title translates to *Praise God*. Its full title is: *Apostolic Exhortation Laudate Deum of the Holy Father Francis to all people of good will on the climate crisis*.



**‘Our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point.’ – Pope Francis.**

Photo: Vatican Media

## **Laudate Deum: An Overview**

By **Nate Cortas, SJ**, contributing writer to *The Jesuit Post*, 10 October 2023

If *Laudato Si'* was a gentle and pastoral invitation to care for creation, *Laudate Deum* is a visceral, prophetic call to conversion.

Eight years after *Laudato Si'*'s initial publication, Pope Francis once again takes on the looming challenges of the climate crisis that have only worsened. Though this focus has drawn criticism from some Catholic commentators, it is hardly a secular document, but one that recognizes that Christians and the Church have a responsibility to the Earth and all of creation.

*Laudate Deum* addresses people of goodwill, admonishing the human family that has neglected its relationships with creation, one another, and above all, God.

As an apostolic exhortation, it is both shorter and more direct than an encyclical, only about 7,000 words long. This introduction offers readers a guiding overview of Pope Francis's renewed call to repentance and reparation.

### **The Global Climate Crisis**

Pope Francis begins with the facts. The climate's current situation is volatile and headed toward catastrophe, and *Laudate Deum* clearly identifies this reality. “Our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point,” he writes. Pointing to overwhelming scientific evidence that climate change is the result of human activity,

Francis describes how the last 200 years of pollution and extraction have led the world to this crisis point. The disastrous situation is already apparent in deadly natural disasters, collapsing ecosystems, and rising temperatures worldwide. Still, many continue to deny the climate crisis or look the other way in favor of profit and productivity. In the face of that neglect, Pope Francis calls on all to remember the connectedness of everything and that salvation is communal.

### **Critique of the Technocratic Paradigm**

Hard truths in hand, Pope Francis returns to an obstacle he first described in *Laudato Si'*, the technocratic paradigm. Technocracy, as the letter explains, is the belief that goodness and truth come directly from advances in technology and the growth of economic power. In the context of the climate crisis, it provides the illusion that it is possible to invent solutions without examining the underlying spiritual and economic problems that brought the world to this point. Expecting that simply moving from gas cars to electric cars or from beef cattle to lab-grown meat will be enough to resolve the crisis is a misguided assumption. Rather, Pope Francis recalls that the human person is also a part of creation, and cannot be separated from it, no matter how powerful scientific developments become.

Those advancements tell us little about how they are actually to be used, and most often, the question is not “Should it be done?” but only “Is it possible?”

### **Weakness of International Politics**

Governments do little to provide real guidance either, let alone constructive legislation. Pope Francis laments the lack of cooperation between countries to address the climate crisis, even though successful efforts on past international concerns offer a helpful model. The sort of collaboration that *Laudate Deum* envisions instead begins not in the centers of power but in the grassroots. “It is no longer helpful for us to support institutions in order to preserve the rights of the more powerful without caring for those of all,” the letter states explicitly. For too long, the margins have been ignored, the poor and exploited made miserable by the same filthy, rotten system destroying the Earth. Respecting the dignity of each person and the necessity of our common home requires the creation of new global mechanisms of discussion and decision-making.

### **Climate Conferences: Progress and Failures**

The current global mechanisms for addressing the climate crisis are fundamentally toothless. Pope

Francis briefly details the history of the COP meetings, which have been held yearly since 1995. Over the past thirty years, these international conferences have been a source of hope but have yet to result in action or progress. Scientific understanding of the climate crisis continues to grow, and the international accords seemingly reflect this, though in reality, they fall short of implementation. Too often, wealthy and powerful countries put their own interest ahead of the global common good and are not held accountable.

### **What to Expect from COP28 in Dubai?**

The trend of making international promises only for nations to back on them, simply put, must come to an end. The crisis is now too dire to ignore the need for substantial change. Though new technology or scientific advances are important for the short term, the change *Laudate Deum* calls for is much more profound. Our problems are deeper than environmental concerns—they are social and political, concerning everyone. You don't need to be a tree-hugger or a wildlife biologist to care about the future of the planet and our children. COP28 has the opportunity to be the conference that finally recognizes the real depth of the crisis that humanity is facing. It can respond and make real, meaningful strides toward climate justice.

### **Spiritual Motivations**

In this concluding section, Pope Francis offers the image of a community on pilgrimage: United by God to each other and all of creation; we walk a journey of conversion that turns from the sinful degradation of the earth and towards faithfulness to God, the creator of all things. We cannot take God's place. A Christian response to the climate crisis is not about recycling or buying an electric car. Repackaged consumerism will not be enough, though *Laudate Deum* clarifies that wealthy countries like the United States are obligated to renounce extractivism and overconsumption.

“Praise God” is the title of this letter. For when human beings claim to take God's place, they become their own worst enemies.” Pope Francis is inviting the whole church to a renewed vision of community and solidarity, where Catholics are willing to stand alongside their poor and exploited brothers and sisters as prophets of another better world. We are being called to collaborate with Christ's liberating grace active in the world, alive in our hearts, our communities, and our Earth.

*This article was published in The Jesuit Post on 10 October 2023. It has been republished in WelCom with permission.*

Read *Laudate Deum* online at: [tinyurl.com/Laudate-Deum-Praise-God](https://tinyurl.com/Laudate-Deum-Praise-God)



St Peter's Basilica, Vatican City.

Photo: Xavier Coiffic/Unsplash