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



87-year-old Pope praises 'dynamic church'

Pope Francis was received with open arms wherever he went on his recent Apostolic Journey to Southeast Asia and Oceania. It was his longest and most challenging trip ever, taking the 87-year-old pontiff 32,000 kilometres by air to four countries from 2 to 13 September.

He visited the country with the world's largest Muslim population – Indonesia, with about 242 million – and the country with the highest percentage of Catholics outside the Vatican itself – East Timor, with some 98 per cent.

He visited two of the world's poorest countries – Papua New Guinea and East Timor – and one of its richest – Singapore.

Reflecting on the trip back in Rome, the Pope said he was struck by how alive the Church was in Asia and Oceania, describing it as 'missionary and outgoing'. He said he would love to have worked there as a young Jesuit.

The Grand Imam Nasaruddin Umar, left, bids farewell to Pope Francis, as he leaves after signing the 'Joint Declaration of Istiqlal 2024' at the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta, Thursday, 5 September, 2024.

Photo: Gregorio Borgia/AP

➤ Full coverage of the Pope's journey, pp 6-7.

Church leaders renew apology in Royal Commission response

New Zealand's Catholic bishops and leaders of religious congregations have renewed a 'sincere and unconditional apology' to people who suffered abuse in Catholic settings as part of an initial response to a national inquiry.

In late July, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care's final report was published following a five-year examination of abuse in state and faith-based care. Organisations were asked to respond to the report's findings within two months.

In that response, New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference president Bishop Steve Lowe and Congregational Leaders Council of Aotearoa New Zealand president Fr Tom Rouse ssc said the Catholic Church had joined other churches and asked to be included in the terms of reference of the Royal Commission, which initially would have looked only at state care.

'We believed it would help not only the Church, but also our country, address these

difficult truths in a more comprehensive way,' Bishop Lowe and Fr Rouse wrote.

'While the report chronicles a disgraceful aspect of our nation's past, it also provides us with a roadmap – continuing the work begun before the Royal Commission and extending into our future.'

The Catholic leaders said they are 'deeply sorry' to victims and survivors, as well as their whānau.

'We know that words alone are not enough; we must demonstrate our apology by taking responsibility and through concrete actions,' they wrote.

'We have made changes, and we remain committed to continuing this work to ensure accountability and healing.'

The Church's response focuses on 11 key sections of the final report that relate to the Catholic Church specifically or to faith-based institutions generally. The majority have been accepted, with some being accepted in part.



Congregational Leaders' Conference Aotearoa New Zealand



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

In coming months, the Church will continue its assessment of the final report, and especially those aspects that are specific to the Catholic Church. A response to the report's recommendations will follow in due course.

'These formal documents are being prepared and published at the same time work is continuing in our dioceses, parishes, schools, social service agencies, chaplaincies and other communities to strengthen our safeguarding initiatives,' Fr Rouse and Bishop Lowe wrote.

They said a series of commitments published in January 2023 provide important additional context to the Church's ongoing promises to the community in responding

to historical cases and in creating and maintaining safe settings for all people.

'We accept the important and particular responsibility the Church has at this time. We want to be part of a wider, whole-of-community promise to use the Royal Commission's findings as a catalyst for change,' Bishop Lowe and Fr Rouse wrote.

'May each of us, in our own context, join a national movement that not only says – but actively ensures – that this tragic past will never be repeated, working together to achieve a future free from such harm.'

The Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission's findings can be found at: bit.ly/CatholicRCFindings

From the editor

Annette Scullion

Tēnā koutou.

Greetings.

Last month Pope Francis undertook his 45th apostolic journey, which took him to Southeast Asia and Oceania over the course of nearly two weeks. During his 11-day journey – the longest trip of his papacy to date – the 87-year-old pontiff visited Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste (East Timor), and Singapore, from 2 to 13 September.

The Pope first landed in Jakarta, Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, to promote religious harmony and interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims in the country. We feature on our cover page a touching and historic image of the fond farewell to Pope Francis from the Grand Imam Nasaruddin Umar, after their signing of the 'Joint Declaration of Istiqlal 2024'.

The Declaration focuses on shared concerns and faith-based resolutions about two serious world crises: dehumanisation and climate change. It was signed during the Interreligious Meeting at the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta – the largest mosque in Southeast Asia, which is located directly opposite the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption.

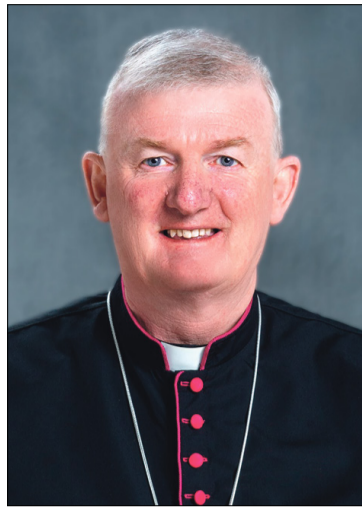
Pope Francis continued his journey meeting with religious and civic leaders and thousands of Catholics young and old wherever he went. We present highlights from his historic, colourful and out-reaching journey of faith on pp 6 and 7.

This month Archbishop Paul Martin sm, Fr Dennis Nacorda and Manuel Beazley journey in the opposite direction from New Zealand to Rome to attend the second and final session of the Synod on Synodality. Archbishop Paul will represent our bishops and Dennis and Manuel will represent the people of this country during this important and historic four-week synodal meeting for the Catholic Church.

On a Facebook video message posted before he left New Zealand, Archbishop Paul asks us to pray for him and his fellow Synod members at this time. 'It's a real privilege to be going to the Synod, but also a deep responsibility, so I would really ask that you pray for us, pray for our stamina – four weeks is a long time – pray that the Holy Spirit will move in our hearts and all who gather for the Church as a whole. This is a significant moment in the life of the Church and your prayers for us, for all who gather and for our Church, are really important at this time.'

Ngā mihi

Truly listening to others



Bishop John Adams
Catholic Bishop of
Palmerston North

I write this editorial comment to you from Rome [in September] where, along with Bishop Richard Laurenson of Hamilton, I am attending a course for new bishops.

New Zealand, still considered a missionary country, is under the care of the Dicastery for Evangelisation. Consequently, new bishops from New Zealand gather with other missionary countries from around the world for this programme.

There are 114 of us here in Rome, many bishops from Africa are with us, and many bishops from India also. In my small group I have brother bishops from India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Taiwan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. As you might imagine this makes for very interesting conversations, and, although our pastoral realities differ, similar themes have begun to emerge.

One common theme that unites us as bishops from all around the world is the almost unanimous

collapse of authentic community within our countries. Although this collapse is happening at different rates around the globe, the Church universal seems under attack from a relentless global drive for individualism, the rise of the 'sovereignty of the self' and the decline of 'space' for the other.

The symptoms of this malaise result in a collective lack of purpose, and a collective lack of purpose leads to the phenomenon which we witness all too regularly of people 'speaking past each other'. The increasingly sectarian environment of world politics is surely an example of this decline. So, with our own politicians here in New Zealand surely heading in this direction we might ask ourselves what response might our Christian communities make, or more specifically, what course of action can we expect from our own Catholic Church?

This very question was discussed by the new bishops as part of a presentation by Cardinal Michael Czerny sj the head of the Roman Dicastery for Human Development. He reminded us that a Catholic community is always required to act with honesty, humility, faith and spirituality. If we do not act in this way, there is not much we can contribute to promote real reconciliation in our society. We may appear to be making limited progress now and then; however, chances are the pathways we propose won't lead anywhere, and we run the risk of prolonging or even aggravating divisions and conflicts. If we fail to embrace the utterly 'other', the other who needs us, then ultimately, we are serving a specific or exclusive outlook, which in the end is a perversion of true Catholicism.

This does not mean we take up

positions of absolute indifference to our Catholic heritage, but it does mean we never tire listening to the voice of the other. Again, this is not to ignore what divides us but rather to confront what divides us with open hearts in order that true dialogue might begin. Yes, even if this act of listening opens us to ridicule and the charge of betraying the clear truths of our faith, we should take that risk. There is a golden rule at stake here – we ought to listen to the other to the extent that we wish to be listened to by them. It's only when we proceed in this manner that our response can really be an anointed one.

The cohesive moral image that was once led and championed by the Church, is still powerful today. What is absent are opportunities to enter into true and meaningful conversation about it. In the absence of these opportunities, it is over to us to instigate occasions for plain speaking by firstly going to places of division with the intent of truly listening. Its then, and only then, that we may enter into honest and patient negotiation. Sheer diplomacy and our natural and social intelligence are not enough – we will always require the reliable action of the Holy Spirit to allow us to be agents to conversion. What a joy it is when we witness the healing of division and conflict in ways never dreamt of by either party.

Let us not lose sight of the hope of our Lord Jesus himself when he uttered these words in John's Gospel:

'I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one – as you are in me Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.' – John 19:21

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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

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Member of Australasian Catholic Press Association (ACPA).

As part of the global Catholic Church, WelCom sources a range of news, articles and opinions from local, national and international sources. Views and opinions published are those of the author and don't necessarily reflect the policy or position of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand.

NZ's 'baby bishops' attend bishops' school in Rome

Two New Zealand bishops, Richard Laurenson and John Adams, attended the Baby Bishops course in Rome, a formation programme for newly ordained bishops. The event ran from 15 to 22 September and gathered 267 new bishops from all over the world for training, reflection and dialogue on their roles within the Church.

The course also offers newly appointed bishops a chance to connect with Church leaders from around the globe. The New Zealand bishops reported they also took the opportunity to meet Australia's newest bishop and the head of Opus Dei.

The week included joint working sessions, promoting collaboration between bishops from the Dicastery for Evangelisation and the Dicastery for Bishops.

The course includes a wide range of topics, from peace and conflict resolution to fostering family life. Dr Linda Ghisoni and Dr Gabriella Gambino, both undersecretaries for the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, spoke about the importance of nurturing



Newly ordained bishops are received by Pope Francis. Photo: Vatican Media

marriage within the Church.

They also highlighted the rise of new communities within the faith.

In a session on peace and conflict, Cardinal Michael Czerny sj led a reflection on Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, which calls for global unity and the healing of divisions. The bishops were urged to consider their role in contributing to reconciliation and peace within their communities.

As part of the week's activities, bishops attending the Dicastery for Bishops' course met Pope Francis on 19 September, while those from

the Dicastery for Evangelisation had an audience on 21 September.

The study seminars, which began in 1994 for bishops in missionary areas, provide new bishops in mission territories with essential insights into their offices through lectures, prayer and dialogue. They also foster collegiality and mutual understanding among bishops from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Sources: *Fides*; NZCBC; *CathNewsNZ*

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Human dignity the focus for Support Life Sunday 2024

Catholics are being encouraged to reflect on the infinite dignity of every person as the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand marks Support Life Sunday on 13 October.

Each year, the Catholic Church chooses a key theme for Support Life Sunday. The Vatican's document *Dignitas Infinita* (On Human Dignity) is the focus for 2024.

Published earlier this year by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dignitas Infinita* reaffirms 'the indispensable nature of the dignity of the human person in Christian anthropology.'

After developing the concept of human dignity, the document reflects on what this means for individual human rights and how this impacts on our freedom in the moral and social spheres.

It then highlights some ways in which that dignity can be violated, including through poverty, war, human trafficking, sexual abuse, abortion and euthanasia.

'Support Life Sunday offers us a chance to dedicate our prayers, our thoughts and our actions towards an issue of significance,' said Bishop Steve Lowe, president of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference.

'The intrinsic dignity of the human person is central to the



Catholic understanding of our world, and being ready and willing to identify and condemn violations of human dignity is part of our Christian calling.'

The resources prepared for Support Life Sunday by the New Zealand Catholic Bioethics Centre – the Nathaniel Centre – pick up on that principle with the tagline: 'Every person matters... always! He mea nui te ora o ngā tāngata katoa... i ngā wā katoa!'

Drawing from *Dignitas Infinita*, the Catholic understanding of each person's value and worth 'calls us to work tirelessly for justice for

the weak and needy, the poor and afflicted, the vulnerable, the most insignificant, the marginalised and those downtrodden by the powerful,' said Dr John Kleinsman, director of the Nathaniel Centre.

Bishop Lowe said the Church's invitation – and its challenge – to focus on human dignity is enduring, not limited to a single Sunday.

'We see Support Life Sunday as an opportunity to reaffirm a central and ubiquitous teaching of the Church and we hope it can be imprinted in our hearts and our minds as a daily calling,' he said.

'We also hope this day of reflection might encourage more people to read the document in full. Parishes might like to establish a study group to undertake that task.'

Resources, including prayers, social media graphics and slides, can be found at: bit.ly/SupportLife2024

Source: NZCBC

>> *Support Life Sunday: 13 October 2024, p 14–p 15; How does the Declaration on Human Dignity apply in Aotearoa New Zealand? p 16.*

Prayer for Life Support Life Sunday 2024

Lord, you call us, your pilgrim people, to be people of life and for life; to journey in confidence towards "a new heaven and a new earth" that is characterised by a commitment to the infinite dignity of every person.

Lord, look down upon the vast numbers of those whose human dignity is daily being violated by war, poverty, exploitation, physical and emotional violence, premature death, abuse, prejudice and neglect.

Grant that we who believe in you may proclaim the Gospel of life in what we think, say and do.

Obtain for us the grace to accept the Gospel as a gift ever new, the joy of celebrating it with gratitude, and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely so as to build, together with all people of good will, a world of justice, mercy, truth, compassion and love.

To the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of all life.

Inspired by and drawn from: *Evangelium Vitae - The Gospel of Life* (Pope St John Paul II, 1995); and *Dignitas Infinita* (Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2024).

Archdiocesan seminarian ordained to the diaconate

John the Baptist Kinh van Nguyen, one of the Archdiocese of Wellington's seminarians, was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons on Friday 6 September by Archbishop Paul Martin sm, at Sacred Heart Church, Ponsonby, in Auckland.

Kinh Nguyen came from the Diocese of Vinh in Vietnam to New Zealand almost six years ago. In 2019, he was admitted to be a seminarian for the Archdiocese by Cardinal John Dew.

At his ordination, Kinh spoke words of gratitude in Vietnamese and in English, beginning by acknowledging the 'unfathomable love of God'. He said 'God called and chose me to be a servant of His people because of his love for me. For this, I will praise and glorify His name forever and ever.'

Kinh thanked Archbishop Paul 'for putting your trust in me and so ordaining me to this Order of Service'. He also thanked Cardinal John for admitting him to be a seminarian for the Archdiocese.

Kinh went on to acknowledge his parents, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces for their 'unconditional love and constant support' throughout his life, and

especially their accompaniment on his vocation journey. 'Though you are not able to be here physically, I know your hearts are always with me, especially on this important

day of my life.'

To staff at Holy Cross Seminary and Catholic Theological College, Kinh said, 'It is you who have provided me with the foundational

stone upon which I am going to build my life as a servant of God and God's people.' He also thanked his fellow seminarians for their brotherhood over the last six years.

Kinh paid special tribute to Vietnamese Choir and the Samoan Choir of Sacred Heart Parish and those who prepared the liturgy for 'making this celebration beautiful and solemn,' and he acknowledged the people of the land, especially the clergies and the people of the Archdiocese of Wellington, for their support and unending prayers.

'I also acknowledge today the love I have received since my arrival in this land from the Vietnamese

communities around the country, especially from my Vietnamese brothers, and the Vietnamese people in Wellington and Auckland.'

King concluded by thanking everyone who came to support him on his important day.

Please continue to keep Kinh in your prayers as he continues his formation at the seminary until the end of this year in his journey towards the priesthood.

You can read about Kinh's vocational journey from Vietnam to Wellington at: tinyurl.com/Kinh-Nguyen-Journey on the Archdiocese website.



Deacon Kinh Van Nguyen with Archbishop Paul following his ordination to the diaconate at Sacred Heart Church Ponsonby, 6 September 2024.

Photo: Supplied



St Patrick's College Wellington

New Zealand's oldest Catholic boys' college

St Patrick's College Leavers Mass will be held on Wednesday 30 October at 10.30am in the O'Shea Performing Arts Centre, and Senior Prizegiving will be held on Thursday 31 October at 7.30pm. Parents, caregivers and whānau are most welcome to attend both events.

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Catholic bishops pray for soul of Māori King

The Māori King, Tuheitia Paki, crowned Te Arikini Kiingi Tuheitia, died on 30 August 2024, at age 69. His death came just nine days after he celebrated his 18th anniversary as king of the Kiingitanga, or Māori king movement, established in 1858 to unite the Māori tribes.

Thousands gathered in Turangawaewae marae, south of Auckland, to pay their respects to the late king following a week-long period of mourning.

Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII was farewelled as the new Māori monarch was ushered in, on 5 September.

The Te Whakawahinga (raising up) ceremony for Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII's successor and for the funeral service, took place on the last day of the tangi.



Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII, 1995–2024, Rest in Peace.

Photo: Source/Far North District Council

The formal ceremony began at 10am, when the Tekau-maa-rua (the Kiingitanga advisory council) ushered the new Māori monarch to the throne.

Te Whakawahinga ceremony was followed by the funeral service for Kiingi Tuheitia.

A special waka carried the king along Waikato River before his burial alongside his tupuna at



Kiiini Te Puhī Ariki Ngawai Hono i te Po Paki has been chosen to succeed Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII. At 27-years of age, Ngawai Hono i te Po is the second youngest monarch to lead the Māori people. She was the youngest and only daughter of Kiingi Tuheitia.

Photo: Courtesy of Kiingitanga

the top of his ancestral at Taupiri Maunga.

Kiingi Tuheitia is survived by his wife Te Atawhai and their two sons

Whatumoana and Korotangi and daughter, Ngā Wai hono i te po Paki.

King Tuheitia's daughter and youngest child, Ngā Wai Hono i te Pō, was announced by the Tekau-ma-Rua as the next monarch. She is the second queen of the Kiingitanga, after her grandmother Te Arikini Dame Te Atairangikaahu, and is a baptised Catholic.

Hamilton bishop Richard Laurenson expressed his sadness over the passing of King Tuheitia.

On behalf of the Catholic bishops of Aotearoa, New Zealand, Bishop Laurenson extended his sympathies to the king's family and assured the family of the bishops' prayers for the repose of the King's soul.

Bishop Laurenson was invited to attend the celebrations for the Maori King's 18th anniversary as king of the Kiingitanga held in August.

He described that occasion as

one of 'great joy and celebration'.

'I was privileged to be asked to lead off the day of prayer for King Tuheitia and the Kingitanga,' Bishop Laurenson stated, as reported by the NZCBC.

Sources: NZCBC; CathNewsNZ; RNZ

E te Ariki, Ka inoi nei mātou tukua mai ki tāu pononga ki a Kingi Tuheitia, kia whiti atu ai ia ki te Kāinga o te māramatanga me te rangimarie. Ma te Karaiti to mātou Ariki. Amene

O Lord, we pray, grant that your Servant King Tuheitia may pass over to a dwelling place of light and peace, Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Church leaders want Treaty Principles Bill voted down

More than 400 church leaders have signed an open letter to MPs calling on them to vote down David Seymour's Treaty Principles Bill at its first reading.

The 440 senior leaders from Catholic, Anglican, Salvation Army, Baptist and Methodist denominations, under the 'Common Grace' umbrella, expressed their views in the open letter sent to MPs last month.

The Cabinet saw a draft version of David Seymour's controversial bill for the first time on 9 September.

The ACT leader's bill will go to a first reading in November – negotiated as part of the coalition Government's agreement – and, if supported, will be sent to a select committee for discussion.

As part of their coalition agreement with ACT, National and NZ First said they would not support the bill beyond the first reading.

However, as a matter of process, the Church leaders who signed the



Act leader David Seymour at the Treaty Grounds ahead of Waitangi Day.

Photo: Michael Cunningham

letter want National or NZ First to break their coalition agreement and vote down the bill at the first reading.

A range of Catholic individuals featured in the letter's 400-plus list of signatories.

Bishops Michael Dooley, Steve Lowe and Archbishop Paul Martin from the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference signed the letter.

While other Catholic leaders

including sisters, priests and emeritus bishops supported the initiative, *CathNews* learned from some signatories they had neither seen a draft of the Treaty Principles Bill nor were conversant with the content of the open letter.

Responding to the open letter sent to MPs on 9 September, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon says he supports the Christian leaders in expressing their views; however, he had not yet seen a full draft of the ACT's Treaty Principles Bill.

The open letter outlines concerns the Christian group leaders have should the bill advance past its first reading and how it will drive more divisiveness within Aotearoa.

The letter states: 'As Christian leaders from across Aotearoa New Zealand we express our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We affirm that Te Tiriti o Waitangi protects the Tino Rangatiratanga of hapū and iwi. That rangatiratanga over land and taonga is to be upheld.

'We therefore express our opposition to the proposed Treaty Principles Bill.

'The proposed bill is inconsistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi in that it does not recognise the collective rights of iwi Māori or guarantee their relationship with the Crown. It would undermine what Te Tiriti guarantees, and what decades of law, jurisprudence and policy have sought to recognise.

'We call on all Members of Parliament to do everything in their power to not take this bill to select committee and to work towards the ongoing restoration of the Tiriti relationship,' the letter said.

David Seymour is not pleased with church involvement in his political plans, saying the churches do not own New Zealanders' moral compass.

He said it wasn't the first time churches had tried to interfere in democracy, citing the End of Life Choice Act as an example.

His coalition partners, National

and NZ First, say they won't support the bill past a first reading. They reiterated their stance in August at the late Kingi Tuheitia's 18th coronation celebrations at Turangawaewae.

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon stressed this remained the case when the Common Grace letter was published in August.

Labour and the Greens have congratulated the Christian leaders for condemning the Treaty Principles Bill.

Susan Healy of Common Grace said the organisation had many MPs from parties across the spectrum emailing their thanks for the letter and that they are considering seriously the content of it, including the Prime Minister's office.

The letter can be read online at: tinyurl.com/Open-Letter-Christian-Leaders

Source: *CathNewsNZ*; *NZ Herald*; *Common Grace*

Mary Potter Hospice wins Supreme at 20th anniversary of Community Awards

Mary Potter Hospice has been recognised for its decades of dedicated mahi and specialist care with the Supreme Award at the 2024 Wellington Airport Regional Community Awards for Wellington City. The awards were announced at an event at the National Library on 31 July.

Every year since 2004, Wellington Airport and the five local Councils come together for the awards to

recognise outstanding mahi and celebrate hundreds of volunteers for their valuable contribution to the community. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the awards.

This year's five categories covered contributions to Arts and Culture, Education and Child/Youth Development, Health and Wellbeing, Heritage and Environment, Sport and Leisure, and the Rising Star Award, with

Mary Potter Hospice winning both the Health and Wellbeing category and overall Supreme Award.

Mary Potter Hospice was established in 1979 in Newtown by the Little Company of Mary Catholic Sisters, with a commitment to make hospice services available to all patients.

In 1988, Mary Potter Hospice was gifted to the people of Wellington as an independent non-



Katerina, Mary Potter Hospice Volunteer Engagement Adviser; Wellington Mayor Tory Whanau; Ross, Mary Potter Hospice Director Funding, Marketing and Communications.

sectarian charitable trust, the Mary Potter Hospice Foundation.

The Supreme winner and the five category award winners all go on to represent Wellington in the Regional Awards on 21 November 2024.

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Vatican approves devotion at Medjugorje

In a highly anticipated report on the alleged decades-long apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Medjugorje, the Vatican's doctrinal office has endorsed prudent devotion to Mary at the popular pilgrimage site in Bosnia and Herzegovina but has withheld any declaration on whether the alleged visions are supernatural in origin.

The Note from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF), approved by Pope Francis, grants a *nihil obstat* to the spiritual experience at Medjugorje. The authoritative judgment means pilgrims may continue to visit and pray at the site, as some 40 million people from around the world have done since the apparitions allegedly first began 43 years ago.

Six children, who are now middle-aged, first reported experiencing visions of the Blessed Mother, originally on a hilltop near the rural village of Medjugorje, on 24 June 1981. The Vatican's report notes the remote site, formerly part of Yugoslavia, is now widely 'perceived as a space of great peace, recollection, and a piety that is sincere, deep, and easily shared.'

While it offers no definitive judgement on the supernatural



Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith at a press Conference on Medjugorje, 19 September 2024.

Photo: Daniel Ibanez/CNA

authenticity of the alleged apparitions, the Vatican's report highlights the abundant good fruits that have come from Medjugorje.

'The positive fruits are most evident in the promotion of a healthy practice of a life of faith, in accordance with the tradition of the Church,' the report states.

It points to 'abundant conversions, a frequent return to

the sacraments – particularly, the Eucharist and reconciliation – many vocations to priestly, religious, and married life, a deepening of the life of faith, a more intense practice of prayer, many reconciliations between spouses, and the renewal of marriage and family life.'

Source: Catholic News Agency

Action needed on 'modern slavery' says Stella Maris

After a television documentary accused a Scottish fishing company of modern-day slavery, a Catholic charity is calling on Britain's Home Office to do more to protect people in the fishing industry.

The BBC One Scotland aired a documentary accusing the TN Trawlers fishing company of modern-day slavery and people trafficking.

Several former TN Trawlers workers were interviewed for the documentary *Slavery at Sea*, which claimed between 2012 and 2020, the UK Home Office officially recognised 35 individuals from the Philippines, Ghana, India, and Sri Lanka as victims of modern slavery after their cases were referred for review.

These workers had been employed by TN Trawlers, headquartered in Annan, a small town on Scotland's southern coast. The BBC said the three-year investigation 'uncover allegations of modern slavery aboard UK fishing vessels.'

The TN Group has consistently denied any accusations of modern



The Scottish TN Trawlers fishing company have been accused of modern-day slavery.

Photo: James Boardman/Alamy

slavery or human trafficking.

UK-based Catholic maritime welfare charity Stella Maris is calling on the UK Home Office to work to protect maritime employees.

Stella Maris chief Tim Hill said the charity has been supporting people in the fishing industry who are caught up in slavery and labour exploitation for over 10 years.

He said while the vast majority of fishing companies treated their employees well, those victims identified were invariably from

developing countries and were suffering at the hands of a minority of unscrupulous employers.

'This is an invisible crime, taking place out of sight at sea,' Mr Hill said.

'The authorities and welfare organisations must get better at recognising what modern-day slavery is, reporting it and supporting swift criminal prosecutions against those few bad operators.'

Source: Crux

'They are not eating our pets'

Religious leaders in Springfield, Ohio gathered in September to denounce false claims that Haitian migrants in the area were 'eating pets.'

Rev Carl Ruby of Central Christian Church addressed the issue directly during a service, declaring 'Haitians are not eating pets in Springfield.' His remarks came after former President Donald Trump made the unfounded, sensational claim during a presidential debate.

The allegation has since gained traction online and caused unrest in the community.

Jesus said that He is the way, the truth and the life. Jesus is with us in truth. And the truth is that Haitians are not eating pets in Springfield' said Ruby, gripping the pulpit as he spoke.

Over the past decade, the city has seen an influx of up to 20,000 Haitian migrants who have arrived seeking employment and stability. Local faith communities have played a key role in supporting these new residents.

Rev Ruby appealed to Trump to retract his statements and urged hate groups to leave the city.

The atmosphere in Springfield has been tense following Trump's comments. Local schools, hospitals

and government offices have faced bomb threats, forcing closures.

Additionally, flyers from a white supremacist group known as the Trinity White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan were circulated, calling for the removal of Haitians from the area.

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio, which provides migrant services, has also been affected. Tony Stieritz, the charity's chief executive, revealed they had received verbal and written attacks.

Sources: Religion News Service, NBC News

St Teresa of Avila's body remains incorrupt

The body of St Teresa of Ávila, a doctor of the Church, remains incorrupt after her death more than 400 years ago on 4 October, 1582. The postulator general of the Discalced Carmelite Order, Fr Marco Chiesa said, 'today the tomb of St Teresa was opened and we have verified that it is in the same condition as when it was last opened in 1914.' The remains of the revered Spanish saint rest at the Carmelite Monastery of Alba de Tormes.

Sydney to host 2028 Eucharistic Congress

The Vatican has announced that Sydney will host the 54th International Eucharistic Congress in 2028. Held every four years, the congress is expected to draw tens of thousands of faithful Catholics from across the globe. Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher op said that this will be the largest gathering held on Australian shores since World Youth Day 2008.

Jubilee 2025 events revealed

As preparations ramp up for the highly anticipated Jubilee Year 2025, the first 26 major events have been revealed on the official Jubilee website iubilaeum2025.va/en.html. The Jubilee's central theme is one of unity, renewal, and spiritual reflection, offering pilgrims worldwide the opportunity to deepen their faith through a series of carefully curated events.

Ireland's small rise in vocations

Priestly vocations in Ireland are experiencing a modest yet significant development, with a slight uptick in the number of men answering the call to priesthood. This trend is being hailed as a hopeful sign. At present, at least 26 seminarians from dioceses in Northern Ireland are studying to become Catholic priests.

Focus on Papal Nuncio role

A study group has been set up to evaluate the functioning and role of Apostolic Nuncios, the papal Representatives in the Church worldwide. The study group, set up at the direction of Pope Francis, will make suggestions to improve their functioning, so that they become more missionary and synodal. Involved in the study will be officials of the Secretariat of State, the Dicastery for Bishops, and the Dicastery for the Evangelization of Peoples.

Pope to visit Turkey

Next May, Pope Francis will undertake a significant trip to Turkey, an event that promises to be both ecumenical as well as politically relevant. This journey, announced by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I, will commemorate the 1700 years of the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, held in 325 in present-day Iznik, Turkey.

WYD 2027 'courage, inter-religious dialogue'


The first World Youth Day to be hosted in a country where Christians are a minority will seek to instil young people with the courage to share the Gospel while fostering inter-religious dialogue. World Youth Day 2027 is to be hosted in Seoul, South Korea.

Cardinal Kevin J Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life said the challenges young people face today – a loss of purpose, climate change, the digital revolution and economic inequality – 'will stimulate young people to

make their personal contribution so contemporary culture may be permeated and transformed by the Gospel, with its power, light and freshness.'

And in Asia, a continent 'receptive to the coexistence of cultures, dialogue and complementarity', the cardinal said young pilgrims will advance 'on their path of learning to become messengers of peace in the world so torn by conflict and confrontation.'

Source: CNS



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Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Singapore

2-13 September 2024

Church still too Eurocentric, says Pope

The Catholic Church is 'more alive' outside of Europe, Pope Francis said as he reflected on his recent apostolic journey to Southeast Asia and Oceania.

'A first reflection that comes spontaneously after this trip is that in thinking about the Church we are still too Eurocentric, or, as they say, "Western"; the Pope said in St Peter's Square.

'But in reality, the Church is much bigger, much bigger than Rome and Europe...and may I say much more alive in these countries,' he added.

In his first general audience after his trip, the Pope expressed

gratitude to God for his experiences in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, and Singapore.

'I thank the Lord who allowed me to do as an elderly Pope what I would have liked to do as a young Jesuit,' Pope Francis said.

The Pope, who turns 88 in December, expressed his enthusiasm for the 'missionary, outgoing Church' he encountered on his visit to the four island nations in Asia and Oceania.

Pope Francis underlined to the crowd that an 'apostolic journey' is much different from tourism because 'it is a journey to bring the Word of God, to make the Lord



known, and also to know the soul of the people.'

Source: CNA

People pray during a Sunday Mass ahead of Pope Francis' visit to East Timor, at a church in Dili, Sunday, 8 September 2024.

Photo: Dita Alangkara/AP



Pope Francis interacts with the young people of Scholas Occurrentes at Grha Pemuda Youth Centre in Jakarta, Indonesia, Wednesday 4 September 2024.

Photo: Tatan Syuflana/AP

Urgent need for 'religious harmony'

'Be builders of hope,' Pope Francis told the over 100,000 Indonesian faithful at his final Mass in Jakarta's main stadium, as his three-day visit to Indonesia came to an end.

'Guided by the word of the Lord,' he said, 'I encourage you to sow seeds of love, confidently tread the path of dialogue, continue to show your goodness and kindness...and be builders of unity and peace.'

His appeal to foster fraternity in a divided and shattered world resonated loudly in this pluralistic and diverse nation of many islands, languages, and creeds.

It's an overwhelmingly Muslim nation, proud of its tradition of tolerance and cohabitation, a nation that sought and found a friend and an ally in Pope Francis.

Earlier in the day the Pope signed a joint declaration with the Grand Imam of Istiqlal Mosque, the largest in Southeast Asia, in which together they called for religious harmony for the sake of humanity and of creation.

The urgent need to foster and nurture Human Fraternity, the main leitmotif of the entire visit, permeated that ceremony in more ways than one when Pope Francis and the Imam stepped into the famous 'Tunnel of Friendship' that connects the Catholic Cathedral and the Mosque, both physically and symbolically.

'We all have a role to play in helping everyone pass through the tunnels of life with our eyes turned toward the light,' he said.

Perhaps the most luminous light of the day shone during his visit to a group of disabled persons waiting to welcome him at the nearby offices of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference. The Pope slowly wheeled his wheelchair up and down the aisles, stopping to greet every single boy, girl, man and woman with a touch, a hug, an exchange of closeness and compassion.

The Holy Father was farewelled at Jakarta's International Airport by Indonesia's Minister for Religious Affairs and representatives of the civil and religious society, including the Cardinal Archbishop of Jakarta, Ignatius Suharyo Hardjoatmodjo.

Pope travels to remote jungles of Papua New Guinea

In the remote coastal town of Vanimo on the northwest edge of Papua New Guinea, Catholics often wait weeks or months for a priest to visit.

Except on Sunday, 8 September, when Pope Francis, carried by an Australian Air Force plane, landed on the edge of the jungle to go where no Pope has ever visited to convey a heartfelt message to its nascent Catholic community: 'You are doing something beautiful, and it is important that you are not left alone.'

Catholicism first arrived here in Papua New Guinea in the middle of the 19th century but only reached this pocket of the country some 50 years ago. With a population of just over 11,000, some Catholics reported walking for several days to reach the meeting with the Pope.

Pope Francis spoke candidly

about the hardships faced by the people there and the efforts by the country's Catholics to 'put an end to destructive behaviours such as violence, infidelity, exploitation, alcohol and drug abuse, evils which imprison and take away the happiness of so many of our brothers and sisters.'

'Let us remember that love is stronger than all this and its beauty can heal the world, because it has its roots in God,' he told the crowd of an estimated 20,000 locals.

Throughout his three-day visit here, the Pope acknowledged the difficulties the country faced, but repeatedly praised the country's diversity – home to over 600 tribes and more than 800 languages – and appealed to their shared Christian roots to encourage them to work together for the common good.



Pope Francis wears a traditional hat during a meeting with faithful in Vanimo, Papua New Guinea, Sunday 8 September, 2024.

Photo: Georgio Borgia/AP

Faith Fraternity Unity Hope Compassion



Pope's Mass attracts nearly half the population of Timor-Leste

Some 600,000 Catholics in Timor-Leste, almost half the population of the country, attended the Mass celebrated by Pope Francis on Tuesday 10 September, at a park in Tasitolu, the coastal plain five miles outside Dili, the capital city. It was the crowning point of his two-day sojourn in the most Catholic country in Asia that drew enthusiastic crowds.

Pope John Paul II celebrated Mass at this site in 1989 but for a much smaller crowd and surrounded by military forces, as the country was then under Indonesian occupation.

Pope Francis, on the other hand, came to what was the first independent state founded in the 21st century. In his homily, Pope Francis told the people, 'We are

called to open ourselves to the Father's love' and 'to let ourselves be fashioned by him, so that he may heal our wounds, reconcile our differences and reorder our lives to create a new foundation for every aspect of our personal and communal life.'

The crowd listened to the homily in near-total silence. At the end of Mass, however, the crowd roared

when Francis went off script, saying: 'I have been thinking: What is the best thing that Timor has? Is it sandalwood? Is it fishing? No, this is not the best. The best is its people! I cannot forget the people on the side of the roads with children. How many children this nation has! The best thing this people has is the smile of its children. A people that teaches its children to smile is a

people with a future.' The Pope's visit to Timor-Leste included an address to representatives of civil society and the diplomatic corps during which he hailed the 'assiduous efforts' they are making at reconciliation with their 'brothers and sisters in Indonesia' and praised their fidelity to the Catholic faith throughout the long years of struggle for freedom.



East Timorese crowd at Tasitolu park for Pope Francis' Mass in Dili, East Timor, Tuesday, 10 September 2024. Photo: Firdia Lisnawati/AP



Pope Francis consoles a person during a visit at the 'Irmãs ALMA' (Sisters of the Association of Lay Missionaries) School for Children with Disabilities in Dili, East Timor, Tuesday, 10 September 2024. Photo: Gregorio Borgias/AP

All religions are paths to God

At an inter-religious dialogue with young people in Singapore, Pope Francis said that all religions are paths to reach God.

'They are – to make a comparison – like different languages, different dialects, to get there. But God is God for everyone. God is God for all, and if God is God for all then we are all sons and daughters of God.'

Some 600 participants from more than 50 schools and interfaith and religious organisations attended the event. The Pope urged the young people of various faiths to commit themselves to unity and hope.

The Holy Father was greeted with testimonies of a young Hindu, Sikh, and Catholic. He encouraged their personal faith journeys, but appealed for them to walk together and toward the common good.

During his visit to Singapore the Pope commented on the city-

state's transformation from its 'humble origins' and commended its 'unwavering commitment to carry out projects and initiatives' that have helped it develop. He also thanked Singapore for its commitment to environmental sustainability.

However, the Pope also warned against the risk of placing 'pragmatism or merit above all things,' which, he said, may inadvertently lead to the exclusion of the marginalised. In this regard, he stressed the importance of remembering the poor and the elderly, and of protecting the dignity of migrant workers. 'These migrants contribute a great deal to society and should be guaranteed a fair wage,' he said.



Faithful wait in the Singapore SportsHub National Stadium, where Pope Francis presided over a Mass, 12 September 2024. Photo: Vincent Thian/AP

'Oak Jubilee' for centenarian sister

Anne Phibbs csb

Sr Helena Fouhy csb was first professed as a Brigidine Sister on 8 September 1944 in the Randwick Novitiate, Sydney. So on 8 September 2024, the 80th anniversary of her profession, she was offered congratulations on her historic day.

It was a momentous occasion for Sr Helena as the first New Zealand Brigidine to reach 100 years of age and the first to celebrate 80 years of profession as a Brigidine.

Mons Brian Walsh assisted by Bishop Owen Dolan – who have both been good friends to Sr Helena over many years – celebrated a Jubilee Mass for her.

During the homily Sr Helena told of the dangerous crossing of the Tasman Sea in 1942 when submarines had been sighted, and the eventual docking of their ship in Melbourne instead of Sydney. It was

a long way from Marima, Pahiatua, where she was brought up.

Among the many assembled to honour Sr Helena were 40 or more of her nieces and nephews, residents of Palmerston North Metlifecare Retirement Village where Sr Helena now lives, and Brigidine Sisters including Sr Maree Marsh who had flown in to Palmerston North from Sydney for the occasion. Sr Maree represented the leadership team of the Southern Cross Community – an amalgamation of the previous Provinces of Victoria and NSW and the Region of New Zealand.

Among the accolades, Sr Helena was thanked for her many years of teaching, including classroom teaching, music and principalship. Her first posting in 1944 was to Johnsonville. She also taught at St Patrick's, Masterton, St Pius X, Titahi Bay, as well secondary teaching at Viard College in Porirua and St Raphael's in Cowra, NSW. Much of it was pioneer work but

Titahi Bay provided the greatest experience of pioneering with eight Brigidines somehow fitting into a two-bedroomed beach house.

Sr Helena was also thanked for her thorough research and writing of the history of the Brigidines in New Zealand: *One Love, Many Faces*.

It's appropriate the 80th Jubilee is known as the Oak Jubilee because the oak is significant to Brigidines. Their patroness is St Brigid of Kildare in Ireland and Kildare means 'the church of the oak'. In the early nineteenth century when Bishop Daniel Delany wanted to re-establish the Sisters of St Brigid, he took an oak sapling from Kildare to Tullow where he founded the Brigidines.

This now magnificent tree is nearly 220 years old. A candleholder made from prunings from that oak tree was given to Sr Helena to be passed on to the next Brigidine Oak Jubilarian.



Sr Helena, aged 100, was given a candleholder made of wood from a special oak tree carried as a sapling from Kildare to Tullow in 1807.

Photo: Sophie McIntyre – Sr Helen's great-grandniece.

Joshua Men's Retreat

Michael Beamish

About 35 men from around Wellington and as far away as Palmerston North gathered at Our Lady's Home of Compassion, Wellington, for a one-day retreat on Saturday 17 August.

Organised by Joshua Wellington, the retreat began praise and worship and a brief introduction of the retreat leader, Brendan Woodnutt, who delivered three talks throughout the day.

Brendan, who completed in 2020 a Masters in Catechesis and

Evangelisation from the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, USA, is currently the Evangelisation Co-ordinator at Christ the Redeemer parish in Christchurch.

The retreat theme was 'Hear then what God is asking you. Only this...' (Micah 6:8).

Brendan touched on what God was asking of us as Catholic men – 'to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly'. Whatever we do, needs to be founded in God. The world is full of people following a different vision.

His first session spoke about 'God's justice in the world' and

the second asked, 'How do I show mercy?' in both words and actions. There was an opportunity for participants to share in five smaller groups after these two sessions.

The after-lunch talk covered 'understanding humility in scripture' using the example of Moses, 'The humblest man on earth' (Numbers 12: 3). Brendan then led us through a time of prayer ministry with the support of three teams. There was also time for private reconciliation and quiet reflection.

In the last session, Fr Dyson Tharakan gave a short talk on 'The Eucharist' before a time of Adoration

leading into the Vigil Mass concelebrated by Fr Peter Ewart and Fr Dyson.

Written feedback from participants indicated the men enjoyed the day very much and appreciated meeting new faces and renewing old friendships. One special comment was: 'One of the best retreats I have ever attended'.

Joshua Fellowship is a Catholic men's fellowship open to all men and its vision is to encourage, support and strengthen men in their Christian calling.

The next Men's Retreat of this kind is likely to be organised by Joshua in

Palmerston North for later in 2025.

Regular Joshua Catholic Men's Fellowship meetings are held in Wellington on the third Thursday of each month from February to November and in Palmerston North on the third Tuesday of each month from February to December. Details can be found in the orange-background advertisement each month in WelCom.

Visit joshua.org.nz for more information.

Michael Beamish is Secretary Joshua Catholic Men's Fellowship Wellington branch.

Holy Cross Miramar closes down

Holy Cross Church in Miramar has closed its doors 'at least temporarily', due to health and safety concerns. A letter to parishioners said the decision was based upon 'the recent earthquake and torrential downpours from which it has become evident that the condition of our church has further deteriorated'.

As a result, the Finance Committee and Parish Leadership

team have reviewed the church's deterioration and concluded that it poses a serious risk to the health and safety of our parishioners, visitors and clergy,' the letter said.

Issues noted during the inspection include, but are not limited to: new visible cracks inside and outside, visible separation between steel beams and wall structures, interior water damage related to roof issues, dangerously

compromised electrical system (water leaking onto heaters) and water damage including wet and mouldy carpets.

In explaining the decision, which came as a shock to many parishioners, the letter from parish leaders said 'the health and safety of our community is paramount'.

Holy Cross Church is one of three churches in the Holy Trinity Parish, in the Eastern suburbs of

Wellington. Services shifted to St Patrick's Church in Kilbirnie from Sunday 29 September. Efforts are being made to provide transport for Miramar parishioners to attend Masses in Kilbirnie.

It is yet to be decided if Holy Cross Church's closing will be permanent.

Source: Holy Trinity Parish



Holy Cross Church, Miramar.

Photo: File



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Māori language festival draws thousands to the streets of Heretaunga

Thousands of people from across the country gathered in Heretaunga Hastings over two days in August for Aotearoa's first-ever festival – Toitū Te Reo – dedicated to celebrating te mana o te reo Māori, culture and the identity of Māori and wider New Zealand.

Touted as the world's first Māori language festival, the festival included food stalls, wānanga (symposium), rangatahi poetry slam competition, and street concerts.

Toitū Te Reo took place at Toitū Hawke's Bay Arts & Events Centre and on the streets of the Hastings CBD from 8 to 9 August.

Katekita Charles Ropitini said

the festival has seen massive success, drawing over 7000 supporters.

Led by Ngāti Kahungunu in partnership with Hastings District Council and Kauwaka Ltd, the event was created to foster and provide a safe space to karawhiua 'give it a go'. Māori speakers of all levels took the opportunity to be in an environment celebrating and encouraging people to speak te reo Māori.

The festival is inspired by the Welsh Eisteddfod, which is considered a catalyst for the revival of Welsh culture and language.

Ngāti Kahungunu iwi chairperson Bayden Barber said it was a 'positive' two days that

celebrated all things Māori. 'It was an expression of strength, strength in our language, strength in our culture, and an opportunity to expose that to people who may not have been exposed to it in the past.'

Charles Ropitini hopes next year's festival can feature a section on the development of Māori liturgical language with a Miha Māori. 'Sacred Heart Church and the Mission Centre are only 100 metres from the main venue on Heretaunga St, so it makes sense to include the Māori liturgical language of the Church as a part of future festivals,' Mr Ropitini says.



Katekita Charles Ropitini (left) on stage with Mayor of Hastings, Sandra Hazlehurst, and Ngāti Kahungunu Chairperson Bayden Barber at the opening of the inaugural Toitū Te Reo Festival. Photo: Supplied

Consultation Hui with Archbishop Paul

Rangimoeroa Waikari-Panapa

On Sunday 15 September 2024, Catholic Māori from around Te Whanganui-a-Tara met with Archbishop Paul Martin to discuss a range of issues relevant to whānau and faith. Archbishop Paul was seeking counsel on a variety of matters including the relaunching of Te Kahu o Te Rangi and the care of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in our Catholic schools. Background for this were the documents put together as part of the national and global synodal process (eg, *Towards October 2024* document).

Lunch preceded the hui – held at St Teresa's, Plimmerton

– which started with karakia and whakawaanaungatanga. This is an opportunity for introductions and sharing something of one's background – whakapapa and iwi links, home towns, parents, education, mahi and aspirations for the future.

One of the kaupapa for the day was Te Kahu o Te Rangi. In 1992, Cardinal Tom Williams had called a meeting at Koraunui Marae, Stokes Valley, 'to ask the Māori community how best may the archdiocese address Māori pastoral needs'. The consensus at that meeting was to establish a representative body of Māori in the archdiocese. The body subsequently established, is Te Kahu o Te Rangi, which held its inaugural meeting on 19 September 1992 at



The attendees of the first Hui whānui mā ngā pākeke Katorika with Archbishop Paul, at St Theresa's, Plimmerton. Photo: Supplied

TūHono Hall, Porirua.

Under the 2019 Constitution of Te Kahu o Te Rangi, the Archbishop will send out the karanga for Māori to gather together and elect a new Executive and to carry out the

functions of Te Kahu o Te Rangi to:

(a) be an advisory and support group to the Archbishop of Wellington;

(b) advise and assist in the area of Māori pastoral care in the

Archdiocese of Wellington;

(c) consider Māori pastoral care initiatives presented to Te Kahu o Te Rangi by the Archbishop or from Te Kahu o Te Rangi to the Archbishop and formulate responses and action; and

(d) share and discuss matters of Māori pastoral significance and communicate these to others in the Archdiocese.

The hope is that our synodal journey of mission may become more fully and deeply realised with the participation of everyone.

The hui conveyed its aroha and karakia to Archbishop Paul on his journey to Rome for the Synod meeting. It ended with his blessing those present and with karakia and hīmene.

Filipino community farewells Fr Marlon Tebelin

Ronald Salazar

Members of the Wellington Archdiocese's Filipino Catholic Community bid farewell to Fr Marlon Tebelin at Sunday noon Mass, at Ss Peter and Paul Church, Lower Hutt, on 1 September.

Fr Marlon has returned to the Archdiocese of Caceres in Naga City, Philippines, after completing his mission in New Zealand. He was the community's chaplain for four years and served as assistant parish priest in Tawa and Titahi Bay, before recently serving as parish priest of Holy Family Parish, Nelson-Stoke.

Filipino Chaplaincy Pastoral Council chair Ria de Leon welcomed everyone and thanked Fr Marlon for celebrating his final Mass in Wellington. Fr Raymond Soriano, parish priest of Our Lady

of Kāpiti Parish – and himself chaplain in the early years of the Filipino Chaplaincy – was co-celebrant. Rachel Calvelo and Rey Alabastro initiated a combined choir of vocalists and musicians to reunite for Fr Marlon's farewell and provide music for the Eucharistic celebration. They last sang and played at the commemoration of 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines at Bishop Viard College, in 2021.

In his homily, Fr Marlon said he has learned how everything revolves around relationships, be it with family, parish, church or community. 'It is through the Gospel that God gives us a guide and we need God's laws because these will foster our relationships.'

He highlighted three moments of his time in New Zealand, all involving relationships. First was

the Mass to celebrate 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines, in Wellington, in 2021, and he reminded us how privileged we are to have received our faith from the Spanish missionaries 500 years ago and now share this faith with everyone.

His second highlight recalled being assigned as parish priest in Nelson, establishing new relationships, his joyful memories of the re-established parish picnic, the increased attendance within the parish, and faith foundation courses for parishioners.

The third was his own personal growth and being surrounded by caring, supportive people.

Fr Marlon thanked all the barangays (parish areas), Catholic and civic communities, his mentors, Fr Raymond, fellow priests, the entire community, and the Filipino

Chaplaincy-Pastoral Council members – urging us all to continue to support the Chaplaincy and our respective parishes.

His parting words, to much applause, were with the Archdiocese of Caceres needing his services back home in the Philippines, 'the archdiocese can take me out of New Zealand but they cannot take New Zealand out of me.'

At the end of Mass, a photo montage of memories with Fr Marlon was shown, as well as a video of farewell messages from his parishioners in Nelson, and a message from Archbishop Paul.

The celebration ended with Fr Marlon blessing September birthday celebrants and all the fathers on Father's Day. Fr Raymond invited the community to join him in prayer, giving his blessing to Fr Marlon. The congregation burst into song with



Fr Marlon blesses September birthday celebrants and fathers for Father's Day. Photo: Supplied

Irish Blessing to wish him well.

Fellowship followed at the hall, with everyone saying how grateful they were to Fr Marlon and how they will miss our Filipino chaplain.

Farewell, Fr Marlon, 'maraming salamat, Dios Mabalos' – 'thank you very much, God will reciprocate – for all you have done.'

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He Hiko Whakapono



This month, our Hiko Whakapono | Journey of Faith, visits the parish of the **Cathedral of the Sacred Heart | Te Ahurewa o te Ngākau Tapu**. Geographically the parish encompasses Thorndon, Wadestown and north Wellington Central, although being the site of the Cathedral it is home to all in the Archdiocese of Wellington. The parish church is Sacred Heart Cathedral, a part of the Catholic precinct that also includes St Mary's College, Sacred Heart Cathedral Primary School, the Sisters of Mercy office in Wellington, the Catholic Centre for the archdiocese administration, and Viard House, which is both the Cathedral Parish presbytery and the Archbishop's residence. The Cathedral's full title, the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and of Saint Mary His Mother, is a reminder that two cathedrals have shared the same site - St Mary's Cathedral and Sacred Heart Cathedral.

BRIEF HISTORY

1850: Thorndon Catholic parish founded and administered by Society of Mary (Marists) until 1935. Bishop Philippe Viard, first bishop of Wellington, blessed and laid foundation stone of St Mary's Cathedral, approx 2000 attended.

1950: Bishop Viard blessed and opened convent and co-educational school. Staffed by four Sisters of Mary who arrived with bishop from Auckland on establishment of Diocese. Temporary school by day and Sisters' residence at night. Beginnings of today's St Mary's College and Sacred Heart Cathedral School.

1851: St Mary's Cathedral, wooden, neogothic structure, blessed, opened.

1861: Sisters of Mercy took over ownership of school, retain today.

1867: Cathedral building completed; cast iron statue of Blessed Virgin Mary, from France, positioned in church tower.

1892: Main school building completed, accommodate 300 children.

1898: St Mary's Cathedral interior gutted by fire. Statue of Mary fell 80 feet, crashing to ground, landing upright with minor damage. Stands today in Cathedral cloister courtyard. School building, St Mary's Chapel, served as Thorndon parish church.

1901: New parish church, Basilica of Sacred Heart, designed by architect Francis Petre, Romanesque style, Oamaru limestone, brick facings, blessed and opened.

1908: Memorial pulpit installed - in use today.

1930: Sir Joseph Ward, 17th PM of New Zealand, died. Prayed daily in Basilica or previous St Mary's Cathedral for 37 years as MP. Bishop O'Shea celebrated Requiem Mass.

1940: Michael Joseph Savage, 23rd, and 1st Labour, PM of New Zealand, died 27 March. Requiem celebrated by Archbishop O'Shea, large crowd.

1893: Sacred Heart School, integrated.

1984: Earthquake strengthening work, concrete piers, steel beams incorporated into fabric of building; addition of Blessed Sacrament chapel, foyer entrance, sacristy, large piazza, adjoining Connolly Hall, completed.

1984: Cardinal Tom Williams, fifth Archbishop of Wellington, elevated and consecrated Basilica to status of Cathedral of Wellington and of Archbishop of Wellington.

1985: Building listed as a Category 1 Historic Place by Heritage New Zealand.

1986: Contract let for works for completion in 1987 to demolish old wooden presbytery, 10 Guildford Terrace, old brick Redwood Houses, Hill St.

1989: Two-metre-high kohatu whakairo (thinking stone carving) installed inside Cathedral entrance and a pou (carved wooden pole) in piazza, gifted as taonga from Catholic Māori of archdiocese.

2000: Cathedral closed for major conservation project to restore inside and outside. Recommended sealing Oamaru stone to stop ingress of water - reversed 20 years later.

2007: Icon of Sacred Heart of Jesus and St Mary his mother by Michael Galovic installed.

2018: Main Cathedral building closed for seismic strengthening, renovation; building then assessed earthquake risk, closed immediately; alternative location for parishioners established.

2020: Cardinal John Dew, Archbishop of Wellington, blessed site and project team on 7 August, for strengthening, refurbishment work to begin.

2024: Feast of Sacred Heart, 7 June, Archdiocese of Wellington and Cathedral Parish rejoiced in reopening of Cathedral after six years of closure.

Our parish

Fr Patrick Bridgman
Cathedral Administrator
Cathedral of the Sacred Heart
Te Ahurewa o te Ngākau Tapu

Joy is the word to describe the feeling that has been widely felt by Cathedral parishioners, people coming from other parishes in the Archdiocese of Wellington, as well as visitors from near and far, as we have returned to Sacred Heart Cathedral.

In Salvation History the Jewish people experienced exile, as did various biblical characters through time. Always looking to the time of return as captured in the expression, 'Next year in Jerusalem!'

The six years of strengthening and refurbishment of the Cathedral was certainly a time of loss, though not exile. We were warmly welcomed to St Thomas More, Wilton, and we were able to celebrate in our Connolly Hall 'Chapel'.

Yes, it was with great anticipation and joy we re-entered the Cathedral on 7 June this year. While the original Cathedral of St Mary was destroyed by fire in 1898, the new Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was built in three years, opening in 1901. And now with people describing the lightness of the nave with the Oamaru stone, the beautiful ceiling, and the mosaics in the sanctuary being visible for all to see, we can gaze upon our Cathedral as they did 123 years ago!

Recently parishioners gathered to look towards the future. These past years have been focused not only the project of strengthening and refurbishment, but also on building a team of parishioners. Calling forward people into various ministries and ensuring that in the midst of an unsettled time, we were still a living and loving parish family. Now is the time to consider how we will be into the future.

It was a delight to gather to consider three topics of evangelisation, leadership, and the Holy Spirit. And through the gift of Spiritual Conversations all who were present were heard, and the inspiration of the Spirit was known. In the coming weeks the parish will continue to discern a way forward to bring further life to the parish, and also to the city in which we live.



Parishioners enjoy morning tea after their Sunday 10am re-opening Mass, 9 June 2024.



Hundreds of parishioners and guests filled the newly restored Cathedral of the Sacred Heart at the re-opening Mass, 7 June 2024.

Photo: Bernie Velasco

Naturally a Cathedral Parish has a unique place in the life of a diocese. Its very name comes from the seat of the bishop, the Cathedra, which stands behind the Altar. Showing to all that this is the home of the Archbishop, as well as being the Mother church for the Archdiocese. It is also the parish church for Thorndon, Wadestown, and surrounding areas, as well as being the spiritual home for whoever finds a welcome here.

It has been a delight to see people finding their way home since the re-opening. The energy that flows from the Sunday Masses into the gathering in the refurbished foyer is a wonderful fruit of all the planning which has been done.

We are blessed to be a parish of diverse talents and backgrounds. There are active prayer, family, ministry, and parish groups. As the Cathedral, our parish priest is Archbishop Paul Martin sm, with the assistance of Debbie Matheson, Lay Pastoral Leader, and [Patrick Bridgman], Cathedral Administrator. We have an office team, which includes Frank Doherty, Sadie Laurenson and a large number of parishioners who volunteer with any number of regular and one-off projects.

How fortunate the parish is in the presence of the Sacred Heart Cathedral School and St Mary's College on the same site. The relationships have always been strong and now can grow even further with



Altar servers and parish leaders lead out the Procession at the end of the Sunday 10am re-opening Mass for the parish, 9 June 2024.

Photo: Annette Scullion/WelCom

Masses and celebrations again being in the Cathedral. Fortunate also are we for the enduring presence of the Sisters of Mercy. Their faith presence has always been a source of inspiration and comfort.

Just down from us on Hill St is St Paul's Anglican Cathedral who have been so welcoming to the parish and diocese in times of need, as well as being our sister congregation with whom we celebrate our united faith in Jesus.

Originally known as Golder's Hill, the Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish rests on Eccleston Hill, Thorndon, across from Parliament, beside St Paul's Anglican Cathedral and in the midst of the capital city of Wellington; a place for the Divine Heart!

no: A Journey of Faith

Parish groups and ministries

The Cathedral parish's many groups, ministries and communities bring people together through Christ in prayer, devotion and fellowship.

Alpha – a first of many, a beginning. Along the way we made new friends; and deepened bonds with whom we're already journeying together. We now have more companions – young and old, familiar and new. There was laughter, there were tears; but most importantly our Lord was with us as we journeyed through.



Scripture Study | Lectio Divina – the Scripture Study group meets weekly in the Cathedral Foyer and through Zoom for 45 minutes and concludes with prayers and a communal blessing. By studying the Gospel for the coming Sunday, it leads us into a deeper relationship with Christ as each member of the group relates their understanding of the Gospel being discussed, which leads to a general discussion on what it is telling us.

Divine Mercy devotion – we are a small group of Divine Mercy devotees who gather every Sunday evening at 6pm at Sacred Heart Cathedral to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. With hearts full of devotion, we honour the infinite mercy of our Lord Jesus. During this time, the Most Blessed Sacrament is exposed for Adoration. Through His revelations to St Faustina, Jesus reminds us His mercy is a powerful force for the world and is open to every soul. This is a sacred time to offer prayers for us, others, and the world. We also take turns sharing reflections from St Faustina's diary, which offer spiritual nourishment for our souls. Everyone is warmly invited to join us for this time of prayer and reflection.



Mass co-ordinators check roster for who are on what ministries for the day.

Adoration at the Cathedral – adoration on Thursdays is now in its fourth year. About 30 people regularly commit for an hour each week and many others visit when they can during the day. There is a real hunger just to be in the Presence of the Lord and to be refuelled for mission.

Vigil Mass Music Group – this Music Group has been serving the parish for nearly 28 years. Love of music and the liturgy, plus a prayerful attitude contribute to the joy and sense of community engendered. There is deep appreciation of the privilege of being able to aid community worship.



Members of the Saturday Night Music group celebrate 25th anniversary.

Sunday 10am Mass Choir – this choir is made up of trained and untrained singers, families and single people. Practice of the hymns and psalms takes place 30 minutes before Mass. Members are sent a run sheet each week outlining hymns that will be sung. The choir is very enthusiastic in leading the congregation in prayer through singing. If you would like to join the choir or music group, please contact the parish office or approach either choir on the Saturday evening or Sunday morning.



Vigil Mass Music Group members combined with the Sunday Mass 10 am Choir members who provided and led the music for the Cathedral re-opening Mass.

Guardians welcoming ministry – the Guardians welcome weekday visitors to the Cathedral and those who arrive for the 12.10pm Mass. They also direct people to the parish office, if necessary, for example if somebody wishes to see a priest. Guardians are also happy to answer any questions from visitors about the history of the Cathedral. Guardians prepare the credence table for the 12.10pm Mass. They read the first lesson and psalm. When a major festival occurs on a weekday, such as Ash Wednesday, Guardians who are also Eucharistic Ministers will help with the distribution of Holy Communion or Ashes.



Sacred Heart Cathedral fundraising group – the group, established six years ago, supports the Cathedral's earthquake strengthening and restoration fundraising. Through activities like dinners, auctions, e-waste collections, raffles, speakers, an online-art auction during Covid, and bake sales, they raise funds and strengthen community bonds. With a further \$633,000 still needing to be raised, the group has more activities lined up.

Hospitality – every Sunday, following the 10am Mass, and at times after the 5.30pm Vigil Mass, hospitality is offered to all who come. Parishioners share a roster and are generous in sharing their culinary gifts and delights. With the refurbished foyer there is a wonderful buzz as people enjoy a cuppa and delicious treats!



Altar servers – the Cathedral Parish is blessed with 20 plus servers, aged 9 to 16. Not being 'home' for over six years, our Altar servers have embraced changes gracefully. There is wonderful energy amongst the servers, and all enjoy this ministry. Pope Francis said, 'Our Lady whispers to them, like the servants at the wedding at Cana: "Do whatever He tells you"'. And they always follow through.

Sacramental programme – the programme completes the Sacraments of Initiations, beginning with Confirmation during school Terms 3 and 4, followed by First Reconciliation during Term 1 of the following year; and culminates with the Eucharist in Term 2. It is designed for children at least 8 years old. The programme also aims to equip the parents with the tools they need to bring up their children in the practice of the faith.



Concerts – musicians have always spoken of the incredible acoustics that are enjoyed in the Cathedral. There has been a tradition this jewel is not only experienced by the worshipping Cathedral community, but when there are suitable concerts and recitals. Recently, on their 30th anniversary, Wellington choir the Baroque Voices celebrated at the Cathedral, with the added poignancy it was in the Cathedral they held their first concert 30 years ago.



Holy Hour for Vocations – every fourth Tuesday of the month, starting at 7.30pm, a Holy Hour for Vocations is prayed at the Cathedral. It includes Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, hymns, prayers of praise, Scripture, and a reflection on the Vocational call. People from all vocations and walks of life gather to offer prayer and support for people discerning their vocational call, as well as for those on their journey. Please come along and join us.



Cathedral project – The Cathedral still has some work to be completed as part of the restoration project. There is ongoing work in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel including the restoration of the confessionals and the stained-glass windows. The Cathedral cloister and surrounds are being refurbished, and soon a new wind lobby will be built at the foyer entrance. A further \$633,000 is required to fundraise for the Cathedral project.

Reserve a plaque – As part of the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Sacred Heart restoration fundraising, we are offering individuals and families an opportunity to reserve a personalised plaque, which will be displayed on a pew within the Cathedral.

This fundraiser is priced at a donation \$1,500 per plaque to permanently acknowledge your contribution. You may wish to use this opportunity to include your name or to honour someone close to you, provided the text will fit on the plaque. There is a limited to the availability of pews – currently there are less than 20 pews left.

To reserve your plaque for a pew, please email us at office@cathedralcampaign.org.nz and we will confirm availability. Your donation of \$1,500 can then be made online:

Internet banking:
Cathedral Project
02 0506 0138488 25
Include 'Pews' and your 'Name' in the Code and Reference fields.

We will then be in touch to confirm your details required on your plaque.

For further enquiries about this opportunity please contact John Owen at 021 742737.

» Continued from p 11

Sisters of Mercy, Thorndon

St Stephanie Kitching rsm

June 1861 saw the coming of three Sisters of Mercy from Auckland to Wellington. Their arrival at St Mary's Convent in Thorndon, a small establishment run by four devout women brought here by Bishop Viard, began the long connection with Wellington Archdiocese.

Immediately these Sisters, led by Julia Dickson (S M Bernard) who had nursed in the Crimea beside Florence Nightingale, began their educational and social work ministry in the school and the Providence – a home for Māori children. By 1873 there were 35 boarders and 89 day pupils, with the Providence having 27 girls. Other schools in the Wellington area were also begun whilst catechism classes were run on Sundays.

Visiting of the sick was also part of weekly routines.

In Thorndon the focus was naturally on St Mary's College and Sacred Heart Primary School where for many years the Sisters were the sole staff. Currently, these facilities are staffed by women and men committed to Mercy values. The College is now governed under the auspices of Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust. Our local Sisters maintain a connection to these schools.

Over the years, as well as staffing the schools and teaching music Sisters living in Thorndon have ministered in various offices in the Archdiocesan Centre and been of service in the Cathedral in differing roles.

Now as Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa we, Sisters of Mercy New Zealand, continue to be centred in God's Mercy, walking in hope



St Mary's Convent Thorndon, Wellington, late 1800s.

Photos: Mercy Archive NZ

with Earth and her peoples. While daring Mercy in collaboration with others, we focus on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the cry of Earth and the cry of the poor.

"He atawhai...tā mātou kaupapa matua." | "Mercy...the business of our lives." – Catherine McAuley, Foundress



St Mary's College students, 1920s.

St Mary's College, Wellington

Sarah Parkinson, Principal

St Mary's College is a Catholic girls' secondary school in Thorndon, for years 9–13. Our 531 students come from all over the Wellington region, drawn to our multi-cultural school where the Catholic ethos permeates every aspect of our college culture.

St Mary's is a place where students can develop a love of learning and strive to achieve their personal best. With Christ as our guiding light and in the spirit of the Sisters

of Mercy, we seek to recognise, appreciate and develop the gifts and talents of every individual and create a caring environment where students confidently grow and achieve their full potential.

St Mary's is one of the oldest existing schools in New Zealand. It is on the site of the original St Mary's School for Girls, opened by Bishop Viard in 1850. The early school was attended by girls of all denominations. In 1861 the first Sisters of Mercy came to Wellington to take over running the college.

At the heart of our Mercy charism is the

work of the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley. Her outreach in mercy to the vulnerable in Ireland in the 1800s laid the foundation for the values and work of St Mary's College today.

We aim to raise awareness in our students of the need in the world around us. Our motto *Misericordia et Sapientia – Mercy and Wisdom*, promotes care and service to others. Our students are encouraged to be compassionate, to identify people's needs and to respond with action. Students initiate projects to support those in need in many

ways, from collecting Easter eggs for the children's ward at the hospital to donating goods to Vinnies or local food banks.

The essence of St Mary's is captured in the words of one of our students:

'St Mary's to me is a beautifully loving environment. Here I have grown immensely in my passion and faith. I have never felt as accepted as I do when I'm learning alongside my sisters and I'm endlessly grateful for the connections I have made with fellow sisters, kind teachers and importantly with God.'



St Mary's students are encouraged to be compassionate, to identify people's needs and to respond with action.

Photos: Supplied



St Mary's College Student Leadership Team 2024 (l-r): Victoria Watson, Kahurangi Douglas, Maia Masina; Aeryn Lao, Dakota Munro, Marianna Boless, Head Girl, Sienna Leilua, Sophia Fouhy, Bailey Nightingale, Jael Laroza.

Sacred Heart Cathedral School | Te Kura Ahurewa o te Ngakau Tapu

Bernadette Murfitt, Principal

'A Catholic school where students achieve their spiritual, cultural, academic and personal potential.'

Sacred Heart Cathedral School in Thorndon is an integrated Catholic School. Our school adjoins St Mary's College and Sacred Heart Cathedral and is opposite the Sisters of Mercy House in Guildford Terrace.

The school was established in 1865 to provide a quality education for Catholic primary students. We have a proud history of excellence in all aspects of a student's school life as we build on the high standards of our past. Our curriculum reflects modern educational practice that encourages high expectations of children in their learning.

I am very fortunate to lead the school at Sacred Heart Cathedral School. We are a diverse school and exciting learning happens every day. Because of our inner-city location, we take advantage of the wonderful opportunities Wellington offers.

Staff who work here are part of an exciting collaborative culture. We are also very fortunate to have a cohesive Board who make



Sacred Heart Cathedral School children at Mass with Fr Patrick Bridgman. Photo: Supplied

decisions through an equity lens. Our parent community works hard to support staff and students to be wonderful young people.

I feel blessed to interact with our students. They are open to new ways of learning and thinking. They know how important positive relationships are. They are the taonga of our school.

We have close links with the Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish and share a warm and positive relationship with Cathedral Administrator, Fr Parick Bridgman, who is also our school

chaplain. Fr Patrick supports us all with our faith journey. His interactions help us all to reflect and be better versions of ourselves.

Sacred Heart Cathedral School is made up of many different cultures. We have a long tradition of close links with our community and celebrate the richness and diversity these bring to our school. We celebrate many aspects of culture throughout each year. Students are given the opportunity to belong to our Kapa Haka and Pasifika groups who represent us at many school functions and events.

An important part of our school is developing an 'ako' approach where the older children look after the younger children. All children are matched up with an older student upon starting school. This creates a positive playground environment where older children look after younger ones.

Ours is a school that thrives on being a community and giving to others.

Mā te huruhuru, Ka rere te manu. Adorn the bird with feathers so it may fly.

E-waste recycling fundraiser

The Sacred Heart Cathedral fundraising group have organised another e-waste recycling day at Sacred Heart Cathedral School, 12 Guildford Terrace, Thorndon, from 10am to 2pm on Saturday, 12 October. Have a big 'spring' clean and drop off your e-waste for a minimal cost. Please also tell your friends. This is a great opportunity to responsibly dispose of your e-waste while supporting a very worthwhile cause – to help raise funds towards the \$633,000 still needed to complete the work required on the restoration of the Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Young Catholics – Rangatahi Katorika

Life Teen Aotearoa Leadership Convention

Louise Lloyd

'Sanctuary' was the theme for the 2024 the Life Teen Aotearoa Leadership Convention, held at Sacred Heart College Lower Hutt over the weekend of 30 August–1 September. Over 150 young people from across all six dioceses attended the uplifting weekend of Faith.

CEO-President of Life Teen International, Randy Raus, Monica Raus and Happy Mayer, Board Member from Life Teen USA, came to the Convention to share their deep love of Jesus, years of Youth Ministry experience and a passion for forming and growing youth ministers to accompany teens closer to Christ.

Darcy Rogers from NET Australia brought a passion for forming young adults to become intentional disciples.

The Convention implementation

was a collaboration between the Archdiocese of Wellington and the Life Teen Aotearoa team of volunteers. Our music ministry, hospitality and AV teams helped the presenters bring the Convention to life.

Sessions were practical, relevant and comprehensive, paired with opportunities to experience prayer, Sacraments, community building and networking.

Archbishop Paul Martin sm and Bishop John Adams led us in Mass on the Saturday.

We have been overjoyed to hear how the Convention has impacted those beginning youth groups in their parishes, teenagers entering into youth ministry as well as those already working with young people.

'I gained lots of ideas from the breakthrough sessions to implement in our youth group, particularly how to lead a youth group and encourage members to seek true happiness in Jesus, doing their best for him



Youth leaders from Life Teen Wellington, Life Teen Whanganui and St Mary of the Angels.

Photo: Supplied

in whatever they do. Through this Convention, I see our youth group becoming more fruitful and on fire for the Lord.' – Jay Fidow, New Plymouth

'I felt the energy of us all ON FIRE for God. Sharing my testimony during the worship and Adoration session was special. I felt God move through me during the weekend and

through the people gathered there, with hearts on fire for Jesus.' – Molly Powell, Wellington



Te Rauparaha Arena in Porirua was alive with music, dance, laughter and fun on 7 August, as the Primary School Day of Te Kiwa Nui was held. It was the first primary school session for several years. Many schools were present including Holy Family School who delighted the audience with a 12-minute bracket of items from Fiji, Niue, Samoan, Aotearoa, Tonga and Tokelau. Weeks of practice resulted in a polished and clever performance and the children enjoyed themselves. 'We sounded so good. We looked amazing. We had great fun. I loved it when the audience called out my name. My 'aiga were so proud of me. I was nervous but still did my best. The parents were so impressed with us.' We thank Ms Levantabua, Miss Pat and Henry for all their hard work.

Words and photo from: Sue Goodwin, Principal, Holy Family School

Growing and learning at St John's College

Lisl Prendergast

A St John's College Year 11 Horticulture class, who are doing a Level 2 unit on bedding plants, planted a large bed of white and blue pansies recently. The planting

was in the form of the Marist logo with a large 'M' and a large 'A' that honour the school's origins and traditions, to be flowering for the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady. The students are now working on a vegetable unit, while at the same time keeping the pansy

bed weeded. They have planted celery, carrots, onions, cauliflower, broccoli, leeks and beetroot. Student Jacob O'Kane said they had learnt 'a lot about fertilisers and the preparation of the ground for planting'. The aim is for 10 credits for NCEA.



Gardening students (l-r) Essex Page, Lisl Prendergast (class teacher), Zion Perez, Jacob O'Kane, William Hancy-Rollinson, Flynn Millward-Mulaney at the plot of bedding plants designed to honour the Marist Fathers who founded St John's College.

Photo: Supplied



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St Patrick's School fundraiser – 800 cans donated to the Vinnies Annual Food Drive in Christchurch.

www.svdp.org.nz

Society of St Vincent de Paul New Zealand

Support Life Sunday: 13 October 2024

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference annual Support Life Sunday this year is on 13 October. The theme is 'infinite dignity'. On the following two pages, writers offer opinions supporting the infinite dignity of life, and which reflect Catholic Social Teaching.

ACT Party welfare proposal 'inhumane'

Roger Ellis
Advocacy Adviser
Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand

The parable of the Good Samaritan¹ underscores the need to help those in need. The Greatest commandments² – loving God and loving our neighbour – require similar humane attitudes and actions. This relates to the Catholic Social Teaching principle regarding the Preferential option for the poor. In addition, children are a gift from God and are highly valued in God's economy. In the Gospel of St Mark (Mark 10:14) Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.'

Against this backdrop the recent proposal by the ACT Party to sanction people who have children while on a welfare benefit attacks the dignity of the adults and children involved. There is also some irony in the fact that the Government wishes to reduce the numbers of people receiving the jobseeker support benefit while at the same time the Reserve Bank of New Zealand is deliberately creating a recession and higher unemployment as part



Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.' – Gospel of St Mark (Mark 10:14).

Image: Unsplash

of its strategy for reducing inflation.³

The ACT policy discriminates by saying, in essence, that if you're poor and receiving a benefit then you should not be allowed to get pregnant and if you do then we will punish you by reducing your already meagre

income. One also wonders what effect such policies would have on a vulnerable mother who is weighing up whether to keep her baby or to abort it. All human life is valuable. Government welfare policies should not be used as instruments to social engineer

particular population outcomes.

Using the welfare system to divide children into those born to 'worthy' families and those born to 'unworthy' families tears at the social fabric of our society, erodes a sense of community and adds to existing divisions.

It's a slippery slope once governments begin to determine which people can have children. Such a philosophy undermines the dignity of all human beings and replaces it with a utilitarian approach – the greatest good for the greatest number. Proposals to reduce poverty by discouraging or preventing births to the poor have deep eugenic roots which further promote the idea that some people have greater value and subsequently greater freedoms, than others. We should be keeping well away from such policies.

A better approach, more consistent with human dignity, would be to stop blaming the victims of a deliberately created recession and instead focus on promoting innovation, investment and new jobs so that people could move from welfare into work.

» Gospel reading and reflection, Sunday 6 October 2024, Mark 10:2-16, p 18.

1 Luke 10:25-37
2 Matthew 22:37-40
3 <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/130568638/adrian-orr-admits-reserve-bank-is-deliberately-engineering-recession>

Respecting men, respecting life

Suzanne O'Rourke

The annual Support Life Sunday, promoted each October by the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand, reflects the active work Catholics need to do to help people facing significant life decisions.

Amidst the many issues that are a contemporary cause of anxiety, especially to our young people, the clash of attitudes over reproductive rights and the clamour for the unchallenged ending of a pregnancy through abortion, can be ugly.

There is a deeper tragedy in assuming the pregnancy rather than the relationship is a woman's choice. At a time when a woman is at her most vulnerable, the men in her life are largely missing. The abandonment and grief felt by women is totally understandable. That felt by men, less so.

What is lost in much of the rhetoric, is the relationship that is, or isn't, at the heart of each pregnancy. In most unwelcomed pregnancy scenarios, men are portrayed badly. In most abortion scenarios, men are assumed to be untouched. This is far from the reality. In research and in anecdotal sharing, men respond to abortion in numerous ways,

seldom any of which are helpful.

Throughout 2023, Rachel's Vineyard Retreats in collaboration with the Buttons Project hosted a series of 'Forgotten Fathers' offering men a platform to talk about how they experience an abortion loss. The insights were deeply moving.

"I can say that I am the father of five – but I only got to raise three of them. It was later, in the evenings, that I began to cry and even though it's been decades...those two sit in an emotional place."

"It didn't just mess me up, it messed her up as well...the depression. Mentally, emotionally...we both started drinking heavily and using drugs."

"The weight of guilt was so overwhelming..."

Men spoke of incredible, deep-seated anger, which found expression in violence, pornography and bitterness. Many were surprised at this, having felt themselves to be supportive of whatever decision their – usually former – partner chose. Mostly they talked of a realisation coming too late, about their role in the relationship, the pregnancy and the future.

"I should have been putting my arms around [my partner] instead of bombarding her with questions. I should have stepped up, instead of speaking out."

The work of Rachel's Vineyard Retreats is



The setting for the Forgotten Fathers events where men spoke of their experiences, their regrets and their guilt.

Photo: Supplied

to 'heal the wounds of abortion, one weekend at a time'. It is usually women who attend these retreats; they after all carry the direct experience of loss, while enquiry from men and couples is welcomed too. There is no charge for the retreat weekends, which are offered three times a year. The experience has already cost the participants enough.

Retreat enquiry is open to anyone, any age, any faith, any culture.

The next Rachel's Vineyard Retreat weekends are:

- Friday 15 to Sunday 17 November 2024
- Friday 28 to Sunday 30 March 2025
- Friday 15 to Sunday 17 August 2025
- Friday 14 to Sunday 16 November 2025.

For information please contact Wendy Hill, Retreat Coordinator at info@rachelvineyard.org.nz or 027 254 9222.

Rachel's Vineyard is an international Catholic Lay Ministry and has been operating in New Zealand since 2010. The name is taken from scripture references from Jeremiah, 'Rachel mourns the loss of her children because they are no more...' and from John, 'I am the vine, you are the branches...'

Suzanne O'Rourke is the New Zealand site leader for Rachel's Vineyard Retreats and is based in Wellington.

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'We choose life, despite being surrounded by death'

One year of conflict in the Holy Land

Peter Lang
Advocacy Analyst
Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand

October 7 marks one year since the devastating conflict in the Holy Land began. The atrocities committed that day were abhorrent and unacceptable, taking more than one thousand lives and plunging the region into chaos. In the ensuing twelve months we have seen some of the worst of humanity – but also humanity at its best.

In one year, the ongoing assault on Gaza has claimed approximately 40,000 lives and permanently changed hundreds of thousands more. The statistics that have come out of this awful conflict are staggering and can be difficult to put into perspective. The Gaza Strip, smaller in area than the size of Lower Hutt, is home to more people than the combined population of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. In the past twelve months, the Israeli Defence Force has dropped more

than 75,000 tonnes of bombs into this area, creating more than 100kg of rubble per square metre in the territory. This scale and intensity of devastation is difficult to imagine.

Thousands of aid workers from within the Holy Land and around the world have responded to the devastation, working tirelessly and at great personal danger to bring relief to the civilians in the firing line. Tragically more than 270 aid workers have been killed in the conflict so far, already the deadliest ever for United Nations workers.

When we remember that behind every number is a human life, the tragedy can seem unbearable. But in the personal stories we also find cause for hope.

George, who leads one of our partner organisations on the ground, relocated to the Holy Family Parish with his wife and children. 'We are in Jesus' house, we are in his hands,' he says. 'We choose life, despite being surrounded by death. We are determined to preserve the Christian presence in Palestine. This is our homeland.'

Caritas has been active on the

ground, setting up temporary medical centres to treat almost 11,000 people, providing cash assistance to more than 20,000 people, and psychosocial support to over 500 children, caregivers and staff. Compared with the millions of civilians in Gaza, these numbers may seem small – until we remember the innate value of every life saved.

Our global efforts add up. In the past year, the Caritas Internationalis network has provided medicine, food, shelter, counselling and cash assistance to more than 150,000 people. This is something to be proud of, but we cannot afford to be complacent. As the conflict approaches the one-year mark, things are in danger of escalating in the West Bank and Lebanon. Hundreds of people have been killed in both of these regions already in the past year, but the threat of all-out war would be cataclysmic.

Throughout the past year, we have advocated for a ceasefire and increased aid, speaking out alongside partners in New Zealand and internationally. We know



Caritas remains active in Gaza and has provided vital assistance to more than 150,000 people since 7 October 2023. Photo: Caritas Internationalis

exactly what needs to happen to bring an end to all this unnecessary suffering: an end to escalation in Lebanon, an end to violence in the West Bank, and an immediate ceasefire in Gaza that will allow all necessary humanitarian aid to reach those in desperate need.

We cannot make these changes

on our own, but together we have a powerful collective voice. Being a voice for the voiceless, calling out injustice, and speaking up for peace are something we can all do.

See more about our work in the Holy Land at caritas.org.nz/holyland

Catholic Social Teaching: 'a hidden taonga'

Rev Dr Jenny Dawson

I have been a regular reader of WelCom for the last 20 years so am sharing these thoughts with a readership who is important to me. I go to Mass, in various Catholic churches, at least once a month. I have many Catholic friends including my husband.

I am Anglican, of the 'high' variety: for us, who see ourselves as both Catholic and Reformed, our practice and theology embraces the Real Presence, daily eucharist where possible, deep reverence for Mary and all the saints, ecclesiology that is both local and universal, and I have a profound gratitude for the ecumenical steps taken in my lifetime.

However, I frequently wonder why the Catholic Church, as I experience it, seems to hide one of its greatest taonga: Catholic Social Teaching. Apart from occasional references to *Laudato si'* – which was quoted this morning in my local Anglican church – I have almost never heard the wonderful principles of Catholic Social Teaching referred to in a homily, nor do parishes that I frequent seem

to offer opportunities to find out.

Why is this such a well-kept secret?

In an age when we of Christian faith are all concerned about evangelisation and when most thinking people are wrestling with issues around climate change, work, diversity – essentially matters of human dignity and the common good – why is Catholic Social Teaching not promoted much more than it currently is?

You don't have to be a Catholic to find a great deal of sense and wisdom in documents such as *Rerum Novarum*, *Pacem in Terris*, *Deus Caritas Est*, *Querida Amazonia*, and of *Laudato si'*.

I long for more of this on the very good Facebook page Catholic Enquiry New Zealand and in the reports publicising various Archdiocesan groups.

For Christians who are not Catholic the coherence and challenge of these documents is precious, but for people who have yet to discover a Christian faith maybe reading such content could lead them to the God who embraces all people with unimaginable love.

Of course I am aware of the excellent work done by Caritas, but

this is promoted largely in-house, within parishes and dioceses, and perhaps its impact is for many limited to Social Justice Week.

As a member of the faith stream in the Living Wage Movement, I was proud to have our work included in the Caritas Social Justice Week projects a few years ago, when I took several opportunities to tell other Living Wage people what the Catholics were and the teaching that leads to the Church's commitment.

I am longing to hear more about the inspiring and attractive teaching behind the great work Caritas does, an opportunity that is there every time the Word is broken open. I believe Catholic Social Teaching has something to say to a hungry world that is looking for meaning.

Homilists, there really is a treasure here that is being ignored.

Rev Dr Jenny Dawson is an Anglican priest who resides in Pukerua Bay, but is shortly to return to Christchurch. Educated at Canterbury and Otago Universities, she was Archdeacon of Kāpiti 2008 to 2011, then a Regional Chaplain to the Bishop of Waiapu until returning to Wellington in 2015. She is an Ignatian spiritual director and retreat giver.

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching is a body of thought, developed by the Church, that stands as a foundation for moral integrity and social justice reflecting Gospel values of love, peace, justice, compassion, reconciliation, service and community in the context of modern social problems.

It is continually developed through observation, analysis and action, and is there to guide us in the responses we make to the social problems of our ever-changing world.

At its core, Catholic Social Teaching is a set of principles that uphold the dignity of every human person, promote the common good, and advocate for justice and peace. These principles, derived from Scripture, theological reflection, and the wisdom of Church leaders – particularly over the last one hundred years – offer timeless insights into building a more just and compassionate society.

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand and the Catholic Enquiry Centre offer considerable information on their websites about Catholic Social

Teaching and leadership.

The following CST principles are listed on the NZCBC website with expanded information.

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

- Human Dignity
- Human Equality
- Respect for Human Life
- Association
- Participation
- Common Good
- Solidarity
- Preferential Protection for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Stewardship
- Universal Destination of Goods
- Subsidiarity

Please visit the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' website at tinyurl.com/NZCBC-CST and Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand at caritas.org.nz for more information about Catholic Social Teaching, its principles and its many formative social Encyclicals (papal letters) from the last 100 years.

Sources: NZCBC; Caritas



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Catholics Thinking

How does the Declaration on Human Dignity apply in Aotearoa New Zealand?

The Vatican's top doctrinal office published a new Declaration, on 8 April 2024, on the theme of human dignity. Entitled *Declaration Dignitas Infinita, on Human Dignity*, the Declaration from the Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, addresses a range of contemporary moral and social issues.

The New Zealand Catholic bishops have announced 'Infinite Dignity - Infinite Love' as the theme for this year's Support Life Sunday on 13 October, which draws on *Dignitas Infinita - On Human Dignity*.

Emeritus Bishop Peter Cullinane discusses the *Declaration Dignitas Infinita, on Human Dignity* in his article, which is published in WelCom in two parts, to coincide with the observation of Support Life Sunday. The first part was published in WelCom's September edition, p 16 and on our website, and the second and concluding part is below.

Part Two

Need for critical thinking and empathy

Are we at risk of unnoticeably buying into deceitful catch phrases and euphemisms that are used to make the violation of human rights acceptable and 'normal'? Abortion is described as 'interruption of pregnancy', and the meaning of 'person' is arbitrarily defined to exclude the child in the womb – regardless of what the sciences tell us.

The idea of 'dignity' is used to justify the direct killing of another person, and the lethal injection has been called 'medical aid'. Restrictions on the marketing of addictive substances is described as infringing the 'right to choose' – by vested interests who know very well that by causing addiction, cigarettes and vapes *deprive people of their freedom* to opt out of their habit.

When marketers believe we can be easily deceived by slogans and euphemisms, what does that imply about ourselves? Are they right? Under the pressures of modern living, do we just drift along with general impressions – easy prey for influencers? Are we doing enough to promote our own, and other people's ability to think critically, which is necessary for the defence of human dignity?

Are we at risk of getting so used to the evils we condemn that we start taking them for granted? Do we need to take our condemnations of mistreatment of others to a deeper level? Do we need to rediscover the meaning of repugnance? And can we find human indignities repugnant without first having a deep appreciation of persons, for whom



Bishop Peter Cullinane

Photo: Jonathan Cameron/Manawatu Standard

Jesus was willing to give his life?

What is happening to our own dignity if we fail to promote the fundamental human dignity of others and work to counter dehumanising situations?

“Under the pressures of modern living, do we just drift along with general impressions – easy prey for influencers? Are we doing enough to promote our own, and other people's ability to think critically, which is necessary for the defence of human dignity?”

War and other atrocities

Our anger at the barbarities of war is justified. But we cannot just stop there. Do we too easily succumb to the idea there is nothing we can do about it? As citizens, it is for all of us to insist our government supports those international institutions that are intended to protect peace and justice – and condemn ways in which their effectiveness is being blocked by countries for their own

political ends.

If the taking of human lives becomes acceptable, it will be even easier to 'normalise' other violations of human dignity. Does our 'throwaway culture' spill over to an idea, even at the back of

our minds, those who experience physical or mental limitations do not matter quite as much as others, and can be given lower priority?

In our own country migrants seeking livelihoods and opportunity to raise their own families have sometimes been defrauded, trafficked, enslaved. Are we satisfied their fundamental dignity is sufficiently safeguarded in New Zealand law?

Are there not practices, and even policies, that are 'far from reflecting clearly women possess the same dignity and identical rights as men...' 'equal pay for equal work, protection for working mothers, fairness in career advancements...?' (44, 45). Not to mention our country's ranking among the worst for domestic

Could the compulsive need to constantly look [at digital platforms] – often for trivia – be the symptom of something else? After all, there is an emptiness that comes with secularism that is not filled by consumerism or entertainment or mere distractions.

violence; do we even ask what's missing in young men's formation?

Do our business practices and political choices help to promote the situation in which 'the ones who possess much more are relatively few, and those who possess almost nothing are many?' (n.36). Do we share the 'obsession with reducing labour costs with no concern for its grave consequences', especially when it causes 'the worst kind of poverty' – unemployment and loss of livelihoods? (37).

Existential dignity

Digital media can help people to be in contact, and can inspire solidarity for good purposes. But there is also a darker side, both through *misuse* – for example the distress that can be caused by the spread of false information, hate speech and bullying; and through *overuse*. It is commonly agreed that indulgent overuse results in 'addiction, isolation, and gradual

loss of contact with reality, blocking the development of authentic interpersonal relationships'. The Declaration points to a paradox: 'the more that opportunities for making connections grow in this realm, the more people find themselves isolated and impoverished in interpersonal

relationships' (61). That doesn't make for life satisfaction.

Could the compulsive need to constantly look – often for trivia – be the symptom of something else? After all, there is an emptiness that comes with secularism that is not filled by consumerism or entertainment or mere distractions.

A recent survey, reported by *CathNews New Zealand*, 15 April 2024, interviewed 200,000 individuals in more than 20 countries, and found the regular practice of religion positively affects life satisfaction – our existential dignity. Why wouldn't it? Honouring God includes honouring God's purposes built into all creation.

Anything less makes us less.

Part 1 of Bishop Peter Cullinane's article, published in WelCom's September edition, p 16, can be found on our website at: tinyurl.com/Cullinane-Human-Dignity-Pt1



Wellington Sexual Abuse HELP

We support individuals, whānau and communities affected by sexual violence. Our free 24/7 crisis support line, social work and counselling services are available to everyone – regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or sexuality.

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Male Survivors Wellington

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Contact Richard Brewer:
support@theroadforward.org.nz
Tel: 021 118 1043
www.theroadforward.org.nz

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention

During the month of October 2024 Pope Francis' intention is: **for a shared mission.**

We pray that the Church continues to sustain in all ways a Synodal lifestyle, as a sign of co-responsibility, promoting the participation, the communion and the mission shared among priests, religious and lay people.

The Mysteries of Light - Mihiteria Hikohiko

The month of October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary.

James B Lyons

In October 2002, Pope John Paul II added The Mysteries of Light to the Rosary. His initiative was almost 600 years after the original set of Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries became the points of meditation in this classic Catholic devotion.

The purpose of the change was to complete the life cycle of Jesus. While the Joyful Mysteries give us the infancy of Jesus, the Sorrowful follow his suffering and death, and the Glorious his resurrection and gift of the Holy Spirit, the Mysteries of Light provide contemplation on the public life of Jesus, from his Baptism by John to the Last Supper.

The change is still not fully appreciated by many for whom the Rosary has been a constant, unchanging prayer. May the following reflection, in this October month of the Holy Rosary, assist a clearer understanding.

Jesus describes himself as ‘the light of the world’ and assures those who follow him ‘will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life’, [John 8:12]. By following Jesus through this set of ‘mysteries’ we are invited into a relationship with him as he expands his awareness of the mission before him, reveals his identity as the ‘Anointed One’ – the Christ – and gifts himself to his followers in the Eucharist.

Mary’s presence on this journey is in the background, a mostly unseen influence. The human qualities that characterise Jesus’ behaviour and thinking reflect her years of maternal example and guidance. The faithfulness and beauty of Mary’s life have helped Jesus set his own course.

1. The Baptism of Jesus - I Iriiria a Hehu

Three elements in the baptism ceremony, water, oil and light, can assist contemplation of this particular mystery.

Each has a link to life; they are indeed necessary for all life on Earth. Baptism marks our adoption as children of God; the baptised become part of the Body of Christ, the People of God, and rising from the waters of rebirth, in the strength of the Holy Spirit (oil), is charged to share in the mission of Christ as light for the world.

In this Decade, contemplate the promises made in your own baptism. Renew your belief in the Triune God and feel this belief empowering you to enlighten, encourage and serve.

2. The Wedding at Cana - Ko te Marenatanga kei Kana

This festive occasion is described in John 2:1-11 and recorded as the first of the signs given by Jesus.

It is Mary who calls Jesus’ attention to the fact that ‘They have no wine’ in her concern that this lack will be extremely embarrassing for the hosts. She makes no request of Jesus to do anything about it; just lets him know that she’s concerned. She then catches the eyes of a servant and says simply, ‘Do whatever he tells you’. The result is a supply of the choicest wine, more than any gathering could ever need.

As a Mystery of Light, the wedding feast opens us to the impact of Mary in the life of Jesus and the generosity of God; to Mary’s attention to detail, her instinctive awareness of potential disaster, and her confidence that all will be well if the words of Jesus are listened to and acted on.

3. Proclamation of the Kingdom - Te Kauhau Mō Te Kingitanga

As a Mystery of Light, the proclamation throws light on the universal search for meaning. Jesus announces the nearness of God.

People are healed, the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk – the human condition is put back in balance and the message that God wants only wholeness and life is clearly stated. This is good news indeed.

Evangelising – telling the good news – can seem an improbable task: *Because we do not always see the seeds growing, we need an interior certainty, a conviction that God is able to act in every situation, even amid apparent setbacks* [Pope Francis, EG, n.279]. Here Mary is our invaluable and necessary guide. As the handmaid of the Lord she went with total trust – even when her Son seemed to deny her access to him or ignore her plea [Mk 3:33; Jn 2:4].

4. The Transfiguration - Te Whakaahuaketanga o Hehu

This Mystery of Light contains everything that reveals and endorses the power and the wisdom of God. Much of this ‘light’ lies in potential: initially not understood, and only fully appreciated when other things fall into place. Jesus was sowing seeds that would flower in the disciples’ consciousness to become their support, their protection and their badge of honour.

Mary empathised with their hesitation and their fear. She had been there before them. She teaches the importance of deeply pondering whatever brings doubt, apprehension and a feeling of improbability. Such pondering nurtures the seed, ultimately bringing it to light.

We, too, are called to *listen* to Jesus. We need to shrug off personal agendas or preconceived notions that get in the way of truly hearing and seeing what he is trying to get across.

This is the Mystery of Light ‘par excellence’: *The glory of God shines*

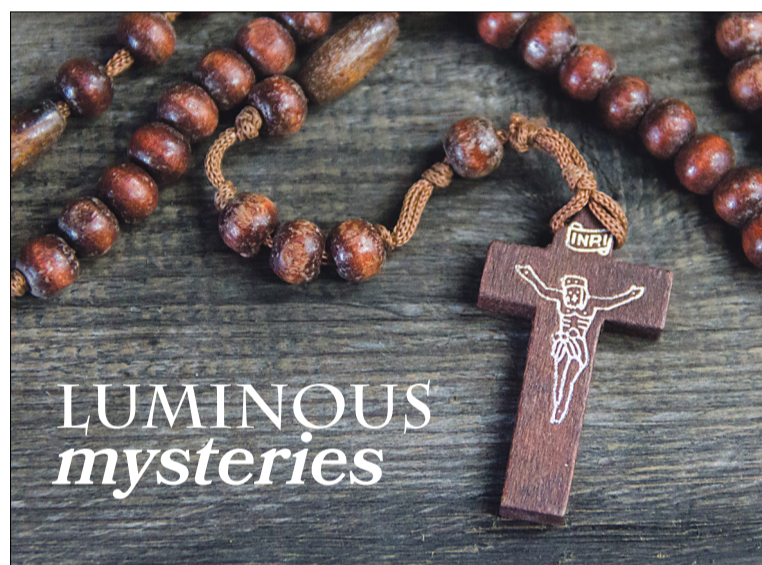
forth from the face of Christ as the Father commands the astonished Apostles to listen to him [Lk 9:35] and to prepare to experience with him the agony of the Passion so as to come with him to the joy of the Resurrection and a life transfigured by the Holy Spirit. [John Paul II, Rosarium VM, 2002, n.21]

5. Institution of the Eucharist - Te Hapa Whakamutanga

The Eucharist is gifted in the midst of uncertainty. Jesus hints there is a traitor amongst them. In the ritual invoking the memory of the sacrificial lamb that helped secure the release of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery, Jesus proclaims himself as ‘THE Lamb’, given in sacrifice for all people – including those at table with him. From now on, he himself is to be the nourishment for his pilgrim followers, the food for their journey, the pledge of his presence.

Mary, who gifted herself in the nourishment of Jesus, would have been among the first to grasp the significance of his words, *Do this in memory of me* [Lk 22:19], as she held fast the memory of that first announcement and knew she lived in the presence of God. This presence was the source of her peace.

The Eucharist is the ‘light’ of Christians, the meeting point of the faithful in communion with God and one another.



Contact Fr James Lyons at j.lyons@wn.catholic.org.nz for a copy of *Beads of Contemplation* a booklet of meditations covering all four Mysteries, including a more extensive treatment of the Mysteries of Light.

‘Go and Invite Everyone to the Banquet’ - Matthew 22:9

World Mission Sunday is celebrated on the second to last Sunday of October, this year on 20 October. It is a special day that unites Catholics worldwide in prayer, solidarity, and support for the Church’s mission efforts.

Pope Francis’ message for World Mission Sunday this year reflects

on the theme: ‘You shall be my witnesses’ (Acts 1:8). He reminds us, ‘every Christian is called to be a missionary and witness to Christ’.

This year’s theme, chosen by Pope Francis, is rooted in the Gospel of Matthew: ‘Go and Invite Everyone to the Banquet’, reflecting the inclusive and urgent call to bring

God’s love to everyone.

‘Let us not forget that every Christian is called to take part in this universal mission by offering his or her own witness to the Gospel in every context,’ Pope Francis highlighted in his message.

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Gospel Reading: Sunday 6 October 2024

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – MARK 10:2-16

² Some Pharisees approached him and asked, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?' They were testing him.

³ He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?'

⁴ They replied, 'Moses allowed us to draw up a writ of dismissal in cases of divorce.'

⁵ Then Jesus said to them, 'It was because you were so hard hearted that he wrote this commandment for you. ⁶ But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. ⁷ This is why a man leaves his father

and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh. They are no longer two, therefore, but one flesh.

⁹ Therefore, what God has united, human beings must not divide.'

¹⁰ Back in the house the disciples questioned Jesus again about this.

¹¹ He said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. ¹² And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too.'

¹³ People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples scolded them.

¹⁴ When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ In truth I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.'

¹⁶ Then he embraced them, placed his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

What God has united, let none of us divide

Dennis Horton

If we were to count the hot topics facing people in Jesus' time, divorce would have to be up there near the top of the list. Our gospel reading for this Sunday has Mark's account of what Jesus has to say on the topic.

Earlier in the same gospel, Mark outlines in graphic detail the treatment of John the Baptist who had expressed public criticism of King Herod for his taking in marriage the wife of his brother Philip. In fulfilment of a reckless oath, Herod has John beheaded and the head delivered on a plate to Salome, his wife's daughter. Jesus mourned the Baptist's death, describing him in another gospel as 'the greatest born of woman' (Matthew 11:11).

Now time is slipping by, and Jesus is well on his fateful way to Jerusalem, where Jewish leaders are likely to look for any accusation they can make against him. A group of Pharisees, working to test

him, put the simple question, 'Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?'

Jesus begins by asking them to repeat what Moses had commanded. Back came the answer, 'Moses allowed us to draw up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce.' With the skill of a chess master, Jesus comes back to his listeners, insisting that this was a concession made by Moses for the people's hardness of heart.

God's original plan, discerned from reading the creation story in Genesis, was that a man would leave father and mother, and he and his wife would become one body. 'So then, what God has united, man must not divide.'

There's a glimpse here of the genius of Jesus as he asserts that he has not come to abolish the law or the prophets. 'I have come not to abolish but to complete them.' (Matthew 5: 17) The vocation of marriage, as Jesus outlines it, is for a couple to see their love as a little piece in the unfolding mosaic of

creation itself, building from their love for each other and for their children something of enduring, even eternal dimensions.

Our gospel passage ends with Jesus blessing the children whose parents had brought them for the Master to touch. He was 'indignant' when he saw his disciples trying to send them away. 'Do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.' What is it we can learn from our children in responding to God's call? Is it their trust and openness, their lack of a cynicism born of disappointment and betrayal? Or perhaps the sense of receiving something as pure gift, not earned but bestowed by a God who knows our every need?

Dennis Horton is a parishioner of St Anne's Church in the Wellington South parish. He retired earlier this year after working as a writer for the Sisters of Mercy for 23 years. In a former life, he edited Zealandia, the Auckland diocesan weekly, for 10 years.

How do you go to confession when you haven't been for years?



Rebecca Taylor-Hunt
Director
Catholic Enquiry Centre

A recent enquirer said she felt uncomfortable confessing to her parish priest, who she knew well. The thought just made her cringe, especially when it had been such a long time since her last confession.

I have always been treated with immense kindness during the Sacrament of Reconciliation by my parish priest and never judgement. Reconciliation is a beautiful way

of finding forgiveness, healing and peace. So, why do so many Catholics not go to confession? Or rather, they leave it so long that going becomes awkward. In fact, as Catholics, we are supposed to go to Reconciliation at least once a year, with Lent and Advent being the ideal time.

The idea of confessing our sins, those secrets we would never normally tell anyone, is an uncomfortable idea, but it doesn't have to be an uncomfortable experience. It's important to remember there is little the priest hasn't heard before, and it is safe to be open during this sacred sacrament of healing. God already knows what is in our hearts.

You'll find the times when Reconciliation is offered on the website or newsletter of your local parish. Once there, you'll see a number of people sitting on a pew near the Confessional. Simply sit down with them and wait your turn. As I told the enquirer, it is also possible to visit a neighbouring parish for Reconciliation, and that's completely okay. You can also contact your parish office to make

an appointment to talk to a priest privately, especially if you think you may need some extra time.

As well as individual confession (Rite 1) there are two group or communal forms of reconciliation (Rites II and III), which often take place during Lent or Advent. These recognise the fact that even our most secret sins can cause harmful ripples in the community. In Rite II we gather as a community, prepare communally and then confess individually and receive absolution individually. It can be healing to mark the truth that we are a sinful people but also forgiven and redeemed community.

In all cases we need to prepare by examining our conscience; to see what we need to bring to God for forgiveness today? Praying for guidance is part of a good confession. If you are unsure, the priest will guide you through, and offer some good counsel before assigning a penance, which is often a prayer, and finally absolution. Afterwards, you will wonder why you were so anxious.

If you have any questions, please contact me at rebecca@catholicenquiry.nz



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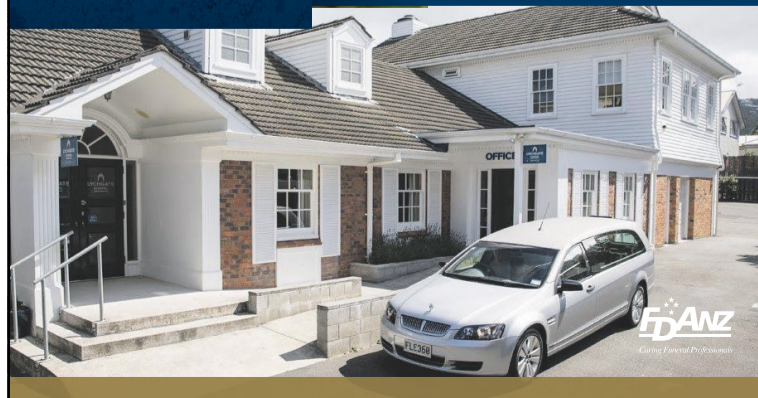


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DATES AND EVENTS – WHAT'S ON

If you would like to list your parish and school events free on this page, please email welcom@wn.catholic.org.nz with event name, date, time, location and contact details.

Friday 4 October

Feast of St Francis of Assisi – Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission and St Francis of Assisi Parish Season of Creation Liturgy at St Francis of Assisi Ohariu Parish, 7pm 'cuppa' for 7.30 pm start, 37 Doctor Taylor Tce, Johnsonville. All welcome.

Saturday 5 October

St Mary's Parish Palmerston North - fundraising concert and meal, 5pm, Queen Elizabeth College Hall. Featuring entertainment and cultural performances. Go to www.surveymonkey.com/r/VNVSGTP to buy tickets.

Sunday 6 October

Suzanne Aubert – Celebration Sunday. At weekend Masses, join with Sisters of Compassion and all peoples of Aotearoa NZ to celebrate life of Venerable Suzanne Aubert Meri Hōhepa. Go to compassion.org.nz/celebration-sunday/ for resources and prayers.

Monday 8-Tuesday 9 October

Seasons For Growth – Children and Young Persons' development training, knowledge and tools for educational intervention programme supporting young people with change, loss and grief. St Anthony's Church, Seatoun. Cost \$420. Email Jess at: seasons@wn.catholic.org.nz for application form and to register.

Thursday 10 October

Front Porch events – David Williams, 'Te Tiriti o Waitangi for Tangata Tiriti in Aotearoa: A Personal Journey', 6pm, St Michael's, 81 Upland Road, Kelburn. All welcome. (Poster information at: tinyurl.com/Kelburn-Talks)

**MOUNT STREET CEMETERY****OPEN DAY DURING THE WELLINGTON HERITAGE FESTIVAL**

SATURDAY 26 OCTOBER
10am–2pm, Mount Street, off Salamanca Road (behind Victoria University of Wellington)

The Friends of Mount Street Cemetery are hosting an open day for people to visit and experience the cemetery.

They will be on hand to describe:

- the history of the cemetery
- its connections to early settlers and the Catholic community in Wellington
- conservation efforts.

A leisurely stroll around the cemetery takes about one hour. Please wear sturdy shoes and dress for the weather.

Saturday 12 October

Cathedral fundraiser – Sacred Heart Cathedral fundraising group e-waste recycling day, Sacred Heart Cathedral School, 12 Guilford Tce, Thorndon, 10am to 2pm. Details p 12.

Sunday 13 October

► Day of Prayer to Support Life.
► Rosary – will be prayed, 3pm, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, to commemorate the Apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima. For further information contact Ian Sutherland on ph (06) 356-7555.

Monday 14 October

One day mission – led by Fr Augustine Vallooran vc with Glen and Teresa La'rive from Divine Retreat Centre Potta, India, 6.30pm to 9pm, Sacred Heart Church, Petone. All welcome. (Poster information at: tinyurl.com/Mission-Wellington)

Wednesday 16 October

Liturgy workshop – Sunday Eucharist: It's Impact on our Lives, presented by Fr Patrick Bridgman, Liturgy Adviser for Archdiocese, 6.30pm start with tea and coffee, for 7pm–9pm, Connolly Hall, Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Friday 18 October

Kaponga Country Day – St Patrick's School, Kaponga, floral art, handwriting and artwork judged inside.

Friday 18, Saturday 19 October

Liturgy Workshop – Sunday Eucharist: Liturgy of the Eucharist. Presented by Fr Patrick Bridgman. Friday, 7pm–9pm; Saturday, 10.30am– 2.30pm, Our Lady of the Bays Parish Centre, Richmond.

Sunday 20 October

- World Mission Sunday – collection.
- Mission Sunday – Catholic Parish of Hastings celebrate Mission Sunday as one community and family day. Mass 10am, on St Joseph's school field, followed by entertainment (koha). Food stalls available (cash only). Bring umbrella, picnic chairs and picnic. Everyone welcome.
- Final Mass – Sacred Heart Church, 43 Ngatai St, Manaia, Sth Taranaki, closing. Bishop John will celebrate final Mass, 10.30am, replaces 9am Mass at St Joseph's Hawera this day. Memories and hospitality after Mass.

Wednesday 23 October

Game On! – parenting eight-week course for Dads, 6.30pm–8.30pm, starts 23 October, NET Family Services, 2 Dudley St, Hutt Central. For more information or to register, email: reception@wn.catholic.org.nz or call Francis on 021 0887 4824.

Sundays 3, 10 November

'Love is a Decision' – archdiocesan marriage preparation course for engaged couples planning their weddings. Contact marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz for more information.

Friday 15-Saturday 16 November

NZ Catholic Medical Assn – Catholic Medical Retreat, Home of Compassion, Wellington. Go to: newzealandcatholicmedical.co.nz/2024-retreat-wellington for details and to register.

Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 November

Seasons for Growth – Companion Training in Children and Young People Programme, two-day professional development opportunity, cost \$300 plus resources, registrations close 1 November. Email Jess at seasons@wn.catholic.org.nz.

15, 16, 17 November

Sacred Heart and Redwood College Nelson reunion for past pupils and staff. Register at: redwoodsacredheart.com or contact Bernadette King-Turner at: SHReunion2024@gmail.com for information.

Friday 29 November

XLT – night of music, worship, Eucharistic Adoration and more for teens and young adults, 7pm–9pm, St Anne's Newtown.

Palmerston North Young Catholics

– 18-35-year-olds invited, after each Sunday 6pm Mass, to the Cathedral lounge at 7.15pm, to meet like-minded people and form new friendships.

Church Calendar Dates**October:**

2. Guardian Angels
4. St Francis of Assisi
7. Our Lady of the Rosary
18. St Luke
28. Simon and Jude
27. St Vincent de Paul.

November:

1. Solemnity of Saints – All Saints Day
2. Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed – All Souls Day.

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'Open House'

Friday 22-Saturday 23 November

Hosted by the Catholic Parish of New Plymouth at St Joseph's and in partnership with the Diocese of Palmerston North and Divine Renovation, 'Open House' is designed to share with other parishes the missional parish journey the parish is on. Some 220 to 250 attendees are expected from our diocese and from around the country. Bishop John has already booked a bus to bring 40 people from Palmerston North. Mass on Friday at 5.30pm will be celebrated by Bishop John followed by his keynote talk. Dinner in the hall will follow. Saturday morning will have a keynote talk by Mons Trevor Murray, and breakout sessions with ministry leaders. Morning tea and lunch are provided. The afternoon finishes with prayer and sending forth in the Holy Spirit led by Bishop Michael Gielen. Parishioners are all invited but full registration (\$85.00) is necessary, and parishioners can attend the keynote talks in St Joseph's Church. Contact office@catholicparishnp.nz for information and to register.

Challenge 2000 seeks CEO

Challenge 2000 is looking for a visionary leader with a passion for social justice and youth development to be its CEO, to lead our highly effective youth development, community and family/whānau social work agency.

Ko wai te whānau nei – Who is Challenge 2000?

For 36 years, Challenge 2000 has been dedicated to empowering young people and families, particularly those facing significant challenges and adversity. Our mission is to create positive change, foster resilience, and promote social justice, social responsibility and personal dignity. "Love works" is at the centre of Challenge's charism, and we operate as a whānau.

Based in the historic Challenge House in Johnsonville, Wellington, the Challenge 2000 whānau of 40 staff delivers services in communities, schools, and youth houses – wherever there is need – primarily throughout the Wellington region but including project work throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. Challenge 2000 is a trusted provider of government funded support for young people and also delivers a wide range of community-based therapeutic, crisis and welfare services funded by charitable donations.

Mō te tūranga – About the role

The Challenge 2000 CEO will bring heart to the role and be an inclusive leader with a clear, strategic, holistic perspective, and an innovative approach to organisational growth that gives life to the Challenge 2000 charism.

With well-honed relationship management skills, you will lead the Challenge 2000 whānau to implement our strategic goals including growing Challenge 2000's visibility in the community; holding the Challenge 2000 charism, demonstrating leadership to create community and form connections, supporting the ongoing delivery of effective youth and family development programmes and strengthening and supporting the sustainability of the organisation.

At a practical level, you will work with the Board to evolve and implement the strategic direction, provide future-focused insights that drive new thinking, and oversee the optimal development and promotion of all Challenge 2000's activities and programmes with the support of the Challenge 2000 whānau. Your relationship with the Board will be critical and you will operate on a 'no surprises' basis.

This is an exciting opportunity to make an important contribution to Challenge 2000's future. We are looking for an empathetic leader who inspires confidence in others, welcomes all perspectives and views and can ensure Challenge 2000 delivers efficiently and effectively for the people and communities we serve.

He kōrero mōu – About you

Essential Skills knowledge and experience

- Lived commitment to and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and a sound understanding of tikanga Māori.
- A strong commitment to youth and family well-being and bringing about positive change in a wide range of communities.
- Proven knowledge and experience in the social services sectors.
- Senior leadership experience working in government, community sector, or NGO environments.
- A consultative, collaborative and open style with a flexible and transparent approach.
- Expertise in developing and sustaining key strategic relationships.
- Significant strategic planning, operational integration and management skills and experience.
- Exceptional levels of business and financial acumen, with sound knowledge of quality and risk management principles and practices.
- Strong people leadership mentoring and coaching skill sets and proven capability to empower and enhance the mana of others.

Applications close:
October 29 2024

Applications to:
jobs@challenge2000.org.nz

Position description: CEO

To find out more about Challenge 2000, please visit our website www.challenge2000.org.nz



Challenge 2000 marks 36th anniversary this month

Challenge 2000 began 36 years ago in October 1988 as a dedicated gospel-centred, social agency to respond to needs in Wellington, particularly those adversely affecting children, young people and their families. Almost four decades later, Challenge remains convinced that **love works**, the **gospel works** and being a community **whānau works**. So today, the Challenge team continues to develop and offer a diverse range of holistic, professional programmes and services based on those beliefs.

Photos: Supplied

Kitty McKinley Challenge Founder and Acting CEO

Challenge 2000 began here in the Johnsonville Catholic parish in 1988 in response to the needs of young people and families and as a way of empowering those who wanted to actively live the gospel to make a difference.

The Challenge foundations are from the Gospels of Luke and Matthew.

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and has chosen me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.' – Luke 4: 18-19

'I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, a stranger and you welcomed me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' – Matthew 25: 35-39

Challenge's mission is to respond to the gospel by working with people in the search for personal dignity, social justice and social responsibility. Ours goals are to:

- develop and deliver quality youth services that meet the diverse needs of young people
- develop and deliver services that provide opportunities for disadvantaged and struggling families, individuals and communities
- develop and deliver programmes that challenge the advantaged and

privileged to adopt values and principles consistent with social justice and social responsibility.

So, for 36 years we've been trying to live our mission and do whatever we can to give the gospel and our Catholic social traditions life in our times. It has been an exhilarating, rewarding, life-giving, transformative and at times challenging time for all involved. If you'd like to volunteer in any capacity – from Board member, food donor, tutor, driving instructor to event fundraiser – then just call

us on (04) 477-6827 – we'd love to hear from you, or visit our website at challenge2000.org.nz for more information.

We are advertising for a new CEO, a Youth Worker and Interns for 2025, so please have a think and maybe accept the 'challenge' to join our team of 40 and live these gospels along with us.

» Please see Challenge's detailed advertisement for a new CEO on p 19.

Foodbank and community garden

Gabe Lawson

Amidst the new challenges and the unprecedented social impact of Covid-19, Challenge 2000 began operating a Foodbank to support those experiencing problems accessing food and essential supplies. Sr Marie Roche led our initiative with aroha, commitment and compassion, and we continue



St Brigid's School students planting our community garden.



Pā Gerard Burns and parishioners blessing the Foodbank garden on the Day of Prayer for Creation.

our Foodbank with these values.

Now, the ongoing impact of underemployment, low wages, higher rents, redundancies, unemployment and poverty has resulted in us continuing with our Foodbank as we experience increasing demand from diverse sectors of our community. As a result, Challenge 2000, St Francis of Assisi Ohariu Parish, and the local Society of St Vincent de Paul are working together to provide food, funding, and volunteers to help support those in need.

An additional venture is the establishment of a vegetable garden, organised by parishioners, volunteers and Challenge 2000 staff. Students from St Brigid's School are learning about planting and are caring for a patch in the vegetable garden.

A big thanks to Tai Avei, our interns, members of our Year 12 and Year 13 Outreach group and parish volunteers who have been helping with our project to ensure we can keep feeding our people in these difficult times.

Internship Year 2024 reflections: young people making a difference

Petonio Foase – after leaving St Pat's Wellington in 2023, I was pretty sure about a career path in construction work. Then I applied for the Challenge Marist internship programme and my pathway has taken other directions. This year I've been given plenty of opportunities. I went on the 21-day course at Outward Bound, obtained my full driver's licence, worked on the Challenge Mission team doing all sorts of maintenance work and driving different vehicles and machinery, mentored young men in trouble, helped facilitate school programmes and lived in a Challenge Marist youth house.

Outward Bound, the Challenge training and retreats all taught me how to take care of my physical, mental and spiritual health. I've gained knowledge about myself, how I work with others and how systems work. I've met so many different people in different places. These experiences have opened my perspective to different careers like New Zealand Police or working at FIFO in Perth ('fly in fly out') to save and get more life experience.

This internship programme gave me an amazing opportunity to be part of Wero Rua Mano – Challenge 2000. I know I will forever be a part of the Challenge whānau and am grateful for the worlds I've been introduced to. I'm also grateful that the Marists fund and support this project so even after I left St Pat's I could still learn and grow. *Sectare Fidem.*



Kate and Petonio, left, with other interns on the Makahika Intern Retreat.

Kate Nahu – when I joined the Challenge 2000 Marist internship programme at the beginning of this year, I wasn't sure what to expect. I heard Kittyspeak about the internship at the end of Mass one Sunday. She described it as an opportunity to give back to the community, to grow yourself and your skills and get paid at the same time. It seemed right and I knew it was something I needed to try. I'm extremely grateful for the opportunities it has provided. For me, the look into the hard mahi social and youth workers do in our communities has been especially insightful. At the start of this year I barely knew what a social worker was, but through Challenge I've been given the opportunity to work alongside them with several young people. This knowledge and experience will serve me well as I continue my nursing studies. I've now been exposed to the undeniable link between social welfare, opportunity, wellbeing and physical health.

The internship isn't easy. You have to put a lot of yourself into the work, which can be tough, especially when trying to form healthy work-life boundaries. I often don't know what to expect when I turn up to Challenge in the morning. However, now I know whatever I do – babysitting, running liturgies, painting banners, mentoring or tutoring young people, serving at functions, leading retreats, just being there – is making a positive difference to others and our communities. At times Challenge has been challenging, but the internship is an experience I will take with me for the rest of my life.

Challenge 2000, in partnership with the Society of Mary, has offered their full-time Gap-Year internship programme based in Wellington since 2007. Go to challenge2000.org.nz/youth/gap-year for more information and how to apply for the 2025 programme.

Youth Ministry Team leads Social Justice Week

During Social Justice Week 2024, Challenge's Youth Ministry Team explored Caritas' theme: *'Imagine Peace For All | Pohewatia te Rangimārie mō te Katoa'*.

We discussed and led initiatives about how we 'see' and 'judge' the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Palestine against the gospel of Jesus and Catholic Social Teaching, and how we can 'act' for peace.

At 7 and 8 September weekend Masses, through music, hymns, a children's drama for rangatahi and young adults, prayers and artwork, we encouraged everyone to be

builders of peace, justice, hope and forgiveness in communities. We invited parishioners to take home a painted 'peace' stone as a commitment to pray and peace. All 200 stones went as well as 'peacemaker' and 'peacebuilder cards' we had made. We also ran school Liturgies for St Brigid's and St Benedict's.

Community feedback was positive. It was a time for us to learn more about what is happening in the world to our brothers and sisters.

– D'Angelo Baice and Semanaia Agafili, Challenge Youth Ministry Team.

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