

SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS



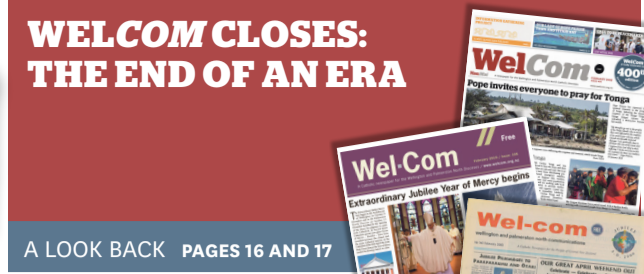
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WelCom

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FREE

FINAL EDITION

NauMai

A newspaper for the Wellington and Palmerston North Catholic Dioceses

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Holy Year of Jubilee begins

Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope

Pope Francis opened the Holy Doors at Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome on the evening of 24 December 2024, thereby officially inaugurating the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope. During his Christmas evening Mass, he reassured us that the Christ Child of Bethlehem offers the world infinite hope and joy.

Due to New Zealand's summer break over Christmas and January, each diocese here chose a date that best suited their celebrations. The Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North celebrated their Jubilee Year opening days on 28 January and 2 February respectively. Both ceremonies began with a short liturgy and blessing of the people outside before everyone entered through their cathedrals' main doors for further blessings and liturgies.

Pictured: Archbishop Paul Martin sm leads a short liturgy at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart Baptismal Font, before Mass begins.
Photo: Annette Scullion

» More about the Holy Year of Jubilee celebrations p2 and p28.

Final edition: Bishops announce closure of WelCom

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ
This edition of WelCom marks the end of the publication of this magazine as a collaboration between the Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North. We are both aware of the rich heritage of this newspaper, firstly for the Archdiocese of Wellington and then latterly as a collaboration with the Diocese of Palmerston North. We both recognise that communicating with our communities is an important aspect of Church life and evangelisation. WelCom has always aimed to be both news of what is going on in the dioceses and also the Church in the world. It has endeavoured to educate people in faith, to provide analysis of Church teachings and highlight the various aspects of Catholic social teaching. It has been a fine publication and we are now looking at how we might be able to achieve these aims in a different way. One of the realities that both of

us have had to face in our dioceses is the financial challenges of living within our means. We are both facing deficit situations in our budgets and as a result we have had to look at what we are spending and where we can make savings so that we can manage our resources. This is a painful process and for both of us has meant reductions in our staffing and in other aspects of our spending. One of these relates to the production of WelCom. As you know it has been produced ten months of the year and there are significant expenses associated with this. Ultimately, we have decided this is not sustainable financially in its current form and so we have made the difficult decision to bring the publication to an end. Over the coming year we will work to see how we will communicate within our own dioceses while also looking at the other forms of communication that are available to us. One of the key ways will be through the CathNews website, the responsibility for



Archbishop Paul Martin sm, Archbishop of Wellington
Bishop John Adams, Bishop of Palmerston North

which the New Zealand Catholic Bishops have taken over. This will be a place for twice weekly news about the Church in New Zealand and the world. It will also endeavour to provide resources for spiritual growth and nourishment and for reflection. We know that there are many Catholic resources available but we do hope that CathNews will be a place that New Zealand Catholics will find helpful for connecting and being supported in their faith experience and knowledge.

We want to thank Annette Scullion for her fine work as the editor of WelCom for these last 10 years. It is not an easy task to put together the last edition of a paper. Annette has edited this paper so well for all these years and we are grateful for her work and the way she has brought this ministry to a conclusion. A paper like this has relied on many people providing information and contributions. We have been very fortunate for all the people over the years who have done this and whose contributions have been stimulating, challenging and heartwarming. It has been a powerful expression of faith and helping your brothers and sisters to understand more deeply their faith and how it relates to the world. We have also been most fortunate to have had the generous support of our many loyal advertisers over several years, whose regular presence and contributions helped to develop and grow the publication from its beginnings over 40 years

ago to what it has become today. We live in times of much change and this is an example of another change for us. We know that WelCom has been very much appreciated, and many people will be disappointed that it is not continuing. Our hope is that we will find new ways of communicating about the faith and our local diocesan news, and that Catholic people will continue to strive to be updated and grow in their knowledge and understanding of their faith. Please continue to pray for the work and mission of our Church in our respective dioceses and in our country. Please be generous in your support of each of our dioceses so that we can do what we need so as to be a Church that is able to carry out the mission of Christ in our various contexts. God's blessings and peace to you.

» WelCom – a look back, pp 16, 17.

From the editor

Annette Scullion

Tēnā koutou kātoa

As we go to print with this final edition of *WelCom*, our thoughts and prayers are utmost with Pope Francis who remains critically ill in hospital. Members of the Catholic Church worldwide, global leaders and people from all walks of life everywhere have been touched deeply by the now 88-year-old Pontiff and leader of the Catholic Church since 2013, and are offering prayers and messages for his recovery.

It is indeed a sad day for *WelCom* too as our long-standing Catholic diocesan newspaper of 40 years comes to a close. Print has been and remains a very effective medium for communicating. Over the years we have always received tremendous and positive feedback for this monthly publication we know will be missed by many of you.

It has been a privilege for me to hold the position of editor for the last nearly 11 years, since June 2014, and to walk in the shoes of the previous editors to continue to bring faith-based news into the homes of Catholic families and whānau throughout the Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North. Through our Hikoi

Whakapono, commenced in 2017, we have visited every parish, school and faith community including Māori Eucharistic communities and cultural groups in our dioceses, to form connections and find and share your stories. Feedback I often hear from readers is that 'WelCom connects us to what is going on'.

We are mindful this is the Bishops' publication and we seek to report on significant events within the Church and beyond, drawing on the richness, values and ethical teachings the Catholic Church stands for based on the Gospels of Jesus Christ. Thank you to Cardinal John Dew, Bishop Paul Martin sm and Bishop John Adams for your faith in me to produce and deliver *WelCom* on your behalf over many years.

A huge thank you too to my team – Michael Fitzsimons, Fr James Lyons, designer and advertising coordinator Rose Miller and Jemma Mullholland before her, photographers Bernie Velasco and David Lupton, our many and generous contributors too numerous to name, our very longstanding and supportive advertisers, our printer Beacon Print, and to you our readers, who together have all helped to create the story of *WelCom*.

Ngā mihi

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention

During the month of February 2025 Pope Francis' intention is: *For vocations to the priesthood and religious life.*

Let us pray that the ecclesial community might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life.

WelCom www.welcom.org.nz

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 This **final edition** of *WelCom*, February/March 2025, was published 25 February 2025.
WelCom has been published monthly for 40 years as a free Catholic newspaper for the parishes and Catholic schools in the two dioceses as well as for other Catholic agencies, communities and interested readers.
 Our mission has been to communicate faith-related news, issues and events in the Wellington and Palmerston North dioceses, including readers' information, stories, photos and opinions as well as topical information from other local, national and international sources.
WelCom has sought to bring a range of news, feature articles, opinions and spiritual reflections. 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.
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Pilgrims of Hope: 'As a Church we are pilgrim people, on the journey outwards'

The people of the Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North gathered to celebrate the opening of the Jubilee Year at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on 26 January, led by Archbishop Paul Martin sm, and at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Palmerston North on 2 February, led by Bishop John Adams. The following excerpts are from the Bishops' messages and homilies.

» *Year of Jubilee, p28.*

Archdiocese of Wellington

Archbishop Paul Martin sm
Archbishop of Wellington

The Holy Father has given this year of Jubilee the theme *Pilgrims of Hope* and it is a very appropriate focus for us as we spend this next year celebrating and renewing and refocusing our spiritual lives and continuing the call of the mission of the Church.

We are a long way from Rome but we are very much able to take part in this renewal and time of

spiritual growth. Over the course of this year there will be a number of opportunities in parishes and around the Archdiocese to take part in events, which will celebrate the Jubilee year and particular aspects or groups within the Church community. There will be times for prayer and group gatherings. The Sacrament of Reconciliation has a special part to play in this year and so parishes will be offering more opportunities than usual for this to happen as well. I also encourage you to attend Mass on

a weekday as well as on Sunday, so you can experience the power of the Eucharistic celebration in a slightly different mode.

As we begin our year of Jubilee may each one of us deepen our relationship with the Lord and experience more powerfully the hope which comes with that, so that we will be heralds of the Gospel and bring many others to know the love of God, his promises and his presence and power in their lives.

May you be blessed and graced in this year of Jubilee.



Diocese of Palmerston North

Bishop John Adams
Bishop of Palmerston North

Let's spend a little time this morning being reminded of exactly why we, as a Christian community, as a Catholic community, are so bold in our hope as this Holy Year begins.

This year of Hope, which we so joyfully begin in our Diocese of Palmerston North, is surely more than pious thinking or baseless optimism. No, Christian hope is

real, it is concrete, it is life changing. Which is why, I am guessing, when Pope Francis first announced this Holy Year he asked each one of us to 'lift up our hearts to Christ and become singers of hope in a world marked by too much despair'.

We stand together in this cathedral this morning, shoulder to shoulder, to say that life is not hope-less – despite the particular circumstances of your life, despite the particular challenges that may lie before you, despite any multitude

of obstacles blocking your way. Your life is not hopeless, because the final victory has been won, and that victory has gone to love. And the winner of that victory knows you by your name, and is calling you to come and follow Him.

Just as Simeon woke up to this truth in our Gospel today, just as St Josephine Bakhita woke up to this same truth – let's ask that this Holy Year might be a time of awakening for us all.

Photos: Annette Scullion



Celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Orders

Annette Scullion

Deacon Matthew White was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Paul Martin sm, on Saturday 22 February. His was the first priestly ordination in the newly re-stored Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. As Archbishop Paul remarked, the day was ‘coincidentally on the Feast of the Chair of St Peter’.

Matthew’s supporters filled the cathedral, including clergy from across the Archdiocese and beyond, fellow seminarians, family members, friends, teaching colleagues, Wairarapa and Ōtari parishioners where Matthew has served as a seminarian, as well as members of his home parish of Te Ngākau Tapu, Porirua, and members of the Launch Out community of which Matthew was a graduate. Members of Ōtari Parish provided music. Fr Patrick Bridgman was mc for the proceedings.

The Liturgy began with a karanga by Whaea Kataraina Millin with a call of welcome to the clergy, who processed into the cathedral escorting Matthew to join his family in readiness for the Rite of Ordination to begin.

Fr Dennis Nacorda presented Matthew to Archbishop Paul as a candidate for ‘Election by the Bishop’ with the ‘Consent of the People’.

In his homily, Archbishop Paul said, ‘In accepting this call to priesthood Matthew you are committing yourself to be a priest

of the Archdiocese of Wellington. The call of the diocesan priest is to immerse himself within the life of a particular church community. The Archdiocese is your home, the people of God of the diocese are your community and family. You are there for them, and they are there to be with you. A priest cannot live in isolation if he is to be truly a man of God, because we are to be a community of faith. I hope you will find the support and care from the people of the Archdiocese that you will need if you are to be truly an effective priest, and that they will find in you a priest who loves his people.’

Archbishop Paul continued the Rite of Ordination by asking Matthew to declare publicly his intention to undertake the office of priesthood. Matthew knelt and placed his hands into Archbishop Paul’s hands as he promised respect and obedience to the Archbishop and his successors.

The Litany of Saints began as Matthew lay prostrate before the altar. Everyone recited the prayer traditional to Christ and the Communion of Saints, asking for prayers and intercessions for blessings on Matthew.

Archbishop Paul laid his hands on Matthew’s head, followed by the concelebrating priests, signifying the imparting of the Holy Spirit.

Archbishop Paul then prayed The Prayer of Consecration, consecrating Matthew a priest for service in the Church.

Matthew stood with his family



Fr Matthew White was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Paul Martin sm, at a moving celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, on 22 February. Photos: Annette Scullion



as he was bestowed with a stole and chasuble belonging to the ministry of priesthood. The chasuble had been handmade by Eileen, Marie and Janeen from the Wairarapa Parish and gifted to Matthew for his ordination – its Māori pattern representing his work with Māori and his home parish of Te Ngākau Tapu.

Archbishop Paul continued the Rite of Ordination by anointing Matthew’s hands. He then presented to Matthew the offertory gifts he had received.

A Kiss of Peace was exchanged between Matthew and Archbishop Paul, after which the priests shared with him the Sign of Peace. Newly ordained as a priest for the

archdiocese, Fr Matthew turned to the congregation as he received a warm round of applause

The Liturgy of the Eucharist followed, presided over by Archbishop Paul, with Fr Matthew taking part at altar alongside Archbishop Paul and Cardinal John Dew with Archdiocese seminarians as the altar servers.

Before the Concluding Rite, Matthew was invited to give words of thanks. He paid tribute to his family members present and past, and all those who guided his formation towards priesthood and helped him towards his day of ordination, especially Archbishop Paul for ordaining him, Matthew

concluded with a request. ‘Please pray for me. But also pray for your own priests. Pray that priests confirm themselves to Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, their hearts and minds are one with Christ and so brings his love to the ends of the earth.’

‘May God Bless you all.’

Following the Mass of Ordination, everyone was invited to share refreshments served in Connolly Hall next to the Cathedral.

Fr Matthew’s Mass of Thanksgiving was held the following day at the Catholic Parish of Wairarapa, Waiyinga Centre, Martinborough.

New Zealanders called to educate themselves on gene technology

Christian bioethicists are encouraging New Zealanders to educate themselves about gene technology and genetic editing as Parliament considers legislative changes that better align with recent scientific and technological advancements.

The InterChurch Bioethics Council (ICBC) and the Nathaniel Centre for Bioethics [an agency of the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference] have collaborated to produce an information resource that explains the science and some of the ethical questions this technology raises. Between them, those groups represent the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Catholic churches.

The resource outlines the benefits that can be derived from advances in gene technology, including repairing people’s genetic codes where issues are identified. But it also asks important questions

that the bioethicists fear might be overlooked.

‘Before we choose to use any technology, we have a responsibility to make sure we have thought about the consequences, good and bad,’ the resource proposes.

‘What, precisely, are the benefits and risks involved? More importantly, how do we carry out a meaningful risk assessment when many of the risks are not easily measured or understood?’

Some people will consider potential financial gains or advances in science as reasons to pursue new technologies, but the ICBC and Nathaniel Centre suggest ‘a genuine assessment of the use of gene technology needs to balance economic benefits and scientific progress with human wellbeing and the wellbeing of all life’.

‘Ultimately, what is required is a robust regulatory process that all New Zealanders can

have confidence in and that is transparent.’

The resource poses questions like: What is a gene? What happens when you change genes in a living thing? How do we make good decisions about gene technology?

It contains sections on the benefits of gene editing, as well as its risks.

‘An informed community is a community that can make better decisions for the good of all New Zealanders,’ said Dr Joy McIntosh of the ICBC.

Nathaniel Centre director Dr John Kleinsman said when issues are as complex as gene editing and broader gene technology, informing the public can be a great challenge.

‘We are hopeful this resource will help unravel the mysteries somewhat and start some informed conversations about this important issue that is otherwise confined to universities, medical clinics and the

halls of Parliament,’ he said.

‘It’s an issue many New Zealanders feel very strongly about.’

Access the ICBC and Nathaniel Centre resource at: <https://bit.ly/ICBCNathaniel>

The Health Select Committee

closing date for receiving submissions on the Gene Technology Bill was 17 February 2025.

Source: The InterChurch Bioethics Council and the Nathaniel Centre for Bioethics



St Patrick’s College Wellington

New Zealand’s oldest Catholic boys’ college

Warmest congratulations to St Patrick’s College 2025 Manu Taupua Matua (Head Student), Sami Ghanem, and his co-Manu Taupua Deputies – Carter Harris, Ethan Lepou, Connor Maxwell and Marley Oloapu-Atoni, and House Captains: Chanel – Cullen Tuiavi’i; Kennedy – Taurus Tumoana; Redwood – Kwade Chadwick; and Watters – Gabriel Aukusitino.

St Patrick’s College warmly welcomes all new students to our College especially the 2025 Year 9 student group.

Sectare Fidem – Hold firm to the Faith



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State of the Nation 2025 shows serious challenges and falling living standards across Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand is backsliding on many areas of social progress, making life harder for people and their whānau across the motu, according to The Salvation Army's State of the Nation 2025 report. Titled Kai, Kāinga, Whānau, The Basics – Food, a Home, Family, the report was released on 11 February.

'Our country needs to do better for people and our report seeks to understand what is happening,' says Dr Bonnie Robinson, director of the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit at The Salvation Army.

'This year we can find few areas of improvement, and, in many cases, indicators have worsened, making it harder for people to have what they need in terms of kai, kāinga and whānau.'

The 18th edition of the report pulls together existing data to provide an annual snapshot of our social progress as a nation. Specific areas covered: Children and Youth, Work and Incomes, Housing, Crime and Punishment and Social Hazards. Another section titled Māori Wellbeing uses He Ara Waiora wellbeing framework to look at how each area specifically impacts tangata whenua.

Key findings in the report include rising unemployment, with more than 400,000 people needing welfare support in December 2024 – the highest number since the 1990s. Food insecurity among families with children has also risen sharply, with half of all Pacific children reported as going without



food often or sometimes.

The State of the Nation 2025 report also highlights while there has been an increase in the number of social housing units available, the pace of new builds is decreasing, and there are rising numbers of people who are homeless. Rent for private rentals continues to be unaffordable for many on low incomes.

Aotearoa New Zealand's prison population has also grown, remaining high compared with other developed nations.

Dr Robinson says of the report: 'We can't wish away the increasing levels of poverty and deprivation that this report is highlighting, but we can prioritise addressing the basic needs of people so that our whānau go beyond barely surviving to seeing them thrive. We need an economy that ensures all people have the basics and one that puts people first.'

The full report is available online: tinyurl.com/Salvation-Army-Report-2025

Source: Salvation Army

Key findings in the report include:

Māori wellbeing

- Large decline in proportion of Māori who feel it is easy to express their identity (75% in 2023/24, down from 84% in 2018).
- Māori almost seven times more likely to be imprisoned. Reimprisonment rate and overall imprisonment rates rising, with much harder impact on Māori.
- Fewer tamariki Māori in state care, as iwi and community-based alternatives increase.

Children and youth

- Violence against children rising, with number of children hospitalised from assault and neglect in 2024 highest in 10 years.
- One in six students left school with no recognised qualification (less than NCEA Level 1) in 2023 (most recent figures available), highest level since 2013.

Housing

- Emergency Housing numbers plummeted, from 4000 in September 2023 down to 1400 in September 2024, below 500 by December 2024. Homelessness rising, eg, Downtown Community Ministries (DCM) Wellington reported increase from 330 to 464 in number of people they are working with.
- Four out of every 10

communities have high rental unaffordability (over 30% median income), hitting those on low incomes hardest.

- Number of social housing units increased by 4500 in 2024, helping to reduce number of people waiting for social housing. Social housing waitlist shrunk by more than 5000 to 20,300 at end of December 2024. About 25,300 people were on waitlist in September and December 2023.
- There are 4000 fewer new housing consents than we estimate is needed to match population growth.
- Median house price in December 2024, \$775,000 – largely unchanged from 2023, but still out of reach for those on lower incomes, around seven times national median income.

Crime and punishment

- About 32% of Aotearoa's population – roughly one in three people – are victims of crime.
- Family violence seen slight decline, 2700 fewer family harm incidents reported by police.
- Almost 10,000 people in prison, with almost 27% on remand awaiting court.

Social hazards

- More than \$2.76 billion lost to gambling in 2023.
- Hazardous drinking increased slightly – one in six people

now drinking in a way that is dangerous to themselves and others.

- Methamphetamine use doubled in September 2024, used by 1.3% of the population, and is the most harmful illicit drug, causing over \$1 billion in social harm costs annually.
- Household debt is down overall, but arrears were highest for five years.
- KiwiSaver withdrawals for hardship up by 58% in past year.

Work and incomes

- Record numbers of people need welfare support, with over 400,000 in December 2024.
- Food insecurity among families with children rose sharply in 2024, and half of Pacific children go without food often or sometimes.
- Unemployment continued to rise during 2024 by 30,000, as number of people employed decreased.
- Pacific and Māori workers bear unequal burden, with unemployment rates two- to three-times higher than other population groups.
- The Salvation Army distributed fewer parcels in 2024 (84,000) compared with 2023, but also had fewer resources as food support funding from government was reduced.

New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference launches 'new' CathNews NZ

On 14 February, the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference (NZCBC) launched the renewed CathNews New Zealand project.

NZCBC recently took on the CathNews NZ name from the Society of Mary. Church Resources, a subsidiary of the Society of Mary, had run the online e-newsletter, delivered twice-weekly to subscribers' inboxes, since 2011.

NZCBC's new CathNews NZ will retain many of the characteristics of the former project, sharing aggregated news about the Church, its people and its ministries. It will draw from material already published and include original content. It will also explore issues of importance for

New Zealand society and culture.

CathNews New Zealand editor Gavin Abraham said providing a Catholic perspective on those issues will help form and inform readers.

'The Church, inspired by the Gospel, has an important voice in our society. Helping share that voice and amplifying it within the Catholic community and beyond will be central to our mission at CathNews,' he said.

Content will come from a range of sources, including mainstream media, Catholic, Christian and other faith-based media, as well as original content from the Bishops Conference.

'We are pleased to welcome

thousands of subscribers, including many who had previously received CathNews,' Mr Abraham said. 'And we are encouraged to have hundreds of new people sign up for this ministry.'

Newsletters will be sent to subscribers each Tuesday and Friday morning, except on public holidays. The cathnewsnz.com website will be updated to coincide with the newsletter schedule.

Visit cathnewsnz.com to sign up to receive the e-newsletter.

To share content for consideration, email cathnews@nzcbc.org.nz or communications@nzcbc.org.nz with other enquiries.

Source: NZCBC

Remembering Dame Tariana Turia

New Zealand Māori rights activist and politician Hon Dame Tariana Turia DNZM died on 3 January 2025, aged 81.

Bishop Peter Cullinane, on behalf of the Catholic Church, sent the following tribute to her Maraekura whānau of Ohakune to be relayed at the gathering and funeral rites for Tariana. *A great lady has passed on to her eternal reward.*

My tribute is simple: she was an example to us all of what leadership really is; of how it is a service, to be exercised for the common good, and not for self aggrandisement. She stands out as an example that many more of us need to follow. May she rest in peace.

– Peter Cullinane, Bishop

Emeritus, Catholic Diocese of Palmerston North.



Hon Dame Tariana Turia DNZM (1944–2025).

Photo: 100maoriLeaders.com

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Evolving the work of the Compassion community

Annette Scullion

WelCom recently spoke with Deacon Rebecca Packer Tumu Whakarae | co-Chief Executive for the Sisters of Compassion Group – almost a year into her role – about her journey that brought her to the special place above the hills of Island Bay, built on the legacy of Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert, and about her vision for the future of the Compassion Centre.

Rebecca began by saying: ‘I wanted to start by thanking those who have worked to make WelCom possible – writers, editors, advertisers and readers. I’ve personally found it a helpful and enjoyable way to learn more about the events and priorities across the Catholic community in the Wellington and Palmerston North dioceses. And it has been wonderful to see support for, and contributions from, our Compassion community in many editions of the newspaper.’

Rebecca’s whakapapa is to Ngāti Kahungunu in Nuhaka through her father’s side, with a strong Scottish and German Jewish connection. On her mother’s side, she is descended from Scottish and English settlers and missionaries. ‘I grew up in Tauranga in the Bay of Plenty as the oldest of four children. I’m a lawyer by training. I’m married to Matthew and we have both recently been ordained as priests in the Anglican Church in Wellington,’ she explains.

Before stepping into the role with the Sisters of Compassion, Rebecca worked at Crown Law, specialising in public law. She started in the wake of the Christchurch mosque attacks to help oversee the government response to the inquiry that followed.

Before this, she spent some time overseas, studying in the UK, working for the UN in Kenya, and working on policy projects in Westminster, in the area of justice sector reform and re-building trust in institutions after conflict.

Towards the end of her time overseas, Rebecca spent a year as part of an ecumenical community in London dedicated to prayer, study and service. ‘This community – the Community of St Anselm – brought people together from all parts of the world,’ she says, ‘and from different faith traditions. It was set up by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, hosted at Lambeth Palace and overseen by a Catholic Order, Chemin Neuf.’

‘This was a hugely formative part of my spiritual life. I discovered the riches of the Ignatian tradition, of contemplative practices and silence, but also the gift of living community, and the dynamic cycle of action and contemplation, prayer and service, taking time out to be filled, to go into the world again, over and over.’

On returning to Wellington six years ago, this deep spiritual experience led Rebecca to the Home



Deacon Rebecca Packer Tumu Whakarae | co-Chief Executive for the Sisters of Compassion Group with her Co-CE Deacon Danny Karatea Goddard before he recently retired for health reasons. Photo: Supplied

of Compassion for the first time.

‘Here, I felt I had discovered a rare and precious treasure. I soon became involved as a Director and later a Trustee.’

In her current role, Rebecca brings her professional background and training, but also a deep faith and commitment to the story and mission of Meri Hohepa Suzanne Aubert and the Sisters of Compassion.

Rebecca and her team want to ensure the Compassion community offers a place of hope and encounter, ‘so the story of Suzanne Aubert can continue to inspire practical, prayerful work today and into the future for the benefit of all of our communities.’

As well as continuing practical service, maintaining a commitment to spiritual nourishment and flourishing, Rebecca’s vision is to further its mission to help grow people of faith and action to embody these commitments into the future – including for young people.

‘Our Lady’s Home of Compassion, being a place of spiritual nourishment, is central to this story. I would like to see it becoming an urban monastery that provides a welcome to pilgrims, including from schools, as well as fostering wider connections across the compassion community.’

Looking ahead, says Rebecca, the *Year of Jubilee: Pilgrims of*

Hope is an opportunity to focus around this priority of the Home of Compassion being a place of spiritual nourishment.

‘We are conscious of the growing need for food and housing, including refugee accommodation. We want to ensure what we are doing is sustainable into the future and we will look for opportunities to grow our mission.’

Partnering with Tangāta Whenua was a key part of Suzanne Aubert’s story. ‘Today partnership remains both a priority and is a work in progress as the organisation continues to foster relationships with iwi groups and others in the community, but also to better embed tikanga, te reo Māori and te ao Māori across our organisation.’

‘Suzanne Aubert was an inspirational trailblazer, and her story is as important today as ever – it’s a living story that continues to inspire action in the present. In Suzanne Aubert, we see the practical outworking of the love of Jesus in our New Zealand context. In encountering Mother Aubert and learning about her ministry, many continue to be touched and inspired to partner with the divine in this gospel work of love, care, and practical prayerful service – to serve the many in need around us. This is the work of our evolving Compassion community – a living and active whānau.’

Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion and resting place of Suzanne Aubert

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga is proposing to list the Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion and Resting Place of Suzanne Aubert, in Rhine St, Island Bay, Wellington, as a Category 1 historic place on the New Zealand Heritage List | Rārangi Kōrero.

Natalie Marshall, Heritage Assessment Adviser, who prepared the listing report, says the Chapel and Resting Place have outstanding historical and spiritual significance for their direct association with the Catholic nun, nurse, and social worker Suzanne Aubert (1835–1926). The Venerable Suzanne Aubert founded the Daughters of

Our Lady of Compassion, the only Catholic order to be initiated in New Zealand.

‘The final resting place is a testament to Suzanne Aubert’s centrality to the order, which continues to make important social and spiritual welfare contributions locally, nationally and internationally.’

Furthermore, Aubert has been nominated for canonisation and her resting place is a site of pilgrimage and education,’ says Natalie.

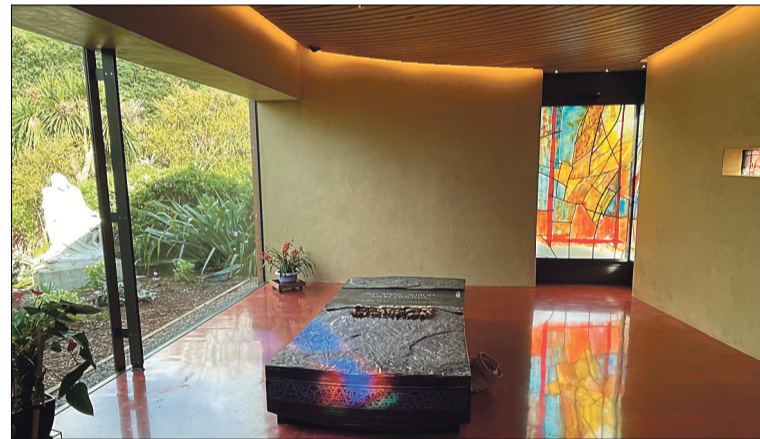
The chapel was a collaboration between architectural firm Structon Group Limited and the late artist John Drawbridge of Island Bay. It has special aesthetic qualities that

evoke a powerful sense of awe and tranquillity.

Natalie says she is keen to learn about people’s personal connections with this place and what it means to them through submissions on the proposed listing.

The Home of Compassion complex continues to be owned and managed by the Mother Aubert Home of Compassion Trust Board, which was established in 1917. Public esteem for the place is evident in its ongoing use as a place of worship, retreat and learning.

People can make submissions by email to submissionscr@heritage.org.nz until 24 February.



Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion and resting place of Suzanne Aubert are being proposed as a Category 1 historic place. Photo: Supplied

Compassion Soup Kitchen Appeal 2025

The year is just beginning and the demand for food and essential services in our region continues to rise. The Compassion Soup Kitchen Appeal 2025 is being launched to help address this current crisis for many people.

In the past six years, the demand for food at Compassion Soup Kitchen has increased by 600 per cent – from 10,000 meals in 2018 to 70,000 in 2024. This is a clear reflection of the growing number of people in the community seeking support and a reminder that, despite the Soup Kitchen’s best efforts, it is still not enough.

The recent rise in unemployment may explain why more people have come looking for a hot meal or the support the Compassion Soup Kitchen provides through its clothing room. Whānau can pick

up essentials such as underwear and socks, a warm jacket or a pair of shoes. Every week the Soup Kitchen staff and volunteers are seeing the clothing room emptying, despite their efforts to keep up with demand.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters and donors, the Soup Kitchen has been able to sustain its services in recent times. The kindness of those who give has helped keep alive the mission of Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert, who began supporting those in need many years ago.

Everyone is encouraged to support the Compassion Soup Kitchen Appeal 2025. A warm meal or a new pair of trousers can provide dignity and hope to those who need it most. Together, we can make a difference.

Please visit www.soupkitchen.org.nz for more information on how to donate.



Compassion Soup Kitchen – Te Pūaroa. So much more than a meal: Conversation, Compassion, Caring. Image: Supplied

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Worldwide outpouring of good wishes and prayers for Pope Francis

Messages of support and prayers for Pope Francis' health have poured in, as he continues to be hospitalised at Rome's Gemelli hospital.

Since Pope Francis' hospitalisation on 14 February for bilateral pneumonia, messages have swarmed in from religious leaders, political figures, friends, faithful around the world, and the children hospitalised in the same hospital, struggling with their own illnesses and saddened by the Pope's health issues but happy to have him close.

In a handwritten letter addressed to his 'beloved brother' by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, the Orthodox Patriarch wishes the Pope a 'swift and complete recovery' and a speedy return, 'with God's help', 'to his sacred and important duties'.

Another letter from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, has called on the faithful to come together 'as one family in faith, united in an urgent appeal' for Pope Francis' health and wellbeing. 'As a spiritual family, we are called to stand together, united in prayer and supplication.'

In Lebanon, Cardinal Béchara Boutros Pierre Raï, Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites, has said he has prayed for Pope Francis both publicly and privately. 'May the Lord help him and grant him healing,' he said.

The Symposium of Bishops' Conferences of Africa and Madagascar has assured 'the solidarity and spiritual closeness' of all the faithful in the continent.



Votive candles and flowers are seen at the base of a statue of St John Paul II outside Rome's Gemelli hospital on 19 February 2025, where Pope Francis is being treated for double pneumonia. Photo: Pablo Esparza/CNS

In Pope Francis' homeland, Argentina, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Ignacio García Cuerva, has issued a call for prayers. 'In this way,' he wrote in a letter, 'we express our love for Pope Francis and ask God to grant him strength, restore his health, and sustain him in the mission entrusted to him.'

Messages and prayers have arrived from bishops and dioceses across Latin America including Uruguay, Mexico, Ecuador, Chile, and Peru, Nicaragua and Brazil.

The Presidency of the Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Council (Celam), led by Cardinal Jaime Spengler, Archbishop of Porto Alegre (Brazil), expressed affection and closeness to Pope Francis in a letter. 'We pray for you,

so that you may feel the strength and consolation of the Lord and that He may grant you much patience.'

In Canada, prayers are being offered for 'the Holy Father's full recovery as he continues to lead the Church with courage and generosity of spirit' and the bishops of the United States have published a special prayer for Pope Francis on their website.

Similar sentiments are shared by Catholic communities throughout Asia. In the Philippines, Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David, the President of the Episcopal Conference, wrote to the faithful asking for 'prayers for his healing and recovery at this difficult time.'

Chinese Catholics are also rallying in prayer and fasting

for Pope Francis' full recovery. The website *xinde.org* a point of reference for the mainland Chinese community, is publishing updates from the Holy See on the Pope's health and has invited the faithful say a special prayer.

World leaders have joined the chorus of good wishes and support. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni visited the Pope in hospital on 19 February.

On 21 February, UN Secretary-General António Guterres spoke to Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, to express wishes of a speedy recovery, remarking 'how important the Pope is, not only for the Church, but also for the whole world.'

Speaking at an event in Bologna Italy, Cardinal Matteo Maria Zuppi, President of the Italian Bishops' Conference, expressed optimism about the Pope's condition, saying the latest updates suggest 'we are heading in the right direction' towards 'a full recovery', which, he added, 'we hope will come soon.'

On Friday evening Pope Francis' medical team said his condition is not life-threatening, and that he is sitting upright in a chair, working, and joking as usual, but warned he is not out of danger and will have to remain in hospital for at least another week. In its latest note the Holy See Press Office said the Pope had a restful night.

Source: Vatican News



Pope Francis waves as he arrives for his weekly general audience at the Vatican, 12 February, 2025.

Photo: Alessandra Tarantino | AP

NZ Catholic Bishops' prayer message

On behalf of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Paul Martin issued this statement to media on Sunday evening 23 February.

'We are deeply concerned as Catholic people about the condition of the Pope's health at this time as he struggles with this sickness. Each time Catholics gather for Mass we pray for the Holy Father but we're also asking our people to pray for Pope Francis even more in their prayers at this time. We hope that Pope Francis senses how much he is loved and supported at this time from all over the world and from our part of the world here in New Zealand. We pray that he also feels the closeness of God at this time of sickness and that he may be restored to full health.'

Pope in hospital, condition remains critical

Pope Francis slept well on his tenth night at Rome's Gemelli Hospital, where he is being treated for double pneumonia, according to the Holy See Press Office.

Pope Francis had a restful tenth night in the hospital, according to a statement published on Monday morning, 24 February, by the Holy See Press Office.

'The night went well; the Pope slept and is resting,' read the statement.

On Sunday evening, 23 February, the Holy See Press Office said his condition remains critical, though he has not experienced any respiratory crises since Saturday morning.

Pope Francis had received blood transfusions to bring up his

hemoglobin levels.

'The thrombocytopenia remains stable; however, some blood tests show early, mild renal insufficiency, which is currently under control,' said the Sunday press statement, adding that 'High-flow oxygen therapy continues through nasal cannulas.'

'The Holy Father remains alert and well-oriented,' the statement read. 'The complexity of the clinical situation and the necessary time for the pharmacological treatments to show results require that the prognosis remain guarded.'

Earlier on Sunday, the Pope attended Mass in his apartment in Gemelli Hospital with the doctors and nurses who are overseeing his treatment.

'Slight improvement' in Pope's condition

On Monday evening 24 February, The Holy See Press Office provided an update on the Pope's health, advising no new episodes of asthma-like respiratory distress; a slight reduction in oxygen flow and levels; and improved test results. The update advised his mild kidney insufficiency is not a cause for concern. Pope Francis has resumed work and, in the evening, called the parish in Gaza, to thank them for a video they had sent him.

Source: Vatican News



Nuns pray in front of the statue of late Pope John II outside the Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic in Rome, where Pope Francis is battling pneumonia.

Photo: Gregorio Borgia/AP

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Pope on Ukraine: 'Painful and shameful' anniversary 'for all humanity'

During his Angelus address, which Pope Francis asked the Holy See Press Office to release while he recovers in the hospital, the Holy Father remembers the imminent three-year anniversary of the War in Ukraine on 24 February 2025, calling it 'a painful and shameful occasion for all humanity', and saying he renews his solidarity with suffering Ukrainians and for all victims of armed conflicts as he prays for peace.

Pope Francis expressed this during the Angelus address he chose to have published on Sunday, 23 February, one day before the three-year anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion in Ukraine.

The Holy Father has been being treated at Rome's Gemelli Hospital since 14 February, diagnosed with double pneumonia.

In his Angelus remarks, the Holy Father remembered 'martyred Ukraine'.

'As I renew my solidarity with the martyred Ukrainian people,' the Pope reminded, 'I invite you to remember the victims of all armed conflicts and to pray for the gift of peace in Palestine, Israel, and throughout the Middle East, in Myanmar, in Kivu, and in Sudan.'

The Holy Father also expressed his gratitude for all those who have been praying for him.

'In these days, I have received

many messages of affection,' he noted, saying, 'I have been particularly moved by the letters and drawings from children.'

'Thank you for this closeness and for the comforting prayers I have received from all over the world!' the Pope concluded, before reassuring, 'I entrust everyone to the intercession of Mary and ask you to pray for me.'

The Ukrainian Parliament has declared 24 February – the anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022 – a nationwide day of prayer.

Source: Vatican Media

Pope Francis supports US Bishops in migrant advocacy

Pope Francis addresses a letter to the bishops of the United States, expressing his support for their efforts to protect the rights and dignity of migrants.

In a letter dated 10 February 2025, and addressed to his brothers in the episcopate, Pope Francis acknowledges the work of US bishops in standing alongside migrants and refugees, he expresses support for efforts to uphold the fundamental dignity of every human person and he highlights the importance of pastoral accompaniment for those facing displacement.

In his letter, the Pope recalls the Holy Family's flight into Egypt and draws a parallel between their experience and that of many migrants today. Their journey, he notes, shines the light on 'the

phenomenon of migration as a decisive moment in history' and reaffirms 'not only our faith in God but also the infinite and transcendent dignity of every human person.'

Highlighting Pope Pius XII's apostolic constitution on the Care of Migrants, which describes the Holy Family as a model for all who must leave their homeland in search of safety and stability, he writes 'Your work in defending migrants is deeply rooted in the mission of Christ and the history of the Church.'

In his 10-point letter, the Holy Father says he has 'followed closely the major crisis that is taking place in the United States with the initiation of a programme of mass deportations' and commends the bishops' efforts stressing that Christian love demands

recognition of the dignity of all people, regardless of legal status.

The Pope acknowledges the complex realities surrounding US migration policies but reminds the bishops that the measure of a just society is how it treats its most vulnerable members.

'The legitimate regulation of migration must never undermine the essential dignity of the person,' he writes.

The Pope also expresses appreciation for the bishops' advocacy against narratives that criminalise migrants and emphasises their role in ensuring that policies respect human rights.

Go to tinyurl.com/Pope-Letter-US-Bishops to read the Pope's letter.

Source: Vatican News

US bishops sue Trump Administration

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has sued the Trump Administration over the suspension of funding of refugee resettlement assistance.

In the lawsuit, filed in the US District Court for the District of Columbia on 18 February, the bishops called this suspension 'unlawful and harmful to newly arrived refugees.'

A USCCB spokesperson said the lawsuit urges the Government 'to uphold its legal and moral obligations' to refugees and to restore the funding needed to ensure faith-based and community organisations can continue their work with refugees.

The USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services is one of 10 national resettlement agencies that work with

the US Refugee Admissions Program, which was established by Congress in 1980, formalising the process by which refugees are legally resettled in the US.

USRAP was suspended through an executive order signed by President Donald Trump on 20 January and is being evaluated to see whether refugee resettlement 'is in the national interest.'

The State Department issued suspension notices to domestic resettlement agencies, including the USCCB, on 24 January, which has impacted resettlement agencies' ability to carry out services for refugees.

The USCCB's president, Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the

US Archdiocese for the Military Services, said 'the conference suddenly finds itself unable to sustain its work to care for the thousands of refugees who were welcomed into our country and assigned to the care of the USCCB by the government after being granted legal status.'

Chieko Noguchi, USCCB spokesperson, said the lawsuit filed by the USCCB 'challenges the suspension of the funding for refugee assistance we have run for decades.'

'Throughout this long-time partnership with the US government, the USCCB has helped nearly a million individuals find safety and build their lives in the United States.'

Source: OSV News

Teresa of Kolkata to universal calendar

Pope Francis has added the feast day of St Teresa of Kolkata to the General Roman Calendar so that her 'Optional Memorial shall be celebrated by all on 5 September every year.' Cardinal Arthur Roche and Archbishop Vittorio Francesco Viola, respectively prefect and secretary of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, announced the Pope's decision in a decree published by the Vatican. Previously the feast day of St Teresa of Calcutta, as the Vatican refers to the city in India where she began her work with the abandoned poor, was inscribed only in the proper calendar of the Missionaries of Charity and the proper calendar of India. Now her memorial is included in the calendar of the universal church.

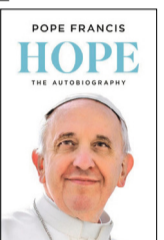
Mass attendance rises in UK: study

The number of Catholics attending Mass in England and Wales has shot up by roughly 50,000 in 2023. The latest figures from the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales reveal that, while 503,308 attended Mass in 2022, 554,913 did so in 2023. The increase still falls short of the pre-Covid numbers. In 2019, according to the Bishops' Conference, 701,902 people attended Sunday Mass. A similar trend has been found in Scotland. Data shows that 95,029 people attended Sunday Mass in Scotland in 2023, compared to 89,420 the previous year. Like England, Mass attendance in Scotland has not returned to pre-Covid levels: 127,003 Scots attended Sunday Mass in 2019. Nevertheless, 647,600 people attended Sunday Mass in Britain in 2023, compared to 592,428 in 2022.

Source: The Tablet

Pope Francis' autobiography: Hope

Hope is a memoir by Pope Francis published by Random House on 14 January 2025, described it as the first memoir ever published by a sitting pope. The book is based on notes from interviews Pope Francis conducted with the Italian journalist Carlo Musso over six years. Francis discusses his childhood in Buenos Aires, the conclave that elected him pope, and his direction of the Church after his election.



Jubilee of Deacons

The fourth major event of the Jubilee of Hope is dedicated to deacons. From 21 to 23, February 4,000 deacons – 'servants of God' – came to Rome for a Jubilee pilgrimage to pass through the Holy Door and participate in a series of meetings. They came from over a hundred countries, including the United States, France, Brazil, India, Cameroon and Australia. The Jubilee concluded with Mass presided over by the pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelisation, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, on Sunday 23 February in St Peter's Basilica, with 23 deacons ordained. The three days in Rome were a time of encounter, prayer and renewal for the deacons and their families.



Over 4,000 deacons gathered in St Peter's Basilica for the special jubilee Mass, 23 February 2025.

Photo: Daniel Ibáñez/CNA

King Charles to meet Pope at Vatican

King Charles and Queen Camilla are scheduled to meet Pope Francis at the Vatican during their visit to Italy in early April. Buckingham Palace announced on 7 February the King and Queen will make state visits to Italy and the Holy See 'in early April 2025'. The announcement said they will join the Pope 'in celebrating the 2025 Jubilee Year – a year of walking together as "pilgrims of hope".'

The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, welcomed the announcement. 'I am delighted King Charles and Queen Camilla will visit the Holy See and meet with Pope Francis during this special Jubilee Year when so many will gather in Rome as pilgrims of hope,' Cardinal Nichols said. 'It presents a wonderful opportunity for us to celebrate the close relationship between the UK and the Holy See.'



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Bishops' pilgrimage celebrates faith passed down for generations

Hundreds of people, who gathered on 12 January this summer at Totara Point in Northland to celebrate the anniversary of the first Mass celebrated on New Zealand soil, have been urged to be 'bearers of hope and peace to one another' during the Catholic Church's Jubilee Year.

Archbishop Gabor Pinter, the apostolic nuncio to New Zealand, reflected on the hope evident in those who were present in January 1838, when Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pompallier and other priests celebrated Mass in the home of Thomas and Mary Poynton at Totara Point.

'With the first *Miha* (Mass) started New Zealand's own pilgrimage of hope; a pilgrimage we continue on to this time,' he said.

'In essence, the first Catholic Mass in New Zealand represents the beginning of a journey of faith, cultural interaction, and community-building that continues to influence the country's religious and social fabric, and our own lives today.'

Archbishop Pinter, who took up the role as papal ambassador to New Zealand and the Pacific last year, placed that hope in the context of the Jubilee Year, which Pope Francis recently opened.

'The Holy Father is inviting us to embark on a spiritual journey. In this sense, this our pilgrimage of today, this *hiko*, is not just a physical journey to a sacred place

but a metaphor for our spiritual journey towards God,' he said.

'Bishop Pompallier and his missionary companions left behind the comforts of home to seek God's presence in Aotearoa. They were able to make that journey, that *hiko*, because they hoped in God's boundless mercy and love.

'We too are invited to go on our own journey, *hiko*, leave our comfort zones, seeking a deeper connection with the Divine, and opening our hearts to God's grace and guidance. I see all of you here present as an embodiment of this spiritual pilgrimage.'

Carrying forward the Jubilee theme of 'Pilgrims of Hope', the nuncio said hope must be the focus of that spiritual pilgrimage.

'In a world often marked by uncertainty, suffering and division, hope sustains us and points us towards a future filled with God's promises. Hope is not mere wishful thinking, but a confident expectation rooted in God's faithfulness.

'As pilgrims of hope, we are called to be bearers of this hope, shining God's light in the world and inspiring others to trust in His promises.'

Auckland Bishop Steve Lowe, president of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, was the principal celebrant at the Mass. He was joined by the bishops of all New Zealand dioceses – Archbishop Paul Martin sm, Bishop John



The bishops of New Zealand's six dioceses and Archbishop Gabor Pinter at Totara Point to celebrate the anniversary of the first Mass celebrated on New Zealand soil, 13 January 1838.

Photos: NZCBC



Hundreds of people gathered for Mass celebrated by New Zealand's bishops at Totara Point in January to mark the first Eucharist celebrated in New Zealand by Bishop Pompallier in 1838.

Adams, Bishop of Christchurch Michael Gielen, Bishop of Dunedin Michael Dooley, and Bishop of Hamilton Richard Laurenson.

Bishop Lowe reflected on the decision Pope Gregory XVI made to appoint Bishop Pompallier to New Zealand, and how Pope Francis – through the apostolic nuncio – continues to provide for the Church 'at the ends of the earth'.

The New Zealand bishops designated two key pilgrimages they would undertake together during the Jubilee Year – to Totara Point on the second Sunday in January, and to St Mary of the Angels, the national Marian shrine, for the Feast of Our Lady of the Assumption, New Zealand's patronal feast day, 15 August.

Following the Mass at Totara Point, many pilgrims joined the bishops in travelling to the church at Motukaraka, where Bishop Pompallier's decision to place New Zealand under the protection of Our Lady Assumed in Heaven is reflected in a painting.

The bishops finally travelled to St Mary's Church in Motuti, the resting place of Bishop Pompallier.

They heard about the history and significance of both those houses of worship, and prayed for the Catholics who have preceded them in carrying on the faith in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Source: NZCBC

Jubilee debt campaign resonates in the Pacific

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is taking part in the global *Together We* campaign, launched in January as part of the Vatican's *Turn Debt into Hope* initiative for this Jubilee Year.

Caritas aims to use the campaign to highlight the urgent need for debt justice, especially for Pacific nations, many of which are forced to borrow money to recover from climate disasters caused by the emissions of wealthier nations.

'This debt crisis highlights a global injustice,' said Mena Antonio, CEO of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand. 'Wealthier nations, whose pollution has driven climate change, are responsible for most of the problem. Yet it's poorer nations paying the highest price, both environmentally and financially. This is especially true in the Pacific, where nations are facing the worst impacts of climate change, yet they are being forced into unsustainable debt to rebuild. We need a new approach, which ensures they have the resources to adapt and thrive.'

Pope calls for action against debt

Pope Francis made a call at the launch of the *Together We* campaign on World Day of Peace, 1 January. He said: 'Foreign debt and ecological debt are two sides of the same coin, namely the mindset of exploitation that has culminated in the debt crisis. In the spirit of this Jubilee Year, I urge the international community to work towards forgiving foreign debt in recognition of the ecological debt existing between the North and the South of this world. This is an appeal for solidarity, but above all for justice.'



In Kiribati, saltwater intrusion and soil salination caused by climate change is exacerbating food insecurity. Photo: Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

The *Together We* campaign is calling on governments, financial institutions, and individuals to stand in solidarity with vulnerable nations and demand a fairer system. It encourages New Zealanders to join the movement by signing a global petition, urging governments to relieve the debt burden for developing nations; raising awareness; engaging in advocacy; and supporting policy changes that promote climate justice.

Part of the campaign is advocating for the international community to rethink how climate finance is delivered – through grants rather than loans. Caritas says New Zealand is already demonstrating leadership in this area.

'New Zealand's government has for many years shown leadership by providing climate finance as grants rather than loans,' says Mena Antonio. 'Grants don't have to be repaid, allowing nations to recover and adapt without the burden of

debt. If more countries followed this approach, it could break the cycle of debt and offer real hope to those most affected by climate change. We think this should be celebrated. New Zealand's innovation shows we understand our moral responsibility to care for our neighbours, and this should be a model for other developed nations to follow.'

The campaign echoes past successes, such as the Jubilee 2000 movement, which led to the cancellation of over \$100 billion in unjust debt.

Visit www.caritas.org.nz/turndebtintofope for more information, sign the petition or to get involved.

Source: Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand

» Testing times ahead for our world, Caritas CEO, p 22.

Masterton churches torched

St Patrick's Catholic Church was one of four Masterton churches damaged in suspicious fires in the early hours of Saturday morning, 22 February. The four churches hit were the Anglican Church of the Epiphany, St Patrick's Catholic Church, Masterton Baptist Church and Equippers Church Masterton. Three other churches also appear to have been targeted.

St Patrick's Catholic Church has praised the efforts of a local police officer who happened to be driving past, saw their building was 'red hot', and managed to dampen the flames with an outside hose until firefighters arrived. The damage to some of them has been described as 'significant', with police now investigating and standing guard at the buildings.

Young Church

Catholic Schools Commissioning Masses

The Catholic Schools Commissioning Masses for 2025 celebrate Eucharist and whanaungatanga; and all who serve in our Catholic school and college communities are commissioned and blessed in their ministries.

Archdiocese of Wellington

- South Island, 28 February, 5.30pm, St Peter Chanel Church, Motueka.
- North Island, 4 March, 5.30pm, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Wellington.

Diocese of Palmerston North

- Manawatu, 27 February, 4.30pm, Hato Pāora College Chapel, Feilding.
- Taranaki, 26 February, 4.30pm, St Joseph's Church, New Plymouth.
- Whanganui, 28 February, 3.30pm, Cullinane College Chapel, Whanganui.
- Hawkes Bay/Tararua, 12 March, 5.30pm, St Joseph's Church, Waipukurau.

World Youth Day 2025

WYD, usually on the Feast of Christ the King in November, will be celebrated at the beginning of August to coincide with the celebration calendar of the Jubilee Year. The NZCBC have permission from the Dicastery of Laity, Family and Life to move this day for us in the antipodes. This will be the permanent celebration day annually.

International World Youth Day 2027 - South Korea

Expressions of interest will soon be called for to prepare for WYD, in Seoul, South Korea, in 2027. It will be the first time WYD takes place in mainland East Asia and in a Christian minority country. Young adult parishioners who will be 18–30 years in 2027, are invited to consider attending. New Zealand bishops hope for a group of 500 people, with Seoul being in close proximity to New Zealand.

NZCBC National Young Church website

The NZCBC National Council for Young People has a website with resources, news and ideas for safe ministry with young people. Visit www.youngpeople.church and share the link.

Archdiocese EJP Commission views Treaty Principles Bill as ‘fatally flawed’



Jim McAloon

The Archdiocese of Wellington's Commission for Ecology, Justice, and Peace was among the hundreds of thousands of groups and individuals who made a submission on the ACT Party's Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill. The closing date for submissions was 14 January 2025.

The Commission's view is that the Bill is fatally flawed. Most importantly, the 'principles' which it includes have very little to do with either the text of te Tiriti in Māori or the Treaty in English. Where the Bill declares that the government has full power to govern 'in the best interests of everyone', by te Tiriti, rangatira allowed the Crown kawanatanga [governorship]. Where the Bill says

that the Crown will respect the rights Māori had in 1840, te Tiriti guaranteed tino rangatiratanga [full chieftainship, or full rights of chiefly authority]. This second 'principle' also says that Māori may have different rights from 'everyone' only if these rights are bestowed by a Treaty settlement. The third 'principle' speaks of equality before the law which is fine as far as it goes, but ignores the guarantee of royal protection in the Treaty. Most objectionably, the Bill provides that these, and no other, 'principles' will be taken into account.

It is well known that the two language versions of the Treaty | te Tiriti are very different. Nearly 40 years ago the Waitangi Tribunal observed that kawanatanga – governorship – in te Tiriti is something less than the 'sovereignty', which the English version conveyed. It might be understood as a duty to keep order so that Māori interests not be disrupted. Likewise, 'tino rangatiratanga' is something more than the 'full, exclusive and undisturbed possession' of the English. Even the English version is a firm guarantee against dispossession, though, and indeed this is part of the problem: the Bill seeks to impose the language of equal rights when, as in the massive land confiscations, the invasion of Parihaka, the fraudulent deeds in many parts of the country, Māori

enjoyed anything but equal rights.

The Crown has in recent times acknowledged some of these wrongs, but this history cannot be glossed over. It requires redress. Pope John Paul II said in Australia in 1986 it cannot be maintained that 'the fair and equitable recognition of Aboriginal rights to land is discrimination. To call for the acknowledgment of the land rights of people who have never surrendered those rights is not discrimination. Certainly, what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow'.

Over the last 40 years there has been slow progress in working out and applying Treaty principles in many contexts. This has taken much dialogue and much patience. It has borne some fruit in Treaty settlements, which have to some degree restored mana and resources to iwi. But as Justin Tipa of Ngāi Tahu said on Waitangi Day, we can also recall the 'sincerity, justice, and good faith' with which Captain Hobson was ordered to negotiate the Treaty in 1839. It is difficult to see how we can progress when one side to an agreement seeks unilaterally to change the terms of that agreement, but that is what this Bill would do.

In 1995, another government tried to impose a cap on the sum



The Hikoī mō Te Tiriti, a nationwide protest against the Treaty Principles Bill, culminated in Wellington on 19 November 2024 where more than 40,000 participants walked from Waitangi Park through the heart of the city to Parliament grounds. It is thought to be New Zealand's largest-ever protest.

Photo: Annette Scullion/WelCom

available for Treaty settlements. Protests erupted. The Catholic bishops at that time criticised unilaterally imposed arrangements and asked that governments 'keep trying to address the grievances of the past with integrity and consultation'. As the bishops said, 'Treaty of Waitangi issues are not about party politics. They are about honouring with goodwill the covenant entered by the Crown and Māori, on which this nation is founded'. What was needed then, and is still needed now, is 'a new

process of consultation on the meaning and application of tino rangatiratanga and kawanatanga as encompassed in Te Tiriti'.

Jim McAloon is chairperson of the Archdiocese of Wellington EJP Commission and professor of history at Victoria University of Wellington.

More information and views about Te Tiriti o Waitangi are on the Archdiocese website at: www.wn.catholic.org.nz/adw_community/hikoī-mo-te-tiriti/

Waitangi Day Masses - recognising dignity, mana and tapu

Monsignor Gerard Burns

The annual Waitangi Day Mass hosted at St Mary of the Angels has been celebrated for about 20 years. On Waitangi Day a good-sized congregation gathered again for this celebration, presided over by Archbishop Paul Martin sm. Archbishop Paul drew from the first reading's image of the desert to reflect on what life here could and can be like, touching also on the role of the Church in public life.

The Waitangi Day Mass has always had the particular participation of Te Ngākau Tapu parish community based in Porirua and the SMOA choir. There are songs and prayers in te reo, English, Latin and various other languages of the congregation. It is a wonderful chance to think and pray for the land of Aotearoa and the connections and covenants



Among the many Masses said around the motu on Waitangi Day, Pā Peter Healy sm (l), Pā Phil Cody sm (c) and parish priest Fr Alan Roberts (r) celebrated Mass at St Mary's Pukekarakā, Otāki. They read a karakia that was recited at the signing of the Treaty in 1840.

Photo: Annette Scullion

made since 1840 and there was a sense of joy in the celebration and the recognition of all the different contributions to life here.

At a time when there is much discussion about te Tiriti, the Mass reminded us of the spiritual basis of human encounters – the

recognition of each one's dignity, mana and tapu. For that reason te Tiriti is being spoken of more

frequently as a sacred covenant, similar to the covenants so central to the Bible and Christian life.

Pā Peter Healy and Pā Phil Cody read the following karakia at Mass at Pukekarakā. This karakia was recited by Ngāmanu of Ngāti Hau and Ngāti Kaharau after he had signed the Treaty in Tamaki, on 9 July 1840. In 1840 more than 500 chiefs signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

**Haere mai e Te Tiriti o Waitangi
Haere mai ki tēnei ao
Haere mai me ngā hua kei roto i a koe
Tū mai ki tō mātou taha
Noho mai ki tō mātou taha
Takiri a nuku
Takiri a rangi
Te Manawa tī
Te Manawa tā
Tenei re kare kau
Te kare a roto e**

**Welcome Te Tiriti o Waitangi
Welcome to this world
Welcome with the fruits you have in you
Stand by our side
Sit by our side
Proceed along the land
Proceed along the heavens
'Tis the enduring breath
The breath of life
Here within are the ripples
The ripples of passion and emotions within**

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2025 clergy moves announced

Archbishop Paul Martin sm and Bishop John Adams announced in December 2024 the following clergy and seminarian appointments for the Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North for 2025.

Archdiocese of Wellington

Catholic Parish of Buller and Inangahua, Westport/Reefton	Fr David Gruschow, Parish priest
Holy Family Parish, Nelson/Stoke	Fr Andrew Kim, Parish priest Seminarian Gerson Badayos, Seminarian pastoral year
Our Lady of the Bays Parish, Richmond/Motueka/Takaka	Fr Andrew Kim, Administrator Fr Cirilo Barlis, Assistant priest Fr Dyson Tharakan, Assistant priest Seminarian Gerson Badayos, pastoral year
Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish, Marlborough	Fr Jacob Kuman cp, Administrator Fr Peter Gardiner cp, Assistant priest
Holy Trinity Parish, Wellington East	Fr Bill Warwick, Parish priest Deacon Kinh Nguyen, Assistant Kham Nguyen, Home base for seminarian
Catholic Parish of Wellington South, Wellington South	Fr Doug Shepherd, Parish priest Fr Biju Xavier, Assistant priest Dyester Abo-Abo, Home base for seminarian
St Mary of the Angels Parish, Wellington Central	Fr Kevin Mowbray sm, Parish priest Fr Michael Young sm, Assistant priest Fr Barry Scannell sm, Assistant priest (after Easter)
Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish	Fr Patrick Bridgman, Administrator Debbie Matheson, Lay pastoral leader (until March)
Catholic Parish of Otari, Karori/Wilton	Fr Joy Thottankara, Parish priest Fr Tikoua Kautu, Assistant priest
St Francis of Assisi Ōhāriu Parish, Khandallah/Johnsonville/Newlands	Msgr Gerard Burns, Parish priest Fr Alfred Tong, Assistant priest
Our Lady of Hope Parish, Tawa/Titahi Bay	Fr Rico de la Torre, Parish priest Fr Pene Patelesio, Assistant priest and supply
Te Ngakau Tapu Parish, Porirua	Msgr Gerard Burns, Administrator Fr Alfred Tong, Assistant priest
Holy Family Parish, Porirua East	Fr Isaac Songa mf, Parish priest Fr Nicholas Phone Myint mf, Assistant priest
St Theresa's Parish, Plimmerton	Fr Ravi Kumar Voliganti, Administrator
Our Lady of Kāpiti Parish, Kāpiti	Fr Raymond Soriano, Parish priest
St Mary's Hāto Mere, Pukekaraka, Ōtaki	Fr Alan Roberts, Parish priest (until Easter) Fr Simone Volavola msc, Administrator (from Easter) Fr Beniata Bakatete msc, Assistant priest (from Easter) [msc – Missionaries of the Sacred Heart]
St Joseph's Hāto Hōhepa Parish Levin	Fr Bruce England, Parish priest until Easter Fr Simone Volavola msc, Parish priest from Easter Fr Beniata Bakatete msc, Assistant priest from Easter
Te Wairua Tapu Parish, Lower Hutt	Fr Akuila Taliauli svd, Parish priest Fr Marlon Maylon, Assistant priest (until replacement in 2025)
Te Awakairangi Parish, Lower Hutt	Fr Raja Kommareddy svd, Parish priest Fr Sang Quang Le svd, Assistant priest Fr Noel Corcino cjm, Assistant priest
Our Lady of the Valleys, Heretaunga/Stokes Valley	Fr Maleko Api-Tufuga, Parish priest
St Joseph's Parish, Upper Hutt	Fr Tony Kearns, Parish priest Fr Kevin Connors, Assistant priest
Catholic Parish of Wairarapa	Fr Dennis Nacorda, Parish priest Deacon Matthew White, Assistant

Other changes

- Fr Alan Roberts – retires as parish priest of Ōtaki after Easter
- Fr Bruce England – retires as parish priest of Levin after Easter
- Fr Seph Pijfers – studies in Auckland
- Fr Michael Bellizzi – has returned to the Archdiocese of Malta
- Fr Marlon Maylon svd – will return to Australia when his replacement arrives.

Diocese of Palmerston North

Diocesan parishes 2025	
The Catholic Parish of New Plymouth	A Fr Sobin Sebastian, Assistant priest
St Brigid's Parish, Feilding St Joseph's Parish, Ohakune St Mary's Parish, Taihape	Fr Trung Nguyen, Administrator
Society of Mary appointments	
St Peter's Parish, Wairoa	Fr Trevor Tindall, Parish priest
The Catholic Parish of Napier	Fr Brian Prendeville, Parish priest
Other changes	
Fr Rob Devlin sm is moving from St Peter's Parish, Wairoa Fr Barry Scannell sm is moving from The Catholic Parish of Napier.	
Bishop John thanks all our priests who have agreed to be moved and who have so readily accepted these changes, and to the parishes that are 'losing' a priest.	

Flood protection options for Wairoa Catholic Marae

Liam Greer
General Manager, Palmerston North Diocese



Tawhiti a Maru Marae was extensively damaged by floodwaters caused by Cyclone Gabrielle.
Photo: Supplied

Of all the extensive damage caused by Cyclone Gabrielle, Tawhiti a Maru Marae in Wairoa was one of the communities most impacted. During the cyclone, two years ago, the flooded Wairoa River gave up on its usual 'horseshoe' path and took the shortest route straight through the Catholic Marae, flooding the Wharekai, Wharepaku, Wharenui and St Theresa's Church.

Over the past many months, the community and the Palmerston North diocese have been working through the insurance claim and options for the replacement of the flood-damaged buildings.

In parallel, a tripartite group of the Wairoa District Council, Tātau Tātau o te Wairoa Trust and Hawke's Bay Regional Council has been working together to explore possible flood mitigation options. Many options have been considered with widespread community consultation led by Lawrence Yule, appointed as Crown Manager to Hawke's Bay Regional and Wairoa District Councils.

Due to its location, some of these options directly affect the Tawhiti a Maru Marae.

One option is to create a spillway near the Marae to manage increased waterflow and prevent flood surge breaching the riverbanks.

There is a lot of work remaining to remediate Tawhiti a Maru Marae. Several people from within the Catholic community and beyond have invested many hours of their time to ensure the redevelopment of the Marae while working with local and central government to find a long-term solution to flood protection.

The Wairoa community, part of the Diocese of Palmerston North, consists of the Tawhiti a Maru Marae – including St Theresa Church, St Joseph's School, St Peter's Church, the Presbytery and Te Rakato Marae located further up the road in Mahia.

New awareness, renewed Kaupapa for inclusiveness

Nick Wilson

The Palmerston North Diocese Synod synthesis last year, indicated a strong discernment from the Spirit pointing us towards doing a better job of welcome and inclusion.

In our diocesan recent restructure, David Loving-Molloy's role has been changed to reflect a new mission of inclusiveness. With nearly 30 years of service as Chaplain to the Deaf Community with Wellington and Palmerston North dioceses, David is now the Pou Ārahi o Whakauru – Leader and Adviser for Inclusiveness for the Diocese of Palmerston North.

David's role involves overseeing spiritual growth for Deaf, hard of hearing, those who experience disability, and their families, in our parishes and schools. He leads the coordination for the ministry for those who experience disability and supports their participation in the synodal way in the life of the local Church.

The mantra '*nothing about us without us*' means those people who are not living with disability should not make decisions about being inclusive without the involvement of those directly affected by such decision-making.

Part of this kaupapa is participating in

a global programme of inclusion called the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Project (hdsunflower.com). It aims to include those living with disability in day-to-day activities of community.

We are called to consider what inclusion looks like in our iwi whakapono | faith communities and reflect on Jesus' priority for those afflicted and living with particular challenges. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, 'The health of a society is measured in how well it cares for its most vulnerable members.'

Empowered by our synodal discernment, we are prioritising this mahi | work, so we are truly living inclusivity inherent of God's kingdom – and the meaning of our Catholic name: universal and unconditional welcome to all.



David Loving-Molloy is now the Diocese of Palmerston North's Pou Ārahi o Whakauru – Leader and Adviser for Inclusiveness for the diocese.
Photo: Supplied

Kimbolton's St Patrick's Church closing

St Patrick's Church Kimbolton, Feilding, is closing and a final Mass will be celebrated there on Saturday 15 March, starting at 2pm. Bishop John Adams will preside over the service.

Following the Mass, Hanson's Café will be available for afternoon tea, pay as you order. If you wish to attend, please email Jayne Fynn, Parish Secretary, at stbrigids@xtra.co.nz or ph (06) 323-3980. Please leave a message if the office is closed. In your voice message or email please include your full name, the names of any family members attending, and a contact number.



St Patrick's Church, Kimbolton, Feilding.
Photo: Annette Scullion/WelCom

A love as precious as platinum

Denise Powell

A couple who have spent 70 years together between the Palmerston North and Hamilton dioceses, recently celebrated their platinum wedding anniversary among family and friends.

John and Doreen Buckley were married at St Brigid's Catholic Church in Pahiatua by Fr BJ Carruthers on 22 January 1955. They celebrated 70 years of marriage with a Mass at St Brigid's Catholic Church in Feilding, officiated by Fr Vince Jones, on 25 January 2025.

Over 100 guests came to Mass and enjoyed a luncheon for the occasion.

During the Mass, John and Doreen received the Papal Blessing, recognising their milestone.

John 91 and Doreen 88 have shared many grand moments in their lives and have experienced more than their share of grief.

They had six children – four daughters and two sons, losing Jacinta Schicker in 1992 and Robert Buckley in 2014, both as sudden deaths. They have 17 grandchildren and 29 great grandchildren – many of whom attended the celebration – along with their surviving children Denise Powell, Jane Fitzgerald, Patricia Barnes and John Buckley Junior, as well as two members of their bridal party.

Faith and family have been the backbone of their marriage, and they are the perfect role models for

their family members and others.

Doreen and John have complemented each other perfectly. They have worked side-by-side in businesses, from transport to farming, to a tearooms and takeaway, back to farming, then finally transport again, neither one being the 'boss' and never an argument heard.

Doreen, who is the eldest of four children and John who is number five of 18 children, say there is no secret to their long and happy marriage, but 'common sense and discuss everything' is their advice.



John and Doreen Buckley celebrated 70 years of marriage on 22 January 2025 and received a Papal Blessing at Mass at St Brigid's Church in Feilding on 25 January recognising their milestone. Photo: Warwick Smith/Manawatū Standard

Carmel's ruby jubilee

Carmel Cole rndm celebrated her ruby jubilee (40 years) in Dannevirke on 7 December among a large crowd at St Joseph Church joining her for her special day. Guests included family, friends and Sisters from other communities as well as parishioners and friends from Dannevirke, where Carmel has been living for four years.

In her opening welcome Carmel remembered her parents, who have both died in the last three years, and gave thanks for their support and inspiration. She also remembered her novitiate companion Alei Leilua who died suddenly in Samoa in 2019.

Appropriately, Bishop Peter Cullinane was the presiding celebrant, as he was the celebrant in 1993 when Carmel made her final vows in Bulls. The parish choir, of which Carmel is a part, provided music for the Mass. Carmel sang the Psalm filling the church with a beautiful sound. The Sisters responded in kind after the Renewal of Vows, harmoniously singing the Gloria Patria.

In his homily, Bishop Peter spoke about the call of each person to follow Christ, with a beautiful reflection on Religious Life. Mary Maitland reflected on Carmel's



Carmel Cole rndm cutting her ruby jubilee cake. Photo: Supplied

life and the various missions and ministries that have formed her. Mary gave thanks for Carmel's courage and generosity, especially for her 12 years of ministry in Leadership of the Aotearoa New Zealand and Samoa Province.

The celebration and conversations continued in the parish hall where parishioners had provided a wonderful spread. Carmel cut her jubilee cake and thanked everyone for their presence at her special celebrations.

Papal award for 'taonga' of Central Hawke's Bay parish

Donna Te Amo

Members of the Holy Trinity Parish community of Waipukurau in Central Hawke's Bay, celebrated the awarding of a Papal Medal to Hamish Kynoch, on 1 December last year.

Hamish was born in Central Hawke's Bay in 1944. In 1964 he became a Catholic and a parishioner of St Vincent's in Takapau. Hamish and his wife Julie have five children.

Hamish has been chairperson of our parish leadership team for the last ten years and is a very active member of our parish community. His many roles include organising the music, Sacristan, reader, St Vincent de Paul member, a paraliturgist and a Minister of the Eucharist to name a few. Hamish and Julie have long been involved with the Marriage Encounter programme in Wellington and Palmerston North dioceses. Their

commitment to the Sacrament of Marriage is inspirational.

Hamish is the chairperson of the advisory board for the Southern Star Abbey, Kopua, in Central Hawke's Bay. He is an excellent administrator and has assisted Kopua staff with updating computer skills and he has helped to greatly increase Southern Star's farm productivity.

Over the years Hamish has also been highly involved in the wider community. He has been mayor of Central Hawke's Bay, 1995 to 2001, a member of the CHB Consumers Power Trust, and the Dominion President of the Young Farmers Club. He was also runner up to Young Farmer of the Year in 1972.

Hamish is a special person and at the parish we feel blessed he has not only been a part of this parish but a fine and inspirational leader. We offer a huge 'thanks' to those who nominated Hamish for the papal award and to everyone for writing recommendations and



Hamish Kynoch (centre) received a papal award from Holy Trinity parish priest Fr Paul Kerridge and Bishop of Palmerston North John Adams at Mass in Waipukurau last December. Photo: Supplied

letters of support.

Hamish is indeed a taonga of the Holy Trinity Parish.

Mā mua ka kite a muri, mā muri ka ora a mua – Those who lead give sight to those who follow, those who follow give life to those who lead.

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Pope Francis' Prayer Intention

During the month of March 2025 Pope Francis' intention is: *For families in crisis.*

Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

Challenge 2000 appoints former Cabinet Minister and MP as new CEO

The Challenge 2000 Board, leadership team, whānau and supporters have welcomed Poto Williams as their new CEO. Poto, a former Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister, has a long association with NGOs throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and being committed to serving on society's margins. Poto takes over the reins from acting CEO and founder Kitty McKinley.

The Challenge 2000 whānau welcomed Poto to their centre in Johnsonville with a pōwhiri in January. Kitty spoke of the immense gratitude she and the Challenge whānau had for Poto saying 'YES' and agreeing to lead Challenge into another decade.

Poto said, 'I am delighted to take up this role and know the massive legacy Kitty has laid down for the young people and the communities she and the Challenge team have served for more than 35 years. I have been humbled by the stories of transformation and mahi with aroha, which are the quintessential experiences of anyone who has

walked through these doors. And that is down to the commitment Kitty and the Challenge whānau have made to people over this time.'

A Registered Charity, Challenge 2000 provides social services, developmental, therapeutic programmes and projects throughout the Wellington Region. The agency has 35 full-time staff and over 100 active volunteers. Some of their work is funded through government contracts and Trusts, while the rest is provided by supportive donors.

The Challenge whānau remain committed to providing professional, loving, dynamic and responsive programmes and services, supporting the personal dignity of every person, encouraging social responsibility and building a hope-filled, just and equitable society.

Challenge began in the Johnsonville Catholic parish in 1988 to bring the gospel alive. Its Youth Ministry team offers retreats for Catholic schools, youth groups, community retreats for young



New Challenge CEO, Poto Williams (centre of middle row, floral dress) with Challenge 2000 staff members.

Photo: Supplied

people and adults, facilitates weekly liturgies at St Benedict's and St Brigid's schools, arranges events and Liturgies for specific Feast Days and commemorative days, such as Waitangi Day, Anzac Day and Matariki.

Challenge offers opportunities for young people to discover and live their faith in an intentional, meaningful, relational and relevant

way. It works in partnership with the Society of Mary who fund their full-time Gap-Internship Year for 18- to 24-year-olds.

Challenge welcomes support. If you'd like to be involved in 2025 please contact the team at info@challenge2000.org.nz or ph (04) 477-6827 or visit challenge2000.org.nz for information.

It was with profound sadness that Challenge 2000 acknowledged the passing of Luke Crawford in December last year. Luke had supported Challenge 2000 as their kaumātua for over 25 years. In a tribute on their website Challenge noted: 'Luke will be remembered by us for his strong but gentle leadership and guidance. Challenge 2000, and the young people and whānau we serve, benefitted greatly from Luke's compassionate and loving spirit. His generosity in sharing his guidance, knowledge, mātauranga Māori, life and encouraging us to strive to build an Aotearoa grounded in Te Tiriti has been extremely significant over a sustained period of time. He was there whenever we needed him. He was our go to, our compass, our encourager, our friend, our mentor. Luke helped lay the foundations of who we continue to become.'

Parish celebrates Lay Pastoral Leader's long service

Chris Newton

People from Te Awakairangi Parish and beyond gathered for a special Mass at St Bernadette's Church in Naenae, on Sunday 9 February, to celebrate Barbara Rowley's 18-plus years of service as their Lay Pastoral Leader.

Barbara's appreciation for people's cultural diversity and wisdom was evident in the multicultural liturgy St Bernadette's Liturgy committee had prepared. Hymns were sung in Samoan, Tagalog, Tokelauan and English with the recessional hymn 'Our Lady of Knock - Queen of Ireland' a Marian hymn, bringing tears to Irish eyes.

St Bernadette's youth group and school students led the prayers of the faithful in eight different languages, as well as the offertory procession. Parish priest Fr Raja, supported by Frs Sunil and Viator, led the liturgy.

Mass was followed by morning tea in the church hall, organised by Naenae Vinnies and Divine Mercy Groups, and kōrero with Barbara and other friends. Members of Filipino, Tokelauan, Sundanese, Youth, Samoan and Divine Mercy groups presented items to Barbara

and her husband Kevin. Several people acknowledged how they valued Barbara's amazing support and encouragement to them as new immigrants to New Zealand.

Mary-Ann Greaney, Sr Regina, and Phil Adamczyk, Parish Pastoral Council Chair, spoke and letters from Fr Alfred Tong, Fr Patrick Bridgman, and Cardinal John Dew were read.

They clearly recognised Barbara's special gifts with their words: 'a woman of prayer; unwavering commitment; humble and astute intuition for engaging the gifts of parishioners by empowering people through collaborative leadership; her ability to see God in the ordinary; everyday life and her ability to not only have hope but to give hope to the People of God she served.'

Barbara thanked everyone for the Liturgy. She spoke about the unknown journey she began many years ago as one of the pioneers of the Launch Out Programme for Lay Pastoral Leadership in the archdiocese, and acknowledged those who had supported and mentored her, particularly Cardinal Tom Williams and Fr Pat Grealley. She said she felt the time was right to step back from her LPL role as



Barbara Rowley, centre, at Mass celebrating her long years of service as Lay Pastoral Leader.

Photo: Chris Newton

the community was strong and 'we should all hold hope for the future.'

Picking up the microphone she announced, 'this is the best day of my life.'

Every blessing for the future to you Barbara, Kevin and family.

Chris Newton is a member of the PPC of Te Awakairangi.

New life for old Greytown church

Jane and Wayne Gillingham purchased the Sacred Heart Church building on Main St, Greytown, Wairarapa, on a whim in December 2023. Their plan was to restore the beautiful building and hope local church groups and other members of the community would want to use it again. The restoration was completed a year later and since the open day on 1 December 2024 they have hosted a wedding, a carol service and a family Christmas meal. The Reform church group is meeting there every Sunday and a drop-in centre is running each weekday morning. Catholic services for Lent will be on in the church on Fridays during Lent. The owners say they are thrilled that God's house is being used again. Please email church@gillingham.co.nz with enquiries about using the church or if you have photos or stories of the church's history.

Photo supplied





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Parishioner writes oratorio about Elizabeth

While there are many great oratorios, particularly the Messiah and Bach's Christmas Oratorio, the wonderful events that happened to Elizabeth have not been musically celebrated in the same way. Yet such a momentous event as the meeting of Elizabeth and Mary and the birth of John the Baptist deserves its own oratorio, according to Adriann Smith. So, Adriann, a writer and longtime member of St Teresa's choir in Karori, and composer Colin Gibson, who was the originator of many of our favourite hymns, including 'Carol Our Christmas', created the oratorio 'Elizabeth or the Birth of John the Baptist'.

This work, which centres on the experiences of two of the most important women in the Bible, Elizabeth and Mary – the mothers of John and Jesus – is waiting to be performed. 'It is a work that can be presented by parish groups, youth groups or secondary schools as the



Oratorio writer Adriann Smith, recently of Wellington, has moved to Palmerston North.

music is well within the range of church or school choirs,' Adriann says. 'As well as the solos, Mary, Elizabeth and Zachariah, a chorus of young girls and another of older women, have an important part in the action, and four-part hymns for all voices for the men in the community are not left out.'

'I would like to see the work used as widely as possible among schools,

choirs, performance groups,' says Adriann. 'I wrote the important story of these two women. I've given it a slightly humorous twist with the dramatically required crisis, but it all ends well on a high note – emotional not musical – of praise.'

An oratorio is a narrative musical work based on a religious theme and presented without staging or costumes. It includes soloists and chorus. Generally the pieces sung by the soloists are termed arias. There can also be sections spoken or chanted to music called recitative (reciting). The word oratorio comes from the Latin *oratorium*, oratory.

'Oratorio is part of the Church's musical tradition and many people enjoy seeing and hearing oratorio performed,' says Adrian. 'They are usually done in churches but don't have to be.'

A copy of the libretto and score are available from Adriann at: smithadris@gmail.com

Korowai honours commitment to Catholic Education

Sue Seconi

A beautifully coloured korowai was gifted to Sr Marie Skidmore rsj for her commitment, faith and wisdom contributed to Catholic Education for almost six decades. The presentation took place at Cullinane College's senior prize-giving celebrations last November.

Board member and kuia from Kaiwhaiki, Francis Huwyler (nee Simon), presented the korowai on behalf of the Board of Trustees and school community, as applause filled the gymnasium. A korowai gifted symbolises the embodiment of responsibilities attached to leadership.

'I was overwhelmed,' said Sr Marie.

Since the Sisters of St Joseph arrived in Whanganui in 1880, some 250 Sisters have taught in the Catholic schools through the years, established mainly in the Palmerston North Diocese.

'I felt I was standing upon many shoulders when I received this gift. It was for us all,' she said. 'It will be a truly beautiful and significant treasure shared.'

When she resigned from the Cullinane Board in early 2024 as a Proprietor's Representative, Sr Marie bought to a close, her nearly 59 years of responsibilities in education, including being principal of Sacred Heart College from 1978 to 1985.

The korowai gifted to Sr Marie expressed with gratitude her mana

and the prestige the college places on her.



Sr Marie Skidmore rsj wears her newly awarded korowai.

Photo: Supplied

New priest welcomed to Archdiocese

Fr Noel Corcino cjm, recently arrived in New Zealand from the Philippines, has been welcomed to the Archdiocese of Wellington.

Fr Noel was ordained in 2018 into the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, founded in France by St John Eudes in 1643.

Before coming New Zealand, Fr Noel was a director of a retreat house for five years. Prior to his priesthood, he worked as a plant pathologist in a prominent banana plantation in the Philippines. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture specialising in plant diseases.

His seminary and priestly formation include qualifications in



Fr Noel Corcino cjm has recently arrived in New Zealand from the Philippines and will be ministering at Te Awakairangi Parish.

Photo: Supplied

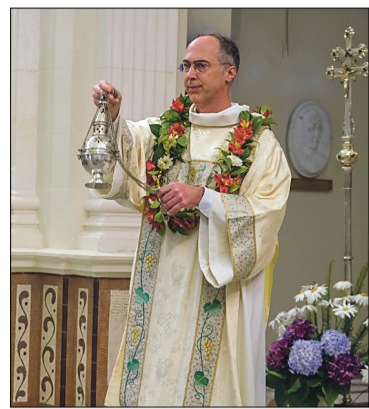
philosophy, a degree in theology from the SVD School of Theology and Ecclesiastical Theology and a Masters in Pastoral Ministry at the Loyola School of Theology in Ateneo de Manila University.

Over 20 years ago, as part of his seminary formation, Fr Noel briefly stayed in the Auckland diocese where he immersed himself with the Māori community in the Hokianga. He says he has fond memories of working with people from the wider Pacific (Samoan, Tongan) in Auckland City (Balmoral).

Fr Noel will be ministering at Te Awakairangi Parish in Lower Hutt.

Deacon from Luxembourg joins Wellington Archdiocese staff

Deacon Philip Mauel from Luxembourg joined the Archdiocese of Wellington staff in January. Philip has served the Archdiocese of Luxembourg as a deacon for the last five years working in both pastoral ministry and diocesan finance. He and his family have come to New Zealand so his children can take up educational opportunities here. Philip will continue to be employed by the Archdiocese of Luxembourg and the Archbishop of Luxembourg has generously made him available to work with the Archdiocese of Wellington while he is here. He will undertake various pastoral appointments, finance, and capital-projects work within the Archdiocese and will also work within the Archdiocesan Curia.



Deacon Philip Mauel of Luxembourg at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart during Mass celebrations on 26 January for the Jubilee Year opening in the Archdiocese of Wellington.

Photo: Annette Scullion

World Day of Prayer service: St Thomas More Church

The WDP Committee of the Cook Islands has prepared a service to take place, 7pm, Friday, 7 March, at Otari Parish's **St Thomas More Church, 30 Worcester St, Wilton**. Join Otari Parish, St Anne's Anglican Church, Northland, and St Luke's Anglican Parish, Wadestown, for this WDP service in Wellington, followed by supper and fellowship. Join in carrying out one of the Synod actions: 'Build up our local ecumenical relationships.' All are welcome.

**Invest in What You Believe –
Join Our Community of
Faithful Stewards Today!**

Matthew 6:21
For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

JOIN NOW

Christian KiwiSaver Scheme

**Local People
Caring in our Community**

Sacred Heart Cathedral needs you!

Michael Humble

All parishes need dedicated volunteers and Sacred Heart Cathedral is no exception! The cathedral re-opened in June 2024 after being closed for six years for earthquake strengthening. Just before Christmas, the Blessed Sacrament Chapel was re-opened and now we await the building of a new lobby to the foyer.

We invite parishioners from around the Archdiocese to join our

Guardians' group. The Cathedral is open weekdays from 10am to 1pm. Each day, members of the team open the complex at 10am. The priority is to prepare the chapel for the 12.10pm Mass, Tuesdays to Fridays, or the 12.10pm Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion service on Mondays. The Guardians are then able to welcome visitors, show them round the Cathedral and share her history.

We need more people to join the team to keep our beautiful Cathedral open from 1pm to 3pm

on weekdays. We would also like to open on Saturday mornings following Mass – especially for cruise ships during their season.

As an added incentive, we have a modern and well-appointed kitchen in the cathedral foyer and our own locked Guardians' cupboard! Please contact the Cathedral Parish Office if you are interested in joining us. The office is open 10am–4.30pm Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Email: cathedral.parish@wn.catholic.org.nz or ph: (04) 496-1700.



Harbour City Funeral Home

harbourcityfunerals.co.nz

Lower Hutt Ph: 04 5700 111
Upper Hutt Ph: 04 5288 924
Wellington Ph: 04 387 8301
Kāpiti Coast Ph: 04 298 4888



Guardian Funeral Home

guardianfunerals.co.nz

Tawa Ph: 04 232 1588
Johnsonville Ph: 04 477 4025



The Wilson Funeral Home

wilsonfunerals.co.nz

Karori Ph: 04 476 5292
Newtown Ph: 04 389 6069

He Hīkoi Whakapono: A Journey of Faith

February 2017 – December 2024

Eight years ago in February 2017, WelCom set out on a Hīkoi Whakapono: Journey of Faith, to visit all the parishes, schools and Catholic faith communities within our two dioceses of Palmerston North and Wellington. Over the years since, WelCom went out to meet kanohi ki te kanohi – face to face – with many of our readers in their widespread communities. In turn, our Hīkoi gave our readers a chance to get to know us in person and to proactively share their news and stories with our very wide community of literally thousands of readers.

In 1841, Bishop Pompallier sailed from Northland to Akaroa to see if a mission could be established there. He

sailed south along the east coast of the North and South Islands. On his way, he left one of his fellow-French priests, Fr Claude Baty sm, at Mahia in 1841.

Significantly, we began our Hīkoi at Te Wairau Parish in Wairoa, Northern Hawke's Bay, being one of the earliest Catholic communities in New Zealand and Palmerston North Diocese's northern-most parish on the East Coast of the North Island.

From Wairoa, we followed the direction of Bishop Pompallier, journeying south along the East Coast of the lower North Island and the top of the South Island as far as Kaikōura. Our Hīkoi then took us across to the West Coast, the top of the South Island, back

up to the Central North Island, around Taranaki, then south to Manawatu, along the Kāpiti Coast to Wellington, Hutt Valley and finally to Pukekaraka, Ōtaki.

We have visited all the pastoral areas of our two dioceses in the lower North Island and upper South Island, to learn about and profile a taste of the rich histories, stories, people and faith communities in our dioceses. Over several editions, WelCom has profiled each pastoral location.

Equally as symbolic as our historic starting point at Te Wairau Parish, our Hīkoi concluded at Pukekaraka, Ōtaki, in December 2024. It was there the first Catholic Mission was created in the

region of Wellington at the invitation of Ngāti Kapu rangatira Tonihi in 1844.

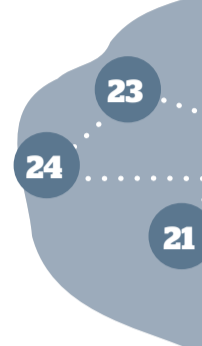
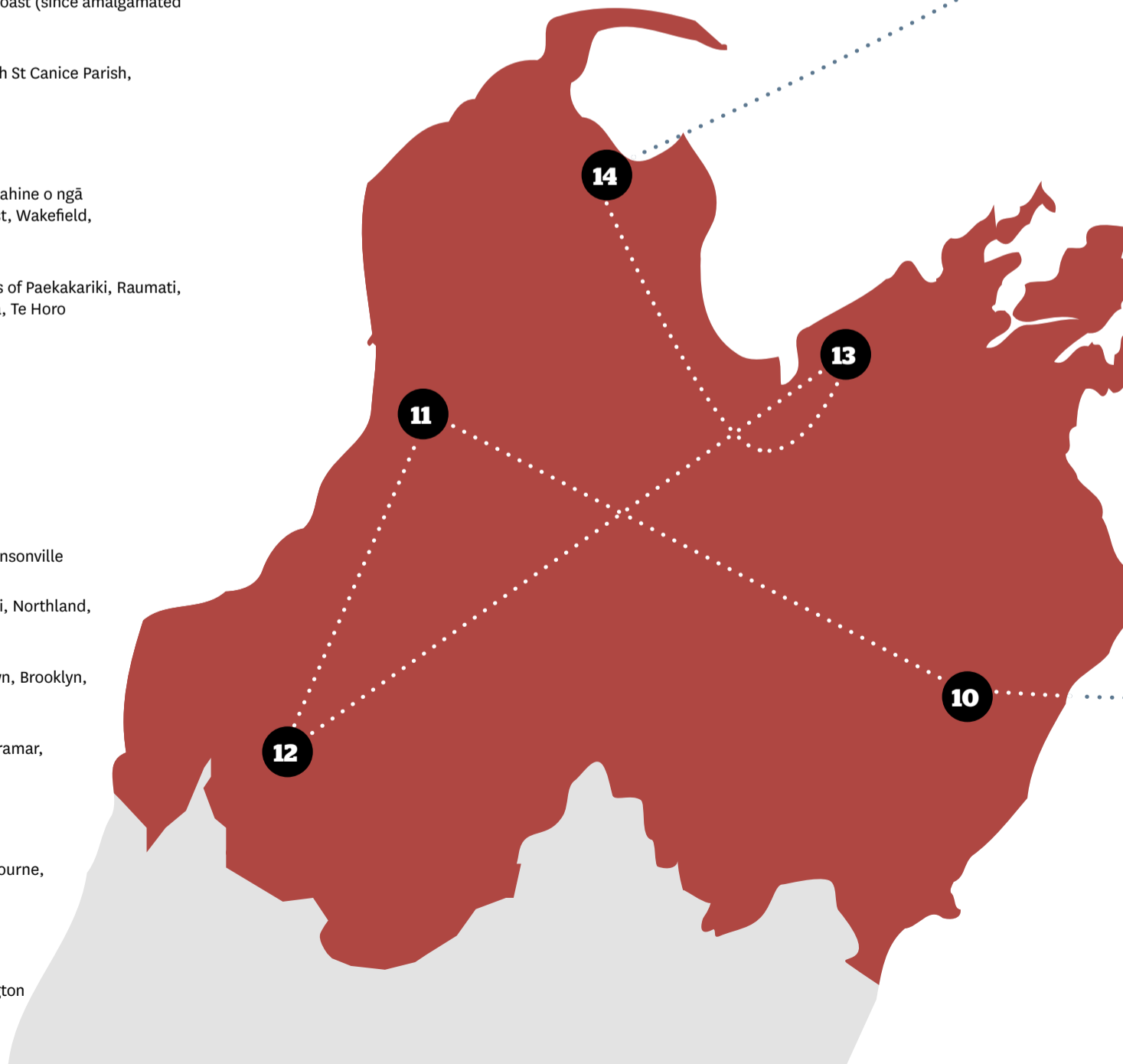
On these two pages in our final edition of WelCom, we present a diagrammatic overview of the places we visited. Once again, we thank so many of you in parishes, schools and communities for hosting us on our journey and for continuing to share your communities' news and stories with WelCom's many readers.

Pdf copies of WelCom are on our website archives page [catholic.org.nz/welcom/welcom-office/welcom-pdf-archive/].

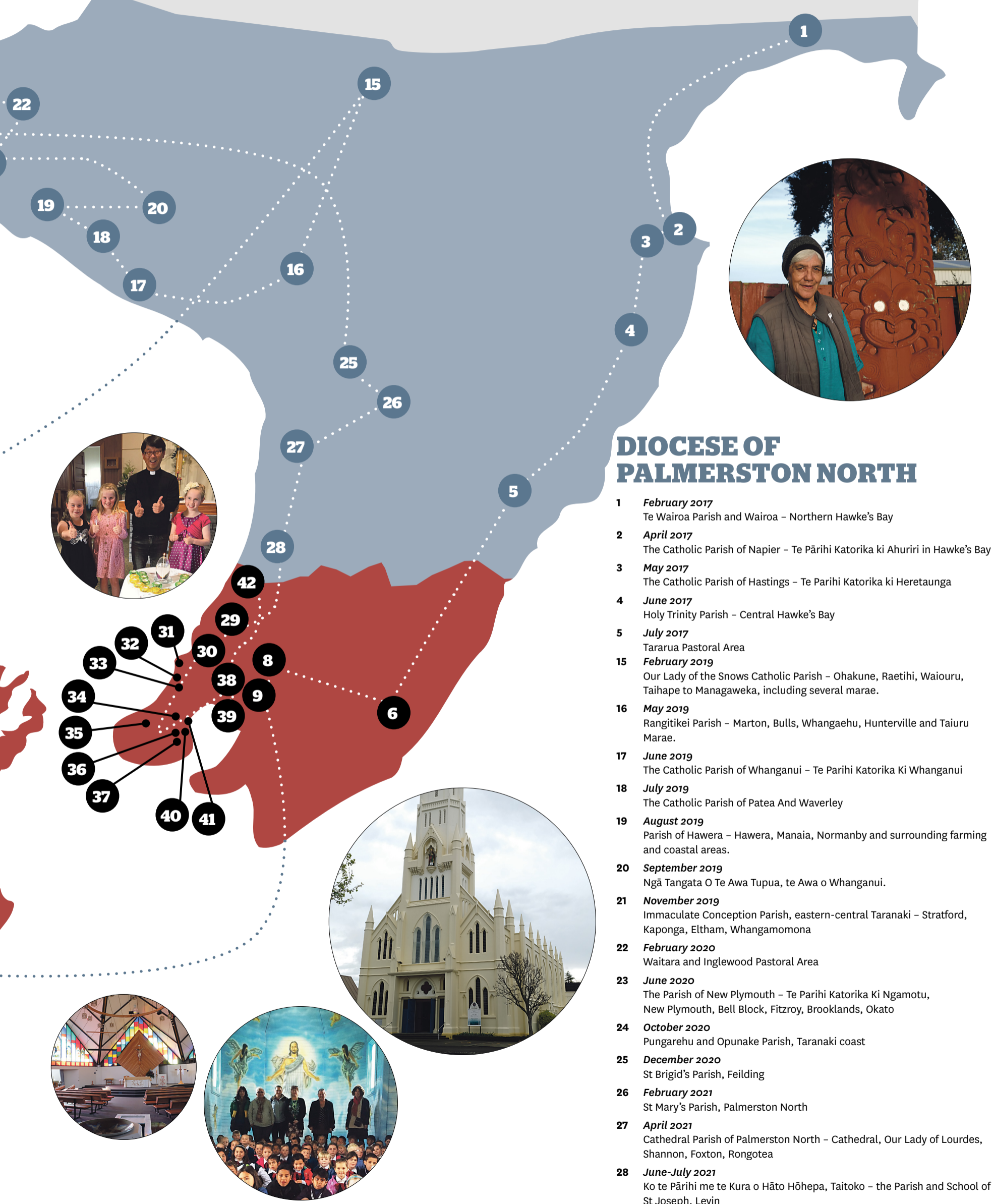
Photos: Annette Scullion and supplied

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

- 6 **August 2017**
The Catholic Parish of the Wairarapa
- 7 **September 2017**
Māori Eucharistic Communities of the two dioceses
- 8 **October 2017**
St Joseph's Parish of Upper Hutt
- 9 **November 2017**
Our Lady of the Valley's Parish, Heretaunga and Stokes Valley
- 10 **February 2018**
Te Whetū o Te Moana – the Star of the Sea, From Marlborough to Kaikoura
- 11 **April 2018**
Parish of St Canice, Westport to Karamea, Westcoast (since amalgamated with Reefton Parish)
- 12 **May 2018**
Pastoral area of Reefton (since amalgamated with St Canice Parish, Westport)
- 13 **August 2018**
Holy Family Parish, Nelson-Stoke
- 14 **November 2018**
Our Lady of the Bays Catholic Parish – Te tatou wahine o ngā whangapariha Katorika: Richmond, Waimea West, Wakefield, Motueka, Takaka
- 29 **August 2021**
Our Lady of Kāpiti Parish – includes coastal areas of Paekakariki, Raumati, Paraparaumu, Otorohanga, Waikanae, Peka Peka, Te Horo
- 30 **October 2021**
St Theresa's Catholic Parish Plimmerton
- 31 **February 2022**
Our Lady of Hope Parish, Tawa and Tītahi Bay
- 32 **April 2022**
Te Pariha O Te Ngākau Tapu, Porirua
- 33 **June–July 2022**
Holy Family Parish, Porirua East
- 34 **August 2022**
Catholic Parish of St Francis of Assisi Ohariu, Johnsonville
- 35 **October 2022**
Catholic Parish of Otari, Wellington West – Karori, Northland, Wilton, Otari
- 36 **December 2022**
The Catholic Parish of Wellington South, Newtown, Brooklyn, Island Bay, Mt Victoria
- 37 **August 2023**
Holy Trinity Parish, Wellington East, Kilbirnie, Miramar, Seatoun
- 38 **November 2023**
Te Awakairangi Parish, Lower Hutt
- 39 **May 2024**
Parish of The Holy Spirit – Te Wairua Tapu: Eastbourne, Petone, Wainuiomata, Waiwhetu
- 40 **August 2024**
St Mary of the Angels Parish, Wellington
- 41 **October 2024**
The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart Parish, Wellington
- 42 **December 2024**
Pukekaraka, Ōtaki



Journey of Faith



DIOCESE OF PALMERSTON NORTH

- 1 February 2017**
Te Wairoa Parish and Wairoa – Northern Hawke’s Bay
- 2 April 2017**
The Catholic Parish of Napier – Te Pārihi Katorika ki Ahuriri in Hawke’s Bay
- 3 May 2017**
The Catholic Parish of Hastings – Te Parihi Katorika ki Heretaunga
- 4 June 2017**
Holy Trinity Parish – Central Hawke’s Bay
- 5 July 2017**
Taranua Pastoral Area
- 15 February 2019**
Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Parish – Ohakune, Raetihi, Waiouru, Taihape to Managaweka, including several marae.
- 16 May 2019**
Rangitikei Parish – Marton, Bulls, Whangaehu, Hunterville and Taiuru Marae.
- 17 June 2019**
The Catholic Parish of Whanganui – Te Parihi Katorika Ki Whanganui
- 18 July 2019**
The Catholic Parish of Patea And Waverley
- 19 August 2019**
Parish of Hawera – Hawera, Manaia, Normanby and surrounding farming and coastal areas.
- 20 September 2019**
Ngā Tangata O Te Awa Tupua, te Awa o Whanganui.
- 21 November 2019**
Immaculate Conception Parish, eastern-central Taranaki – Stratford, Kaponga, Eltham, Whangamomona
- 22 February 2020**
Waitara and Inglewood Pastoral Area
- 23 June 2020**
The Parish of New Plymouth – Te Parihi Katorika Ki Ngamotu, New Plymouth, Bell Block, Fitzroy, Brooklands, Okato
- 24 October 2020**
Pungarehu and Opunake Parish, Taranaki coast
- 25 December 2020**
St Brigid’s Parish, Feilding
- 26 February 2021**
St Mary’s Parish, Palmerston North
- 27 April 2021**
Cathedral Parish of Palmerston North – Cathedral, Our Lady of Lourdes, Shannon, Foxton, Rongotea
- 28 June-July 2021**
Ko te Pārihi me te Kura o Hāto Hōhepa, Taitoko – the Parish and School of St Joseph, Levin

The end of an era, 1984-2025:

This edition of WelCom - the 430th issue since the newspaper began 40 years ago - is significant, being the last issue as the publication comes to a close. We have invited two former proprietors, Cardinal John Dew and Bishop Peter Cullinane, and some of our longstanding and regular contributors to share their reflections on WelCom for this final edition.

A look back at WelCom



Annette Scullion
Editor, WelCom, 2014-2025

The first edition of WelCom was published in September 1984 - the WelCom name being an abbreviation of 'Wellington Communications'. In 1984, Cardinal Tom Williams was the archbishop. His vision to establish this Catholic newspaper to inform, teach, and tell the stories of the archdiocese. WelCom has also been for many years shared with the Diocese of Palmerston North.

In his greeting on the front cover of the inaugural edition, Cardinal Tom wrote:

Derived from the words: 'Wellington Communications', WEL-COM is indeed welcomed into the life of our Archdiocese.

Our Catholic people and organisations have

good news to share. Because of the growth and developments taking place, it is news to cheer and hearten. Without some form of Archdiocesan newspaper, that good news will remain largely untold.

WEL-COM is to be distributed at every Mass in the Archdiocese. This first issue should therefore reach every active parish family and individual. It is hoped to produce two further issues before the end of this year.

So read, and share the joy of your Archbishop, your clergy and your fellow Catholics.

Cardinal Tom's aim was to share news of the archdiocese. Firstly it was about two specific and related projects - progress reports on the Cathedral strengthening, the additions to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, the Cathedral Foyer and Connolly Hall; and secondly it was to make public information about archdiocesan finances. The second edition of WelCom included a four-page, lift out with the financial review for 1984 and a budget for 1985.

Over its 40-year lifespan WelCom has changed. It has been a means to share papal letters and encyclicals and encourage others to read, reflect and pray with messages from the Holy Father - particularly Pope Francis in the last 12 years. It has grown as a vehicle for sharing news, issues, opinions and stories about the Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North and beyond, to learn from and support one another and to inform, inspire and educate our Catholic and wider communities.

Creating 430 hundred editions of WelCom over 40 years has been an immense achievement for all involved: from the editors - Fr Bernie Hehir, Marilyn Pryor, Cecily McNeil and [me] Annette Scullion - to regular and casual contributors, the advertisers and other supporters who have helped to keep it going as a free newspaper, and to those in the parishes and schools who help distribute WelCom to whānau and families, to share information about the Wellington and Palmerston dioceses, and the wider Church and community.

The media landscape has also changed enormously over the last 40 years. WelCom began before electronic media became mainstream and news and information was communicated largely through printed press, radio and television. With so many communication formats being instant and fragmented, the place of a regular, printed Catholic community newspaper that has brought targeted and connected information through our parishes and schools has been important and cherished.

Now, sadly, WelCom | NauMai has reached the end of an era as a printed and online newspaper for our two dioceses. It is time to say 'haere rā' and hand over the communication reins to a new information platform and direction.

Source: Excerpts from WelCom's 400th commemorative edition, February 2022.

Pope Francis: communication must be inclusive and truthful

'The duty of those who work in communications is to encourage closeness, to give voice to the excluded, to draw attention to what we normally discard and ignore,' Pope Francis said when addressing Vatican employees and participants in the Dicastery for Communication's Plenary Assembly at an audience in November 2022.

'True communication stems from listening, from encounter, from telling the stories of people.' Too often, the media marginalises and censors 'what is uncomfortable and what we do not want to see'.

He went on to say, 'communication must also make the diversity of views possible, while always seeking to preserve unity and truth, fighting slander, verbal violence, personalisms and fundamentalism that [...] only spread division and discord'.

Pope Francis encouraged his audience to continue to be 'reliable and bold, to speak from the heart and to listen carefully, to be humane and to always engage in dialogue in the quest for truth'.

Source: Vatican News

An instrument of HOPE



Cardinal John Dew

We are 'Pilgrims of Hope' and in this Jubilee Year of 2025 Pope Francis has reminded us of and asked us to not only have hope but to give hope to others.

In this issue of WelCom, it is time to give thanks for all that this Catholic newspaper has been to the Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North since September 1984. Sadly, but realistically, this edition

Number 430, is the last edition of WelCom.

WelCom has served thousands of people over the two dioceses for forty years. I am most grateful for all that it has been for us. The paper has educated us and informed us of what is happening in the local churches as well as about our church nationally and internationally.

I know too that Cardinal Tom Williams was proud and grateful for WelCom, for its editors and contributors over all those years. It has been a resource which has been informative and educational. I also believe it has been an instrument of HOPE.

As we reminisce and give thanks for what has been a remarkable achievement, we could do not better than to think of the ways this resource has given us HOPE. The Jubilee year of 2025 was still a long way off when WelCom began in the 1980s, the phrase 'Pilgrims of Hope' had not been used at that stage, and Pope Francis was a Jesuit priest in Argentina.

As we reflect on this gift, we have enjoyed for forty years we give thanks for the way it has given us Hope and we pray that each of us will take up the call with enthusiasm and truly become 'Pilgrims of Hope'.

WelCom - a true apostolate



Emeritus Bishop Peter Cullinane

Through stories and histories, pictures and faces, WelCom has portrayed Catholic faith as it has been lived in so many different settings. It set out, and was laid out, to engage eyes, ears, minds and hearts - not minds only; not information only. These multi-faceted presentations have helped to expand people's awareness of what they belong to. It has helped them to know what is theirs through

their own participation.

The communities of the two dioceses - Wellington and Palmerston North - are indebted to WelCom's editors down its forty-plus years. I have some idea of the extra sacrifices they have made.

Research by the NZ Catholic Education Office under Brother Sir Patrick Lynch revealed that for most Catholics, their main source of information about the Church came not from parish newsletters or diocesan offices or New Zealand Catholic Communications, or radio, but from the Catholic schools. And so, a big 'thank you' is due to those in the schools and parishes who sent WelCom out into homes.

That was WelCom's original purpose - a true apostolate. WelCom went looking for its readers. Online communications will be there for those who go looking for it - pastorally speaking, a different model.

As we move into the changing environment of communications, let us ask God's blessing on what the Second Vatican Council called an apostolate and a pastoral responsibility.



WelCom bids 'haere rā'

Final thoughts from a contributor



Dr Elizabeth Julian rsm

prophet who asks, 'What voices are really guiding you?' We need the cheerleader who encourages us, as well as the harasser who teases us when we take ourselves, rather than God, too seriously. Finally, we need an inspirational voice that calls us to be all we can be without embarrassing us about where we are now.

WelCom over the years has been that friend to many throughout the two dioceses and further afield. A monthly platform for the prophet, the cheerleader, the harasser and the inspirer, it has called and challenged us to live out our baptismal vocation to be priest, prophet and king in our daily lives.

Thank you Bernie (RIP), Marilyn (RIP), Cecily and Annette for your skill, patience, creativity and determination to meet the deadlines despite numerous challenges as you kept us informed, and for encouraging 107 articles from me over the past 25 years. Thank you, too, Tom (RIP), John and Peter for your broad vision and relentless pastoral concern to keep the people informed and formed.

I read this description recently:

There is an old saying: 'A friend knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten how it goes.' In our circle of friends, we need the

'Thank you, WelCom' - from the Nathaniel Centre for Bioethics



Dr John Kleinsman

government seeks to update the legislation that shapes our regulatory processes around Genetic Engineering.

The past 25 years have seen significant biotech developments. In keeping with our responsibility to educate the Catholic laity and promote the study and practical resolution of ethical, social and legal issues arising out of biotechnologies, we have found the WelCom newspaper to be an effective means for keeping people informed.

A synthesis of the WelCom reporting on bioethical issues over the years provides a comprehensive history of the changes that have happened in New Zealand. It is with sadness we hear this is the final issue.

At a time when there is an ever-greater need for the Church to reinforce an approach to human dignity that highlights a commitment to the weak and those less endowed with power (see *Dignitas Infinita*), we need every means possible to communicate such a narrative. From this perspective, the loss of any Catholic publication is regrettable.

That said, the dominant emotion for this time is one of gratitude for the willingness of the present and past editors to report on the serious topics we deal with, and which have ramifications for all New Zealanders.

Grātiam habeo

Dr John Kleinsman
Kaitohu | Director
The Nathaniel Centre for Bioethics
TE KUPENGA – Catholic Leadership Institute

The Nathaniel Centre for Bioethics has had a long and productive relationship with WelCom for which we are very thankful. We were formed as an agency for the New Zealand Catholic Bishops in 1999, a response to the rise of novel and increasingly complex ethical and moral issues associated with new developments in biotechnology.

One of the first active contributions our Centre made to discussions in the 'public square' was an extensive submission to the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification in 2000. That work was recognised in numerous ways, notably in the Commission's final report, which made frequent reference to the Nathaniel Centre and NZ Catholic Bishops Conference contribution. In February this year, almost 25 years on, we have made a new submission on the same topic as the current

'My word is my mana' 'Ko taku kupu, ko taku mana'



Deacon Danny Karatea Goddard Wellington

Rikona Danny Karatea-Goddard Te Ūpoko o te Ika

a beautiful saying, 'Ko taku kupu, ko taku mana' – 'My mana is my word'. Your good work has brought mana to our words.

TODAY we give thanks to God for Annette Scullion and her sterling work over the years. Annette your words, your heartfelt expression and works of love will remain in black and white – and colour – for years to come. Thank you and God bless you.

Nō te tau 2002 kua hono ahau ki a NauMai me tōna ētita o nāiane, ki a Annette Scullion. He hokinga mahara atu tēnei ki a Bernie Hehir rātou ko Marilyn Pryor, ko Cecily McNeil, ā, ki a Annette Scullion mō ā rātou mahi hei ētita marika i ngā tau i mua. Ko NauMai ia e pānui nei i ngā kōrero mō te Hāhi, mō te Whakawhanaungatanga o Ngā Hāhi, mō te mātauranga Katorika, ngā kura, ngā pārihi, ngā hapori me ngā karere mō te whai tika, ngā take me ngā kaupapa i ngā Rohe Pihopa Katorika o te Papaioea me te Rohe Matua o te Te Ūpoko o te Ika.

He mea whakahirahira a NauMai ki nga Here Ūkariē Māori nō te mea he mea e tūhono nei, e whāngai nei i ngā mahi pai i ngā Rohe Pihopa o te Papaioea me te Rohe Matua o te Te Ūpoko o te Ika.

Kua manaakihia a NauMai e au i ngā tau kua hipa ki ngā kupu whakamāori me ngā huritao. Ka whakatairangatia e ō mātou hapori ngā kohinga kōrero mō ngā whānau whakapono huri noa i ngā Rohe Pihopa e rua arā He Hikoi Whakapono. He mea whakaata tuakiri mōku, mōu, mō ō tātou māmā, pāpā, mokopuna me te āhua o to matou noho manawareka i roto i te orange o te Hāhi.

Nā tō tātou poropiti nā Kingi Tāwhiao te kī 'My word is my mana' arā, 'Ko taku kupu, ko taku mana'. Nā tāu mahi pai rawa kua whakamanahia ō mātou kupu.

I TĒNEI RĀ e mihi kau ana ki ngā mahi pai rawa a Annette Scullion i ngā tau kua hori. Annette, āu kupu, tō momo, tō ngākau nui me āu mahi arohanui ka puritia tonutia i te mā me te pango – me ngā tae – mō ngā tau e tū mai nei. Kia ora rā koe, ā, kia whakapaingia koe e te Atua.

Since 2002 I have been associated with WelCom and the current editor Annette Scullion [since 2014]. It is moments like these we remember Bernie Hehir, Marilyn Pryor, Cecily McNeil and now Annette Scullion who have made wonderful contributions as editors in the past. WelCom reports about Church, inter-Church, Catholic education, schools, parish, community and social justice news, issues, and events in Wellington and Palmerston North Catholic dioceses.

The WelCom magazine has always been a highlight for our Māori Eucharistic communities as it kept us connected and updated on the good works in the Diocese of Palmerston North and Archdiocese of Wellington.

For many years now I have supported WelCom with regular translations and reflections. Our communities will always treasure He Hikoi Whakapono, the collection of stories of our communities across both dioceses. It gave a glimpse into you and me, our aunts and uncles, our mokopuna and the simple everyday life of the Church.

Our Māori prophet and king Tawhiao had

Importance of community newspapers

John Spring
Managing Director, Beacon Media Group

The media industry in New Zealand is going through a difficult period, with pressures from increased costs and declining advertising revenues. Businesses are restructuring, cutting costs and reducing staff levels with redundancies.

Television has been heading these changes and newspapers have also been affected. NZME recently closed 14 community newspapers and Stuff closed about 28 community newspapers a couple of years ago.

But there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Some local communities, faced with being without their local newspaper, have started up replacement newspapers, and NZME sold some papers to community owners.

The communities can see the important role their local newspaper plays and don't want to lose that.

The Wairoa Star is a great example of the community pulling together to restart their community newspaper. After the Wairoa Star was closed, local iwi, Tatau Tatau o Te Wairoa, started up a new paper.

Their reporters write the articles and advertising reps sell the ads, Beacon provides the production services and the printing.

It's really encouraging to see the interest in starting up a newspaper. So, while the industry

is facing tough times and going through a lot of changes, there is optimism with communities keen to have their own local newspaper, providing that essential service for a democratic, informed and functioning community.

Beacon has its own newspaper printing press based in Whakatāne, and it is the only independent newspaper printer in the North Island. We have been printing WelCom for 40 years – starting in Whanganui, then Hastings, then Whakatane. Thank you for your business and well done on your achievement in publishing your newspaper for your readers and advertisers for over four decades.



Brian Cornes, Beacon's General Manager, oversees production at the Whakatane printing press. Photo: Supplied



Catholic College Dux and Special Character Diocese of Palmerston North

Sacred Heart College, Napier



Emma-Jaiye Taylor-Nelson
Dux 2024



Anna McIvor Proxime
Accessit 2024



Ann Maria Jelish Pat Faulkner
Memorial Cup 2024



Head Girls 2025 (l-r): **Trustina Aluni** (Deputy Head Girl), **Sneha Jenson** (Head Girl), **Violet Unwin**, (Deputy Head Girl).



Student Leadership Team 2025 (l-r), back row: **Madison Kerins**, **Violet Unwin** (Deputy Head Girl), **Poppy Walling**, **Sophia Unwin**, **Caitlin Montaperto-Wells**, **Mikayla Brown**, **Addison Kneebone**, **Shakarna Crichton**, second row: **Saraid Murphy**, **Eva Brazier**, **Emma Rich**, **Sophia Ventura**, **Myah Lee**, **Sabine Toomer**, **Smriti Nijjar**, **Maria Greville**, **Riana Foster**, front row: **Lillian Cameron**, **Precious Paa**, **Chahat Dhami**, **Adalyn Homan**, **Molly Jones**, **Sneha Jenson** (Head Girl), **Paige Jones**, **Laura Brassington**, **Jordin Tolentino**, **Āwhina Kaio**, **Trustina Aluni** (Deputy Head Girl).

St Joseph Māori Girls College, Napier



Kiriwehi Grant and Iritana Matenga
Dux 2024



Kahurangi Amaru and Tiori Stockman
Head Girls 2025

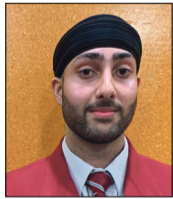


Prefect Team 2025 (l-r), back row: **Rangikoaea Kingi**, **Emma Hall**, **Teina Beatty**, **Tialemua Lemisio**, **Maria-Rose Houkamau**, **Palee Dewes**, front row: **Sarah Wilson**, **Georgia-Rose Maniapoto**, **Kahurangi Amaru** (Head Girl), **Tiori Stockman** (Head Girl), **Quaysha Reedy**, **Hinepare Te Tomo**.

St John's College, Hastings



Jeevanjot Singh
Dux 2024



Satvir Parmar
Proxime Accessit 2024



Jayden Mathers
Head Boy 2025



Student Leadership Team 2025 (l-r), back row: **Jordan Fontaine**, **Jacoby Makea**, **Flynn Grimstone**, **Reuben Fey**, **Archie Stevens**, **Joshua Street**; third row: **Hugo Macdonald**, **Seth Mackie**, **Jack Craft**, **George Briggs**; second row: **Mikko Capio**, **Jet Hapuku**, **George Stent** (Deputy Head Boys); front row: **Jayden Mathers** (Head Boy). Absent: **Alex Biju**.

Sacred Heart Girls' College, New Plymouth



Florence Parker
Dux 2024



Thea Irys Lacanaria
Proxime Accessit 2024



Hannah Montalla
Centennial Cup 2024



Head Girl Team 2025 (l-r): **Sahara Cameron** (Deputy Student Council), **Lucy Forsyth** (Head Girl), **Meliz Cerda** (Deputy Special Character).



Student Leadership Team 2025.

Francis Douglas Memorial College, New Plymouth



Owain Bridge
Dux 2024



Caleb Kiss
Proxime Accessit 2024



Harry Scott
Head Boy 2025



Daniel Butler
Deputy Head Boy 2025



Matthew Connelly
Special Character Leader 2025



Student Leadership Team 2025 (l-r), back row: **Blake Davis**, **Jack Hopkins**, **Isaac Lamb**, **Will Perrett**, **Jack Rangiwahia**, **Ryan Roberts**, **Ruben Waru**, **Koen Wensor**; third row: **Rory Gilmour**, **Oliver Winstanley**, **Oliver Howarth**, **Luke Gallacher**; second row: **William Hopkins**, **Reece Omelvena**, **Jake Whitaker**; front row: **Matthew Connelly** (Special Character Leader), **Daniel Butler** (Deputy Head Boy), **Harry Scott** (Head Boy).

Cullinane College, Whanganui



Lawrence Florendo
Dux 2024



Joanna Petras
Proxime Accessit 2024



Joanna Petras and Elena Solomona
Joint winners Geoff Lott Trophy for Commitment for Special Character 2025



Thor Darlington
Head Boy 2025



Alani Veikoso
Head Girl 2025

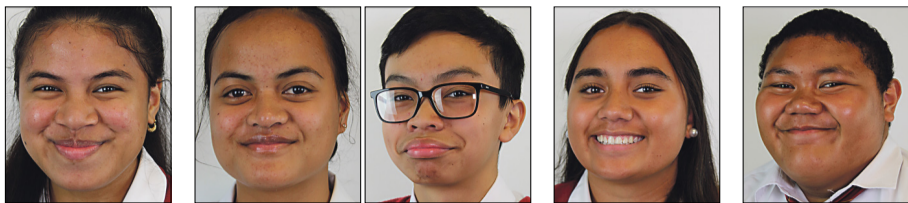


Tuakana Student Leadership Team 2025 (l-r): **Abigail Schwartzfeger**, **Alexandria Peralta** (Head of Love), **Sarah Savage**, **Samuel Jackson**, **Kayden Dickinson-Robinson**, **Alani Veikoso** (Head Girl), **Thor Darlington** (Head Boy), **Levi Hadfield**, **Ethan Linklater** (Head of Service); **Filipe Bayly** (Head of Unity), **Xavier Rayner** (Head of Optimise). Absent: **Sarah Ellison-Rogan**.

Awards 2024 and Student Leaders 2025

Archdiocese of Wellington

Bishop Viard College, Porirua



Charity Kells
Dux 2024 and Nellie Hunt Special Character Award 2024

Fa'alua Tairea and Dominick Dayanghirang
Joint Proxime Accessit 2024

Leilani Betham
Head Girl 2025

Ilalio Manuele
Head Boy 2025



Student Leadership Team 2025 (l-r): **Koki Pelman, Kisona Gaulofa-Wright, Kahvarn Masoe-So'ialo, Ilalio Manuele** (Head Boy), **Leilani Betham** (Head Girl).

Chanel College, Masterton



Lachlan Bashford
Dux 2024

Dakota Wallis
Proxime Accessit 2024

Casper Morcilla, Jacquelyn Murray, Lachlan Bashford
School Spirit Cup 2024



Student Prefect Team 2025 (l-r): **Madeleine Penman, Tori Patterson, Lotia Lio, Charles Macan, Alexis Kruger, Bede McCullough, William Roe-White** and **Alvin Joy**.

Sacred Heart College, Lower Hutt



Amelia Prebble
Dux 2024

Viktoriya Lyubich
Proxime Accessit 2024

Zara Joe
Archbishop's Award for Catholic Leadership 2024



Student Leadership Team 2025 (l-r): **Jessica Greaney, Sophie Mayo, Arnika Lahood, Vienna Serpa, Isabel To'ia, Alice Hoerara-Hunt, Harriet Rosemergy, Mia Sarich, Phoebe Jefferson, Bettylicia Sa'u** and **Aiymani Taueki**.

St Patrick's College, Silverstream



Oliver Heffernan
Dux 2024

Laito Fauchelle
Proxime Accessit 2024

Kobe Betham
Archbishop's Award, 2024

Tyler Duncan
Head Boy 2025

Garin College, Richmond, Nelson



Ellen Theobald
Dux 2024

Finn Campbell
Archbishop's Award, 2024

Student Leadership Team 2025 (l-r): **Abbie Parker, Kate Rankin, Naima Selg, Sophie Pahl, Flora Jackson, Ben Adlam, Franchezka Diza, Hector McNeilly, Sadie Wills, Gus Western, Caitlin Gorn, Ayla Turner**.

St Catherine's College, Kilbirnie



Alessandra Basile
Dux 2024

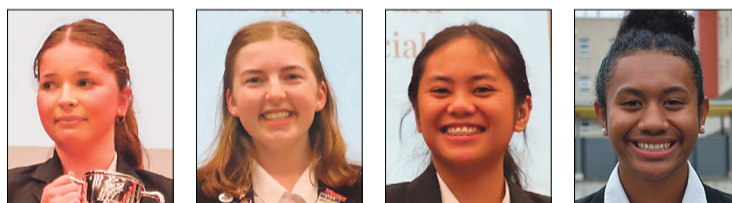
Michaela Borja
Proxime Accessit 2024

Helena Basile and Katherine Hickey
Special Character Leaders 2025



Student Leadership Team 2025 (l-r), back row: **Justine Rivera, Katherine Hickey, Leilani Garnons-Williams, Meika Joyce, Victoria Wilson, Miranda Lerum, Manuela Amanuel, Tanvi Patel, Bethanya Zergabachew, Helena Basile, Hannah Stark**; front row: **Rociana Ropati, Anayah Masina, Telesia Finau, Mason Stratford, Savannah-Che O'Donnell-Russell, Nadya Shelton**.

St Mary's College, Wellington



Lucille Johnson
Dux 2024

Olivia Napp
Proxime Accessit 2024

Jael Laroza
Special Character 2024

Lynda Rabeni-Vatuloka
Head Girl 2025



Student Leadership Team 2025 (l-r): **Annie Launiuvao, Jane Isaako, Maia Masina, Jessica Tupai, Lynda Rabeni-Vatuloka** (Head Girl), **Liana Saipani, Potesio Ve, Charelize Camerino, Carmel Fernandez**. Absent: **Toakase Tali**.



Manaia Pirere-Newton
Head Boarder 2025

William Davis-Lenz
Deputy Head Boy 2025

Gerard van Helsdingen
Deputy Head Boy 2025

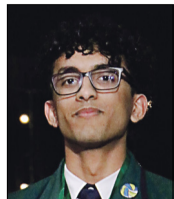
Elijah Solomon
Deputy Head Boy 2025

Young Catholics

>> Continued from p 18

Diocese of Palmerston North

St Peter's College, Palmerston North



Deiz Shinoy
Dux 2024



Mata Severinsen
Proxime Accessit
2024



Deiz Shinoy and Rosalia Siu
Special Character Recipients 2024



Ella Marlow and Joshua Leamy King
Head Girl and Head Boy 2025



Student Leadership Team 2025 (l-r), back row: **Junior Faiao Pelasio, Joshua Lee, Joshua Leamy-King, Tom Mullin, Nikora Greening, Flynn Wilson, Nian Trocio, Ryan Lister**; middle: **Lydia George, Natalia Harding, Tessa Amey, Ariana Kerehoma, Manny Tautau, Te Aiokura Kenrick-Paniora, Laila Severinsen, Jamie Croucher, Olivia Jensen**; front row: **Eva Mason, Fia Smith, Thia Mantle, Tessa Yates, Ella Marlow, Eleanor King, Ann Gibu Joseph, Jessie Kinsman, Kate Pettersson**. Absent: **Madison Gilbert**.

Hato Pāora College, Feilding



Manaia Okwara
Dux 2024



Prefect Team 2025 (l-r): **Te Rangitaurewa Tipene-Matua, Tamati Kereopa, Manaia Ringiao** (Deputy Head Prefect), **Te Ahitaewa Hakaraia-Hosking** (Head Prefect), **Tuck Kahukuranui, Te Raungaiti Moses, Te Mana Anapu-Burke**.

>> Continued from p 19

Archdiocese of Wellington

St Bernard's College, Lower Hutt



Benjamin Housden
Dux 2024



Euan Monteclaro
Proxime Accessit
2024



Angelo Araiza
Special
Character 2024



Ben Faapusa
Head Boy 2025



Vansh Kumar
Deputy Head
Boy 2025

St Patrick's College, Wellington



Sam Glynan
Dux 2024



Mevan Herath
Proxime Accessit
2024



JJ Historillo
Special Character
2024



Student Leadership Team 2025, top four (l-r): **Marley Oloapu-Atoni, Ethan Lepou, Sami Ghanem, Manu Taupua** (Matua | Head Prefect), **Carter Harris, Connor Maxwell**.

Catholic Education - outlook for 2025



Dr Kevin Shore
CEO NZ Catholic Education
Office, CEO Association of
Proprietors of Integrated
Schools

A very important milestone in 2025 is that our Catholic state integrated schools are celebrating fifty years since the signing of the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act (PSCIA) in 1975. Our wonderful Catholic education system would not exist today without the sacrifice, generosity and willingness by many individuals and groups within the Church, as well as the government and education interest groups who put aside their differences to ensure in signing the PSCIA, and Catholic schools were able to provide an education that was at least equal to state schools. The rest as they say is history. Our Catholic education stakeholders have much to thank Prime Minister Norman Kirk and the politicians of the time who put the interests of parents and students in the private school system ahead of the pervading education and political philosophies of the time.

I would like to think the ongoing government funds provided to operate our state integrated schools in Aotearoa has been a sound investment for the state. By ensuring Catholic character could be imbued across all aspects of the school, students have been given every opportunity to grow in their own personal relationship with Christ and develop a set of beliefs and values that uphold the dignity of each person and contribute positively to our society. Since 1975, our schools have moved from a position of education deficit to the current point in time where our Catholic schools are known for their outstanding pastoral and achievement outcomes.

Teachers and special character

However there are challenges, in maintaining such a wonderful

system into the future. Like many international countries, it is becoming much harder to find teachers who can be tagged in special character positions in our Catholic schools. Our schools need teachers who are connected and committed to their faith to be able to provide an authentic Catholic education. Not only is there a current shortage of teachers but given that 60 per cent of primary teaching roles and 40 per cent of secondary teachers in Catholic schools must hold a special character position it has not been easy for some of our Catholic schools to meet these requirements. Many schools are doing a good job of growing staff within their own schools to take on these roles but it is challenging and a potential threat to our system.

Leadership

The second challenge is ensuring the system continues to prepare and support staff for leadership roles in Catholic schools. The turnover of school leaders in both the state and state integrated sector is relatively high and some Catholic school boards are concerned that there is not always a strong pool of candidates to choose from. The good news here is that in our Catholic national leadership programmes we are getting strong support from the sector and the current National Catholic Aspiring Leaders Programme has almost 50 participants preparing for a leadership role in our Catholic schools.

[For information about the National Catholic Aspiring Leaders Programme, visit tinyurl.com/nzceo-aspiring-leaders-2025].

Demand for Catholic schools high

More good news is that demand for places in our Catholic schools remains high and overall, our national Catholic student roll in 2024 rose by about 1500 students. In terms of preference of enrolment, 70 per cent of students in our Catholic schools are either baptised or undertaking preparation for baptism with a further 13 per cent coming from a family where at least one parent is baptised. Our schools and parishes are working together to encourage those students and families where the child is not baptised to participate in a sacramental programme.

Our Catholic schools remain a key player in the Church's Mission of bringing the message of Jesus Christ to the world.



Demand for places in our Catholic schools remains high.

Photo: Annette Scullion

Rangatahi Katorika

Festival One 2025

Nick Wilson

Festival One, formerly known as the Parachute Christian Music Festival, is held annually in January at Karapiro, in the Waikato. The action-packed festival has multiple stages featuring different musical artists and Christian music genres. Attendees hear Christian messages of hope, enjoy worship, quiet prayer sessions, sports competitions and learn about the different missionary

and service opportunities in New Zealand and further afield. It is an epic experience open to families, and young people come away reinvigorated in their faith. One of the highlights is an enactment of the feeding of the 5000, where festival goers are fed off Argentinian BBQs. The festival is family friendly and we are going again in January 2026. If your young person would like to come along, we would love to have them join our diocesan group!



Nick Wilson, far left back row, with young participants from Palmerston North Diocese at Festival One, held in Karapiro in January. Photo: Supplied

YCL - Palmerston North Diocese

Nick Wilson

Every December, the Diocese of Palmerston North Youth Office runs a Young Catholic Leader programme at Highland Home Christian Camp, in the beautiful Pohangina Valley. This year we had 65 participants and 15 leaders – our biggest ever programme – with participants from seven of our diocesan colleges and some state schools within our diocesan boundary. Catholic Charities and the Page Trust provided generous sponsorship.

The programme trains Year-12 students for servant leadership in the way of Jesus for their Year 13 year. It bolsters special character leadership in the school by teaching 11 keys of effective leadership. Feedback was outstanding, showing the value of this programme in our secondary schools. We commission our leaders at the end of the programme by asking them what gift they will take back to their school for the following year and 2025 looks like a fantastic year for our diocesan secondary schools!

Living the lines of our school prayer

**Stacey Mackenzie
St Peter's College,
Palmerston North**

'You call us to live lives that matter, lives that change our world for the better. Give us eyes to see that needs of others, and hearts to reach out to fill those need,' are lines from St Peter's College school prayer.

Later last year, St Peter's Junior Leaders invited Years 7 to 10 students to donate unused toys for our 2024 Toy Drive. We had learned at assembly, many families around New Zealand struggle at Christmas time with rises in food costs, power bills and medical fees. As a school, we wanted to spread some Christmas magic to families around the Palmerston North community.

Whānau and students donated over 1000 items, allowing the Junior Council to wrap over 60 presents to go to those in need.

As a fun competition, junior students were asked to decorate a shoe box with a Christmas theme with the winner getting chocolates



St Peter's College students and whānau donated over 1000 items for Christmas presents.

Photo: Supplied

and lollies for their class. The stunning range of decorated boxes to help with the packaging added to the magic of the mission.

Junior Council members had all the gifts organised before the collection date and Vinnies were blown away when they came to collect the presents – their truck was full!

St Peter's College is an amazing school and community. Our prayer is not just words on a page, it is the actions we live by.

LifeTeen Summer Camp 2025

Nick Wilson

Palmerston North Diocese Young Catholics from New Plymouth, Whanganui, Palmerston North and the Hawke's Bay joined Archdiocesan youth and others from around the country at LifeTeen Summer Camp, at St Paul's College, Hamilton, 14 to 18 January.

LifeTeen is the biggest Catholic youth event in Aotearoa New Zealand with nearly 400 people attending every year. Prayer, small group works, sessions of sisterhood, brotherhood to apologetics 101, messy games, daily adoration Mass and fun made the week an incredible experience of encounter for young people. Praise and worship rang out across the Camp and we were pleasantly surprised with a visit from Bishop John Adams, who is the Episcopal representative on the NZCBC National Council for



Diocese of Palmerston North participants at Life Teen from Hawke's Bay, Palmerston North, Whanganui and New Plymouth parishes. Photo: Supplied

Young People.

The LifeTeen kaupapa in our diocese across our five largest parishes has our young Church ministers well conversant in this Ministry to young people. The LifeTeen mantra is 'leading teens closer to Christ'. Faith came alive

for the young people. When we invest in the faith lives of young people, they thrive.

Nick Wilson is Palmerston North Diocese Young Catholics Team Leader and Heamana|Chair, NZCBC Council for Young People.

20 years forming young leaders in the Archdiocese of Wellington

Chris Duthie-Jung

At the end of last year, 70 year-12 students and 17 young leaders gathered at Forest Lakes Camp, Ōtaki, to prepare for life as school and parish leaders for 2025.

The 20th edition of the Young Catholic Leader (YCL) camp, which began in 2004, once again celebrated the energy and creativity of young people while developing the insight and experience leadership entails.

At the end of each year, the YCL programme focuses on learning about servant leadership as disciples of Jesus Christ for the student leaders from Catholic colleges – and a parish or two – for the year ahead. Using an activity-based learning approach, the camp gives participants opportunities to understand and practice self-awareness, communication and planning.

The end of year 2024 programme was immersed in student-led prayer, celebrating Eucharist with Archbishop Paul Martin sm and Reconciliation with eight visiting archdiocesan clergy, as the students wrestled with how



Seventy Catholic students attended the 2024 YCL Camp last December to prepare for their 2025 student leadership roles. Photo: Supplied

to make faith our centre, as our Catholic Colleges do.

The programme had a dynamic team of 18 leaders who explored leadership with the students. Six were fresh out of Year 13 as leaders themselves. Free time was ever popular with the renowned Forest Lakes mudslide, waterslide, pool, volleyball, ten-pin bowling and just 'chilling' as teens. The friendships developed among students from the different colleges proved almost as important as teambuilding within the college groups.

While all Catholic colleges in the archdiocese make a real effort

to have their representatives attend the programme, the 'award for commitment' must surely go to Garin College, who again brought a full quota of 12 students from Nelson then faced the challenges of cancelled ferries when heading home. Special mention too to the intrepid three students, each from three different state colleges, who joined the programme to meet and learn alongside the student groups from the Catholic colleges.

Together, all the students enjoyed lots of learning, lots of fun and they left set for leadership in 2025!



St Bernard's School, Brooklyn, Wellington, celebrated a wonderful day last December with Fr Doug Shepherd baptising nine students, including three siblings. Principal Mrs Small was particularly proud to be godmother to one of the boys and to see one of the girls wearing her own First Communion dress for the day. 'All nine students are thrilled to now say they are members of the Catholic Church and the older ones are looking forward to working towards receiving further Sacraments later this year,' said Mrs Small. 'It was a special honour for the school community to be able to share in such a holy day.' Photo: Supplied

Testing times ahead for our world – Caritas' focus remains strong

Caritas state of the nation: Taking our place in Aotearoa and the Pacific in a challenging world



Mena Antonio
CEO, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand

Nau mai, Haere Mai.

It is a pleasure tinged with sadness that I write in the final issue of *WelCom*. Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand and the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North have had a strong relationship over many years and we will be sad to see this newspaper go.

The departure of *WelCom* is one of many developments among the light and hope, that have made this past year difficult. Change is gruelling and constant, and the last year has been full of challenges; and we know more is to come.

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand continues its mission of bringing hope, guided by Catholic social teachings - promoting social justice and upholding the dignity of all people, especially the vulnerable and those facing poverty.

Challenging times for aid agencies

But we live in testing times. New Zealand's economic recession has led to hardship and suffering and - understandably - a downturn in donations across the sector, as well as a government that is keen on austerity. It remains to be seen if this austerity stretches to New Zealand's foreign aid budget. Caritas' donor base continues to

shrink as Catholics in New Zealand age and decline in number. This is happening against a backdrop of increasing hostility to international aid - as seen most dramatically this month with the US government shutting down USAID for 90 days. This action has already resulted in disruption for our sister agency Catholic Relief Services, and will cause suffering for millions of the world's poorest people.

Here in the Pacific, this could not be worse timing. Our region faces the complexity of climate change and its effects - rising sea levels resulting in soil and water salination, increased cyclone damage, flooding, food insecurity, and of course - as we have discussed in *WelCom* before - unsustainable climate debt. Currently, countries such as Fiji and Samoa allocate around 15 per cent of government revenue to debt servicing, which is more than they spend on health or education. This financial burden leaves little room for these nations to invest in climate resilience or long-term development.

Conflict and humanitarian crises

We also saw the devastating consequences of conflict in the Holy Land. Although a ceasefire had been declared at the time of writing [10 February 2025], at least 46,000 Palestinians and hundreds of humanitarian workers - including some Caritas colleagues - lost their lives in the conflict, with entire neighbourhoods now reduced to rubble. The challenge of rebuilding that region, and for those impacted to rebuild their lives, is immense and the future of the region is uncertain, given recent political developments.

And the Gaza conflict was not unique. We saw people's inhumanity towards others in multiple places, with conflicts in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Syria and Ukraine, to name a few.

Despite these obstacles, Caritas

has remained steadfast in its mission to support the most vulnerable communities through advocacy, development, and humanitarian aid. We are on the ground before, during and after disaster strikes.

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." - Matthew 25:40

Hope in action

In seven countries across the Pacific and Southeast Asia, our development programmes continued to help local communities with assistance as diverse as agricultural training in Fiji to health and nutrition training to counter climate change in Kiribati. In 2024, 154,000 people benefitted from long-term development initiatives thanks to Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

Advocating for fairness in New Zealand

Our advocacy work has increased with renewed energy. We were proud to be one of dozens of organisations that stood alongside our Justice and Peace Committee against the proposed changes to Te Tiriti and called for public submissions on the issue on the issue, resulting in hundreds of thousands of Kiwis having their say. Our online templates helped our supporters to place submissions to Parliament on the Fast-Track Approvals Bill. We are working to change the laws related to human trafficking, we advocated on behalf of victims of the conflict in the Holy Land, and are embarking on a global campaign this year called *Together We*, part of Caritas Internationalis efforts to end unfair debt.

We were also instrumental in helping to establish the Oceania Migrant and Refugee Network with our allies from Australia and the Pacific. The network is working to combat forced migration due

to climate change and to ensure pastoral care is provided to migrants enrolled in New Zealand and Australia's seasonal labour mobility schemes.

Support for the Holy Land

As the humanitarian community scrambles to meet overwhelming needs in Gaza in response to the ceasefire, we have sent an additional \$70,000 to support rebuilding and recovery efforts in the region. Kiwis have now contributed more than \$240,000 worth of humanitarian assistance through our organisation. More than 46,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank have now received assistance through Caritas' support, which has included healthcare, emergency relief, cash assistance, and mental health aid. We also facilitated aid to Ukraine through our partner and sister agencies. Altogether, in 2024, 414,000 people received emergency assistance from Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand across the globe in times of crisis.

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic social teaching permeates all of our work, be it advocacy, development, humanitarian work or education. In fact, our engagement with Catholic schools continues to draw great feedback, and our team is excited to be in front of students again. If we want a world of peace and love we must make sure our young people are advocates for social justice - especially for the poor and vulnerable. It may seem like fun, but Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand supported activities - like uniform-free days or the Caritas Challenge - have a serious message rooted in Christ's love. This year, more than 400 students at Holy Trinity School in Papua New Guinea will benefit from new classroom equipment thanks to the uniform-free efforts of Kiwi kids - and the 2024 Caritas Challenge raised approximately \$28,000 for Caritas. Some 39,000 Kiwi school

children participated in Caritas-led activities last year.

The world is changing fast. It seems like it is in constant flux. We are adapting to these challenges as best we can - guided by the wisdom of Catholic social teaching.

Despite the challenges, we are strengthening our mission, building partnerships, and finding innovative ways to serve communities in need.

Looking ahead to 2025 - the Jubilee Year

I share the words of Pope Francis as we enter what is likely to be another turbulent 12 months.

'We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us; and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire; that is why I have chosen as the motto of the Jubilee, Pilgrims of Hope.'

In this time of flux, it is even more important we stand in our mission to give preferential option to the poor and vulnerable, to care for the environment and to take courageous action when there is pressure instead for NGOs to tow the line. We will amplify our language of Catholic social teaching, and we will endeavor to be the light of the way of Jesus.

Caritas expresses deep gratitude to its supporters, including many who have read about us in this newspaper over the years - and the team at *WelCom* who have always made this mission possible and real. Our volunteer board and committee members provide the necessary oversight in a highly regulated environment, and we are grateful for the devotion of the New Zealand bishops for their support. We are blessed to be of service to you.

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‘Where to from Here’

Gerry Stevens
National President
Society of St Vincent de Paul
in New Zealand

‘State of the Nation’ speeches are very popular among politicians, though the cynical part of me believes they are mainly used to either justify what they have done or what they are about to do. I have waited in vain for a speech that outlines a dream or vision for the future.

‘Where to from Here’ is probably a better heading.

Traditionally, in New Zealand, nearly every parish had a Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society. In most cases they reflected the life of the parish and were often mirrors of the parish life.

If that is the case, then today we have a similar manifestation – but reflecting a very different story.

Shrinking attendance, ageing parishioners and a shortage of clergy, sees parishes closing, churches shut down and local church communities disappearing as parishioners struggle to cope with the new environment. Many younger people no longer see the need to attend church.

In the Society we too face an ageing and shrinking membership, empty leadership positions and an unwillingness or an inability to commit long term. Younger people don't see us as being relevant in the way we operate. And the difficulty of working within today's legislative environment also adds to the membership problem.

In the sixties Pope John 23rd asked us to open up to the world, and Pope Francis, in turn echoed that call in telling us we had to be

outward looking. There was no ‘Dummies Book on How to be Open and Outward Looking’ to tell us how to do this and while we struggled along came computers and the Information Age to add to the turmoil. Things could only get worse, and they did with the Abuse Scandals and the worldwide Covid pandemic. Now, we are trying to deal with today, while using yesterday's methods and tools.

Religion no longer holds the ‘Mana’ of the old days. The rule-based certainty has gone, to be replaced with questions, science and Google, with of course the ultimate question of ‘what's in it for ME?’ No mention of ‘US!’.

We have tried Refocus, Renewal, Recovery, Renovation and all the other ‘Re-s’ with limited or no success. All these have focused on the *symptoms* of the problem rather than the *roots*. When a person is ill, we must deal with the symptoms of their illness, but common-sense dictates we must also deal with the root cause of the illness in first place. I would suggest our root cause is that we have lost sight of the Mission of our Society.

“Today, like Frederic Ozanam, we need to Re-found our Society. Find radically new ways of bridging the gap between Christ's mission and the world in which we now live.”

When Frederic Ozanam and his friends started the first Conference in 1833 it was in an environment of violent political unrest, extreme poverty and epidemics with no health system and a Church that couldn't decide where it fitted in. Frederic, a devout Catholic and a man of great faith, formed a group (Conference) to discuss how a Christianity of loving God and



St Vincent de Paul Shop, Richmond – one of many Vinnies stores helping communities around New Zealand.

Photo: WelCom/File

loving your neighbour, had helped and was continuing to help shape the world for the better. After being challenged by a non-Christian to ‘show us your works’ he very quickly realised that Loving your Neighbour in practical ways helped you grow your personal faith. The two great Commandments, Love

Frederic ‘Re-found’ his faith. He looked back to the Founder of his faith, Jesus Christ, and understood how Jesus loved the Father and wanted to share that love with all, particularly the Poor. That was Jesus' Mission and Frederic found new ways of carrying out that Mission – ways suitable to his time and environment.

Today, like Frederic, we need to Re-found our Society. Find radically new ways of bridging the gap between Christ's mission and the world in which we now live.

My *Dream* for the future is for a Conference to be a place where Vincentians come together as one to grow their faith through love and care for each other; working together to share that love with the Poor in practical and personal ways while passing no judgments.

As a very wise man told me many, many years ago; ‘Just Love them, Gerry, Just Love them’.

However, the reality is that doing all this is not going to be easy. The world we live in is, as my father used to say, ‘going to Hell in a handcart’. The world, including many Institutions, is in a crisis, politically, environmentally and spiritually. We are frightened and worried as we travel this journey, knowing whatever happens we will be different at the end. We can draw comfort from the story of Jesus and the Apostles travelling across the lake in their boat when a storm blew up. They were in a crisis, and in their panic, they demanded help from Jesus. ‘Be not afraid’ he said as he calmed the storm, and they made it safely to the other side with strengthened faith and hearts full of joy.

Those three words ‘be not afraid’ fill us with hope that we will end our journey better, full of faith, joy and peace. We have created something new!

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Catholics Thinking

...and a time to laugh



Ian Munro

Have you heard this joke about Pope Francis? I hadn't until just recently. It goes like this.

As soon as Pope Francis arrives at the airport in New York for his apostolic journey in the United States, he finds an enormous limousine waiting for him. He is rather embarrassed by that magnificent splendour, but then thinks it has been ages since he last drove, and never a vehicle of that kind, and he thinks to himself: OK, when will I get another chance? He looks at the limousine and says to the driver, 'You couldn't let me try it out, could you?'

'Look, I'm really sorry, Your Holiness,' replies the driver, 'but I really can't, you know, there are rules and regulations.'

But you know what they say, how the Pope is when he gets something into his head – in short, he insists and insists, until the driver gives in. So Pope Francis gets behind the steering wheel, on one of those enormous highways, and he begins to enjoy it, presses down on the accelerator, going 50 miles per hour, 80, 120 – until he hears a siren, and a police car pulls up beside him and stops him. A young policeman comes up to the darkened window. The Pope rather nervously lowers it and the policeman turns white.

'Excuse me a moment,' he says, and goes back to his vehicle to call headquarters. 'Boss, I think I have a problem.'

'What problem?' asks the chief. 'Well, I've stopped a car for speeding, but there's a guy in there who's really important.'

'How important? Is he the mayor?'

'No, no, boss ... more than the mayor.'

'And more than the mayor, who is there? The governor?'

No, no, more. ...'

'But he can't be the president?'

'More, I reckon. ...'

And who can be more important than the president?'

'Look, boss, I don't know exactly who he is, all I can tell you is that it's the Pope who's driving him!'

Pope Francis retells this joke about himself in his new book, *Hope: The Autobiography*. He has discussed the importance of humour on a number of occasions

in the past. He believes when it becomes hard for us to cry seriously or to laugh passionately, we have become anaesthetised adults who can do nothing good for ourselves, society, or the Church.

Most recently, he talked about humour with an invited international audience of comedians. He told them that humour is a precious gift, a gift that can spread peace within our hearts and between peoples, helping us to overcome difficulties and cope with daily stress.

'In your own way,' he said in his address to them, 'you unite people because laughter is contagious. It is easier to laugh together than alone. ... You denounce abuses of power; you give voice to forgotten situations; you highlight abuses; you point out inappropriate behaviour. You do this without spreading alarm or terror, anxiety or fear, as other types of communication tend to do; you rouse people to think critically by making them laugh and smile.'¹

Joy in the Holy Spirit

In his 2018 apostolic exhortation, *Gaudete et exultate*, Francis previously made the point that Christian life is 'joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom 14:17) and far from being 'timid, morose, acerbic or melancholy, or putting on a dreary face, the saints are joyful and full of good humour'. His namesake, St Francis of Assisi, would refer to himself and his followers as *Jongleurs de Dieu*, or Troubadours of God, as they travelled from town to town singing and preaching joyously.

"The ability to laugh with others and at ourselves is a blessing. We need to take advantage of that blessing and heed Pope Francis's advice to do a lot more laughing and take life a little less seriously."

Fundamentalist or overly pious believers in some religions might hold that humour and spirituality are incompatible and, when I reflect on the last two and a half decades of this century, particularly post-Covid, it seems to me that we have moved from the hopeful promise of the new millennium of peace and prosperity and lightness of heart and spirit to an age of anger and grievance, too easily taking offence.

I'm certain so much could be sorted with our legendary Kiwi compassion and sense of humour. Both still exist in many corners of our communities but are loudly and stridently shouted down more readily than those attributes are promoted. Our self-effacing modesty is no match for those with other agendas and we are in danger of becoming an embittered people with any humour having a hard, sarcastic, bullying and generally unpleasant edge to it – humour that does little more than belittle others.

...and a time to laugh

Many seem to be forgetting that there is both 'a time to weep and a time to laugh' (Eccles 3:4). Joy and



Pope Francis met with more than 100 comedians from around the world last June, encouraging them to cheer people up and help people see reality with all its contradictions. Photo: Vatican Media/Divisione Foto

laughter are part of our Christian heritage as much as the weeping and sadness. And both are part of simply being human.

Jesuit theologian, Fr Karl Rahner wrote that laughter is first and foremost an affirmation of our humanity. We firstly relate to those telling the jokes or sharing a humorous story and then respond through laughter, which is an expression of solidarity and love.

'The laughter of daily life announces and shows that one is on good terms with reality. ... Laughter is praise of God because it foretells the eternal praise of God at the end of time, when those who must weep here on earth shall laugh.'²

Humour is usually the only weapon oppressed people have, and the shared laughter helps to keep them going. Jewish humour

is legendary, and Mahatma Gandhi reportedly remarked that without his sense of humour he would long before have committed suicide.

Humour allows for a sense of proportion, and I think that being able to laugh at our own mistakes and foibles is also important in this sense. It shows a degree of self-awareness and an ability to forgive ourselves, an attribute we need if we are truly to be able truly to forgive others.

Grant me, O Lord, a good sense of humour

In his address to the assembled comedians, Pope Francis tells that he daily prays St Thomas More's prayer, 'Grant me, O Lord, a good sense of humour' (see panel).

I wouldn't go as far as Mark Twain and describe humour as mankind's greatest blessing. There's another contender for that designation. However, I would suggest the ability to laugh with others and at ourselves is a blessing. I think we need to take advantage of that blessing and heed Pope Francis's advice to do a lot more laughing and take life a little less seriously.

"Grant me, O Lord, good digestion, and also something to digest.

Grant me a healthy body, and the necessary good humour to maintain it.

Grant me a simple soul that knows to treasure all that is good and that doesn't frighten easily at the sight of evil, but rather finds the means to put things back in their place.

Give me a soul that knows not boredom, grumbling, sighs and laments, nor excess of stress, because of that obstructing thing called T.

Grant me, O Lord, a sense of good humour. Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke and to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others". Amen.

- St Thomas More



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Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is an international Catholic Charity offering spiritual and pastoral support to suffering and persecuted Christians. ACN is looking for Diocesan Outreach Assistants (DOAs) living in the Diocese of Palmerston North to help spread the news of this work in Catholic parishes in 2025.

The Diocesan Outreach Assistant role is a part time position which consists of delivering 15 weekends of parish presentations across a year. The role also requires the capacity to undertake administrative work (pertaining to booking presentations in parishes e.g. phone calls, emails, etc.)

The primary tasks of the Diocesan Outreach Assistant are:

- To raise awareness of the suffering and persecuted Church by sharing the stories of our brothers and sisters who suffer or are persecuted for their faith. The DOA will encourage parishioners to sign up to receive the ACN's Newsletter.
- To invite parishioners to pray for the persecuted and suffering Church.
- To inspire parishioners to take action to support the suffering Church and to join ACN in its journey to keep the faith alive.

For more information and to view the full job ad go to www.aidtochurch.org/work, call 0800 242 322 (10am-7pm NZST) or email Cecilia: cecilia@aidtochurch.org

Applications close: 17 March 2025, however interested candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible as applications will be considered and shortlisted (if suitable) as they are received.

The key to life is the appreciation of beauty

James B Lyons

'We are here to appreciate beauty.'

I read this in a novel over the Christmas break. While I can't recall how it fitted into the plot, the image has stayed with me. It's a great answer to the question each of us has to ask at some time on our life's journey.

Why am I here? Why are any of us here?

If the answer is to appreciate beauty, what is this 'beauty'?

I believe it is the gift of life itself. The gift of the natural world, the sun, moon and stars and the vast universe that surrounds us.

It is the gift of my individual life and the life of every person. It is the gift of friendship, companionship and the gift of motion, colour and contrast.

We are awestruck by what is beautiful – a sunset, a smile, a flower garden, the night sky, new life....

For Christians, the realisation that God so loved the world as to enter our space and share life with us, is the most beautiful gift of all.

We recently hailed this gift with the Christmas festival and entered a New Year, celebrating family life and its potential for greatness.

The months ahead open us to the Jubilee Year as *Pilgrims of Hope*, walking with Pope Francis to create a world-wide atmosphere where reconciliation, harmony and peace can find a permanent home.



'We are here to appreciate beauty.' Tree lake – Lake Wanaka. Photo: Unsplash

These are indeed the fruits of appreciating beauty.

Failure in this appreciation will inevitably lead to disharmony, a selfish approach to life and a warped sense of privilege.

It is easy to forget that I am not a totally independent being. If all I have is gift, I can claim no right to it. Yet, by acknowledging and accepting the gift, I should want to do my best to honour it, to use it well and to recognise how it fits in relationship to all life around me.

Forgetting to appreciate beauty, by taking it for granted, ignoring it or assuming it's mine by right, is to close myself in to a life where possessions and power count for everything and compassion, caring and forgiveness become signs of weakness.

Appreciating beauty enables me to wonder at the marvel of creation

and the hope this inspires for all life.

Noticing even the simplest of beautiful things or actions can lift the veil of worry or doubt, rekindling an awareness of being part of something greater than myself and the value of having others in my life.

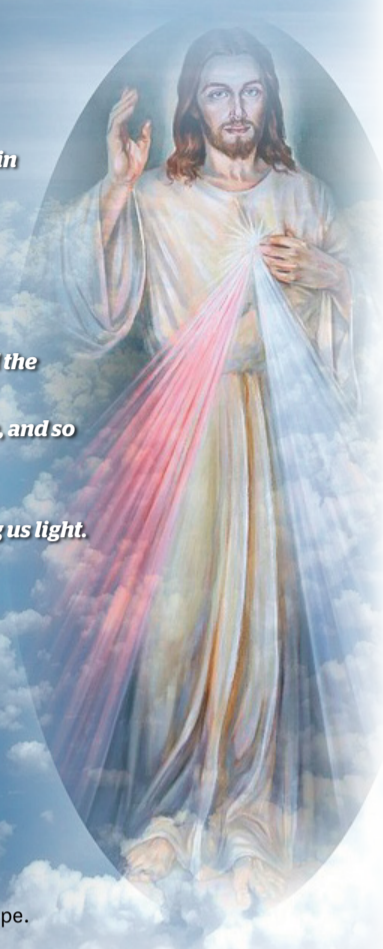
In his latest encyclical letter, *He Loved Us*, Pope Francis reminds us that we 'cannot attain our fulfilment as human beings unless we open our hearts to others; only through love do we become fully ourselves. The deepest part of us, created for love, will fulfil God's plan only if we learn to love.' [*Dilexit Nos, He Loved us, October 2024, n.59.*]

We are certainly here to appreciate beauty. This appreciation is the gateway to wonder, which opens a path to faith, provides an essential ingredient for hope and becomes a teacher of love.

Pilgrims of Hope

*Rain clouds darken the sky
The stars cannot be seen
War cries fill the earth
Peace is just a dream.
These times are far from certain
The path ahead unclear
Yet we dare to lift the curtain
And boldly face our fear.
Pilgrims of hope
Our journey's on its way
There's life to live - beyond the darkest days
With dreams alive and free, and so much yet to be
Our pilgrimage takes flight
And we trust the dawn to bring us light.
Family ties lie broken
Poverty is real
We need to hear love spoken
And people helped to heal.
Hope is our companion
Our reason to believe
Together we keep moving
To meet our destiny.
Pilgrims of hope
Our journey's on....*

JB Lyons – 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope.
Chris Skinner sm – music.



Fr James Lyons wrote this song for the Jubilee Year. Celebrated singer, songwriter and musician Fr Chris Skinner sm has put the words to music. It was played and sung at Fr James' book launch on 4 February at the Home of Compassion, Wellington. (See book review p 27.)

Keeping the Faith alive



When you hear the word 'charity' what comes to mind? Perhaps it is feeding the hungry, caring for the sick and sheltering the homeless. These are vital **material needs** and the Catholic Church has carried them out since her inception.

But is that it? Is the Church only here to fill stomachs and tend to wounds? Actually, even if the Church could eradicate all poverty and disease for all time that would not be her greatest gift to the world. The Church's greatest gift to the world is Jesus Christ. The Church exists to primarily sustain the **spiritual needs** of its people.

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In short **we offer faith, hope and love to our brothers and sisters** who cry out to us for Jesus.

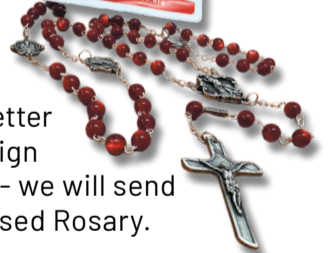


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Gospel Reading: Sunday 2 March 2025

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Luke 6:39-45

³⁹ Jesus told his disciples a parable, 'Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit?' ⁴⁰ No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher.

⁴¹ Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but never notice the great log in your own?

⁴² How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye," when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the great log from your eye first; then you will see clearly enough to remove the splinter in your brother's eye.

⁴³ 'A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree

bear good fruit.

⁴⁴ For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles.

⁴⁵ A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.'

Working to make the kingdom come

Dennis Horton

Today's reading comes hard on the heels of Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount, read at Mass a fortnight ago. It includes a cluster of parables which Jesus uses to show his disciples how they need to act if their faith is to turn into deeds that will help to make God's kingdom come.

At the heart of each parable lies the truth expressed so neatly in the maxim taught by scholars like Thomas Aquinas, 'Nemo dat quod non habet' – no one can give what they do not have.

There may well have been a blind person among those listening to Jesus, led by a family member or friend; only someone with sight could keep them from stumbling. Jesus insists that his word alone gives the light we need to see clearly

and act with integrity.

Judgment of others is a trap into which disciples can easily fall. Only God sees the heart; Jesus warns us against the superficial judgments that focus on external behaviour and can often fall far short of the truth. The beam in our own eye can cause us to magnify what is only a speck in another's life; true religion is concerned with inner motivation and integrity of heart, not external conformity on which the Pharisees were so prone to focus. Foremost among the images Jesus provides is that of the tree known by its fruit – good or rotten. We can deliver only what springs from our heart, good or evil.

The start of a New Year is traditionally a time for good resolutions. How can each of us become more faithful in responding to the gospel's call? What can I do, in a practical way, to let the values

of Jesus take deeper root in my life and in my world? The theme of the Holy Year of Jubilee, proclaimed by Pope Francis as he opened the holy door in Rome on Christmas Eve, is that we become pilgrims of hope.

His call was echoed by Archbishop Gabor Pinter, the pope's representative in New Zealand, at a Mass in Northland to mark the first Eucharist celebrated by Bishop Pompallier in 1838. We are all on a pilgrimage, the nuncio declared, not a physical journey to a sacred place but a spiritual journey towards God. Hope is not just wishful thinking, he said, but 'a confident expectation rooted in God's faithfulness.' As prophets of hope, 'we are called to be bearers of this promise, sharing God's light in our world, and inspiring others to trust in God's promise.'

Students awarded Suzanne Aubert Tertiary Scholarship 2025

The Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert Tertiary Scholarship has honoured three students with support for their studies in 2025. The award is a one-off grant of \$3,000 offered to second-year students, or students

in above years who are not eligible for 'Fees free' government support for their Tertiary Studies in 2025. The Sisters express their gratitude to the Mother Aubert Home of Compassion Trust Board for

making this award possible. The Sisters of Compassion extend their congratulations to the three students on their successful applications.



Rose Powell

Rose Powell is a student at Victoria University of Wellington, studying in 2025 for a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in History and Religious Studies, with a goal towards teaching.



Giovanni Noaro

Giovanni Noaro is a student of Bachelor of Aviation (Air Transport Pilot) at Massey University, completing his second year in 2025.



Katharina Bestall

Katie Bestall is a student at the Western Institute of Technology in New Plymouth, completing her final year of a Bachelor of Nursing in 2025.

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Last words....

Four of WelCom's contributing writers have recently written and launched new books, which are featured on this page. We congratulate **Bishop Peter Cullinane**, **Fr James Lyons**, **Michael Fitzsimons**, and retired Anglican **Bishop John Bluck** on their new published works and for sharing their writings with WelCom readers.

A Litany re-discovered

Reviewed by
Michael Fitzsimons

One in our midst, Honouring Mary in the 21st Century, is a new book of spiritual reflections from well-known Wellington author, Fr James Lyons.

The book is a refreshing take on the Litany of Loreto, which dates back to 1531. It was officially approved by Pope Sixtus V in 1587 and since then has had a number of invocations added.

However, as Fr James notes in the introduction, the popularity of litanies has waned in recent times. 'This book is an attempt to reignite interest.'

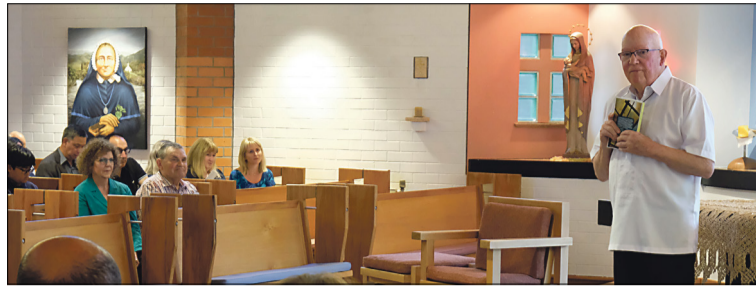
The Loreto Litany is named after a town in Italy where it was first prayed in the local Basilica. It actually contains six litanies, two of which are

the focus for this book: 'Symbols of Mary' and 'Mary the Helper'.

These two litanies contain 18 intercessions. They are varied in nature, using many traditional descriptors for Mary not commonly used today, such as House of Gold, Morning Star, Refuge of Sinners, Seat of Wisdom, Mirror of Justice.

Fr James takes each of these invocations, outlines their biblical context and references, and then makes connections with our experience of faith today. His great gift as a writer is in taking these ancient images and breathing fresh life into them. Each reflection offers information and inspiration.

The cumulative effect is to flesh out the person of Mary – her humanity, her humility, her profound faith. She is a model of



Fr James Lyons spoke at the launch of his new book at the Home of Compassion Chapel on 4 February. The book explores the titles given to Mary the Mother of Jesus in the Litany of Loreto, and their relevance today. Fr James' writings were featured in a series in WelCom over 12 months. Archbishop Paul Martin sm launched the book to a gathering of around 50 people.



Photo: Annette Scullion

faith for us today just as she has been for generations before us. She is one of us. In Fr James' words: 'In her life among us she knew joy and sorrow, excitement and disappointment, love and loss. There is much about her to be honoured and admired. There is much she can teach us from yesterday; there is much she can tell us today.'

Like all litanies, the Litany of Loreto is a series of invocations or intercessions, ideally suited for public participation. I can vividly remember praying many litanies during my long-ago days as a seminarian. The numerous intercessions followed by 'pray for us' had an hypnotic effect, image piled upon image, a multi-dimensional

meditation. Saying a litany is a different way of praying with its own ability to nourish the interior life. It would be our loss if this tradition was allowed to fade away.

Fr James is doing his best to stop that from happening. In his trademark accessible prose, he unpacks these traditional images used to bestow honour on Mary.

Poems of gratitude

High Wire, a new book of poetry from regular WelCom contributor Michael Fitzsimons, has been published by Wellington publisher Cuba Press. It is his third book of poetry.

His second book, *Michael, I thought you were dead*, dealt with a cancer diagnosis and was described by Joy Cowley as 'a feast for the soul'. Gregory O'Brien said of this book: 'It is hard to imagine a book of poems more infused with living, with seasonal growth, with the

wairua and spirit of being alive.'

Poetry is a way of seeing the world, says Michael. Jotting down words, phrases, impressions and images from a day has been the habit of a lifetime, he says.

'For me, poetry is a way of thinking about what it is to be alive in this world. It's usually a case of being struck by an experience or a feeling, and digging around for the magic that is there. Time passing makes these moments extraordinary and poignant.'

The habit of poetry-writing has a lot to do with gratitude, says Michael.

'It's so easy to take our days for granted. I read somewhere that the worst thing about life was waking up and finding it almost gone.'

'Poetry is a way of staying awake! If you can bring attention to the moment, everything is a gift, even the hard stuff. Joy and suffering are the two paths to God, the great spiritual teachers.'

'I hope gratitude comes through in this latest collection. Surviving a cancer diagnosis gives you a special reason to be grateful. It makes you acutely aware of the fragility of



life. Ordinary things are suddenly brilliant things.'

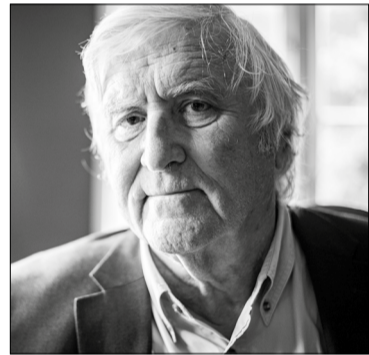
Michael is a former editor of Zealandia Catholic Newspaper and for many years was a director of the Wellington communications and publishing company FitzBeck Creative.

High Wire is available from Unity Books and all good bookshops, and online from Cuba Press thecubapress.nz/shop/high-wire/ The cost is \$25.

A new book by Bishop John Bluck on Aotearoa's bicultural future

Living on the Fault Line – Aotearoa's bicultural future, Quentin Wilson Publishing, February 2025, is a new book by New Zealand author and retired Anglican Bishop John Bluck. The book picks up the themes of John's 2022 book *Becoming Pākehā*, but set in the new context created by the Treaty Principles Bill, and exploring how we might become a more effective and informed partner in that debate. It also offers a deeper look at the richness of our Pākehā cultural and religious history that John first covered in a RNZ series several years ago. The book is available at a special prepublication price of \$25 plus postage, when ordered from johnbluck22@gmail.com

A retired Anglican bishop and former Dean of Christchurch Cathedral, John has worked ecumenically all round New Zealand and overseas, including terms as Communication Director for the World Council of Churches



in Geneva, editor of the NZ Methodist newspaper *New Citizen*, professor of pastoral theology and communication at Knox Theological Hall, Dunedin and staff writer for the Boston Catholic newspaper *The Pilot*.

Now an author, he creates podcasts for RNZ and writes articles and opinion pieces for them and other New Zealand media companies. Visit John's website johnbluck.nz for information about his published books.



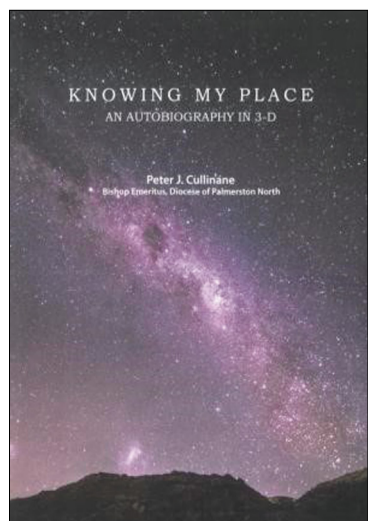
Bishop Peter Cullinane – an autobiography

Knowing My Place: An Autobiography in 3-D by Bishop Emeritus of Palmerston North is an autobiography he published in 2023. The book shares an in-depth insight and account of his rich, interesting and faith-filled life.

Published on the back cover, the following words are from Bishop Peter's good friend the late Cardinal Thomas Williams Archbishop Emeritus of Wellington:

In March 1980, Pope John Paul II created the Diocese of Palmerston North and appointed a priest-theologian Peter Cullinane as its founding bishop.

In his autobiography, Bishop Cullinane has shared his personal



story and also provided insights into the first forty years of the new diocese's life and history. His faithfulness to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and his leadership in liturgy formation, ecumenical relationships and work for social justice brought the benefit to his own diocese, but also to the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference, and further afield.

Ten years into his episcopate, Peter suffered a massive heart attack, resulting in considerable and inoperable damage. That he was able to continue until his retirement, at seventy-five years, to lead the diocese so effectively is testimony to his courage and commitment. This is a

very human story, and witness to the risen Christ.

The A5, 100-page book, is available for purchase at \$24.99 from Pleroma Christian Supplies [christiansupplies.co.nz] or email Bishop Peter at pjcullinane@xtra.co.nz to purchase a copy.

A new writing presented to WelCom by Bishop Peter Cullinane entitled *Formation for Being Human: Taking our Cue from Faith and Reason Together*, explores the gift of human life in a faith and ethical context. It is available to read online on WelCom's website: wn.catholic.org.nz/welcom



Long-time friends Bishop Peter Cullinane (l) and Cardinal Tom Williams (r), share a moment at Cardinal Tom's 60th Jubilee in December 2019. Photo: WelCom file



Ordinary Jubilees are celebrated every 25 years in the Universal Church. For the 2025 Jubilee Year Pope Francis has chosen the theme 'Pilgrims of Hope', inspired by the words of St Paul in Romans, 'Hope does not disappoint' (Romans 5:5).

At St Peter's in Rome, Pope Francis opened the Holy Doors to begin the Holy Year of Jubilee 2025, on Christmas Eve. He also opened a new Holy Door in Rebbbia Prison, Rome, affirming that the doors of Hope are thrown open to all peoples.

With our summer break in this part of the world, each diocese in New Zealand chose a date that best suited their local celebrations. The Archdiocese of Wellington began the Jubilee Year on 26 January and the Diocese of Palmerston North on 2 February, as people entered through the Cathedral doors 'thrown open' for the Year of Jubilee and a time of renewal.

Year of Jubilee 2025



Coming up in our dioceses...

Archdiocese of Wellington

'24 Hours for the Lord'

Among the planned events this Jubilee Year, the Archdiocese will be observing '24 Hours for the Lord' – a worldwide initiative of prayer and reconciliation celebrated on the eve of the 4th Sunday of Lent. It will be held at Sacred Heart Cathedral, beginning with an opening Liturgy at 5.30pm on Friday 28 March, and ending with the Vigil Mass at 5.30pm on Saturday 29 March. Parishes and communities are invited to take the lead for an hour during this prayer vigil. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available throughout this time. '24 Hours for the Lord' is an opportunity to pray together for peace, reconciliation and hope in a hurting and fragmented world. *Everyone* is encouraged to visit the Cathedral to pray during these 24 hours.

Jubilee - a year of Pilgrimage

Pope Francis calls pilgrimage 'one of the People of God's most eloquent expressions of faith'. The Archdiocese has identified five Sacred Sites people are encouraged to visit during the Jubilee Year: Pukekarakā Hāto Mere, Ōtaki; Our Lady's Home of Compassion, St Mary of the Angels National Shrine, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Wellington; and Garin Memorial Chapel in Nelson. Many other sacred spaces are significant to our Catholic story. A pilgrimage resource has been prepared to help individuals and parish groups go on a local pilgrimage. Visit wn.catholic.org.nz/jubilee-2025/ to download the resource. Contact Lucienne Hensel at l.hensel@wn.catholic.org.nz for more information.

Diocese of Palmerston North

Jubilee of Artists - arts trail

The Jubilee of Artists arts trail began on the weekend of 15–16 February, and will continue throughout the Jubilee Year at various churches in the diocese. Participating churches are still being collated. Taking part, so far, are churches in New Plymouth, Hastings, the Cathedral, St Mary's Palmerston North, Ohakune, Taihape, Pahiatua and Whanganui. This hikoī can start from any church in our diocese. Explore within a region, a city or embark on a weekend adventure across multiple churches in our diocese, take time to appreciate the art inside and the beauty that

surrounds these sacred spaces. This is a time to enjoy, learn and reflect in prayer, and give thanks for the creativity, inspiration, and vision artists bring to our world.

Pilgrimage to Hiruhārama | Jerusalem, 8 March

During this special year, the Church invites us to deepen our faith through pilgrimage, prayer, the sacrament of Reconciliation, and works of mercy. We embrace the opportunity to walk this sacred journey of Mother Aubert, learning about the Mission work she and others inspired among Māori they encountered.

Lent 2025 and Easter Sunday

Lent 2025 begins on Wednesday, 5 March and ends on Holy Thursday, 17 April.

Palm Sunday is on 13 April.
Good Friday is on 18 April.
Easter Sunday is on 20 April.

After a short liturgy and blessing from Archbishop Paul Martin sm, as people of the Archdiocese gathered outside the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, the sound of a karanga from Noeline Matthews called everyone to begin the Holy Year of Hope. They moved in procession, venerating the Processional Cross held by Archbishop Paul, as they entered the cathedral's main doors. Inside, in prayerful silence, Archbishop Paul blessed everyone from Baptismal font. Archbishop Paul presided over the Jubilee Opening Mass with Cardinal John Dew, Fr Patrick Bridgman, Deacon Kinh Nyugen and Deacon Philip Manuel. A karanga welcomed those gathered outside the Palmerston North Diocesan Centre, followed by prayers led by Bishop John Adams. The congregation processed along Broadway Ave to the cathedral steps, beginning the Jubilee Year pilgrim journey. At the main doors, Bishop John Adams offered prayers before blessing the entrance and proclaiming the start of the journey ahead. The Proclamation of Pope Francis' Papal Bull was read before the cathedral doors were opened. Leading the congregation inside, Bishop John presided over Mass, assisted by Bishop Peter Cullinane, Mons Brian Walsh and Fr Vui Hoang. Photos: Annette Scullion