

OF
CATHOLIC DIOCESE
TE TAKIWĀ Ō TE PĪHOPA

CHRISTCHURCH

Welcome, worship and witness

Our Future Cathedral Precinct

*"Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labour in vain."*

Psalm 127:1



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Tēnā koutou katoa

My first 18 months as Bishop of our diocese has been a blessed time, as I have met you in our parishes, schools and faith communities. During this time, one of my priorities has been to listen to what is important to you. A common theme has been a desire for clarity around the Cathedral.

Over the past year, considering this question has been central to my prayer life. It has also called for the commitment of significant staffing resources in our diocese to assess the many important practical questions.

I now wish to share with you my thoughts regarding the location of a future Cathedral.

My vision is that our new Cathedral is beautiful, timeless in design and is a worthy house that honours God and represents our faith tradition. It must be a place where all feel welcome so we can continue to foster the faith we have received and to grow in our own call to holiness. It will be a unique place of worship that current and future generations will be proud of.

The initial question has been: Where is the best location for a new Cathedral? The world has changed since the decision in 2019 to build a Cathedral in Armagh Street. COVID-19 forced us to consider what is truly important; the Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry shone a light on our responsibility to those who suffered abuse while in our care; and the increase in both the cost of living and construction costs has highlighted the need for financial prudence.

In considering the question of the best site, we have engaged for feedback with our priests, religious,

parish leadership, Catholic Māori and diocesan representatives. We have also engaged specialists to provide analysis on the options available.

Three potential sites have been identified:

- the site at Barbadoes Street
- the land at Armagh Street
- Manchester Street
- with the renovation of St Mary's Pro-Cathedral

To faithfully consider this project, we are following the Catholic practice of decision-making: prayer, dialogue, discernment and final resolution. Each site has been approached considering its historical and spiritual significance, the capacity for the site to accommodate supporting facilities: a community and cultural centre, a priests' residence, diocesan and parish offices, an adoration chapel and possibly a school or schools. We also considered potential for future growth, accessibility and parking, and ultimately the financial viability of each site, remembering our wider financial commitments to all parishes in the diocese and the important responsibility to support those who have suffered while in Church care.

A clear recommendation has been discerned as a result of those factors:

That we return to our humble and historical roots and locate our Cathedral on Barbadoes Street. For 166 years this land has been central to our story of faith. Living on this land for the past 18 months, I too have sensed its mana and future potential. It blesses us with a rich spiritual history, significant size - many times larger than the other sites - financial viability and accessibility.

“Our visible churches, holy places, are images of the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, toward which we are making our way on pilgrimage.”

“Clarity around the Cathedral has been identified as a matter of priority ... it is time for certainty.”

Bishop Michael



The Barbadoes Street site is sacred to many. Representatives of our Catholic Māori community tell me the site is sacred to them as the place where Aperahama Te Aika, Tipuna Poua, a founding member of the Catholic Church for Māori in Te Waipounamu, was Confirmed. It was also a busy trading route for early Māori. The Carmelite sisters tell me it was the first place the seven-sisters who established a monastery in Christchurch went to pray after their boat docked in Lyttelton. Not forgetting the many humble migrant people for many decades who have invested their lives and savings into this land. It is a site steeped in history with many identifying it as an anchor for their faith in Christchurch.

Keeping with our Catholic principle of discernment, I now turn to you. I encourage each of you to reflect on this important decision, through prayer, dialogue and ongoing discernment, and to share the fruits of that process. After I have had the chance to listen to you, I will make the final decision as your Bishop.

I now invite you to join me in the first step of discernment: Prayer.

As a diocese, I invite us all to dedicate this coming week as a week of prayer, where we can place the intention of our Cathedral location before our God.

Following this week, we will then enter a three-month period of dialogue and discernment. To assist with this, our website will be updated on Monday 18th December with a short survey where you can submit

your thoughts and reflections. Hard copies of the survey will also be available from parish offices. The survey will be open to all until the end of March 2024.

The survey will form one of the elements I will consider before making a final decision. Other elements will include in-person parish group feedback sessions, technical information, financial considerations, the feedback I have received from key stakeholders and the guidance of my advisory bodies (the College of Consultors and the Diocesan Finance Council).

A lot of effort and expertise have brought us to this point; now is the time for you to share your feedback.

In this time of our history, we have the great privilege and responsibility of building an inspiring Cathedral to be a Mother Church for our diocese. The weight of this decision is not one I take lightly; however, I am equally aware it is the same Holy Spirit of Jesus who has brought us to this point in history and that will faithfully guide us in the journey ahead. I invite you to join me in committing this intention to your daily prayer through Jesus' mother, the patron of our country.

Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us.

St John the Baptist - patron of our diocese, pray for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Michael Gielen".

+ Michael Gielen

Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch



My Vision

Times have changed since the decision, in 2019, to build a Cathedral in Armagh Street.

COVID 19 re-educated us as to what's important: the Royal Commission Inquiry into abuse in care shone a light on our responsibility, I am committed to have funds available for redress to those who suffered abuse while in our care; the cost-of-living crisis means our community needs us more than ever before; and the realities of global inflation necessitated a wholesale rethink of the project.

To ensure my thinking was well informed, I tasked our diocesan management team to engage consultants to provide 'like for like' analysis on the opportunity to build a Cathedral and ancillary buildings on our three available sites - Armagh Street, Barbadoes

Street site and modifying St Mary's Pro-Cathedral on Manchester Street. Our new Catholic Cathedral must be a timeless landmark and a worthy tribute to God. It must bear witness to our faith and enable our diocese to continue the exceptional mission we undertake, through our faith communities, schools and social services.

Most of all, it must be a place where everyone in our city feels welcome so we grow our worshipping community and create something current and future generations will be proud of.

That translates to a need, not just to build a timeless and worthy Cathedral, but to build a precinct that is necessary to grow our future.

A worthy timeless Cathedral, anchored by a Precinct that would be accessible for all and feature:



A function facility



Perpetual Adoration Chapel (24/7 worship)



Functional working office spaces



Cultural and community space



Easy and accessible car parking



Link to our school(s)



Appropriate housing to accommodate priests

Our beautiful inspiring Cathedral must:



Be a landmark that honours God



Have a mission focus



Enable and encourage worship



A welcoming place for all



Represent our rich Catholic history



Represent our cultural and geographical identity



Allow room for growth in the future



"The building of a Cathedral was one of those events which stirred the minds and hearts of whole peoples... They knew that in return for their toil they or their children would have in their midst another royal residence, a sure refuge, a house of prayer, a true happy home for themselves... They knew that they were building not for man, but for God."

Bishop John Joseph Grimes SM, first Bishop of Christchurch

The Analysis

It is important a decision of this magnitude is well-informed.

To develop a 'like for like' comparison, we tasked independent experts with examining how a Cathedral precinct concept would work on each site. Sites assessed included:

1

Manchester Street

2

Armagh Street

3

Barbadoes Street

The experts were tasked with evaluating:

- Whether each site could support an 800-seat Cathedral, a function facility, presbytery, car parking, offices for parish and diocesan services.
- The cost of building the above on each site.
- Land values of each site.
- The ability to expand and adapt St Mary's Pro-Cathedral.
- Geotechnical assessments of each site.

The analysis was undertaken by quantity surveyors Rawlinsons, consulting engineers Lewis Bradford and property valuers Telfer Young (now CBRE) and master planning WSP Architects.

RAWLINSONS



lewis bradford
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

CBRE



Included in the assessment was looking at how selling land at Barbadoes Street and Armagh Street would impact the funds available for the budget. Selling Manchester Street was not considered.



Option One: Manchester Street

5,904m²

Key findings:

1. The diocese would have to purchase St Mary's School's land to have enough room. This purchase and relocating the school would add significant cost to the project.
2. Developing this site would require temporary facilities to be found for Mass while the project took place.
3. Refurbishing and extending St Mary's Pro-Cathedral to 100% NBS seismic strength, is similar in cost to building a new Cathedral.
4. Modifying any older existing building carries risk - contractors do not know what they will find once work starts which increases the likelihood of budget blowouts.
5. Rawlinsons have costed the modification and found it's not viable. It is cheaper and less risky to build a new Cathedral.

Option Two: Armagh Street

5,132m²

Key findings:

1. The site can fit everything but is constrained for future growth, as we would need to sell excess land to fund the project.
2. A car parking building would have to be developed which adds to the project cost compared to other sites.
3. While car parking could be free on Sundays, there would be charges mid-week. Mid-week parking would also be a challenge as the car park would be used by office workers.

"It is important our decision enables the diocese to meet its future financial responsibilities - including to support our parishes building new churches and to support those who have suffered while in Church care."

Bishop Michael Gielen

Manchester Street



Armagh Street





Option Three: Barbadoes Street

14,828m²

Key findings:

1. The site is two and a half times larger than the others and comfortably fits all the facilities, plus has room for growth.
2. There is opportunity to co-locate other facilities there.
3. The site's size gives flexibility to develop in stages.
4. The land was transferred to the Bishop on trust, to be held for specific purposes - honouring the trust intentions.
5. Utilising this site enables us to sell the high value Armagh Street land.



Barbadoes Street





“All options produce a deficit. The diocese would have \$30m less to fund if the Cathedral was built on Barbadoes Street compared to Armagh Street”

Simon Thompson
Diocesan General Manager



Comparing Our Options

Manchester Street	Armagh Street	Barbadoes Street
		
5,904m ²	5,132m ²	14,828m ²

Given Barbadoes Street is approximately two and a half times the size of the other sites, it offers more flexibility.

It could accommodate not only a Cathedral but a range of facilities alongside it and it could be developed in stages with areas under construction being cordoned off while other facilities are in use.

The table below outlines what features could fit on the new site and also the financial outcome of the analysis our consultants undertook.

The project will be funded by the sale of assets (land) and fundraising.

Critically, all options produce a deficit but the diocese would have \$30 million less to fund if the Cathedral was built on Barbadoes Street.

This is due to selling the high value land in Armagh Street to fund the project, whereas the land value in Barbadoes Street is much lower.

This outcome also enables the diocese to make a contribution to the five new churches that the parishes plan to build in the diocese and meet future financial commitments.

	Manchester	Armagh	Barbadoes
Pre-primary school	×	×	✓
Primary School	✓	×	✓
High School	×	×	✓
Cathedral Parish Centre	✓	✓	✓
Presbytery	✓	✓	✓
Parish and Diocesan offices	✓	✓	✓
Community and Cultural Centre	✓	✓	✓
Car parking	✓	Yes, but not free	✓
Financially viable	Medium deficit	Largest deficit	Smallest deficit
Supports contribution to new churches	×	×	✓



Barbadoes Opportunity

The area around the Barbadoes Street site is becoming an increasingly vibrant part of the city.

Many new businesses have moved into the area since the earthquakes and thousands of students are enrolled in Ara and NASDA (National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Art).

Excitement is building around the city's new multi-use stadium Te Kaha which sits just a stone's throw from the Barbadoes Street site. The 30,000 seat covered Stadium will feature an urban forest and 23 food and beverage outlets. It's due to open in 2026.

The five block long Rauora Park is home to dozens of new residences and it's expected the number of new houses in the area will continue to grow.

The Cathedral precinct could benefit from being part of this community and further add to the area's character.

The opportunity to link to Catholic education on the site, will bring hundreds of rangatahi and their families to the precinct each day. As well as being able to access quality education, they'll experience the best of parish life in the warm shadow of our Cathedral and witness a thriving Catholic community alive in faith.

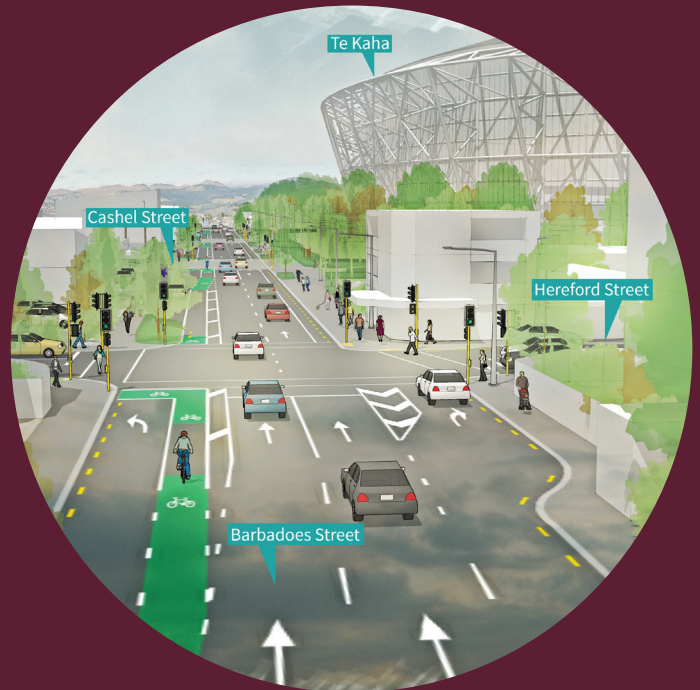


Image used with permission © Christchurch City Council

The potential inclusion of features such as a community centre and the offers of social services, will attract the wider community into the heart of our precinct to see and experience the very best our diocese offers.

This will be a place the city can be proud of, a place of life and learning that respects our heritage while offering space for our diocese to grow well into the future.



"The area around our Barbadoes Street site is changing and already thriving with thousands of students from Ara. The council's future plans for the area suggest the development of new businesses and residential properties. Our Cathedral precinct will compliment the vibrancy with our thriving parish, education and cultural communities."

Father Simon Eccleton, Cathedral Administrator



Titiro whakamuri, kōkiri whakamua *- Look to the past, advance into the future.*

Our diocese has a historic attachment to the Barbadoes Street site.

The provincial government granted the land to the Catholic Church in 1857 - it was some of the most low-lying and flood-prone land in the city. Due to our forefathers' passion and dedication the first Catholic Chapel opened there three years later.

The Church of the Blessed Sacrament was built there in 1864 and a year later the city's first Catholic school relocated to Barbadoes Street opening with 86 pupils.

The site has a rich history of education - many thousands of Catholic children and rangatahi have learned and grown in the many schools that have operated on the site to this very day.

Our diocese was established in 1887 with Reverend John Joseph Grimes SM appointed as the Bishop of Christchurch. On arrival, he named the Church of the Blessed Sacrament the Pro-Cathedral in anticipation of a suitable Cathedral being built.

The Pro-Cathedral was shifted on wooden tracks to make way for the construction of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in 1900 - it was the largest building to be moved at the time.

The site was also a busy trading route for early Māori and many of our Catholic Māori community consider the site sacred as the place where Aperahama Te Aika, Tīpuna Poua, a founding member of the Catholic Church for Māori in Te Waipounamu, was Confirmed.

Our many humble migrant people for many decades generously donated and invested their time and talents into the development of the site and the community.

It also holds significance to the city's Pacific community. A Samoan Catholic community was established on the site in 1963 and has operated from there ever since.

The Barbadoes site is one which is steeped in history with many identifying it as an anchor for their faith in Christchurch.



Pre-1850

A busy transport and trading route for early Māori



1857

Provincial government grants land to the Catholic Church



1860

Permanent priest placed in Christchurch and first church built on the site



1864

Larger church built to accommodate the growing Irish immigrant population



1865

First Catholic school relocated to the site



1889

Aperahama Te Aika Confirmed in the Church of the Blessed Sacrament



1905

Consecration of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament



2010

Basilica closed after damage from the earthquake

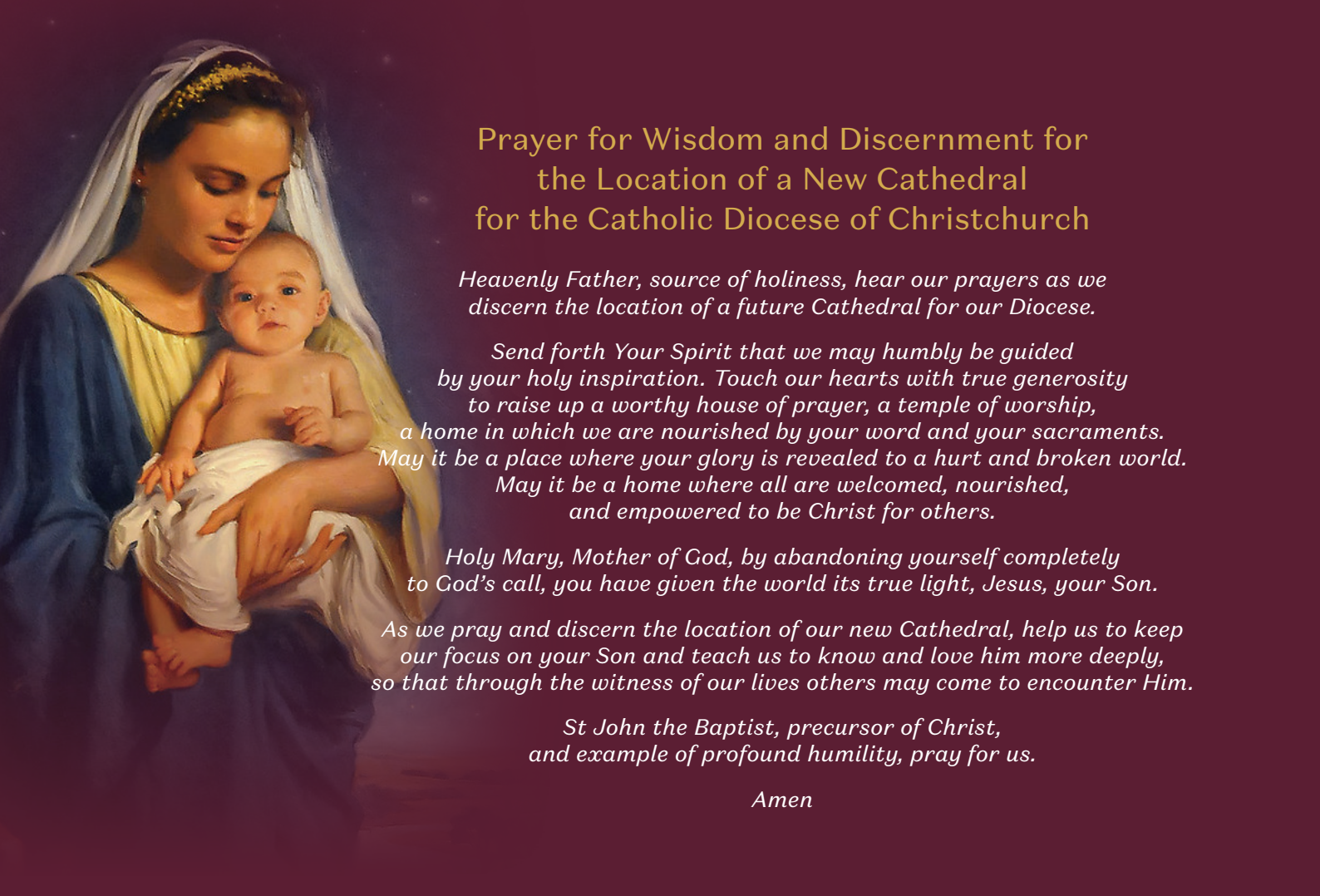
A photograph of two men, Michael Gielen and Kaumatua Bob Te Miha, smiling and touching noses. Michael Gielen is on the left, wearing a dark grey sweater over a black collared shirt, with glasses hanging from his shirt. Kaumatua Bob Te Miha is on the right, wearing a dark grey jacket with red lining and a red collar. They are both smiling warmly at each other. The background is slightly blurred, showing a wooden frame and a colorful poster.

*“Barbadoes Street has been Christchurch’s
Catholic turangawaewae since 1860.
Our history is intertwined there - it is our anchor.”*

Kaumatua Bob Te Miha - Te Rangimārie Centre

*“Reflecting on our history, I stand in awe at the
commitments faithful, past generations of Catholics
have made on our Barbadoes Street site, this sacred land
continues to remind us of the humble foundations our
diocese was established on.”*

+ Michael Gielen, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch



Prayer for Wisdom and Discernment for the Location of a New Cathedral for the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch

Heavenly Father, source of holiness, hear our prayers as we discern the location of a future Cathedral for our Diocese.

Send forth Your Spirit that we may humbly be guided by your holy inspiration. Touch our hearts with true generosity to raise up a worthy house of prayer, a temple of worship, a home in which we are nourished by your word and your sacraments. May it be a place where your glory is revealed to a hurt and broken world. May it be a home where all are welcomed, nourished, and empowered to be Christ for others.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, by abandoning yourself completely to God's call, you have given the world its true light, Jesus, your Son.

As we pray and discern the location of our new Cathedral, help us to keep our focus on your Son and teach us to know and love him more deeply, so that through the witness of our lives others may come to encounter Him.

St John the Baptist, precursor of Christ, and example of profound humility, pray for us.

Amen

Timeframe

December 2023
Preferred option announced &
Feedback process opens
Mon 18th December 2023

March 2024
Feedback process concludes
end of March 2024

April to May 2024
Collate Feedback / Discernment

Mid 2024
Final decision announced

Share Your Feedback

Catholic Diocese of Christchurch website
www.cdcc.nz



Bishop Michael invites the community to share your feedback. The easiest way to do this is via the online survey form on the website, available from **Mon 18th Dec 2023**. Online feedback is encouraged as it assists with the ease of collation. However, should you wish to submit a paper form, you can download a form from the website or collect one from your parish office. Hard copy surveys can be dropped to your Parish office or posted to "Cathedral Location feedback", CDCC, PO Box 4544, Christchurch 8140. Email enquiries to cathedralfeedback@cdcc.nz