

## New Catholic cathedral name extends long legacy

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**August 4, 2024**

A 160-year legacy for the Catholic community in Christchurch will continue with Bishop Michael Gielen announcing the new cathedral will be named The Blessed Sacrament.

The announcement at Masses this weekend follows two months of community engagement and focused prayer to support the Bishop's discernment of a new name.

The Blessed Sacrament signifies a central tenet of the Catholic faith – that Catholics receive the Body and Blood of Christ, in the form of bread and wine, at Mass.

Bishop Gielen said Catholics' affection for that name, which has been attached to multiple churches and a cathedral in Christchurch, was evident among the more than 2,000 responses to a shortlist of possible names.

"Since the 1860s, the land on Barbadoes St has been home to the Church of the Blessed Sacrament or the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament," he said.

"In the coming years, a new cathedral of the same name will stand there."

The new cathedral will be built after the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament was severely damaged in the Christchurch earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, and later demolished.

People shared their memories of buildings in which they and their forebears had been baptised, professed their love for a spouse and farewelled loved ones.

"Some people spoke of the pain of losing the previous cathedral after the earthquakes, and how retaining the name would provide some comfort for them," Bishop Gielen said.

"But in what might be the most compelling argument, people shared their love of the Blessed Sacrament as the source and summit of our faith, our bread for the journey of faith and the journey of life."

In a letter read at Masses this weekend, Bishop Gielen said the two-month journey to the announcement was designed to help him "better understand the heart of the people".

"Your heart, expressed through a desire for the name Blessed Sacrament, has won my heart," he wrote.

"Our path towards a new cathedral will take many years, but this is another important milestone on our way.

"As discussions loom about the design of our cathedral, that work will have the Blessed Sacrament – that source and summit of our faith – at its centre."

Find out more and read the pastoral letter at: <https://cdoc.nz/cathedral>