



Inform

A PUBLICATION OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOP OF CHRISTCHURCH

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From Our Bishop

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Easter, Jesus' resurrection, always inspires me. The story of how God is able to do something beautiful when faced with our humble, often broken lives. This was brought home to me in a powerful way during my recent pilgrimage to Rome and Canterbury, England.

I have not long returned from an international gathering of 60 Catholic and Anglican Bishops, known as IARCCUM, the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission.

We had many graced moments during our time together. Two of which were: praying with Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury at St Paul's Basilica; and listening to the humbling stories of many bishops who proclaim Christ risen in the face of great challenges, including in stories of war and violence from the Holy Land and Myanmar.

The highlight for me was recalling our shared story of St Augustine of Canterbury. Within a 14-hour period, we travelled from St Gregory's Church in Rome, where St Augustine and his 14 monks were sent by Pope St Gregory to proclaim the Gospel in England, to Canterbury Cathedral in England, where

St Augustine established the first mission, where Canterbury Cathedral would eventually be built.

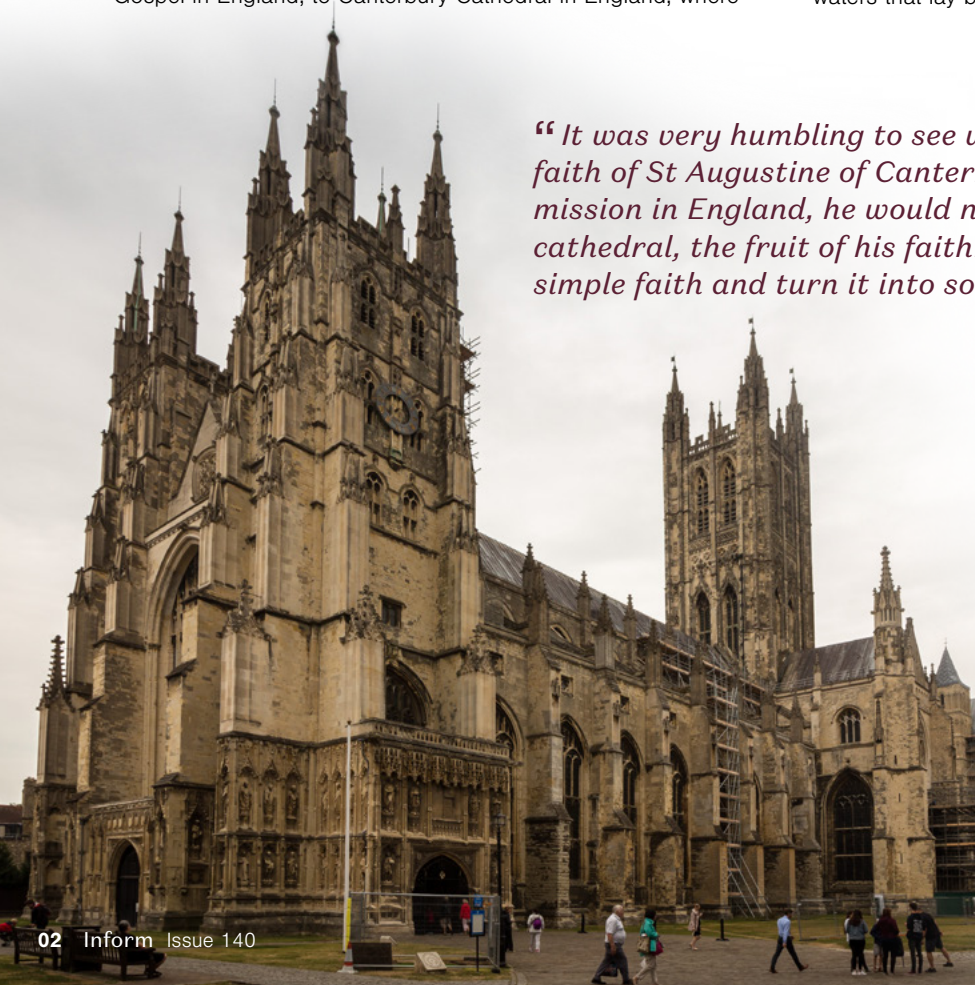
It was very humbling to see what God has done with the faith of St Augustine of Canterbury. When asked to establish the mission in England, he would never have seen the awe-inspiring cathedral, the fruit of his faith. However, God was able to use his simple faith and turn it into something beautiful.

As the disciples of Jesus found, having faith in God is not easy, especially when things get difficult, when what he is asking seems impossible and the mountains of doubt and difficulties loom large. This was Augustine of Canterbury's reality as well.

It is important to remember that St Augustine was not a missionary trained for worldwide evangelisation; he was a monk. Yet, he was called in faith and obedience by Pope St Gregory to proclaim the Gospel to the pagan king of another country, in the south of England.

As he and his small band of monks set out, they quickly faced the many challenges that lay ahead, not least the treacherous waters that lay between them and their destination. They also

“ It was very humbling to see what God has done with the simple faith of St Augustine of Canterbury. When asked to establish the mission in England, he would never have seen the awe-inspiring cathedral, the fruit of his faith. However, God was able to use his simple faith and turn it into something beautiful. ”



San Gregorio al Celio



faced the fears of the unknown, of stories relating to the tribes that awaited, tribes who had only a few centuries earlier driven out the Romans. Setting off in the face of these challenges and doubts they quickly decided to turn back, sending Augustine home to advise the Pope they could not go on.

How many of us have done this in our faith lives? When faced with life's challenges, do we lose trust in God? Pope St Gregory fortified their faith, calling on them to trust in God. "Faith is the assurance of what we hope for and the certainty of what we don't see." (Heb 11:1)

St Augustine was strengthened. He returned to the monks, calling them to trust that God had a plan and could do something beautiful with their small efforts. Soon after their arrival, the king of the local region, whom they had been most afraid of, decided to convert to Christianity. He gave them a piece of land in Canterbury, on which Augustine would build a monastery and on which a few centuries later the Canterbury Cathedral would be built.

It has been some 1400 years since Augustine and his monks answered the call to leave their homeland, their familiar surroundings, to share the Good News in England.

Since then, Canterbury has seen many ups and downs, like each of us in our own lives. One of its more famous sons was St Thomas of Canterbury, from whom our own St Thomas' College has taken its name. He was a priest who remained faithful to God and was subsequently martyred in the Canterbury Cathedral.

Our own province here in Canterbury has a strong connection to Canterbury Cathedral. It was an incredible privilege to stand in Canterbury Cathedral, on the site where Pope St Gregory sent

Augustine, and to marvel at what God had done with the humble offerings of the first unlikely missionaries to England.

The story of St Augustine is our story too. God calls us to great things beyond our imagining. We see impossible odds before us, we wonder how God can find a way forward, we even doubt his presence and, much like St Augustine, we sometimes turn back.

God does not need anything from us, other than our humble trust in him. He can make straight our crooked lives, turn our dark places into light, our despair into hope, our small offerings into something remarkable.

More importantly, this is the story of Easter. The disciples came to Jerusalem with so much hope; just a few days later they despaired in the face of the cross at Calvary. God does not need our great plans. He needs our trust. He needs our faith.

I pray the story of St Augustine, the unlikely first Archbishop of Canterbury, will inspire you this Easter, as it has me. I pray that you will have the faith to trust in God, to trust that no matter what lies before you, however unlikely and bleak things appear, you will continue to step forward in faith, knowing that Jesus can make something beautiful out of our humble and sometimes broken lives.

Yours in Christ

+ Michael Gielen
Bishop of Christchurch

For a complete list of

Holy Week Liturgies & Easter Mass Times

and Sacrament of Reconciliation times in all parishes throughout the Christchurch Diocese visit:

www.cdcc.nz/easter

CATHOLIC DIOCESE
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TE TAKIWA O TE PIHOPA

How can we be a synodal Church in mission?

Towards Synod 2024

by Mike Stopforth, Director - Bishop's Pastoral Office



In October 2023, three Aotearoa New Zealanders were part of the Oceania contingent to attend the Synod General Assembly in Rome. Among them was Archbishop Paul Martin SM, the tenth bishop of Christchurch, who highlighted

the role of prayer in the synod's proceedings. "Stopping and praying or trying to recollect yourself is a powerful way of drawing the Spirit into the conversation." he observed.

Synods have been part of the life of the Church since very early times. The meeting in October differed from previous synods in that the 360 participants included clergy, religious and laity. From the October gathering in Rome, a synthesis report was produced, identifying various themes. Each theme included convergences, matters for consideration and proposals. Dioceses were asked to reflect on the question, "How can we be a synodal Church in mission?" and to provide concrete actions that enable individuals and groups to make their unique contribution to the Church's mission.

Direction was given from the synod that the focus of this stage of the discernment was to engage with existing groups. In our diocese groups have gathered to reflect on this question and the synthesis document. The fruits of these consultations will be sent to the New Zealand Bishops' Conference to form part of the overall New Zealand document to be sent to Rome. The synod is part of a three-year process that began in 2021 with our own diocese participating in the worldwide process of consultation. The synod will conclude after a second gathering in Rome from 2-27 October 2024.

The fundamental element of the discernment process is one of respectful listening to one another. Those who have experienced this process of journey together, value the experience of listening to one another in an atmosphere of prayer.



ISSUE 140 LENT 2024

Nga mihi nui from the editorial desk

Nga mihi nui from the editorial desk.

Welcome to Inform Issue 140, our Lenten edition.

Along with our regular features, these pages cover Catholic life in the Christchurch Diocese from December through to March. We highlight the Church's Year of Prayer and the ways in which the diocese is underpinning it. We update you on some very good initiatives in support of vocations to the priesthood and mark the life and vocation of Thomas Cardinal Williams. The spirituality of our Filipino community is featured as is our first Catholic women's night.

Inform is a great way we can inspire and encourage each other in our faith. As you read it, please pray for God's blessing on all the people and stories covered. Share the link to Inform online cdoc.nz/inform and give copies to those you believe would appreciate reading about Christ's Church in the Christchurch Diocese.

In Christ

Ken Joblin, Editor



Fr Dennis Nacorda, Archbishop Paul Martin SM & Manuel Beazley, three Aotearoa New Zealanders who were part of the Oceania representation at the Synod General Assembly in Rome

Visit the diocesan website »»» www.cdoc.nz

Here you will find information about parishes, Mass times, diocesan news and events.

Parishes, schools and church groups are welcome to advertise events. Please email mstopforth@cdoc.nz.

Bishop Michael & Anglican Bishop Ross Bay in Rome & Canterbury for international dialogue

Bishop Michael, along with the Anglican Bishop of Auckland, Ross Bay, represented New Zealand at the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) conference.

The gathering was called Growing Together. More than 50 bishops, in pairs of Catholics and Anglicans representing 27 regions of the world, took part in the first such event since 2016. IARCCUM aims to foster closer co-operation between the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions and to put into practice progress made in theological conversations.

Visiting holy sites, the bishops prayed together, reflected and learned from one another. There is an aspiration to discuss ways of growing together in joint witness and mission in the world.

Bishop Michael said he was inspired by the rich history of IARCCUM during the gathering.



“It has been a deep privilege to join with fellow bishops of our respective churches from around the world, hearing their stories and, in many cases, their profound challenges, while continuing to celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ we share,” Bishop Michael said.

Bishop Bay attended the last IARCCUM summit in 2016. He said walking alongside Bishop Michael, with whom he serves as a co-chair of the local New Zealand Anglican-Catholic dialogue, has opened up opportunities.

“As a result of being together here I hope that we will grow in our commitment to express our unity in more tangible ways through our common mission,” said Bishop Bay.

Among the highlights of the gathering was a liturgy for the participating bishops with Pope Francis and with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.

On 25 January, at the tomb of St Paul in Rome, Pope Francis and Archbishop Welby commissioned the bishops “in pairs, to be witnesses to Christian unity”, before the bishops moved to Canterbury from January 26 to 29 and discussed the future work of IARCCUM.

The Rite of Election 2024

by Alex Chia, Parish Formation and Liturgy Adviser

The Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion are important steps for those desiring baptism and full communion in the Catholic Church. This celebration is at the heart of the Easter Vigil.

In the Rite of Election, those seeking Baptism publicly acknowledge the call they received from God by inscribing their names in the Book of the Elect, listing those who have been chosen for the sacraments of initiation. Those already baptised but wishing to be in full communion in the Catholic Church

go through the Call to Continuing Conversion and renew their baptismal commitment to Christ and his Church.

We are greatly encouraged this year, as we have a total of 61 candidates and catechumens. Bishop Michael celebrated the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion on the first Sunday of Lent at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. We pray for them and rejoice that they are deepening their commitment to Our Lord and His bride, the Church.



Christchurch Anglicans and Catholics Share the Lenten Pilgrimage

by Gavin Abraham



This year, the ecumenical liturgy for Ash Wednesday was again offered in various of our respective parishes, not least, at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. Christchurch Anglican Bishop Peter Carrell, and the Dean of his cathedral, Ben Truman, joined Bishop Michael and Fr Simon Eccleton in leading their cathedral communities in this service. This Lenten observance has alternated between the two cathedrals since it was first recommended by the Anglican Roman Catholic Commission in Aotearoa New Zealand. "This is in the spirit of the joint declaration of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope, and in keeping with the encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II on the quest for

Christian unity," noted the evening's order of service.

Bishop Carrell gave the sermon at the liturgy, offering a reflection on how the readings of Ash Wednesday inspire and encourage people for the impending Lenten journey - a journey of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Bishop Michael, in his welcome and again before giving the final blessing, spoke about his rich experience earlier this year at the international gathering for Anglican and Catholic bishops (covered elsewhere in Inform). We continue to pray that we may all be one.

"The unity of all divided humanity is the will of God. For this reason he sent his Son, so that by dying and rising for us he might bestow on us the Spirit of love." Pope John Paul II, Ut Unum Sint



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Fr Michael Pui new Director of MissionNZ

In late January, Fr Michael Pui, who was the Parish Priest of Good Shepherd Parish Hurunui, was appointed National Director of MissionNZ, the local face of the Pontifical Mission Societies. He took over from Fr Bernard Espiritu SVD, the national director since 2012.

The Pontifical Mission Societies are a group of four missionary bodies under the jurisdiction of the Pope, via the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples. The societies connect local churches to the Catholic Church's missionary work around the world. They are perhaps best known to most people for overseeing the World Missions Sunday collection on the third Sunday of October each year in all Catholic parishes around the world.

Fr Pui was ordained in Christchurch in 2000 by Bishop John Cunneen, after a secular career as an engineer with the former Electricorp and Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. Since his ordination, he has served as parish priest in several of our parishes.

"I am taking up the position with some trepidation, and also with some sadness at the thought that I will no longer be a parish priest among my flock," said Fr Pui.

"The role of the National Director is far more than dealing only with the collection of Mission Sunday or generating a revenue to fund mission work in the world." It includes promoting a missionary sense within local parishes, religious institutions and schools with particular attention to World Mission Sunday and establishing a stable and good relationship with the bishop who liaises with MissionNZ within the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference. Currently Bishop Michael is the liaison.

Some good news and some bad news

by Luis Arevalo - Manager, Catholic Social Services (CSS)

2024 started as a mixed bag - some really exciting news that helps us shape the future of how we better serve the community and some really quite sad news that marks the end of an era.

Research shows that most people would rather hear the bad news first. Since we are a research informed organisation, I'll do as research says and tell you the bad news first.

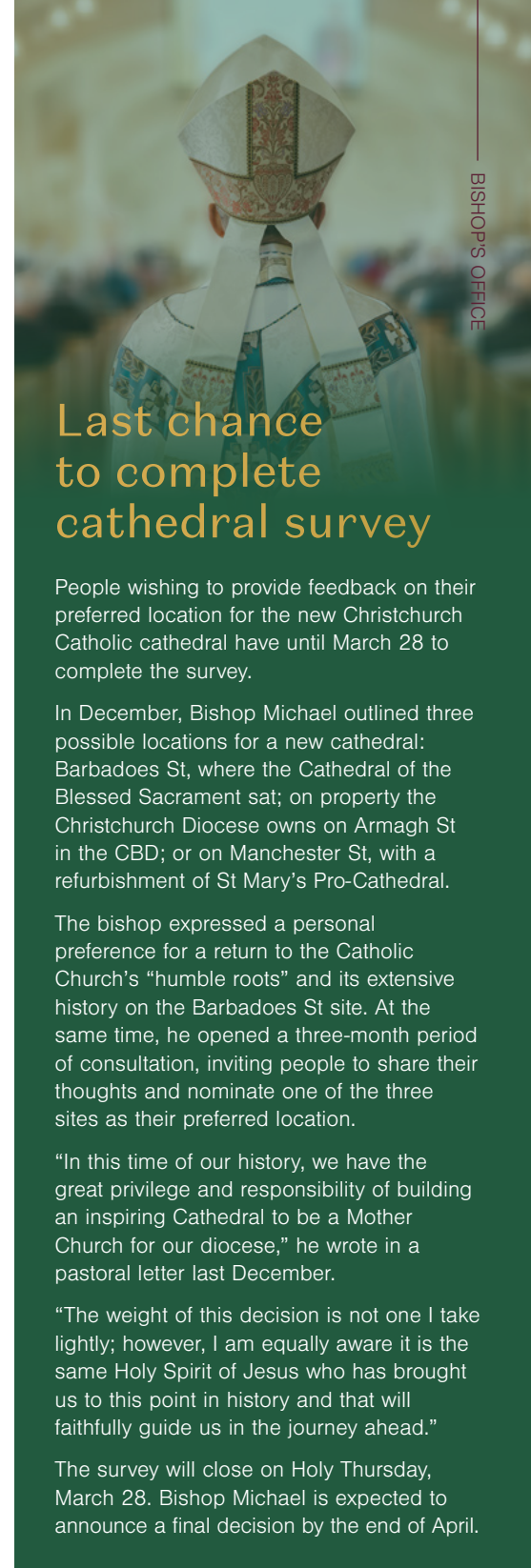
After almost 60 years, Catholic Social Services (CSS) will no longer be running a food bank. As we are all aware, the cost of living has hit us hard in all aspects of our lives, none more than the cost of food. As we have had to purchase all the food we give to our food bank clients, it just got too expensive in the end. Grants for the food bank were not keeping up with the costs of us having to purchase it, so I made the very hard decision to close it. All of our clients will be pointed towards St Vincent de Paul for their food needs.

Now the good news.

As you may be aware from our last Inform article, I commissioned an independent researcher to look at potential service gaps in the community for those between the ages of 5-12 years, with an eye to us building capacity around those gaps. The research, which concluded earlier than expected, identified three areas where CSS should look at expanding and/or starting:

- **Child and Family Psychology / Learning Assessments** - the research identified a huge need for us to expand this service into the regions.
- **Free Counselling** - Explore options for increasing our free counselling capacity into the regions and
- **Child and Adolescent Anxiety** - tailoring our group programmes with an emphasis on addressing child and adolescent anxiety.

These findings are key in helping us form our strategic vision and intent for the future and gives us a high level of confidence that if we are able to deliver on these findings, then we are



Last chance to complete cathedral survey

People wishing to provide feedback on their preferred location for the new Christchurch Catholic cathedral have until March 28 to complete the survey.

In December, Bishop Michael outlined three possible locations for a new cathedral: Barbadoes St, where the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament sat; on property the Christchurch Diocese owns on Armagh St in the CBD; or on Manchester St, with a refurbishment of St Mary's Pro-Cathedral.

The bishop expressed a personal preference for a return to the Catholic Church's "humble roots" and its extensive history on the Barbadoes St site. At the same time, he opened a three-month period of consultation, inviting people to share their thoughts and nominate one of the three sites as their preferred location.

"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," he wrote in a pastoral letter last December.

"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."

The survey will close on Holy Thursday, March 28. Bishop Michael is expected to announce a final decision by the end of April.

directly delivering to the needs of our communities.

That said, funding is the only hurdle we face in our wish to serve the community. We are extremely grateful for all the support received and we hope it will increase proportionally with the demand and help us address all requests in a meaningful and timely manner.

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2024 - A Year of Prayer

by Matt O'Connell

Recently, Pope Francis declared 2024 as a Year of Prayer for the Catholic Church, as a lead up to the great Jubilee Year in 2025. In preparation for the Jubilee, dioceses around the world are invited to promote initiatives, to remind people of the centrality of both individual prayer and community prayer.

"Today we begin the Year of Prayer, a year dedicated to rediscovering the great value and absolute need for prayer in personal life, in the life of the Church, and in the world. Let us renew every day the joy and commitment to be men and women of prayer. Prayer that comes from the heart".

Pope Francis is hoping that this year will be a "great symphony of prayer". He wants us to spend the prayer in the "presence of the Lord", listening to him, adoring him, thanking him for "the many gifts of his love for us and to praise his work in creation". His hope is that this year "makes it possible for every man and woman in this world to turn to the one God and to reveal to him what lies hidden in the depths of their heart".

Theme - The Our Father

The Holy Father has made the theme of the Year of Prayer, the Our Father, "the prayer Jesus taught us, the life programme of each of his disciples". The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that "by entering into the holy name of the Lord Jesus we can accept from within, the prayer he teaches us: "Our Father!" His priestly prayer fulfills, from within, the great petitions of the Lord's Prayer: concern for the Father's name, passionate zeal for his

kingdom, the accomplishment of the will of the Father, of his plan of salvation and deliverance from evil".

This year of prayer is particularly apt in the world. Fr Jacques Philippe writes that it is "prayer that will give birth to all renewal in society and the world ... the most useful thing the Church can do today is to give people a thirst for prayer and teach them how to pray".

This year of prayer is an opportune time for dioceses and parishes around the world to do this.

The Bishop's Pastoral Office has already sent a resource to all parishes with ideas about how to celebrate the Year of Prayer. There will also be diocesan events throughout the year.

Pope Francis wants all Catholics this year to commit to going "deeper in their commitment to pray in 2024, and in their love of God" and to also "think about how they might accompany someone else to pray during the coming Year of Prayer". In 2001, St Pope John Paul II wrote about how important prayer is for Christians - "It would be wrong to think that ordinary Christians can be content with a shallow prayer life that is unable to fill their whole life. In the face of the many trials to which today's world subject's faith, they would be not only mediocre Christians but "Christians at risk". Further resources can be found at the Diocesan Website ([cdcc.nz](https://www.cdcc.nz)) or at the official Year of Prayer website (<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/verso-il-giubileo/2024-anno-della-preghiera.html>)

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*"Now God has not only raised the Lord,
but will also raise us up through his power."*

- 1 Corinthians 6:14 -

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Reflection on Prayer

Prayer is the light of the soul

A homily of Pseudo-Chrysostom

The highest good is prayer and conversation with God, because it means that we are in God's company and in union with him. When light enters our bodily eyes, our eyesight is sharpened; when a soul is intent on God, God's inextinguishable light shines into it and makes it bright and clear. I am talking, of course, of prayer that comes from the heart and not from routine: not the prayer that is assigned to particular days or particular moments in time, but the prayer that happens continuously by day and by night.

Indeed the soul should not only turn to God at times of explicit prayer. Whatever we are engaged in, whether it is care for the poor, or some other duty, or some act of generosity, we should remember God and long for God. The love of God will be as salt is to food, making our actions into a perfect dish to set before the Lord of all things. Then it is right that we should receive the fruits of our labours, overflowing onto us through all eternity, if we have been offering them to him throughout our lives.

Prayer is the light of the soul, true knowledge of God, a mediator between God and men. Prayer lifts the soul into the heavens where it hugs God in an indescribable embrace. The soul seeks the milk of God like a baby crying for the breast. It fulfils its own vows and receives,

in exchange, gifts better than anything that can be seen or imagined.

Prayer is a go-between, linking us to God. It gives joy to the soul and calms its emotions. I warn you, though: do not imagine that prayer is simply words. Prayer is the desire for God, an indescribable devotion, not given by man but brought about by God's grace. As St Paul says: For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself intercedes on our behalf in a way that could never be put into words.

If God gives to someone the gift of such prayer, it is a gift of imperishable riches, a heavenly food that satisfies the spirit. Whoever tastes that food catches fire and his soul burns for ever with desire for the Lord.

To begin on this path, start by adorning your house with modesty and humility. Make it shine brightly with the light of justice. Decorate it with the gold leaf of good works, with the jewels of faithfulness and greatness of heart. Finally, to make the house perfect, raise a gable above it all, a gable of prayer. Thus you will have prepared a pure and sparkling house for the Lord. Receive the Lord into this royal and splendid dwelling - in other words: receive, by his grace, his image into the temple of your soul.

Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration

On the first Sunday of Lent, the Perpetual Adoration Chapel at St Gregory's was promoted at Masses throughout the diocese. This has resulted in a number of new adorers. In this Year of Prayer, you might like to consider signing up for an hour of adoration at the chapel. Pope Francis writes that "We're called to adore and serve the Lord." Pope Francis says that we're always adoring, either the Lord or something or someone else. Eucharistic adoration helps crush our idols: our disproportionate focus on work, material possessions, entertainment, our families, or our egos. In the state of the desert, spending time with Jesus in prayerful adoration, we learn how to prioritize him, to unite all parts of life to him, and to ensure that he alone is our God. That's why Eucharistic adoration is so important in Lent and life".

For more information contact Matt O'Connell on 366 9869 or chchadoration@gmail.com.

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Vocations Update

The Christchurch Diocesan Vocations Office consists of Fr Tien Cao as Vocations Director and Matt O'Connell as Vocations Coordinator. The Vocations Office seeks to promote the vocation of diocesan priesthood as a major priority in the Diocese of Christchurch. To do this, the office is trying to create a greater awareness of vocations and build a culture of vocations within the diocese.

A number of events and initiatives are planned for 2024:

Students & Seminarians

At Holy Cross Seminary in Auckland, Matthew Clark and Tuong Duong have begun their first year. Tung Tran (Ignatius) has begun his 4th year. Linh Cao, who is in his 5th year, is on pastoral placement in the Cathedral Parish for 2024. In addition, we have two students studying English in Christchurch, Pho Vo and Thang Pham, with hopes that a third will soon join them. Please continue to pray for all our students and seminarians. An updated poster with names and photographs has been sent to all parishes.

Vocations Groups

Last December, a vocations group began again and meets every two months, for support, encouragement and formation. It is a place where men can learn more about prayer and discerning a vocation.

Thursday as the day to pray for Vocations & Priests

As in previous years, every Thursday will be dedicated to praying for priests and vocations throughout the diocese. Priests have been asked to offer a Mass on that day for the intention of vocations. The vocations team has developed a simple prayer card, which is to be handed out to daily Mass goers and prayed together at the end of Mass on Thursdays.

Pray for our SEMINARIANS & STUDENTS



Linh Cao
(seminarian)



Tung Tran (Ignatius)
(seminarian)



Tuong Duong
(seminarian)



Matthew Clark
(seminarian)



Pho Vo
(student)



Thang Pham
(student)

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matt 28:19

Prayer For Vocations to the Priesthood & Religious Life

Lord of the Harvest, bless young people with the gift of courage to respond to your call. Open their hearts to great ideals, to great things. Inspire all of your disciples to mutual love and giving - for vocations to blossom in the good soil of faithful people. Instill those in religious life, parish ministries, and families with the confidence and grace to invite others to embrace the bold and noble path of a life consecrated to you. Unite us to Jesus through prayer and sacrament, so that we may co-operate with you in building your reign of mercy and truth, of justice and peace. Amen.

Other events & Initiatives

This year 28 April is Vocations Sunday and the week following is Vocations Week. As usual the vocations office will send resources to parishes and schools. The annual vocations dinner with priests will be held at the end of June. This was very successful in 2023 with over 70 priests and men gathering together. A men's retreat and a women's retreat will also be held this year. For more information contact Matt O'Connell or Fr Tien vocations.chch@gmail.com



Thomas Cardinal Williams RIP

Thomas Cardinal Williams, ONZ, Archbishop Emeritus of Wellington died, aged 93 on 22 December 2023. Bishop Michael asked that Inform might reflect the passing of Cardinal Williams who, though Archbishop of Wellington, had quite an effect on the local Church as Metropolitan of New Zealand. In doing so, we take excerpts from the obituary offered by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference, announcing his death and reflecting on his life.

"Cardinal Williams became Archbishop of Wellington on 20 December 1979 - the 20th anniversary of his priestly ordination - following the death of Cardinal Reginald Delargey. He was created a cardinal by Pope John Paul II on 2 February 1983.

He was appointed a Member of the Order of New Zealand, New Zealand's highest civilian honour, in the 2000 Queen's Birthday Honours List. Only 20 living people can hold this honour at any one time.



"I have expressed one wish which I have to accept may be ignored. It is that my eulogy and homily be reduced to just eight words: He was a sinner. Please pray for him."

Thomas Stafford Williams was born on 20 March 1930 in Wellington. He attended Holy Cross Primary School, Miramar; Saints Peter and Paul School, Lower Hutt; St Patrick's College, Wellington; and St Kevin's College, Oamaru; before studying for a Bachelor of Commerce degree at Victoria University, Wellington, then working as an accountant for several years.

He was deeply involved in the Catholic Youth Movement and for a while worked full-time for it. "It gave me my vocation," he said in a 2020 interview. "I wouldn't have become a priest, had I not had the background and the formation in the Catholic Youth Movement."

He began studying for the priesthood in 1954 at the National Seminary, Holy Cross College in Dunedin, and in 1956 went to the Pontifical Urban University in Rome where he gained a licentiate in theology. He was ordained a priest in Rome on 20 December 1959. He then attended University College, Dublin and received a degree in social sciences.

Returning to Wellington, he was assistant director at the Catholic Enquiry Centre, which to the present day continues to bring the light of faith to many non-Catholics and Catholics alike. He was parish priest at St Patrick's in Palmerston North for two years, a priest in Samoa

for five years, and from late 1975, parish priest at Holy Family Parish, Porirua East, one of the archdiocese's most multicultural parishes. Four years later, he was named Archbishop of Wellington.

In December 2019, in a homily marking his 40th anniversary as a bishop and his 50th as a priest, Cardinal Williams said, "Above all, I thank God for giving me a share in the priesthood of his son, Jesus Christ, as I thank God for those in earlier

years who formed me, and prepared me to respond to his call to priestly ministry."

"In a 2019 interview with NZ Catholic, Cardinal Williams said he'd seen considerable changes in the Church: "The degree to which New Zealand has become very, very secular is quite alarming. I'm very grateful to God that, while all the Churches have declining membership, that the Catholic Church, which has now become the largest minority in New Zealand, has not declined to the same extent." That reflected an essay he wrote in 2004, where he said:



"We have rejected the moral sustenance of the past, and are attempting to live on junk food provided by a bankrupt liberalism." He warned that while today's barbarians "may be soberly suited and stylishly presented," their impact was still ruin.

Also in 2019, Cardinal Williams said that, having ordained 40 men to the priesthood, he had always emphasised in his ordination homilies "that priesthood has nothing to do with power and privilege, but everything to do with sacrifice and service, seeking nothing for the priest himself but striving to please God, imitate Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, and commit himself unreservedly to his pastoral responsibilities.

Asked by NZ Catholic how he would like to be remembered, Cardinal Williams hesitated before saying, "I don't expect to be greatly remembered but ... I would like to be remembered as a dedicated servant."

On the final page of his 2014 memoir, A Kiwi Cardinal's Chronicles, Cardinal Williams wrote that he had made mistakes aplenty in his life and had much to atone for.

"In planning my funeral - I have reached the age when it is prudent to do so - I have expressed one wish which I have to accept may be ignored. It is that my eulogy and homily be reduced to just eight words: He was a sinner. Please pray for him."



Theology of the Body

"Irreplaceable, Indispensable & Unrepeatable"

by Theresa Mischewski - Director, John Paul II Centre for Life

In January, I had the privilege of joining 100 other participants from around the world, in a six day training course held in Sydney. Together, we delved into the teachings of Pope St John Paul II. The course, organised by the Theology of the Body Institute and led by Christopher West, provided an in-depth examination of the concepts found in St John Paul II's influential work, "Love and Responsibility."

The course focused on key aspects of human relationships. It explored the nature of human dignity, identifying how each person is irreplaceable, indispensable and unrepeatable. The course also included a thorough exploration of the metaphysical, psychological and ethical dimensions of love. Participants engaged in discussions on the nature of personhood, the virtue of chastity and the Christian approach to addressing topics such



as sexuality, marriage and sex education for children.

From my perspective, the course was an incredibly enriching experience. I loved the intellectual side, where you really got to delve deep into St John Paul II's masterpiece and not just remain at the surface of it. The course was also designed as a retreat. Throughout the day, participants had many opportunities for prayer, including the Divine Office, attending daily Mass, Adoration and Reconciliation. This all combined into a really powerful experience, where you truly got to encounter God's plan for human relationships, in a way that did not just rely on the theory but was truly experienced in a deeper conversion. I would highly encourage anyone who is able to attend a course by the Theology of the Body Institute to do so.

Catholic Women's Night

by Grace Challies, Special Projects Assistant

In early February, around 100 women from throughout the diocese gathered for the Catholic Women's Night. The evening was filled with laughter and sisterhood and featured a quiz, games and courageous sharing of touching and inspiring personal stories of faith. These testimonies were offered by everyday women in our various parishes. Bishop Michael gave an inspiring address, in which he shared the impact made by women in his life, emphasised the need for community in our current times and expressed his deep admiration and love for Mary, our Blessed Mother.

The fact that this night was organised by women from many different parishes throughout the diocese made it all the more special. It celebrated the unity of Catholic women across the generations and provided an opportunity for many to see familiar faces and forge new friendships. The event's success has inspired the organisers to plan another gathering later in the year. Future Catholic women's events will be advertised in the Diocesan Dispatch and posted on our facebook page.





A 'Full' Christmas for Filipino Catholics

by Joyce Roa

"Mary was afraid of what God would ask of her. But a small voice inside her said yes - to enter into adventure with God."

Bishop Michael shared these words to the thousands of mostly Filipino Catholics who packed the Amuri Area School Gymnasium in Culverden on the 23rd of December. Attendees came from Christchurch, Culverden and other parts of Canterbury to join in the closing program of Paskong Pinoy (Filipino Christmas). The culminating program followed nine days of novena Masses held every night at various parish churches across Christchurch from the 16th of December. The closing Mass was concelebrated by Fr Michael Pui, Fr Rex Ramos and Bishop Michael.

Bishop Michael added, during the homily, that there is always a battle going on. "Who will be the God of my heart? Will it be Jesus or will it be material things?"

He shared of his own adventure with God when he felt the call to priesthood at eight years old, and said that God prepares our hearts.

Bishop Michael concluded the homily with a question, "Will you let Jesus be the Lord of your life? Will you enter into an adventure with Jesus and let him be born in your heart and go where he asks you?"

After the Mass, there was a short

program, including a speech from the Mayor of Culverden, Marie Black, and from Philippine Chaplaincy president, Arlene Wilkins. There were also presentations from various Filipino groups. A free dinner was then served with food stretching from one end of the gym to nearly the other end, with contributions from various individuals and groups, including several roasted pigs (lechon), a staple in big Filipino celebrations.

Food for the soul, food for the body - a sense of a full Christmas for the many who came to be fed.

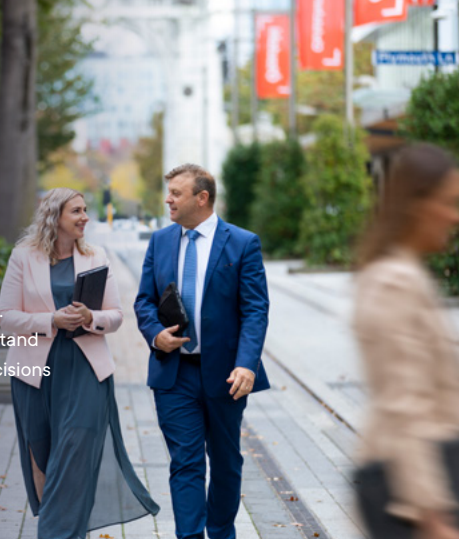


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IN THE DIOCESE

Sto. Niño

A Magnet that Drew in Devotees and Guests

by Joyce Roa



There is hardly any Filipino who has not heard the word 'Sinulog' (from the Cebuano word 'sulog', roughly meaning 'like water current movement'). Every third week of January, wherever there are Filipino Catholics, a group will honor the Christ Child (Sto. Niño) through nine days of Novena Masses culminating in a gathering where the prayer dance 'sinulog' is performed.

The Sinulog Festival and the devotion to the Sto. Niño has its root when Catholicism was introduced in the Philippines. In 1521, the rulers of Cebu, Rajah Humabon and Queen Amihan were baptised together with their subjects. The Spanish explorer Ferdinand Magellan gave Hara Amihan an image of the Child Jesus as baptismal gift. The Sinulog Festival is now considered the grandest festival in the Philippines attracting millions of



people during its celebration.

It then goes without saying that Sto. Niño devotees in Christchurch also honored the Christ Child. Nine days of Novena Masses were held at Sacred Heart parish. Then on Saturday, 20th January, the eve of the celebration (or visperas), a fluvial procession was held in Lyttelton Harbour at 9am. Around 180 Filipino pilgrims reserved two Black Cat Ferry trips to join in the fluvial parade. The ferry was decorated with red and yellow ribbons and balloons. There was a reenactment of how Magellan handed the image of Sto. Niño and a Sinulog dance was performed. The ferry trip took around 30 minutes and participants prayed the Rosary while on the procession. There was also a land procession later in the afternoon.

The meaningful and fun day was followed the next day with the Sinulog Festival held at Cowles Stadium. The venue was filled to capacity with devotees and guests from all over Christchurch and neighbouring areas. The Mass was concelebrated by Fr Peter Head, parish priest of Sacred Heart Parish in Addington;

 St Bede's College Chapel	 Te Raekura Redcliffs School	 Spark Square
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Fr Rex Ramos, newly assigned parish priest to Hurunui, and Fr Tony Ricarte, guest priest from New Jersey. He inspired the crowd with a relatable homily of the theme: "Sto. Niño: the Magnet of Love in the Synodal Church". He explained that it is because God became a child in Sto. Niño, vulnerable and approachable, that the Little Child Jesus is the magnet of love by everyone. We then have a choice to draw near to Him.

After the Mass, there was a Sinulog dance led by dancers then later joined in by everyone, including the three priests. Free lunch was had by everyone, and people went home replete. Once again, Sto. Niño drew various members of the community together, binding them together in love for him and fellowship with one another.



Bishop Michael celebrated Mass for Health Care Workers on Sunday 11th February at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. This Sunday coincided with the World Day of the Sick and was an opportunity for those who work in the medical profession to gather for Mass followed by hospitality.



This year Ash Wednesday fell on Valentine's Day, so a Mass was celebrated the day before on Tuesday 13th February at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. This Mass celebrated by Fr Chris Orr includes an opportunity for a couple to anoint each other in celebration of their love and commitment for each other.



Bishop Michael and Parish Priest Fr Brian Fennessy with Confirmation candidates at Our Lady of the Plains Catholic Parish - Selwyn

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Hearts Aflame 2024

by Grace Challies, Special Projects Assistant

The annual Hearts Aflame National Summer School is always the first big Catholic event to usher in the new year. For most of its more recent history, it has been held in Marton, a small township between Whanganui and Palmerston North. With over 125 participants, this year's Hearts Aflame had its largest attendance yet.



Gemma Morton-Jones, Helene Mischewski, Emily Irvine, praying the Litany of Trust

The first three days of the school were set aside as a time of retreat, this year led by Fr Justin CSJ, a brother of St John from the The Holy Family Parish in Christchurch West. He delved into the theme, "Behold, I make all things new", doing so with humour, wisdom and searching questions, provoking deep self reflection. The next seven days were packed; providing participants with many opportunities to delve deeper into their faith. Each day saw the praying of the Divine Office and the offering of Mass. Lectures were given by dynamic speakers from around New Zealand and Australia. Each day also allowed free time for sports, swimming (to help people to cope with the intense heat), personal reflection and time to connect with other young adults from throughout the country.

A highlight was having the company of so many priests and religious, many of whom are quite young, and willing to give up their time after Christmas to be with us. Another was having Mass at the stroke of midnight, with many of the participants stating that it was the "best way to start the year". Of course, the opportunity to connect with other young adults and feel supported in our journey of faith, is always a major highlight.

With Hearts Aflame Director, Jemma Brunton, stepping down after nine years of service, Jessica Jackman from the Christchurch Diocese is to take up this role. This year, Christchurch was the second largest diocese in attendance with over 30 participants. We hope there will be more next year, which will build up the young adult community in Christchurch.



Group from Christchurch



Fr Isaac blesses a participant during Healing Adoration

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Opening of Marian College and the Consecration of the Chapel

*“Titiro whakamuri, Kōkiri whakamua
- Look back and reflect, so you can move forward”*

The official opening of Marian College in February was a joyful celebration of the past, present and future of the College. Guests were delighted with the innovative design and the foresight shown by the Diocese to re-purpose an existing warehouse structure.

During the formal ceremony, Marian College Principal Mary-Lou Davidson reflected on the 13 year journey to get to our new home. She acknowledged the key groups who had made the building of Marian College possible, with the gift of a hand-drawn copy of the Marian tohu/symbol called Kotahitanga. It was designed by Tiana Purdon from the class

of 2023 and drawn by Lydia Iosefo, from the class of 2022.

The celebration and reunion of past staff, students and whānau afterwards, was a real highlight for attendees. Former Deputy Principal, Sr Colette Forde, flew from Auckland to join in the celebration and whizzed around the school with her walker, leaving her student tour guides struggling to keep up. Quick-witted as ever, she shared some of her favourite and funniest memories with current students. They quickly came to understand why she was so well-known among Marian staff and students, past and present.

Members of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart and the Ngā Whaea Atawhai Sisters of Mercy were also in attendance. They enjoyed seeing the Chapel of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and both congregations are among the first patrons of the chapel. Past teacher Peter Gately (1989-1990) and his wife travelled all the way from Maine, USA for the opening, having followed the school's progress via the monthly updates on its website. He said that, despite having watched the progress over the past few years, nothing could have prepared him for just how big the school was. The way the students spoke and acted had not changed and it reinforced for Peter, how Marian “magic” was with its people and community and not because of its buildings.



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Introducing our 2023 College Head Students



Losa Mefiposeta
Catholic Cathedral College - Head Student

Kia Ora. I am privileged to attend school in such a diverse yet connected community. I am part of the only Catholic Co-Ed school in Christchurch, rich in culture, history, and values derived from the Marist Brothers and Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions. Like Christ, the love from the Gospel, we must realise faith does not fit into a mould. Our kura celebrates this really well, highlighting faith in everyday life, in places we may not even be aware that it exists.



Pavlos Palaiologos
Catholic Cathedral College - Head Student

Good day. This year, I have been blessed with the role of Head Boy for Catholic Cathedral College. I was born in Greece and moved to New Zealand in 2016. I have had the opportunity to attend the only Catholic co-educational secondary school in Christchurch, a school with a very diverse population and most of all, a school that feels like family. Unity is going to be my focus as a leader. While we are all very different in our own ways, yet we are all united through faith. That is why my faith is important to me. It leads me to connect with other people and love them in the way that Jesus taught us.



Gabriella McKey
Marian College - Head Student

Kia ora! I am very honoured and excited to be the Head Student for Marian College in 2024. Over the past four years, I have been blessed by inspirational and approachable student leaders to guide me through my high school journey. As the Head Student, I want to ensure other students continue to feel supported and embrace Marian mana. Although I have been a Catholic my whole life, Marian College has provided me with opportunities to develop my faith and celebrate it with my peers. I've always felt invited to be a part of a community that taught me what it truly means to be a Catholic. This has encouraged me to take my faith beyond school, with different groups of people. I, alongside my fellow leaders, will make the most of the opportunities our new school environment provides, to focus on enhancing this sense of community among our ākonga, as we are united through our faith.



Neave Bruin
Roncalli College - Head Student

Kia ora. I am honoured to be a head student of Roncalli College for 2024. I am excited to serve the school community which has supported me throughout the last four years, and to form even more connections with students and staff. As a leader, I hope to increase the sense of culture within our school, while also encouraging others around me to step out of their comfort zone. Working alongside the rest of the Roncalli student leadership team this year will be a great opportunity to continue to nurture the supportive, whānau focussed environment of our College.



Carter West

Roncalli College - Head Student

Kia Ora. I have the great pleasure of being a Head Student at Roncalli College for 2024. I aim to serve the students, staff and community at Roncalli, to inspire them to be who God created them to be, and to have the courage to pursue excellence in their lives. I'm incredibly grateful for the support I have received from staff and my peers. I can't wait for the challenge of the year to come.



Simon Curnow

St Bede's College - Head Boy

Kia ora. I feel both privileged and honoured to be given the opportunity to lead St Bede's College this year. I'm proud to go to St Bede's, it being unapologetically Catholic and Marist. I stand on the shoulders of giants who came before me and once led and shaped the school to what it is today. My faith journey hasn't always been a smooth ride.

I took my faith for granted up until Year 10, before I realised how much my faith has helped me be the person I am today. It was after a whole school Mass when something I can't explain just clicked and I realised just how lucky I was to A, have my Catholic faith and B, be part of a community where I can celebrate that faith with others. St Bede's has helped me develop that faith hugely, especially in Year 12 with opportunities involving the Young Marist group. I've learnt my faith isn't just about myself, or about Church. For me, it's living out the Marist values of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, humility, justice and honesty, all while showing the St Bede's College motto that is stuck with me for life, "by faith by works". Overall, I'm beyond excited for this year at St Bede's College.



Afa Apulu

St Thomas of Canterbury College - College Captain

Talofa Lava. I'm College Captain of St Thomas of Canterbury College for 2024. I would like to give thanks to God for the many blessings he has given me. I know people have faith in me to uphold not just my values, but the values of my school. These values include Brotherhood, Compassion, Manawa and Legacy. I am thankful for my family because they made many sacrifices for my siblings and I to have a better future, so that we may have the opportunities that some of my family members did not have the chance to get. They are and always will be the source of my strength. Making my family proud and making St Thomas' better than when I found it excites me, as I can give back to them for all the positive and lovely things they have done for me. I cannot wait to see what 2024 has in store for all of us!



2024 VMC Service Team; (l-r) Nika Miguel, Nina Ortaliz, Anugraha George, Jemma de Burger, Katie Emms (2024 Service Captain), Rata Christensen, Jordana Johnston, Madde Sales, Sophia Ward

Katie Emms

Villa Maria College - Service Captain

Kia ora tātou. It is my honour to lead and serve the community in 2024. This year, our focus is the theme of whakawhanaugatanga building strong familial relationships to empower the Mercy Sisterhood. This involves intentionally strengthening the bonds between our peers, kaiako and our Villa whānau through service. I truly believe sharing our burdens and assisting others in their struggles is the main path to a united Christian community. However, our Mercy Sisterhood is not just confined to supporting one another. Jesus has made each one of us uniquely. This year, we are called to remember that each of us is a unique piece that makes up the precious puzzle of the Villa Maria community.

In 2024, we will strive to inspire Villa students to see areas of need and make a difference by meeting it. I ask that you pray for the College this year, and for the service initiatives we embark on. I extend an invitation to you to serve alongside us via your prayers.

Sister Mary Scanlon LCM, RIP

Sister Mary Scanlon died peacefully in Christchurch Hospital on Sunday 19 November, 2023. The following is taken from a tribute given at her funeral.



Is your group seeking a peaceful venue in a beautiful setting to hire?

The Mary Potter Community Centre is a Ministry of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary. The Centre is ideally placed close to the "four avenues" of Christchurch, located at 442 Durham Street North, St Albans. It is tucked behind the Southern Cross Hospital, hidden away from traffic noise and the busyness of life. Off-street parking is available on-site.

The Community Centre and Italian Garden is available for hiring on an hourly or daily basis for groups whose purposes are in keeping with the mission of Mary Potter, the Foundress of the Little Company of Mary. The Centre has a capacity for up to 90 people with a light-filled main hall, a welcoming foyer, kitchen facilities and access to the beautiful garden.

To learn more about what the Mary Potter Community Centre offers and to view a virtual tour of the Centre and Italian Garden, visit our website lcmchristchurch.org.nz and click on Community Centre Booking Enquiry, or contact us by emailing nzadmin@lcm.org.au or ph 03 372 9224.

Mary was born in Wellington in November 1930, the eldest of four children. Mary attended nine schools in different parts of New Zealand, (both Catholic and State) due to her father's situation during the Depression and World War II.

When Mary graduated from school, she gained a bursary and studied Arts at Canterbury University. She also began part time work as a Nurse Aide at Calvary Hospital. She had always wanted to be a nurse and while working at Calvary, began to experience an inner sense of being called to join the Little Company of Mary (LCM). She entered the LCM Novitiate in Sydney in 1949 and was finally professed in 1955. Her motto was "All for Jesus through Mary."

Mary was a registered nurse and midwife, a registered psychiatric nurse and graduated with a New Zealand diploma in nursing education. She nursed in Australia and New Zealand LCM Hospitals, was a nursing tutor for young Sisters in Wellington and worked in mission development with staff at Calvary Hospital. Mary was awarded the Queen Service Medal in 2016 for her involvement at Mary Potter Hospice, Wellington, both with staff and as a Board member for many years. She was also on the Committee of Hospice NZ. Mary suffered a number of serious illnesses during her life, but always bounced back with new energy and determination. Her love of writing



"All for Jesus through Mary"

continued. She wrote many reflections over the years. Some are included in her book, "Mission of Love" Mary lived our LCM charism daily. She was close to Mary the Mother of God and to our Founder, Mary Potter, whom she wrote and spoke about often. She was drawn to walk beside and befriend the lonely and those with other health needs. Mary loved living and ministering in the Nazareth community and being able to attend daily Mass in the Chapel. Our gratitude to all who cared for Mary, her mission of love has ended, may she rest in peace.

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THURSDAYS

9.00am Board Games
9.30am Mass
10.00am Morning Tea
10.30am Board Games
12.00noon BYO Lunch / Socialise
12.30pm Housie (*numbers limited*)
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Sister Anne McLaughlin RSM, RIP

Sr Anne died in Greymouth on 24 January 2024. The following was taken from a tribute given by Sister Theresa Scott, her Mercy and ministry companion in Cobden.

Anne began life in Greymouth 83 years ago. Sixty years ago, Anne began life as a Sister of Mercy and took the motto "Christ Needs Me Now." Responding to people and circumstances of the everyday was her strength. For 20 years, she was involved as a teacher and administrator, educating young people on the West Coast and in Christchurch. Her desire to be more involved with families led her to work in the community of Hoon Hay in Christchurch, and then in Cobden.

Who was this Anne that people met? A person totally accepting of others. A person interested and attentive to what

people expressed. A person of strong character who faced reality - there was no "beating around the bush". An opportunist who took any opening to make a change if it was going to make the world a better place.

No one can accomplish anything alone and most of us have friends and family to rely on. Anne had many and she would want to say thank you for the memories, and to say, "Live each day to the fullest and follow your dreams".

Rest in peace, Anne, your spirit will live on amongst us. *Kia okioki ia i runga i te Rangimarie.*



"Christ Needs Me Now"

Sister Elizabeth Fitzgerald RSM RIP

Sr Elizabeth died on 26 December 2023. The following is taken from the tribute given by Sister Bernadette Fitzgerald RSM, one of her family members.

Elizabeth was born in Timaru on 24 September 1930, being the second child of eight, five girls and three boys. She was educated in Timaru at Sacred Heart Primary School and Sacred Heart College, both of which were staffed by the Sisters of Mercy.

Elizabeth admitted that being the first one in the family to leave home at the age of 18 to follow her dream of becoming a religious, was a traumatic experience. She preferred to be in the background. However, she was very determined. Her motto taken at her profession as a Sister of Mercy in 1951 was 'To Jesus through Mary'. She dearly loved the Mercy Congregation to which she belonged.

She taught in schools in the diocese, having gained her Teaching Certificate and later a Diploma in Religious Education. She valued being able to educate many children in their faith. After

studying for her Licentiate in Speech and Drama, she specialised in teaching speech communication skills. She loved reading and learning poetry - this began in her own primary school years and continued throughout her life. She enjoyed listening to music.

Although Elizabeth was a self-professed shy person, she participated in groups for charismatic prayer and scripture study. She did a National Liturgy formation programme and for several years was a member of the liturgy committee of St Mary's parish, Manchester Street.

Having been a teacher of oral communication, it was a special trial for Elizabeth to lose the power of speech as the result of a stroke. During her recent years at Nazareth House, she appreciated the regular Eucharist there and the care from staff.



"To Jesus through Mary"

Jonah's Mission in Nineveh

homily by Fr Kevin Burns at a Mass in St Peter's, Beckenham, on 21 January 2024

Jonah was a reluctant prophet; no doubt overwhelmed by the task set before him. The ancient city of Nineveh was large, in fact it was the largest city in the world at that time, 700 bc.

The positive response from the people, startled Jonah. The Ninevites listened and accepted his message to repent, to change. They took off their fancy clothes and donned sackcloth and they fasted from their sumptuous banquets; they ruminated and changed their lives and the prophet Jonah moved on - mission accomplished!

The remnant of this ancient city of Nineveh is now within the city of Mosul in Northern Iraq on the east bank of the Tigris and is within the neighbourhood of the Israel/ Gaza conflict taking place at this time. Mosul residents themselves suffered huge devastation during the recent Syrian civil war; many lives were lost there and parts of their ancient culture were utterly destroyed.

“And the people of Nineveh believed in God... God saw their efforts to renounce their evil behaviour, and God relented: he did not inflict on them the disaster which he had threatened.”

Jonah 3: 1-5

Our spiritual heritage comes from these parts which we call the Middle East. Our sacred scriptures were first experienced there in that land, our Bible was first written there in the Middle East; our prophets like Jonah, Isaiah and Elijah proclaimed there and Jesus was born there and the Gospel was first lived there - it is called the Holy Land.

We are concerned these days and involved in the plight of our brothers and sisters and their children who suffer in the Middle East. We long for leadership that can turn the tide and turn weapons of war into ploughshares and turn mourning into dancing and turn famine into festivity.



Berlin Wall painting by artist Nadia Valeska

Pope Francis is a strong moral voice in our world - he speaks peace and writes peace constantly. In a recent publication called 'Social Friendship' he calls the world to have political love, political charity! He explains it in these words, "Government leaders should be the first to make sacrifices and seek convergence on important issues, always upholding the common good". The pope then added that this may seem utopian and naïve, yet, he proclaims, 'let us not renounce this lofty ideal'.

Pope Francis and the Muslim leader Grand Imam Ahmad Also-Tayyeb, in the spirit of the prophet Jonah, have called loudly to those people who are architects of international policy and world economic policy, to work strenuously to spread the culture of tolerance, paving a way forward to peace and to intervene at the earliest opportunity, to stop the shedding of innocent blood.

It is within this great hope that we, you and I, can hope and articulate our prayers to God, expressing our love for this world and every person residing here. This is the lofty ideal we must not renounce.

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A Listening Heart

by Lyn Gallagher on behalf of the Christchurch Diocesan Spiritual Directors Group,
Whakakōingo o te Ngakau: The Yearning Heart

At the beginning of the year, I was staying overnight in our son's sleep-out, when a book on the shelf attracted my attention. It was entitled: "A Listening Heart" by Benedictine monk, Br David Steindl-Rast. The book had been borrowed from us some years ago! Picking it up, my heart was moved as I remembered meeting Br David when he came to Christchurch. With friends, we travelled south from Christchurch for an event in Mosgiel. I remember noticing his attentiveness to everything: trees, the sea, the stones on the beach, the person he was talking with, the seagulls as he fed them his leftover potato chips. I could see his embodied faith being lived out with depth, childlike attention and wonder, as he delighted in each moment.



"The very first word of the rule of St Benedict is Listen - "Ausculta!" writes Br David, "and all the rest of Benedictine

discipline grows out of this one initial gesture of wholehearted listening, as a sunflower grows from its seed." In scripture, listening is frequently either the theme or an invitation. We are called back to remembering who we are in God and invited to attend to God's desire for us. In the Gospels, Jesus challenges the disciples to listen; "seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand." (Mt 13:13)

Today, our broken and wounded world is crying out for wholehearted listeners. Pope Francis calls us to be a listening

"But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door and pray to your Father in secret" (6:6)

Church. "Listening is much more than simply hearing. Hearing is about receiving information, while listening is about communication, and calls for closeness." writes Pope Francis. "Listening is never easy. Many times, it is easier to play deaf. Listening means paying attention, wanting to understand, to value, to respect and to ponder what the other person says." (Message for World Day of Social Communications, 2016). Listening means paying attention to each other, especially the poor, rejected and marginalised. For Pope Francis, listening also means paying attention to the earth, "the poorest of the poor." An attribute of a listening heart is paying attention, in a childlike way, to the ordinary, everyday encounters with creation.



A listening heart is also a praying heart in a relationship of intimacy with God. In Matthew's Gospel, we hear the invitation: "But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door and pray to your Father in secret" (6:6). Listening is prayer, and prayer is listening from the heart.

As I pick up Br David's book again today, I read his message to us in the opening pages: "May you always hear the music of peace in your hearts, and find in it the joy I find when I listen to the birds of Aotearoa. Gratefully, your Brother David."

May this be a prayer for us all at this time.

Image 1, Painting by Amelie Gallagher, aged 5.
Image 2, Spider Lily painting by Lyn Gallagher.

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by Liza Sparrow, CDF Marketing & Business Development Manager

Serving our Diocese of Christchurch for over 55 years

The CDF traces its origins back to 1956 when the first fund, originally named the Schools Provident Fund, was established in Melbourne, Australia. At that time, Melbourne was experiencing a significant population boom in the aftermath of World War II, and the Catholic Church recognised the pressing need for capital to build schools to accommodate the growing number of children.

The success of the fund in Melbourne inspired the creation of similar funds in other regions, eventually totalling 30 across Australia and New Zealand, with CDF Christchurch proactively supporting the Bishop of Christchurch since 1967.

While each fund operates independently, they all share the common goal of serving their respective bishops by providing funding and loans for the Church to fulfill its mission.



The gathering of 50 delegates from dioceses across Australia and New Zealand marks a pivotal moment for the Australasian Catholic Development Funds (CDFs).

Hosted by CDF Christchurch, the Australasian Conference of Catholic Development Funds departs from the conventional format of invited speakers, embracing a new theme: *"Now Next United"*. This shift reflects a collective acknowledgment of the common objectives shared by CDFs - maximising returns to support the broader mission of the Church - and the strategic imperatives that bind them together.

The CDF landscape is diverse, with 30 funds ranging in size from approximately \$30 million in customer investments to \$2 billion. Despite the variation in scale, there exists a fraternity among CDFs characterised by shared values, support networks, and a commitment to best practices.

The two-day gathering allows for open dialogue, as delegates delve into the pressing questions facing their businesses. What are the current realities shaping their work? How do these dynamics influence future trajectory? And crucially, what steps must be taken, individually and collectively, to realise business objectives? Through candid exchanges and collaborative

brainstorming, the conference setting enables delegates to unravel the complexities of their shared mission to support the diocese they serve.

Reflecting on the significance of hosting counterparts from across Australasia, Janice Rennell of CDF Christchurch explained that beyond the formal sessions, delegates have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the Christchurch Diocese: sharing Mass with Bishop Michael, attending the Catholic Business Network lunch, and hearing of our diocese's service in Antarctica and of mountain adventures by South Westland Parish Priest, Fr Michael Mahoney, at the International Antarctic Centre.

Janice commented, "As a small fund within the CDF network, we're proud to host this conference. Our efforts will certainly help foster bonds that extend beyond the confines of the conference room. This time together will serve as a testament to the spirit of camaraderie that is the CDF community." The CDF team in Christchurch is pleased to celebrate a successful gathering, with a resounding message of: *Now, Next, United*. In embracing this mindset, CDFs across Australasia stand poised to confront the challenges of today as they continue to strengthen the CDF offering, together.

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Karakia (*Blessing of Welcome*) for the 2024 CDF Conference

Heavenly Father/Atua,

As we gather together for our Australasian Conference of CDFs, we come to you today asking for your guidance, wisdom, and support as we begin our meeting.

Help us to engage in meaningful discussion; strengthen us and allow us to grow closer and more united as an Australasian community, working to support our Catholic Bishops.

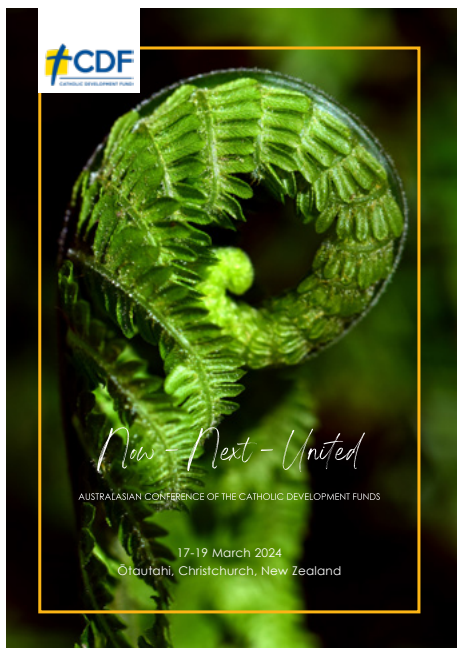
We thank you for all the work that done by our predecessors who established the CDF community.

We remember those who have gone before us and pray for colleagues who are unable to attend this meeting.

Grant us wisdom and grace as we discern, plan, and make decisions about what lies next for the CDF.

Give us freedom to speak the truth boldly and with kindness;
Give us patience to listen openly, without prejudice;
Give us confidence to discover and explore new possibilities;
And continue to remind us that all that we do, all that we accomplish, is for the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of You, and for the service of humanity.

We ask these things in your name, Amen/Amene.



Teamwork - representatives of the Australasian Catholic Development Funds at the 2023 Conference of Catholic Development Funds in Hobart



Supporting education and the pastoral care of our community

Church of St Joseph the Worker, Lyttelton

Canterbury's Oldest Catholic Stone Church

by Penelope Clifford

St Joseph the Worker Memorial acknowledgments and thanks:

To The Friends of St Joseph the Worker Memorial Charitable Trust for your vision. To all the past parishioners and locals who generously donated their time and money. To the Diocesan property team for their unwavering support. The Trust thanks Fr Benito Velasco, former parish priest and Michael Schlumpf, former chair of the parish finance and management committee, for their support and advice. To staff at Christchurch City Council, for all the advice and support and the grants from Banks Peninsula Community Board and CCC Heritage Team. For the generous grant from the Lottery Environment and Heritage Fund

All who made the memorial garden, at the front of the original church site, on 18 Winchester Street possible.



(Above) Memorial Committee:
Pene Clifford, Pauline Goodfellow, Gerry Doherty,
Mary Hancox, Frances Hutcheon



Lyttelton's Catholics celebrated the opening of St Joseph's Church on the feast of Sts Peter and Paul, 29 June 1865.

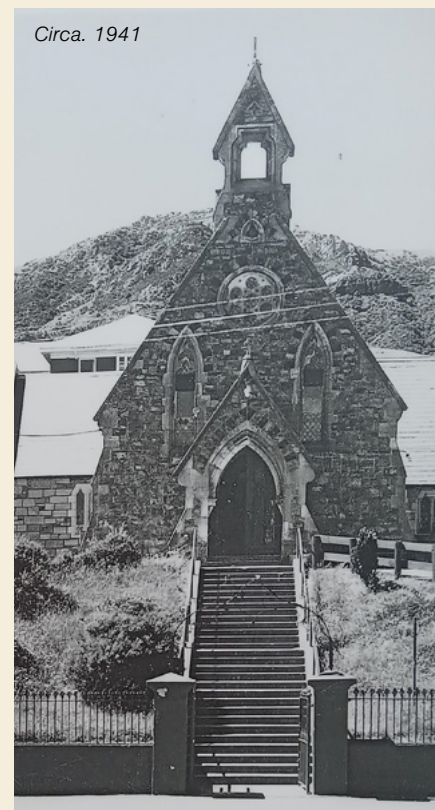
St Joseph's was a Roman Catholic Church and home to those of mainly Franco-Irish origins. Rev Jean Baptiste Chataigner SM was the first of 29 parish priests to serve St Joseph's Church over 146 years.

On 4 September 2010, an earthquake (7.1 Richter scale) damaged the south facing frontage of the church. On 22 February 2011, a subsequent huge and shallow earthquake, centred close to Lyttelton, caused the frontage to completely collapse. Another big aftershock on 13 June of that year further damaged the church to the extent that three months later, the decision was made to demolish it.

On 18 September 2011, there was a thanksgiving and farewell ceremony for the deconsecration of St Joseph the Worker Church, with Fr Rick Loughnan and Fr Denis Nolan as celebrants.

At Pentecost, on 23 May 2021, a final Mass was celebrated in a marquee on the site of the church; this was the official closure of St Joseph the Worker parish. At this final Mass, plans and a fund-raiser for a St Joseph the Worker Memorial were launched by the Friends of St Joseph the Worker Memorial Charitable Trust.

Finally, in 2023, the Memorial garden at the front of 18 Winchester Street was completed, in recognition of the rich history of the oldest stone Catholic church in Canterbury. The memorial garden features include the surviving heritage fabric, consisting of the original boundary walls, posts, church signage, wrought iron railings and archway. In the memorial garden is what was salvaged from the earthquake deconstruction: the original church bell, some stonework from the church, the stone cross from above the entrance porch and the wooden cross from the top of the church.



Our Lady of the Assumption, Hoon Hay Farewells its Church

by Jan Whitburn, Hoon Hay parishioner

On 25 November 2023, the parishioners of the former Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption (OLA), Hoon Hay, gathered for a thanksgiving service. This service was arranged after the church, first opened on 25 November 1956, had been quite suddenly closed after the 9.00am Mass on Sunday 18 June. The Christchurch City Council informed the parish that the church remained well below the current building code. While we knew this was going to happen sometime in the future, the suddenness of the closure gave us quite a shock.

On the positive side, it was also at this June Mass that one of our valued members was received into the Catholic Church. Her entry into full communion in the Church came after many years of accompanying her husband to Sunday Mass, meeting and greeting people as they came through the door on Sundays, and generously contributing to other groups in the parish.

In November, our Thanksgiving Liturgy really brought home to us the many occasions we have gathered in this church for significant events, in our own lives and the lives of our parish family. How does one say "thank you" for all these times? Hopefully, we do so constantly from our hearts and with hope for the future.



Parishioners gathered to begin the Thanksgiving Liturgy - "where there is a will, there is a way"

Our parish priest, Fr Peter Head, led us through the rite of thanksgiving. After the welcome, opening prayer and scripture reading, Fr Peter spoke movingly of the significant symbols used at OLA, these being the cross used at the beginning and closing of Mass, the chalice, the lectionary, the pyx, the Easter Candle, the bells, the stole (to remember past and present priests who have served the people of OLA) and the book of memories.

The 80 or so parishioners then moved to the side of the church for the Litany of Remembrance, prayed by different members of our parish community. The service concluded with prayers for the future and a prayer of thanksgiving. We prayed: "As we look to the future, fill us with Your Spirit and may we be full of grace, joy and peace, because of Your presence with us".

As we completed our final part of the circuit around the church, we sang two beautiful hymns to Mary - Immaculate Mother and Hail Queen of Heaven. For those of us fortunate enough to be part of OLA since its inception, I am sure these hymns brought back wonderful memories of the Good Shepherd sisters, their devotion to Our Lord and Our Lady and their devotion to teaching their pupils the many gems they handed down to us.

Finally, after the Liturgy we gathered in the school grounds for refreshments, to catch up with those we had not seen for a while. The sun was shining and people were not in a hurry to leave. We are blessed to belong to this community. Though its location has changed, our community still remains.

"Though its location has changed, our community still remains."



Rima Arney (105 years) and her daughter Angela Woolstencroft, both of whom have been very involved in OLA parish; Rima since the very beginning of the parish and Angela from a young girl

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Mass in Rolleston

- A Step Forward for Selwyn

by Fr Brian Fennessy



The planning team

February saw the Selwyn Parish commence Sunday Masses in Rolleston. In the last ten years and particularly as a result of the Canterbury earthquakes, Rolleston has mushroomed as a town.



Over the past years, the Selwyn parish has been searching for an appropriate site for Rolleston Catholics to meet for a weekly Sunday Mass. While Rolleston School was an ideal site, we had to wait for Hope Presbyterian Church to move to its new church building, before we could move in. This has now happened.

At the time of writing, the first few Masses have taken place and have attracted between 230 and 300 Rolleston residents. This group includes existing Selwyn parishioners, but many are newcomers. Some may have attended adjoining

parishes or simply responded to the presence of a Mass in their own town. We hope this group will become a nucleus in the establishment of a faith community within the town, as we plan to build a new church in Rolleston. Parish Priest Fr Brian Fennessy commented that "There used to be Mass in the past, but that was in the early days of Rolleston, when attendance was smaller. Rolleston is now as big as Ashburton."

The Selwyn Parish covers the existing churches in Lincoln, Leeston and Darfield and now Rolleston is taking its place.



Inform

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Contributions may be sent at any time to:
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Please attach your high resolution images or send us a link to a file sharing website. Do not embed images in your article. jpeg format is most suitable for photos. Please identify people featured in images and where images are taken.

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All parishioners are invited to the annual celebration of
DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY
Sunday 7 April 2024
St Mary's Pro-Cathedral
373 Manchester Street, Christchurch

12.30 - 2.15pm Confessions
12.30 - 2.00pm Veneration of Relic and Divine Mercy Image
2.00pm Chaplet of Mercy Sung/prayed
2.15pm Holy Mass

Celebrant: Monsignor Rick Loughnan
Book sales to follow in Narthex and refreshments in the Assisi Lounge.
Note earlier start times.

Phone 03 359 2087 for more information
email info@divinemeracy.co.nz
www.divinemeracy.co.nz

