



# Inform

A PUBLICATION OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOP OF CHRISTCHURCH

ISSUE 143 ADVENT 2024

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# From Our Bishop



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Greetings to you all as we journey through Advent, looking towards the coming of Our Lord at Christmas and at the end of time.

In my teenage years, U2 was one of my favourite bands. Their music and lyrics captured the hearts of many in my generation. What endeared me even more to them, was the courageous faith of Bono, their lead singer.

When asked about Christmas, he once said, "I believe that there is a logic that stands behind all things and, as a poet, I see the wonderful appropriateness that this awesome power would express itself as a baby, born in straw poverty."

This mystery is what we celebrate at Christmas: our awesome God, the creator of the cosmos, humbling Himself to become a poor baby. For Bono, this is true because it is the correct order. If God is powerful, he has no need to prove it through a show of power. Rather, his power is shown in something poor and vulnerable. There are few things more humble and vulnerable than a poor, defenceless baby, lying in a borrowed manger.

I invite you to take time to reflect anew on this mystery. How is it that the God who created the Southern Alps, watched over the formation of the Canterbury plains, who tenderly thought of you before you were born, now, once again, comes among us as a vulnerable baby? I have come to know and believe, He did this because He loves us, He wants to be in relationship with us, to show His face to each of us in His Son, Jesus. Babies change us. This is the mystery of Christmas. God, in his perfect will, bursts into our world, whether we are ready or not. He does not ask for any material gift. Rather, he only asks for the door of our hearts

to be open. This is a time to celebrate new beginnings, fresh hope, and the unending promise of God's light in the darkness. Let us welcome the Christ Child, not only into our homes and churches, but into every part of our lives.

## The New Zealand Bishops' Pastoral Letter, Following the Prime Minister's Apology to Those Abused in State and Faith-Based Care

In mid November, I joined with many of you as we listened to the Prime Minister's apology to those who suffered abuse in state and faith-based care. It was an important moment in our nation's history. The Sunday following the Prime Minister's apology, a pastoral letter from the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference was read at all Masses, followed by a Litany of Lament. I joined with you in offering Mass for those who suffered from every kind of abuse at the hands of people in the Church, here in New Zealand. I ask you to walk with me, as we continue to face this painful wound within the Church, in the Christchurch Diocese and in our country. In this season of Advent, may it be a darkness we can turn away from as we walk towards the light of Christ.

As I speak to you now through Inform, may I quote from the guiding words of Pope Francis, found at the end of our Pastoral Letter of Lament: "Looking back to the past, no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done, will ever be sufficient. Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening." We have taken some important steps on that road, but there is more to be done.

*"God, in his perfect will,  
bursts into our world,  
whether we are ready or not. "*



Confirmation candidates from the Opihi Parish (from left): Fr Jolly Arakkaparambil, Ivan Orbase, Ace Suyat, Anna Brown, Bishop Michael Gielen, Martha Bravo, Abi Jeromson, Holly Phillips, Cameron Blogg.

## A Milestone for Inform

May I congratulate Ken Joblin on editing this, his fiftieth issue of Inform. His faith speaks through his work for this publication, as in other work he does for us. I also thank those involved in the formulation, design, and production of Inform both now and during the 33 years of its life. 143 editions have helped tell the story of the many faces and buildings, regions and communities, who make up our wonderful diocese of faith. Inform has helped tell our story, while reminding us of the one who authored it, Our Lord. I also thank those of you who responded to our Inform survey. Around 200 of you indicated how much you value Inform for its content and its ability to capture the life of the diocese. It remains a critical way for us all to remain connected as a family of faith, throughout the diocese. Later in this issue, Ken will write further about the insights gained from your responses.

## Gratitude for Good Work

I would like to thank Simon Thompson, who concludes his time with us as General Manager at the end of the year. He joined us in late 2021, and highlights of his time include the successful completion of the new Marian College, the move of our diocesan offices back to Barbadoes Street, and his work in the selection of the preferred site of the new Cathedral. After more than a decade of supporting the Diocese of Christchurch, our Property Manager Tony Sewell will also conclude his time with us at the end of the year. He has overseen some critical moments in the Diocese during a great time of challenge, but also of opportunity. He has provided trusted advice to three bishops and their advisors, to parishes and diocesan staff. The guidance he has offered to the Cathedral project will serve us well in the years ahead. We wish Simon Thompson and Tony Sewell well in what lies ahead for them and their families.

## Priests' Retirement Villas Fundraising Campaign

My thanks to those who have given so generously for the priests' retirement villas. Providing appropriate retirement housing for priests, who have given so generously and faithfully to the Diocese, is an important responsibility we all share. Your generosity will form the foundation for a restful home for them.

## Final Thoughts

May I conclude by reprising the words of Bono from U2: "there is a logic that stands behind all things, a wonderful appropriateness — that this awesome, powerful God, would express Himself as a baby, born in straw poverty." How blessed are we to have Him come to our door. May we have the humility to let him enter our inn.

Yours in Christ

+ Michael Gielen  
Bishop of Christchurch

For a complete list of

*Christmas Masses*

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

[www.cdcc.nz/christmas](http://www.cdcc.nz/christmas)







*Nga mihi nui  
from the editorial desk*

Inform Issue 143 looks back over the last three months of Catholic life in our diocese.

After you have read this packed edition, please pass on its stories to others, either in hard copy or online: <https://cdoc.nz/inform>. We wish you well as you prepare for the coming of our Lord at Christmas and at the end of time. "Maranatha, come Lord Jesus."

## Ken Joblin, Editor



by Mike Stopforth - Director, Bishop's Pastoral Office

This full day workshop was a follow-up to a workshop held earlier in the year by her parish priest, Fr Chris Ryan MGL. More than 80 of our parish leaders, from 13 parishes, gathered to hear something of Cathy Kennedy's experience of evangelisation. We were inspired by her practical insights in support of parishes being intentional in building a culture of evangelisation, especially in drawing upon the Alpha tool.

A particular highlight was learning about the thresholds of conversion, and how each person can journey and accompany people towards being disciples of Our Lord.



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# Christmas in the Perpetual Adoration Chapel

Over the eleven years that the Perpetual Adoration Chapel has been operating at St Gregory's in Bishopdale, the chapel has remained fully open throughout the Christmas and New Year period. People tell us that they love to have the chapel open during this time. Obviously, it is a challenge to find enough people to cover the gaps left by adorers who go away on holiday. However, it is also an opportunity to introduce new people to the chapel as rostered adorers.

Each year, parishioners put up their hands to help out because they have a little more time to spare during the holiday period. Rostered adorers are also encouraged

to ask friends or family to cover for them. The more people who come to know about the chapel as a place of quiet prayer, the better.

This year we have a large number of people going away and require extra people to help out.

The biggest challenge throughout the holiday period is finding people to cover the gaps in the middle of the night. This is becoming more difficult as elderly adorers, who have spent many nights in the chapel, retire from their commitments. Praying in the early hours of the morning is not easy. In fact it seems crazy.

Here are but two testimonies from overnight adorers:

"There is something very spiritually special about being still with the Lord in the middle of the night. Nothing else is happening around me; the busy world is hushed. It's just me and God. So I can feel Him close in the stillness of the night".

One overseas adorer calls the overnight hours the "ironman hours — those brutal hours (which), in many ways are the hidden life blood of Perpetual Adoration".



Because adorers commit to these overnight hours, it allows the chapel to remain open and then there is a place for anyone to come at whatever time they want. It is not uncommon for people to pop in for a brief visit at all hours of the night. We have heard of powerful testimonies of people going to the chapel in the middle of the night, at times of crisis. No matter what is happening, no matter what time of the day or night, the chapel is open and the Lord is always waiting to pour out his love, grace, and peace on all who come.

So, if you have some time this Christmas, please consider the possibility of adoring during the night.

For more, contact Matt O'Connell:

[chchadoration@gmail.com](mailto:chchadoration@gmail.com)

Cell: 027 536 9407 DD: 366 9869



Members of the ARCCANZ group visit Totara Point with members of the local Catholic parish community



## Anglicans and Catholics Journey North

Visiting St Mary's Motutū for Mass with a few of the local community



ARCCANZ is the Anglican Roman Catholic Commission of Aotearoa New Zealand. In October, we visited Northland and sites of Christian significance for the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. These included Totara Point, where the first Mass on land was celebrated in New Zealand. We celebrated Mass at St Mary's Motutū, where Bishop Pompallier's body is interred. We also visited Rangihoua, the site of New Zealand's first Christian mission station, set up by Bishop Samuel Marsden.

Mike Stopforth, one of the participants said "this hikoī was a wonderful opportunity to connect with our Anglican brothers and sisters as well as visit the significant places of the foundations of our faith here in New Zealand"



# Recalling Chancery Lane

Acknowledgements: Mike Crean, author,  
Photographic Archives of the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch

Churches were dotted around Christchurch by the mid 20th century. But Bishop E Joyce had long dreamed of one more. A small central-city chapel would be a wonderful thing, he thought. And it was — but it lasted only until the major earthquake struck in 2011.

Bishop Joyce drove the establishment of the chapel vigorously. He said it was necessary for people living in the inner-city who had long walks to the nearest churches. He thought visitors to Christchurch staying in central hotels would be pleased with it, as would shoppers from all over Canterbury, and workers in the area who liked to take a walk in their lunch hour. The chapel would, and did, fulfil the ideals of a small community church for locals and a “drop-in” centre for all sorts.

The Bishop purchased land on the corner of Gloucester Street and Chancery Lane in 1956. Chancery Lane was a pedestrian path running northwards from Cathedral Square's north-west quarter. (The site of the chapel is now beneath the southern point of Te Pae, the Convention Centre.)

The Bishop announced his plan to all parishes in May 1957, 100 years since the first Mass was celebrated in Christchurch, by

missionary priest Fr J Petitjean. The bishop chose the name of Holy Cross Chapel. An appeal for funds to develop the chapel went to all parishes in the Christchurch Diocese. Response to the appeal was great. It needed to be. The chapel sanctuary was graced by marble enhancements from Australia, Italian mosaics, and valuable statues and pictures.

The chapel opened in 1958. The building, previously occupied by offices of the National Airways Corporation (NAC), was of two storeys. The church on the ground floor could seat 80 people. The floor above had separate residences for a priest and a housekeeper.

Fr Tom Liddy, who had been a keen adviser and helper to the bishop, was the first priest of the chapel. For the next 26 years the chapel was very popular. In one way it acted as a parish church, with a regular community of worshippers attending. In another, it hosted frequent visitors popping in to pray, to catch a Mass, to go to confession, to seek help from the priest, or just to soak in the good feelings and artistic beauty.

In 1984 the chapel moved, not far, just a few metres along Chancery Lane. Developers bought the chapel's original site and demolished it (and other buildings in the block). The new chapel was moved to a two-year-old concrete complex. Diocesan officers pushed a

hard bargain and gained a blessed outcome. They took a lease on the new chapel building for 999 years at an annual rent of \$1. The agreement included the Catholic Bishop of Christchurch Diocese being the registered proprietor. In exchange the Bishop handed over the first chapel site to a large company for part of \$2.5 million in developments in the lane.

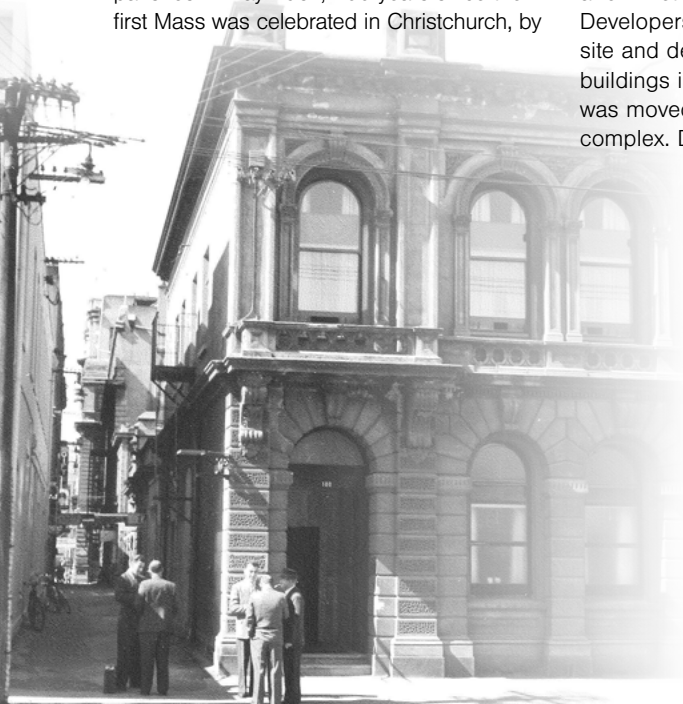
A Catholic shop operated beside the chapel, selling many sacred items. The shop later moved to the end of a new building, adjacent to St Mary's Pro-Cathedral on Manchester Street. The chapel's other neighbours included a “magic” shop, a tavern, and a night club. All of these, plus the chapel, and others, were hit badly by earthquakes in 2010 and 2011. All the buildings in the newly renamed Chancery Arcade were damaged, some beyond repair. So, the chapel was demolished in March, 2015.

## Demolished but not forgotten

A prominent long-time attendant at the chapel was artist Peb Simmons, now deceased. Her written records of how the chapel community functioned between 1970 and 1990 are in the files of the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch Archives. Simmons notes a community similar to a parish, with prayer groups, a music group, youth group, children's group, hospital visiting group, a pastoral team, a “core” group, and others. She tells how the chapel community became “a real centre for people involved in Charismatic Renewal.”



Holy Cross Chapel



First chapel cnr Gloucester St and Chancery Lane



Entrance to the Chapel on Chancery Lane, Catholic Shop on left



# Six Christchurch Women Awarded for long service to the Church in this Diocese

by Elizabeth Ong - Tribunal of the Catholic Church for New Zealand

On 24 November, six women in our diocese were presented with the Benemerenti Medal Award by Bishop Michael Gielen and Msgr Brendan Daly. This papal award is made in recognition of their cherished years of service to the life of the Catholic Church. The award recipients are Mrs Pat Beck, Mrs Nell Pascoe, Mrs Stephanie Butchard, Mrs Maureen Williams, Mrs Marie-Therese McRae, and Mrs Sharon Henshaw.

The Benemerenti Medal is awarded by the Pope to members of the laity, religious, and clergy for services to the Catholic Church. It is usually presented to individuals who have done something significant for the faith, contributed decades of voluntary service or innumerable number of hours towards enriching particular areas of the Church. The Church appreciates and is thankful to all individuals who give of their time and energy so willingly, especially in this circumstance. These six award recipients, who have voluntarily served or have been called to lead in the areas in the life of their own particular parish, for their parish community, and community in general and for their long service to the ministry of the Tribunal of the Catholic Church for New Zealand in the Diocese of Christchurch.

As a community, it is a most happy occasion to celebrate and appreciate the spirit of generosity and love for the Church, expressed through so many years of dedicated service towards her mission in various areas of parish, community, and Tribunal life. Congratulations to all Benemerenti Award recipients. May God's blessing always be upon you and your families.



(Back L-R) Msgr Daly, Nell Pascoe, Stephanie Butchard, Maureen Williams, Marie-Therese McRae, Bishop Michael, (Front) Sharon Henshaw, Pat Beck.

Among many events held were picnics and social evenings. Being like a parish, the community held First Communion days, Baptisms, Confirmations, weddings, funerals, and retreats. The chapel community grew so large that members soon outnumbered seats. The congregation moved to a bigger hall, and to yet another with more space.

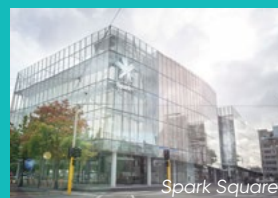
While Eucharistic Adoration remained most important, the chapel "became the gathering place for visitors, waifs, and strangers from the inner city," and others, Simmons writes. She also notes the long-serving priests who took part in all the activities. With them, the Core Group worked "to support and exhort." That's pretty much what Bishop Joyce would have wanted.



St Bede's College Chapel



Te Raekura Redcliffs School



Spark Square



Paragon Apartments



Ballantynes Redevelopment



Christ Church Cathedral Reinstatement

**Building Christchurch Landmarks**  
naylorlove.co.nz





# Inform Survey: *Positive and Thoughtful*

by Ken Joblin - Inform Editor

In our June edition, you, our Inform readership, were invited to fill out a survey, in either hard copy or online. We wanted to gain data and information on the current and future effectiveness of Inform, as a critical publication of the Christchurch Diocese.

You were given July and August to fill in and return your surveys. This you did, with over 200 responses received from laity and clergy alike. We received two thirds of your surveys online, with the remainder in hard copy. We were very pleased with your response, as you gave us a large enough sample from which to gain insight.

You helped us to determine our areas of strength, and you offered thoughtful ideas for the future.

You were asked: "What do you like most about Inform?" You told us that it does what it aims to do. It keeps the Diocese informed and strengthens Diocesan connections. Inform reflects a diverse Catholic community. In reflecting a general sentiment, one of you observed that Inform "Makes me feel part of a community of thoughtful, decent, diverse people, religious and lay."

You told us that you find Inform to contain very helpful local and regional content, and a great range of articles. One of you observed that "Articles provide such an antidote (and an answer) to the grim news of the day." Your responses tell us that you appreciate our high quality photographs.

You support Inform remaining a freely available magazine in hard copy, but with easy online access. You find Inform offers useful information from our Diocesan headquarters. The survey finds that we provide sound theological and spiritual content, often from good local specialists. You appreciate the coverage we offer on our religious communities. You see Inform as a great record of life in the Diocese and a good source of historical material.

We were interested to see that Inform retains long-standing, loyal readership; that we are holding the interest of this group and doing so through consistent, high standards. Around a quarter of you began reading Inform within the last five years. On the basis of the survey at least,

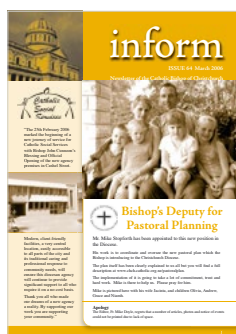
it seems that twice as many women read Inform as men.

We often encourage our readership to share Inform with family members and friends, particularly those who have yet to deeply connect with the Church. We encourage you to become more conscious of Inform as a way to bring people closer to Christ. This means taking copies and giving them to people, or sharing the link to Inform online more widely among your own communities. There is room for improvement in Inform being seen as a useful tool in re-engaging inactive or prospective Catholics.

We asked you how we could improve Inform. We were gratified that many comments indicated a high level of happiness with the status quo. You would like our parishes to share the Inform online link on their websites and newsletters. You would like more theological, spiritual, ecumenical, and diocesan historical and archival content.

You would like more personal faith, religious, parish, and priestly profiles. You are keen to see more articles reflecting our Catholic cultural diversity. You would like to read more from our Catholic school community, our youth and tertiary students. You made a number of practical suggestions about our design, to assist you in readability.

Your survey responses were collated into a report and offered to our bishop. With the assistance of your response, Bishop Gielen is pleased to retain Inform in hard copy and online, as an effective,



**Growing communities  
from the ground up,  
shaping a better  
tomorrow.**

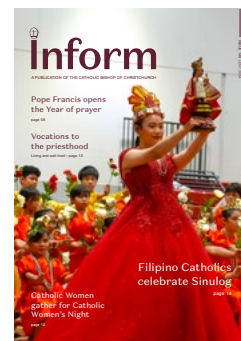
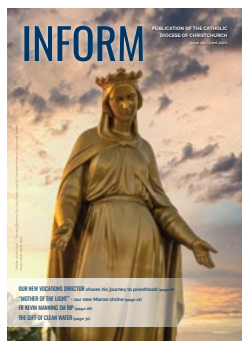
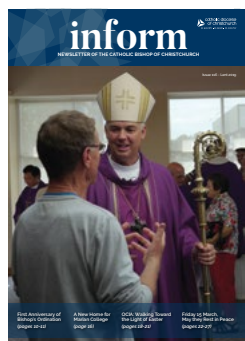
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high quality, quarterly publication of the Christchurch Diocese. It will remain a vehicle to form and inform its readership and be reflective of Catholic life in this diocese. We will consider its relationship with our other Diocesan platforms for communication. We will look into effective ways of reducing the cost of publication, without reducing quality. To this end, we are moving to a less expensive, more

environmentally friendly paper in 2025. We will be calling together those of you who are interested in our communications to assist us in how we might better reflect youth and young people, and those more recently arrived in the Christchurch Diocese.

There is always more we can do to reflect the richness of the Catholic community in

the cities and regions which make up our diocesan family. As Inform Editor, I thank you for your survey responses, which are both encouraging and helpful for future editions. Please continue to share stories with the wider Catholic family. We can see how much it encourages other readers to redouble their efforts to place Christ at the centre of their lives and of the wider community.

## The Vatican's Diplomatic Representative in New Zealand

In July, Pope Francis appointed Archbishop Gábor Pintér as the new Apostolic Nuncio to Aotearoa New Zealand. A nuncio is the Pope's chief diplomatic representative in a country, the equivalent of an ambassador.

Archbishop Pintér, who also serves as Apostolic Delegate to the Pacific Ocean, succeeds Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa, who returned to Rome in March after suffering a stroke last October.

Before taking up his appointment here, Archbishop Pintér was the present Apostolic Nuncio to Honduras. He was born in Kunszentmarton, Hungary, in 1964, and ordained as a Catholic priest in June 1988. He has a PhD in Theology and a PhD in Canon Law, and speaks Hungarian, Italian, English, German, French, Spanish, Russian, Swedish, and Haitian Creole.

He entered the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See in 1996 and served in Haiti, Bolivia, Sweden, France, the Philippines, and Austria, before being appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Belarus in 2016.

He was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Honduras in November 2019, coincidentally replacing Archbishop Rugambwa, who was nuncio there until his appointment to New Zealand that year.

During his time in New Zealand, Archbishop Rugambwa had overseen the appointment of bishops in five of the country's six dioceses — Bishop Lowe in Auckland, Archbishop Paul Martin SM in Wellington, Bishop Michael Gielen in Christchurch, Bishop John Adams in Palmerston North, and Bishop Richard Laurenson in Hamilton.

Some two years of Archbishop Rugambwa's time in New Zealand encompassed the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, with churches often closed by government decree as a public health measure.

We are blessed to have archbishops of such quality representing Pope Francis and the universal Church resident in our country, and we are grateful for their efforts in maintaining communion with the local church in God's farthest outpost.



Archbishop Rugambwa

## His Excellency Archbishop Gábor Pintér

- Born in Kunszentmarton, Hungary, on 9 March 1964.
- Ordained Catholic Priest on 11 June 1988.
- Incardinated at the Diocese of Vac (Hungary).
- PhD in Theology and PhD in Canon Law.
- Entered the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See on 1 July 1996, and subsequently served in Haiti, Bolivia, Sweden, France, Philippines and Austria.
- Appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Belarus on 13 May 2016 and named Titular Bishop of Velebusdo.
- Appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Honduras, on 12 Nov 2019.
- Languages: Italian, English, German, French, Spanish, Russian, Swedish and Haitian Creole.



Archbishop Pintér with Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro





# "Come Before Him, Singing for Joy"

Psalm 99 (100) Jubilate Deo

## The Final Three Concerts in This Year's Series

by Ken Joblin - Jubilate Director



Jubilate North - Christ the King School Choir



Jubilate North - Marian College Choir



Jubilate North - St Bede's College Choir



Jubilate North - St Joseph's School Choir



Jubilate North - St Patrick's School Choir (Bryndwr)

Jubilate is our Diocesan Sacred Music programme, and is well established. Indeed, it has just completed its ninth year. Alongside four regular Christchurch city concerts, bringing together our primary, secondary, and parish choirs and instrumentalists, Jubilate also visits our regions.

September saw the fifth and sixth concerts in the Jubilate series in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. Both were very successful, with a full church for the East and a packed church for the North, with both events hosted by

Jubilate West Coast took place in Greymouth in October, and concluded this year's series. The two primary schools, St Mary's Hokitika and St Patrick's Greymouth, along with John Paul II High School, formed a combined choir of 40 singers, with feature items from all three schools. It is the first time that John Paul II High School fielded its own choir. They sang two two-part pieces with organ accompaniment. Their newly arrived Head of Music, James Roberson and his wife Stephanie, made contributions

*"A really special musical evening that everyone enjoyed"*

parish clergy. The East featured Samoan and Tongan choirs along with the Catholic Cathedral College choir. "Jubilate is a wonderful event to be part of," said Adele Greig, Principal of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Sumner. The North featured all four of its primary school choirs, along with Marian and St Bede's College choirs. Mary-Lou Davidson is Principal of Marian College. "It was an excellent concert" she said "and much enjoyed by the families and students. The church was so full, I had to sit in the choir loft, so I had the chance to really enjoy the performances and that of Benedict Gordon, the organist from St Peter Chanel."

on the organ and in singing. An hour long concert attracted an appreciative audience, and was hosted by Fr Mathew Siji, Parish Priest in Greymouth. St Mary's choir director, Theresa O'Reilly, was delighted with the event and how it was run. "A really special musical evening that everyone enjoyed," she said. "I asked the students what they enjoyed the most about their experience the next day, and it was really lovely to hear their positive responses. I think it will be one of those experiences that will be a special memory for them," she observed. The West Coast is looking forward to Jubilate in 2025.

2025 will be the tenth anniversary for Jubilate.

Photography credit: Rachel van der Plas



Jubilate North - St Albans School Choir





# Vocations change the course of history

In the Diocese of Christchurch, every Thursday is the day where we specifically pray for priests and for vocations to the priesthood. In the Gospel of Luke (10:1-12), we read about Jesus sending out 72 disciples to "go ahead of him." He says to them, "The harvest is rich, but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest."

We must also pray fervently to the Lord for vocations, for men and women to respond to the Lord's call to "send labourers to his harvest."

As I was praying with this scripture, I was reminded of a chapter in George Weigel's powerful book, *Letters to a Young Catholic*, entitled "how vocations change history". In this chapter, Weigel shows the profound impact that individual vocations, specifically those of the laity, priests, and religious, have on the broader narrative of history and culture. He used the example of St Pope John Paul II, who quietly but earnestly discerned his vocation to the priesthood in Poland, in the early years of World War II.

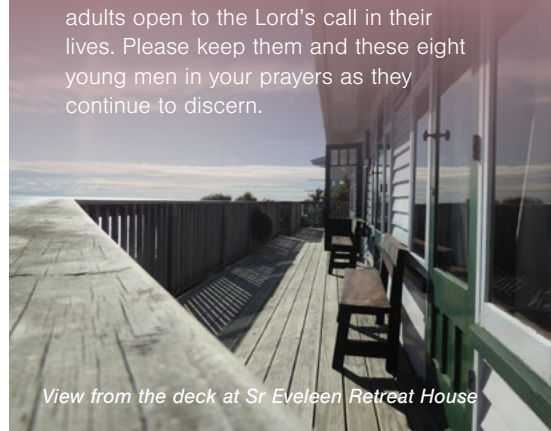
St Pope John Paul II heard the call of Jesus the Good Shepherd and responded. That decision changed history when we look at the impact of St John Paul II on the many young people he encountered as a parish priest, the impact he made in Poland as a bishop during communism, his selection as Pope, the role he played in ending communism, and in developing the Theology of the Body and World Youth Days. His twenty-seven years as Pope changed history for the better.

No doubt, many people prayed for him as he discerned his vocation. Today, there are people here in Christchurch, in New Zealand, and around the world, discerning a vocation. That vocation can also change history. Let us continue to pray for all young Catholics as they discern their own vocations — because their response will "resonate far beyond their immediate surroundings" and may very well transform the world.

## Vocations Retreat

Late August saw eight young men gather at Sr Eveleen Retreat House in Sumner for a weekend of talks, prayer, quiet reflection, Adoration, Mass, and fraternity. Alongside our Vocations Director, Fr Tien Cao, and Vocations Coordinator, Matt O'Connell, several of our priests joined to give talks, hear confessions, and share testimonies. The young men were open, prayerful, mature, and discerning. One retreatant commented that "This weekend was great and very eye-opening for me. I look forward to keeping in touch and seeing where this journey goes."

In our diocese, there are many young adults open to the Lord's call in their lives. Please keep them and these eight young men in your prayers as they continue to discern.



*View from the deck at Sr Eveleen Retreat House*



## Sr Lauren of the Cross

Sr Lauren of the Cross (Butler) made her first profession as a Carmelite Extern Sister in the Christchurch community last week, on the feast of St Teresa of Avila. It was a joyous occasion as she took her vows during a Mass celebrated by Bishop John Adams and concelebrated by a large group of priests. The monastery in Halswell is one of two Carmelite monasteries in New Zealand.

*(Left) Sr Lauren of the Cross and Bishop John Adams; Sr Lauren of the Cross and her mother Ann Wilson; (below L to R) Fr Tien Cao, Fr Brian Fennessey, Fr Monty Bamford, Fr Allan Jones SM, Bishop John Adams, Fr Simon Eccleton, Sr Lauren of the Cross, Fr Barry Malone SM, Msgr Rick Loughnan, Fr Tang Phan, Fr Alister Castillo. Photography credit: Rachel van der Plas.*





# Fostering Vocations in our parish communities

In the past, there was great rejoicing when a vocation came from within a parish community. One of the signs of a fruitful parish is producing vocations. Pope Benedict XVI noted that "The ability to foster vocations is a hallmark of the vitality of a local Church."

## How does a parish become vocation-producing?

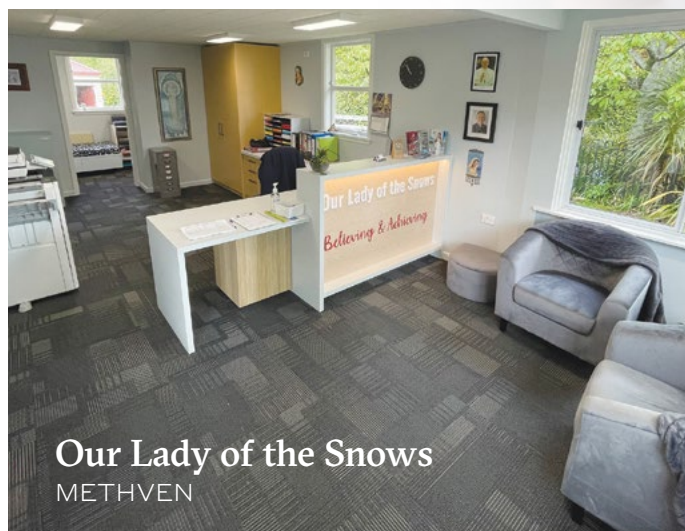
Answer: through expectant prayer and activities which promote vocations. Vocations start from prayer. Indeed, it was Jesus himself who said, "pray to the Lord of the harvest." It is important to remember that vocations are not simply the responsibility of the Vocations Director or parish priest — every person in the parish is responsible for praying for vocations, for asking people to consider them, and for supporting and nurturing those that respond generously.

Here are some things a parish might consider doing:

1. At all Masses on Thursdays, pray for priests, seminarians, and for vocations to the priesthood, using the prayer card from Pope Francis, which Bishop Gielen has asked us to use.
2. Begin a vocation ministry within your parish. In the United States, it is said that 80% of seminarians come from the 20% of parishes with a vocation ministry or committee.
3. Gather a group of parishioners and start a weekly prayer group in front of the Blessed Sacrament and pray for vocations from your parish. Perhaps you might combine this group with a weekly holy hour for vocations in front of the Blessed Sacrament.
4. Pray a 9-day Vocations Novena during Vocations Awareness Week, for vocations from your parish.
5. Insert a prayer of the faithful at Mass every week for vocations from your parish.
6. For families: pray for your children, teach them to pray, to hear the voice of Jesus the Good Shepherd, talk to them about the various vocations, invite your priests around for dinner, support and encourage your children to be open to wherever God might be calling them.
7. Give a prayer card out to every person in the parish and ask them to pray daily for vocations. In particular, ask the sick and the homebound of the parish to make this a special intention or work of theirs.



8. Run a monthly Children's Adoration event. Adoration is a powerful way for young people to encounter Jesus and hear his call.
9. Begin a vocations group in your parish for young people open to a vocation. Teach them about prayer and discernment.
10. Invite the Vocations Director to come to your parish and preach at all Sunday Masses. He might also meet with various groups and also the young people of the parish. He could also give a talk to families about fostering vocations in family life.
11. Display vocation posters in your parish foyers and put regular bulletin notices in your parish bulletin. This keeps vocations before the eyes of the parishioners.
12. For priests: preach more often about vocations and visit classrooms. Research has shown that the seeds of most religious vocations are sown in years 4-8, even though the person does not make the final decision until years later. Catholic schools are incubators for vocations.
13. Invite seminarians into your parish to speak to parish youth and young adult groups. They make excellent speakers for young people, as they have already intentionally tested their provisional call in the seminary.



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*Pattie Ree, Principal.*

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## *“Charity Above All”*

# Sr Eileen Dwyer RSM RIP

2 September 2024

From a tribute by Sr Tina Vaeatangitau RSM

Our Foundress, Catherine McAuley, stated: "It is for God we serve the poor, not for thanks. Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. The poor need help today, not next week. Walk in the way of righteousness, along the path of justice."

How well Eileen embodied this Mercy vision, this way of the Gospel.

Born in September 1934, Eileen grew up in Drombane, Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland. She left her beloved Ireland in 1955 to join the Sisters of Mercy novitiate in Timaru. Eileen was professed in 1957, with the motto: "Charity Above All."

From 1957 to 1969, Eileen taught at different primary schools in Christchurch, Timaru, and Akaroa. In 1970, she moved to Tonga to become the principal of St Paul's Primary School in Lapaha village. She closed St Paul's in 1974 and, with two other teachers, opened Takuilau College in 1975.

In 1977, she returned to New Zealand to attend Chaneel Institute in Auckland, where she studied for a Diploma in Scripture and Theology. After completing her Diploma, she returned to teaching once again, this time on the West Coast and in Christchurch. She also completed two years of Te Reo Maori study at the tertiary level. This was followed by a year at Turramurra, North Sydney, before returning to Tonga in 1985 to teach at 'Apifo'ou College.

At 'Apifo'ou College, she left an impact on the school and its students which has lasted even until today. As a teacher, Eileen took a holistic approach. She focused on the mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions of each pupil, and would do anything to ensure the child's well-being. At 'Apifo'ou, she was known for following up on any adverse situations impacting pupils. Eileen would go the extra mile for the safety and well-being of her pupils, accompanying them through difficulties until a time of justice and resolution or healing was achieved. She truly lived out her motto, 'Charity Above All.'

After six years in 'Apifo'ou, she returned to Christchurch to a new ministry, working in the Hornby Parish, visiting the sick and parishioners.

In 1992, the needs of Tonga called again to Eileen's Mercy heart, and so she found herself returning, this time to work at Lapaha parish for a couple of years before taking up the demanding role of prison chaplain; a ministry she undertook for twelve years. She was outstanding at this ministry. It was as though she had found her niche. Indeed, it was Eileen who introduced Restorative Justice in Tonga.

Eileen not only embraced each of the prisoners with care and love, but also included their whole families in her ministry. The prisoners' families became Eileen's family.

*“She focused on the mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions of each pupil, and would do anything to ensure the child's well-being”*

In 2006, Eileen returned to New Zealand. Rather than seeking an easier life, Eileen began volunteering at Christchurch Women's Prison. In 2009, the Department of Corrections awarded Eileen a special award for her outstanding contribution to prisoners' rehabilitation, reintegration, and welfare. For Eileen, no matter the crime, a prisoner was a person, a family member, and a contributor to society.

As her health deteriorated, Eileen needed more care. It was difficult for her to let go of being actively involved in people's lives and serving their needs, yet she gradually accepted her decline.

Toka aa 'i he fiemalie Eileen — Rest in peace, Eileen.

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## *“Serve the Lord with joy”*

### Sr Kathleen Fitzsimmons RSM RIP

22 September 2024

Adapted from the funeral tribute given by Sr Tina Vaeatangitau RSM

Born in October 1935 on a family farm at Greta Valley, North Canterbury, Kathleen Fitzsimmons entered the Sisters of Mercy novitiate in Timaru and was professed on 2 September, 1955, taking the motto ‘Serve the Lord with joy.’ Kath’s main ministry after her novitiate was primary school teaching. She taught in Greymouth, Methven, and Christchurch.

She was a woman of kindness and compassion. She had kept a card on her which a past pupil from her Loreto College days had written, “I have wanted to thank you, Sr Kathleen, for the great start and passion for learning you gave me — as my new entrant teacher. I still remember those school days very clearly and your kindness and compassion stood out to me as a young boy. I have wonderful memories of learning to read and mastering maths with you.” While this past pupil has risen to a current and prominent leadership role in our country, no doubt many other ex-students of Kath would say the same. One who became a well-known 3ZB broadcaster in Christchurch in the 90s, when he was on the air, often referred to Sister David (Kath), as the lovely and kind new entrant teacher who taught him. Those whom she served faithfully and compassionately in

her various other ministries as a Woman of Mercy, have similar memories.

It is extraordinary how these grown-up men, both public figures, still fondly remember their new entrant teacher and were proud — in the best sense — to refer to the Sister who taught them. But, that was Kath: once you met her, she would remain in your memory forever.

*“I still remember those school days very clearly and your kindness and compassion stood out to me as a young boy. I have wonderful memories”*

Kath was not only a teacher at Loreto College, but also the bursar and the local superior from 1973 to 1978. Her organisational skills were valued and appreciated by the Congregation. These were put to good use when the decision was made to close Loreto College in the late 1970s and prepare the property for sale. She had been so good at organising the sale of Loreto in 1983, that she was also asked to prepare for auction the huge old convent in Timaru, when the time came for its demolition. It was a monumental task, but Kath undertook it with great joy and with competence.

When Kath entered Religious Life, it was a time when those joining worked and, at the same time, studied to earn their professional qualifications. Kath did this for some time, and in 1987, it was a source of excitement for her that she was sent to the National Pastoral Institute in Melbourne for a year to study for a Diploma in Religious Education.

Kath returned from Australia to live in Christchurch, where she worked as the Pastoral Assistant in Our Lady of Victories Parish, Sockburn. She then joined the Rosary House Spiritual Life Centre team, attending to the running of the household and hospitality.

The last few years of Kath’s life, she spent in care. She accepted her painful health condition with grace and dignity.

Kath, you will always be remembered as one who ‘served the Lord with joy’; a wonderful Mercy Woman of kindness and compassion. Rest in peace, Kath.

### *Come and enjoy social interaction with other seniors...*

#### MONDAYS

9.00am Board Games  
10.00am Morning Tea  
10.30am Arts and Crafts  
12.00noon BYO Lunch / Socialise  
12.45pm Exercise Class  
1.30pm Variety Hour  
2.30pm Afternoon Tea

#### 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*)  
2.15pm Afternoon Tea  
3.00pm Exercise Class

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# Family Parade of Saints and Living Rosary

by Christian Celi - KFC Christchurch Central Coordinator

On the eve of All Saints Day, St Bernadette's Church in Hornby was filled with families celebrating Halloween the Catholic way. A Living Rosary was also held to mark the culmination of the rosary month.

For the second consecutive year, Kids for Christ (KFC), a ministry of Couples for Christ (CFC), organised this special event to honour the true meaning of Halloween, or 'All Hallows' Eve.' This is a time for us Catholics to remember the saints and be encouraged to follow their example of faith. It is a tradition we hope to revive for our children and families.

The evening began with a Living Rosary. Families prayed together, bead by bead, forming a powerful chain of prayer in honour of our Blessed Mother Mary. Children, parents, and other adults were dressed as their favourite saints. These included Padre Pio, St Monica of Hippo, St Claire, St Augustine, and Filipino saints like San Lorenzo Ruiz and Pedro Calungsod.

They joyfully and reverently processed into the church, with even a baby dressed as Santo Niño (Holy Child Jesus).

Fr Zani Pacanza then celebrated a vigil Mass for All Saints' Day, sharing stories of the saints and how they serve as a source of inspiration for kids, who are the future of our Church.

After the Mass, everyone enjoyed a time of fellowship, with children receiving "treats" to add a bit of festive fun to the evening. It was a wonderful way to gather in faith, family, and community, reminding us all of the joy and inspiration the saints bring to our lives.

True to our mission to "Evangelise Kids, Enrich Families, and Renew Society", Kids for Christ is committed to making this meaningful celebration an annual tradition. We invite more families each year to join in celebrating Halloween with faith and purpose.

# 6,823 Households

## St Vincent de Paul in Christchurch in 2024

by Robyn Casey - General Manager  
St Vincent de Paul, Christchurch

On behalf of St Vincent de Paul, Christchurch, we wish to thank all those who supported our work in the last year: particularly through volunteering, donations of food, furniture, and clothing. Your donations have enabled us to help 6,823 households in the calendar year ended 31 October 2024.

If you would like to donate to our Christmas appeal for the Foodbank and the Christmas toy appeal, see the link below for our Givealittle page:

<https://givealittle.co.nz/org/svdpchch>

As we approach Christmas, may I draw upon some words from Psalm 145:

*"It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed.*

*It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free, the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down, the Lord, who protects the stranger and upholds the widow and orphan.*

*The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age."*

*Please donate now...*







## Race Night a Roaring Success

by Maria Schmetzer - Acting Director, John Paul II Centre for Life

The ninth annual John Paul II Centre for Life Race Night was held on 6 September, and saw people from all around Canterbury gather to enjoy a night with friends, family, and fellow parishioners at Addington Raceway.

Several priests vied for the Priest Punter of the Year Trophy. This year it was Bishop Michael Gielen who prevailed over his fellow priests to win this coveted trophy. Fr John O'Connor and his horse, named Food for Faith, also had an exhilarating duel sulky race, taking out first place.

We are grateful to all those who supported this fundraiser, through attending and buying raffle tickets, and to our wonderful private and corporate sponsors, including Giesen Wines, Pak'n'Save, Cranford Ale House, Thermo King, Murney Family Trust, Hickman Family, John Jones Steel, Ark Financial Group, and the CDF.

Congratulations to our Raffle winners, whose ticket numbers and names are: 695 Sasha Magzada; 652 Kellie Reid; 1067 Joseph Perpinan; 234 Connor Eatwell; 527 Sean Woodnutt; 197 Selma Scott; 42 Fr Peter Farrant; 120 Esther Wee; 301 Rob Bickle; 200 Kirsten Tester.

The John Paul II Centre relies on this major fundraiser and donations to carry on our mission through marriage preparation courses, supporting families who are experiencing difficulties (especially during the child-bearing years), assisting families who have been wounded by pornography, and those who have received an adverse or life-limiting diagnosis for their unborn child. Our heartfelt thanks to all who enable us, by their donations and prayers, to continue this work.

Bless you all!



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# Prepare a welcoming heart and a welcoming world this Christmas

*by heeding the cry of the poor  
and the cry of the earth*

by Laudato Si' Action Group Waitaha

We know that Christmas can be hard for many people, particularly those with little, who are already struggling with the pressures of life. Apparently, holidays are not so good for the planet either, particularly Christmas, with the extra waste and extra kilometres travelled, the increase in household and food waste, not to mention the cost!

Last year, Pope Francis shared his hopes for a 'good programme for Advent: to encounter Jesus who comes in every brother and sister who needs us, and to share with them what we can: listening, time, concrete assistance.'

Here are some ideas:

- Consider who needs your help this Christmas: look around your neighbourhood or parish and see who else you could include in your Christmas plans; invite people you know who will be alone, to join you for Christmas; arrange to meet up with people on their own at Christmas Mass so they're not there alone. Visit your neighbours, the ones you don't know, or elderly living in social housing or rest homes.
- Spend your time, not money. Gift a meal, a cooking class, some child minding; offer a driving lesson; fix someone's bike; teach a skill; repair something; help with a garden cleanup. Give vouchers as a promise of time you will spend with a person, an activity you will do with them, a place you will take them, something you will teach them.
- Share a recipe or some encouragement. Pass on a present or something you have treasured. Grow herb or vegetable seeds or tree seedlings and gift them in recycled pots. Give produce or flowers from your garden. Put some extra in the Vinnies basket at church. Donate to Caritas, Catholic Social Services, St Vincent de Paul, St John of God Hauora Trust, or other charities. Pay school fees for a year for a family in your parish. Pay someone's bill.
- Shop at Flourish or Vinnies, or other charity shops. Ask all of your family to buy second hand presents. Reuse and recycle wrapping paper, or use fabric or magazine pages and recycled string or ribbon. Seek out ethical companies; support small, sustainable, and local businesses.
- Create decorations from natural materials; write a letter to a friend, or a poem; make your own Christmas cards.
- Bike to church as a family; walk to a picnic spot; take the bus to somewhere you've never been.
- Ask a young person their ideas on how to cut down on waste, plastic use, single-use items, fuel, spending. Ask an older person what matters most in their lives and how they celebrated Christmas when they were young. Ask how you can help. Ask for help.
- Give time. Be present. Appreciate the natural world and thank God for the gift of Jesus and the gift we can be to others.



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# From Naga City to New Zealand:

## *Peñafrancia Festival Brings the Filipino Community Together in the Christchurch Diocese*

by Janet Zapanta

The Peñafrancia Festival has once again ignited the hearts and spirits of the Filipino community in Christchurch and Canterbury. Over 700 devotees gathered on 22 September, to honour the Divino Rostro and Our Lady of Peñafrancia in a celebration that brought faith, tradition, and community together, in a profound expression of devotion. Organised by the Bicolano community, this cherished festival has grown larger and more meaningful with each passing year.

The nine-day novena began on 12 September, at St Bernadette's Catholic

Church in Hornby. Each evening, different families and community groups sponsored the novena and Mass, with various priests celebrating each service. This beautiful series of events brought together not only the Bicolano community, but also other Filipino groups, in a collective expression of faith and unity.

This year, for the first time, we introduced a Moto-Procession on 8 September, where we transported our beloved Ina from Christchurch to the Catholic Church in Rakaia. The Christchurch group was warmly received by Bicolanos and other Filipino communities from the Rakaia and Ashburton areas, led by Fr Lito Quinones. The novena culminated on 22 September, coinciding with the actual Peñafrancia celebration in Naga City.

The day began with a 'Sakay,' or Fluvial Procession, on the Avon River, with many devotees joining in a symbolic and moving act of devotion. Following the Fluvial Procession, there was a campus procession around the grounds of Catholic Cathedral College, where the Mass and social gathering were held. The Eucharistic celebration was officiated by Fr Michael Therese, Fr Zani Pacanza, and Fr Rex Ramos, and attended by over 700 faithful.

After the Mass, the community gathered in the college hall for a social feast, with Bicolanos sharing their famous dishes. The PIMUZ band provided live music, creating a lively atmosphere as everyone enjoyed the meal, followed by dancing and merriment.

This annual festival, now a highly anticipated religious celebration for

Filipinos across Christchurch and Canterbury, has been brought to life by the Bicol Express Community of Canterbury (BECC) for the past nine years. It was initially started in Christchurch by the late Fr Benito Velasco, whose dedication helped build the foundation for this remarkable event.

### A Brief history of This Devotion

According to the Archdiocese of Caceres, the devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia dates back to 19 May 1434, when Simón Vela discovered an image of the Blessed Mother on Peña de Francia in Spain. The statue had been hidden to protect it during the Moorish invasion, and its discovery was followed by miracles that led to the building of a chapel to honour it.

In the 18th century, Miguel Robles de Covarrubias, a seminarian in Manila, experienced miraculous healing through the intercession of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. After recovering, he became a parish priest in Naga City and commissioned a statue of the Virgin Mary, which he placed in the church he built. Devotion to her continued to grow, with more miracles attributed to her, eventually leading to the creation of the Peñafrancia Festival.

The Peñafrancia Festival, originating in Naga City, is recognised as Asia's largest Marian celebration. Held every September, it honours the Divino Rostro (Divine Face of Jesus) on the second Friday, and Our Lady of Peñafrancia (Ina), the patroness of Bicol, with a deep devotion that crosses oceans and brings communities together in faith.

Viva La Virgen! Viva El Divino Rostro!







# CFC Youth for Christ

by Niña Lauron Ortaliz

During the October school holidays, over 150 youth gathered at Waipara Adventure Centre for the CFC-Youth for Christ South Island Conference 2024. CFC-Youth for Christ is a ministry under the Couples for Christ Global Mission Foundation, which unites people, especially youth, to engage in building relationships with other people globally, and to build oneness in spiritual faith.

The conference theme, 'Into the Light,' was inspired by Isaiah 49:5-6, calling participants to re-discover their identity as beloved sons and daughters of God. The conference aimed to empower attendees to embrace love that is free, total, faithful, and fruitful, as exemplified by Christ's self-giving love. It reinforced our mission to be bearers of Christ's light in our daily lives, becoming beacons of love and hope within our families, friendships, and communities.

The three-day event included worship, sessions, workshops, and fellowship, all centred on the theme. Youth attended from Christchurch, Culverden, Rakaia, Ashburton, Oamaru, Timaru, Dunedin, and Invercargill, building a vibrant and connected community. Bishop Michael Gielen celebrated the closing Mass on Sunday morning, marking a powerful conclusion to the weekend.

A highlight for many participants was the opportunity to deepen their faith through worship and Adoration, which provided meaningful moments for reflection and spiritual connection. As one of the team leaders, it was incredibly fulfilling to witness the youth grow and be moved by the sessions and worship we prepared. A true highlight was seeing so many young people come together, deepening not only their relationship with Christ, but also their bonds with one another. The weekend was not only rich in faith, but also filled with genuine love and connection.

I was also able to deepen my own faith and gain a better understanding of myself. The sessions and workshops were truly eye-opening, helping me to grasp what it means to be a daughter of God and to carry His light to others. Another highlight for me was the YFC Got Talent showcase, where youth participants shared their God-given talents through dance, spoken word, short films, and band. It was inspiring to see their creativity and passion on display.

Overall, the weekend was a great success, allowing us to serve God and glorify His name in everything we did.

THE PHILIPPINE CHAPLAINCY  
DIOCESE OF CHRISTCHURCH

## Christmas NOVENA MASS 2024

(ENGLISH MASS)

### SCHEDULE OF SIMBANG GABI

<b>St. Marys pro Cathedral</b> 373 Manchester St., Chch <b>Dec 15-18   7:30pm</b>	<b>St Anne's Church</b> 739 Ferry Rd., Woolston <b>Dec 19-22   7:00pm</b>
<b>St. Patrick's Church</b> 31 Gerald St., Lincoln <b>Dec 15-22   7pm</b>	<b>Holy Name Church</b> 58 Sealy St., Ashburton <b>Dec 15-23   7pm</b>
<b>Our Lady Help of Christians</b> 12 Montrose Ave., Culverden <b>Dec 14-22   7pm</b>	<b>St. Teresa of Lisieux Church</b> 8 Puriri St., Riccarton Chch (Misa De Gallo) Morning Mass <b>Dec 16-24   6am</b>

### Paskong Pinoy 2024

**Dec 23, Monday 7pm (9<sup>th</sup> day Novena Mass)**  
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 Bishop Michael Gielen - Celebrant

PRIMO DIGITAL CREATIVE





## How our Diocese will mark the Jubilee Year

Bishop Michael Gielen will open the Jubilee Year in our Diocese on Sunday 26 January 2025, by celebrating the 9.30am Mass in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral.

Throughout the year it is intended there be opportunities for celebrations of Jubilee Masses for various groups.

Pilgrimages are an important element of the Jubilee Year, where individuals, parishes, and groups are invited to visit as part of the Jubilee celebrations. The designated pilgrimage sites for our diocese are:

- St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Christchurch
- St Patrick's Church, Akaroa
- The St Mary MacKillop Chapel, Catholic Parish of Opihi, Temuka
- Sanctuary of Fourviere and Shrine of Mary, Mother of Light, Leithfield.

A Eucharistic procession on the Feast of Corpus Christi (Sunday 22 June) is being organised.

Following this year's successful one day Prayer Conference, a further Conference is planned for August 2025.

A Northland pilgrimage to significant sites of our Catholic Faith in Aotearoa.

There will be a concerted effort to invite people to undertake volunteer prison visiting ministry.

A small prayer book will be developed entitled "Pilgrimage of Hope"

A programme called Exodus will be offered during Lent, inviting men to prayer, fraternity, and practise of disciplines.

## The Jubilee Year in 2025

### *Becoming Pilgrims of Hope*

In 2025, the Catholic Church will celebrate its next Jubilee Year—a centuries-old tradition, rich with spiritual significance.

This special time is dedicated to promoting renewal, spiritual growth, mercy, and forgiveness. The Jubilee was first initiated in the Christian era by Pope Boniface VIII in 1300, and is generally held every 25 years, although popes may proclaim additional Jubilees for special occasions. The last Jubilee, an "Extraordinary" Jubilee, was declared by Pope Francis in 2016, to mark the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council.

The concept of Jubilee traces back to the Jewish tradition recorded in the Old Testament, where every 50th year was designated as a year of rest, forgiveness, and restoration (see Leviticus 25:8-13). Known as the "Year of Jubilee," it was a time for debts to be forgiven, slaves to be freed, and land to rest. The word "Jubilee" comes from the Hebrew word 'yōbēl', which means "of the goat", because the holy year was proclaimed by the sound of a goat's horn.

For the 2025 Jubilee Year, Pope Francis has chosen the motto "Pilgrims of Hope," inspired by the words of St Paul in Romans, "Hope does not disappoint"

(Romans 5:5). In his letter proclaiming the Jubilee, Pope Francis beautifully reflects on Christian hope:

Christian hope does not deceive or disappoint because it is grounded in the certainty that nothing and no one may ever separate us from God's love: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or the sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8:35.37-39). Here we see the reason why this hope perseveres in the midst of trials: founded on faith and nurtured by charity, it enables us to press forward in life.

Pope Francis encourages us to deepen our faith through pilgrimage, prayer, the sacrament of Reconciliation, and works of mercy during the Jubilee year. Each of these practices embodies the



Pilgrimage Site -  
St Patrick's Church, Akaroa



Pilgrimage Site - Sanctuary of Fourviere &  
Shrine of Mary, Mother of Light, Leithfield





year's themes of mercy, healing, and renewal. Pilgrimage symbolises the journey of conversion and commitment to following Christ. Prayer draws us closer to God, opening hearts to His mercy and guidance. The sacrament of Reconciliation is an essential part of the Jubilee, inviting us to re-discover the value of confession, and experience God's forgiveness in a personal, profound way. Works of mercy, both corporal and spiritual, play a central role, as we are encouraged to perform charitable acts that support those in need, bringing Christ's compassion and justice to life. Together, these practices make the Jubilee a deeply transformative period, inviting all to renew their commitment to faith, love, and service.

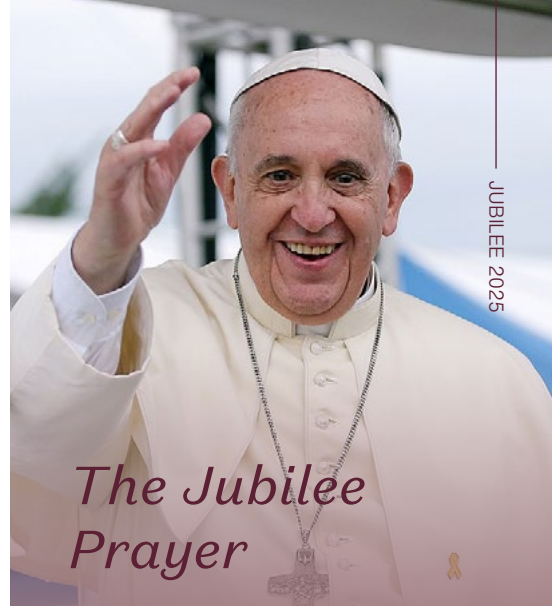
In his letter proclaiming the Jubilee, Pope Francis concludes by encouraging us to hold fast to the hope that never fades, and to find in God our refuge and our strength. He says, "Let us even now be drawn to this hope! Through our witness, may hope spread to all those who anxiously seek it. May the way we live our lives say to them in so many words: "Hope in the Lord! Hold firm, take heart and hope in the Lord!" (Ps 27:14). May the power of hope fill our days, as we await with confidence the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and glory, now and forever."



*Pilgrimage Site -  
St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Christchurch*



*Pilgrimage Site -  
The St Mary MacKillop Chapel  
Catholic Parish of Opihi, Temuka*



JUBILEE 2025

## *The Jubilee Prayer*

Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.

May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

## Further Information and Resources

There are a number of resources developed for the Jubilee Year. These can be found on the diocesan website <https://cdoc.nz/jubilee>, where you can find the Jubilee Hymn, the Jubilee prayer in other languages, and links to other resources.

For more information, please contact Mike Stopforth  
Bishop's Pastoral Office  
[mstopforth@cdoc.nz](mailto:mstopforth@cdoc.nz), 027 539 8542

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# How to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence



Firstly, meet the following conditions:

1.



Detachment from all sin, even venial

2.



Sacramental confession



Holy Communion



One Our Father for the intentions of the pope

The conditions in number 2 can be fulfilled a few days before or after performing the works below to gain the indulgence, but it is appropriate that Communion and the prayer take place on the same day that the work is completed.

Complete one of the following six works:



**Undertake a pious pilgrimage to one of the Diocesan Sacred Sites and completing one of the following:**

- devoutly participating in Holy Mass or the Anointing of the Sick
- a celebration of the Word of God;
- the Liturgy of the Hours
- the Way of the Cross;
- the Marian Rosary;
- a penitential celebration, which ends with the individual confessions of the penitents.



**Carry out a corporal or spiritual work of mercy**



**Carry out a work of Penance**

Such as abstaining, fasting, donating money to the poor, by supporting works of a religious or social nature, especially in support of the defence, protection and quality of life in all its phases, or by volunteering free time to activities that are of service to the community.



**By devoutly visiting one of the Diocesan Sacred Sites**

For a suitable period of time, engage in Eucharistic adoration and meditation, concluding with the Our Father, the Apostles Creed, and the Hail Mary.



**Participate in Missions, Spiritual Exercises or formation activities,**

with a devout spirit, on the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, held in a church or other suitable place.



**Those who are sick or cannot participate for serious reasons, can obtain the Jubilee Indulgence**

If, united in spirit with the faithful taking part in person, they recite the Our Father, the Apostles Creed and the Jubilee Prayer, offering up their sufferings or the hardships of their lives.

## Sacred Sites in the Diocese of Christchurch

- 1 St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Christchurch
- 2 St Patrick's Church, Akaroa
- 3 The St Mary MacKillop Chapel, Catholic Parish of Opihi, Temuka
- 4 Sanctuary of Fourviere & Shrine of Mary, Mother of Light, Leithfield



# "But who do You Say I Am?"

## Antioch 2024

For the second time in 2024 the sellout signs were up as, in September, another chapter was added to the legendary Antioch Camp at Woodend Christian Camp.

Following on from Revolution Camp in July, the theme of "But who do you say I am?" was opened up by our keynote speaker, Christyna Malietoa-Brown from Auckland. A lively young wahine, her series of talks began by touching on who other people say Jesus is, before drawing the campers into answering the question for themselves.

A social highlight was the return to Antioch of the iconic Messy Games small group tournament. All participants were grateful for the early spring weather as they took each other on in games such as "Foam Heads," "Hungry Hippos," and "Human Battleships."

In the ever-iconic Saturday night session, local youth ministers Mark Currie and Ivory Wallace challenged the campers to open up to what the Holy Spirit might do, and asked them to truly answer the theme question, by drawing upon the metaphor of Christ knocking at their door (Rev 3:20). Supported by a testimony from local legend Ella Malone, this set the scene for a time of Adoration and Reconciliation. The queues for both that sacrament and prayer ministry were continuous, with one priest later remarking

how impressed he was with the depth and humility of confessions.

The global Church's Year of Prayer provided the inspiration for Sunday morning, with campers having the opportunity to try a variety of prayer methods, including the Rosary, journaling, lectio divina, and the Divine Office. One camper remarked on how they've incorporated two of these methods into their personal prayer life in the weeks after camp; a joy for the leadership team to hear.

Camp of course finished with a stirring final Mass on Sunday. Two weeks later, many participants and their leaders regathered for 2024's final Diocesan Youth Mass in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral.

But it wasn't the programme or the activities that impressed Mark Currie, Camp Director, the most. Rather, the serving hearts of a 34-strong camp leadership team, who helped deliver Antioch for the 98 participants. "I always worry that I'm asking too much of our volunteer leadership team, but they went above and beyond in so many different ways and I couldn't be more proud of them."

Planning has already begun for the 2025 camps and Diocesan Youth Masses, with a special youth event being planned to celebrate the Jubilee Year.





# Parish Youth Round-Up 2024

## Parish-Based Youth Ministry in the Christchurch Diocese

by Mark Currie - Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator

**Editor's note:** Our Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator, Mark Currie, is known to be a sports fanatic. His latest written contribution shows he may have a second calling as a sports commentator.

It's been a terrific year for parish-based youth ministry in the Diocese of Christchurch, with 2025 set to be even better! The staple ingredients of parish-based youth ministry featured across the board in 2024, as each parish sought to journey alongside each young person.



Waimakariri Youth Group Sausage Sizzle Fundraiser after Mass in Rangiora



Christchurch North

### Waimakariri

At the heart of that journey has been St Peter Chanel Parish in Waimakariri, led by their Youth coordinator, Sarah Blair. This year, they subscribed to the LifeTeen International Parish resources, which Sarah described as "a total game changer." She added, "The content is so well thought out and really meets our teens where they're at, giving us a solid foundation for each term."

In Term One, they dived into the theme of connection, so their teens could see how important it is to have a community around them as they walk with Christ. The sessions were packed with community-building games and chances to support each other, making faith real and relatable. The goal was to get them fired up to grow in faith, serve and love like Christ, and appreciate the power of the Church as one big family.

Guest speakers were at the heart of Term Two, which hit on some thought-provoking topics such as entitlement, chasing after things that don't satisfy,

letting go of control, and trusting in God's will. They wrapped up the term with their annual tramp to Lake Daniell in Lewis Pass, always a favourite and a chance for everyone to connect and reflect in God's beautiful creation.

Against the backdrop of the Paris Olympics, Term Three saw the series "Anthem" on offer. This series speaks of running the "race of faith" with intention and focus. Each session was based on the four pillars of the Catechism: bringing in the Creed, Sacraments, Life in Christ, and Prayer.

The youth group also engaged with the consultation on the new parish church build, the All Saints Party, and the celebration of the Sunday Mass, including the monthly youth Mass. There's plenty on the move as they look ahead to next year, including sending a big group to LifeTeen Summer Camp, alongside our Cathedral Parish.

### Christchurch North

It was a time of transition at Christ the Redeemer Parish in Christchurch North, as they farewelled their Youth Coordinator Hannah Morton-Jones and welcomed Francis Mones-Cazon. They also welcomed a brand new team of exciting youth leaders, including Eunseong Kim and Madalyn Papesch.

Alongside the 5:00pm Sunday Mass at St Bede's College, their regular programme covered a wide variety of topics, including a visit from David Jackman who talked about the Pro-life movement. They've also continued their male and female breakout groups, to grow the relationship between leaders and young people and build a great sense of brotherhood and sisterhood.

There were two camps held as well, with a youth group camp in March, followed by a Confirmation camp in May.

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ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS



Most exciting has been the start of two new initiatives in the parish. The first of these was their Youth Adoration Night. Happening every Wednesday night and open to anyone in the diocese, Adoration is allowing young people to gather, pray, and then enjoy each other's company afterwards. They also formed a youth group band, which played at one of their Wednesday Adoration Nights and at a parish First Holy Communion Mass, a highlight for many.

### Greymouth

As one of our smallest parishes, St Patrick's Parish more than punches above its weight, with a thriving parish youth ministry. It comprises three youth groups, covering all ages from Year 4 to Year 13.

Parish Youth Worker Ivory Wallace works closely with John Paul II High School to ensure the parish meets the needs of the young people of the West Coast. The visit of English priest Fr Frankie Mulgrew was a particular highlight.

### Christchurch West

Under the careful guidance of Fr Philip Suelzer CSJ, they continued their youth ministry each Sunday, with around 25 members gathering at Our Lady of Victories.

Especially pleasing for Fr Philip was seeing countless benefits for their youth ministry after the core team attended a Lower Hutt youth convention. They had a strong group attend their parish camp at Living Springs earlier in the year, with the usual mix of activities – both spiritual and recreational.

### Christchurch East

As one of our longest continually running youth ministries, Stella Maris Parish goes from strength to strength. A real focus for them is the strong connection between family, school, parish, and young person, reflected in their three youth groups. Each group places emphasis on the scriptures and how God's Word applies to the lives of each young person. As with the other groups, they began the year with their 'Proclaim' camp at Woodend.



This is just a taste of what is happening in local communities in every corner of the Diocese. As Diocesan Youth coordinator, I could not be more thrilled. Every day, I am inspired by seeing and hearing of the ministry with young people happening in the diocese. Young people are encountering Christ! Thanks be to God!

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[www.svdp.org.nz](http://www.svdp.org.nz)

 Society of St Vincent de Paul New Zealand



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



# The Challenge of the Advent Liturgy

**Editor's note:** this article was originally published in Inform Issue 43, December 2000. Dame Betty O'Dowd wrote a number of articles for Inform in its earlier days. She did much to form the lay faithful of the Christchurch Diocese and beyond. She died on 11 June 2011. This beautifully written Advent article is as pertinent to our spiritual lives now as it was then.

During Advent, the Church invites, and the Sunday Mass readings urgently cry out to us, to stop and look afresh at Christian reality — at who we are, where we have come from, where we are going, and how we get there.

The readings range from the hope-filled longings of the prophets and the glorious promises made through them, through Christ's warnings about the end of the world, to the call to repentance of St John the Baptist, key Advent figure and the patron of our Diocese. Central to the Advent message is St Paul's prayer (second Sunday of Advent, Year C) that we go on growing in love for each other so that we can better discern what is right to do.

These Advent readings are a truly arresting, beautiful, and moving collection. They offer us consolation and encouragement; they are full of the hope and expectancy that belongs to this time. They also challenge us to repentance and conversion, to make a new effort to open ourselves to the searching light and fire of Christ's love in our hearts' depths.

The call couldn't come at a worse time. In our society and culture, the weeks of Advent could scarcely be less conducive to this sort of activity, filled as they are with end-of-year stress and holiday preparation, and so often increased money worries. But if we can manage to take our Sunday missals and go through these readings, we can certainly expect that the Spirit, whose words they are to each one of us, will lighten our minds and warm our hearts with them.



The liturgy of Advent recalls the long preparation for the pivotal event of human history, the moment when the Creator of all that is, became one of us as a helpless and vulnerable infant. But it also keeps before us the end of the journey that began in Bethlehem, the time when Christ will come again in glory to restore all things to his Father and ours. The time between these two points is the time of the Church, our time, when we are called on to work for the coming of his kingdom.

What the Advent readings are telling us is that to do this we all, always, need conversion, to be open to being changed. It is what John the Baptist is on about when he talks about smoothing out the rough roads. It means letting our concern for ourselves grow less and for others grow more. It is usually painful, but it invariably will bring greater freedom and peace. Surely this is what most of us want from the Child born in the stillness of that holy night?

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# God walks with Me

by Sr Clare of Assisi, Beatitudes Community

On behalf of Whakakōingo o te Ngākau: The Yearning Heart, the Diocesan Spiritual Directors' Group

So often we live as if we were alone. We pray as if God wasn't there. Do we actually believe that God loves us and wants us to share in his own life? Perhaps our image of God is the problem. Is the "god" of my faith a distant figure, totally detached from the insignificant creature that I am, but ready to punish if I put a foot wrong? Or am I afraid that if I surrender to God's will, he might ask me to give up the things and people I love most?

This image of God doesn't seem to gel with the mystery we are invited to contemplate in this holy season. Kneeling before the crib at Christmas, I will look down at the baby Jesus, so small, so helpless. I am invited to come closer, to look beyond the plaster figure to the God who became so small just for me. The Word of God became flesh in Jesus Christ and dwelt among us, not to provide an escape from reality, but to be God with us in the concrete reality of our existence.



The liturgical season of Advent, the beginning of the Church's year, is an opportunity for us to receive new graces, especially that of a new beginning. So why not begin again today? Why not go to him just as I am and let him be born again in the messiness of my life? Why not let him come to me as he wants to, humble, little, vulnerable, to meet me in my hardness of heart, my self-sufficiency, my unwillingness to be seen as I truly am, and also in my deepest desire to be loved and wanted and valued?

Where does my heart need to be healed in order to "see God" in the face of Jesus and to believe in his love and goodness for me? Try placing yourself in the nativity scene — which figure do you feel most drawn to? Remain there and simply gaze at the infant in the manger, who is born for you this Christmas.



## Fifth Gospel Living



This year, a collation of ninety personal experiences of God has been shared in a book by people from our own Christchurch Diocese and further afield. While on his sabbatical this year, Fr John O'Connor of our diocese spent some months collating these writings into 'Fifth Gospel Living'. Fr O'Connor is an experienced spiritual director and continues to walk with many people as they discern the presence of God in their lives, both here and internationally.

In the blurb of his book, Fr O'Connor observes that "Jesus Christ IS speaking and IS teaching, IS preaching and IS healing in our own time and in our own neighbourhoods."

He goes on to say: "God has come down to earth to be encountered in the nitty-gritty demands, duties, and distractions of daily twenty-first century living, and is in every place accessible to every person in every moment. I never imagined" he says "that my Easter request inviting people to tell of one personal experience of God would bring such an enthusiastic response with ninety carefully considered and crafted reflections arriving in my inbox over the six Easter weeks." He concludes that "In these pages, you will read of the divine presence and activity in every human joy, hope, grief, and anxiety."

*Copies are available from The Copy Press (Nelson), wherever good books are sold, or directly from Fr John at [john@fff.org.nz](mailto:john@fff.org.nz).*



# Formal Closure of the Waiau Church

## *the end of an era*

by Steve Joyce - Waiau parishioner

On 6 October, the eve of Our Lady of the Rosary, Bishop Michael Gielen celebrated a Mass for the closure of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary church, Waiau. Bishop Gielen was joined at the altar by current Hurunui Parish Administrator, Fr Rex Ramos, and former parish priest, Fr Dan Doyle (1985-1986). Our church was blessed and opened by Fr Thomas Price in 1900. He did so as Bishop Grimes, our first bishop, was unable to attend.

### From the centennial booklet, edited by Josie Brady (nee O'Malley)

On 14 October 1900, Waiau church of the Most Holy Rosary was opened. "A simple gothic style intended to seat 100 people" and costing 350 pounds.

1902 on June 7th visit by Bishop Grimes who said "Waiau church, very nice, excellently built". On the following day he administered confirmation at Waiau, and preached to solicit funds for the proposed new cathedral and raised 150 pounds from one of the smallest parishes in the Diocese.

Back to 2024: the church was overflowing with people from Waiau, the Hurunui parish, visitors from other parts of Canterbury, New Zealand, and overseas. The Lord blessed us with a beautiful sunny day for the 10.30am Mass, followed by a shared meal and stories from the past.

Our Bishop spoke of his sadness for having to close the Waiau church, but gave a beautiful message of hope in what the Lord was doing. He called to mind all those who had received Baptism, been married, been buried from here, or received sacraments of Confession, Confirmation, or Holy Communion in this church.

The closing ceremony was a simple but dignified time, to remove the religious objects from the church, including the beautiful statue of Our Lady and the Lectionary, and the offering of prayers of thanksgiving for the baptismal font, the confessional, and the altar.

The people stood to sing the final hymn, Immaculate Mary, for the last time, as they processed from the church to a shared lunch outside.

Sr Rosalie O'Malley was born and raised in Waiau. Her grandparents ran the Waiau pub in the 1880s and her parents, Campbell and Alice, lived with their six children next to the church. They were the backbone of the parish for many years. Their son Pat (who also spoke), followed in their stead, serving for many years on the parish council, while daughter, Sr Rosalie, no doubt inspired by the sisters and priests that used to stay with their parents, left for the convent in Australia in 1956. Some pertinent comments from her speech are printed here:

"At one stage, my father accompanied one of the new priests up to see a parishioner at the back of Waiau, where the roads were not the best. When Dad came home, he was looking a bit pale. When Mum asked if he was okay, he said "Oh yes, but the trip was a bit scary, I have never prayed so hard before! I won't be doing that again. The priest didn't have the best sight and the road wasn't the easiest."

My mother, on the other hand, while caring for her six children, cleaned the church each Saturday night, if there was Mass in the morning. We all had to help. My least preferred job was to clean the long drop, situated amid the line of pine trees. It was always dark by the time we got there and even with a torch, it was scary. If we were very good, we were allowed to have a little play on the old harmonium when we were finished. Mum washed and ironed the linen and in those days, they all had to be starched and ironed, not like today's lovely materials.



Father Darr Doye, Father Rex Ramos and Bishop Gielen with altar servers



Waiau Choir



Waiau Group gathered for a talk and shared meal after Mass



# A Joyful Gathering of Faith and Community

## Stella Maris Parish Day

Woe be tide us if we put our dirty hands on them when playing hide and seek in the dark. She arranged the flowers. Mind you, she first had to find some, as there were no florist shops in Waiau.

After Mass, Mum always had a cup of tea and hot scones with jam and cream on for all who called in, made in the old coal range, and there was often a kitchen full of people."

Fr Rex Ramos and Fr Dan Doyle spoke on behalf of the Bishop and clergy, while Emmett Daly spoke on behalf of the Parish Council. People who had travelled a long way to be there reconnected after many years, and it was a simple, relaxed, and fitting way to celebrate together at Waiau one last time.

We give thanks to the pioneers and patrons of Waiau, who founded and built the church, and to the families and priests who lived and worked in the Waiau parish and tended the faith over the years. For all those who have been blessed by graces received at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary church Waiau in the past and extending into the future, we give thanks. Our Lady of the Rosary, Pray for Us.

On Sunday 22 September, Stella Maris Parish gathered at the Haeata Community Campus, Aranui, for a vibrant and heartwarming celebration. We began with a solemn and uplifting Mass, celebrated by Fr Tang and concelebrated by Parish Priest, Fr Job, Fr Paulo and Fr Dan Doyle. It was a beautiful moment of spiritual unity.

The Mass was enriched by the incredible voices of our Samoan, Filipino, Our Lady Star of the Sea and Tongan choirs, creating an atmosphere of reverence and joy and setting a beautiful tone for the day ahead.

Following the Mass, our four parish schools, Our Lady Star of the Sea, St Anne's Woolston, New Brighton Catholic and St James Aranui, show-cased the creativity and spirit of our young people.

A shared meal followed, with contributions from all corners of our parish community. Our parish youth ministry organised a free sausage sizzle for the children, along with games, face painting, and a bouncy castle. These activities filled the day with laughter and excitement for the young ones, while the adults enjoyed each other's company and the joyful atmosphere.

The event saw an incredible turnout, with over 800 people attending from across our four parish Mass centres and schools. Others were unable to join due to lack of space. Stella Maris Parish day was a beautiful testament to the strength and unity of our parish community.



## South Canterbury

(clockwise from far left) Confirmation candidates with Bishop Michael; Bishop Michael blessed Rosemary and Leon O'Sullivan on their 60th anniversary of marriage recently; Memorial Mass held in the Sacred Heart Basilica in the first week of November; Sacred Heart Basilica with its newly restored domes, completed in August.







## Some October News from Greymouth

by Fr Mathew Siji - Parish Priest, St Patrick's, Greymouth

Jubilate West Coast was celebrated in Greymouth on 17 October, and encompassed the beautiful singing of our students from John Paul II High School, St Patrick's, and St Mary's Hokitika. Their melodious singing made the evening a special one. I congratulate all who organised, supported, and participated in it.

The Marist Rugby League Club celebrated its 100th anniversary on 27 October. The members, who came from far and wide, were welcomed and assisted in a number of ministries within the Mass

on that Sunday's Mass. On behalf of the parish, I congratulate them on this great anniversary.

As we know, October is the Month of the Holy Rosary. St Patrick's parishioners made a pilgrimage to Charleston and joined with other parishioners from Reefton and Westport to gather before the grotto of Mother Mary in Charleston. This pilgrimage takes place around this time every year.

## From the Parish of St Augustine, Mid Canterbury

by Anna Aguila - Parish Secretary

On 8 September, 37 young people in our parish received the Sacrament of Confirmation in Holy Name Church, Ashburton. Bishop Michael Gielen was joined at the altar by Parish Priest Fr Lito Quinones and Priest in Residence, Fr Peter Costello.

A youth Mass was held on 20 October in the same church, celebrated by Fr Peter Costello. Monica and Niko Taumaoe organised this wonderful occasion to bring together our youth groups to participate more fully in the Mass. They did everything from altar servers to lectors, bringing forward the gifts and the collection, to the newly formed youth choir, who sang absolutely beautifully!



Young people from Mid Canterbury Parish on their Confirmation Day



# Celebrating our faith on Roncalli Day

by Rachael Burrowes - Director of Ministry, Roncalli College

Roncalli College in Timaru is named after Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, whom Pope Francis canonised as Pope St John XXIII in 2014. His Feast day is 11 October. This year, we celebrated our patronal day



on 17 October, once our students had returned to begin Term Four.

The College is proud of our patron saint. Pope St John XXIII is patron of Papal delegates, was born in 1881, and died in 1963 during the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council, which he called together at the beginning of his pontificate.

We welcomed Bishop Michael Gielen, who celebrated Mass in our beautiful Sacred Heart Basilica. It was a wonderful celebration of the Eucharist, with the Bishop delivering a thoughtful homily on the life and legacy of Pope St John XXIII — Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli. A number of students were received into full communion in the Church, through the sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Assistant Parish Priest Fr Vincent Barboza prepared our students to receive the sacraments of initiation. It is wonderful for our students to have the

support of our priests and the Holy Family Parish on their spiritual journey.

Following Mass, students gathered for the inter-house Tug-of-War. This is a tightly contested competition between the four school houses. After a barbecue lunch for all, the school gathered on the top field for the colour run. Roncalli Feast Day proved yet again to be a day of faith, fun, and friendship for students, staff, and the wider community.



## “Forgiveness Opens the Door to Peace”

by the Christchurch Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

The Christchurch Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) recently held its annual competition on the theme, “Forgiveness Opens the Door to Peace.” Students were invited to create a poster (Years 7-10) or submit an essay or multimedia project (Years 11-13) on this theme.

The winners of this year's competition are:

**Years 7-10:** Cassie Reyes, St Mary's Primary School (her hand-painted artwork, addressing current issues of peace and war, gently yet powerfully touches on the theme of forgiveness.)



**Years 11-13:** Seraya de Silva (she was awarded the Justice and Peace Cup for her exceptional essay. Her message resonated strongly, bringing the topic to life in a compelling way.)

She writes: *“For most of us, we do not experience life-threatening harm. Our challenge to forgive comes in the form of day-to-day annoyances. It's the smallest things we hold grudges about—whether forgiving our siblings for eating the last piece of cake, forgiving friends for an annoying comment, or forgiving classmates for being loud. In these situations, we can always create inner peace, peace between siblings, friends, and classmates, and ultimately, world peace. Forgiveness opens the door to peace, as demonstrated through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching. In a world filled with war, it is our duty to foster peace within our small communities. Together, we must unite in forgiveness for a more peaceful world.”*

We thank all students for their participation and teachers for their support.

(left) Winning artwork of Cassie Reyes





## Sr Colette Forde: A truly remarkable woman

### *Small in stature but great in presence*

Sr Colette Forde sadly died in October. On hearing this news, an outpouring of love and memories came from the MacKillop College and Marian College communities, as they reflected on the everlasting impact this incredible force of nature had on their lives.

Born in County Mayo, Ireland, on 22 August 1940, Sr Colette was one of nine children, with four sisters and four brothers. She left home at the age of 14 to join the Sisters of Charity, but was unable to get a visa to the USA because of her eyesight, and was sent home. Undeterred, she decided to go to the juniorate in Newmarket, in the hope of joining the Sisters of St Joseph in Australia. After two years there, she left for Australia in December 1956 to join the congregation.

In the 1960s, Sr Colette moved to New Zealand, where she began her teaching career as a primary teacher, and then settling in Christchurch, spending 28 years as a teacher at MacKillop and Marian Colleges.

During her time at MacKillop and Marian Colleges, her roles included Senior Mistress of the boarding hostel, Maths teacher, and Deputy Principal.

Marian College principal, Mary-Lou Davidson, said Sr Colette was a humble role-model, with a deep faith. "She epitomised servant leadership in action. It was a joy and a blessing for the Marian

community that she was able to see the opening of our new school."

Past students and colleagues shared their memories of Sr Colette via an online condolence book, with many reflecting on her sense of humour and her ability to teach maths to anyone.

Rest in Peace, Sr Colette.

*(Sr Colette Forde's Requiem Mass was offered in Auckland. A memorial service will be held at Marian College on Sunday, 23 February 2025. More details will follow.)*



(L to R) Sr Eleanor Capper,  
Bishop Michael, Sr Colette Ford



Sr Colette happy to be back in the classroom

## A Panel Treat at Villa Maria

by Conor Entwistle, Teacher of Religious Education, Villa Maria College

In September, three of our Year 11 Religious Education classes were treated to a panel discussion and Q&A session with Sr Lauren of the Cross from the Carmelite monastery in Addington, Br Barnabas from the Brothers of St John, and local Cathedral parish Assistant Priest, Fr Monty Bamford.

During the discussion, the panelists shared something of their lives and their vocations. They also offered some wisdom on the necessity of prayer and simply cherishing the present and daily interactions we have with one another. The students thoroughly enjoyed their time and we are so thankful for such a great opportunity to hear from them.





# Unveiling the Restored Villa Maria College Grotto

On 18 November 1947, one of Christchurch's major tragedies occurred with the Ballantynes Department Store fire. 41 people sadly lost their lives in the blaze, and the building was destroyed. One of those who died was Mary McLean, the mother of Marie-Rita McLean, then a student at Villa Maria College.

After finishing school, Marie-Rita joined the Sisters of Mercy. Sr Marie-Rita and her brother Keith decided to create something at the College to commemorate their mother's life, along with that of their father, Finlay, who had died before her. They also wanted to create a sacred place of prayer and peace for the Villa Maria community. In the following decades, the grotto was often referenced as a quiet and calming spot for the students, where they could pray and appreciate the surrounding beauty of the statues and flora.



By 2023, there was significant deterioration visible on both the statues of Our Lady of Lourdes (The Virgin Mary) and St Bernadette. In November last year, these statues were sent for restoration to Damien Walker of the Studio of Saint Philomena. During the restoration, significant work had to be completed. The most substantial task was a full replacement of the face and an arm of St Bernadette. Mr Walker found the original Italian moulds for both statues, allowing for an exact restoration.

This amazing restoration was celebrated at the grotto's unveiling on 25 September. These statues now have a worthy appearance for their 75th anniversary in 2025.



## Fashion Show a Resounding Success

by Cyrene Tionko  
- Young Vinnies Coordinator

The Villa Maria Young Vinnies Fashion Show Fundraiser, held in late October at Villa Maria's school auditorium, was a resounding success; seamlessly blending style, heart, and community spirit. The models showcased a stunning array of clothing, each one exuding confidence and grace, as they strutted down the runway. The fashion was diverse, with everything from chic casual wear to elegant evening attire, complemented by a variety of accessories that captivated the audience.

The programme itself flowed effortlessly, keeping everyone engaged and entertained from start to finish. The St Vincent de Paul videos added a touching and informative element, highlighting the cause and the profound impact the funds will have on families in need this Christmas.

A live band provided a vibrant soundtrack, setting the perfect mood and adding a lively energy throughout the event. The wide selection of clothing and accessories available for purchase catered to different tastes and budgets, making it easy for attendees to support the cause, while adding something special to their wardrobes.

Thanks to the generous support of all involved, the event raised over \$5,000, a remarkable achievement that will go a long way in providing Christmas cheer and much-needed assistance to families. It was an evening of fun, fashion, and philanthropy that truly made a difference.



# Golden Catholics: A Celebration of Faith, Community, and Inspiration

by Liza Sparrow, CDF Marketing & Business Development Manager

The October Golden Catholics gathering, co-hosted by Holy Family Parish in Timaru and the Catholic Development Fund (CDF), drew parishioners from South Canterbury and beyond. With its blend of heartfelt liturgy, Bishop Gielen's inspiring testimony, "Journey to Priesthood", and warm fellowship, the event highlighted the essence of the Catholic community.

Mass was celebrated in the Sacred Heart Basilica, before Bishop Gielen shared an intimate presentation on his faith journey. His personal reflections captivated guests.

Born in Cambridge and raised in Tokoroa, the Bishop described how his family's faith, struggles and love profoundly

shaped his vocation. As the eldest of Henk and Maureen Gielen's six children, he grew up in a home where Christian values were central, eventually leading him to Holy Cross College in Mosgiel, and ordination in 1997.

Bishop Gielen's ministry has taken him throughout New Zealand and the world, with notable roles in Gisborne, Hamilton, and Mount Maunganui. He has also studied in Steubenville, USA, and in Rome. His passion for fostering vocations was brought to life through stories of a 33-day cycling pilgrimage in 2015 with eight seminarians, aimed at promoting priesthood throughout New Zealand.

His presentation also touched on extraordinary milestones, including an encounter with Pope Francis during the Seminar for New Bishops in 2022, and the incredible experience of celebrating Mass alongside nearly 700 bishops and 400,000 pilgrims at World Youth Day in Portugal in 2023.

For the 100 guests, the Bishop's reflections were a reminder of the power of faith to guide and sustain us. His stories underscored themes of service, dedication, and the enduring support of family and community. He acknowledged the years of service given to the Church by those present.

The Holy Family Parish Centre was packed; guests shared lunch, provided by Maree Lowen and Mary Brosnahan and their parish team, including willing students from Roncalli College, and music provided by Parish Priest, Fr Chris Friel. As a few boasted, "nothing beats South Canterbury hospitality!" As Bishop Gielen emphasised, "It's events like Golden Catholics that reaffirm the strength of our Catholic community."

## Golden CATHOLICS

Golden Catholic events celebrate faith, food, and fellowship. Parishes interested in hosting an event can contact the Catholic Development Fund at [cdf@cdoc.nz](mailto:cdf@cdoc.nz) or 0800 403 863.



(From top) Catering Team: Mary Brosnahan and Maree Lowry;  
Bishop Gielen sharing lunch with parishioners from St Patrick's, Fairlie;  
Lunchtime entertainment by Holy Family Parish Priest, Fr Chris Friel



# Catholic Development Fund Sponsors St Bede's Old Boys' Golf Tournament

by Liza Sparrow, CDF Marketing & Business Development Manager

On November 8, the Catholic Development Fund (CDF) proudly sponsored the annual St Bede's Old Boys' Association Golf Tournament at the picturesque, tree-lined Waitikiri Golf Course. The event welcomed 140 old boys, clergy, and friends of the college for a day filled with connection, friendly competition, and a celebration of Beadean tradition.

Fr Monty, a regular competitor, summed up the day's atmosphere: "It is always an honour to play in the St Bede's Old Boys

Golf Tournament, despite not being an Old Boy! I was disappointed to relinquish the Basil Blake Cup (for the lowest clergy score) to Bishop Michael because he scored more Stableford points than me. However, I really enjoyed the spirit of camaraderie evident throughout the day."

This year, Bishop Gielen claimed the Basil Blake Cup, a trophy rich in history. First awarded in 1961 to Fr Leo Patrick Spring SM, it honours the legacy of Fr Basil Blake FMS, a former rector of the College.



CDF Trustee Terry Foote, who participated alongside his son Kieran—a St Bede's College old boy—shared his experience: "Playing alongside my son made the round even more special. It's a great opportunity for the CDF to support the school and our wider Catholic community."

The CDF extends its gratitude to the event organisers and the Waitikiri Golf Club for delivering a memorable tournament. As a dedicated supporter of Catholic education, the CDF looks forward to continuing its support of school initiatives across the diocese in 2025.

(Left) Team CDF: Gavin Abraham, Kieran Foote, Fr Monty Bamford, Terry Foote

(Above) Basil Blake (Clergy) Cup won by Bishop Gielen



## CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

Our offices and CDF Online will close during the festive period.

**CLOSE 3.00PM MONDAY 23 DECEMBER**  
**RE-OPEN MONDAY 6 JANUARY 2025**

May we take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support of the Fund and wish you and your family a very happy Christmas and New Year.

**Call Us:** 03 366 9869 / 0800 403 863 **Email us:** [cdf@cdoc.nz](mailto:cdf@cdoc.nz)  
**Visit Us:** 391 Moorhouse Avenue, Christchurch 8011



[cdf.org.nz](http://cdf.org.nz)





# BISHOP'S APPEAL 2024

## PRIESTS RETIREMENT VILLAS

## Bishop's Appeal for our Priests Retirement Villas

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, I invite you to reflect on the gift of service our priests have given to the Church. This Christmas season, we are reminded of the many ways we are called to give back, and one way is by supporting those who have dedicated their lives to guiding and nurturing our faith communities.

Last year's appeal focused on support for the formation of our seminarians. I am deeply grateful for your generosity. Today, I am reaching out to ask for your help in addressing another important need—providing for our retired priests.

We currently have 13 retired priests, with six more nearing retirement. Sadly, there is no dedicated housing for them once they step down from active ministry. These men have served our parishes, often with great sacrifice, and it is only fitting that we ensure they have a place to call home in their retirement.

After consulting with our senior clergy, we've made plans to build seven modest, two-bedroom units on the site of the former Bishop's residence in Sydenham.

This project will cost \$3.5 million, and I am pleased to share that we have already secured 30% of the funds thanks to the generosity of our clergy and benefactors.

Now, we need your help to raise the remaining funds. Your support, no matter the amount, is a powerful way to show your love and gratitude for our retired priests. Every donation is an act of kindness, ensuring these faithful men have a comfortable home in their later years.

As we approach Christmas, let us come together as a community in support of those who have given so much. I wish you and your loved ones a joyful and blessed Christmas.

With my heartfelt thanks,

+ Michael Gielen  
Catholic Bishop of Christchurch



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# Inform

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Contributions may be sent at any time to:

The Editor, PO Box 4544, Chch 8140

**E** [inform@cdoc.nz](mailto:inform@cdoc.nz) **P** 03 366 9869

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