



# Inform

A PUBLICATION OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOP OF CHRISTCHURCH

ISSUE 144 LENT 2025

Photo: Brendan Woodnut, Locorum Photography

*Cleo Fitzgerald, with godfather  
Gerry Irvine, writing her name  
in the Book of the Elect*

Temuka celebrates  
reopening of its  
historic Church

page 16

Winning the peace,  
80 years after  
end of WWII

page 20

Celebrating  
Lord Concrete

page 36



# From Our Bishop



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

## 2025 - Proclaiming the Year of Jubilee: A Year of Hope

2025 has been proclaimed as a Year of Jubilee - a year of hope for our Church and for the world. This is not just a tradition; it is a profound reminder of God's promise to renew and restore us. On Christmas Eve, Pope Francis opened the Holy Door, heralding a new Jubilee. His words resonate deeply: *"Tonight, the door of hope has opened wide to the world. Tonight, God speaks to each of us and says: there is hope also for you!"*

### The Roots of Jubilee: Renewal and Freedom

The concept of Jubilee originates in the Old Testament, where a special year was dedicated to forgiveness, renewal, and liberation. In ancient times, it was a period for releasing captives, freeing slaves, and restoring hope. It was a tangible reminder of God's unending mercy - a time to reset, to restore, and to rekindle faith. Today, as we look around, it is evident that we need this renewal more than ever. Hope is in short supply. We see it in the conflicts and wars that rage on, the growing economic disparity, divisions across cultures and politics, the erosion of trust in leaders and institutions, the fears spawned by technology and misinformation, and the breakdown of marriages and families. Most poignantly, we see it in the loss of faith in God.

### Jesus: The Embodiment of Hope

Jesus was no stranger to such hopelessness. He was a refugee, driven from his homeland. He lived under Roman oppression, in a time marked by economic hardship, heavy taxation, and deep societal divisions. Disease and fear of accusation loomed constantly over the lives of His people. His mission was clear: to bring hope.

The Jubilee opening Mass Gospel reading comes from the first sermon Jesus gave in his hometown of Nazareth, after his testing 40 days in the desert.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord."* (Lk 4:18-19)

This was - and remains - a call to hope. Jesus' life and ministry were a testimony to God's love and a promise that His hope is eternal, bringing glad tidings, liberty, and recovery.

### The Gift of Hope

The door of Jubilee Pope Francis has recently opened is normally sealed shut and bricked over for 25 years. The bricks are only removed in a year of a Jubilee year. This symbolises our own hearts at times. Through personal suffering, unforgiveness, and past sins we can allow our hearts to become hardened, impenetrable, and hopeless. The Holy Father removing the bricks symbolises a jubilee of hope for all. No sin, no suffering, no depth of unforgiveness is too much for God. Hope is not merely an optimistic feeling; it is much more profound. Our Catholic understanding reminds us it is a supernatural gift, a theological virtue, standing alongside faith and charity. It is given at baptism and rooted in our trust in Christ's promises. As the Catechism teaches, hope is the desire for the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal life, trusting not in our strength, but in the grace of the Holy Spirit. In basic terms, Hope reminds us, God is always faithful, even when all seems lost; He can bring beauty out of every difficulty, transforming our hopelessness through His ever present love.

For a complete list of

## *Holy Week Liturgies & Easter Mass Times*

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

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



CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF CHRISTCHURCH  
TE TAKIWA Ō TE PIHOPA



First Holy Communion, St Joseph's Temuka



First Holy Communion, St Mary's Church Pleasant Point

## A Story of Hope.

A friend of mine shared a story of hope with me over Christmas. She met a young person coming into Church to pray - they were from overseas on a working holiday. The person was noticeably upset. After a while my friend approached the person out of concern. They explained how the hostel they had booked into had been overrun by a gang whose associates were now intimidating them. They felt isolated and afraid not knowing where to go or who to turn to. In hope of God's support they went to Church. My friend felt a call in her heart to invite the young person to her place. She rang her husband, a non-Catholic man, and told him Jesus was asking for something. He hesitantly asked what Jesus was asking for this time. My friend said he was asking could they make room for the young woman. He agreed they could stay. They developed a warm friendship. Hope is trusting God will provide, as St. Paul reminds his listeners: *"Hope does not disappoint"* (Romans 5:5).

## Jesus proclaimed Two Key Themes of hope

1. **Hope is personal.** Jesus wants each of us to experience His personal offer of hope. He spent His life witnessing to God's promise to personally offer hope to all. Jesus did this by ministering to tax collectors, prostitutes, lepers, Pharisees, fishermen, and the chronically ill. His message of hope was open to anyone willing to receive His words of healing and forgiveness. No one was and is outside Jesus' hope. Hope is searching for a welcome in your heart this Easter.
2. **Hope is not a secret.** Jesus calls us not only to receive hope but to share it. As Pope Francis reminds us, we are to be "Pilgrims of Hope." Those who have experienced the freedom of hope in Jesus want to share it with those they meet. My friend and her husband were pilgrims of hope as they took that young person into their home. Hope is not a feeling, it is a decision, to trust God will respond to our halting and imperfect efforts to offer hope to others.

## Hope is Not Optional

Our Church is not merely an institution called to hope; rather, hope has a Church. Hope is not optional for us Catholics, it is at the heart of who we are. We have received the fullness of hope in Jesus, we are promised this gift, and in-turn we are called to witness to this, to be pilgrims of hope for others.

I ask you today, when was the last time you lived out the hope given to you at Baptism? Do you allow the doors of your heart to be open, allowing the supernatural virtue of hope to lead and guide you? This is a gift promised you at baptism. One of the best ways I know to keep hope alive is to pray every day the miraculous prayer titled the Surrender Prayer. It is my favourite prayer of hope. "Jesus, I surrender to you, I trust you to take care of everything." Every day I pray it, reminding myself, Jesus has control of my life. Over many years people have made this prayer an essential beginning and end to their day. I invite us all to pray this prayer every day during this year of Jubilee. "Jesus, I surrender to you, I trust you to take care of everything." Giving him the chaos in the world, my sin, my health, my studies, my marriage, my friendships, my family, our Church. Jesus, I surrender all of this to you, I trust you to take care of everything.

## Hope does not disappoint.

I pray, starting again today, you will allow the Lord to remove any wall, any build up of bricks in your heart, allowing hope to stream in anew. Jesus' hope is for everyone, the year of jubilee is for everyone. Pope Francis, when he opened the door of hope wide to the world, reminded us, there is hope for everyone, also for you!

Yours in Christ

+ *MA Gielen*

+ Michael Gielen  
Bishop of Christchurch

*"Jesus was no stranger to such hopelessness...  
His mission was clear: to bring hope."*





ISSUE 144 LENT 2025

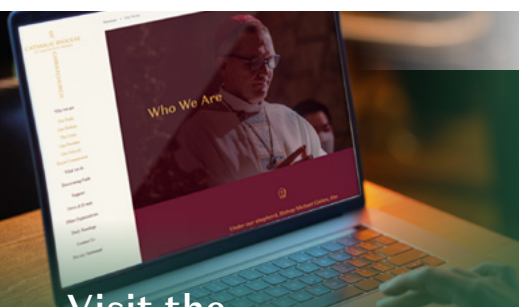
## *Nga mihi nui from the editorial desk*

These pages cover Catholic life in the Christchurch Diocese from November through to March. Among our stories, we feature the re-opening of Temuka's historic St Joseph's Church. Fr Brian Fennessy shows us the possibility of peace and the beauty of forgiveness, and Dominic Hassan shares something of the life of key Catholic architect, Francis Petre.

As you read Inform, please pray for God's blessing on all the people and stories within its covers.

In Christ

**Ken Joblin, Editor**



**Visit the  
diocesan website**

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



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

Parishes, schools and church groups are welcome to advertise events. Please email [mstopforth@cdcc.nz](mailto:mstopforth@cdcc.nz).

## Three Key Appointments to Our Diocesan Team



### Chief Operating Officer

In October, Bishop Michael appointed Alex Bailey as our new Chief Operating Officer (previously known as GM.) Alex took up his role with us in January, bringing a wealth of relevant experience, and is completing a master's degree in theology. For some years, he served as a manager in the Hamilton Diocese, and was chair of a national advisory body to the Bishops' Conference. In 2023, he led a large group of young New Zealanders to World Youth Day. "I'm already delighted to see the good work being undertaken by employees and volunteers, both at our Diocesan Office and in our parishes. My task is threefold: support the bishop, serve parishes, grow the Church. I look forward to faithfully serving Christ and His Church and meeting with you in the year ahead." Alex, Anita, and their three young children came from the Waikato last year, and are now parishioners of St Peter Chanel, Waimakariri.



### Diocesan Property Manager

In December, Bishop Michael appointed James Kearns as Diocesan Property Manager. James took up his role in January, and now leads the property function of the Diocese. He has responsibility for delivering the strategy and performance of our property portfolio, will oversee the construction of the priests retirement villas, and is the Project Director for the new Cathedral project. James brings a wealth of experience to his role. He has 25 years of experience in the construction industry, with the last 18 years at John Creighton Builders as General Manager. "I'm looking forward to assisting our parishes in their work, am excited by the challenge of leading the planning and construction of our Mother Church, and engaging with many of you to ensure we build a beautiful and timeless Cathedral, a building that honours God and reflects our Catholic faith tradition." James and his wife Monique have five children and are active members of the Parish of Christ the Redeemer, Christchurch North.



### Capital Campaign Director

In March, Bishop Gielen appointed Tony Brazier to our Diocesan team as the new Capital Campaign Director in our Fundraising Department. Born in Invercargill, he was schooled in Southland, gained qualifications in education, later becoming Deputy Principal at St Joseph's School, Timaru North, where he became the youngest Grade 1 Principal status in New Zealand. After a career change to Real Estate, he later established Brazier Property Investments, which specialised in and sold the majority of residential investments in Christchurch for 25 years. This business morphed into one of the largest Property Management companies in New Zealand and was sold in 2019. Tony's strengths and experience make him an ideal candidate to take on the significant fundraising task ahead of us. Tony will be well known to many of you as a parishioner of the Cathedral parish, and currently serves on the Cathedral Precinct Project Control Group. He and his wife, Shar, have four grown up children, and are excited to have their seventh grandchild on the way.

## the Catholic Shop

Your best range of instore and online religious gifts and church supplies

373 Manchester Street, Christchurch

Monday - Friday 9.30am - 4.30pm, Saturday 10.00am - 1.00pm

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

- 1 Corinthians 6:14 -

03 366 2853

[catholicshop@cdcc.nz](mailto:catholicshop@cdcc.nz)

[thecatholicshopchch](https://www.facebook.com/thecatholicshopchch)

[thecatholicshopchch](https://www.instagram.com/thecatholicshopchch)

[thecatholicshop.nz](https://www.thecatholicshop.nz)



The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference is excited to recently launch CathNews New Zealand, a ministry designed to share the news, life, and impact of the Catholic Church in this country.

In February, the Bishops Conference reached an agreement with the Society of Mary to take on the CathNews name. Church Resources, a subsidiary of the Society of Mary, had managed CathNews since 2011.

The new CathNews New Zealand retains many of the characteristics of the previous project. Its primary focus is sharing news about the Church, its people, and its ministries. It also explores issues of importance for New Zealand society and culture.

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

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

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

"We are pleased to welcome thousands of subscribers, including many who had previously received CathNews," Mr Abraham said.

"We are also encouraged to have hundreds of new people sign up for this ministry."

Newsletters featuring nine stories will be sent to subscribers each Tuesday and Friday morning, with some exceptions due to public holidays. The website, [cathnewsnz.com](http://cathnewsnz.com), will be updated to coincide with the newsletter schedule.

People wishing to share content for consideration can email [cathnews@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:cathnews@nzcbc.org.nz). Other enquiries can be sent to [communications@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:communications@nzcbc.org.nz).

If you're not already a subscriber, visit [cathnewsnz.com/sign-up](http://cathnewsnz.com/sign-up) to sign up to receive future newsletters.



## The Rite of Election 2025



Catechumen Jon Bernard Gurr, from the parish of St Mary Mackillop, Ophi, writing his name in the Book of the Elect

The Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion mark significant milestones for those preparing to be baptised and received into full communion in the Catholic Church. During the Rite of Election, those seeking Baptism write their names in the Book of the Elect, which lists those who have been chosen for the sacraments of initiation. Meanwhile, those already baptised who seek full communion in the Church, participate in the Rite of the Call to Continuing Conversion, renewing their baptismal commitment to Christ and His Church. On the first Sunday of Lent, Bishop Michael Gielen celebrated this sacred occasion with 67 catechumens and candidates at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. As they journey toward Easter, we rejoice with them and keep them in prayer, asking God to strengthen their faith and deepen their love for Christ and His Church.



# Lent 2025

## Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Services

On Ash Wednesday, many Catholics and Anglicans enter Lent together, sharing in a prayer service devised by our respective bishops' conferences, where we are encouraged to turn away from sin and lead a life with Christ. This year, our cathedral communities met in the Anglican Transitional Cathedral, with Bishop Peter Carrell presiding and Bishop Michael Gielen preaching.

In his homily, Bishop Gielen recalled celebrating his first Ash Wednesday service with Anglicans in the year 2000,

when he was a priest in Gisborne. He said that as we have experienced the joys and sorrows of recent years, we are called to be people of hope in this Year of Jubilee. Lent is the season of hope and a time to examine our hearts. This time of jubilee is one of forgiveness and renewal, where God remains faithful to us, especially in a world when hope is in short supply, but for Christians, hope is both a supernatural gift and theological virtue. Let's reclaim the hope that Jesus brings us.



Front: Bishop Michael Gielen, Rev'd Dr Peter Carrell,  
Bishop of Christchurch Anglican Diocese  
Back: Fr Simon Eccleton, Rev'd Ben Truman,  
Dean of Christ Church Transitional Cathedral



## Third Annual Men's Breakfast

The first weekend in March saw 150 men of all ages gather for the third annual men's breakfast with our Bishop. This time, we were hosted by Christ the Redeemer Parish, Christchurch North, at St Bede's College.

The morning began with gathering for 6.30am Eucharistic Adoration in the beautiful College Chapel. This was followed by a barbecue breakfast and a brief input on the men's Exodus Lenten programme. Bishop Michael passed the statue of St Joseph from the Christ the Redeemer Parish, to the St Peter Chanel Parish. The statue is now there for a few months, where it moves around the homes of men of that parish.



The Parish of Christ the Redeemer hosts  
Third Annual Men's Breakfast with our bishop.  
Photo taken by Peter Fleming.

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

Engineering | Survey & Spatial  
Planning | Environmental & Water  
Urban Design & Landscape

**Let's talk 03 379 4014**



**eliot  
sinclair**

# The Season of Lent -

## Fiat and Exodus Lenten Programmes for Women and Men Attract Strong Numbers

With the enthusiastic encouragement of Bishop Michael Gielen, groups of women and men throughout the diocese are engaging with two focused spiritual challenges, called Fiat and Exodus. Both programmes have three pillars: prayer, disciplines, and fraternity.

Fiat is a 40 day programme, written for women who want to experience an intentional and prayerful journey through Lent. A booklet guides participants through three core elements — daily prayer and other spiritual practices such as regular reconciliation; physical and lifestyle disciplines such as abstaining from sweet food, alcohol, and social media; and relationships with others, through a weekly meeting with other women and daily contact with a Fiat partner.

Jacinta Nicholls, who has coordinated the programme for the diocese, said, "It has been a beautiful opportunity to step back from worldly distractions and intentionally make room for God. It is through these small sacrifices that we have more time for prayer, for meditation on the Scriptures, and for the grace to grow in the virtues of Christ and His Blessed Mother."

Throughout the diocese, there are over 100 women participating in this Lenten journey. Some women have chosen to complete Fiat40 as an individual journey, as they fit in family and work commitments. Mrs Nicholls commented that "Most of our Christchurch parishes have a group of women participating, who have been meeting once a week together to share, pray, and encourage each other. One of the great things about this programme is that it is a flexible, personal journey. Each woman chooses the disciplines that are right for them."



Over the past four years, a group of men have been taking part in Exodus 90 — a 90 day journey to Easter. This year, a group of around 90 men throughout the diocese have been undertaking a 40 day version, beginning on Ash Wednesday. The men meet for an hour of Eucharistic Adoration to be strengthened by our Lord, then have a group ("fraternity") meeting. The brotherhood component sees men have a one-to-one buddy or anchor, to strengthen and support each other as they detach from distractions, through the challenge of physical, food, drink, and media restriction disciplines.

Ramez Ailabouni, one of the men supporting the promotion of Exodus, commented on the underlying principle of Exodus, "that God called the people of Israel out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage and slavery into the desert, so that they may worship him and that he may establish a new covenant with them. That first year in the desert was a year of formation. Furthermore, Jesus went into the desert for 40 days. God is calling us out into the desert; to be with him and to detach from our addictions and distractions this Lent."

Mike Stopforth from the Bishop's Pastoral Office said that this Lent has been a blessed time for both our women and men. "There has been a significant response of people participating in each programme, with the combination of extra prayer, the various disciplines, and gathering with others, having a big impact on the Lenten journey to help us draw closer to Christ."

THE ONLY CATHOLIC MONTESSORI PRE-SCHOOL IN CHRISTCHURCH  
LET'S BUILD A FOUNDATION BASED ON FAITH

60 CURLETT'S ROAD  
UPPER RICcarton  
CHRISTCHURCH 8042



Sancta Maria  
Montessori Pre-School

127 SHERBORNE STREET  
ST ALBANS  
CHRISTCHURCH 8014

[info@sanctamariamontessori.co.nz](mailto:info@sanctamariamontessori.co.nz)

AMI  
Association Montessori Internationale

[www.sanctamariamontessori.co.nz](http://www.sanctamariamontessori.co.nz)



Bishop Michael at the Jubilee Year  
Opening Mass at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral

## The Year of Jubilee

The Year of Jubilee is celebrated every 25 years and is now under way. Pope Francis chose "Pilgrims of Hope" as the Jubilee theme. Late January saw the opening Mass for the diocese in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. A number of Jubilee Masses are to be offered this year, along with pilgrimages to significant sites for the Catholic community. More information can be found on our Jubilee page [cdoc.nz/jubilee](http://cdoc.nz/jubilee).

## Christchurch Diocesan Jubilee Pilgrimage to Northland

### *A Christchurch Diocesan Pilgrimage to the foundations of the Catholic Faith in New Zealand*

26 - 31 October 2025

We are now well into the Jubilee year. As you will know, the theme of the Jubilee in 2025 is 'Pilgrims of Hope.' Pilgrimage is foundational to Jubilee Years – the faithful going on pilgrimage to sacred places, "bearing living witness to the faith professed in every age."

One of the exciting opportunities the Christchurch Diocese is offering in 2025 is a Diocesan 6-day pilgrimage to the sacred places at the very foundation of the Catholic Faith in New Zealand.

The pilgrimage will begin in Auckland and will explore the sites of the first missionaries that brought the faith to this country. New Zealand has a rich Catholic heritage over the 185 years since the first Mass on New Zealand soil.

During the pilgrimage together we will explore the sites of the first missionaries that brought the faith to this country. We will journey to the Hokianga to visit Tōtara Point, where Bishop Pompallier arrived and said the first Mass on New Zealand soil. We will visit Bishop Pompallier's remains at St Mary's, Motuti, where he is buried. We explore Te Tiriti o Waitangi with a visit to the Treaty Grounds at Waitangi including a hangi meal. We will visit Doubtless Bay, site of the first Mass in New Zealand Territory in 1769. On the way we will stop at Hohi (Oihi) Beach (Rangihoua Bay), where Sameul Marsden preached the first Christian service. We will visit the shrine of St Peter Chanel at Russell, visit the local parishes, and much more.

The pilgrimage is being held October 26 – 31, 2025. Places are limited. Matt O'Connell is leading the tour and there will be a priest chaplain. Bishop Gielen will also join the pilgrimage for two days.

For more information, please contact Matt at the Diocesan Office on 366-9869 or [moconnell@cdoc.nz](mailto:moconnell@cdoc.nz)

## Itinerary

### **DAY 1 (Sun Oct 26)**

#### **Arrive in Auckland**

*Today our pilgrimage begins. Arrange your own flights to Auckland and make your own way to our hotel where we settle in. You will meet your pilgrimage group this evening at 19:00 in the hotel restaurant for your welcome dinner.*

#### **Auckland overnight (D)**

**Accom:** Rydges Hotel Auckland, nestled in the heart of Auckland's CBD

### **DAY 2 (Mon Oct 27th)**

#### **Auckland to Paihia**

*After a leisurely breakfast we start our journey northward to Whangarei for lunch before continuing onto Paihia. Upon arrival we will settle into our Hotel followed by some free time. We then gather together to travel to Kerikeri for an evening Mass and dinner hosted by the local parish.*

#### **Paihia overnight (B, L, D)**

**Accom:** Kingsgate Hotel Autolodge, Paihia



St Mary's Church, Motuti



**\$2,365** per person share twin/  
double (single supplement \$621)

## Inclusions

- All Bus travel and Accommodation
- Meals where listed
- Russell Ferry Tickets
- Waitangi Experience, Concert and Hangi
- Tour to Doubtless Bay / Rangihoua

## Exclusions

- Flights to and from Auckland and transport cost to hotel
- Insurance
- Meals not listed
- Spending money
- Other tours in your free time

## Cost and Payment

- 20% payment due on booking
- \$100 non-refundable
- Bookings close June 19th
- Full Balance is due on or before July 11th
- Minimum number for pilgrimage to go ahead is 20. If it is decided that the tour will not go ahead at this point due to lack of numbers, full refunds will be given less \$100 non-refundable deposit
- There are options to extend your stay in Auckland or the surrounding area.
- Cancellations before August 27th will be refunded minus 20%. (If you are in a double room and thus reduces the booking to a single room, it will affect the cost of the person you where sharing with)
- No refunds will be given within 60 days of tour departing
- Full travel insurance is highly recommended at time of booking to ensure you are covered in the event of a cancellation



### DAY 3 (Tues Oct 28)

The Christian Faith comes to NZ

*An amazing day as we head north to Doubtless Bay to commemorate the beginning of the Christian and Catholic Faith in New Zealand.*

*We will first stop at Hohi (Oihi) Beach, (Rangihoua Bay). This is the site of the first Christian service in New Zealand led by Samuel Marsden in 1814.*

*We then travel to Doubtless Bay. The first actual Catholic Mass in New Zealand territory was by the Chaplain on de Surville's ship in December 1769 here in Doubtless Bay. We will celebrate Mass to commemorate this first Mass.*

*We will continue to Kaitia for lunch and a visit to the local church.*

**Paihia overnight (B, L, D)**

**Accom:** Kingsgate Hotel Autolodge, Paihia

### DAY 4 (Wed Oct 29)

Foundation of the Faith in NZ

*Today is the highlight of our pilgrimage. Bishop Michael joins us as we travel to Tōtara Point, site of the first Catholic Mass on New Zealand soil in 1838. We spend time in quiet reflection before seeing the place where "New Zealand's first Catholic Family" lived and hosted Bishop Pompallier. We then travel to Motuti where Bishop Pompallier is buried in the church of St Mary's. We celebrate Mass and spend time learning about this Bishop and the first missionaries. Upon our return to our hotel, the rest of the day is free to explore.*

**Paihia overnight (B, L, D)**

**Accom:** Kingsgate Hotel Autolodge, Paihia

### DAY 5 (Thurs Oct 30)

Retreat Morning in Russell and Evening Visit to the treaty grounds at Waitangi for a Hangi and Concert

*This morning, we travel to the beautiful little town of Russell, a former capital of New Zealand. Russell is a pleasant 15-minute ferry ride from Paihia. We take some time of retreat this morning, with quiet time, prayer and Mass at the Shrine to St Peter Chanel. Together we will visit the Pompallier Mission and Printery and then you are free to get lunch in Russell and make your own way back to Paihia with your return ferry ticket, at your leisure. The afternoon is free before we gather for a tour of the Waitangi Treaty Grounds and a Hangi experience in the evening at 6pm. Waitangi, only 2km from Paihia, is arguably one of New Zealand's most historic sites. It was here in 1840 that the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between Maori and the British government. You are able to tour the treaty grounds before your hangi experience.*

**Paihia overnight (B, D)**

**Accom:** Kingsgate Hotel Autolodge, Paihia

### DAY 6 (Fri Oct 31)

*We conclude our time in the far North with Mass with the local parish community in Kaikohe. After morning tea we travel via Highway 12 to stop at Tane Mahuta, an ancient Kauri Forest. Follow a lunch stop in Dargaville, we then travel back to Auckland Airport to say our goodbyes as the pilgrimage ends and people depart for home (please don't book flights home before 6.00pm).*

**Bay of Islands (Paihia) to Auckland Airport via Waipoua Forest (B)**

*“What do you hear? What do you notice?  
What do you sense?”*

*Renewal of this personal relationship  
with God is the great gift of Jubilee ”*

## The Holy Place

by Fr John O'Connor

The announcement of a Jubilee Year is accompanied by encouragement to visit Holy Places. When Catholics think of Jubilee Holy Places, we are likely to look to the nominated places of pilgrimage, whether close to home or in distant lands.

In our own diocese, Canterbury has four advertised Holy Places. A personal or communal visit to any of these sanctuaries will bear fruit, both in positive connections with others who make the same journey, and in graces from God, whose abundant, loving, and forgiving generosity is the theme and the gift of every Jubilee Year.

We are also aware of people who will not be able to visit a promoted Holy Place. I think of those whose illness confines them to home or hospice, and those whose home, family, and work responsibilities make such travel impractical.

We remember too, the people of our diocese in Westland and the Chatham Islands, for whom a visit to Canterbury across mountains and oceans is not possible in these months.

There are also many whose negative experience of the Church institution may keep them at a distance.

A Jubilee Year is a gift for all.

While traditionally, seven days leads to a day of sabbath rest, after seven years a sabbath year is offered, in which the earth and all who live in the earth are invited to rest in God. Traditionally, the ground would lie fallow and the people might pilgrimage to Holy Places. Every fifty years (seven times seven years), an abundant Jubilee Year is proclaimed, with debts and sin forgiven, burdens lifted, and captives freed.

While the idea of travelling to a Holy Place is intrinsically Catholic and also shared by the other people of faith, the opportunity for a renewal of faith in Jesus Christ is offered to all without leaving home.

Parish and diocesan programmes and pilgrimages are offered in the hope they will be helpful for those seeking a deeper engagement with parish life and worship. How does the Church also engage with those (around 90%) who feel distant from Catholic life and practice for a variety of reasons?

Pope Francis has repeatedly emphasised that those who feel as though they are on the peripheries of institutional Church life, are not necessarily distant from God. Francis adds that there are many at Mass regularly who may be obeying a religious requirement, but their hearts are astray.

STRUCTURAL STEEL SUPPLY, FABRICATION & ERECTION SOUTH ISLAND WIDE

# JJS JOHN JONES STEEL

Phone 03 366 8679

Email: [admin@jjsteel.co.nz](mailto:admin@jjsteel.co.nz) [frank@jjsteel.co.nz](mailto:frank@jjsteel.co.nz)

18 Sir James Wattie Drive, PO Box 4241, Christchurch, NZ

[JJSTEEL.CO.NZ](http://JJSTEEL.CO.NZ)

A Jubilee Year requires those who may be at Mass often, to prayerfully ponder whether they are genuinely practicing their Catholic faith. A Jubilee Year also invites people who have a vibrant relationship with Jesus through prayer, who care for those in need and show gentle generosity towards those who struggle, to discover even greater maturity in their lives of faith.

A Jubilee Year, while a time of sabbath rest, is no time for casual complacency.

In a Year of Jubilee, we remember that our hope comes through the fact that God, in Jesus Christ, is journeying to us in every moment of each long day and dark night, in the complexities of life in our families, workplaces, and neighbourhoods.

This means that my personal Jubilee Holy Place may not only be found in a place of pilgrimage, a special place of significance for the Church, but in the reality of my life today.

You might be reading this reflection because you picked it up off the coffee table of a friend or family member. Perhaps someone passed it to you thinking you might find it helpful.

Whatever your reason for reading, I invite you to put what I am saying to the test, and here's a suggestion for how you might do this.

Take one minute right now, to speak directly to God, perhaps imagining Jesus, with you, listening to you. Speak to Jesus. Tell him how you feel about your life, about your relationships, your work, the Church, your struggles, your shame. Just tell him. One minute.

Now take another minute to just breathe, and to listen for his response.

What do you hear? What do you notice? What do you sense?

Renewal of this personal relationship with God is the great gift of Jubilee.

Our mission on earth is to deepen and mature our awareness that in Jesus, God is with us. In this maturation, we learn that our personal reality of struggle and shame, and our sense that there must be more to life, is not a problem but an opportunity, a capacity to encounter the divine in the often-hidden and even repressed recesses of our human hearts.

Our place of encounter with God, our Holy Place of hope-filled and hope-fuelled pilgrimage, is a journey to the heart.

The story is told of the king who sought to hide his treasure for safe keeping, while he visited distant regions of his realm. He called his advisers to ask where best to conceal the treasure for safe-keeping in his absence. The first adviser suggested he find a spot at the top of the highest mountain. The second advised that the depth of the ocean would be safer. Then the third, the wise and holy one, advised that the human heart would offer the most secret place, since people rarely think of the heart as the place of hidden treasure.

Therein lies the ultimate adventure of faith.

Late last year, Pope Francis expressed this powerfully in his letter "He Loves Us" on the Human Heart. In a selection of quotations from the letter, he reflects:

"All of us need to rediscover the importance of the heart."

"Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."

"In this 'liquid' world of ours, we need to start speaking once more about the heart and thinking about this place where every person, of every class and condition, creates a synthesis, where they encounter

the radical source of their strengths, convictions, passions and decisions."

"At the end of our lives the value of the heart alone will matter."

"The inmost core of reality is love."

And now, before you move to the next article or turn the page, just take the minute.

I am confident that you won't be disappointed.



John O'Connor ([john@fff.org.nz](mailto:john@fff.org.nz)) is author of the [foodforfaith.org.nz](http://foodforfaith.org.nz) mission and publisher of Food For Faith (reflections for those seeking greater maturity of Christian faith) and Fifth Gospel Living (90 people from Aotearoa and further afield sharing personal experiences of God).

## STRIDE ORTHOPAEDICS



- Ethical and faith based
- Collaborative team approach
- Innovative patient care
- Paediatric orthopaedics
- Affordable nurse practitioner
- Hip preservation surgery
- General orthopaedics
- Sports and post injury care
- Precision hip and knee replacement
- Patient centred empathetic care

**A:** Specialists @ 9, Level 2, 9 Caledonian Road, St Albans, Christchurch

**T:** 03 968 3402 **E:** [admin@strideorthopaedics.co.nz](mailto:admin@strideorthopaedics.co.nz)

**W:** [www.strideorthopaedics.co.nz](http://www.strideorthopaedics.co.nz)

**SPECIALIST TEAM-BASED RESPECTFUL INNOVATIVE DEDICATED EMPATHETIC**

# A Sea of Faith Engulfs Filipino Feast of Sto. Nino

The recent Sto. Niño Feast in the Christchurch Diocese was a joyous celebration of Filipino culture and faith. Nine novena Masses were held from 9-17 January at Sacred Heart, Addington, and Our Lady of Victories, Sockburn. The Feast brought together the Filipino community and beyond to honour the Santo Niño (Child Jesus), and to commemorate the introduction of the Catholic faith in the Philippines, more than 500 years ago.

After the nine-day novena Masses, a fluvial procession was held in Lyttelton Harbour on 18 January, with a vespera (evening) Mass at 7pm, held at Sacred Heart Church, Addington. Finally, the Sto. Niño Fiesta was held on 19 January, with Bishop Michael Gielen as celebrant and concelebrated by Fr Rex Ramos, Fr Zani Pacanza, and Fr Sam Leidel at the Haeata Community Campus.

During his homily, Bishop Gielen shared that the Filipinos have the most beautiful faith in the world, because they are very religious and devoted. His final advice was to never fail or be shy to come to the child Jesus and to make sure to teach that kind of love for Sto. Niño to their children. Even if they grow up in the modern and comfortable life of New Zealand, they will still practice their faith and always come to Jesus, because these children are the future of the Church and our community, and they need to be humble and obedient like Sto. Niño to his Heavenly Father.

One of the celebration's highlights was the vibrant Sinulog dance, performed at campus grounds. Dancers, adorned in colourful costumes, moved gracefully with the signature two-step-forward, one-step-back rhythm, mirroring the ebb and flow of a river.

Beyond the vibrant performances, the festival was a powerful reminder of the importance of preserving Filipino heritage. Religious ceremonies, including Novena masses and a meaningful fluvial procession in Lyttelton Harbour, deepened the community's connection to their faith and cultural roots.

The Sto. Niño celebration transcended cultural boundaries, fostering a sense of unity and belonging. It provided a valuable opportunity for younger generations to learn about their heritage, connect with their elders, and experience the vibrant spirit of Filipino culture firsthand.

The festival was a true testament to the enduring strength of the Filipino

community in New Zealand. It was heartwarming to see the festival attract participants from diverse backgrounds, including Caucasians, Indians, and Samoans. The mesmerising dances, performed by various groups in stunning costumes, captivated the audience. The delicious and plentiful food was a testament to the generosity of the Filipino community. Viva Pit Señor Sto. Niño!





## Paskong Pinoy: *a Growing Celebration for the Body & Spirit*

Christmas time for Filipino Catholics is a very big thing. It means tradition, sacrifice, and celebration. Many who grew up in the Philippines know that Christmas means waking up as early as 2:00am to go to church for Mass—for 9 days! Or it may mean going to church at night for nine days after a full day of work. Then of course, after the nine-day Novena Masses, it's celebrating with a lot of food. Even the poorest will try to do so.

*“I am very grateful for the faith you have brought to this diocese... you are a joyful people”*

So it was welcome news for many Filipino Catholics in Christchurch, when the traditional nine-day evening Masses (Simbang Gabi) became more parish-based, and were held in six parishes nearer to where they lived: St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, for four nights, then to St Anne's Church, for the remaining four nights; St Patrick's Church in Lincoln; Holy Name Church in Ashburton; Our Lady Help of Christians in Culverden; and St Teresa of Lisieux Church in Riccarton. Most of the Masses were held at 7:00pm or 7:30pm, while that at St Teresa's was held at 6:00am. Filipinos and parishioners filled up these churches throughout the nine nights or mornings.

The culminating Mass and event was called Paskong Pinoy (Filipino Christmas) and attended by around 1,500 people at the Haeata Community Campus on 23 December at 7:00pm. Bishop Michael Gielen celebrated the Mass, together with seven priests.

Bishop Gielen's homily was both an encouragement and a challenge to those present. He said that just like Elizabeth and Zachariah, who presented their son on the eighth day as thanksgiving, we too are called as Catholics to offer thanksgiving. The bishop added, “I am very grateful for the faith you have brought to this diocese.” He added that Filipino Catholics give a wonderful witness to the people of New Zealand,

saying, “Your particular witness is of joy for you are a joyful people. You really are. You bring that through your smile, through your relationship with each other, through your food - this brought loud

applause and laughter - and especially, through your faith.”

Then he challenged the group saying, “And faith is something we have to work at. It's like a muscle. We have to invest in Jesus every week. Your children are watching you. Does your relationship last beyond Christmas? If it doesn't, it loses its beauty.”

He concluded with reassurance and encouragement. “If you make an investment in Jesus, he will give you the strength to be the person he has called you to be. Please fight for your faith. Invest in your faith.”

After the Mass, the large gathering flocked to the free food at the café area. A live band also played and provided entertainment for everyone. It was indeed a feast of the body and spirit.

All parishioners are invited to the annual celebration of

### DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Sunday 27 April 2025  
St Mary's Pro-Cathedral  
373 Manchester Street, Christchurch

1.30 - 2.45pm	Confessions
2.30pm	Chaplet of Mercy sung/prayed
2.45pm	Holy Mass

Celebrant: Bishop Michael Gielen  
Book sales to follow in Narthex and refreshments in the Assisi Lounge.

Note: No parking on Cathedral grounds until after 2.00pm

Phone 03 359 2087 for more information  
email [info@divinemercy.co.nz](mailto:info@divinemercy.co.nz) • [www.divinemercy.co.nz](http://www.divinemercy.co.nz)



# Festival of the Lights marks 30 Years for the Beatitudes Community in New Zealand!

## Tornado Wreaks Havoc at Shrine!

By Rebecca Loretz

The 30th Anniversary of the Beatitudes Community in New Zealand dawned fine and bright. God continued to bless the day of the accompanying Festival of the Lights with blue skies, a light breeze, and no thought of woolly jumpers.

The event was celebrated on Saturday 7 December, together with Bishops Michael Gielen and John Adams (Diocese of Palmerston North) and the president of the Beatitudes, Fr Johannes-Maria Poblotski (who was born in Germany but is now based in France.) This visit from the superior of the Beatitudes was indeed a special

one, as it was Fr Johannes-Maria's first time in New Zealand, and he had only been in his role for six months.

Under the stretch tent at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fourviere, Mass was celebrated with a large crowd of locals, visitors from Christchurch and further afield, Catholics, and the curious, who had heard of the Festival from friends, flyers, or Facebook. The feeling of gratitude and love for the Beatitudes Community was evident. So too was the appreciation from the Community to their many benefactors and supporters, when Fr Johannes-Maria gave a biography of the Community's life in New Zealand and praised God for all the love and kindness they had received.

After the Mass, the food! Some families had brought a picnic dinner, while others headed to the fundraising barbecue and the coffee from the 12 Stars Café. As with all great events, there is always one thing that goes awry, but not even a coffee machine malfunction could stop the party! The fun continued with many young girls and boys joining in the Jewish dancing, with the Community members encouraging the dancers as they learnt a new way to pray!

As the sun set, the procession began. With candles alight inside the special paper lanterns from Lourdes, the crowd sang their way from the chapel under the covered walkway to the trees, then around the lake and then under the stretch tent. Here they were



*Sr Giovanna Maria under damaged walkway*

*Gathered for Adoration under the stars*





*Collapsed convent walkway*

greeted by Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. The invitation to stay all night and adore was given. Confession was offered. Many people stayed for a time with the Lord, some went home and came back later in the night and the usual contingent of local, youthful adorers set up their chairs and their sleeping bags. With biscuits and hot drinks in the 12 Stars Café, it was going to be a great night!

The beautiful peace that surrounded the event was remarked on by visitors and friends of the Community alike. Many had been at previous Festival of the Light celebrations, for some, it was their first time, and others were saying they felt a call to go back to Mass again and rekindle their relationship with God.

The next day at Mass, the Community was still buzzing with gratitude and happiness. There had been a lot of preparation and organisation before, during, and after the celebrations, and the final clean-up had gone well. A rest was coming, but alas! On Sunday evening, before the volunteers had a chance to secure the stretch tent, a storm brewed and massive winds hit North Canterbury, damaging the Sanctuary, the Memorial for the Unborn, and the Community's house, Holy Family. The stretch tent was torn apart and is beyond repair, the crucifix at the Memorial was toppled off its mount, and the covered walkway between the convent and Holy Family was destroyed by a fallen tree. The clean-up was a team effort, with many locals helping to restore order. The tent won't be a feature in the next Festival of the Lights, but the Festival will be celebrated on 6 December 2025. In the meantime, the Beatitudes Community will be praising God and celebrating another year of spreading God's Word and ministering to His people.



*Blessed Sacrament in monstrance with adorers*

## Te Rīpeka Ngaro

by Barbara Te Miha

When Te Rangimārie Centre reached the age of twenty five years, our komiti decided to celebrate that milestone by having a carved Cross created to hang on the facade of the building. Much kōrero followed that decision: what timber to use, where to source it, and who would carve a cross that represented Catholic Māori beliefs?

Tōtara was the wood of choice, and I was delegated to find it. Naturally enough I looked back home to South Westland, and contacted the Giles whānau who operated their own sawmill - the same family who created the "Duzgo," a nifty little machine for getting around a farm.

Steve Nolan, well known West Coast personality and always a generous supporter of the Catholic Church, donated the timber from a tōtara tree on his farm. Steve was already known at Te Rangimārie, having led the delegation that accompanied Pā Kevin Foote from Whataroa to take up his position as Māori Missioner here.

In due time the timber arrived at Te Rangimārie and was then taken to Oaro, to Wiremu (Bill) Solomon, who was chosen as the carver. Bill was the upoko of Takahanga Marae at that time. Bill carved a very fine Cross and, I guess because I had sourced the wood, he sat down with me and explained to me what the carving represented.

Bill was a very spiritual man, and his faith underpinned everything he did. He had created a Cross that expressed his knowledge and his beliefs. His carving on the cross beams and the upright were carved to give meaning to the natural world of Māori. Over the intersection of the cross beams and the upright he placed a circle which enclosed the centre of the Cross. The circle and its adornment symbolised the Spirit of God moving and bringing change like the wind - meeting the world of the Māori with te Rongopai - the Good News. Where the crossbeams and the upright met, Bill carved the Face of Christ, the ultimate goal of our search for Truth.

Our revered cross hung on the front of Te Rangimārie for just over another twenty five years, until the end of November 2024 when it was smashed and destroyed - the upright beam and the circle broken off and stolen - but the Face of Christ remains. The whānau of Te Rangimārie are very saddened at this act of hate or vandalism and we know that Bill Solomon would feel the same sadness - sad but not vengeful. In this year of Hope, Bob and I hope that the Face of Christ will still look out from Te Rangimārie and be mirrored on the faces of the whānau who worship there.

# Temuka community celebrates church re-opening

## *Thirteen years in the making*

The Catholic community in Temuka and the wider area gathered on 8 December (The Feast of the Immaculate Conception) to celebrate the long-awaited re-opening of St Joseph's Church, Temuka. The church's spire was damaged in the September 2010 Canterbury earthquakes and some years later, a risk assessment resulted in the non-compliant areas of the church — including the organ, confessional, and front doors — being

closed off for more than a decade. The church has since undergone significant strengthening and other upgrades, with iconic features like the spire, the clock, and the stained-glass windows among the highlights of the re-opened church. The stained glass windows had been removed and cleaned. The windows, which were made in France, cost \$300,000 each, and have been laminated on the outside to protect them from the elements.

The interior of the church has also undergone a major transformation, with the plastering and painting of cracks from the earthquake, and attention to general wear and tear. The sacristy has been completely redesigned and re-configured, with a new toilet added. The church has been re-roofed, a new confessional built, and new heating and sound systems installed. The major cost

was in strengthening, with the internal steel framework now connected to massive bolts in the ground.

Parishioners have undertaken a variety of jobs, including the restoration of over 30 pews, and the cleaning of all the lamp shades. Two parishioners restored the bells and clock. Retired mechanic Robin Galbraith had looked after the clock for 50 years. With the able assistance of Michael Healy, he removed the bells and built new cradles.

Organist Cathy Blogg said playing the organ for the first time since it had been "mothballed" in 2012, had "definitely brought a tear to my eye." Despite it not being tuned, the organ sounded exactly as she remembered. "It took my breath away."

Bishop Gielen celebrated the Mass and was joined at the altar by both



## Two Opihi Parishioners Receive Papal Awards

Congratulations to Alan and Margaret McKenzie of St Mary's, Pleasant Point, for their well merited Papal Medal, Bene Merenti. It was a very proud and joyful moment for our parish when two more of our parishioners were honoured and adorned with these awards from Pope Francis. They received this honour at the Saturday Vigil Mass on 4 January. It is a well deserved recognition for their tireless and selfless service to the parish, Church, and the community.





## World Day of Prayer at St Anne's Woolston

On 7 March, we celebrated the World Day of Prayer service at St Anne's. This is a service celebrated in many churches throughout the world. Written by women of the Cook Islands, it involved prayers, reflections, and beautiful songs.

Our service was attended by 151 students, 15 teachers, and around 30 adults. There were wonderful colourful costumes, musical items provided by St Anne's school, and Pasifika cultural artifacts on display. Our thanks to the students for learning the Cook Islands' Īmene, for the donations of over \$332, and to our school principal Dallas Wichman, for helping to organise such a vibrant and engaging World Day of Prayer service for our parish.

(left) Leilia Ah-San reading a reflection of a 15 yr old Cook Islander about her faith during covid times  
(right) 'Te Au Tangata Rutu Pa'u o Hato Ani, e rutu ana' - The St Anne's Drummers in action



the current clergy and priests who have formerly served in the parish. With the church reopening on the same weekend as Notre-Dame in Paris, he explained the importance of beautiful houses of worship in supporting a life of prayer and mission.

The following are key statements taken from Bishop Gielen's homily:

"There are two communities gathering with joy today, one in the Southern hemisphere and one in the Northern hemisphere. They both have a rich history that they celebrate. They both have important dignitaries attending. But most importantly, they both have a church they can be proud of. And not just any church, but a church that is recognised for its beauty and significance."

"What sets those two churches apart and unites them, is their spire. The spire that

reaches out, above the skyline, into the heavens. The spire that fights against the ravages of gravity and pushes above, into heaven. The true reason a spire is built is that it represents our faith."

"This church is not a monument, or a museum, or an historic artifact; it is a living and breathing house of God."

"I've had the privilege of celebrating Mass in both Notre-Dame Cathedral and in St Joseph's "Cathedral," shall I say, today. (I must admit, seeing this church, I do wish we could transport it to Christchurch, and save us a lot of money and time.)"

"In 2015, I cycled with eight young men throughout New Zealand. I arrived outside this church on a quiet November day, and I was amazed by what I saw. Why is this magnificent church built here? Why have I not heard of this church, it is magnificent.

This church took my breath away. What love and sacrifice were made for God in this place. And my breath was taken away again today, as I saw again the effort and love and sacrifice."

"May you grow in faith, the faith that this spire represents, so that we can pass onto the next generation, for hundreds of years to follow, that same God, who has given us life, and life to the full, amen."

The Christchurch Diocese is proud of and grateful for all the work and support leading to the restoration and re-opening of our historic St Joseph's Church. "The new spire looks stunning and the exterior stonework looks like new." recently wrote Heritage New Zealand Conservation Advisor, Mike Gillies. "I couldn't believe the difference with the windows and the interior of the building. The windows seemed to be glowing. It's hard to believe that they are over 130 years old! It is a magnificent and significant contribution to conserving South Canterbury's built heritage."

*Editor's note:*

*For myself, I know when I first entered St Joseph's, Temuka, in March 2010, I was struck by the sense of it being a well prayed-in space. I could sense the gentle light through the windows and hear the soft reverberation of the acoustic and the feeling of space and height. I recently played the organ there and immediately was aware of those who faithfully played it since its installation in the 1880s. Through the gentle decay of our sound, this church was re-assuring me that our prayer and praise would be heard in heaven. I encourage you all to visit, to attend Mass there, to take some quiet time there in the stillness of this church and be deeply touched by the presence of God.*





Outside Our Lady of the Lourdes church, Okuru after the Ecumenical Service



Attendees at the Ecumenical Service

## Celebration of 150 Years at Jackson Bay, South Westland

On the weekend of 18 / 19 January, celebrations at Jackson Bay in South Westland took place, to mark 150 years since the first arrival of immigrants in 1875.

On the Saturday, there was an unveiling of a plaque at Arawhata Cemetery, with the names of those who are buried in the cemetery, most in unmarked graves.

A second unveiling followed at Jackson Bay, where the plaque had the names of the families of the first pioneers.

A dinner was held at Haast on the Saturday evening, with over 150 people attending.

On Sunday there was an Ecumenical Service led by Fr Peter Head sm, at Our

Lady of Lourdes church at Okuru. Part of Fr Peter's homily follows:

"It is a statement of fact that the original settlers to this part of Westland were let down by the Government of the time. In my reading of several historical documents, there are consistent reports that confirm this fact. For example, in "Jackson's Bay: A Korero Report" NZ Defence Force, 1944, the report states:

"In 1875, settlers came to take up holdings in the town of Arawata. This settlement was established by the Government in order to open up the lower portion of the West Coast. Pamphlets painting a bright picture of the possibilities of the district and offering a free passage to settlers attracted some hundreds to Arawata.

The attempt at settlement was a failure. The settlers were not to blame. They had been led to believe that they were going to a land of milk and honey. They landed instead on a desolate beach beyond which was a barrier of impenetrable forest. Before they could win any return from their 10-acre holdings they had to clear back the bush and build their homes.

They had to give battle also to the millions of mosquitoes who claimed prior right of possession, and grow accustomed to the incessant rain, which was more than tropical in its dreary intensity. A depressing prospect for pioneers, however hardy."

From a faith perspective, many of those who first came to Arawhata were Catholics. It was in 1880 that the Catholic Church purchased four sections in Jackson Bay to build a church and a presbytery. Would you believe that the Catholic Parish of South Westland still owns these four sections!

A very interesting article I read was written by HJ Cuttance of Otago. In this article he says: "In the winter of 1875, Father Nicholas Binsfeld sm visited Jackson's Bay. He celebrated Mass in John Cronin's hut at Arawata settlement. The little hut was filled to overflowing. The congregation consisted mainly of Irish and Polish settlers, the latter not long out from their homeland. As may be imagined there was a mixture of languages — a confusion of tongues — the Poles being unable to understand English. All the same, we were



Plaque unveiled at Jackson Bay



Fr Peter leading the Ecumenical Service



a happy, sociable gathering — the faith makes all men kin.

An uncertainty always existed in those days as to when we should have the opportunity to again attend Holy Mass. As a matter of fact, it was not until 1885, ten years later, that Father Patrick Ahern came down overland on horseback, a distance of 200 miles — during those years there was not a bridge on the long toilsome journey from Ross to Jackson's Bay.

It was always characteristic of the early settlers to be generous to travelers, and whether priest or layman, they were made welcome. Denomination did not count with those warm-hearted people, respect and kindness was extended to all."

We come here this morning to unite as one in first of all acknowledging with gratitude, the pioneers who came to Jackson Bay and Arawhata 150 years ago. We honour them before God. We honour them by our presence. We remember all those who lost their lives. May they now have a peace that they may not have experienced in coming to this area. And as we look to the future, we pray that God will continue to watch over and protect and sustain the people who reside and visit this beautiful and unique area of Aotearoa / New Zealand."



## Faith and Service: A Day of Fellowship & Mutual Support

In late November, 48 seniors from Stella Maris Catholic Parish, Christchurch East, journeyed to Our Lady of the Plains Parish in Lincoln for their Annual Christmas Party, a heartwarming example of parishes coming together for mutual benefit.

The Catholic Women's League of Lincoln hosted the group with a festive traditional Christmas meal, featuring ham, chicken, new potatoes, spring carrots, minted peas, salads, and desserts of fruit salad, pavlova, and Christmas pudding with custard. The day's festivities were made even more special with the singing of Christmas carols, spreading joy and holiday cheer.

This gathering exemplifies the spirit of faith and service. While Stella Maris parishioners enjoyed a delightful day in the countryside, their visit also supported a larger cause. Funds raised by the Catholic Women's League at Our Lady of the Plains Parish are sent to the Ruavatu Catholic Secondary School in the Solomon Islands, managed by the Dominican Sisters. This collaboration highlights the beauty of connection between town and country parishes. Stella Maris parishioners experienced hospitality and community, while Our Lady of the Plains Parish furthered its mission outreach, a true win-win situation, demonstrating the shared values of faith, fellowship, and generosity.



## Pilgrimage to Reefton

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

The Catholic Parish of Greymouth made a pilgrimage to Sacred Heart Parish, Reefton, on Sunday, 16 February, as part of the celebration of the Year of Jubilee. It was truly a memorable and spiritually enriching gathering. Both Greymouth and Reefton parishes were able to come together as people of God, and

the support and participation was a vital part of this collective experience. Together, we celebrated our faith, strengthened our bonds, and created lasting memories. There were over 100 people gathered and it was so lovely to see the church full.

# Winning the Peace

by Fr Brian Fennessy, Parish Priest of 'Our Lady of the Plains Parish', Selwyn and a former Army Chaplain

## Editor's note:

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the concluding chapters of World War II. In this context, I am especially grateful for a feature article from former military chaplain, Fr Brian Fennessy. With the terrible loss of life on both sides of this war and the destruction of peoples' homes and ways of life, this article offers some deep insights into the possibility of repentance and forgiveness. With ANZAC Day but weeks away, it is especially pertinent for Fr Fennessy's article to feature in this edition of Inform. In the context of current international instability and the conflict being experienced around the world, are world leaders looking to history and the wisdom which comes from it? Yet, this article offers hope. In the words of St John Henry Newman: "Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom." We will feature a second article from Fr Fennessy in the next issue of Inform.

This year we commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the end of WWII: VE Day on 8 May and VJ Day on 15 August. It is a noteworthy Anniversary.

The atrocities of the Third Reich became clear when the Soviets liberated Auschwitz on 27 January 1945; the British liberated Bergen-Belsen on 15 April; and the Americans liberated Dachau two weeks later. January 27 is now observed as 'Holocaust Remembrance Day.'

After the War, 'Winning the Peace' was a major concern.

Hitler became Chancellor and the Nazi Party came to power in 1933; by 1945 a generation of Germans had only known the Nazi Regime; young males became members of the Hitler Youth, and girls joined the League of German Girls.

In Germany, denazification was a major project.

Rebuilding Germany under the Marshall Plan was the means to rebuild the infrastructure. Denazification, taking responsibility for Nazi crimes, bringing people guilty of atrocities to justice, and the end goal of achieving reconciliation, were more complicated.

The Nuremberg Trials, and the Trials in other countries, were a means of bringing justice. Whether the Trials would stand modern scrutiny is another question.

As we know, few Nazi Leaders acknowledged their guilt. However, the story of Rudolf Höss is interesting. Rudolf Höss was the infamous commandant of Auschwitz Concentration Camp. As commandant, he perfected the techniques of mass murder, such as the use of Zyklon B and the crematoria. The three Camps that comprised Auschwitz were renowned for their brutality. At the end of the War, he was the only senior SS Officer to confess his sins. Rudolf Höss was hanged on site at the Auschwitz Camp on 16 April 1947; he was 47. Ironically, he was the last person to die at Auschwitz.



Rudolf Höss in 1944

Recently, I came across a copy of a lecture by John Jay Hughes at the Archbishop Gerety Lecture at Seton Hall University, on 25 March 1998. It is a great story about the process of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Forgiveness from the persecuted was also a need. The story of Corrie ten Boom provides a good account of the difficulty in making the decision to forgive.

Corrie had been a prisoner at Ravensbrück Concentration Camp. After the War she preached a message of repentance around Europe. Her sincerity was tested at a Gathering in Munich when a former guard came up to her after the meeting.

She wrote: 'He came up to me as the church was emptying ... his hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus,

*"You have learnt how it was said: you must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons and daughters of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad people as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest people alike..."*

Matthew 5: 43-48



They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.  
They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

*I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.*

*I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness.*

*As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.*

*And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on his. When he tells us to love our enemies, he gives along with his command, the love itself."*

Rudolf Höss had been baptised a Catholic in 1901. His parents were devout Catholics; however, his father was strict in his Catholic observance. In his younger days Rudolf was devoted to his faith. However, it seems that over an incident of confidentiality he lost his confidence in the Catholic Church.

As a youth, during the First World War, he served with distinction in the Middle East.

After the War, in 1922, he formally left the Catholic Church. In time, he joined the Nazi Party and began an association with Heinrich Himmler and Martin Bormann. It was Himmler who invited Rudolf to join the SS in 1934. He served at Dachau and Sachsenhausen Camps, and in April 1940 he was appointed Commandant to the newly established Auschwitz Camp in Poland. Rudolf was a loyal Nazi; he supported their racial purity policy and the 'Final Solution.'

There is a paradoxical element to his role as commandant at Auschwitz because his family home was adjacent to the Camp. It was impossible to ignore the reality of the Camp.

After the War, he was able to evade capture for ten months, until March 1946, when he was arrested by British Military Police. He was initially taken to Nuremberg, but as Auschwitz was in Poland, his trial began in Warsaw on 5 March 1947.

Over the three-week trial, he accepted responsibility for everything that happened at Auschwitz. His ideology was ingrained in him, but while in prison he came to acknowledge that this ideology was based on the wrong premise.

After initial rough treatment in Poland, the Polish prosecutor intervened. Of his treatment thereafter, he wrote, "*In Polish prisons I experienced for the first time what human kindness is. Despite all that has happened I have experienced humane treatment which I could never have expected, and which has deeply shamed me.*" Rudolf Höss' story reminds us of the silent witness of the Polish guards in living the Gospel message.

After he was sentenced to death, he seemed to have reflected on his actions. He wrote his memoir and requested to see a priest. In his memoir he wrote about his actions and didn't disguise his role at Auschwitz. The communist Polish authorities delayed the request to see a priest, however, in time a priest came to see him. We don't know what he said to the priest, but over the six-day period, before his execution, he made a formal profession of his Catholic Faith, made his confession, and received holy communion.

During this six-day period he wrote a farewell letter to his wife:

*'My misspent life places on you, dearest, the sacred obligation to educate our children so that they have, in their deepest heart, a true humanity ... Make them sensitive to all human sorrow. What humanity is, I have only come to know since I have been in Polish*

*prisons. Although I have inflicted so much destruction and sorrow upon the Polish people as Commandant of Auschwitz, even though I did not do it personally, or by my own free will, they still showed such human understanding, not only the high officials, but also the common guards, that it often puts me to shame. Many of them were former prisoners in Auschwitz or other camps. Especially now, during my last days, I am experiencing such humane treatment I could never have expected. In spite of everything that happened, they still treat me as a human being.'*

The story of Höss does raise the question - was the collapse of Germany a cause for his repentance? People may ask, 'how is a man capable of extreme inhumanity able to accept his sin?'



*Höss being escorted to the gallows, 1947*



*Höss on the gallows, immediately before his execution*

Repentance is a journey, not a single act. Höss may not have completed his journey, but he had started his road of repentance.

However, during the final weeks of his life, Rudolf Höss accepted the Gospel and celebrated the sacraments, but perhaps, equally importantly, he experienced the humane treatment of his jailers who revealed the presence of Christ in action. Human kindness led him to reflect on his life and reconnect with his Catholic heritage.

In the concluding words of Hughes' Lecture: *'the laity are called in a special way to make the church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can she become the salt of the earth'.*

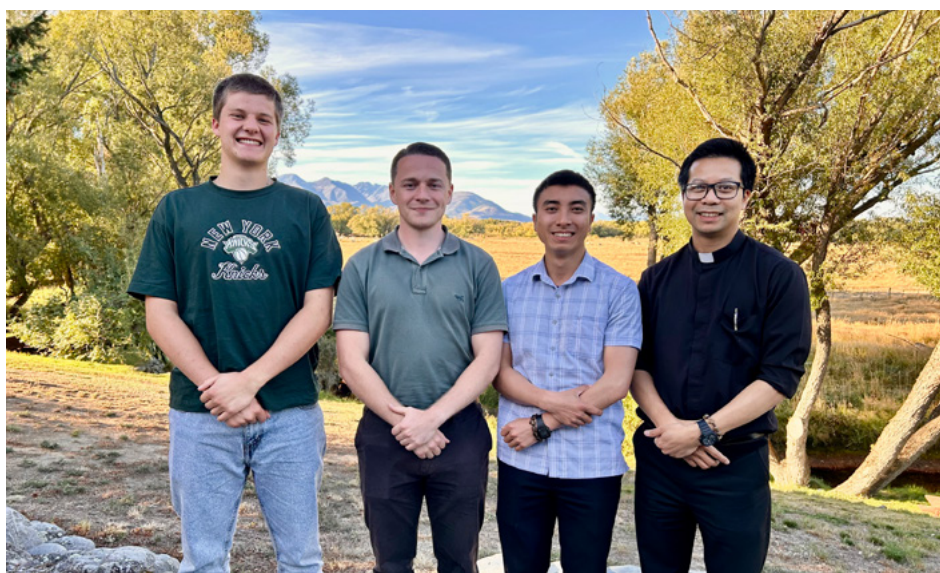
'Winning the Peace' is the goal of all conflicts. 'Winning the Peace' is achieved by endeavouring to live a humane and practical Christian Faith.

Corrie ten Boom and Rudolf Höss provide us with the complexity of forgiveness and repentance, but they also both illustrate the freedom achieved by forgiveness.

Reference to John Hughes' Archbishop Gerety Lecture at Seton Hall University, 25 March 1998, may be found at: [www.shu.edu/documents/mass-murderer-repents.pdf](http://www.shu.edu/documents/mass-murderer-repents.pdf)

Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*, Hodder and Stoughton. Kent. 1982. pp 220-221.

Images of Rudolf Höss, public domain, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf\\_Höss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Höss)



Three young men and Fr Tien in Mackenzie Catholic Parish for a Come & See vocations weekend

## "Why Are You Here?"

by Fr Tien Cao, Vocations Director, Christchurch Diocese

I have just returned from Vietnam, where I visited my family, friends, and communities during the Lunar New Year. While there, I had the opportunity to stay at Vinh's Bishop House, where my uncle resides as the Rector of the Seminary. When I arrived, he told me he had just met nearly 500 candidates for the priesthood in the diocese, but only needed 30 every second year. You can imagine my reaction — I was astonished!

In my first weekend back in the Mackenzie Parish, I welcomed three young men who are exploring whether they might have a vocation to the priesthood. It was tempting to compare what I witnessed in Vietnam with our humble reality here, but I am not alarmed. I believe the Church is holy and universal and that, while it may be spring

in one place, it can be winter in another. The Lord never ceases to provide His Church with vocations; we simply need to trust in His love and mercy.

These three young men came to my parish for a "Come and See" weekend. They arrived on Friday night, shared a simple meal with me, and were immediately immersed in what it means to be a parish priest in Mackenzie. I have no assistant priest, no secretary, and no pastoral worker. I do almost everything myself, both in the house and in the parish. Initially, preparing the bulletin was time-consuming, but a priest cares for his people in any way he can.

I also shared my weekend routine with them: driving down to Twizel once a week. If people in the city complain about the distance to Mass, I tell them that I travel over 200 km per Mass and I am completely fine with it. After the Vigil Mass, I usually return home, prepare a meal and, at times, it is dark, cold, and wet outside. There are moments when I don't even feel like eating, but I must, because living alone requires discipline in looking after oneself.

I am not complaining, or comparing my life with that of a married man or a bachelor, but simply sharing this reality with these young men. If God is calling them to this vocation, they should know what awaits them.

Of course, I am completely happy with my vocation. I was made for it. I see no better way of life than the one the Lord has called me to. However, is this life for



*Rise, Let us be on our Way*  
An Evening with  
Fr. Chris Alar MIC

**Tuesday 27 May, 2025 7pm-9:30pm**  
**St. Bedes College Chapel,**  
**Main North Rd, Christchurch**

(Parking entry through Momorangi Road only please)

A collection will be taken to defray costs.  
Tea/Coffee will be available after the talks.

Fr. Chris Alar MIC is head of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception in USA. Popular on YouTube (over 500,000 followers). Best-selling author.

We also welcome Anna Nuzzo, a renowned international singer/song-writer from USA.





a responsibility. How can we truly know our sheep without spending time with them? Their joys and sorrows bring the parish to its knees before the Lord and, if necessary, they should be the ones who keep us awake at night in prayer.

I have now accompanied many young adults in New Zealand and in the diocese. I know that there are young men truly searching for the pearl and treasure of their lives. I pray that they recognise the diocesan priesthood as a real possibility and, above all, that they understand it is a vocation born of faith — faith in God and in His Church. Without a deep personal relationship with God and His Church, they will struggle to discover the path He has destined for them. Consequently, everyone must face one of the most intrinsic questions of their lives: why are you here on earth and what is your response?

them? That is something they must pray about and discern.

The Come and See weekend was also a time of retreat. I reflected with them on the Scriptural passage where Elijah met God at Horeb and was confronted with God's question: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Feeling alone and afraid, Elijah cried out to God about Israel's unfaithfulness. God revealed His presence, not in the mighty wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a gentle breeze, teaching Elijah that He speaks in stillness and calls him to trust in His guidance (1 Kings 19:11-13).

Another essential point for their meditation was the First Principle and Foundation from the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola: "God created human beings to praise, reverence, and serve God, and by doing this, to save their souls. God created all other things on the face of the earth to help fulfill this purpose." This truth is not only vital for these young men but for everyone and for every vocation.

After one of the weekend Masses, the

three young men visited a welcoming family, which became a highlight of their visit. We enjoyed a friendly cuppa and a chat about their why - the reason for their exploration. As Pope Francis reminds us, a shepherd must have the smell of the sheep. I find that being with my parishioners is both an honor and

## JOIN THE VINNIES



Young and old, town and country. Vinnies harness the generosity of Aotearoa NZ – whānau, churches, community groups, schools. Get involved and help those who are going through tough times.

**You can join up with your local Vinnies Conference or make a donation to:**  
**Society of St Vincent de Paul**  
**02-0528-0208598-027**

Please use your name and email address as a reference and we will send you a receipt.



[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.*



## Annual Carmel Retreat Meeting a Thirst for Silence and Contemplation

by Megan Emery

College House in Upper Riccarton is an Anglican-based Hall of Residence, a block away from the University of Canterbury's Ilam campus. In November, it hosted a rather different clientele, the Carmelite (OCDS) Peace of Christ Community. The usual sound of student life was replaced by 52 retreatants, staying on site or coming together each day to encounter Christ in profound silence. This annual retreat normally takes place at Rochester and Rutherford Halls, following on from our priests' retreat. Due to unavoidable maintenance, that venue was unavailable this year.

We were grateful to College House and its staff, who met our every requirement. Our retreatants thoroughly enjoyed the spacious and warm sitting rooms, along with areas to rest in silence. The conference area worked very well for such

*"The tree that is beside the running water is fresher and gives more fruit"* St Teresa of Jesus

a large group and the surroundings were beyond excellent.

The theme printed on our retreat card was "The tree that is beside the running water is fresher and gives more fruit," St Teresa of Jesus. We were delighted to welcome Fr Adalbert, a Carmelite friar from Perth, to lead us in discovering the beauty of silence. He presented his reflections with great spiritual knowledge, encouraging our participation through his responses and personal insights. "By embracing silence, we can foster a deeper relationship with God, grounded in truth, discernment, and powerful prayer," commented one of our retreatants.

Over the years, we have made our Carmel retreat available to those outside our Community as there is such a thirst for silence and contemplation. This year, we were fully booked, without our usual advertising, with a variety of retreatants coming from outside the diocese. We are grateful to Our Lady of Mount Carmel for drawing us all together, to grow in holiness and love of our Carmelite vocation.

For more visit [carmel.org.nz](http://carmel.org.nz) or e-mail: [benedictus@windowslive.com](mailto:benedictus@windowslive.com)

## Vocations at the service of the Church on Mission

by Matt O'Connell, Vocations Coordinator, Christchurch Diocese

Over the past few years, the Diocese of Christchurch has been very focused on evangelisation and mission. Many parishes have become much more intentional about seeking to preach the good news of Jesus Christ to those who are not members of the Church.

Did you know that vocations and mission are very closely connected? For over 60 years, the Church has dedicated a special Sunday as the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Each year the Pope writes a message for Good Shepherd Sunday (the fourth Sunday of Eastertide) to accompany this day. This year Pope Francis invites us to become pilgrims of hope by generously offering our lives as a gift.

"A vocation is a precious gift that God sows in our heart, a call to leave ourselves behind and embark on a journey of love and service."

I encourage you to read the full message online. Please continue to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.



*“To know, love and serve”*

## Sr Mary Hanrahan RSM, OBE RIP

Professed as a Sister of Mercy on 5 September 1958, Convent of Mercy, Timaru. Died 2 February 2025, Nazareth House. The following is taken from a tribute by Raylene Dwyer RSM at Mary's funeral.



Tēnā koutou katoa.

Mary Hanrahan died on the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, which happens to be the Day of Prayer for the Consecrated Life. What a coincidence. For Mary, religious life and ministry were everything.

Born into a farming family in Rakaia, Mary attended St Ita's Primary School in Rakaia and then Sacred Heart College in Timaru, both staffed by Sisters of Mercy. After leaving school, she entered the Sisters of Mercy in 1956. When Sister Mary Bede (as she was called back then) made her perpetual profession in 1961, she took as her motto: “To know, love and serve.” This love of service led her to teaching roles over the next decade at Sacred Heart College in Timaru, St Mary's High School in Greymouth, and Villa Maria College, Christchurch. In 1972, she was appointed Deputy Principal at Villa Maria College, and then the principal the following year.

Villa Maria College and her family were among Mary's great loves. Her commitment to Villa Maria involved hard work, faithfulness, energy, and good administration skills, day after day. Love and concern for her students, staff, and their families were a priority. As a Sister of Mercy recently said, she always had her door open for the staff. She had an outstanding ability to remember every student's name and the parent community.

In 1992, she was awarded the Woolf Fisher Trust Travelling Fellowship to observe educational facilities overseas. This was followed by a contract with the College of Education and then short appointments by the Ministry of Education. These included

Acting Principal roles at Chanel College in Masterton and St Thomas of Canterbury College. In 1993, she was awarded the OBE for services to Education—a fitting recognition.

From 1997 to 2001 she was appointed the Director of the Mercy International Centre in Dublin, where Catherine McAuley is buried. She immersed herself more deeply in Catherine and all things mercy and shared that gift with us.

On her return she was elected the Congregation Leader for the Sisters of Mercy, Diocese of Christchurch, and became the President of the Federation of Sisters of Mercy New Zealand. She was deeply involved in the amalgamation process that led to the four Sisters of Mercy congregations becoming one in 2005 as Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa, Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.

When her leadership role concluded, Bishop Barry Jones appointed her as the Christchurch Hospital Chaplain in 2006. She loved this work of Mercy and enjoyed meeting new people and the past pupils of Villa Maria College who were nurses, doctors, or hospital staff. She held this position for eight years until her feet could no longer manage walking the corridors.

How fitting we bid her farewell today, when the church celebrates the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. That is another coincidence. This woman of mercy made every effort to remember us by name – to know us, to love us and to serve us, even when her memory began to fail. Today, we remember her and pray with gratitude for the joy and gifts she brought to our lives. Rest in peace, Mary. Kia okioki Mary i runga i te rangimārie.

*“Thee Alone”*

## Sr Catherine Morrison LCM RIP

by Sr Helena Kearns LCM

Sr Catherine Morrison died peacefully at Christchurch Hospital after a short illness, on 2 January 2025.

Baptised Gabrielle Anne Morrison, she was born in Christchurch and was the third of four Morrison children. She grew up on the family farm in Darfield and attended Teschemakers College in Oamaru as a boarder for her secondary education.

Gabrielle completed her Registered General Nurse training at Christchurch Hospital before travelling to London, private nursing and travelling. Returning to Christchurch, she became a Ward Sister at Princess Margaret Hospital for two years before entering the Little Company of Mary (LCM) Novitiate in Wellington. As a novice, she was given the name Sister Catherine and was Finally Professed on 1 July 1969. She chose “Thee Alone” as her motto.

In her own words, Catherine wrote:

“During my college years, I read the book “Elected Silence” by

Thomas Merton. This book had a great influence on me. Prior to entering, I had a great love of Jesus on Calvary and it was a pleasant surprise to find this was very much part of the Little Company of Mary charism.”

Catherine nursed at Calvary Hospitals in Invercargill, Wellington, and Christchurch. In Invercargill she was Nurse Manager and Local Superior.

When she retired, Catherine visited residents at Mary Potter Courts before moving to Addington, where for some years, she was a Parish Visitor at Sacred Heart parish. She moved to Nazareth Village and shared an apartment with Sr Raye Boyle for some years. Daily prayer and living the LCM spirit were very important to Catherine. She was active until her sudden terminal illness.

May Catherine now rest in peace.



# Robert (Bob) Te Miha

07.02.1946 – 14.03.2025

Recently the much loved kaumatua of Te Rangimarie, Robert (Bob) Te Miha, passed away.

His whakapapa on his father's side was Ngāi Tahu and Ngāti Kahungunu and Te Atihaunui-a-Paparangi on his mother's side.

His heart of service, his faith in God and the Catholic Church guided him through life. Bob recalled fond memories of his early childhood spending time with his extended whanau on the Whanganui River and this is where his lifelong spiritual journey rooted in Maori Catholicism began.

Bob was an intelligent student gaining top marks in Latin, French and Maths. He attended St Bernard's College in Lower Hutt where he gained University Entrance

which placed him in the top one percent of Maori student achievers. He gained a Ngarimu VC Scholarship to attend Victoria University where he studied engineering. Later he gained another scholarship to study at University of Canterbury.

Bob came to Christchurch when Te Rangimarie was being established and he became a leader of the community.

Bob very much enjoyed kapahaka – with the fire and energy that was involved in it, often with young people.

Over the years Bob along with his loving wife, Barbara, have had a deep

involvement in the Church at all levels. He provided cultural advice to successive bishops, priests and pastoral staff of the Church. He was a leading figure in the Catholic Church's efforts to deepen its commitment to biculturalism. Together Bob and Barbara have been passionate advocates for Catholic education and involved in many of our Catholic schools in Christchurch. Nationally he was a founding member of the Catholic Māori Runanga at its inception in Kirikiriroa, (Hamilton) and he also helped to draft its Constitution. He was on the Diocesan Commission for Justice and Peace for 14 years.

*“he had a deep and abiding reverence for God. He never felt the need to explain that and he trusted in the Lord with all his heart”*

Above all else Bob was determined always to attend Sunday Mass each week as he had a deep and abiding reverence for God. He never felt the need to explain that and he trusted in the Lord with all his heart.

Over these days Bob's gentleness and humility has been spoken of many times. He was a living example of the whakatauki, "Kāore te kumara e kōrero mō tōna ake reka" (The kumara doesn't speak of its own sweetness). He has served us faithfully over the years and particularly as kaitiaki of Te Rangimarie Centre.

Moe mai i te rangimarie e te Rangatira, moe mai, moe mai, moe mai ra, Moe mai i roto i nga ringa ringa o te Matua. Haere haere haere atu ra. (Rest in peace Bob, in God's loving arms)

(Acknowledgement: Some material used from the eulogy by Russell Caldwell)

Peace of mind for you.  
Certainty for those you love.

Plan a personalised funeral ceremony, and we'll deliver it with the traditions of dignity, respect, and service that the people of Ōtautahi Christchurch have trusted for over 140 years. Talk to us, and one of our caring team can help you through our various pre-arranged and pre-paid funeral options, including the Catholic Development Fund. 03 379 9920 | [staff@johnrhind.co.nz](mailto:staff@johnrhind.co.nz)

**JOHN RHIND**  
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

[johnrhind.co.nz](http://johnrhind.co.nz)

**CHRISTCHURCH & KAIAPOI**  
A proud Funeral Directors Association of NZ member



## "Thy Will Be Done"

### Sr Maria O'Connell RSM RIP

The following is from a tribute by Theresa Scott RSM given at Maria O'Connell's funeral. Sr Maria was professed a Sister of Mercy on 5 September 1953; she died on 31 January 2025 at Nazareth House. Her Perpetual Profession motto was "Thy Will Be Done."

"On Sunday, 2 February, Maria would have celebrated 92 years of life, a life full of energy and vitality. Born and raised on a farm in Dunsandel, she attended the small country school, before boarding at Sacred Heart College in Timaru, run by the Sisters of Mercy, with its rules and regulations, but this did not deter her from returning to Timaru to become a member of our Mercy community there, two years later. Maria trained as a teacher and taught in schools on the West Coast and in Ōtautahi Christchurch. Past pupils still reminisce about this attractive young Sister Maria Goretti, as she was known then. Her enthusiasm was infectious.



In the late 60s, she felt called to work with people who were disadvantaged materially and spiritually. She became involved working with inmates in Rolleston Prison, a position she held for over 20 years. She became close to prisoners' whānau, especially the women and children. Joining the Te Rangimārie Catholic community, she became aware of the needs of the people in the inner city of Ōtautahi and their challenges. Her homes in Worcester and Hereford streets became open houses for people in need.

She was an activist who lived courageously. Her life was governed by Atua (God), whānau (family), Te Tiriti (the treaty), and Mana Wahine (feminism). Sometimes, we didn't always want to hear the challenge Maria presented to us. Discussions were never about who was right or wrong, but coloured by her fight for equality for all. We admired her resolve to make the world a better place.

All of us knew Maria in various ways, be it as a family member, a friend, an advocate, an English tutor (to new immigrants), or a listening ear. You may have tramped with her, received a gift of her art or pottery, or shared her love of books and reading. She made our lives so much richer in so many ways.

Thank you, Maria, for 72 years of commitment to following the call of Catherine McAuley and your faithful service in this diocese. Kia okioki Maria i runga i te rangimārie."



### Fr Geoff Gray RIP

Fr Geoff Gray very sadly died on 29 November, 2024 in Akaroa, aged 82 years. Fr Gray was born in Timaru on 7 November 1942, attended Sacred Heart Primary School, Marist Brothers School and later St Bede's College in Christchurch. He was ordained on 17 June 1972 by Bishop Brian Ashby in Sacred Heart Basilica, Timaru and was a priest for 52 years.

He served in many parishes in the Christchurch Diocese. These included Greymouth, Addington, Chatham Islands, New Brighton, Waimate, Temuka, Timaru North, Ashburton and Akaroa. For some years, Fr Gray served as a priest in Bolivia as part of the Missionary Society of St James on two occasions, spanning a total of 11 years.

In addition to his parish ministry he also served as Director of Religious Education from 1979-1984, was a member of the Bishop's advisory body, the College of Consultors, from 2014 to 2017 and was Chancellor of the Diocese from 2014 to 2018. He was a faithful son of the diocese.

Bishop Michael Gielen offered a funeral Mass for Fr Geoff in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral on Thursday, 5 December, with his Requiem Mass offered the following morning in Sacred Heart Basilica, Timaru. He was interred in the Timaru cemetery. Our thoughts and prayers remain with his family and friends and we have been blessed by his more than five decades in the service of Our Lord and His people. May Fr Geoff rest in peace.

#### Keeping the Faith alive



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

But the Church's greatest gift is not just material aid—it's the **gift of Jesus Christ**.

**Aid to the Church in Need** is the only international Catholic charity focused on the spiritual

and pastoral needs of suffering Christians. Our mission is to nurture the faith where the faithful are oppressed and persecuted. We support the Church when she cannot support herself.

**Each year we support more than 5000 projects in 140 countries** ranging from the formation of priests, funding poor nuns and building churches to training catechists and to distribute Catholic resources.



#### Will you join us in keeping the faith alive?

Please scan the QR code or visit [www.aidtochurch.org/](http://www.aidtochurch.org/)



**signup** to sign up for our newsletter and discover how you can help keep the faith alive for our brothers and sisters who cry out for Jesus. As a sign of thanks – we will send you a blessed Rosary.



Aid to the  
Church in Need

ACN AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND

AU 1800 101 201 • NZ 0800 242 322 • [www.aidtochurch.org](http://www.aidtochurch.org)



Seyara and Molly with JJAMM organiser  
Sr Jan Barnett rsj

## Unlocking Leadership & Inspiration: JJAMM 2025

by Molly Maynard and Seyara De Silva

The only jam we knew was the spread on our toast. That is, until 15-18 February, when we experienced JJAMM with two Js and two Ms. The "Joseph, Julian and Mary MacKillop" conference, held in Sydney, brought together student leaders from Josephite schools throughout Australia, along with representatives from two schools in New Zealand.

For us, it was a life-changing experience, as we were able to deepen our faith and connect with other school leaders. Throughout the conference, we participated in presentations, activities, and lessons which applied Josephite values to practical leadership skills. Understanding the humble, passionate, and creative leadership styles of St Mary



Student leaders from Australia and New Zealand at JJAMM in Sydney



Sixty Marian College students have been trained in Peer to Peer Ministry

## A 50 Year Reunion

by Antoinette Searle

Labour Weekend saw former students of Sacred Heart and Xavier Colleges reunite in Christchurch to celebrate fifty years since they were together at what has become Catholic Cathedral College in Ferry Road. The 1974 Seventh Form

and 1973 Sixth Form brought 70 people together for a weekend of reconnection and celebration. We all gathered to see our old classmates at the Hotel Montreal. The large print on the name badges was a great help! A very successful tour of the

school the next day saw us look around Catholic Cathedral College and see the remains of our old schools. We were particularly enthralled as to where the old common room was and even wondered if our messages inside the floorboards will still be there when it shortly comes down. Unlike today, there were 11 girls in the Sacred Heart College Seventh Form.

Classmate and current Board member, Rick Stone, filled in the passage of time, telling us about the use of the buildings after the earthquakes. How exciting to see what the future holds with plans underway with the Blessed Sacrament Cathedral next to the College. On the tables were copies of sports teams and old magazines, as well as aerial site photos.



Sacred Heart College and Xavier College  
past pupils gathered for a reunion weekend



of the Cross MacKillop influenced us to take a deeper look into our leadership and vision for this year.

Furthermore, we were encouraged to think deeply about society's problems, and to work together for change. Finally, we participated in numerous activities that broadened our own presentation, collaboration, and communication skills.

Highlights for us included the incredible bonds we made with other students, the Sydney Harbour ferry ride, and Mary MacKillop's Chapel. Overall, this conference was an absolute privilege to attend. Our leadership team looks forward to incorporating our new learning into this year's activities.



Head of Special Character Seyara De Silva and Head Student Molly Maynard at the Mary MacKillop Chapel



More than 60 past students and staff from Marian and McKillop colleges came together to remember and celebrate the life of Sr Colette Forde rsj, who died last year. A memorial seat, funded by generous donations from alumni and staff, was unveiled and now proudly stands at the front of Marian College.

A wonderful buffet dinner held at The Elms followed the tour. Here, our previous head girl, Veronica Buckley, toasted the 50 years. Congratulations were shared on eight marriages that started as school sweethearts. A sombre moment was when we acknowledged those who had died.

The next morning, we met at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral for Mass. We were delighted with the turn-out and enjoyed the beautiful music of the Cathedral choir, directed by Don Whelan. We fondly remembered our favourite teachers and the educational opportunities the Sisters of the Mission and the Marist brothers gave us. It was a great get-together, and there was talk of holding another one in five years. We wish the college well in their re-development.



## CATHOLIC BUSINESS NETWORK

CONNECT | EXPLORE | GROW

Join the **Catholic Business Network** for a luncheon and cocktail evenings in 2025.

Connect with like-minded professionals, hear from inspiring speakers, and explore the intersection of faith and business.

**Individual and corporate memberships available.**

**cbn.nz**

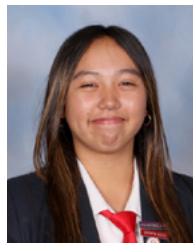
# 2025 College Head Students

## Catholic Cathedral College



**Marc Marimon**  
Head Boy

It is my great pleasure and honour to be one of the Head Students of Catholic Cathedral College. This school has been a home to me for four years, where I have grown and learned more than just academically, but also in my faith, my beliefs, my strength as part of our community, and as an individual. I have come to learn and believe that every student has a unique voice that deserves to be heard; "He tangata, he tangata, he tangata" (It is the people, it is the people, it is the people.) People are at the centre of my beliefs as I lead this kura, our whanau. My vision is to continue the legacy of our previous leaders, and to strengthen not only our school values—Manaakitanga, Whakapono, Panekiretanga, and Whanaunatanga—but also our school's founding values, given by the Marist brothers. By leading with presence, simplicity, love of work, family spirit, and in the way of Mary, I aim to build upon the foundations of our leaders, to further shape our school to grow in faith, unity, and in excellence.



**Shiloh Martinez**  
Head Girl

I am extremely excited and honoured to be one of our Head Students. I was born in the Philippines and when I was just two years old, my family moved to Christchurch, where I've had the privilege of growing up. Being at Cathedral since 2021, I've been part of a school where cultures unite, creating a community that's warm and bright, where respect and values are shared by all, and where we experience the vibrant energy within our school walls. As the only Catholic co-ed school in Christchurch, we are shaped by the legacy of the Mission Sisters and Marist Brothers. We are guided by our faith in God and it is through Him that we find our strength. Living as Jesus did, with love, compassion, and service to others, inspires us to follow our school motto, 'To Live by Faith.'

## Villa Maria College



**Anahera Leo'o**  
Head Student

I am truly honoured to attend Villa Maria College. Being part of this community means growing within a Catholic environment which fosters compassion, respect, and excellence. Showing love and mercy is essential, as the Bible calls us to "love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:39) and "be merciful" (Matthew 5:7). By living these values, we reflect God's love and create a kinder, more compassionate world.



**Molly Maynard**  
Head Student

I am very privileged to be the Head Student at Marian College. Throughout my time at Marian, I have experienced support in my learning and faith, especially in the values we are encouraged to follow: respect, courage, commitment, and perseverance. I have also learnt the importance of service; how helping people in need is a great way to follow Jesus and our role models: Mary mother of God, Mary MacKillop, and Catherine McAuley. I am very grateful for my education here at Marian and all the opportunities that come with it, and hope to ensure other students feel the same way.

## Marian College

# HannConstruction

COMPANY LIMITED

**Committed to Rebuilding and Strengthening Catholic Facilities in Christchurch**  
**www.hannbuilt.co.nz - 03 344 5951**

## St Thomas of Canterbury



### Neihana Mata'afa College Captain

I have the privilege of serving St Thomas of Canterbury College as College Captain for 2025. Our core values are "Brotherhood, Compassion, Manawa, and Legacy." I am committed to embodying them

in everything I do. By the end of this exciting year, I know our student leadership team will have made a meaningful impact. My family deserves my deepest gratitude. Their unwavering support has shaped me into the person I am today. Being Māori and Samoan, I have the opportunity to represent not just myself, but both sides of my whakapapa and culture. My goal is to lead by example, honour my heritage, and inspire others to believe in God and themselves. 2025 is our year!

## St Bedes College



### Gethin Blair Head Boy

I am deeply honoured and privileged to serve as Head Boy of St Bede's College this year. Being a Bedean means everything to me and I take immense pride in being part of a school that is not only

unapologetically Catholic and Marist, but also one that is built on faith, service, and tradition. One of the values closest to my heart is our school motto, Fide et Opere — by faith and work. Every day, I strive to live this out by supporting and guiding younger students, ensuring they feel welcomed, valued, and encouraged to embrace everything that makes St Bede's special. The Marist way has taught me that true leadership is about service, humility, and community, and I am incredibly grateful to be part of this journey. I look forward to the year ahead, knowing that as a strong and united Bedean family, we will continue to uphold the traditions, faith, and brotherhood that make our college so special.

## John Paul II High School



### Sarah Manoj Champagnat Marist Leader

I am serving as the Champagnat Marist leader for our school. This year, the main goal is to focus on the Whakatauki "He tangata, he tangata, he tangata," - It is the people, it is the people, it is the people. In its purest

form, this means that bringing our students' voices to action will be our most important duty this year. I also want to focus on the Marist and Mercy values. These values remind me to ask for guidance from God before making decisions. My favorite value is: In the Way of Mary; by showing virtues like humility and faithfulness. As a first-generation immigrant from India, who moved to New Zealand five years ago, I have learned to embrace every opportunity that comes my way.



### Pyper Murphy Mercy Leader

I feel very honoured to be our Mercy Leader. As our High School is very small, there is a big sense of unity, which I am proud to be a part of. I cannot wait to help others learn what it means to be a part of John Paul II

and how we are all unified through Christ. I strongly believe that we are called to live the way that Jesus taught us to, by loving one another in all that we do. I aim to bring this sense of compassion and care for others throughout this school year and to present to others how simple it is to do the same.



### Roshni Francis Mission Leader

I'm honoured to be our Mission Leader. My role includes promoting the Catholic character of the school and creating avenues for young people to develop their faith. My family and heritage is one in which

the Catholic faith is embedded in how we live and act. As a student striving to live by the school motto, "Christ is the Key," I try to use this as a guide to my faith. I have realised that Christianity means a true relationship with God. I hope to bring this same awareness to all those I meet. I pray that we, as a school, continue to strive for excellence and uphold our value of keeping Christ as the key of our hearts.

## INVEST IN THEIR FUTURE

A CDF Education Savings Account sets your child on their education journey while earning interest and supporting good faith throughout the community.

Provide for a loved one's school fees, camps, uniforms, tertiary study or first car.

CDF - INVEST IN GOOD: 0800 403 863



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

## Roncalli College

### James Fennessy Head Boy

During my time at Roncalli, I have received a massive amount of support, which I have greatly appreciated. So far on my leadership journey, I have been lucky enough to attend Outward Bound, Rotary Boyle River Leadership Camp, and also many leadership opportunities with the Marist Network of schools. These experiences have taught me the fundamentals of leadership and have challenged me to step out of my comfort zone and reflect on my personal values. During my final year as a leader at Roncalli, I would like to encourage fellow students to follow their faith and make the most of their high school opportunities. Next year I am planning to study business at Otago University.

### Maevi Fleming Head Girl

Throughout the past four years at Roncalli, I've been provided with a supportive influence, enabling me to become the person I am today. I'm eager to give back to the students, staff, and wider community by serving, supporting others, and building even more relationships and connections. My vision this year is to extend the level of culture within Roncalli, and to also build on our special character, which are both Marist and Mercy values. Outside of school, I enjoy music and performing arts, and you can find me playing guitar, singing, or participating in local shows. I have a strong passion for public speaking and debating, which has inspired my goal of pursuing a double degree in law and music, with the ambition of one day becoming a politician.

*From left to right: Gabriel Dickerson (Deputy), Jack Steele (Deputy), James Fennessy (Head Boy), Maevi Fleming (Head Girl), Holly Thomas (Deputy).*



## LifeTeen

This year's summer camp at St Paul's Collegiate in Hamilton saw the biggest ever Christchurch group attend. Mostly drawn from the Cathedral and Waimakariri Parishes, 30 young people were treated to engaging activities, powerful talks, and worship opportunities. We're starting to see the effects of this camp flow into our parish communities.



## Bishop Lyons Lives On *Iconic Shield Won by St Thomas of Canterbury*

by Marcus Quinanola, Edmund Rice Inclusive Community Leader, St Thomas of Canterbury College.

Over 14-15 March, all seven Catholic colleges of the Christchurch Diocese (John Paul II High School, Greymouth; Roncalli College, Timaru; and local colleges Marian, Villa Maria, Catholic Cathedral, St Bede's, and St Thomas of Canterbury) participated in various public speaking competitions, with the goal of winning the Bishop Lyons Shield. St Bede's hosted us for the first time since 2015. This competition is a significant icon, originating from the 1950s.

The competition was full of heart, mind, and spirit! In speeches, students expressed soulful emotions, forming ideas manifesting in our minds; debating teams stood steadfast in belief; and in questions, our minds united to explain the meaning of faith and the Word.

For the first time in the history of the competition, the St Thomas of Canterbury debating team won our section.

But outside of competitive events, we connected; united through Catholic faith, we found joy in the community around us - even trading blazers, badges, and praise. All seven schools demonstrated their dedication, time, and practice in their challenges, and closed into fierce competition between St Bede's and St Thomas'. In the final stretch, St Thomas' emerged victorious, with St Bede's College as runner-up.

Friday night saw all the schools gathered in the beautiful St Bede's College Chapel to celebrate Mass with Bishop Michael Gielen. To have so many of us young people there, sharing our faith, was something quite special.

Next year many of us will return to the team and defend the Shield in Timaru at Roncalli College!



## Pontifical Mission at Catholic Cathedral College

On 26 February, Catholic Cathedral College was honoured to welcome Fr Leopold Kropfreiter SJM and Fr Michael Pui of the Pontifical Mission on a visit to the school. Fr Leopold is the National Director of the Pontifical Mission of Kazakhstan.

After a formal welcome and refreshments, senior students heard about Fr Leopold's work, and were able to see what school life is like in Kazakhstan. This was also a wonderful opportunity for our senior students to hear more about the work of the Pontifical Mission Society in spreading the Gospel.

Kaumātua, the late Bob Te Miha and his wife, Barbara, presented Fr Leopold with a precious taonga, a tūi carved by Russell Thyne (Te Arawa and Ngā Puhī). Fr Leopold was delighted to hear about the significance of the tūi and to learn of a shared Kazakhstan connection through Russell's whakapapa.



*Kaumātua Bob and Barbara Te Miha presenting the carved tūi to Fr Leopold Kropfreiter*



*Mark Aying, Jhanel Reyes, Fr Michael Pui, Fr Leopold Kropfreiter, Breanna Fesway, Aidan Aileone*



*Sofia Hinlo, Franz Broces, Fr Michael Pui, Fr Leopold Kropfreiter, Gregory Ducrot, Jaden Coloma*

## Equip Ministry Leaders Training Day

In late January, 65 emerging leaders from our parishes, John Paul II High School, St Thomas', Catholic Cathedral College, Villa Maria, and Marian Colleges, attended the first Equip Ministry Leaders training day. This day, coordinated by CYT, is part of the roll-out of the Catholic Schools Youth Ministry International scheme (CSYMI) in our Colleges. It will equip young people to be leaders in their own faith communities.



# Students and Teachers Attend Equipping School to Strengthen Youth Ministry in the Christchurch Diocese

Late February saw 14 students, teachers, and Christchurch diocesan staff travel to Canberra to participate in an “Equipping School” as part of Catholic Schools Youth Ministry International (CSYMI). The students, who were from the pilot schools - Catholic Cathedral College (CCC), John Paul II High School in Greymouth, and St Thomas of Canterbury College - traveled to Canberra with their teachers for the two-day event. The equipping school, designed to help implement the CSYMI programme throughout the Christchurch Diocese, was hosted at the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese Centre, adjacent to St Christopher’s Cathedral.

In his opening remarks, Archbishop Christopher Prowse of Canberra-Goulburn emphasised that “The Church needs both mystical and functional Catholicism. Programmes and resources are not enough.” The CSYMI programme aims to help young people encounter the person of Jesus and grow in their relationship with Him as they transition into adulthood.

Nathan Galea, Project Officer for the New Evangelisation in Catholic Schools within the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese, explained that the CSYMI programme has emerged in response to the Australian Catholic Bishops’ call for “Catholic Schools to be centres of the New Evangelisation.” Bishop Michael Gielen, who initiated this work in his Diocese, shares similar goals for his schools.

Participants were divided into three streams: one for students, one for teachers, and one for youth ministry workers. Each group engaged in lectures, workshops, and discussions tailored to their specific roles. In the evenings, participants traveled to St Benedict’s Church in Narrabundah, where parish priest Fr Chris Eaton MGL (a former CCC student) led prayer and ministry sessions, including praise and worship music, Eucharistic Adoration, and the sacrament of Reconciliation. Fr Chris was assisted by other priests of his order in these sessions, as well as the Archdiocesan praise and worship band.

Stephen Kennedy, Director of Religious Studies at St Thomas of Canterbury College, expressed his enthusiasm for the experience: “The best thing about this is that we’re growing our faith leaders - these young Year 12 students. But more importantly, we are connecting as a group of people - within our schools, within our diocese, and around the world.”

The Equipping School builds upon the work of Diocesan Youth Coordinator Mark Currie, who successfully delivered a one-day Leadership programme for Year 11-13 students in January. Mr Currie, along with other diocesan staff present at the event, was able to identify aspects of the Canberra Equipping School that would enhance the local programme delivered in January and inform future plans for the CSYMI initiative.

Here’s what some of the students had to say about their experience:

“I’ve learned that each individual is a part of the Body of Christ, and as part of the Body of Christ, we are called to make a difference in the world.” - Rianna Tordecilla, Year 12, Catholic Cathedral College.

“As I met new people here, I’ve realised that we’re all on different journeys of faith, and we can help each other on that journey.” - Samuel Amaris, Year 12, St Thomas of Canterbury College.

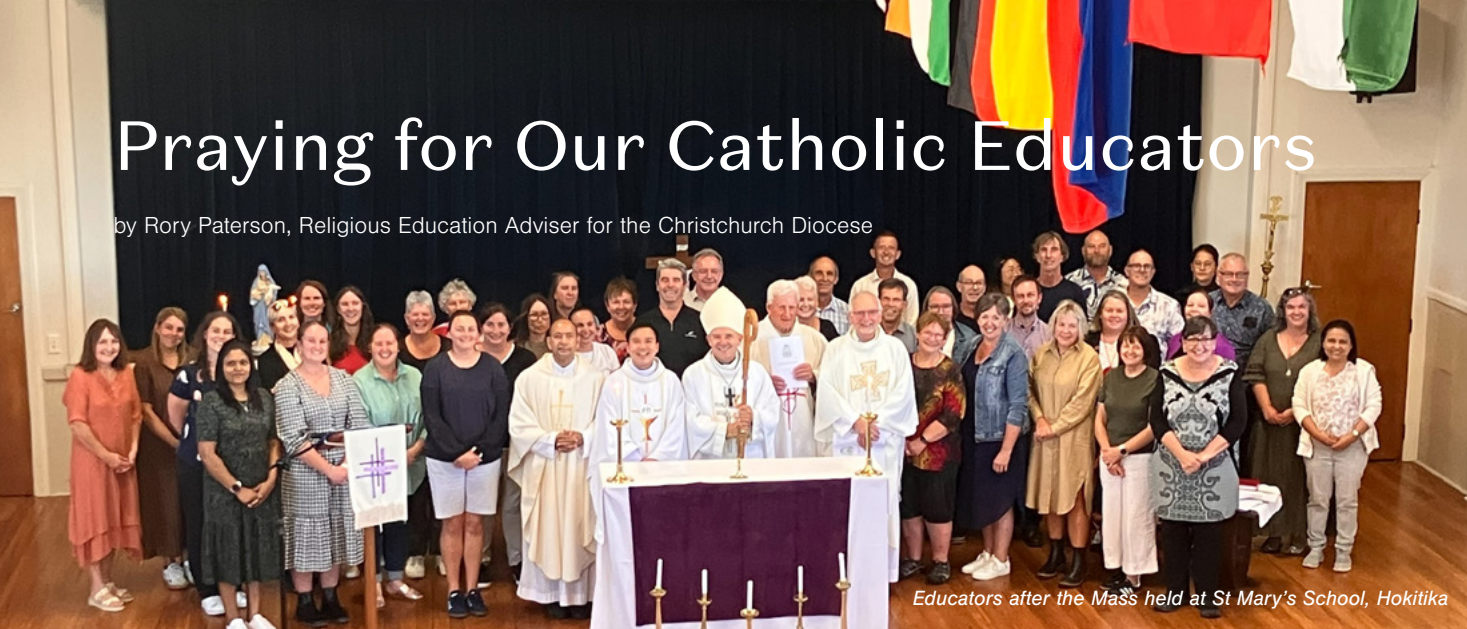
“I’ve learned that the youth are the future of the Church, but we’re also the now.” - Katie Boddy, Year 12, John Paul II High School.

“The place where we’ve been located for the Equipping School is right next to St Christopher’s Cathedral. In Christchurch, we don’t have anything like that. You go in and see all the stained glass; it’s amazing! I’m super excited to go back to our ministry teams and share how bold the Australians are and how comfortable they are with their Christianity. I think that’s an amazing thing to share.” - Julia Fallon, Year 12, Catholic Cathedral College.



# Praying for Our Catholic Educators

by Rory Paterson, Religious Education Adviser for the Christchurch Diocese



*Educators after the Mass held at St Mary's School, Hokitika*

In the first half of Term One, Bishop Michael Gielen offered three Masses to pray for and encourage those working in Catholic education throughout the diocese. He was supported in doing so by a number of our clergy. The purpose of these Masses was threefold: to give thanks to Our Lord for being at the centre of our lives in education, to pray for the continued blessing of Catholic education in the diocese, and to acknowledge the ongoing formation of those who participate in Bishop Gielen's teaching ministry within Catholic schools.

On 20 February, 220 teachers from the greater Christchurch region gathered in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral for a Mass in commemoration of the Holy Year of Jubilee. Likewise, on 12 March, 80 teachers from Mid and South Canterbury gathered in the newly restored St Joseph's Church, Temuka. 60 teachers, board members, and parishioners attended the final of these Masses for 2025, held on 19 March, the Solemnity of St Joseph, at St Mary's School, Hokitika. Music at these Masses was led by our Diocesan Sacred Music Advisor, Ken Joblin. For a sixth year, the Christchurch Mass featured the Teachers Schola, singers drawn from our Catholic school community.

As we did at each of these three Masses, we invite you to join in praying for our Bishop, that he receives every grace needed to be Christ's apostle in this diocese, and that his gaze is always firmly fixed on Our Lord. We prayed for the Church in this part of our country: that in this year of Jubilee, She will never fail to be a prophetic voice, bringing the insight of the Gospel to the issues of our day.

We prayed for education in our country: that those looking to the future for our schools will do so with values aligned to Christ and the Christian foundations laid down by Bishop Pompallier and those who first brought the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Please pray for our teachers in Catholic schools: that we are truly vessels of Christ, authentically handing on the gift of faith to our students in thought, deed, and word.

Likewise, for our students: that they will be open to the Gospel in every season of their lives and never hesitate to call on Him as their Father in heaven, and to pray for the intercession of their Mother Mary and the Communion of Saints. We remember those who have died, having influenced us as teachers in Catholic schools: may the good they have done live on through us and remain in our schools, and their fidelity be rewarded by Our Lord in heaven.

At the conclusion of the Christchurch Mass, the following teachers were recognised by the Catholic Education Office for their ongoing formation. The Diocesan Certificate of Attainment in Religious Studies was awarded to:

*Angela (Ange) Asi (St Albans Catholic School), Joanne (Jo) Jones and Clair Wilton (St Bernadette's School, Hornby), Lillian Lever (St Bede's College), Trish McKendry (St Patrick's School, Kaiapoi), Ruth Robertson (Hornby High School), and Melissa Tucker (St Joseph's School, Papanui).*

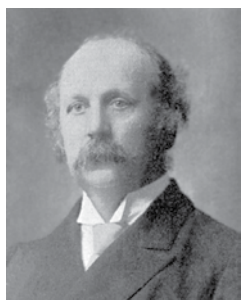
The New Zealand Certificate in Christian Studies was awarded to:

*Myrna Burroughs (Catholic Cathedral College), Christie Harwood (Our Lady of Victories School, Sockburn), Petrea Hibbs (St Patrick's School, Bryndwr), Frank McManus and Kayte Jory (Sacred Heart School, Addington), Angelina (Angel) Moore (New Brighton Catholic School), Ruth Robertson (Hornby High School), and Nicole Sequeira (Catholic Cathedral College).*

As this Year of Jubilee unfolds, may our lives open further to the spirit of the Lord, resting upon us.



*(above) Awardees at the Christchurch Mass held at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral; (left) Educators praying during the Mass at St Joseph's Church, Temuka.*



## Built on Petre

by Dominic Hassan

In the first of two articles, Dominic Hassan explores something of the life and legacy of Catholic architect, Francis Petre. In this edition, Dominic focuses on Petre's life. In Issue 145 he will outline the beauty of the most significant of Petre's churches.

Anyone familiar with the landmarks of Wellington, Christchurch, Timaru, Waimate, Oamaru, Dunedin or Invercargill, will know something of the legacy of Francis William Petre. Fashions in architecture come and go, but some buildings just continue to stand out from the rest.

Francis was born in 1847, just seven years after Petone, his hometown, had been settled. Henry, his father, arrived in 1840. Henry was the 21-year-old son of staunchly Roman Catholic William Petre, the eleventh Baron Petre of Ingatestone in Essex, and chairman of the New Zealand Company.

After a year in the fledgling colony, young Henry returned to England to marry, returning with his sixteen-year-old bride, Mary Ann, in 1842. He joined his cousins Charles Clifford and William Vavasour in establishing a sheep station in the Wairarapa. Unsettled by the 1855 Wellington earthquake, Henry turned down an appointment from Governor Grey and returned with Mary and their numerous children to England.

There, young Francis received an education befitting his family's standing and creed: The Jesuit, Mount St Mary College, Derbyshire; Royal Naval College, Portsmouth; Haffreingue College, Boulogne-sur-Mer, France; and Ushaw College, Durham.

After training with prominent London firms in naval architecture, architecture, and engineering, the 25-year-old Francis, with experience in mass concrete construction, was hired by the international railway, mining, and smelting corporation, John Brogden and Sons, and sent to the antipodean new Edinburgh, Dunedin.

For the next three years, he supervised the construction of railway lines, tunnels, and bridges for the Dunedin to Balclutha and Blenheim to Picton railway lines. He also directed the drainage of swamp land in the Taieri Plains. On completion of these tasks in 1875, he went out on his own, setting up an architecture and engineering practice in Dunedin. He was soon busy in the thriving southern city, designing substantial homes for its high-profile residents. He proved adept in delivering the diverse styles of his client's wishes, be they tudor, castle, or early gothic revival, in a self-assured contemporary mode with generous windows and simple details. The former Canterbury student union building, later converted into the tavern, "Dux Deluxe", was a residence he completed in 1883 for Christchurch merchant, John Lewis.

One thing led to another. After completing a castle-like mansion for the staunchly Presbyterian member of parliament, Edward Cargill, an unexpected romance blossomed between the eligible bachelor architect and Mr Cargill's daughter, Margaret. After an awkward courtship and inter-faith negotiation, the couple were permitted their mixed marriage in 1881, not in St Joseph's Cathedral, nor in the Presbyterian First Church, but at Mr Cargill's seaside 'castle'. A stable, life-long union followed, with seven daughters and six sons.

### 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

*Gold coin donation for non-residents*

### MARY POTTER COMMUNITY CENTRE

442 Durham Street North, St Albans, Christchurch 8014 Telephone 372 9224

Website [www.lcmchristchurch.org.nz](http://www.lcmchristchurch.org.nz) Email [nzadmin@lcm.org.au](mailto:nzadmin@lcm.org.au)





(previous page) Sacred Heart Cathedral, Wellington; Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Christchurch; (above) Sacred Heart Cathedral, Wellington Photo credit: Bernie Velasco; (right from top) Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Christchurch; Sacred Heart Basilica, Timaru.



The talented young local architect / engineer also caught the attention of the Catholic Bishop, Patrick Moran. Francis was set to work on a substantial priory for the numerous Dominican nuns, on their steep urban-fringe site, in a unique simplified gothic style, with faceted windows. It was to be the largest unreinforced concrete building in the southern hemisphere, earning Petre the nickname, "Lord Concrete".

Soon after came potentially his most dramatic work, next door to the priory, the new Catholic cathedral of Dunedin. Had St Joseph's Cathedral been fully realised, it would have towered over the hilly city in the vertical grandeur of Scottish gothic revival. Even as built, the 1886 edifice commanding a high knoll atop many steps at the corner of Rattray and Smith Streets in basalt and Oamaru stone, is impressive. Missing is the planned apse and 61m central spire, which, due to funding constraints after the gold rush, did not eventuate.

He completed 36 small parish churches and six larger churches, named "basilicas", around the South Island and Wellington. In the latter, he turned from the gothic revival style to various Italianate modes.

St Patrick's Basilica, South Dunedin, built 1892-1894, was followed by another basilica of the same name in Oamaru, beginning in 1893. His next large church, Wellington's Sacred Heart Basilica (now Cathedral), 1899-1901, neighbours the parliamentary complex. Invercargill's St Mary's Basilica, 1904-1905, is the least basilica-like of his 'basilicas'.

St Patrick's Basilica, Waimate, was built 1908-1909. The last of Petre's bigger churches, Timaru's Basilica of the Sacred Heart was built 1910-1911. This church was so admired that a replica was later (partially) built in Paddington, Sydney. Widely recognised as his crowning achievement was the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Christchurch, built 1901-1905. Sadly, this treasured building was a casualty of the 2010-2011 Canterbury earthquakes, leading, after a period of investigation, to its complete removal ten years later.

As a founder of the Dunedin Institute of Civil Engineers and Architects in 1876 and a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Architects upon its foundation in 1905, Francis Petre had helped to shape the profession of architecture in the fledgling nation. His legacy punctuates the townscapes of Te Wai Pounamu, serving as reminders of Roman Catholicism's role in the development of the country. As the colony's and dominion's preeminent Catholic ecclesiastical architect, conversant with engineering and liturgical design, he built upon the aspirations of emancipated British Catholicism, freely blending European architectural traditions with the emerging construction technologies of the late- and post-Victorian eras.

Francis Petre's 'three-score-and-ten' came to an end on 10 December 1918, surrounded by his numerous children, and Margaret, his wife, who was to survive him by fifteen years.

*Dominic Hassan is a registered architect with a special interest in ecclesiastical design, practising in Christchurch.*

# The Outcomes of the Synod on Synodality

by Msgr Brendan Daly

The members of XVI Synod have approved the final document “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission”. This document epitomises the approach of Pope Francis to reform in the church. Pope Francis, as he noted in his apostolic exhortation after the synod on the Amazon region, seeks to challenge rigidity in the Church, clericalism, and any approach that would narrow our vision of the Church, or would restrict our understanding of the Church to its functional structures. Synodality is a path of spiritual renewal and structural reform that enables the Church to be more participatory and missionary so that it can walk with every man and woman, radiating the light of Christ.

Normally a year or two after a synod, the Pope issues an apostolic exhortation about the synod topic. This time however, Pope Francis announced he would not be writing an apostolic exhortation, but would simply publish the final document that had been voted on by the bishops in attendance and the 70 non-bishop members. Pope Francis states “what we have approved is sufficient”. By using the word “we”, he makes the point that laity have contributed to the magisterium through this collegial act which is an act of the power of governance in the Church. By approaching the outcome of the synod in this way, Pope Francis was

delivering a message about the process involving all members of the Church who had been listened to and were part of the approval process of the final document. In that sense, the synod was operating in a model way for the entire Church.

The final document recognised the need for much more transparency and accountability in the Church. It is obvious there are many gaps in areas in the life of the Church from financial decisions, through to decision makers and the processes in abuse cases. Many issues are not dealt with promptly. Instead, there are delays, decisions are postponed, or a committee is formed to look into

the final document requires ministers and ministries to be evaluated. “A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church. How does our Church community identify the goals to be pursued, the way to reach them, and the steps to be taken? How is authority or governance exercised within our local Church? How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice? How are evaluations conducted and by who?”

Ten study groups of experts had been created after the 2023 synod meeting to deal with complex or controversial topics such as deaconesses and changes in canon law. Some changes may be

*“Lay people should have: increased participation in the discernment processes and in all phases of decision-making processes”*

the matter. At other times Judith Hahn notes power is sometimes used to delay clarifications on points or what can be done. Pope Francis in his final greeting to the synod members said true reform comes about by “listening, convening, discerning, deciding and evaluating ... [with] pauses, silences and prayer.”

Lay employees often have performance reviews, but few clergy currently have them. This will change in the future as

forthcoming in canon law, but a lot of application of synodality has been left to the local Churches to implement. This means that local Churches can apply their own applications of the synod in a way that suits their local circumstances and realities. Pope Francis in his final greeting to the synod said of the final document: “it will largely fall to you, together with many others, to make what it contains accessible in the local Churches. The text without the witness of lived experience, would lose much of its value.”

Sometimes structures in the Church exist, but they are not used, or nothing of importance is referred to them and they die. This can happen with parish councils and diocesan pastoral councils. Too often there is a lack of application of real consultative processes in the Church. Therefore, episcopal conferences are encouraged to allocate personnel and resources to facilitate the growth of a synodal Church in mission.

The final document quotes from John 21 where Peter says to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'we will go with you.' This scriptural passage symbolizes the Synodal journey was begun by the successor of Peter and today the whole Church is called to be in communion with him and to participate in the mission as

JBWere

Financial Advisers to the Catholic  
Diocese of Christchurch since 2005

Please contact us for a  
personalised investment strategy

**jbwere.co.nz**  
**0800 555 553**

©JiWire (NZ) Pty Ltd ABN 13 136 488 418  
JiWire uses the JiWire brand under licence from JiWire Limited (ACN 137 978 360), a subsidiary of National Australia Bank Limited (ABN 12 004 044 937). JiWire is not a member of the NAB group of companies (NAB Group). No member of the NAB Group guarantees, or supports, the performance of, JiWire's obligations to any party.

*“A synodal Church will have real engagement with everyone, will listen and learn as it preaches and lives the Gospel reestablishing trust”*



missionary disciples. Mission involves all the baptized, married, single, religious and clergy. Lay people should have: increased participation in the discernment processes and in all phases of decision-making processes (drafting, confirming and making decisions); more opportunities for lay people to qualify as judges in all canonical processes (New Zealand has one married woman judge); more involvement in seminaries and decision making about ordinations and who is in active ministry.

Article 60 on the role of women's leadership in the Church was the most contested issue. Seventy two percent of the delegates voted for the article, so a big number voted against it. It is clear that just because an article got a two thirds majority voting for it does not mean that change will happen. Nevertheless, article 60 is a strong official Church statement:

“There are no reasons that prevent women from taking on leadership roles in the Church: what comes from the Holy Spirit cannot be stopped. The question of women's access to the diaconal ministry also remains open. We need to continue discernment in this regard.”

A key focus of the synod was the involvement of women in positions of leadership and authority. While deaconesses remains an unresolved issue, it is clear that while some canon law needs to change, in fact the biggest obstacle to the involvement of women in decision making is the culture of the Church and things like clericalism.

Pope Francis has often spoken about how the Church has been bedeviled by clericalism and patriarchy so that things like abuse have been ignored, covered up or minimised. The synod specifically mentioned that “the Church must acknowledge its own shortcomings. It must humbly ask for forgiveness, must care for victims, provide for preventative measures, and strive in the Lord to build mutual trust.” In response to these systemic problems, Pope Francis promotes synodality, not by creating new laws which are not always observed anyway, but by developing more of a customary approach to the law that is built on living relationships in the Church with all its members of laity, religious and clergy moving together as a real

community in mission. Much will depend on what bishops and other local Church leadership allow or promote. Synodality is the path that God expects from the Church of the third millennium. A synodal Church will have real engagement with everyone, will listen and learn as it preaches and lives the Gospel reestablishing trust. The big challenge for the Church is to make synodality real, alive and active in the lives of individuals and the Church as an institution. To be a synodal Church there has to be change in the Church in New Zealand. For that to happen there must be more transparency, co-responsibility and accountability throughout Church life and that is the challenge for everyone.



**Building Christchurch Landmarks**  
[naylorlove.co.nz](http://naylorlove.co.nz)



# Upcoming Retreats

## May

02 - 04

Call to Holiness Couples Retreat  
[retreats@beatitudes.nz](mailto:retreats@beatitudes.nz)

10

Discovering your ministry style  
[www.replenishretreat.co.nz/events](http://www.replenishretreat.co.nz/events)

23 - 25

Freedom to be Loved  
Women's Retreat  
[retreats@beatitudes.nz](mailto:retreats@beatitudes.nz)

## July

23

Diocesan Jubilee Pilgrimage  
to the Beatitudes  
[moconnell@cdoc.nz](mailto:moconnell@cdoc.nz)

25 - 27

Discernment of Spirits Retreat  
[retreats@beatitudes.nz](mailto:retreats@beatitudes.nz)

## August

09

Diocesan Year of Prayer  
Pilgrimage & Retreat – Temuka  
[moconnell@cdoc.nz](mailto:moconnell@cdoc.nz)

16

Marian Retreat Day at the  
Community of the Beatitudes  
[retreats@beatitudes.nz](mailto:retreats@beatitudes.nz)

22 - 24th

Diocesan Men's Vocations Retreat  
[moconnell@cdoc.nz](mailto:moconnell@cdoc.nz)

## June

06 - 08

Men's Pentecost Retreat  
Community of the Beatitudes  
[retreats@beatitudes.nz](mailto:retreats@beatitudes.nz)

13 - 14

Called and Gifted Workshop  
[www.replenishretreat.co.nz/events](http://www.replenishretreat.co.nz/events)

23 - 25

Praying with St Ignatius of Loyola  
– Exploring the major themes  
of the Spiritual Exercises  
[www.sistereretreat.com](http://www.sistereretreat.com)

27 - 29

Revolution Camp  
for Years 7-9 at Woodend Christian Camp  
[mcurrie@cdoc.nz](mailto:mcurrie@cdoc.nz)

## CavellLeitch

### Move with confidence

However you're stuck, we are a Christchurch law firm that is here to help, not make it harder. That's why our legal advice is simple to understand with a clear point of view, so you can make decisions you're sure about and get moving again.

+64 3 339 9940  
[cavell.co.nz](http://cavell.co.nz)

# Inform

A PUBLICATION OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOP OF CHRISTCHURCH

**Deadline for next issue:**

**Friday 30 May 2025**

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

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

**Design & layout:** Cath Waller Design

**Printing:** Sprint Print



This publication uses 100% recyclable paper from sustainably managed forests

**CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF CHRISTCHURCH**

TE TAKIWÄ Ō TE PIHOPA



[cdoc.nz](http://cdoc.nz)



[chchcatholic](https://www.facebook.com/chchcatholic)



[catholicdioceseofchristchurch](https://www.instagram.com/catholicdioceseofchristchurch)