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Towards new horizons
CARITAS STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR OCEANIA 2020 REPORT

Many countries in Oceania are living in an emergency situation and facing a convergence of multiple crises such as climate change, economic instability, a global pandemic and conflict, says a new Caritas report on Oceania.

The report, entitled ‘Towards new horizons, State of the Environment for Oceania 2020 Report’, says in its introduction that governments have responded in a variety of ways to the global pandemic, with severe impacts on Oceania.

Restrictions on international travel and trade produced negative economic consequences, with many places reliant on tourism and remittances from family members overseas. Humanitarian aid and supplies were disrupted and complicated due to travel restrictions and Covid-19 precautions.

However, the report notes the pandemic showed how quickly nature can recover when given space, and how quickly governments and institutions can act in a crisis.

The Report, issued annually by Caritas, assesses the impact of environmental issues on people in the region. The assessment is based on stories and data received by Caritas from official sources, as well as Caritas’ staff, partners and associates in the region.

FIVE CATEGORIES

- weather;
- coastal erosion and sea level rise;
- food and water;
- offshore mining and drilling; and
- finance availability to deal with climate change.

Caritas’ assessment of extreme weather impacts in Oceania remains at severe, based on the unprecedented bushfires in Australia; the impact of Cyclone Harold on countries such as Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and Fiji; and highly unusual weather events in many places. Extreme weather patterns are a new normal, says the Report.

“We must use the present crisis to attend to the needs of the poorest, including our Mother Earth and future generations.” – Towards new horizons

On the issue of coastal erosion and sea-level rise, Caritas has raised its assessment from high to severe, reflecting concern from Caritas members in Tonga, Fiji and Papua New Guinea in particular. Fiji is looking to relocate more than 40 coastal villages in coming years.

Caritas’ assessment of environmental impacts on food and water supply remains at high. Both unusual weather events and resource extraction continue to impact poorer populations. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of some poor urban dwellers compared to people who live close to the land and food supplies.

Caritas has raised its assessment of the impact of offshore mining and drilling from moderate to high, highlighting the stress that continued efforts to mine the seafloor is placing on coastal peoples.

Finally, the Report concludes that the finance available for vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change is woefully inadequate. ‘There is still only a trickle of what many frontline Pacific communities need to survive,’ says the Report.

Recommendations

The Report’s recommendations include the rebuilding of economies that serve people and the planet, that value and support local resilience, food production, ecosystems, and communities.

It calls on Governments to remain committed to stronger Nationally Determined Contributions.”

Continued on p3

Michael Fitzsimons

Oceania faces multiple crises – Caritas Report

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Continued on p3
This month WelCom features two recent and significant Church-based documents: Pope Francis’ latest encyclical, p 28; and closer to home, the annual Oceania environmental report from Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, p 1 and 3.

Both were written during the Covid-19 global pandemic and released to coincide with St Francis of Assisi Day, 4 October. They each cite the pandemic as a wake-up call and a profound opportunity to change hearts and minds and ‘renew the face of the earth’.

The Caritas report recommends rebuilding economies that serve people and the planet, that value and support ecosystems and communities, and that reach out and protect those on the margins.

In Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis urges people to renew society by putting love for others ahead of personal interests. He sees the putting love for others ahead of personal interests as Church and society, we need to be open to the possibilities of the collective and long-term benefit of all. This is not fanciful thinking. It is Church teaching.

Heeding Pope Francis’ words, as Church and society, we need to be open to the possibilities of the collective and long-term benefit of all. This is not fanciful thinking. It is Church teaching.

Earlier this year the Archdiocese was on course to sponsor a conference entitled ‘Takirua 2020 – Shaping the Mission’. The conference was scheduled to take place over Anzac weekend in April with about 300 people from all over New Zealand registered to attend. ‘Shaping the Mission’ was to be the first time those involved in Marriage Ministry work and Youth Ministry would come together to reflect on their work and how together they could shape the mission for the 2020s. Unfortunately, and very disappointingly, because of the Covid-19 lockdown the conference did not take place.

However, in the last couple of months there have been two sessions held in Wellington for people who work with young people, and very recently another session for people involved in Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment work. This has meant almost 260 people have participated in some way, by listening to presentations and reflecting on the material that would have been presented at the Anzac weekend conference. Some of the material presented addressed issues such as ‘Realities of the Young Today’, ‘Realities of the Church Today’ – this has been greatly influential to adjusting to a world hit by the pandemic – and ‘Realities of Marriage Today’.

Also, on March 14 this year we celebrated our Mission Expo 2020 at Bishop Viard College in Porirua. We were to have held another Mission Expo a week later at Garin College in Richmond, Nelson, for the South Island part of the Archdiocese, but again Covid intervened and it did not take place. The Mission Expo at Bishop Viard College was a great success and I have been thrilled to hear several people talking about it in recent weeks. I really believe these events have helped more people to understand something of our own personal mission as the baptised daughters and sons of God.

Just a few days ago I was in a parish and someone from the St Vincent de Paul Society spoke about their work, and then said, ‘Cardinal John kept telling us that we are all Missionary Disciples’. I was delighted to hear that and to know people are seriously thinking about how they can be a mission. In his Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium of 2013, his first major document as Pope, the Holy Father wrote, ‘I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in the world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing’, (Evangelii Gaudium 273).

Do you see yourself as a mission’ and if so, how does that affect the way you live?

Just this week I spoke at a gathering of people who were reflecting on their work in the Church. I was able to use the following words of Pope Francis as I thanked them for all they are doing and encouraged them to also be a mission: ‘... the Lord is also calling you, because you, fathers and mothers of families; you, young people who dream great things; you, who work in a factory, a store, a bank or a restaurant; you who are unemployed; you who are in a hospital bed… The Lord is asking you to be a gift wherever you are, and just as you are, with everyone around you. He is asking you not simply to go through life, but to give life; not to complain about life, but to share in the tears of all who suffer. Courage! The Lord expects great things from you. He is also expecting some of you to have the courage to set out and to go wherever dignity and hope are most lacking, where all too many people still live without the joy of the Gospel’. (Homily for Vespers for Extraordinary Mission Month 2019).

We are only too well aware that Covid-19 has disrupted 2020 beyond our imagining. It has changed the way we look at so many things, including our appreciation and understanding of our Church and the part we all play in it. We cannot let this opportunity go by. The pandemic has given us the opportunity to think in new and different ways, and maybe to bring new life and energy to our Church. Back in March, Pope Francis prayed on his own in a rain-swept St Peter’s Square, and the image of him alone as he gave a blessing to the city of Rome and to the world remains for me one of the most haunting images brought about by Covid-19. He said: ‘Like the disciples in the Gospel, we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm, we have realised that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat… are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying “We are perishing”, so we too have realised that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this’ (Urbi et Orbi Blessing, March 27, 2020).
**Conclusion**

The Covid-19 crisis has thrown the world into turmoil and reminded us of our vulnerability, and interconnectedness, says the Report. Governments and international bodies must protect people’s health and minimise the fallout from Covid-19, while continuing to step up efforts to address urgent climate mitigation and adaptation. Neither can the need for a green transition be used as a smokescreen to plunge human exploitation to the ocean depths.

“We must use the present crisis to attend to the needs of the poorest, including our Mother Earth and future generations. It challenges us to re-think our relationship to the earth, to each other, and our notion of “economy”, which means “household management”. Our common home is in need of our care. ’”

**Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement by the end of 2020.**

The Report says climate finance must prioritise the poorest communities, and empower local communities to access funding. It calls for the banning of further seabed mining and exploration and says that the earth must be allowed to restore healthy ecosystems. Growing and distributing food sustainably needs to be a priority.

**Cathedral demolition work begins**

Mike Stopforth

Work on the demolition of the historic Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, in central Christchurch, commenced in September and is expected to take up to a year to finish.

Completed in 1905, the Catholic Cathedral on Barbadoes St was closed after being damaged in the September 2010 earthquakes and received further more substantial damage in the February 2011 earthquakes. Speaking on September 1, 2020 the Catholic Bishop of Christchurch, Paul Martin, said even though the decision to demolish the cathedral was made a year ago there was still sadness in seeing the building being demolished.

‘Work will commence from the eastern or rear end of the building, firstly removing the unstable arches and other highly hazardous elements. The roof and other high and overhead elements will follow as they form significant hazards.

‘Work on the cathedral will progress towards the west with the Barbadoes St frontage being the last area demolished. ’

‘Even though much work has occurred over many years to remove badly damaged sections of the cathedral as part of the stabilisation process, the site remains very hazardous and dangerous’, Bishop Paul said.

‘Work methodologies will be driven by health and safety best practice to ensure the protection and safety of the people involved.

‘The remains of Bishop John Grimes, Bishop Edward Joyce and Bishop John Cunneen, who are buried under the floor of a side chapel, will be disinterred once the cathedral has been deconstructed to ground level.

‘Planned salvage of the angels and some of the columns will be undertaken early in the project, but any other salvage activities will be opportunistic in nature, and subject to being able to safely access areas of the building. This also includes recovery of other items such as stained glass windows and plaques.

‘Ornate stone elements may be retained for future projects where opportunities are identified. While it would be desirable to incorporate some of the recovered artefacts into the new cathedral, successfully merging two architectural styles from different eras into a modern building can be extremely difficult to achieve.

‘There is a willingness for this to happen but it might not be possible’, Bishop Paul said.

‘Protranz are the contractors on the $1.8m project. ’

Continued from p1

**Sea-level rise, Solomon Islands.**

Photo: Caritas

**Correction**

The headline for the Catholic Bishops Election Statement 2020 article, p 4, in the October edition of WelCom, should read: ‘Eia oti katoo tātou te pahihe – We are all connected’. 

**St Patrick’s College Wellington**

New Zealand’s oldest Catholic boys’ college

“We unlocked: The Art Exhibition” will be held in the College hall on Friday 6 November from 6.30pm to 9.30pm. Tickets are available from the College and entry is $25.00 per person and includes one beverage and nibbles.

“St Patrick’s College Leaver’s Mass will be held in the College hall at 10.30am on Monday 9 November and Senior Prizegiving will be held on Tuesday 10 November at 7.30pm in the College hall.”

**Seifried**

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**Royal Commission**

The Aotearoa Catholic Te Rūpā Tautoko is the group set up to co-ordinate and manage cooperation between the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care and the Catholic Church in Aotearoa. It represents the Catholic Bishops and Congregational Leaders of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Within the scope of its inquiry, the Royal Commission will be investigating the adequacy of the redress process of the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Salvation Army, and what needs to be done to support people who have been abused or neglected in faith-based institutions.

Te Rūpā Tautoko has undertaken an enormous amount of work involving the collation and submission to the Commission of thousands of documents in preparation for the public Faith-based Redress Hearings. The hearings are scheduled from 30 November to 11 December this year.

**Referendum results**

The outcome of the votes on the End of Life Choice Act and legalisation of cannabis referendums will not be known until three weeks after the results of the general election. Preliminary results for both referendums are expected on October 30. The final official referendum results are expected to be announced on Friday, November 6.
Jubilees celebrated in Palmerston North Diocese

Sue Seconi and Emma Dodsworth

Parishioners and clergy from across the Diocese of Palmerston North gathered in the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit on October 8, for Mass to rejoice with priests celebrating Ordination and Bishops their episcopal anniversaries.

The eight celebrating priests were Fr John McLaughlin, 65 years; Fr Frank Twiss sm, 60 years; Fr John Dykes, 55 years; Fr Michael Wooler sm, 50 years; Fr Peter Brockhill, 30 years; and Fr Craig Butler, 25 years. Fr Walter Cooke, 60 years, and Fr Damian Caccioppioli sm, 40 years, were unable to attend.

Celebrating their episcopal ordinations were Bishop Peter Cullinane, 40 years, and Bishop Owen Dolan, 25 years. Cardinal John Dew, the presiding celebrant of the Mass, was celebrating his 25th jubilee as bishop.

In his welcome Cardinal John acknowledged the jubilarians for their years of spiritual service. ‘Thank you for being faithful stewards of the Mystery,’ he said.

During his homily Bishop Peter reflected on faithfulness to the Word, and what the jubilarians have been called to and have given their lives for – which, according to the Second Vatican Council, is first and foremost a ‘ministry of the word.’

Today, the challenge facing all of us is how to proclaim that word effectively, Bishop Peter said. ‘How are we to speak convincingly about something that can seem so other-worldly? How to speak about the nearness of what can seem remote? How to speak with a sense of urgency about what seems out of sight and postponable?’ he asked.

Like God telling the prophet Ezekiel to be ‘a sign’, today the Church asks its priests to ‘put our whole life and whole self where our mouths are’. Bishop Peter said. Jubilees are not just about numbers of years, but about years of service, self-sacrifice and faithfulness.

Bishop Peter shared how that during his first Mass at Falefou, it was his parents who were the first to welcome him. ‘When Cardinal John said at Falefou’s jubilee at Wellington Cathedral, “I see the Church as a field hospital after battle.” POPE FRANCIS

I was sick and in prison and you came to visit me.

Karen Holland and Vivien Chiu

Catholic Social Services

I was sick and in prison and you came to visit me.

Last month Cardinal John Dew commissioned two chaplains from the Archdiocese of Wellington.

At Sunday Mass on October 4, at St Michael’s Church, Taita, Falefou Sio was commissioned as Catholic chaplain to the men and women in Rimutaka and Arohata prisons.

At an ecumenical service at Wellington Hospital Chapel on October 14, Kate Sanders O’Connor was commissioned as a Catholic hospital chaplain; and Bishop Eleanor Sanderson commissioned Rev Mary Minson as ecumenical hospital chaplain.

Cardinal John said at Falelou’s commissioning we are God’s vineyard and that God plants the vineyard. ‘Prisons too are a part of God’s vineyard. We do not know what has happened in the lives of men and women who are sentenced to a term in prison but they too deserve having people such as our chaplains who help them, journey with them and assist them to make changes in their lives.’

Falefou paid tribute to his parents. ‘When I received the cross from Cardinal John I remembered the dreams of my deceased parents – “to serve the church”.

‘My role as prison chaplain is a job, a mission that requires enormous sacrifices and a lot of time to dedicate and divide among those who have an overabundance of time: to talk with the prisoners, to share the penalty with them. I always meet my brothers and sisters – to whom I have a duty – to introduce myself with an attitude of service. I am worth what I love.’

Cardinal John invited the community to remember Falefou and all our prison chaplains. ‘They minister to people who are like us, people who make mistakes, who slip up in their lives, and sometimes make very big messes of their lives. But they too deserve the mercy and compassion of our God. Remember the words of Jesus: “I was sick and in prison and you came to visit me.”

Joining Kate at her commissioning were family members, colleagues, Archdiocese of Wellington directors, Interchurch Council of Hospital Chaplains (ICHCH) officials, and Wellington Hospital management staff.

Mary and Kate promised to declare the Good News of God’s love and provide pastoral and spiritual support to the patients, staff and whānau at the hospital. Each was presented with a cross, a pyx (small, round Eucharist container) and a candle as symbols of their ministry. Norman Gray, Wellington Hospital Operations Manager presented them with their IDs and badges of office. ICHCH Regional Manager Rev Joe Gray presented Mary with a Bible and New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference senior Catholic chaplain Tony Sanders O’Connor on their appointments as chaplains to some of our most vulnerable people. We offer our prayers, support and encouragement in their ministries.

Prison and hospital chaplains commissioned in Wellington Archdiocese

Rev Mary Minson, Bishop Eleanor Sanderson, Cardinal John Dew, Kate Sanders O’Connor.

Lenton presented Kate with her Bible. ‘Their service concluded with the ecumenical Christian prayer from Pope Francis’ recent encyclical Fratelli Tutti. ‘Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty, reflected in all the peoples of the earth, so that we may discover anew that all are important and all are necessary, different faces of the one humanity that God so loves. Amen.’

Cardinal John quoted Pope Francis’ reaffirmation of the Church’s commitment to ecumenism, to encourage cooperation with the member churches and with our ecumenical partners. The spirit of collaboration between organisations involved in hospital chaplaincy was evident. We congratulate both Falelou Sio and Kate Sanders O’Connor on their appointments as chaplains to some of our most vulnerable people. We offer our prayers, support and encouragement in their ministries.

“I see the Church as a field hospital after battle.”

POPE FRANCIS

Help us to be there on the battlefield for those who need it most. A Bequest to St Vincent de Paul is a lasting way to help the most disadvantaged and needy in our community.

If you would like to discuss a Bequest with us, please get in touch.
World Day of the Poor

Lisa Beech

Families, households, parishes, individuals, schools and communities of the Archdiocese of Wellington are encouraged to find appropriate ways to share food with others this year for the World Day of the Poor, on Sunday 15 November 2020.

In the context of our more fragmented and disconnected communities, following the Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions, which have included the suspension of many Masses and other activities this year, there is a greater need than ever to reach out and connect with each other and with people in need, says Cardinal John Dew.

However, the large-scale activities as organised in previous years in the Archdiocese to mark the World Day of the Poor are less appropriate in the current Covid-19 environment, he says. 'But that doesn't stop us reaching out to each other,' says Cardinal John. 'This year, to mark the World Day of the Poor, we are encouraging every family and household of the Archdiocese to find something appropriate that you can do safely to share food with others.'

If we are still in Covid-19 level one [in which we are allowed to meet], that could include inviting a friend or neighbour over for a meal, or buying a ‘pay-it-forward’ coffee in a local café.

If Covid-19 restrictions are again in place in November, sharing could include safely passing on some homegrown vegetables to a neighbour, baking a cake for a family with a newborn baby, donating to the foodbank or sponsoring a meal at the Compassion Centre Soup Kitchen.

In his recent encyclical Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis uses the parable of the Good Samaritan to highlight the responsibility each of us has to be a neighbour to others. He asks us in the face of suffering to draw near to others without asking questions: 'I should no longer say I have neighbours to help, but that I must myself be a neighbour to others. (Fratelli Tutti #81)

The World Day of the Poor is observed in November each year. It was instituted by Pope Francis following the Jubilee of Mercy in 2016.

Connection in a disconnected world

Work by the Society of St Vincent de Paul during the Covid-19 lockdown to support the needs of the community has helped many people to feel connected in a suddenly disconnected world, Cardinal John Dew said at a Mass for the feast of St Vincent de Paul on September 27, 2020.

The Mass was hosted by the Wellington Area Councils of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, at St Benedict's Church, St Francis of Assisi parish of Ōhāriu. It was able to occur because Covid-19 level 2 restrictions had been lifted the previous week.

Quoting from the first reading of the day from St Paul’s letter to the Philippians urging that ‘people not think of their own interests first but everybody thinks of other people’s interests instead,’ Cardinal John acknowledged in the face of the Covid-19 threat, the Society’s members, volunteers and staff could have chosen to look after their own interests.

Instead the St Vincent de Paul Society ensured many people continued to receive food parcels, personal hygiene supplies, winter blankets and bedding for new-born babies.

St Vincent de Paul Wellington are now supporting 33 per cent more people than this time last year, and are providing 55 per cent more services. These needs are expected to increase as the wage subsidy and rent freeze schemes come to an end.

Cardinal John asked the Society to continue to accompany and support parishes in identifying and responding to both new and old forms of poverty and injustice. He told St Vincent de Paul volunteers, members and staff, ‘Please continue to be a living example of the mission inspired by St Vincent de Paul.’

Vincentsians recognised as community heroes, p.8.

Launch Out 2020

The Archdiocese of Wellington’s Launch Out candidates have been working on pastoral projects in parishes throughout this year. They will formally present their project results to Cardinal John Dew, mentors, parish priests and Archdiocese directors at the Catholic Centre on 21 November.

The eight candidates are from Te Wairua Tapu, Holy Trinity, Our Lady of Hope, Wellington South, Star of the Sea and St Therese’s Pimmerton parishes.

‘This has been a year to remember because of the pandemic and I am personally heartened to know well the candidates were still able to serve their parishes with plans all up in the air,’ says Maya Bernado, manager of the Launch Out formation programme. ‘What they have achieved is a good message of hope for us all.’

Launch Out is the programme the Archdiocese has developed for those who wish to become Lay Pastoral Leaders in parishes. It involves four to eight years of intensive study, pastoral experience and spiritual formation.

“SAINTS OF GOD COME TO THEIR AID. HASTEN TO MEET THEM, ANGELS OF THE LORD”

These words from the Catholic requiem service speak of our connection with those who have died. This month, November, the Church gives special remembrance to the Faithful Departed. We pray for them and for ourselves, with thanksgiving and loving memory. May they rest in peace.
Pope Francis expresses support for the creation of civil union laws for same-sex couples in a new documentary about his seven-year papacy.

In the film, *Francesco*, he says: 'Homosexual people have a right to be in a family. They are children of God and have a right to a family. Nobody should be thrown out or be made miserable over it. What we have to create is a civil union law. That way they are legally covered. I stood up for that.'

The question of civil unions comes up in the film in a segment that features Andrea Rubera, a gay Italian man who was able to participate in one of the Pope’s daily Masses in the Vatican’s Santa Marta residence.

Rubera says that he gave Francis a letter that explained conversations he and his partner were having over whether to take their children to church, fearing they might be subject to unfair judgment as children of a gay couple.

Rubera says the Pope later called him, and encouraged them to take their children to church and to be honest with the pastor about their living situation.

The Pope has previously spoken in favour of civil unions, saying they are a way to protect the legal rights of persons in same-sex relationships.

In the past the Church has opposed legal recognition of same-sex unions. In 2003, a Vatican document issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith set out why it was ‘necessary to oppose legal recognition of homosexual unions’ because they ‘obscure certain basic moral values and cause a devaluation of the institution of marriage’.

*Francesco* tells the story of Pope Francis’ papacy over the past seven and a half years, covering many of the trips he made before the Covid-19 pandemic and his handling of the sexual abuse scandals that have engulfed the Church.

It also focuses on issues that Pope Francis has made the hallmarks of his papacy, including the environment, poverty, migration and inequality.

Sources: The Guardian, *The National Catholic Reporter*

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**NZ Catholic bishops endorse civil unions stand by Pope Francis**

Commenting on the Pope’s remarks about same-sex civil unions, reported in the film *Francesco*, Bishop Patrick Dunn, Bishop of Auckland and President of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference, said in a statement on October 24, 2020, ‘I endorse the reported comments of Pope Francis. I know he is anxious for LGBTQI people to know they are valued members of the family of the Church as they are of their own families. We want their happiness, and for them to know that they are loved.’ Same-sex civil unions have been available in Aotearoa New Zealand from April 26, 2005.

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**Catholics increase, vocations decrease**

New data released by the Vatican shows the number of Catholics is on the rise worldwide. The global Catholic population grew 16 million to 1.33 billion in the past year, according to figures released by the Vatican.

The percentage of Catholics in the world remained at 17.73 per cent, indicating the increasing numbers are in line with world population growth.

All continents reflected growth. Africa reported the most significant increase in Catholics with 9.2 million, 1.8 million in Asia, and 177,000 in Oceania.

However, according to a report issued by the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, the number of priests and ordained leaders has dropped significantly. The reduction is particularly notable in Europe and America.

The total number of priests in the world decreased to 414,065 in 2018, with Europe registering a drop of 2,675 priests compared to 2017.

The reduction in clergy combined with the increase in Catholics is putting pressure on priests. The figures reveal there are now 3,210 Catholics to every priest, and over 14,000 people per priest worldwide. There has also been a significant decline in the numbers of religious women.

Sources: Catholic News Agency, Religion News Service

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**Russian Catholic Bishop**

Nicolai Dubinin, the first Russian-born Catholic bishop since the start of the Soviet era, has been appointed to a see in the former Soviet Union.

The first Russian-born Catholic bishop since the start of the Soviet era says he prefers to speak of challenges facing the minority Catholic Church rather than problems.

‘Being a relatively small community, the Catholic Church in Russia is challenged with making a positive, constructive contribution as an integral part of society,’ says Bishop Nikolai Dubinin.

The Catholic Church, currently making up less than a per cent of Russia’s population of 144.5 million, was savagely repressed under Soviet rule in 1917–1991, losing almost all its clergy and churches.

‘As a result of Soviet-era persecution, our Church was virtually destroyed, so clergy from different countries came here to help,’ says Bishop Dubinin. ‘But it’s taken almost 30 years, among native Russians who grew up in our local Church and took the path of priestly ministry, for a local bishop to be chosen.’

Although he’s the first Russian-born Catholic bishop in 100 years, Dubinin explains there were many before the 1917 revolution. ‘I’m the first and only one in the Church’s recent history,’ he says.

As the country’s first auxiliary bishop, Dubinin will serve northeastern areas of the Moscow-based Mother of God Archdiocese, where he previously taught at the Church’s seminary. Dubinin is a Conventual Franciscan who was ordained in 2000 after training in Poland.

Sources: The Tablet, Asia News
Young 'tech whiz' beatified

Carlo Acutis, a 15-year-old Italian, who used his computer programming skills to spread devotion to the Eucharist, was beatified last month. In a service on Saturday October 10, in the Italian town of Assisi, Carlo Acutis became the youngest contemporary person to be beatified.

Carlo Acutis: 15-year-old moves closer to becoming first millennial saint.

Pope Francis receives Cardinal George Pell on September 30, for the first time since being jailed and then acquitted on the charges. Pope Francis, a fierce defender of the presumption of innocence, held a private audience with Pell, the Vatican said.

While a reunion between Pope Francis and Cardinal Pell had been expected, it was not clear that Pell is to be entrusted with a new Vatican role.

Senior officials said Pell had not been summoned back by Pope Francis but had returned on his own volition.

Source: Vatican News

Pope Francis receives Cardinal George Pell

Pope Francis received Cardinal George Pell in an audience on Monday October 12, 2020 and failed to seek the removal of Pell as Vatican role.

Senior officials said Pell had not been summoned back by Pope Francis, but rather to use the new communications technology to transmit the Gospel, and to communicate values and beauty, ‘Carlo was well-aware that the whole apparatus of communications, advertising and social networking can be used to lull us, to make us addicted to consumerism and buyer-ism, and that the new technology is a gift from God to communicate values and beauty,’ he said.

His remains are preserved in Assisi’s Santuario della Spogliazione. Looking at the remains of Acutis today, it’s easy to see why such a figure seems more within reach. He lies in repose not wearing ornate clerical vestments or a religious habit, but rather Nike sneakers, blue jeans and a blue soccer jacket.

Acutis, a 15-year-old who used his computer programming skills to spread devotion to the Eucharist, was beatified last month. In a service on Saturday October 10, in the Italian town of Assisi, Carlo Acutis became the youngest contemporary person to be beatified.

Carlo Acutis died from leukemia in 2006. Before then he was an average teen with an above-average knack for computers. He put that knowledge to use by creating an online database of eucharistic miracles around the world.

Acutis is a role model for young people today who are often tempted by the traps of ‘self-absorption, isolation and empty pleasures,’ says Pope Francis.

‘Carlo was too well-aware that the whole apparatus of communications, advertising and social networking can be used to lull us, to make us addicted to consumerism and buying the latest thing on the market, obsessed with our free time, caught up in negativity,’ the Pope wrote. ‘Yet he knew how to use the new communications technology to transmit the Gospel, and to communicate values and beauty,’ he said.

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Safeguarding Officer for Palmerston North Diocese

Matthew Balm has been appointed as the Safeguarding Officer for the Diocese of Palmerston North.

Matthew says his focus will be to establish and build relationships that nurture the growth of the culture of safeguarding within the diocese and that his wish is ‘to connect with everyone to help them to understand his philosophy’.

Safeguarding is about respecting the inherent dignity of the person. We all have the right to feel safe in our places of work, ministry and prayer and we all carry the duty to keep others safe.

All dioceses in New Zealand work with the National Office for Professional Standards (NOPS) to implement a set of national standards, policies and procedures for safeguarding. Matthew has joined a committed team of dioceses, which works with NOPS to provide support and training in all aspects of safeguarding throughout New Zealand’s six dioceses.

All staff and representatives of the Catholic Church are expected to undertake safeguarding training, so Matthew will be connecting with all parish offices within the Palmerston North Diocese in the coming months and promoting the safeguarding workshops he will be running. He hopes to be able to extend support to Catholic primary and secondary schools to assist them with building their own culture of safeguarding.

Matthew has more than 25 years of experience as an educator and has extensive experience in project management and publishing. He brings with him rich cultural experience, having lived in Papua New Guinea, England and Japan. A highlight of Matthew’s teaching career was being a recipient of a 2012 Royal Society of New Zealand Endeavour Teacher Fellowship, which saw him researching indigenous community campsites at Massey University’s Hopkirk Research Institute.

Matthew and his wife Pauline are long-time residents of Palmerston North, where they have three children at local Catholic schools. They are active members of St Patrick’s Parish at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, and Matthew is chairperson of St James’ School Board of Trustees.

Kevin Balm, new Safeguarding Officer for Palmerston North.

Vincentians recognised as community heroes

Two Vincentians are among those recognised for outstanding community service in the 2020 New Plymouth District Council’s Citizens Awards, celebrated at a ceremony in New Plymouth on October 8, 2020.

Mavis Bridgeman is a member of the St Joseph’s Conference in New Plymouth. Kaddy Smale is a long-time supporter of the Society’s weekly community meals.

Mavis has been one of the most active members of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

‘She is a regular visitor of those suffering from poverty’, says Gabrielle Carman, President of the St Joseph’s SVDP Conference.

She provides practical support and advice, and is also a regular helper at the weekly community meals that we run.

Mavis grew up in foster homes and has cared for more than 250 foster children. She still has one grandmothering a week with her each month.

‘Mavis knows intimately about challenges that people in poverty face on a daily basis’, says Gabrielle.

‘Through years of interfacing with helping agencies, she has become a fount of knowledge about agencies and benefits entitlements. She knows how to get things done’.

Mavis also supports Faith and Light, a faith-based group (NOPS) supporting those with intellectual disabilities, the Taranaki Disabilities Information Trust, the Open Home Foundation Taranaki, and the New Plymouth Pakeke Lions Club. Mavis has also volunteered for 26 years as a supporter of people going to the Special Olympics.

Kaddy Smale has been a community ‘good sort’ for more than 45 years. She helps out at the local Catholic Parish, has 30 years’ service to libraries in the district, supports migrant women, volunteers for the New Plymouth Guided Walk, supports the Rotary Assistance Reading Programme and is a long-time supporter of the St Vincent de Paul’s weekly community meals.

‘For more than five years Kaddy has been a wonderful supporter of our community meals,’ says Gabrielle.

‘These meals are held every Tuesday evening and attract 40 to 50 dinners, with additional meals taken out into the community for people in need who can’t make it to the supper room.’

Kaddy has been part of the cooking team, right from the start. The food she makes is always special and a favourite with the diners, and she usually stays on to help serve the meal and clean up. After 40 to 50 people have eaten, that’s a big job. She is an absolute star in our eyes.’

St Vincent de Paul members of St Joseph’s Conference in New Plymouth were delighted about the Citizens Awards bestowed on Mavis Bridgeman and Kaddy Smale. Pictured (l-r) are Bob Goodyear, Treasurer, Kaddy Smale, Mavis Bridgeman, and Gabrielle Carman, President. Photo: Supplied

Hibernian stalwart honoured

A special presentation was made to Keith Stinson OBE at a Hibernian Society meeting in Hastings, October 7, 2020 in honour and recognition of his service as the Patron of the local branch. Keith is a long-standing and dedicated member of the St Joseph’s Branch 172 of the Hibernian Catholic Benefit Society. St Joseph’s Branch President Mike Martin presented Keith with a framed citation in honour and recognition of his service.

Keith has lived a busy life of community service. He joined the Hibernians as a 20-year-old in 1946 and in a very few years became involved as an officer of the local branch, the New Zealand Society, and the Australasian Society. He is currently a mentor to the Hastings Branch executive who welcome his wise counsel.

As well as his dedication to the Hibernians, Keith was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) at the Queen’s Birthday Honours in 1987 in recognition for his services to the newspaper industry, Catholic Education, and the community.

Keith joined The Hawke’s Bay Herald Tribune, based in Hastings, as a clerk and soon afterwards as part of his daily duties, he oversaw the delivery of the newspaper to distribution agencies throughout Central Hawke’s Bay. Promotions over the years resulted in Keith becoming general manager and later retiring as managing director of the company.

Keith Stinson OBE is a long-time supporter of our community meals, ‘For more than five years Keith has been an absolute stalwart of our weekly community meals,’ says Mavis.

‘These meals are held every Tuesday evening and attract 40 to 50 people, with additional meals taken out into the community for people in need who can’t make it to the supper room.’

Keith has been part of the cooking team, right from the start. The food she makes is always special and a favourite with the diners, and she usually stays on to help serve the meal and clean up. After 40 to 50 people have eaten, that’s a big job. She is an absolute star in our eyes.’

The Hibernian Society, St Joseph’s Branch 172, Hastings was established in 1885.

Keith Stinson (r) received a framed citation from Hibernian St Joseph’s Branch President Mike Martin, in honour and recognition of his service as the Patron of the Hastings Branch.

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Parish communities observe Season of Creation

1 September - 4 October

Kaitiaki at Ōtari

Ōtari Catholic Parish Karori/Wilton, St Luke’s and St Anne’s Anglican Churches and Wadestown Presbyterian Church jointly celebrated the Season of Creation with an Ecumenical Walk in the Ōtari-Wilton Bush reserve. The focus was ‘kaitiakitanga na roto i karakia – guardianship through prayer’.

The walk symbolically visited the Genesis creation story – stopping at seven ‘stations’ in the reserve. People walked, talked, prayed and sang, giving thanks for the special place on their doorstep, and acknowledging the skills of the kawahakatea – navigators – who found our shores by reading the signs of the sun, stars, wind, ocean, and clouds. Locals spoke about the indigenous flora, fauna, bird, animal and fish and the human impact on this environment, and how today protection and regeneration are embraced.

Prayers for protecting God’s handiwork.

Ecumenical walk for creation story

Over 55 members of St Theresa’s Catholic parish, and St Andrew’s Anglican parish in Pimmerton walked together to celebrate the Season of Creation, make new connections and build community. Along the way they stopped at seven ‘stations’ to recall the story from Genesis, with readings from scripture, reflection and prayer. People were invited to hold a small item from nature collected on the walk, to connect to it and to make a commitment to care for creation through daily actions. Sharing prayer and silent reflection gave time to consider and plant a selfless ecological attitude towards all of creation.

Ecumenical walking group at Pimmerton Beach reflect on the creation of earth, sea and sky, as Vicar Jenny Dawson retells a creation story.

New leadership for St Vincent de Paul Society, Wellington area

Sally Babington has been appointed the general manager. Sally has worked in statutory social work and has led teams in special education providing support and services for children with disabilities. She has led change-management programmes for improved services in the prison system, with ACC, Legal Aid Services, and with Barnardo’s New Zealand.

Ms Babington said she was looking forward to working with a committed team in the community, providing services directly to people in need and building on the ‘amazing work’ being done at St Vinnies.

‘I bring an adaptive and responsive leadership style, one that is particularly important in our current world where people are experiencing stress, change and uncertainty’, Ms Babington said.

Mr Kennedy-Good also acknowledged the 15 years of growth and service achieved by the previous manager-secretary, John Rosbotham.

Sally Babington, general manager.

Mr Kennedy-Good also announced Eustie Kamath as his successor as president of the SVdP Wellington Area Council. ‘Eustie has a wealth of experience on social-justice issues and has participated in the life of several councils; facilitating Lazarus Experience; mentoring Seasons for Growth (for prisoners); council; facilitating Lazarus Experience; mentoring Seasons for Growth (for prisoners); council; facilitating Lazarus Experience; mentoring Seasons for Growth (for prisoners); council; facilitating Lazarus Experience; mentoring Seasons for Growth (for prisoners); council; mentoring Seasons for Growth (for prisoners); council relations; leading to practical actions by individuals and groups’.

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New principal for St Mary’s College

Andrew Murray has been appointed the new principal of one of Wellington’s oldest schools – St Mary’s College in Thorndon. The 170-year Catholic girls’ secondary school, founded on the Sisters of Mercy Charism, teaches girls from Year 9 to Year 13.

Mr Murray has been deputy principal of Sacred Heart Girls’ College, New Plymouth since 2011 and is currently acting principal there. He will join St Mary’s at the beginning of 2021.

The St Mary’s Board of Trustees had been seeking a new principal since the retirement last January of Catherine Ryan, principal since 2013.

Andrew Murray, pictured with his daughter Charlotte, will be joining St Mary’s College at the beginning of 2021. Charlotte will be starting at the school in 2022. Photo Supplied

The board is delighted to have appointed Mr Murray, says chair Juli Clausen. ‘Andrew, who has wide teaching experience in New Zealand and Australia, is ambitious for St Mary’s and he is enthusiastic and passionate about leading a school that develops outstanding students. He is a man of prayer and his Catholic faith is at the core of who he is,’ she said.

‘We have enjoyed our time in Taranaki,’ Andrew Murray says. ‘We are active in the Catholic Parish of New Plymouth where my wife Benita is chair of the parish lead team. We are excited about the next challenge. We feel we have something to contribute to the Catholic Church in Wellington. It will be Mr Murray’s second appointment at St Mary’s – he was a dean and assistant director of religious studies at St Mary’s from 2006 to 2011.

‘I am excited and humbled about the new position. We feel St Mary’s College and Wellington is our turangawaewae and we are returning home. Walking through Gabriel Hall and considering those great women who have previously led the College I have a sense of walking in the “shoes of giants”. It was only after a great time of prayer did I consider applying for this position. To have the support of the former principals Mary Cook and Sr de Porres, former students and staff Judy Houlahan and the Sisters of Mercy means a great deal to me.’

Wellington-born Mr Murray has a BA in English and History fromVictoria University of Wellington and Masters’ degrees from Australian Catholic University and the University of New South Wales.

In 2013, he was seconded to develop digital resources for New Zealand’s Catholic secondary schools in respect for the National Centre for Religious Studies, now part of Te Kupenga-Catholic Leadership Institute. He has also led projects for the NZ Qualifications Authority and the Ministry of Education around NCEA changes. He has also taught at St Bede’s College inChristchurch, Francis Douglas Memorial College in New Plymouth and at several Catholic colleges in Victoria and New South Wales.

‘I bring 25 years of experience in Catholic education, but I think it’s more that I have a passion for people’ says Mr Murray. ‘I bring with me a strong faith and an understanding of the strong tradition of St Mary’s College. But as we go forward a vision we should celebrate is St Mary’s being a school with tradition but not being a traditional school.’

Fathers’ Day at St Matthew’s School

Fathers, grandparents, godfathers and mothers enjoyed the Father’s Day celebrations at St Martin’s School.

Students entertain the mātua/parents with dance and song.

Our celebrations started with a delicious morning tea of savouries, pagipopo (coconut buns), muffins, doughnuts and fresh fruit; and coffee, juices and smoothies for the mātua/parents to push through.

The Catholic Social Teachings of katapakatanga and whakawhanaungatanga alongside our school value of ‘hospitality for all people’, guided our plans to acknowledge and celebrate God’s gift of fathers, grandfathers, godfathers and father-figures, for Fathers’ Day at St Matthew’s School in Marton, at a special day in September.

Tumua Pala’aia

The Catholic Social Teachings of katapakatanga and whakawhanaungatanga alongside our school value of ‘hospitality for all people’, guided our plans to acknowledge and celebrate God’s gift of fathers, grandfathers, godfathers and father-figures, for Fathers’ Day at St Matthew’s School in Marton, at a special day in September.

Tumua Pala’aia is Principal and Director of Religious Studies, SENCO, St Matthew’s School, Marton. Kura Katorika o Hato Matiu, Anja Katoliko o Sagato Mataio.

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The Knights of the Southern Cross, Wellington, Charitable Trust Board is seeking applications from organisations based in, and operating primarily within, the Archdiocese of Wellington who need financial assistance to carry out religious or charitable or educational works.

Requests for application forms can made to patrick.mcgill@xnet.co.nz.

Applications for grants should be made by Friday 22 January 2021 and should be sent to:

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PO Box 56029, Tawa, Wellington 5249
Young people invited to join gap year in 2021

Sio Iaseto-Filo
Gap Year Coordinator, Youth Minister, Challenge 2000

Challenge 2000 is a Gospel-based youth development and social service Trust. Based in Johnsonville, it provides a wide range of programmes, projects and services for young people, communities and families in the Wellington Region.

Challenge includes in its mission an annual Challenge 2000-Marist Formation and Employment Year, funded and resourced by the Society of Mary. Each year, this programme offers eight young people, aged 18–25, the chance to develop the social, spiritual, intellectual, employment, well-being and physical dimensions to help prepare for a successful and balanced life ahead.

The gap-year programme focuses on developing and challenging each participant in different ways, in a nurturing and supportive environment. It involves:
- formal NZQA learning;
- service placements;
- work experiences;
- supervision and mentoring;
- group work;
- travel and exposure to many aspects of our society and Church.

Participants are given a training allowance, and accommodation is provided in the Challenge 2000 youth houses in Kilbirnie and Lyall Bay or with families in Wellington.

The programme has been offered since 2007 and to date 85 people from around Aotearoa New Zealand and from abroad have graduated from the programme.

Some of the activities and events the 2020 participants have been involved with include:
- attending Outward Bound; serving with a Youth agency in Kaićurā;
- completing a NZQA Youth Certificate; technology training;
- sacramental and youth ministry leadership; mentoring Youth Justice young people; climbing mountains and kayaking rivers; completing driver’s licenses; helping deliver college-based school programmes; working on farms; and hunting up the Whanganui River.

Aotearoa New Zealand?

Rosary campaign

Speaking to the crowd gathered outside of St Peter's Square on Sunday October 11, Pope Francis invited children around the world to join in a special rosary campaign for Sunday 18 October.

The Aid to the Church in Need Foundation (ACN) is promoting the initiative “for unity and peace… with one million children praying the rosary”, the Pope said. “I encourage this beautiful event that involves boys and girls throughout the world, who will pray especially for critical situations caused by the pandemic. The aim of this prayer initiative is first of all to show that the trusting prayer of children can fly like an arrow straight to the heart of God and consequently has great influence. How powerful then is the prayer of the Rosary when prayed by children for peace and unity within families, within their own nation and in the whole world! Our Lady even told the children at Fatima: ‘Pray the Rosary daily; to obtain peace in the world.’”

The annual Rosary campaign began in Venezuela in 2005 to nurture the love of prayer and Our Lady amongst children. Five years ago, ACN took over the campaign. The ACN, a pontifical foundation, established in 1947, helps persecuted Christians and others in pastoral need. Each year it supports more than 5,000 projects in over 140 countries.
Thinking after Covid-19: guests at the Lord’s table

It is typical of the vast majority of Catholic church buildings the world over. Seats, set out in rows after rows, with the intention that those sitting there can see the special area – marked off in various ways – known prior to Vatican II, but still referred to by many, as the ‘sanctuary’. It is built around the notion that the priest says Mass, and the laity attend Mass – a basic liturgical motif most Catholics simply knew as the ‘old normal’. When we assemble for the Eucharist we do not know from our experience (despite hearing references to it at every eucharistic assembly). Look at any table set out to welcome people. The table forms the centrepiece and the guests sit around it. Watch people in any restaurant. They will face each other across the table, and if more come to sit down they will locate themselves between those already there.

This is a seating plan for a theatre, but it would not be a church because it has the exact same special arrangement. Indeed, now with the pandemic, many churches have adopted just such seating plans to show you where you can, and cannot, sit. This arrangement is perfect if you (along with many other individuals) all want to watch a performance by the actors on stage – but is it that what we are when we assemble for the Eucharist? If I am a member of an audience, then I want to see without interruption and my focus is on the stage, and there is a barrier – what actors call the fourth wall – between me, a consumer of the play/film/performance, and the production. But in liturgy I am part of the production, we are all in it together, we are all actors in the Christ as his sisters and brothers in baptism. The very fact that most church buildings have seating arrangements, which exactly parallel theatres, illustrates that the old normal was/is anything but ideal. Just as we are celebrants rather than consumers (refer to: https://international.la-croix.com/news/we-are-celebrants-not-consumers/12392) when we assemble liturgically, so we should think of ourselves as actors on the stage rather than audience in the stalls.

Called to his supper

So what should it be like? The starting point is to note that in our liturgy we experience anew being present at the Lord Jesus’ table: he has called us friends (Jn 15:15) and as such we can sit at table with him. This sitting at table anticipates being seated at the heavenly banquet ‘many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven’ (Mt 8:11). The table – the banquet – and having a place at the banquet table is, a basic liturgical motif most Catholics simply do not know from their experience (despite hearing references to it at every eucharistic assembly).

Look at any table set out to welcome people. The table forms the centrepiece and the guests sit around it. Watch people in any restaurant. They will face each other across the table, and if more come to sit down they will locate themselves between those already there.

Here we have a basic liturgical shape that is built out of the nature of what we are doing when we assemble, rather than just chosen as a common form – the ancient theatre – and imposed on the Lord’s Supper. This is the eucharistic shape of space, not the familiar shape of most of our current buildings.

Creating a new space

Does it matter? It matters for several reasons. First, if we are to experience anew the promises of Jesus – which is the meaning of ‘remember’ – then we have to have an adequate location for those experiences. A gathering around the table, when remembered, means we gather around a table! Second, during Covid-19 many have asked if going to Mass made much difference? This can only be answered by offering a new, renewed, experience: only when I know what I am taking a part in can it really make sense to me. If I feel it is ‘just an event I attend’ then there is little reason why we should not simply have it as a performance we tune into on a computer. And third, we use the language about sitting at table, gathered to the Supper and being around the Lord’s table – but if this does not happen, we experience cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance relating to a matter tends to precede rejection of something as being either irrelevant or false.

But perhaps there is an even more pressing reason for moving to a whole new layout of new seating arrangements, so we could see, sit, and recline, in a circle around the table. It is part of the battle against the clericalism that is deforming the Catholic Church. We have a look at this picture of the chapel of the Presbyterian College at McGill University in Montreal.

Many western churches have taken on board in recent decades the notion, from Vatican II, that the eucharist is the centre and summit of the Christian life – and we can see this improved in the way this chapel is arranged. But look also at the fact that each person, a baptised sister or brother, each has the same chair in this assembly. All are around the table, but all are equal in dignity, each has a place, and the Lord’s table is the focal point. The table is the centre and each must respect everyone else as fellow pilgrims. Perhaps we have something to learn from this picture. If we critique clericalism in our ecclesiology then we must express that critique in our furniture and spatial arrangements. It is mere words to reject clericalism, if the basic experience of our worship – our experience of the space around us – simply reinforces it. We need to experience anew the Lord’s invitation to come and sit at table, not experience anew the clericalism that Pope Francis says we must reject. Changing the furniture would not fix the problem, but the furniture must be changed if we are to fix the problem.

Thomas O’Loughlin is a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, emeritus professor of historical theology at the University of Nottingham (UK) and director of the Centre of Applied Theology, UK.
Gospel Reading: Sunday 1 November

GOSPEL, MATTHEW 5:1-12

1 Seeing the crowds, Jesus went onto the mountain. And when he was seated his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them: 3 ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. 4 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: they shall have their fill. 5 Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. 6 Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God. 7 Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognised as children of God. 8 Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of righteousness: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. 9 Blessed are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you falsely on my account. 10 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.’

Saints are next door

A reflection on Matthew 5:1-12

Dr Elizabeth Julian rdm

I see saints from all over the world everywhere in my Newtown community in Wellington – the blessed, happy, holy named in the beatitudes and celebrated in today’s feast – All Saints Day, 1 November.

The beatitudes form the heart of Jesus teaching (CCC 1716). Until now in this gospel Jesus has been teaching the first three describe the hope and joy that sets us free and empowers us to be part of the reign of God.

The healing ministry of Jesus was all about helping people to feel good about themselves. When a person feels loved, she or he is more able to be loving. It then becomes easier, despite failings, to accept others, to be forgiving and tolerant, to understand and even welcome differences.

This is the truth Jesus came to us.

The Beatitudes

‘Jesus Christ the King’ by Janet Melrose, Scotland, is full of symbols of Christ’s overflowing love and life.

‘That truth, that we are loved unconditionally by the God of all creation who wants only our love in return, is perhaps the hardest for us humans to accept.

We are more conditioned to close the truth about ourselves. What is truth?

Jesus came to proclaim. Based on Old Testament teaching the first three describe people usually despised or on the third person plural – Blessed are they... – emphasising that we don’t live or pursue them individually.

They require communal attitudes and actions now to help bring about the reign of God, signs of which are already visible in the present. In his recent encyclical Fratelli Tutti Pope Francis argues strongly that everyone is connected, in Laudato si’ everything is connected. We are all members of one human family. Though this is not new teaching, Francis notes the Covid-19 pandemic ‘momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person’s problems are the problems of all. Once more we realised that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together’. He hopes that, ‘After all this, we will think no longer in terms of “them” and “those”, but only “us” (FT #12). So, while the blessings of the beatitudes point us to the fullness of God’s reign, the qualities of discipleship required are concerned with how we live right now.

The beatitudes are bracketed by the promise of the ‘kingdom of heaven’ which Jesus came to proclaim. Based on Old Testament teaching the first three describe people usually despised or on the outer but favoured by God: those who know their dependence on God; the meek, humble or gentle; and those who mourn.

The next five beatitudes highlight certain commitments and values necessary for disciples: being in right relationship, showing mercy, acting with integrity, working for peace and reconciliation, enduring persecution for the sake of justice.

For most of the beatitudes there is a later illustrative story, for example the meek Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey. You may like to recall others.

The final beatitude is addressed to the disciples themselves. Pause for a moment and imagine that you are sitting in the place of the Master, which we are called to reflect in our daily lives.

What strikes me today, is that the first eight beatitudes are in the third person plural – Blessed are they... – emphasising that we don’t live or pursue them individually.

They require communal attitudes and actions now to help bring about the reign of God, signs of which are already visible in the present. In his recent encyclical Fratelli Tutti Pope Francis argues strongly that everyone is connected, in Laudato si’ everything is connected. We are all members of one human family. Though this is not new teaching, Francis notes the Covid-19 pandemic ‘momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person’s problems are the problems of all. Once more we realised that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together’. He hopes that, ‘After all this, we will think no longer in terms of “them” and “those”, but only “us” (FT #12). So, while the blessings of the beatitudes point us to the fullness of God’s reign, the qualities of discipleship required are concerned with how we live right now.

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Fr James Lyons

When Jesus told Pilate he'd come to bear witness to the truth, he knew he'd sealed his fate. Pilate's response, What is truth? is the response of a person whose mind is warped from alternatives and compromise and closed to the possibility of finding the key to a completely satisfying life.

Peter, Martha and the Samaritan woman Jesus met at the well, were among the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ of God – the Chosen One sent to help us discover the truth about ourselves.

“The tradition of honouring Christ as King is not for the purpose of championing Jesus as an all-powerful conqueror and ruler, controlling and threatening, but rather to acclaim him for opening the world to receive a new vision of justice, love and peace.”

The tradition of honouring Christ as King is not for the purpose of championing Jesus as an all-powerful conqueror and ruler, controlling and threatening, but rather to acclaim him for opening the world to receive a new vision of justice, love and peace.

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-11 where we are given life-giving promises that are fulfilled through service, mercy, compassion and forgiveness.

This is the truth that sets us free and empowers us to be part of the reign of God.

The healing ministry of Jesus was all about helping people to feel good about themselves. When a person feels loved, she or he is more able to be loving. It then becomes easier, despite failings, to accept others, to be forgiving and tolerant, to understand and even welcome differences.

This is the truth Jesus came to us.

Pilate's cynical response is typical of those who refuse to recognize Jesus as King and therefore cannot accept it in others.

The Church’s year ends with the festival of Christ the King. It is surely a signal for thanksgiving, while readying ourselves for a new cycle of waiting, listening, learning and responding.

Fr James Lyons is a Wellington priest.

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, is Sunday 22 November, 2020.
In the midst of Covid-19 darkness, we have the light of a new book of spiritual reflections from the indefatigable Joy Cowley. *Coming Home,* an Ignatian Journey, charts Joy’s experience of doing a 30-Day retreat with the Ignatian Exercises.

Joy is well-versed in Ignatian spirituality, having done two 30-day retreats with the Exercises and the spiritual journey itself. It includes helpful insights into prayer practices such as The Examen, a daily time of prayerful reflection on the thoughts, words and deeds of the past day, and Lectio Divina, a form of meditation based on a careful, imaginative reading of a short piece of scripture.

Joy Cowley is one of New Zealand’s greatest spiritual writers. All her spiritual writing is about what it means to live a life close to God and this book is no exception. She has the gift of being able to put that experience into words, as few other writers can.

*Coming Home* is a guide to the spiritual life through the lens of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. It brings together the rich and enduring Ignatian tradition and the writer’s own deep feminine spirituality, nourished over a lifetime. The reflections and insights come out of prayer and a fresh reading of Gospel stories and texts. As always, Joy writes with huge encouragement, clarity and a down-to-earth wisdom which makes the book a pleasure to read.

The great theologian Karl Rahner once wrote: ‘In the days ahead, you will either be a mystic, one who has experienced God for real or nothing at all.’ *Coming Home* is perfect reading for your mystic journey.


www.copypress.co.nz
Partihaka, 5 November

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.”

Matthew 5:9.

Founded in the mid-1860s, the settlement of Partihaka on the western foothills of Mt Taranaki, began attracting Māori from the protestant and disaffected Māori from around the country. Its main leaders were Te Whiti-o-Rongomai and Tohu Kākāpō, both of Taranaki and Te Aro Awi iwi.

All were welcomed to Partihaka on the condition they followed the kura maori - the peace or non-violence, summarised in the leaders’ reference to the biblical announcement of Christ’s birth: Glory to God, Peace on earth, and good will towards men.

The thriving community utilised a strategy of passive resistance to oppose the Crown’s efforts to purchase land for Pākehā settlers. When in May 1879 the colonial government moved to occupy fertile land on the Waimate Plains, south of Partihaka, that had been declared confiscated in the 1860s, Te Whiti and Tohu developed tactics of non-violent resistance. Ploughmen from Partihaka fanned out across Taranaki to assert continuing Māori ownership of the land. The government responded with laws targeting the Partihaka protesters and imprisoned several hundred ploughmen without trial.

On November 5, 1881, 1600 volunteers and Constabulary Field Force troops, recruited from all over New Zealand, marched on Partihaka. Several thousand Māori sat quietly on the marae as singing children greeted the force led by Native Minister John Bryce. The Whanganui farmer viewed Partihaka as a ‘headquarters of fanaticism and disaffection’. Bryce ordered the arrest of the Partihaka leaders, the destruction of much of the village and the dispersal of most of its inhabitants.

Hundreds of the Partihaka men, including Te Whiti and Tohu, were arrested and imprisoned without trial. It was several years before they returned and many died as a result of their incarceration. A five-year military occupation of the Pi included the destruction of houses and crops and the violent abuse of many women. The non-Taranaki Māori were relocated to their own home districts. The confiscation of Partihaka land left the community without an economic base.

The Partihaka invasion is the first known case of nonviolent resistance in the world. It is reported that Mahatma Gandhi heard about Partihaka while in South Africa and inspired him to non-violent resistance action in India, which effectively led to the independence of India in 1947.

Sources: nzhistory.govt.nz dominicans.org.nz

Sacred Heart, Rongotea, to celebrate 125 years

Anticipating the continuance of Covid-19 at Level 1, the congregation of Sacred Heart, 6 Mersey St, Rongotea, near Palmerston North, will celebrate their 125-years’ milestone with a luncheon at the conclusion of Mass on Sunday, November 1, All Saints Day. Please note the Mass will be celebrated at 11.30am. Parishioners, current and former, clergy, and friends are invited to join in Mass and lunch on November 1. Please register your interest for catering with Tim Hehir at: tim.hehir@xtra.co.nz ph 027 5839137.

Humbled by the generosity, encouragement and prayers of their many supporters, in what has been a tough year for everyone, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand says ‘thank you’

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand says ‘thank you’

Compassion, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay. Ph (04) 383-7769.

The generous support Caritas has been receiving from so many. The following weekend Caritas will be visiting the Palmerston North area. You are invited to join the team after the Vigil Mass at St Patrick’s Church in Napier, on Saturday 14 November and after the 9am Mass at St Peter Chanel Church in Hastings, on Sunday 15 November.

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You are invited to meet and join the Caritas team after the Vigil Mass at St Patrick’s Church in Napier, on Saturday 14 November and after the 9am Mass at St Peter Chanel Church in Hastings, on Sunday 15 November.

Unlocked’ art sale

St Patrick’s College, Kilbirnie, Parents Association invites you to the biennial Art Exhibition with original artworks, ceramics and jewellery for sale by well-known and upcoming local artists.

This biennial event is organised by the Caritas team after the 5.30pm Mass at St Patrick’s College, Kilbirnie, tickets $25 each, purchase from College, ph (04) 939-3070 ext 226. (More information this page).

Tanz Prayer – Reflective time with simple songs and scripture to bring stillness and silence, 7pm – 8pm, The Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay. Ph (04) 383-7765.

Thursday 10 November


Saturdays 14, 21 and Sundays 15 and 22 November

Caritas ‘thank you’ roadshow begins in Palmerston North Diocese areas. See information this page.

Sundays 15 November

World Day of the Poor – see p. 5.

Friday 27 – Sunday 29 November

Advent Retreat with Rex Begley and Fr Donald Hornsey SSC – time to reflect on what’s happened to ‘You, our Church our World’ since last Christmas. Magnificat Retreat Centre, Cross Creek Road, Featherston. Cost $190. Registration required. Please contact: rexandtheresebegley@gmail.com ph: 027 545 6808 or 027 967 2299.

Sunday 29 November

1st Sunday of Advent – collection for sick and elderly priests.

General events

Christian Meditation – Mondays 7pm-8pm, and Thursdays, 11am-12pm. The Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay, ph (04) 383-7134 or (04) 383-7769.

Craft Gathering at Home of Compassion – bring your handmade craft project and own lunch, or Cloister Café open, 12pm, Suzanne Aubert Heritage Centre, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay, contact heritagecentre@compassion.org.nz or phone (04) 282-1953.

Mihia – Māori Mass, Sundays 11am, The Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay, ph (04) 383-7769.

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www.kapiticoastfunerals.co.nz

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www.caritas.org.nz

www.wcc.org.nz
New encyclical calls for decisive action in global crisis

In his new encyclical, written during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis challenges humankind to reset priorities and unite communities riven by racism, inequality and climate change.

Fratelli Tutti, signed in Assisi on October 3, 2020 urges people of good will to promote fraternity through dialogue, renewing society by putting love for others ahead of personal interests. Throughout the encyclical, the pope emphasises the primacy of love, in both social and political contexts.

It is clear the Pope sees the questions regarding the purpose and meaning of life that many have asked during the lockdowns as an opportunity to reset a pattern of catastrophic systemic failures that has created an unequal and polarised world.

The pandemic has taught people and society that ‘no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together.’ The coronavirus presents the world with an opportunity for real systemic change – Francis suggests that we believe we can carry on as before is ‘denying reality’.

“The pain, uncertainty and fear – and the realisation of our own limitations, brought on by the pandemic have only made it all the more urgent that we rethink our styles of life, our relationships, the organisation of our societies, and, above all, the meaning of our existence.” – Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti

Pope Francis has always wanted his papacy to be one of action – placing the needs of the poor marginalised and disenfranchised at the centre of his ministry. As a community of believers, Catholics are expected by Pope Francis to mobilise and become agents for change in the world. This action is to be based upon the canon of Catholic social teaching.

While Laudato si’ (Praise to You, 2015) implored the world to ‘care for its common home’, Fratelli Tutti offers teaching devoted to the concept of fraternity and social friendship based upon the example of St Francis of Assisi who ‘whenever he went...sowed the seeds of peace and walked alongside the poor, the abandoned, the infirm and the outcast, the least of his brothers and sisters’.

Fratelli Tutti offers a new vision of society in which human dignity and the human rights of all are respected. The Pope believes that actions based on the common good – the concept that everyone should be able to contribute meaningfully to society must form the bedrock of politics and that people must acknowledge and respect everyone as their equal.

Pope Francis takes pain to point out such a transformation will not be easy. Rather, it will be a process without an endpoint, something to be continually worked at. Fratelli Tutti is an encyclical which above all teaches that complacency is the enemy of a peaceful and just society.

Dark clouds

But in order to engage in action, the problem must be diagnosed so that we know where to direct their energies. There can be no doubt from the first chapter, ‘Dark clouds over a closed world’, that Pope Francis understands the complexity of the crisis facing the world.

As well as the existential crisis that has led to the disintegration of communities and social relationships, he paints a grim picture of a world undergoing what he calls a ‘third world war’ fought piecemeal which – along with hunger and human trafficking – presents a sustained attack on the dignity of the human person.

Fratelli Tutti contains a number of references to the populist politics that have led to ‘hyperbole, extremism and polarisation becoming political tools’. The Pope also observes the resurgence of racism, and the disintegration of intergenerational relationships – all of which demonstrate the innate individualism, lack of empathy and aggressive nationalism which lies at the heart of the global crisis.

Decisive commitment

The solution to this crisis demands a decisive commitment from individuals and from politicians and religious leaders in particular. Politicians need to reorient their mindset away from individualism towards a commitment to the common good and what the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace has termed ‘social love’. This is, he notes, ‘a force capable of inspiring new ways of approaching the problems of today’s world, of profoundly renewing structures, social organisations and legal systems from within.

If only we might rediscover once and for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family can experience a rebirth; with all its faces, all its hands and all its voices, beyond the walls we have erected.” – Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti

Politics needs to become a vocation of service, charity and generosity rather than a means to exercise power. Religious leaders need to engage in dialogue with one another in order to ‘awaken the spiritual energy that can contribute to the betterment of society’ and to prevent the distortion of religious beliefs that lead to violence.

Ultimately, this is an encyclical which teaches that we are dependent upon one another to thrive and reach our full potential as human beings.

Read Fratelli tutti in full at: vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

Sources: CNA News, The Conversation UK, Catholic Outlook

Pope Francis’ third encyclical

Fratelli Tutti is Pope Francis’ third encyclical following on from the 2013 Lumen fidei and 2015 Laudato si’. Written during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 45,000-word papal letter will inevitably be known as the ‘Covid encyclical’.

Fratelli Tutti, the encyclical’s opening words, means ‘all brothers’ in Italian and is taken from the writings of St Francis of Assisi, the ‘saint of fraternal love’.

Encyclicals are considered one of the highest forms of communication from the Pope to the world’s 1.3 billion Catholics and people of goodwill everywhere. They are exhortative in tone. They counsel and encourage and make clear that what is said is not to be taken lightly. They deal with complex social and moral issues and back up their claims with reference to the Bible and to Catholic tradition and doctrines.

Looking Back

Last month’s WelCom profiled the parish of Pungarehu and Opunake. This historic photograph was taken on the occasion of the Opunake presbytery and convent grand opening in 1903.

The opening of a new presbytery and convent on 6 October, 1903 was cause for great jubilation among the Catholic community at Opunake and surrounding areas. The arrival of Archbishop Francis Redwood sm signified the importance of the occasion.

The Archbishop arrived at the new presbytery and convent on the preceding afternoon where he was welcomed by parish priests, Fr C Cognet sm. Owing to a sudden downpour of rain, the planned welcoming event had to be abandoned. The following day the Archbishop administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to about 50 children in the parish church.

As reported in THe Opunake Times, the boys all wore white silk scarves and the girls looked very nice dressed in white and wore white veils and wreaths.

The new presbytery and new convent were both decorated in greenery and on the side of the convent was the motto Benevolentius qui venit in nomine Domine. Between the convent and presbytery, an arch was decorated with the Archbishop’s coat of arms and his motto, O crux, ave, spes unica. Between the arch the cross, our only hope, and on the other side was shown in large letters, Cead mille fáithfe (Irish phrase meaning ‘a hundred thousand welcomes’).

In the afternoon Archbishop Redwood formally opened and blessed the presbytery and convent. In the course of the speeches, the ‘sealous industry and charity of the Sisters of the Mission were warmly extolled, as was the ‘pious and sainthood’ nature of the faithful local priests, Fr C Cognet. A collection was taken up afterwards which raised 65 pounds and 13 shillings.

Pope Francis arrives at the Basilica of Santa Maria in Ara Coeli, in Rome, October 20, 2020 as he and other religious leaders attend a prayer service for peace across the world. Photo: Stefano Dal Pozzolo/CNS

Archbishop Francis Redwood sm, local priests and leaders in the Opunake Catholic community, at the opening on the Opunake presbytery and convent, 1903. Photo: Marist Archives

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