



ARCHBISHOP OF WELLINGTON

1 February 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

I am pleased to be greeting you as we begin the second month of year already! I hope that this finds you rested and having had a chance for time with family and friends over the holiday season. We have been very blessed to have had such good weather in most areas of the Archdiocese.

As we get back into the ordinary time of our lives, after holidays, it is a chance to look again at the basics in our lives. Most of the time our lives are regular and have a pattern to each day. This is a good thing generally; it enables us to live with some certainty and to operate out of our regular routines. The question that we can ask at the start of each year is 'are my routines and habits ones that are good for my life?' We often talk about making New Year's resolutions which are one way of asking that same question, but on a deeper level it can be about the need each of us has to review how we are living and the habits we have developed. Habits in themselves can be good as well as being unhelpful. It is the same in our spiritual lives. Good habits of prayer, reading and reflection help us to stay connected to God. The question we may ask is do I have these good habits? If I don't it is never too late to start developing them, even if we have been on the road for a while!

Lent begins in two weeks, it is an important time for us all. The Church's call to us of fasting, prayer and almsgiving is about developing those areas of our lives which can become hardened to the things of God. Going without things that we are attached to helps us to enter into this Lenten season physically, it can be demanding and difficult, but it does tie us to the suffering of Jesus for us. Our communication with God in prayer enables us a chance to listen to what God is saying to us, as well as telling him what we need. The giving of our resources to others through almsgiving is about caring for our brothers and sisters in their need. All these elements are there, not for some sense of being miserable, but because they help form our hearts and minds to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. Athletes train for their events, we prepare ourselves for the great Easter festival over these forty days. I encourage you to think about how you participate in Lent and how you might do it this year. While we hear in the scriptures that we should keep what we do to ourselves, it is good to encourage one another in making the most of this Lenten time.

I ask that you encourage others and support our Caritas Lenten Appeal during Lent. For our Catholic community Caritas is the means by which we help many of our brothers and sisters in the Pacific and beyond. The Lenten Appeal is an important means of providing the resources needed and we depend on this to be able to do this work. As part of almsgiving please make a donation which represents your Lenten almsgiving. Over the last couple of years there has been a drop in the giving for Caritas and this has put pressure on the ability to fund the programmes that have been committed to. Check out the Caritas website to see more about what they are doing.

The second session of the Synod on Synodality will take place in Rome in October and the organisers are asking for feedback on the Synthesis document which came out of the first session. There are going to be a number of opportunities for groups to give feedback, but it has to be done by the beginning of April, which is a short time frame. The consultation will not be as extensive as the ones before the Synod. The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council is coordinating groups to give feedback so if you hear of a group meeting in your area please take the time to join in with it.

Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington

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Over the Christmas holidays we celebrated the funerals of Cardinal Thomas Williams and Monsignor Charles Cooper. Both of these men were faithful servants of the Archdiocese and to the wider Church. Cardinal Tom put a lot of things in motion which we are enjoying the fruits of today. He also played a significant role in a number of Vatican committees and events and was well respected internationally, especially for his commitment to social justice. Monsignor Charles had been a specialist in the liturgy and pastor in a number of communities in the Archdiocese. The latest WelCom has a detailed tribute to Cardinal Tom. May they rest in peace.

Their deaths remind us of the need for priests to continue to minister in our communities and to work with you all for the growth of faith in all people. We have one young man joining the seminary this year along with the other three who are in formation. Please keep encouraging those you know who may be suitable to consider if God is calling them to this life.

Our school communities are beginning again this week. We are very blessed to have our Catholic school network and all that this entails. We pray for our teachers, school staff, pupils and their families, for a successful year and hopefully one without too many disruptions. I look forward to joining our teachers at the Commissioning Masses in Nelson and Wellington in the coming fortnight. I want to thank Mr Andrew Murray, who has finished his time as principal, for his leadership at St Mary's College and Mrs Nenah Kelemete at St Pius X in Titahi Bay. Ms Maria Potter will finish as principal at the end of term one at Sacred Heart College Lower Hutt. Please keep these communities in your prayers as they go through the process of employing new principals. Mr Tala Moemai begins his time as principal at Holy Cross School Miramar and we wish him every blessing as he takes up this role.

A number of our priests have moved parishes in the last week. I am touched by the way you have farewelled those who are leaving, it is a reflection of your kindness to them and the affection in which they were held. I know you will do the same for the priests who are arriving. It is never easy to change, both for the priests and the people, and I hope that for both groups this will be the beginning of a fruitful time in the life of your parish communities.

Congratulations to Sr Julianna O'Sullivan RSM who celebrated her 100th birthday recently and Sr De Porres RSM who celebrated 70 years of religious profession. Both these women have been faithful religious and have ministered in our Archdiocese for many years. They remind us of the great gift of religious life to the Church and the witness given by so many religious women and men. Tomorrow is the World Day for Consecrated Life when we pray for those in religious life. Thank you to all our Religious for your ministry and presence.

Towards the end of this month the bishops are heading to the far north to gather for retreat and planning for the year ahead. It is a chance to see how we might cooperate more effectively between the dioceses and in the sharing of our resources. Please keep us in your prayers that it will be a fruitful time.

Blessings to you

Ngā mihi nui



+Paul Martin SM
Archbishop of Wellington



**We pray for our Dead
February**

1	James McNeill (1994)
2	John Schokker (2000)
3	Thomas Kerins (2011)
8	Raymond Stachurski (2017)
14	Colin Durning (2022)
16	Stanley Lorrigan (2001)
17	Clement Evans (1971) Geoff Broad (2012)
19	Edmond Phelan (1969)
20	Fergus Reeves (2020)