



ARCHBISHOP OF WELLINGTON

1 May 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Greetings to you as we continue our celebration of Easter. I hope you have found this time a chance to enjoy and reflect upon the wonders of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. So many of our readings at Mass currently show the vibrancy of the early Christian community, and their strong desire to spread this Good News of the Risen Lord to all whom they met. It is this same mission that we are called to in our world today.

May is the month of Mary and one which gives us the opportunity to deepen our appreciation of her and pray for her intercession. We cherish that she said yes to the call to become the mother of the Saviour, trusting in God's word while not really knowing what it would all mean. She then formed Jesus, along with St Joseph, to become the man he was and to take up his call from the Father. She was with Jesus at his death, and she supported the disciples after the resurrection as they took up the call to spread the Gospel. I encourage you during this month to take the time to read about Our Lady from the many sources that are around, to pray the rosary more regularly than you may currently, and to help our young people to discover the power of this woman of faith, the first disciple of Jesus.

Next year is going to be a Jubilee Year in the Church. This happens every 25 years and there is an extensive programme from the Holy See for celebrations of the various aspects of Church life. The Jubilee will be celebrated all over the world and we will be celebrating in our country and Archdiocese as well. As part of this Pope Francis has asked that in preparation 2024 is to be a Year of Prayer. There are many resources to help for this and if you go to the following website you will find them: <https://www.iubilaum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/verso-il-giubileo/2024-anno-della-preghiera.html>.

I encourage you to continue your own faith formation through prayer and reading. What we feed ourselves with will shape our lives. We are so blessed as a Church to have so many wonderful spiritual writers and presenters, people who unpack the faith for us and who help us to reflect on our relationship with God. It would be great if we could turn to our brothers and sisters and ask what they are reading or listening to for faith development, and them being able to recommend something to us.

Next week the priests of the Archdiocese are gathering together for three days to reflect on their life as priests and on what they are being called to do in the Church today. We have 34 priests in the Archdiocese who are currently working in our 22 parishes. Of those 26 are diocesan priests and 8 belong to Religious Orders. We are living in changing times and one of the realities is that as we develop in being more synodal as a Church, we need to see what are the roles and ministries that priests are called to do and, what are the areas that all the people of God are called to be a part of? This will mean a change in the way that we as priests live out our vocation, and in the way that lay faithful take up the many parts of the life of the Church and the parish. We need to look at our expectations of our priests and of our willingness to participate in the life of the parish. These are significant questions and discussions for us all to have, and we will be doing more of this as an Archdiocese in the future.

Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington

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Our schools began back on Monday and so, to all who work in this important ministry in our Church, we give our heartfelt thanks. There are many challenges facing education in general as well as the particular ones we have for Catholic education, especially around the formation of teachers to be able to teach Religious Education, and, to witness to it by their own faith lives. This is a truly worthy vocation and I encourage you to do all you can to help support our schools and our teachers.

Last Saturday I celebrated Mass for the Sisters of Mercy in New Zealand who gathered for a pre-chapter meeting. Religious Orders gather every few years in what is called a 'chapter' to set the policy for the coming years, to review and reflect on what has happened in the preceding years, and to elect a new leadership team. We have been so blessed by the Religious Orders who have worked in our country. The Sisters of Mercy first came to New Zealand in 1850 to Auckland and then to various parts of the country since then. They have made a huge contribution to the life of the Church and society. They are having to deal with the realities of fewer sisters and handing their works to lay people to continue in their Mercy spirit. Please keep them in your prayers as they prepare for their meeting in August.

We are currently getting ready for the re-opening of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and of St Mary His Mother. It has been a significant undertaking to strengthen and renovate the Church. There will be a Mass of Thanksgiving in the evening of the 7th June, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, and then activities over the weekend. Due to the limit of seats the Mass on the Friday evening will be by invitation, but please come to the Cathedral over the weekend, or in the weeks following, to pray and celebrate the return to the Mother Church of our Archdiocese.

Currently I am in Dunedin for a Bishops Conference. We meet four times a year, twice for two days and twice for four days. This is a four-day meeting. We are trying to see how we can work together across our dioceses to have a more coordinated approach to the many parts that make up the life of the Church. We receive reports from the many Church agencies that make up our presence in the country, and we look at various issues and challenges that we face as a Church and as presence in this country. It is good to now have a full contingent of bishops in our country.

We remember those who have died in the last months and in particular Sisters Ruth Vella RSM and Therese Louise McConway RSJ. Please also remember in your prayers Fathers Frank Maguire, Frank Whitaker, Peter O'Connell, David Orange, Kevin Purcell and Tikoua Kautu who are not well at this time.

Ngā mihi nui



+Paul Martin SM
Archbishop of Wellington

We pray for our deceased Priests May

- 1 Fr Michael Cashman (1946)
- 5 Fr John Pearce (2019)
Fr Harold Trehey (1978)
- 8 Fr Robert Ryan (2005)
- 9 +Thomas O'Shea SM (1954)
Fr Francis Walsh (1956)
- 11 Fr Kieran Klimeck (1983)
- 12 Fr Merton Bradford (1973)
- 13 Fr Brian Austin (2018)
- 15 Fr Leo Jansen (1994)
- 16 Fr Michael O'Dea (2020)
- 21 Fr Harry Ekelschot (1991)
- 23 Fr Hugh McHale (1984)
- 25 Fr Brian Fox (1972)
- 27 Fr Thomas Leahy (1927)
- 28 Fr Patrick Cullen (1969)
- 31 Fr Noel Donoghue (2005)

Anniversary of Ordination May

- 6 Fr Biju Xavier (2000)
Fr Cirilo Barlis (2017)
- 9 +John Dew (1976)
Fr Joseph Keegan (1976)
- 21 Fr Paul O'Connor AA (1978)
- 23 Fr Maurice Carmody (1970)
- 25 Fr Tadiusz Swiatkowski (1982)