

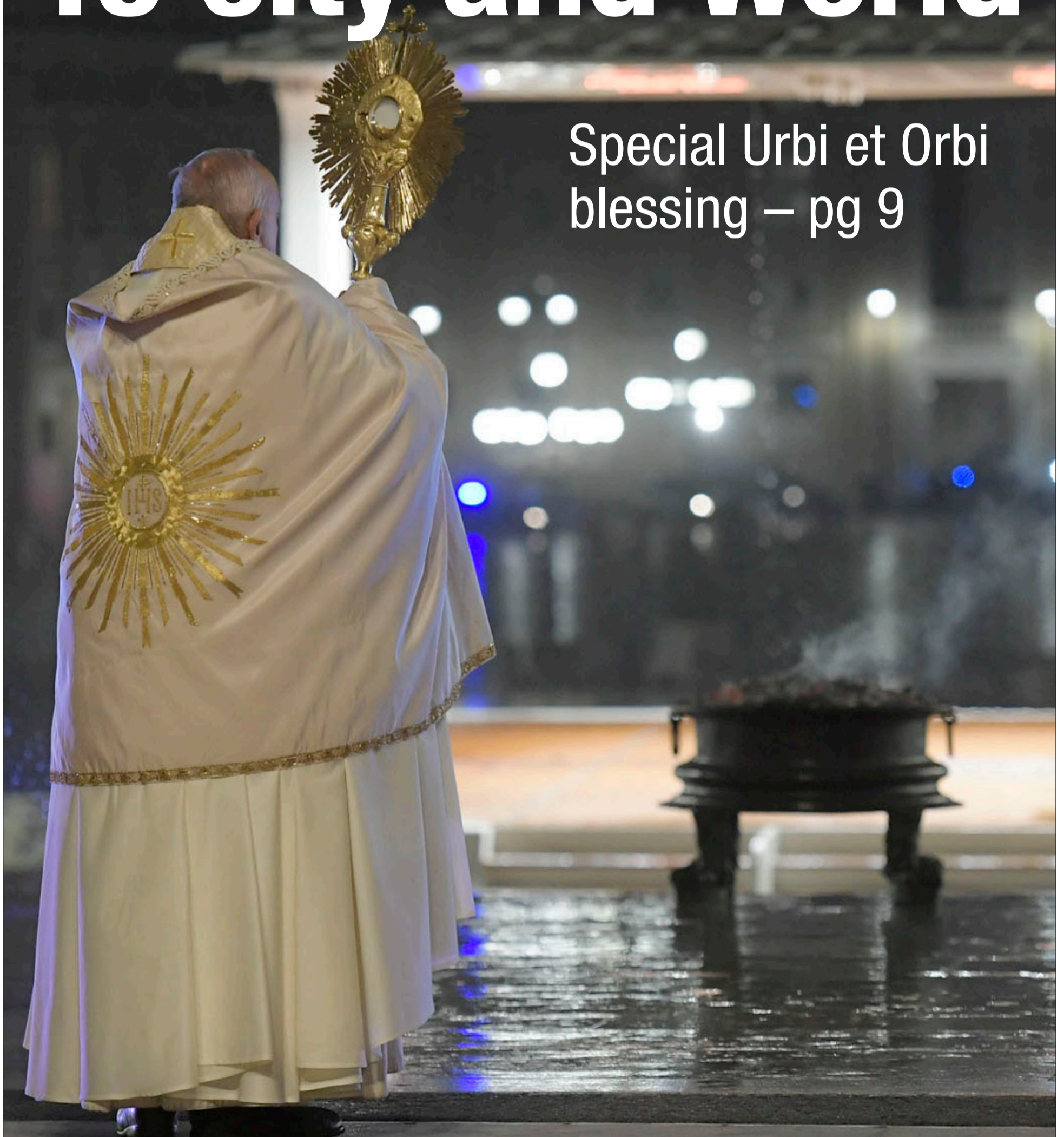
NZ Catholic

The national Catholic newspaper

April 5 - 18, 2020 • No. 586

To city and world

Special Urbi et Orbi
blessing – pg 9



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On the front cover: Pope Francis holds the monstrance as he delivers his extraordinary blessing “urbi et orbi” (to the city and the world) during a prayer service in the portico of St Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on March 27. (CNS photo).

NZCatholic ★★

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Marketing and Administration: Claudia Cachay
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NZ Catholic is published fortnightly. Subscriptions: One year, \$73; two years, \$135. Overseas airmail extra. The contents of NZ Catholic are copyright and permission to reprint must be obtained in advance. ISSN 1174-0086

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- See regular updates on our college website under COVID19 latest update.
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Note from the Editor

If you are reading this, you are likely doing so using an electronic device. NZ Catholic was two days away from going to press with its next print edition when the Ministry for Culture and Heritage decided that non-daily newspapers and periodicals are not considered essential services under the news and media designation. NZ Catholic does not come under the exemptions announced by the PM on March 31.

Rather than waste the edition we had largely prepared, we have made it into a free electronic edition. This can be found on our website (www.nzcatholic.org.nz) and on others. We hope to produce more of them during the lockdown.

Please share these as wide-

ly as possible. We will also be posting stories to our website and to our Facebook page regularly. It is important to keep communicating as well as possible as a Church community, especially at this time. Good communication is needed now more than ever.

Since we are not producing print editions during the lockdown, our normal administration function is effectively suspended. We will not be issuing subscription renewal letters and updating our subscriber database until we are able to return to our office. Likewise, we are not sending papers to parishes while churches are closed.

If we can produce a print edition at some point in the

future, but not return to our office, the present position is that subscribers will not be billed for these editions. They will be regarded as bonus issues. If this changes, we will let you know.

This is an unprecedented situation, not only for the staff of NZ Catholic, but for the whole Church and the whole nation. We hope that we can return to producing a print edition as soon as conditions permit. But some conditions — for instance the future supply of newsprint during the lockdown — may be beyond our control.

We wish all our readers well. Please keep us in your prayers. Keep safe and stay home. St Maximilian Kolbe, pray for us. St Francis de Sales, pray for us.

— Michael Otto, Editor.

Abortion law change disappointing

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The New Zealand Catholic bishops are deeply disappointed that Parliament passed the Abortion Legislation Bill at its third reading by a margin of 68 to 51 on March 18. That was the final vote on the bill in Parliament. With the royal assent given by the Governor-General on March 23, it is now law.

“This [piece of legislation] totally ignores the fact that there are always at least two human lives involved in every pregnancy,” said a spokesperson for the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, Ms Cynthia Piper.

“There is no longer any recognition of the rights of the unborn child in this new law,” said Ms Piper, a lecturer for the Church’s Te Kupenga – Catholic Leadership Institute, speaking on behalf of the bishops.

“That is a travesty of human rights. To hold that the foetus is not a legal person ignores the reality that a genetically unique human life has begun which is neither that of the mother or the father. That the law fails to recognise this does not change what is a biological and human fact.”

The bishops’ conference also believes the new law will fail many women.

“Those of us who have experience of supporting women with so-called unwanted pregnancies, or women who have had abortions, know only too

well the coercive realities that drive many women to have an abortion that they later regret,” said Ms Piper.

“That is why we have argued consistently that it is in women’s best interests that the legal pathway to an abortion needs to be robust. This law does nothing to help those women who, for a variety of reasons, choose an abortion because they feel they have no other choice, whether that is because of partner pressure or for economic or social reasons.

“Neither does this law do anything to reduce the overall number of abortions, something that a majority of New Zealanders have consistently said they want. It has been rushed through and is ill-considered in so many ways.”

Furthermore, the bishops are absolutely dismayed that MPs voted down a host of sensible amendments that would have made the new legislation much more compassionate, said Ms Piper.

“These included amendments that would have required babies born alive to be cared for like any other child, a ban on sex-selection abortions and a ban on disability discrimination abortions.”

Sadness at Msgr Browne’s death

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Hamilton Bishop Stephen Lowe expressed sadness over the passing away of Msgr Michael Browne, brother of Bishop Emeritus of Hamilton, Bishop Denis Browne. Msgr Browne was 85.

“The Lord has called Michael home at 10.20pm. May he know the fullness of God’s love,” Bishop Denis said in a text message to Bishop Lowe on March 3, 2020.

Msgr Browne’s roles in Hamilton diocese included being vicar for administration, Clergy Trust Fund secretary, treasurer of the CTF and Medicare Fund, member of the DFC, confessor for the Tyburn community, member of the Priest Council and College of Consultors, member of the Appointments Committee, Dean of the Hamilton North Deanery, convener of the Boundaries Commission — being a sub-committee of the Priest Council — and chancellor for diocese.

He retired in 2013, residing first in Papamoa and then moving to Auckland.

Msgr Browne was ordained as a priest in 1959 by Archbishop James Liston, having been trained at Holy Name Seminary, Christchurch and Holy Cross College, Mosgiel.

He was assistant parish priest in Onehunga (1959-1971) and Tauranga (1971-1975). He was then assigned as parish priest of Tokoroa (1975-1981), Gisborne (1981-1987), Matamata (1987-1997), Fairfield (1998-2002), Fairfield and Te Rapa (2002-2006) and Tauranga (2007-2012).

A requiem Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary on March 6, followed by burial at the Ohaupo Catholic Cemetery.

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Locked down Church community keeps faith

by ROWENA OREJANA

"I feel like we are entering into another type of Lent."

This was Dunedin Bishop Michael Dooley's reflection in his pastoral letter on March 22 as the New Zealand bishops made the painful decision to cancel all Masses - starting on March 20 and until further notice.

The bishops had to make another "heartbreaking decision" to close churches after the Government advised it was putting the country into lockdown from 11.59pm on March 25 to prevent the further spread of the novel coronavirus/Covid-19.

The lockdown put a halt to planned first confessions and communions throughout the country as well as to weddings and funerals.

■ Spiritual fasting

"Reluctantly, we are 'fasting' from the Eucharist, but this can be a chance to appreciate the gift of it more fully," Bishop Dooley said.

The bishops earlier gave people in their dioceses dispensation from their obligation to attend Sunday Masses and holy days of obligation in accordance with Canon 1248.

Hamilton Bishop Stephen Lowe suggested "spiritual communion, which is a rich part of the Church's spiritual wealth for those who cannot receive Holy Communion".

He also asked people to be "sensible and flexible".

"I ask you, please do not make this a 'political' issue, but rather, reading the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel, look at this time as an opportunity to grow in your own spiritual life and holiness," he said in his pastoral letter.

Christchurch Bishop Paul Martin, SM, also called on people to deepen their spiritual life.

"This will certainly be a different Lent than we have ever experienced before. But we are people who believe in a God who loves us and in whom we trust, through all the stages of life and whatever might happen. Let us place our trust in him, pray for strength and courage as we

face these challenges and not let fear rule our heart," he said.

Auckland Bishop Patrick Dunn encouraged families to celebrate Sunday "as a domestic Church".

"Moving to Alert 4 sees all of us self-isolating. Not just to keep ourselves safe, but those about us. This requires our church buildings to close. But not the Living Church. We, the people of God, are still missionary disciples, praying for and supporting one another," he said.

With available technology, the different dioceses put links to streamed Masses on their websites. More prayer and reflection resources had been made available online.

Bishops Dunn, Lowe and Martin celebrated online Sunday Masses, the links to which were posted on their Facebook pages as well as on websites. Different priests also celebrated daily Masses across the country.

Bishop Lowe celebrated a Votive Mass, a Mass celebrated for a particular need which, in this case, was protection from the pandemic.

"It's bizarre for me to be preaching before a camera. Whenever I preach, I get engaged with people sitting in front of me and their reaction. Perhaps for you, it's bizarre watching a homily from home, on a laptop or computer or a phone. But this again is a time for us experiencing something new, something new coming to birth within us. It is my hope that, at this time, as we pray the Mass together, me here in my chapel and you, wherever you may be, that we'll enter into the mystery of the Mass more deeply, and the prayers," he said.

Bishop Martin, in his homily on March 20, warned against seeing the pandemic as God's punishment.

"It's a really dangerous way to see God, and not one that measures up to what Jesus Christ revealed to us about the nature and the way that God operates. Indeed, in the event of the man who was blind, the Pharisees asked Jesus, who [it was that] sinned - this man or his parents, because they considered that his



A screenshot of Bishop Patrick Dunn celebrating Mass in his chapel.

blindness was a punishment from God. Neither, says Jesus. This man's [blindness] is so that the works of God may be made visible through him," Bishop Martin stressed.

Bishop Dunn reflected on how the blind man came to see, while the Pharisees became more and more blind.

"The big issue is, for the Pharisees, did Jesus heal on the Sabbath day? For the blind man, and for us, the issue is, did he help a man born blind to see again, whatever day of the week it happened," Bishop Dunn said.

"If that is the case, who is Jesus? And that's the question that is in our hearts as we journey towards Easter.

"As we continue our lenten journey, we pray for the gift of sight that we can see Jesus in our day to day life . . . and you might even say in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic."

The Church is posting online Mass links

on its National Liturgy Office website. The page has regular updates of links in New Zealand and overseas, including to the Pope's daily Mass, held at 7pm New Zealand time.

■ Unusual kindness

Wellington Cardinal John Dew, in his reflection on March 26, called on the faithful to show "unusual kindness".

"These unusual times call us to respond with unusual kindness, to go out of our way to be kind to those who are isolated, anxious, lonely, ill or suffering a bereavement. It is good to look after our fellow parishioners, but we are people called to mission. The people in our street, workmates, extended family and especially those who are struggling, all need 'unusual kindness'."

He also suggested Catholics donate financially, if not in goods, to foodbanks and community organisations.



PM makes personal call to school board chair

by MICHAEL OTTO

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has made a personal call to the chairperson of the board of an Auckland Catholic school which has been in the news as one of the novel coronavirus "clusters" in New Zealand.

The chair of the board of Marist College in Auckland, Stephen Dallow, wrote on the school's Facebook page on March 27 that he had "just received a personal call from our Prime Minister".

"She wanted to pass on her best wishes to our community at this time. She knows you are all nervous and worried, but we will get through this. Her heart is very much with us at Marist."

Mr Dallow added: "We live in a pretty special country when a Prime Minister, in the middle of a crisis, can still ring and discuss things directly."

Earlier on March 27, the board chair had talked on a Facebook video post of hearing about a handful of students being out on the streets, mixing with others. He strongly emphasised that this could not happen. "We have to stay home," he said, in order to stop the spread of the disease.

Before she sent her message to Mr Dallow, Ms Ardern had been questioned about the students during a press briefing. The Prime Minister made a plea to the students involved to take the restrictions seriously, especially so as not to put those whom they love at risk.

As of March 30, according to a Ministry of Health update, there were 47 confirmed and probable cases in the Marist College "cluster".

Among those who had tested positive was principal Raechelle Taulu.

On March 27, Mr Dallow wrote on Facebook that "many are providing feedback that they are well or nearly back to full health. For a lot, the symptoms were mild. One case I reported as serious has come back negative, a reminder that there are normal change-of-season bugs out there as well."

A letter from deputy principal-pastoral care Emma Coupar-Wanoa, posted on Facebook on March 27, stated that "the head girls will be

launching a Marist College Student Instagram account as a way for our students to stay connected".

"They will post messages, prayers, well-being tips, and fun activities to do while in self-isolation and lockdown. If students are under 13 years old, their parents can follow this account and share messages/information with their daughters."

The letter noted that this would be a private account and would be overseen by the deputy principal-pastoral care.



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Pastoral Letter to the Catholic People from the Bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand regarding Covid-19 (March 28, 2020)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we begin these weeks of lockdown in Aotearoa New Zealand, we are deeply aware of the shared sacrifice for the protection of our families, workplaces and the wider community both local and international. In these weeks the safety of all people is our primary concern. We are unable to leave our homes and must remain isolated from everyone other than those with whom we live.

The current restrictions prevent priests from leaving their homes, even to minister to the sick and dying, and therefore the sacraments of the church are unavailable to parishioners. This is an especially great suffering for both priests and people, unprecedented in our lifetime.

But this lack of availability of the sacraments is not unknown in the history of the Church in our land. Before the arrival of the first priests in Aotearoa in 1838, Catholic faith was growing in New Zealand with families and small communities of Catholics living with the strong desire for the sacraments of Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, and Anointing that they were not yet able to celebrate. Even following the arrival of priests many of our Catholic ancestors still found themselves unable to participate in the Mass because of distance, but they embraced the mission of forming their families in faith with daily prayer together and ensuring that the scriptures and

the lives of the saints were read for personal formation and shared with their children.

In these days we hear that many of you are praying more regularly in your homes using every means of support available, especially online streaming of the Mass and Stations of the Cross, reading the scriptures privately or with your families and praying the Rosary and other devotional prayers. We are inspired by your generous response to this unexpected Lenten penance and we are excited by the evidence that Christ is meeting you in your "closed room."

God always provides for his people. The sacraments, which are the primary communicators of the life of God within the Church, are not the origin of grace, nor do they have a monopoly on it. God is the origin of all grace and God freely chooses to reward virtue, good intentions and actions.

In these extraordinary days of lockdown, when we are unable to receive the sacraments we desire (Eucharist, Reconciliation or Anointing), the Vatican, following the leadership of Pope Francis has communicated how we may obtain the graces usually given through these sacraments.

The healing and grace of these sacraments and more is still available to you, directly and without the sacraments through a Plenary Indulgence. This is the beauty of what was of-

fered throughout history by Indulgences, before our understanding of these communicators of grace was corrupted by misuse.

This is a beautiful opportunity to know the mercy, forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ. How we might receive these graces is detailed on the appended last page: *When you cannot receive the Sacraments because of Quarantine.*

The Church has always responded to people in times of need with extraordinary generosity and mercy. This is true in these days, with the Indulgence offered not only to those in danger of death, but to all people who seek to rekindle their relationship with Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church.

Finally, we must remind you, please stay true to the spirit and the letter of the restrictions. Unless you work in an essential industry, or need to visit a supermarket, a doctor or a chemist, do NOT break this lockdown. Stay in your own household. Do not let visitors enter.

At the heart of our faith is the fact that in Jesus, God comes to us. We do not have to leave home to find God. In these days, in Jesus, God is coming to us, seeking to encounter us in the confines of our own homes.

Your parish priests are available to give counsel via the telephone and online. Mass is being celebrated

online, with links available from your parish websites, or this special National Liturgy Office page:

www.nlo.org.nz/news-and-events/media-releases/celebrate-mass-online/

Lent is traditionally a time of sacrifice, but we are usually free to choose what we will do and not do for Lent. This Lent, so much has changed unexpectedly, depriving us of many freedoms. An unexpected penance has been imposed from outside. Yet these next few weeks of lockdown offer us an unprecedented and extraordinary opportunity for growth. Let us unite in embracing this opportunity to grow together seeking greater maturity in faith in Jesus Christ within the Catholic Church.

Yours in Christ,

✠ Patrick Dunn, Bishop of Auckland and NZCBC President

✠ Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Hamilton and NZCBC Secretary

✠ John Dew, Cardinal Archbishop of Wellington, NZCBC Vice President

✠ Paul Martin SM, Bishop of Christchurch

✠ Michael Dooley, Bishop of Dunedin

✠ Michael Gielen, Auxiliary Bishop of Auckland

When you cannot receive the Sacraments because of Quarantine

On 20 March 2020, The Apostolic Penitentiary issued a statement for people affected by the Covid-19 lockdown. It gave a way (a Plenary Indulgence) for those in danger of death to be forgiven their sins and to be readied for eternity. The extract below clarifies the necessary steps to prepare for and to receive this abundant mercy of God.

For those unable to receive the sacraments

(for example, Mass, Reconciliation):

do any one of the following:

- unite spiritually in Mass online, OR
 - read the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, OR
 - recite the Holy Rosary, OR
 - do the Way of the Cross, OR
 - recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy,
- to implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself, and to pray for the Holy Father's intentions.

And have the intention of going to sacramental confession and holy communion once these things are possible.

For those who are sick:

- recite the Creed and
- pray the Lord's Prayer and
- pray the Hail Mary, or other prayer invoking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and
- pray for the intentions of the Holy Father offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the intention of going to sacramental confession and holy communion, once these things are possible.

For those who are dying:

This indulgence is granted to them, provided that they are well disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime. The recommendation is that the dying person be given a crucifix to hold or to look at.

Maturity of faith during lockdown

by Fr JOHN O'CONNOR

This week's pastoral letter of the New Zealand bishops invites the Catholics of Aotearoa to greater maturity of faith in the face of the coronavirus restrictions.

When we began this Lent five weeks ago, we could never have imagined that we would soon be confined to our homes and deprived of the sacraments of the Church, which we know to be essential.

The bishops write that they are inspired by the generous response of parishioners to this unexpected Lenten penance and are clearly excited by the evidence that people are encountering Christ within their own homes as they pray together, following the live-streaming of Masses and other communal times of prayer, reading the Scriptures alone or with families, and praying the rosary and other devotional prayers.

While it may seem as though our faith and mission is restricted and even confined in these weeks, we know that we are united with people of faith in every nation on earth who are also deprived of the life-blood of the Church.

But we know too that the Church was born in closed rooms where the first disciples gathered. It was in these confines that the risen Jesus broke through locked doors and fearful hearts to reform the Church.

We understand well that the sacraments are an indispensable source of relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore we rightly do all we can to participate in the Mass every Sunday and take part in the sacramental life of the Church - ensuring that children are baptised, and receive Eucharist and reconciliation, and that the sacraments of marriage and anointing of the sick are celebrated whenever necessary. We understand well that the sacraments provide a beginning point for faith.

Perhaps we appreciate less fully that the sacraments are also a summit point of relationship with Jesus Christ. The person who comes to a priest to confess sins, receive communion or to celebrate marriage or anointing of the sick has decided before they meet the priest that they will celebrate these sacraments. They live therefore with the desire for these sacraments, which has already led to their decision to make the phone call, send the email or to get in the car. These people are already experiencing the grace of the sacrament they seek.

The coronavirus lockdown awakens us to our desire for the sacraments, precisely because they are unavailable to us. But the bishops are reminding us that the desire we experience is itself the life of faith. Our deep longing for the sacraments is proof that we do have faith and that the life of Jesus Christ is already vibrant within us.

The bishops remind us that the sacraments of the Church, instituted by Jesus, are the usual tools of trade for the priest as minister of the grace of Jesus Christ. However, when a priest is not available (or when we celebrate a year of jubilee), the Church enthusiastically takes extraordinary steps to indulge those who seek God with an abundance of God's mercy through indulgences.

In this situation, the Church is able to be even more generous with God's mercy, and the method for this mercy is the gift of the indulgence.

Fr Merv Duffy, SM, writing in the Marist Messenger a couple of years ago, concluded his reflection: "Indulgences have a very long history in the Church. They have encouraged virtuous actions and helped many people on their path to salvation. . . . [I]ndulgences are a simple and concrete support and encouragement for practices that should be part of the life of every Catholic."

Fr John O'Connor is director of the National Liturgy Office.

Fundamentalist biblical interpretation off the mark

In response to various statements from certain religious figures — mainly on the Internet — to the effect that the coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic was foretold in the Book of Revelation in the Bible, NZ Catholic asked Te Kupenga — Catholic Theology Institute Scripture lecturer Fr Kevin Waldie, SM, for comment. His response is below.

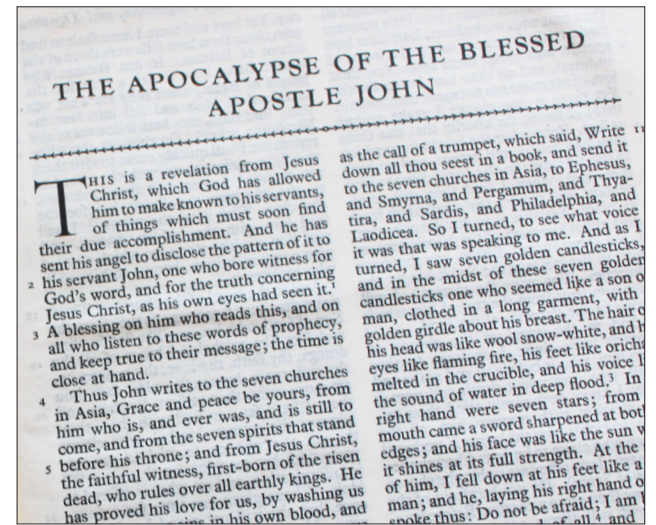
Fr Waldie: The title itself indicates how we should regard this last book of the Bible. It is not, as I often hear, the book of “Revelations”. It is a unified literary piece that presents God’s unfolding Word imaginatively by using layer upon layer of symbolism to convey its central message.

That symbolism takes many forms, like numbers, colours, animals and representative characters of good and evil. Because of its complexity, the symbolism is often naturally difficult to fathom. And that warns against any kind of fundamentalist reading that is not respectful of the book’s literary genre set within the historical

context of the late first century CE.

Its purpose is not to predict future events, catastrophes or world-shattering phenomena. Rather, it should be remembered that this work of literature belongs to a popular form of writing, known as Apocalyptic, and that its main aim was to give Jewish and Christian believers hope for the present, despite many social difficulties and trials endured during this earthly existence of ours. In that way, it served to encourage the intended audiences to remain loyal and strong members of their faith tradition.

With an emphatic focus on the risen Christ’s victory over death present in passages like Rev 1:12-20, 5:1-14, 19:11-21 and 22:6-21, its dominant message is one of hope for our eternal future. Of significance here too is how Revelation begins (chapter 1) and ends (chapter 22). For in these two chapters, the author signals how to regard the whole book and hear a truly comforting message for our own time of trial and tribulation.



The last book in the Bible

CWL cancels national conference

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The national board of the Catholic Women’s League has decided to cancel the league’s national conference in July.

National president Susan Dickson said this was done with heavy hearts.

“We acknowledge the hard work of the Hamilton Diocesan Council and thank the organising committee for all their planning and efforts towards making this conference a success for us all,” Mrs Dickson said.

She noted that all members were looking forward to the launch of the league’s 2020-2022 theme, which is traditionally done at the biennial conference.

But even though the conference will not take place, a new theme has been shared. It is “Kia Kaha — Courage, Take Heart”.

“Little did the board know how apt this theme would be,” Mrs Dickson said.

“Our faith gives us such peace and reassurance. One of our board members has commented that the Holy Spirit must have been helping us in our deliberations.”

Mrs Dickson cited Scripture passages such as Isaiah 35:4-10 and John 14:27 as examples of a promise made throughout the Old and New Testaments.

League members were encouraged to find similar passages.

“Make a list and use them as prayer and inspirational starters during the coming weeks. In the coming weeks, it is imperative that we grasp

this lockdown as an opportunity to build strong connections. To have courage and stay strong. Be positive. It is a challenge. Follow the rules. Care for each other,” Mrs Dickson said.

She suggested league members take advantage of the many prayer opportunities online and via email, as well as diocesan websites that are streaming Masses and scripture.

Mrs Dickson suggested several other ideas in line with the theme at this time — such as taking part in an Internet prayer circle; Activating an old-fashioned telephone or email circle for all those who don’t use social media; Setting up a “ring for a chat” roster; Establishing a branch or parish Facebook page or group on Messenger; Having virtual meetings, cuppas and challenges; Using Skype and video calling; Sharing photos and updates to encourage each other; Identifying who, in branches and parishes, are most vulnerable or who lack a support network; Involving as many members and others within league members’ community as possible. Another suggestion



Susan Dickson

was: “If knitting and sewing are your thing it could be gloves for the homeless, or craft items for a fundraising stall, when this is all over.”

Mrs Dickson exhorted members to take the lead to actively support others and to share news and encouragement.

“Don’t forget to have some fun,” she added.

She said that Ministry of Health advice should be followed at all times and that league members should keep themselves safe and well.

“May God keep you always within the palm of his hand.”

Event cancellations

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Among the upcoming Catholic events in New Zealand postponed or cancelled because of the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic are:

■ The *Takirua 2020: Shaping the Mission* conference planned for Wellington for April 24-26 has been postponed until later this year because of uncertainties caused by the pandemic. The decision to postpone was made before setting a new date, to provide clarity and certainty for people around the April dates in the face of the rapidly changing pandemic issue.

The conference has been jointly promoted by Catholic Network of Marriage Educators and the NZ Catholic Bishops’ Council for Young People.

“We are working on alternative dates and, as soon as further decisions are made, we will be in touch via email, social media and on our website,” said Chris Duthie-Jung, director, Marriage, Family and Young Church Ministries at the Archdiocese of Wellington.

Registrations are refundable upon request, as the conference cannot now happen on the originally advertised dates.

“However, we encourage registered delegates to consider waiting until new dates are announced before deciding to attend or seek a refund.”

Conference website: takirua2020.nz

■ On his facebook page, Cardinal John Dew announced that the South Island Mission Expo [scheduled for Garin College in Nelson on March 22] is postponed “until later in the year or early next year due to the Covid-19 situation”.

■ The Christchurch March for Life organised for Saturday, March 28, was postponed in order to comply with the Government’s Covid-19 restrictions. The March, organised by Cantabrians for Life and supported and sponsored by Right to Life, will now be held at a future date.

■ The Auckland CBD stations of the cross on Good Friday, which usually goes from Albert Park to St Patrick’s Cathedral, has been cancelled.



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

POPE FRANCIS

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Evangelising with Pope Francis

Some months ago, I was writing a letter to a terminally ill friend living in North Canterbury. To my knowledge, he did not have any religious affiliation, but, having known him for more than 50 years, I knew he was, at heart, a good person. I was looking for some words of assurance that death is a new beginning, not an end, and that God has plans for us that extend beyond our earthly life. Not a simple task to do convincingly, you will agree. It so happened that, as I wrote, a copy of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Christ is Alive (Christus Vivit)* was open on the desk beside me at the page which has paragraph 112:

"The very first truth I would tell each of you is this: 'God loves you'. It makes no difference whether you have already heard it or not. I want to remind you of it. God loves you. Never doubt this, whatever may happen to you in life. At every moment, you are infinitely loved."

This paragraph provided the assurance I was seeking to give my friend, so I included it, and it helped me with the rest of the letter. I also suggested that he might find recitation of the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me") a source of peace, as it had been for other friends of mine in similar circumstances.

In *Christ is Alive*, Pope Francis addressed his exhortation to young people, but pointed out that youthfulness is not a matter of years, but a frame of mind! Francis explains that there are three great truths that all of us need to keep hearing constantly. In addition to paragraph 112, the other two are paragraph 118:

"The second great truth is that Christ, out of love, sacrificed himself completely in order to save you. His outstretched arms on the cross are the most telling sign that he is a friend who is willing to stop at nothing: 'Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end' (John 13:1)".

And then there is paragraph 124:

"Finally, there is a third truth, inseparable from the second: Christ is alive! We need to keep reminding ourselves of this, because we can risk seeing Jesus Christ simply as a fine model from the distant past, as a memory, as someone who saved us two thousand years ago. But that would be of no use to us: it would leave us unchanged, it would not set us free. The one who fills us with his grace, the one who liberates us, transforms us, heals and consoles us is someone fully alive. He is the Christ, risen from the dead, filled with supernatural life and energy, and robed in bound-



less light. That is why Saint Paul could say: 'If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile' (1 Corinthians 15:7)."

Notice the simplicity of these statements and how they are focused on a personal relationship with Christ (and God and the Holy Spirit). In introducing Christianity to someone who is not a

Michael Pender

believer, or endeavouring to coax someone back who has drifted away, Francis emphasises that our motivation must come from our own personal relationship with Jesus which will be manifested in our joy, liveliness, patience, warmth, and a non-judgemental disposition.

Additionally, in his weekly general audience for October 2, 2019, Francis said:

"If there is no Holy Spirit, there is no evangelisation, this can be proselytising, advertising. But evangelisation means letting the Holy Spirit guide you, that he is the one that pushes you to announce, to proclaim with your witness . . ."

So, it is not us but the Holy Spirit who does the evangelising; our task is to respond to the promptings of the Spirit when they arise.

As explained above, the "drive" for our evangelistic efforts is the joy of our own personal relationship with Jesus. What if we are not aware

of this relationship? Pope Francis has the answer: ". . . if we do not feel an intense desire to share this love, we need to pray insistently that he will touch our heart . . ."

Catholicism has, over the centuries, through a process of painstaking reflection and vigorous discussion, developed a magnificent intellectual edifice expressing our human understanding of the mysteries of our faith. Additionally, there is the Catechism, which has approaching 3000 headings explaining various aspect of our faith.

However, I don't think either of these is the place to start evangelisation. It seems to me that developing the personal relationship with Jesus is the first step. Once this is in place, it is possible to appreciate the bigger picture and start to explore the Catechism and our intellectual tradition.

Recently I have been involved with our parish RCIA programme. I find it of interest that the approach adopted is low key and based on Scripture. Similarly, if one examines the set of booklets provided by the Catholic Enquiry Centre, the approach there is not focused on an intellectual understanding.

And my friend? On receiving my letter, he wrote and thanked me for sharing my wisdom. After his death his wife told me that he valued it greatly and re-read it many times as his new beginning approached.

Professor Michael Pender is a professor of geotechnical engineering at the University of Auckland. He is a member of St Michael's parish, Remuera.

Ronald Rolheiser

Judgement day

We all fear judgement. We fear being seen with all that's inside us, some of which we don't want exposed to the light. Conversely, we fear being misunderstood, of not being seen in the full light, of not being seen for who we are. And what we fear most perhaps is final judgement, the ultimate revelation of ourselves. Whether we are religious or not, most of us fear having to one day face our Maker, judgment day.

We fear standing naked in complete light where nothing's hidden and all that's in the dark inside us is brought to light.

What's curious about these fears is that we fear both being known for who we are, even as we fear not being known for who we really are. We fear judgement, even as we long for it. Perhaps that's because we already intuit what our final judgement will be and how it will take place. Perhaps we already intuit that when we finally stand naked in God's light, we will also finally be understood and that revealing light will not just expose our shortcomings but also make visible our virtues.

That intuition is divinely-placed in us and reflects the reality of our final judgement. When all our secrets are known our secret goodness will also be known. Light exposes everything. For example, here's how the renowned poet and spiritual writer, Wendell Berry, foresees the final judgement: "I might imagine the dead waking, dazed into a shadowless light in which they know themselves altogether for the first time. It is a light that is merciless until they accept its mercy; by it, they are at once condemned and redeemed. It is hell until it is heaven. Seeing themselves in

that light, if they are willing, they see how far they have failed the only justice of loving one another. And yet, in suffering the light's awful clarity, in seeing themselves within it, they see its forgiveness and its beauty and are consoled."

In many ways, this wonderfully captures it: When, one day, we stand in the full light of God, stripped naked in soul, morally defenceless, with everything we have ever done exposed, that light will, I suspect, indeed be a bit of hell before it turns into heaven.

It will expose all that's selfish and impure inside us and all the ways we have hurt others in our selfishness, even as it will expose its opposite, namely, all that's selfless and pure inside us. That judgement will bring with it a certain condemnation even as it brings at the same time an understanding, forgiveness, and consolation such as we have never known before. That judgement will be, as Berry suggests, momentarily bitter but ultimately consoling.

The one nuance that I would add to Berry's idea is a something taken from Karl Rahner.

Rahner's fantasy of our judgement by God after death is very similar to Berry's, except that, for Rahner, the agent of that judgement will not so much be God's light as it will be God's love. For Rahner, the idea is not so much that we will be standing in an unrelenting light that sears and pierces through us, but rather that we will be embraced by a love so unconditional, so understanding, and so gracious that, inside that, we will know instantly all that's selfish and impure inside us, even as we know all that's pure and selfless.

Therese of Lisieux used to ask God for for-

giveness with these words: "Punish me with a kiss!" Judgement day will be exactly that. We will be "punished" by a kiss, by being loved in a way that will make us painfully aware of the sin within us, even as it lets us know that we are good and loveable.

For those of us who are Roman Catholics, this notion of judgement is also, I believe, what we mean by our concept of purgatory. Purgatory is not a place that's separate from heaven where one goes for a time to do penance for one's sins and to purify one's heart.

Our hearts are purified by being embraced by God, not by being separated from God for a time so as to be made worthy of that embrace. As well, as Therese of Lisieux implies, the punishment for our sin is in the embrace itself. Final judgement takes place by being unconditionally embraced by Love. When that happens to the extent that we're sinful and selfish that embrace of pure goodness and love will make us painfully aware of our own sin and that will be hell until it is heaven.

As a lyric by Leonard Cohen puts it: "Behold the gates of mercy, in arbitrary space, and none of us deserving the cruelty or the grace." He's right. None of us deserves either the cruelty or the grace we experience in this world. And only our final judgement, the embrace of unconditional love, God's kiss, will make us aware both of how cruel we've been and how good we really are.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com Follow on Facebook www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser.

Singing the Lord's song in lockdown

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" This question in Psalm 137, from a time when God's chosen people were in exile, echoes down the centuries to our time, when most nations are in the very strange land of a coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic.

In New Zealand, restrictive measures have implemented to slow the spread of the virus.

For Catholics, the greatest impact is being felt in the cessation of Masses — announced by the New Zealand bishops on March 20 — and in not being able to visit churches to pray and spend time in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

Writing before the Government announcement was made about the country going into lockdown — other than for essential services — the bishops acknowledged the disappointment the decision on cancelling Masses would bring to many. They also noted that many would be pleased that this sacrifice was made in order to promote the public good.

It was only a few weeks beforehand that 3000 people had gathered in the Vodafone Events Centre in Manukau for the joyous episcopal ordination Mass of Bishop Michael Gielen.

At that time, many were well into their Lenten preparations, looking ahead to Holy Week and the Triduum and the celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord.

But all of a sudden, a feast (even in Lent) became a famine. Joy and expectation turned to anxiety about what the future might bring. Then the nation hunkered down into lockdown mode.

"Yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion," Psalm 137 also stated. Many Catholics will identify with this verse at this time.

We are weeping now — not only for the pain and suffering overseas we see with horror, but for the scattering of the Lord's flock here and elsewhere.

As the Book of Ecclesiastes says, there is indeed a time to weep. But that chapter in Ecclesiastes noted that no-one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. It also stated that there is nothing better for people to do while they live than to do good.

Catholics need only to look to their history, to their saints, to see the good that the Lord can raise up in dire circumstances of illness and disease. There are the saints who actively tended to the sick, or who arranged for their care. St Aloysius Gonzaga, St Charles Borromeo, St Damien of Molokai, St Teresa of Kolkata — these are some of the names that spring to mind. There are many more. It would be useful to seek their intercession at this time, in praying for the sick and for those caring for them.

Most Catholics in New Zealand will not be called to take such measures as these saints. In fact, all other than those providing essential services, should obey the Government directives to stay at home, acting as if they too had the virus.

Catholics are usually called to be saints in their own place, in their own time, in their own circumstances. For most during this time, that place will be their own home, up until the lockdown ends.

Some of the great names in the Church spent long times in isolation or near isolation — for instance, St Basil, St Gregory of Nazianzus, St John Chrysostom, St Jerome — and this was part of a deliberately ascetic way of living the Lord's call. (Although the New Advent website notes that some other hermits were not "models of piety").

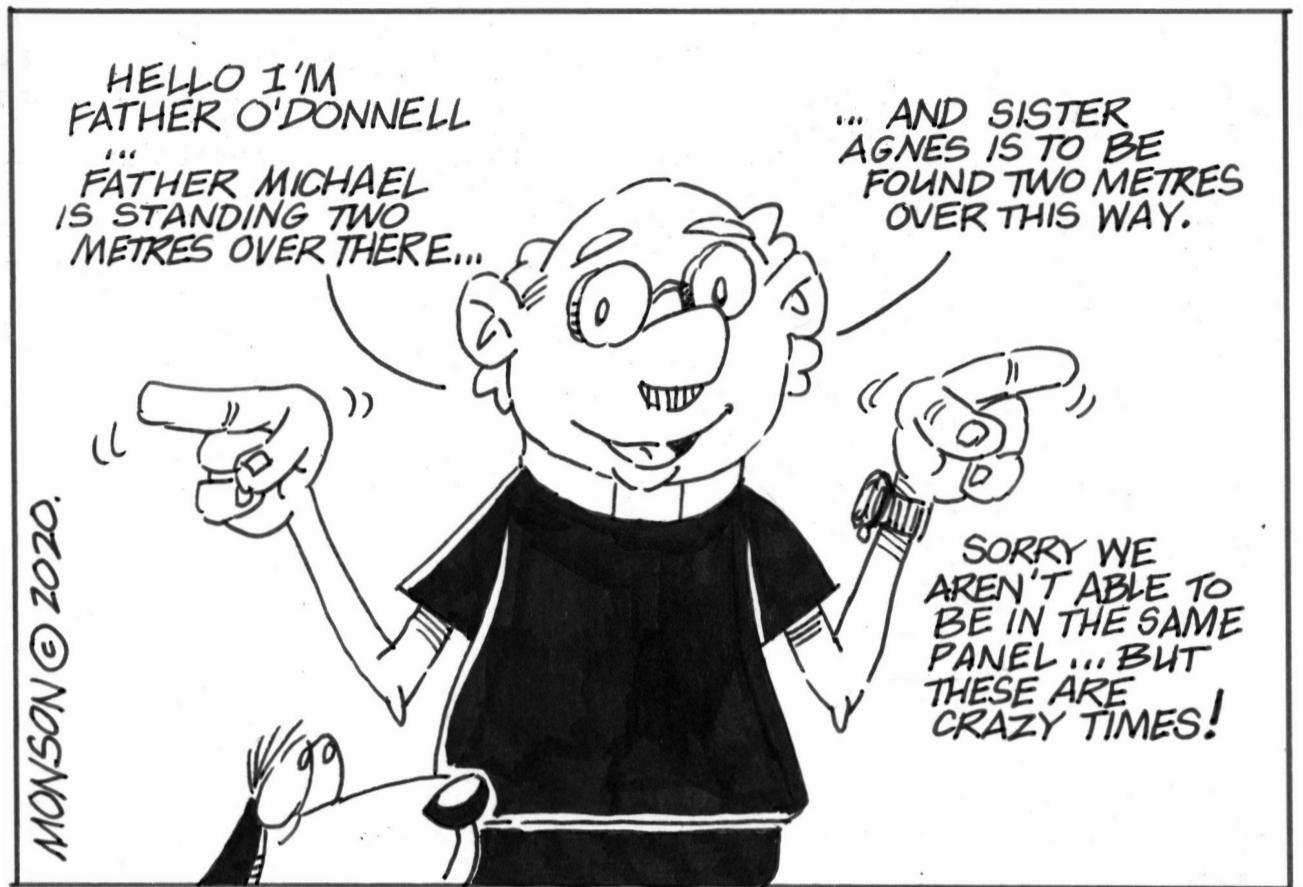
Will Catholics today find it easier to be "models of piety" during the time of lockdown? If there are many people in a home, it might be harder than usual to get away to a quiet place for prayer. Family tensions might be exacerbated. Patience will be called for.

During the lockdown, Catholics will not have the immediate consolation of the liturgy, of the Eucharist, of many aspects of their normal, community life as a Church. But as the New Zealand bishops wrote in a pastoral letter, the life of Jesus Christ communicated to us through the Church remains open to us. There are still spiritual resources, streamed celebrations of Mass and social interactions available online.

And who knows what good will arise out of this time of "lying fallow" as a Church community?

We have to hope that, whatever inconveniences, trials, suffering and tragedies arise out of this pandemic, God will ultimately bring good out of it.

The Habit



Letters

With God

Peace be with you. "Everything will pass away, but my word will not pass away." Christ spoke those words from his heart and it's true. Though the earth shakes, the sky falls, the mountains melt, and even the pandemic spreads like fire, he is with us. He said he will be. So we trust him. He is mighty indeed. He is powerful and strong. He will hear the cry of the righteous and the sinner. This is the time to cry out to him. This is the moment to pour it all out to the God who knew this was going to happen way before we even had any clue as to what is going on.

So, sit back, relax, and pray. Sit back, relax, and enjoy each other's company. Sit back, relax, and watch as God does miracles. You may have to sit, actually sit, to be able to hear from God. To hear what he's doing in your heart, or your mind, or your spirit.

He won't come into your heart and home without your invitation.

I thank God for his presence with us. This chaos, this uncertainty, this "new norm" we have to live in are surreal. But, and there's always a "but", we are God's people. We are his children. We are sheltered under his wings. His wings are big enough to hold you, and me, so come on in.

Mina Amso, Christchurch.

Obligation

Our bishops have announced that the laity are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass each Sunday during the Covid-19 epidemic. I don't know just how long this requirement has been in place. But I do hope that, when this epidemic is over, they do not reinstate it.

Things have changed a lot since the obligation was first introduced. It was a different era with different challenges to the Church.

Those who now do attend Mass regularly do so because we wish to, not because we are obliged to.

I think that it is possible to be a good Christian and Catholic these days without this obligation and the threat of committing a mortal sin.

If the requirement is reinstated, I believe it will say much as to how the thinking of the Church hierarchy has changed in the last 50 odd years.

Michael Vanderpump, Palmerston North.

Abortion

One can only wonder if this coronavirus that is spreading like wildfire around the world is punishment on mankind for its crimes.

Our next generation is being aborted by the millions and the act is classed as a service. Evil

is now good and good can be classed as evil.

We, in New Zealand, are as guilty. Since the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Act was passed in Parliament, some 500,000 babies have been aborted in the abortion mills here. There is new legislation that has been passed . . . wait for the terrible statistics that will flow from that.

The consequences for the slaughter of the innocents may well be catastrophic. St John Paul II told us "we should shout it from the rooftops".

Ted Downs, Whanganui.

■ Abidged — Editor

Bishops

Once every three years, the episcopal conference draws up a list of potential replacement bishop candidates.

This is forwarded to the Apostolic See. The terna process (if a vacancy or need arises i.e. illness or an auxiliary is requested) commences. All the background work is undertaken discreetly. If Rome concurs, there is a press release! "We have a bishop."

In past ages, such a position could have been arranged, but in more recent times an incumbent proposes a preferred candidate. Agreed, it is not a popularity contest!

Given the developing synodal approach, could there be a variation to this process? The vacancies advertised. The qualities,

skill sets, job description etc. are prepared, mindful of all necessary canons. Candidates apply to a Human Resource Management (HRM) company. A short-list is compiled and representatives of the hierarchy, clergy, and laity (for the latter all who must be viri probati (married men or single of proven virtue)) undertake the process of selection. Rome would have to confirm.

All institutions e.g. military, police, Corrections, hospital boards, NZRFU, etc., follow this process. So why does the Church model remain so different?

Qualities required: A proven record of pastoral experience, several appointments exceeding five years, prayerful, adaptable, humble, approachable, a listener, can delegate, accesses scientific data, understands HRM methodology, and can determine when it is appropriate to retire and not wait until age 75!

Julian Wagg, Otaki.

Masses

We would like to express our appreciation to those in the various dioceses who are providing the online daily Masses during this time of Covid-19 lockdown, a list of which is on the National Liturgy Office website.

Our thanks to the priests and videographers concerned.

Suzie and Pat McCarthy, Beach Haven, Auckland.

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The unexpected gift while staying at home

by JOANNA KOHORST

ROME (CNS) — I was video-chatting with my childhood friend yesterday. We haven't talked in almost a year and we were organising a virtual happy hour with our high school friends.

Why hadn't we thought about doing this before? I told my friend we had to organise this now because I have sage advice to give about my friends' futures.

Right now, living in Italy means living at least one week and five hours ahead of people in the United States. (Central European Time is five hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time.)

March 23 marked the beginning of the third week of my family's self-isolation at home, in line with the Italian government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As an American living across the ocean from my family back home, I am well-versed in how to keep up a virtual social life and, with two small children, it is rare that I get out to enjoy Rome's wonderful restaurant and night scene.

That has helped make this massive transition less overwhelming, but it does not make what is happening OK.

What is happening feels dystopian. Rome feels like August when the city empties out and everyone goes on vacation, but right now no one in the world is on vacation.

Rome is silent, the sun is shining, the birds are singing and there are bees on the flowers on my balcony, but our hearts are not calm.

In the beginning, when the situation was rapidly changing, we would refresh the news almost every minute, feverishly trying to understand what was happening. Friends, family, colleagues and parents were texting constantly, our eyes barely left our phones. How were we going to make this work? Are we overreacting? Are we doing enough? Are we safe?

Living one week and five hours ahead of those I love in America, I am sounding the alarms. This is real. Please take it seriously. Don't panic, but be smart. Wash your hands. Be safe. Ask for help. Help others.

Italy is entering its third week of mandatory home isolation with only essential stores open throughout the country. We are blessed to be able to telework with small kids underfoot. We plan virtual playdates and birthday parties, dance and discipline, bake (homemade pizza and pasta) and wait in line for the grocery store, massage cracked dry hands, wear gloves and masks, and keep our distances, watch things break (currently

our kitchen sink) and fix things.

At times we are afraid and tell macabre jokes. We pray and wish on stars, cry and regroup. We put down our phones for a mental break and try not to obsessively check the news, only to hit refresh one more time. We have had two weeks of successfully making it work because what else are you going to do? You figure this out one day at a time.

The world is stopping, trying to save our most vulnerable. Your plans are cancelled. Our grandparents, cancer survivors, the immunocompromised and now our front-line responders are getting sick and dying. Our doctors and nurses, pharmacy, grocery store and delivery workers are at the front lines of this fight, desperately trying to save lives and keep our society from collapsing.

What can we do? How can we help? For most of us who do not provide essential services, the answer is: STAY HOME.

Are we overreacting? Are we doing enough? Are we safe? I don't know.

I do know, however, that I am being blessed with the privilege of time: Time to watch my kids grow and play. Time to check in with family. Time to help my neighbours. Time to flatten the curve. The whole world needs time.

My friends and I are finally organising a virtual happy hour because, for once, our busy schedules have been abruptly cleared. We realised that this precious time is important to share with those we love.

Joanna Kohorst is the administrative assistant of the CNS Rome Bureau. This story was first published online on March 24.



Joanna Kohorst's young children paint a rainbow on a large piece of paper during the lockdown that began on March 10, 2020, in Rome because of the coronavirus pandemic. Someone also drew on a wall, so the markers used are on a special lockdown within the lockdown. (CNS photo)

Lockdown with children at home

by SHANNON ROBERTS

It is hard to get my head around the many implications of this lockdown, with our three crazy children all at home all the time.

However, I am also conscious that this will be a golden opportunity for families to come together and enjoy a lot more family time than ever before. For some, this may be the most time they've ever been able to spend with their children. As parents, while acknowledging many of us will find it very stressful to manage part- or full-time jobs alongside caring for our children full-time, it could also be a very special time of amazing memories if we choose to treat it as such.

Here are some tips for living at home with a young family I have thought of:

Consider agreeing on a family contract/some family rules which everyone agrees to over the period that you will all be at home together;

Set up structure and routine (one of my good friends just sent me through a picture of her schedule, clearly drawn up on a whiteboard for tomorrow so her 6-year-old son will know exactly how the "school" day will unfold. Another friend is considering making her son wear his school uniform for a shortened school day to help him to visually understand the transition between doing some schoolwork and free play time. Another will still be packing lunch boxes for the day to ensure she isn't eaten out of house and home too quickly!)

Make family exercise a part of your routine. It will be good for everyone's mental health. Consider how you can appropriately and responsibly get outdoors if this is an option available to you. Consider skyping friends, or even having some virtual classroom sessions with friends. Can you virtually teach a lesson to all your children with a friend and build a feeling of "we're all in this together"?

Remember that play is important learning for children too. Think of creative ideas for your house, or backyard if you have one, like a household item or nature scavenger hunt. Consider whether there is a large project that everyone can get excited about, and even young children can play a part in. This could be a small building project that you already have supplies for. Could you learn a family dance to pull out at your next party? If it is the right season and you have access to some seeds, planting a garden is always rewarding. Consider planning out whatever it is, almost as if it is a school project. Can one child draw up plans? Can another figure out some maths problems associated with the project? Can every-

one have a set role that is age-appropriate? Can a younger child play alongside the project with a toy version of what is taking place? Can a report be written up about how it goes? Make sure there is a pre-decided reward for finishing and a real celebration of the work that has gone into whatever it might be.

Take turns with your partner to have "time off" from the kids if you can. Perhaps have some times when you have pre-agreed child-care shifts — especially if you are both managing work.

Consider making family functions into a real event which breaks up the week. One of the most popular reward-system "prizes" in our household is holding a "family movie night". The kids get so excited about getting to choose dinner or choose dessert, and then all sit down together in the lounge to watch a movie. If you have children who are able to cook, can you plan out a menu and courses, with each child cooking something? Could you use online cooking shows or different cuisines for inspiration?

Consider what resources may be available online for older kids and yourself if you start to go crazy. Could you learn important skills as a family, like First Aid, new soccer moves or even knitting if you have the appropriate equipment? Duolingo is also great for learning languages, and I'm sure there are lots of other extracurricular activities on offer virtually too.

Could older children create a visual or written diary of everything you get up to, and make an online photo-book of this time for printing? My children love to take photos and videos. Speaking of photos, if you can connect up your laptop to the TV, this a great opportunity to finally have a viewing night for all the thousands of family photos and videos you likely have saved somewhere in the cloud.

We are our children's first and primary teachers. The more hours of influence we have while they are young and still within our care, the better off they will be in the long term.

Parenthood should be regarded as a highly professional role, and this time is a great opportunity to become even more conscious of treating it as such. I find intellectualising parenting problems and tasks, just as a professional would, does great things for my patience! "The days are long, but the years are short." Yes, the days might now be very long indeed.

Shannon Roberts and her husband Marcus co-edit the Demography is Destiny blog on www.mercatornet.com, which is where this article was first published. They live in Auckland and are parents of three young children. The article is republished with permission.

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Pope: Pandemic is a call to live differently

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The worldwide coronavirus pandemic is not God’s judgement on humanity, but is God’s call on people to judge what is most important to them and resolve to act accordingly from now on, Pope Francis said.

Addressing God, the Pope said that “it is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others”.

Pope Francis offered his meditation on the meaning of the Covid-19 pandemic and its implications for humanity on March 27, before raising a monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament and giving an extraordinary blessing “urbi et orbi” (to the city and the world).

Popes usually give their blessing “urbi et orbi” only immediately after their election and at Christmas and Easter.

Pope Francis opened the service — in a rain-drenched, empty St Peter’s Square — praying that the “almighty and merciful God” would see how people are suffering and give them comfort. He asked God to care for the sick and dying, for medical workers exhausted by caring for the sick and for political leaders who bear the burden of making decisions to protect their people.

The service included the reading of the Gospel of Mark’s account of Jesus calming the stormy sea.

“Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives,” the Pope said. “Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them.”

Like the disciples on the stormy Sea of Galilee, he said, “we will experience that, with him on board, there will be no shipwreck, because this is God’s strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things”.

However, the pandemic storm has made most people realise that “we are in the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented”, the Pope said. And it has shown how each person has a contribution to make, at least in comforting each other.

The pandemic, the Pope said, has exposed “our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities”.

In the midst of the storm, Pope



The Pope leads the prayer service. (CNS photo)

Francis said, God is calling people to faith, which is not just believing God exists, but turning to him and trusting him.

As Lent and the pandemic go on, he said, God continues to call people to “convert” and “return to me with all your heart”.

It is a time to decide to live differently, live better, love more and care for others, he said, and every community is filled with people who can be role models — individuals, “who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives”.

Pope Francis said the Holy Spirit can use the pandemic to “redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people — often forgotten people — who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines”, but are serving others and making life possible during the pandemic.

The Pope listed “doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves”.

“How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic, but a shared responsibility,” he said. And “how many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up

to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer”.

“How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all?” he said. “Prayer and quiet service: These are our victorious weapons.”

In the boat, when the disciples plead with Jesus to do something, Jesus responds, “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”

“Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us,” the Pope said. “In this world that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything.”

“Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things and be lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet,” Pope Francis said.

“We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick,” he said. “Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: ‘Wake up, Lord!’”

The Lord is calling on people to “put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be foundering,” the Pope said.

“The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith,” he said. “We have an anchor: by his

cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love.”

Pope Francis told people watching around the world that he would “entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, health of the people, and star of the stormy sea”.

“May God’s blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace,” he said. “Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak, and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm.”

Introducing the formal blessing, Cardinal Angelo Comastri, archpriest of St Peter’s Basilica, announced that it would include a plenary indulgence “in the form established by the Church” to everyone watching on television or internet or listening by radio.

An indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment a person is due for sins that have been forgiven. Catholics following the Pope’s blessing could receive the indulgence if they had “a spirit detached from sin”, promised to go to confession and receive the Eucharist as soon as possible and said a prayer for the Pope’s intentions.

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Dozens of bishops dedicate their nations to Mary



Saints Jacinta and Francisco Marto are pictured in a colourised image with their cousin, Lucia dos Santos (right), in a file photo taken around the time of the 1917 apparitions of Mary at Fatima, Portugal. The two young saints died during an influenza epidemic. (CNS photo).

(CNS) — Church leaders around the world used the feast of the Annunciation on March 25 to entrust their nations to Mary and Jesus.

Catholic leaders from 24 states sought divine help in ending the Covid-19 pandemic by consecrating their countries to Jesus and Mary during a March 25 ceremony in Fatima, Portugal.

"We wish to entrust our supplications to the Virgin's maternal heart, so she may present them to God and intercede for us," said Cardinal Antonio dos Santos Marto of Leiria-Fatima.

"Through the rosary, we will keep in mind both direct and indirect victims of this pandemic, as well as health professionals tireless in their efforts to help the sick and the authorities seeking to find solutions."

At the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary in Fatima, where three shepherd children reported apparitions of Mary in 1917, the rector, Fr Carlos Cabecinhas, noted that two of the shepherd visionaries, Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto, died in the influenza pandemic that swept Europe after World War I.

The Catholic Ecclesia news agency said the Fatima ceremony was livestreamed, and included bishops from Albania, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, East Timor, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Kenya, Mexico, Moldova, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

The prayer of consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary said all participating countries were now looking for God's mercy and salvation as parts of the "pilgrim Church on earth".

"In this unique hour of suffering, assist your Church, inspire the rulers of nations, hear the poor and afflicted, exalt the humble and the oppressed, heal the sick and sinners, raise up the dejected and discouraged, free captives and prisoners, and deliver us from the pandemic that strikes us," the prayer continued.

"Support children, the elderly and most vulnerable, comfort doctors, nurses, health professionals and volunteer caregivers; strengthen families; aid us in citizenship and solidarity; be a light for the dying and welcome the dead into your kingdom."

In Harissa, north of Beirut, the towering white statue of Our Lady of Lebanon was illuminated on the night of March 25 in the colours of the Lebanese flag. This was followed by the rosary, in the presence of a few priests, as Lebanese people were confined to their homes.

"We asked Our Lady of Lebanon to bless Lebanon and bless the whole world," Maronite Father Fadi Tabet, rector of the Harissa shrine, told the Catholic News Service.

Fr Tabet said more than 1 million people "attended" the lighting via Facebook.

Pope's schedule updated for Holy Week, Easter Church space offered

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — With public gatherings, including Masses, banned in Italy to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, the Vatican published an updated version of Pope Francis' schedule for Holy Week and Easter.

In a March 27 statement, the Vatican said that all Holy Week celebrations will be celebrated at the Altar of the Chair in St Peter's Basilica "without the participation of the people".

The Vatican also said the release of the updated schedule takes into account the provisions made by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the congregation, said in a decree dated March 20 that, because the chrisem Mass is not formally part of the Triduum, a bishop can decide to postpone its celebration.

For the first time, the Pope's schedule for Holy Week does not include the chrisem Mass, which is usually celebrated the morning of Holy Thursday. During the liturgy, priests renew their promises and the oils used for the sacraments are blessed.

This year also will be the first time Pope Francis will celebrate the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper in the Vatican instead of at a prison, hospital or other institution. The Congregation for Divine Worship said that "the washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted" when there are no faithful present.

The congregation also said that bishops should advise the faithful of the times for the celebrations, so that they can pray at home at the same time.

Here is the updated schedule of papal liturgical ceremonies for Holy Week and Easter released by the Vatican (times listed are local):

April 5, Palm Sunday, 11am; April 9, Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper 6pm; April 10, Good Friday, 6pm, liturgy of the Lord's passion; April 10, Way of the Cross, 9 pm, in front of St Peter's Basilica; April 11, Easter vigil Mass, 9pm; April 12, Easter morning Mass, 11am followed by the Pope's blessing *urbi et orbi* (to the city and the world).

OXFORD, England (CNS) — Catholic dioceses and religious orders across Europe are offering to turn church facilities into spaces needed for health care or housing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Church leaders have been struggling to maintain Catholic devotions during national lockdowns against the coronavirus, but have also sought ways, in addition to regular aid from Caritas and other Catholic organisations, of making resources available for health and social services.

San Giuseppe Church at Seriate in Italy is being used as a depository for coffins, which were later gathered by military trucks for cremation as local authorities struggled with the scale of deaths.

In Germany, one southern diocese said it had opened a telephone hotline for needs ranging from shopping to childcare, while Benedictine nuns in Bavaria are manufacturing 100 reusable respiratory masks daily for local hospitals.

In Portugal, dioceses offered seminary rooms and other facilities to health professionals and civil protection teams. Portugal's Guarda Diocese had turned over its apostolic centre for "emergency care", while the Jesuit order's Oficina technical college in Lisbon said it was producing visors with 3-D technology for local medical centres.

Bishop Mario Içeta Gavicagogeascoa of Bilbao, Spain, said he was ready to resume his previous career as a doctor, if Pope Francis consented.

'Synodality' as 2022 synod theme: Pope

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis has decided the next world synod of bishops at the Vatican, which will take place in October, 2022, will have the theme: "For a synodal Church: Communion, participation and mission."

The Vatican announced the choice of "synodality" as the theme in a brief communique on March 7, a few days before coronavirus-related restrictive measures in Italy's previous "red zone" areas were extended to the entire nation.

"Synodality", which literally means "walking together", has become a key topic of Pope Francis' pontificate, but one which has raised questions and even confusion.

The basic idea in the Pope's teaching is that the grace of baptism makes one part of the body of the Church and, therefore, responsible for its life and mission. In a hierarchical church,

that shared responsibility calls for regular, serious and structural forums for listening to all members of the Church. At the same time, as the Pope has said, it does not mean putting decisions to a vote as if a synod were a parliament.

In 2018, the International Theological Commission, which advises the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, published a document on the topic, "Synodality In the Life and Mission of the Church".

Synodality, which has been present in Christianity since its very beginning, the document said, is not simply about involving people in decision-making, but involving all the baptised in discerning God's will and listening to the Holy Spirit. The goal, it said, is always to find the best ways for every baptised person to fulfil the Church's mission of proclaiming God's love and salvation in Jesus Christ to the

world.

Regarding questions that continue to be raised about the similarities and differences between synodality and a democratic form of Church governance, the commission wrote: "A synodal church is a church of participation and co-responsibility. In exercising synodality, she is called to give expression to the participation of all, according to each one's calling, with the authority conferred by Christ on the College of Bishops headed by the Pope. Participation is based on the fact that all the faithful are qualified and called to serve each other through the gifts they have all received from the Holy Spirit."

At the same time, it said, "the authority of pastors is a specific gift of the Spirit of Christ the Head for the upbuilding of the entire body, not a delegated and representative function of the people".

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A sign reading 'Everything will be fine' hangs on a statue of Pope St John XXIII in Zogno, Italy, near Bergamo, on March 22. Bergamo is one of Italy's cities worst-hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

These are some of the ways that Church members have responded to early restrictions imposed in response to the novel coronavirus pandemic. Many of the activities depicted are NOT PERMITTED in New Zealand at this time, as people have to stay at home except for accessing essential services and exercising in their local area. (CNS photos)



A man prays in front of an empty St Peter's Square in Rome on March 25. Joined by Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant church leaders and faithful from around the world that day, Pope Francis led the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, imploring God's mercy on humanity amid the coronavirus pandemic.



Members of the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit sew face masks at their general house in Rome. Although the masks do not have filters and so cannot be donated to hospitals, the sisters and members of their community wear them when they must go out to the grocery store or pharmacy.



Newlyweds Diego Fernandes and Deni Salgado kiss through protective face masks during their wedding ceremony with only witnesses and no guests in Naples, Italy, on March 20. Public gatherings are banned as part of Italy's lockdown measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



Father Dan Leary of St Andrew Apostle Catholic Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, leads prayers for eucharistic adoration on March 21, as parishioners remain in their cars.



Fr Noel Sixon listens to a penitent's confession on March 21, in the parking lot of St Patrick Church in Huntington, New York. The parish hosted "drive-through" confessions to accommodate parishioners seeking to receive the sacrament of reconciliation during the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

Gospels for Passion Sunday and Easter Sunday

The following Gospel passages correspond to those used on Passion Sunday and Easter Sunday morning Masses this year. As a service to *NZ Catholic's* readers during this time of Covid-19 alert stage 4, these texts, which have been taken from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' website (New American Bible, Revised Version), are provided for devotional use and spiritual reflection.

Passion Sunday

Gospel: Matthew 26:14-27:66.

Then one of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The teacher says, 'My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples.''" The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me." Deeply distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely it is not I, Lord?" He said in reply, "He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me. The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born." Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" He answered, "You have said so."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood



The Last Supper by Gian Battista Burato, Cathédrale Santa Maria Matricolare of Vérona. (Wikimedia Commons)

of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father." Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, "This night all of you will have your faith in me shaken, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed'; but after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee." Peter said to him in reply, "Though all may have their faith in you shaken, mine will never be." Jesus said to him, "Amen, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you." And all the disciples spoke likewise.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, "My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!" Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open. He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand."

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a large crowd, with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests and the elders of the people. His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him." Immediately he went over to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and he kissed him. Jesus answered him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then stepping forward they laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. And behold, one of those who accompanied Jesus put his hand to his sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must come to pass in this way?" At that hour, Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me? Day after day I sat teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me. But all this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then

all the disciples left him and fled. Those who had arrested Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Peter was following him at a distance as far as the high priest's courtyard, and going inside he sat down with the servants to see the outcome. The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally, two came forward who stated, "This man said, 'I can destroy the temple of God and within three days rebuild it.'" The high priest rose and addressed him, "Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?" But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus said to him in reply, "You have said so. But I tell you: From now on you will see 'the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power' and 'coming on the clouds of heaven.'"

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need have we of witnesses? You have now heard the blasphemy; is your opinion?" They said in reply, "He deserves to die!" Then they spat in his face and struck him, while some slapped him, saying, "Prophecy for us, Messiah: who is it that struck you?"

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man!" A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away." At that he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly.

When it was morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

Then Judas, his betrayer, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, deeply regretted what he had done. He returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? Look to it yourself." Flinging the money into the temple, he departed and went off and hanged himself. The chief priests gathered up the money, but said, "It is not lawful to deposit this in the temple treasury, for it is the price of blood." After consultation, they used it to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why that field even today is called the Field of Blood. Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of a man with a price on his head, a price set by some of the Israelites, and they paid it out for the potter's field just as the Lord had commanded me."

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and he questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?" But he did not answer him one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast, the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called [Jesus] Barabbas. So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them, "Which one do you want me to release to you, [Jesus] Barabbas, or Jesus called Messiah?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over. While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I suffered much in a dream today because of him." The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus. The governor said to them in reply, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They answered, "Barabbas!" Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus called Messiah?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" But he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted the louder, "Let him be crucified!" When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was breaking out instead, he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood. Look to it yourselves." And the whole people said in reply, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.

And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of the Skull), they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall. But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And they placed over his head the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, [and] come down from the cross!" Likewise the chief priests with



Jesus meets his mother in this depiction of the fourth station of the Way of the Cross by American artist Virgil Cantini. (CNS file photo)

the scribes and elders mocked him and said, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. So he is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" The revolutionaries who were crucified with him also kept abusing him in the same way.

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "This one is calling for Elijah." Immediately, one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him." But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit.

And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after

his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many. The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said, "Truly, this was the Son of God!" There were many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. Among them were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb.

The next day, the one following the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember that this impostor while still alive said, 'After three days I will be raised up.' Give orders, then, that the grave be secured until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him and say to the people, 'He has been raised from the dead.' This last imposture would be worse than the first."* Pilate said to them, "The guard is yours; go secure it as best you can." So they went and secured the tomb by fixing a seal to the stone and setting the guard.

Easter Sunday
Gospel: John 20:1-9

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; He bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths, but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

Then the disciples returned home.

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Showing solidarity with March 15 victims

by BEATE MATTHIES

The Auckland Interfaith Council (AIFC) demonstrated solidarity with the victims of the March 15 (2019) Christchurch attacks and, at the same time, called upon everyone to work for peace and unity despite different backgrounds, beliefs, spiritualities or walks of life.

An interfaith prayer service on March 15 this year was hosted by the Anglican Holy Trinity Cathedral and attracted more than 250 people.

A line in the introductory prayer for the service expressed the purpose of the event: "Let there be joy in our coming together today and let us celebrate the richness and diversity of life."

Bishop Kito Pikaahu (Anglican Bishop of Te Tai Tokerau) set the scene with a mihi whakatau. A waiata tautoko by the Auckland Anglican Maori Club was followed by words of welcome from the host, Rev. Anne Mills, the dean of the Cathedral and from Ruth Cleaver, the president of the Auckland Interfaith Council.

The first speaker was Anne Degia-Pala, QSM, who represented the Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand (IWCNZ). She gave a reflection, which concluded with a prayer. When she mentioned the victims and their families, she could hardly hold back the tears.

However, everybody was drawn back to hope and joy when Rev. Josh Jones performed a song that he wrote in 2019: "This is the Day - Te Rangimarie". When he picked up his guitar, he started singing: "Aotearoa peace is calling. In the bonds of love, we meet; for the world this day is dawning, it shines a light to greet."

Further speakers and readers were of the Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Baha'i faiths, and the Sufi Order. The Sikh community contributed with sacred music.

Beate Matthies, the Catholic representative on the AIFC, recalled the encounter between St Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malik al-Kamil 800 years ago, and concluded with a variation on the prayer of St Francis ("Lord, make me a channel of your peace") that Mother Teresa prayed when she addressed the United Nations in 1985.

The programme was wonderfully put together with a combination of prayers, reflections, music, silence and the lighting of candles.

The prayer service concluded with the New Zealand National Anthem and a blessing by Anglican Bishop Ross Bay.

In the light of Covid-19, it was decided not to have afternoon tea afterwards in a confined area. However, many participants socialised in front of the cathedral and enjoyed the sunshine.



Candles are lit at the service



The interfaith prayer service at Holy Trinity Cathedral.



Family Matters

Helen Luxford

Looking after each other

The coronavirus has arrived in New Zealand and some people are panic-buying. Some aren't worried at all, saying: "It's just the flu". Some people have already self-isolated and some — who are supposed to — are not following the rules. I think these sorts of situations bring out both the best and, unfortunately, the worst in people.

We must not allow selfishness to overtake us. We have to look out for the most vulnerable people in our community.

The elderly are at the highest risk, because they are more likely to have a severe, or even fatal, illness, but also because, with social distancing, they will get even less social contact than they do currently. They also don't necessarily have the means financially or otherwise to stock-pile food and other necessities. I've seen heart-warming photos of people keeping in contact with the older people in our community by sitting outside their window and calling on the phone. I've also seen and heard of older people turning up to the supermarket and not able to buy a single roll of toilet paper. We went to the supermarket last night and saw lots of empty shelves — with only in-store made bread left for sale. Current restrictions saw us being told we were not able to buy our usual supplies of bread and milk!

(And we don't stock-pile or hoard). This will mean lots of small, frequent visits to the shops for us.

I have seen several initiatives start up to encourage kindness in the community. There are people offering to check up on those who don't have much family support. People are offering to deliver food and supplies to those in self-isolation. We have a facebook page for Mums in my area and I have seen others pop up for different areas. Many people who really need help won't be on Facebook or such like, but such pages raise awareness that we should all look out for them.

I think the biggest issue will just be supporting each other. Texting, calling, face-timing. It's very easy to feel alone and focus in on the bad and the negative. I wouldn't mind two weeks in self-isolation to read books and watch TV! But this is not a reality for me, in my line of work. It's hard to do all my work from home when there are children there too.

We want to really focus on keeping the kids happy and calm during this time. Everyone is stressed and anxious. Adults and kids worry about different things, but adults must not forget that kids are scared. Everyone around them is talking about coronavirus and how many people will be affected and how this will affect the world — jobs, money, employment and so on. Staying calm

in the face of uncertainty can be really hard. The children need to know that, one way or another, once this storm passes they will be going to birthday parties again, seeing their friends, getting back into team sports and so on.

I think time spent outdoors, within the bounds of our own property, will keep us sane. Perhaps this is a good time to do things like paint fences, mow lawns, trim hedges, tidy up the garage. There are so many jobs that we delay because we don't have time. Now is the time to embrace all those jobs and, in doing so, be productive while people are isolating.

We all need to look after each other and how we do that will be different depending on our means and our locations. We don't want to turn into a nation that fights over toilet paper, of all things. Remember, above all, to put time in for prayer and reflection and Bible reading to keep our faith alive as the world seems to be falling apart around us.

Philippians 4:6; "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Helen Luxford is a physician, working part-time. She is a parishioner of St Michael's, Remuera. Together with her husband Michael, they are raising their children in the Catholic Faith and reflecting on the challenges and joys that brings.

What to watch in closedown?

by NEVIL GIBSON

The unprecedented closure of much of the world's cinema industry will mean a big boost for the home entertainment alternative.

It is ironic that moviemakers have been ahead of the curve in depicting the effects of a worldwide virus pandemic. Steven Soderbergh's 2011 thriller *Contagion* — still available in some Netflix markets for those with VPN software — gives a realistic account of how a virus can spread out of China, based on earlier examples.

Netflix also has a prescient documentary series simply called *Pandemic*, which was released last year.

But these are tangential to the provision of entertainment, led by the Hollywood studios. They have deferred a dozen or more major box office movies for the northern summer — the best time for big-budget blockbuster releases.

Among them are *No Time to Die*, the latest James Bond adventure, and *Mulan*, a live-action version of the 1998 Disney animated feature and directed by New Zealander Niki Caro.

Others likely to appeal to large audiences are *Minions: The Rise of Gru*, *Black Widow* (Scarlet Johansson in her own Marvel vehicle), *A Quiet Place II* and *Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway*. Most are now scheduled for later in the year.

The closure of cinemas halted the French Film Festival after just a few days; it was planned to run nation-wide until April 8, with 30 features on offer. It included some classics as well as a selection of recent productions.

Two I managed to see were *L'adieu à la nuit* (Farewell to the Night) on radicalisation of Mus-



Vanessa Redgrave and Timothy Spall in *Mrs Lowry & Son* (2019)

Movie Review

lim youth, and *Les éblois* (The Dazzled) about a sect in the Catholic Church. Both showed the French flair of treating serious topics with the respect they deserve.

Many of the regular releases that have had their seasons interrupted are above average for this time of the year.

They include *Dark Waters* (a study of bad corporate behaviour), *The Humourist* (about a Russian satirist), *The Current War* (the rivalry between Edison and Westinghouse), *Les Misérables* (social conflict in France) and *Bait* (a low-key British thriller).

It remains to be seen whether these will return after the virus emergency is over: *The Personal History of David Copperfield*, from Armando Iannucci (*The Death of Stalin*); the Marie Curie biopic *Radioactive*; the Bill

Nighy-Annette Bening marital conflict drama *Hope Gap* and *Downhill*, a remake of Sweden's Force Majeure about the effects of a ski-field avalanche on a marriage (some of these are reviewed at www.nzcatholic.org.nz/reviews).

Meanwhile, the cinema closedown allows a chance to catch up on recent releases now available on DVD or through streaming or pay TV services such as Sky, Netflix and Lightbox.

These include some from the British Film Festival that were largely overlooked in the pre-Christmas rush, such as *Official Secrets*, *Fisherman's Friends*, *Farming, All at Sea*, *Mrs Lowry and Son* and *The Aeronauts*.

The *Good Liar* and *Knives Out* are two examples of more traditional fare in genres that have become unfashionable.

CLIPS

Netflix Originals offer large-screen talent and budgets to match the best that Hollywood studios can provide. The following are worthy examples of an alternative movie experience:

The Last Thing He Wanted

Anne Hathaway headlines this adaptation of Joan Didion's novel about revolution, violence and gun-running in Central America, starting in the 1980s. Hathaway plays Elena McMahon, a journalist who, with a photographer (Rosie Perez), has been covering the story for a fictitious newspaper that resembles *The Washington Post*. They are pulled out to cover Ronald Reagan's second presidential campaign. But events change when Elena has an opportunity to return to the field in a dodgy deal for her ailing father (Willem Dafoe). This leads her into a bizarre web involving many more dubious characters. Among them are an American government spy (Ben Affleck) and resort owner Toby Jones. Director Dees Rees (*Mudbound*) and co-writer Marco Villalobos get bogged down in the complexities of Didion's plot, but their staging is never in doubt. The settings include a rebel training camp in the middle of nowhere and a weird island beach resort that is just as remote. Netflix rating: 13+; 115 minutes.

Horse Girl

Alison Brie (*Glow*) is co-credited with director Jeff Baena (*The Little Hours*) for the script of this offbeat mental health drama that is her best role yet. Though sometimes confusing and wacky in the extreme, you can see the attraction in playing this chance-of-a-lifetime character. Sarah (Brie) is socially reclusive, working in a craft store and spending most of her life in a fantasy world. She exudes sweetness with an equal measure of awkwardness. This changes when she starts dating Darren (John Reynolds), who sees no strangeness in her dreams about aliens and other disturbing events. However, one dinner date goes badly wrong, sending her into a downward spiral that will be as baffling to most viewers as to Sarah herself. Baena treats this material without the usual melodramatics, which also has the effect of distancing his protagonist from the empathy she deserves. Netflix rating: 16+; 104 minutes.

Lost Girls

By contrast, the lead role in this recreation of serial killings on Long Island leaves little doubt with motive and purpose. The based-on-fact story starts in 2010 when New Jersey mother Mari Gilbert (Amy Ryan from *Gone Baby Gone*) learns her daughter, who has drifted into prostitution, is missing and police are reluctant to pursue the case. Her anger and tips from an informant eventually lead to a search near a gated community that turns up several bodies — but not those of Mari's daughter (the case is still unsolved). Documentary maker Liz Garbus (*What Happened, Miss Simone?*) makes a creditable transition to drama, though some of the characters (such as the sister played by New Zealander Thomasin McKenzie) are underdone. Gabriel Byrne also takes a low-key approach to his role as Mari's nemesis, a police commissioner who, at first, is determined not to upset his political backers in a well-heeled community. Netflix rating: 13+; 95 minutes.

Bringing together writings of three learned Brits

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, compiled by Ryan J. Marr. Pauline Books & Media (Boston, 2019). 160 pp., US\$12.95.

G.K. CHESTERTON, compiled by Dale Ahlquist. Pauline Books & Media (Boston, 2019). 144 pp., US\$12.95.

THE READING LIFE: The Joy of Seeing New Worlds Through Others' Eyes by C.S. Lewis. HarperOne (San Francisco, 2019). 171 pp., US\$19.99. Reviewed by ALLAN WRIGHT (CNS)

In *John Henry Newman*, Ryan Marr has compiled numerous writings by the recently-canonised Catholic saint. This is a timely book and, as one commentator suggests, "God has given us John Henry Newman for precisely these times in the Church". Cardinal Newman's prose, while difficult at times, still cuts to the core and challenges the reader to take action.

Those who have encountered Cardinal Newman in his writings can attest that the phrase he used as his motto when elected as cardinal, "Heart speaks to heart", still resonates today. The compiled quotes draw from various theological topics such as faith, holiness and Our Lady, among others. Cardinal Newman can be theologically deep and many novices stumble to get through. The passages in this book are bite-size and digestible for all who desire to get to know this latest saint.

Dale Ahlquist, president of the Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton and the Chesterton Schools Network, compiles various writings from the well-known journalist and convert to Catholicism in *G.K. Chesterton*.

Ahlquist says of Chesterton: "He was not a priest, not a preacher, not a member of a religious order. He was a British journalist, writing what was considered ephemera, and yet his 'throwaway' words are still being read over 75 years after he laid down his pen and breathed his last."

Books

The quotes span the decades of Chesterton's life and fit loosely in chapters titled "Wonder", "Innocence", "Goodness", "Purity", "Faith, Hope and Charity", "The Christian Ideal", "Everyday Holiness" and "Joy".

Many of the quotes are no more than one line, yet they reflect Chesterton's quick wit and ability to get straight to the heart of the matter. A perfect book for those wishing to get a taste of G.K. and a healthy dose of spiritual and practical wisdom.

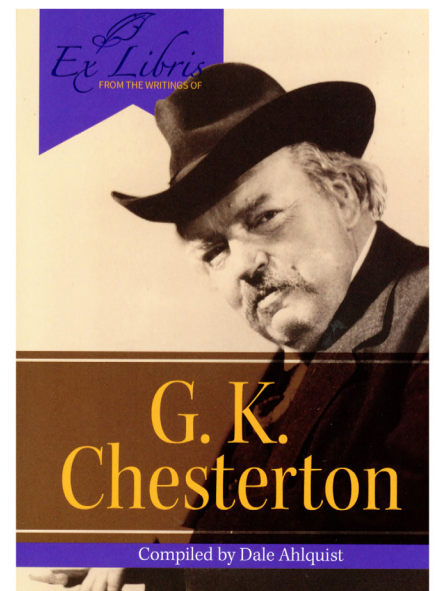
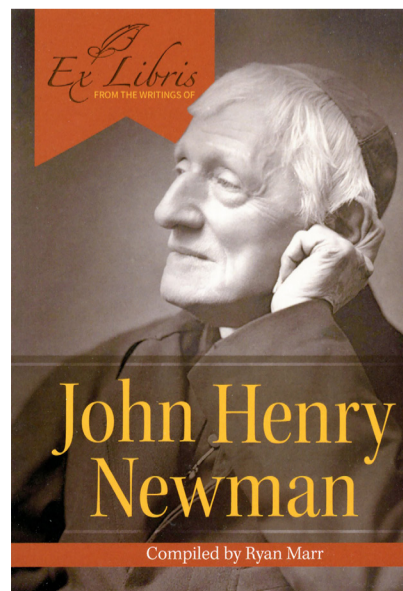
C.S. Lewis is recognised in Christian circles as a convert to Christianity, whose fantasy writings take the reader through a journey of the human heart where they encounter the divine. In *The Reading Life*, the emphasis is not on the religious or spiritual writings, but on Lewis' love for reading and the importance it played throughout his life.

Lewis' words of wisdom on reading and literature tend to lean toward those works that spark the imagination and take readers ever deeper into themselves and beyond. "No book is really worth reading at the age of 10 which is not equally (and often far more) worth reading at the age of 50," Lewis wrote. "The only imaginative works we ought to grow out of are those

which it would have been better not to have read at all."

In the brief chapter titled "How to Murder Words", he states, "Verbicide, the murder of a word, happens in many ways. Inflation is one of the commonest; those who taught us to say awfully for 'very', tremendous for 'great', sadism for 'cruelty' and unthinkable for 'undesirable' were verbicides." This book offers another perspective on C.S. Lewis and affirms that the time spent with books is time well spent.

Allan Wright is principal of Koinonia Academy in Plainfield, New Jersey, and author of 14 books on Scripture.



THE CHURCH YEAR

▼ We are here: Palm Sunday

Advent

Christmas

Ordinary Time

Lent

Eastertime

Ordinary Time

The mystery we proclaim year after year

Scripture

by Fr Kevin Waldie sm

April 5: Palm Sunday. **Readings:** 1. Isaiah 50:4-7; 2. Philippians 2:6-11; **Gospel:** Matthew 26:14-27:66.

For this Palm Sunday, the Scriptures focus on the very personal sacrifice that we see acted out in the week to come.

With Isaiah, the scene and mood are frankly presented to us. His prophetic mission centres around the pain and suffering that often accompanies the exercise of one's vocational duties. And so, in these few verses, Isaiah readies himself to be subjected to all sorts of bodily punishment. But in true obedience to his divine commission, the prophet accepts his destiny, knowing that, by grace, God helps bring about the right outcome for his people.

Paul's famous Christ hymn from Philippians works well alongside Isaiah. For it too sees a divine commission that ushers in humiliation that is destined to reap a wonderful harvest. So in the very act of obedience and human suffering, the victory over death causes the earliest Christian believers to glory in that death. The honour that is due to Christ heralds the arrival of a truly awesome moment for the early Church. This holy season is therefore a time of great and solemn observance, remembering an extraordinary event almost beyond human imagining.

The Passion Story according to Matthew is a

powerful form of witness to the radical basis on which our saving faith is founded. Its variously repeated references to betrayal and infidelity on the part of Jesus' inner core of followers drive home the dramatic nature of Our Lord's incredible personal sacrifice. The crucifixion itself concludes a sequence of abuse and pain that Jesus endured for the sake of fulfilling his mission. The remembrance of this most bloody end to the Saviour's life has us stunned by its violence.

In sum, this day's readings mark out for us the sublime nature of the faith we share and the mystery we proclaim year after year.

Alleluia! He is Risen!

The annual Easter festival is wonderfully welcomed with readings that truly celebrate the fact that we are not only marked with the sign of the cross, but also bathed in the light of Christ risen from the dead.

What is recalled in Acts reminds us that we have a God who has been active in the midst of the Church. And that God has overseen every aspect of the event we gather to commemorate.

Peter's words in this text testify to the enormity of the witness that is given to a whole series of Jesus-centred happenings, ranging from the baptism at John's hands up to the special appearances after his death. In proclaiming the risen one as the judge of the living and the dead,

Peter and the other apostles officially commence preaching what we now believe on account of their testimony.

The brevity of either second reading should not fool us into thinking that they have little to say. In the three or four verses from Colossians or 1 Corinthians, we hear what is of major significance for our daily profession of faith.

As Christ-centred believers, we know ourselves to be alive in the risen Christ and that we profess and celebrate every day.

The Resurrection appearances that are recounted in either John or Matthew also testify to the faith proclaimed by Peter and Paul in the first two readings.

April 12: Easter Sunday. **Readings:** 1. Acts 10:34,37-43; **Psalm:** 118; 2. Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; **Gospel:** John 20:1-9 or Matthew 28:1-10.

Hearing what Mary Magdalene, for example, sees in John and Matthew tells us that, right from the earliest of days in the Church's life, significant testimony to the appearances of the risen Christ was evident.

Today we join with those early witnesses to add our cry of Easter joy to the universal Church's celebration of an ancient festival. In festive mood, therefore, we boldly declare, "Alleluia! He is Risen!"

SAINTED GLASS



This issue there is such a broad focus on Easter — Palm Sunday, Last Supper, Crucifixion and Resurrection. Which event is more important? My opinion varies, depending on where I am and what is happening in my spiritual life. The Last Supper is important at every Mass. When I am conscious of my own sinfulness, it's the crucifixion, because I was partly responsible for Jesus sacrificing his life. This year, there is a beautiful carved cross in our temporary church in St Patrick's Hall, Paraparaumu, and there are bare crosses adorning our new church, to be opened on Palm Sunday. No Jesus on the crosses means He is risen. This window in the Church of the Nativity, Blenheim, beautifully portrays the angel giving the women the good news at the empty tomb. Alleluia!

— Glen McCullough.



Joshua passing the River Jordan with the Ark of the Covenant, by Benjamin West, 1800.

Ancient temple ruins found

JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Archaeologists in Israel have discovered extensive ruins of a temple complex in an ancient Canaanite city mentioned in the Book of Joshua.

The Heritage Daily website reported that the discovery of the ruins in the ancient city of Lachish was made by a team of archaeologists led by Professor Yosef Garfinkel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Institute of Archaeology and Professor Michael Hasel at Southern Adventist University in Tennessee.

Lachish was one of the most important Canaanite cities during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. Its people controlled large parts of the Judean lowlands.

The city was built around 1800 BCE, was rebuilt and destroyed several times, including by the Egyptians, before finally succumbing in about 1150 BCE.

The city was mentioned in the Old Testament.

"And the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls therein... (Joshua 10:32)"

The ruins were discovered in National

Bible News

Park Tel Lachish, near the present-day Israeli city of Kiryat Gat. The researchers' findings were published in Levant.

The temple is similar to others found in northern Israel in Nablus, Meggido and Hazor, is more square in shape and has several side rooms, typical of later temples including Solomon's Temple.

Among the artifacts found on the site was a gold-plated bottle inscribed with the name Ramses II, one of Egypt's most powerful pharaohs. Near the temple's holy of holies, the archaeologists found two bronze figurines. Unlike the winged cherubs in Solomon's Temple, the Lachish figurines were armed "smiting gods".

Of particular interest was a pottery sherd engraved with ancient Canaanite script. There, the letter "samek" appears, marked by an elongated vertical line crossed by three perpendicular shorter lines. This makes it the oldest known example of the letter.

Local Diocese News

Wellington mission expo shows 'good things'

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

A successful Mission Expo held at Bishop Viard College in Porirua may be the last large event in Wellington archdiocese this year, Cardinal John Dew said.

The Mission Expo on March 14, which was the official launch of Wellington archdiocese's Year of Mission, saw a variety of different booths put up to showcase the work of the agencies and organisations within the Catholic community in this country.

Cardinal Dew reminded the large crowd present of the importance of living out the mission they have as Church members.

The expo offered a range of activities for the whole family, including cultural performances, workshops, games, sport tournaments, food stalls and prayer.

Writing on his Facebook page after the event, Cardinal Dew described the expo as "a time to be together and to share the many good things happening in the Archdiocese of Wellington".

But he noted that: "It may be our last large event together, as we are postponing the South Island Mission Expo [scheduled for Garin College in Nelson on March 22] until later in the year or early next year due to the Covid-19 situation."

Referring to the event at Bishop Viard College, the cardinal said on Facebook that "the mission booths showed just how many different forms of spirituality and activity we share, as did the workshops".

"Seeing it all in one place was wonderful.

"The food was stunning, [with a] Kiwi barbeque, and ethnic foods all reflecting the diversity of our community.

"There was entertainment, games, activities for children, and the priests turned out to be surprisingly good when they played St Mary's [College] at basketball!

"My profound thanks to all those who worked hard to make this unique event happen, to Bishop Viard College who were wonderful hosts, and to all those who came to be part of it."



People at the expo watch a cultural performance.

New community asset offers a beacon of hope

by MONICA DEVINE



Irish ambassador Peter Ryan cuts the 'green' ribbon at the Chanel Family Centre.

The Upper Hutt building that was once St Peter Chanel church has taken on a new lease of life. In an initiative partnering Greenstone Doors Charitable Trust from Lower Hutt and St Joseph's Parish of Upper Hutt, the building has been spruced up, re-purposed and reopened as the "Chanel Family Centre".

This additional location for Greenstone Doors is a new community asset offering a beacon of hope for many families. Services available through Greenstone Doors include professional counselling services, whanau support, pregnancy testing, young Mum support groups, free baby clothing, playgroups and specific parenting courses for men and women.

The official opening of the Chanel

Family Centre on February 22 began with a warm welcome of korero and waiata by Cameron Kapua-Morrell. This was followed by the cutting of the "green" ribbon by Peter Ryan, the first Irish Ambassador to New Zealand.

The mayor and deputy mayor of Upper Hutt and representatives from a number of community groups also attended to lend their support.

Fr Kevin Connors blessed the centre with prayer and holy water and invited all present to lay their hands on each of the walls and invoke the care of the Holy Spirit.

Several of those who attended were in some way connected with the history of the church and were, in a sense, blessing and passing on the whakatara or challenge to its next generation of users.

People could go on a tour of the

premises, during which they heard from Suzanne O'Rourke (Greenstone Doors trustee) about the whakapapa and history of the centre.

Wendy Hill (founder and manager of Greenstone Doors) spoke about the vision for the centre and the kaupapa (guiding principles) of Greenstone Doors.

The day was filled with happiness and hope. At the very core of the kaupapa of Greenstone Doors is hospitality and welcome. All those present experienced this in a very real way with barbeque food, cakes and hot drinks, entertainment for the children and a sense of community mission.

Those who wish to donate time or money to Greenstone Doors Charitable Trust to support this new venture are invited to visit www.greenstonedoors.org.nz or phone (04) 566 5037.

Twin anniversaries marked in Jerusalem

by SUE SECONI

Forty parishioners from the Catholic parish of Whanganui — Te Parihi Katorika Ki Whanganui — travelled to Jerusalem on the banks of the Whanganui River on Sunday, March 15, to mark 25 years since the Rosary Way there was established.

It was doubly fitting that Bishop Peter Cullinane, Bishop Emeritus of Palmerston North, was present as he had blessed the set of stations at their opening. It was also the first occasion of celebration for an anniversary of Palmerston North Diocese, which came into being on March 6, 1980. Jerusalem was designated as one of two places of pilgrimage in the new diocese. (The Cathedral of the Holy Spirit was the other.)

As people gathered around the altar for Mass in St Joseph's Church in Jerusalem, the first anniversary of the mosque shootings in Christchurch was recalled.

"Let's pray for peace, justice and human rights for everyone and where

rights are being violated," Bishop Cullinane said.

The recently deceased Home of Compassion Sister Catherine Hannan was also remembered. Bishop Cullinane mentioned a special joke shared between them both during a retreat he led in the 1970s.

"We were talking about the psalm where God speaks of dancing for joy and delighting in us. I appreciated we dance in God's presence, but God dancing was something [I] had never considered. Catherine was amazed that [I'd] just realised this," the bishop said.

The last letter Bishop Cullinane wrote before resigning as bishop was to the Sisters of Compassion enquiring if Venerable Suzanne Aubert could be buried at Jerusalem. "I knew it wasn't going to work, but gave it a try anyway. The letter came back with a 'no'," he said.

Following Mass and lunch, those present prayed the rosary and the day finished with Benediction.

Down through the years, the sta-



Bishop Peter Cullinane and people at Jerusalem.

tions on the Rosary Way had deteriorated. They had been positioned along the shady path between the Church and the orphanage. In readiness for the anniversary, the stations were bought back to Whanganui for either a repaint, to have new images inserted or have rotten timber replaced.

Parishioners adopted a station,

paying \$25 each, which paid for the repairs.

The original concept of erecting the Rosary Way came when parishioner and Legion of Mary member Ted Downs visited and saw the Rosary Way at Aylesford Carmelite Priory just outside London.

"It dawned on me then, to do exactly the same in Jerusalem," he said.



Papal Prayer

The Pope's universal prayer intention for April:

Freedom from Addiction

We pray that those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied.

40 YEARS AGO

HE WALKED THE WAY OF THE CROSS

A Latin American archbishop, internationally recognised and admired for his labours in the cause of justice and peace, has been shot dead.

Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, who has fearlessly spoken out against military repression and violence in the strife-torn country of El Salvador, lost his life by machine-gun fire as he was preparing to say Mass at a Catholic hospital in San Salvador on March 25.

The assassination came after a series of death threats, and bomb attacks on the Church radio station through which he frequently broadcast.

In one of the strongest of his statements, made at the end of February, Archbishop Romero declared, "Political power is in the hands of the military without scruples, who know only how to repress the people and to favour the oligarchy."

He asked President Carter not to

supply military aid to El Salvador. He wrote, "I am appealing to you because you are a Christian and affirm that you defend human rights. Please demonstrate this, because with military help to El Salvador, the injustice and repression against our people will only get worse."

El Salvador, which is in a virtual state of civil war, is sharply divided between the extreme right, representing a rich, landed oligarchy and segments of the military and the extreme left, which seeks to overthrow the Government and seize power from the military.

Most of its 4.8 million people live in extreme poverty.

The Government is a five-man junta comprising of the military and three Christian Democrat politicians. It has been trying to enforce some land and economic reforms, but is meeting resistance from the right, and counter-resistance from the left.

— *Zealandia*, April 6, 1980

CAPTION CONTEST

Caption contest is taking a break until the COVID-19 national lockdown is over and NZ Catholic can resume publishing and distributing in its regular newsprint format. All entries submitted for Caption Contest 585 will be held until then. We apologise to our regular caption contest contributors for the inconvenience.

The winner of the Caption Contest from issue 584 (right) was Gillian Vine, Dunedin.

Some other suggestions were:

"Snapped! Hatchback caught trying to sneak over wall, assisted by Mini Cooper!" — T.M. 'Ofamo'oni, Auckland.

"Speed bump!" — June Jarka, Dunedin.

"The way that we drive says a lot about us: I lost control ages ago." — Michael Jarka.

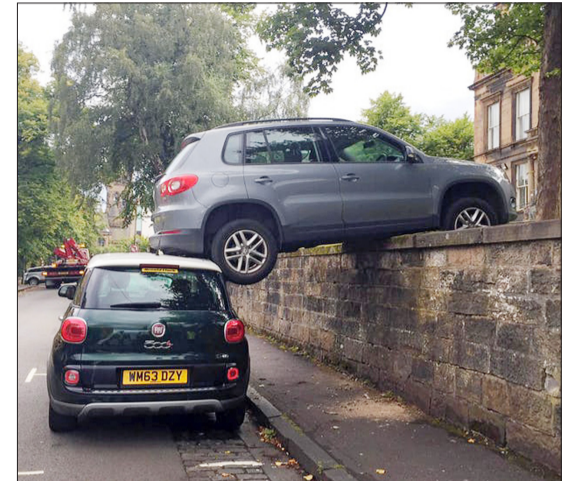
"preCARious!" — Keith Wicks, via email.

"Well, here's another nice mess you've gotten me into!" — John Lewis, Hamilton.

"Yes. I don't park on the footpath." — John Britto, Auckland.

"Trialling new ways of parking." — Dave Colquhoun, Te Aroha.

"Failed attempt to create the first



Parking is such sweet sorrow

double-decker car." — Paul McKee, Christchurch.

"They did not tell me that backwards was a drop down." — Russell Watt, Auckland.

"Wall-mounted – with some unexpected assistance." — Sr. Mary Scanlon, Christchurch.

"An easy way to have a rest, it seems it has reached (retirement) age." — R.A. Carrucan, Auckland.

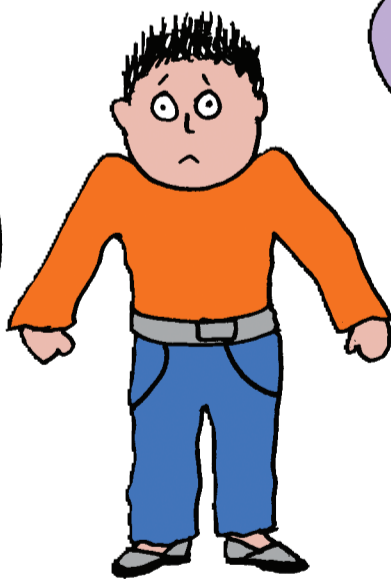
Kit's Corner

What if I make a mistake?

I don't know what to say.

What if I am not allowed to go?

What if they don't like me?



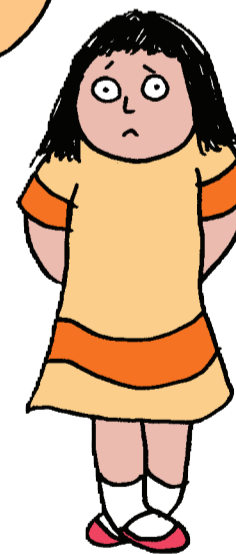
What will people say?

What will happen tomorrow?

What will I do?

What am I going to wear?

Will I get into the team?



What if I get into trouble?

What do I look like?

Will it be all right?

Do you sometimes worry about things at home or school?

Jesus tells us **not to worry!** He said that just as God the Father looks after the birds and flowers he will **look after you**. Jesus said not to worry about food or drink or clothes, or what is going to happen tomorrow, because **GOD** in heaven **KNOWS** that you need all these things and will take care of them.

The best thing to do is to **stop worrying**. You can **change** the way you think about yourself, or you can ask someone to help you sort out the worry.

Everyone can change for the **better**. Of course, there will be some things that you cannot change. When that happens, you have to **trust God** and let God be in charge. That means you have to **share** the problem with God in **Prayer**.

Can you learn this verse off by heart? 1 Peter, chapter 5, verse 7: **"Leave all your worries with him, because he cares for you."**

Find the story



in the Bible
Matthew 6:
25-34

Patience needed for full look at Vatican wartime role

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When the Vatican’s wartime archives opened to researchers on March 2, just as the coronavirus pandemic was accelerating, it was just the start of what should be a long, slow process of studying, analysing and publishing findings, said the Vatican’s archivist and librarian.

“We have to have the patience to wait and listen to the results” that dozens of scholars are expected to produce over the coming years, from what is known to be “inevitably slow and complex” work, Cardinal Jose Tolentino Calaca de Mendonca told reporters on February 20.

Only by expecting and letting scholars take the time to do their job thoroughly can the examination and discussion of the controversial World War II period have “certain” and document-based evidence, he said.

The true task of a historian, he said, is to understand and submit to the truth, untangling the reasons behind historical events.

“The Church is not afraid of history and faces the assessment of historians and researchers with trusting certainty” that the meaning and spirit of what was done will be understood, Cardinal de Mendonca said.

The cardinal was one of a number of Vatican archivists who spoke with reporters at the Vatican press hall about the opening of the archives related to the wartime pontificate of Pope Pius XII.

A vast amount of materials from the period of 1939 to 1958 is to be available for consultation and study by qualified scholars or academics. The materials come from not just the Vatican Apostolic Archives, but also multiple other archives, such as from the Vatican Secretariat of State, including documents regarding internal Church governance and the Holy See’s relations with states, non-governmental organisations and the international community.

Johan Ickx, director of the archive of the section for relations with states, told reporters that staffers have digitised almost their entire archive, starting with 1939 and reaching just shy of 1958, since they “started doing it only nine years ago”.

“We are now past 1.3 million documents” already scanned and available online for study or



The Vatican Secret Archives are seen in this undated photo. (CNS photo)

to request printed copies, he said.

To offer an example of what one could find, he said, “There are documents of ambassadors coming to the Holy See”, meeting with Vatican officials and staff, expressing their opinions, concerns and plans, and documents or correspondence related to other diplomatic contacts and activity.

There also will “certainly be documents” related to a hypothetical or “presumed” plan by the Nazi regime to kidnap Pope Pius XII, he added in response to a question.

Ickx said, “I think the researchers that come will be astonished when they see” all that is in

their archive.

Much is already known from the extensive research carried out in other archives around the world, but the opening at the Vatican “will still change something, that is, for understanding the truth better. I am certain of this”, he said.

Other archives making their documentation available from the time period include the congregations for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Evangelisation of Peoples and Eastern Churches, the Apostolic Penitentiary and the Fabbrica di San Pietro, the Vatican office in charge of St Peter’s Basilica.

Interreligious role for theology lecturer

by MARTIN de JONG

Wellington-based theology lecturer Dr Christopher Longhurst has been appointed a fellow of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID).

During the term of his one-year fellowship, he aims to publish a handbook for teaching and learning interreligious dialogue through reflection on and conversation around pictorial art. He said that the use of pictorial art could be “an effective and innovative technique to undertake interreligious dialogue”, and he hopes that the handbook will be used in classrooms and academic centres teaching religion throughout New Zealand.

KAICIID was established in 2012 to promote interreligious dialogue to prevent and resolve conflict and enhance understanding and cooperation. Named after the then-King of Saudi Arabia (who died in 2015), it was founded by Saudi Arabia, Austria and Spain, with the Holy See as a founding observer. Its board consists of representatives of major world religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism).

Dr Longhurst hopes KAICIID’s mandate to promote dialogue and enhance understanding will be taken up by the New Zealand Government and key stakeholders to foster dialogue among people of different faiths and cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Dr Longhurst’s fellowship will involve training and capacity-building in dialogue, mediation and peacebuilding, through three intensive in-residence training sessions and online learning programmes.

KAICIID fellows are typically educators from academic religious institutions worldwide, who learn skills to educate their own students and communities about interreligious dialogue, so they, in turn, can become facilitators and leaders in dialogue and promoting peace in their communities.

Dr Longhurst is kaiwhakaako/lecturer in



(left to right): Dr Christopher Longhurst with senior advisor to KAICIID, Professor Mohammed Abu-Nimer of the School of International Service at American University, and fellow Udo Effiong Joseph from Nigeria, at the first in-residence training session at Vienna, Austria, in January.

theology and Wellington site coordinator for Te Kupenga — Catholic Theological College. He is also on the New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Committee for Interfaith Relations (NZCBCIR) and the Wellington Interfaith Council (WIFC).

From NZ Catholic

With the decision by the Government that most non-daily newspapers and periodicals are not essential services, we are unable to print *NZ Catholic*.

Therefore, subscriber renewals and new subscriber receptions for *NZ Catholic* are suspended until such time as we can both print a paper and return to our office.

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cn431

New bishop goes north in his first week

by MICHAEL OTTO

Only a few days after his episcopal ordination, Auckland diocese's new auxiliary bishop visited the cradle of the Catholic faith in this country for the first time.

Bishop Michael Gielen, with Auckland Bishop Patrick Dunn and members of Auckland diocese's lead team, visited the Hokianga area for three days.

They asked locals not to go to any trouble during their visit — but the locals decided they wanted to extend hospitality and plenty of it.

Auckland diocese vicar of social impact and communications Loraine Elliott, who was one of those who accompanied Bishop Gielen in the Hokianga, told *NZ Catholic* that the visit had many highlights.

The group spent one and half days on retreat at Omapere, on the southern side of the entrance to the Hokianga Harbour, where Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pompallier arrived in 1838.

They were able to visit places of historic and spiritual significance — including Motuti, Motukaraka and Totara Point.

A welcome and service was held at Motuti. Panguru priest Fr Maliu 'Otutaha was the first speaker — and he spoke entirely in Te Reo Maori — a language he is learning. The consensus among locals was that he did very well.

After further speeches and karakia, Sr Magdalen Sheahan, DOLC, came to the front of St Mary's church and spoke about Bishop Pompallier and his journey and how his remains had been brought back to that place. She said to the visitors — is there a question you want to ask me?

Auckland diocese vicar for Maori Manuel Beazley beckoned to Bishop Gielen and the latter asked if he could see the casket containing Bishop Pompallier's remains.

The casket was raised from its resting place and was displayed. The two bishops knelt side-by-side and prayed in front of the casket. Everyone else present did likewise in turn. Waiata were sung throughout.



Bishop Michael Gielen with Bishop Patrick Dunn and members of Auckland diocese lead team and Hokianga Catholics outside St Mary's Church at Motuti.

At Motuti, Bishop Dunn blessed Bishop Gielen's greenstone pectoral cross. Bishop Dunn did the blessing in Te Reo. Bishop Gielen later described this as a very special moment for him.

After the service, there was food and socialising. A big fuss was made of all the guests, Mrs Elliott said. Local people were thrilled to see the two bishops and made a particular fuss of them.

There was lots of chat and conversation.

Some of the local people knew Bishop Gielen and some had been to his ordination,

Mrs Elliott said.

The visitors were later taken to Totara Point, the site of the first Mass celebrated in this country by Bishop Pompallier.

Fr 'Otutaha and Mr Beazley and the two bishops led prayers there. Mr Beazley explained the history of the area and its people and its significance for the Church.

Asked about the general feeling after their visit, Mrs Elliott said that every day was special, "but it was very, very special for all of us to visit Motuti and Totara Point. To be able to do it. . . with your two bishops and the local priest . . . how special is that?"

GENERAL MANAGER

- Key Senior Management Position
- Organisational Leadership Focus
- Palmerston North

The General Manager is the custodian of the physical, financial and staffing resource (people) of the Diocese of Palmerston North and is responsible for ensuring they are appropriately protected, efficiently managed, utilised in the provision of pastoral services (as directed by the Bishop) and that all resources are strategically managed for the future.

With the impending retirement of the current long standing General Manager, the Diocese is now seeking applications from suitably experienced professionals for the position. It is anticipated that the new General Manager will be available to take up the appointment to the role before 30 June 2020.

Reporting to the Bishop, and leading a capable and committed team of people, the General Manager will:

- Take responsibility for the effective and efficient operation of the diocesan office by providing leadership and direction to the organisation and ensuring that the strategic objectives of the Diocese are met;
- Demonstrate excellent all-round skills in financial & resource management, human resource management, planning and risk management;
- Be an excellent communicator with well-developed interpersonal and problem-solving skills and with the ability to relate effectively with stakeholders;
- Hold appropriate tertiary qualifications in business or in a related discipline.

It would be preferable if the applicant had experience of working in a leadership capacity within the wider Catholic Church, whether nationally or in a parish or school context.

This is a challenging and rewarding senior management position. The appointee will have the chance to play a key role in the strategic management and development of the Diocese of Palmerston North.

For more information please contact Mike Hurdle on 04 917 7355 or apply online.

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DIocese OF
PALMERSTON
NORTH



Bishop Gielen with a statue of Our Lady.



THIS YEAR CELEBRATE THE 20TH OFFICIAL WORLDWIDE;

Divine Mercy Sunday

19 April 2020

Jesus asked Saint Faustina: *“Gather all sinners from the entire world and immerse them in the abyss of My mercy . . . On the day of my feast, the Feast of Mercy, you will go through the whole world and bring fainting souls to the spring of My mercy. I shall heal and strengthen them.” (Diary 206)*

For Divine Mercy Sunday, remember to reflect on our sins, repent of our sins, receive the mercy of God and respond to the graces which flow from your Reconciliation with God.

To observe Divine Mercy Sunday fittingly, we should precede the feast by a nine-day novena of reciting the Divine Mercy Chaplet, beginning on Good Friday (privately said).



Jesus said to Saint Faustina:

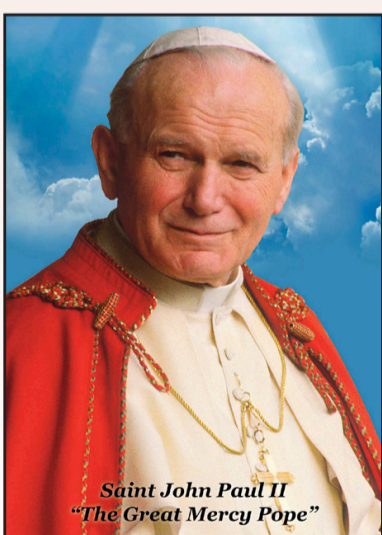
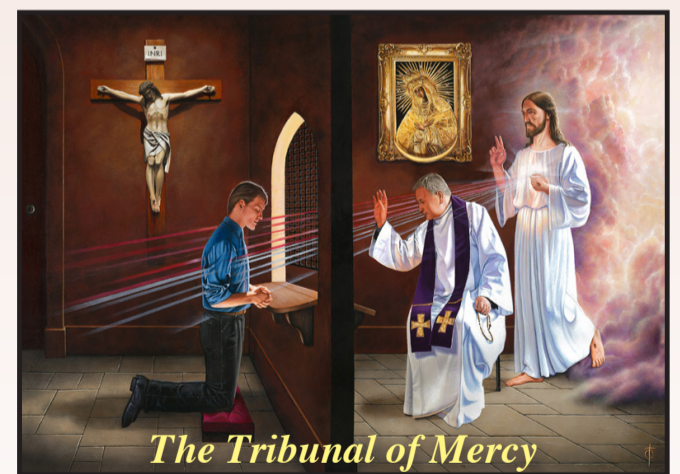
“I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners.

On that day, the very depths of My mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy.”

“The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter.” (Diary 699)

“The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment.”

(Diary 699)



“Whoever sincerely says ‘Jesus, I trust in You’, will find comfort in all fears.”

Pope John Paul II, 7/6/97

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