

# NZ Catholic

The national Catholic newspaper

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'Joy to the world'

## A cause for celebration

In the early fourth century, a senior priest in the great university city of Alexandria in Egypt began to preach a message that almost tore the Church apart.

Arius was perplexed by the mystery of Christmas, and could only make sense of what happened at Bethlehem by claiming that Jesus could not have actually been God. He taught that Jesus was the most wonderful of all created beings, but he was "created", and so there was a time when the Father existed and the Son did not.

Arius was a convincing teacher, and soon had attracted many followers, including scholars and political leaders. But others, including many everyday Catholics, began to sense that

what Arius was teaching was not actually the faith that they had received from the apostles.

The thought that Jesus was simply a great religious teacher is still commonplace today, even though the views of Arius were rejected at the Council of Nicaea, which met in the year 325. That council produced the Nicene Creed, which we pray aloud at Mass most Sundays, reminding ourselves that Jesus was "begotten but not made", that he is the Son [begotten], but not just another created being like the rest of us. He is "consubstantial with the Father", and "through him all things were made".

The fact that Jesus is truly Emmanuel, God-among-us, is what

makes the Christmas story such a cause for celebration.

"The Maker of the stars and sea, become a child on earth for me" is how Sir John Betjeman puts it in his Christmas poem. We must not allow the modern day followers of Arius to blur this amazing truth for us.

Christmas every year reminds us that, for all the troubles and challenges of the past year, and there have been many, it is still true that God loves us so much he sent his only Son, and he invites us to share life eternally in all its fullness as his sons and daughters.

Have a wonderful Christmas, and a happy New Year.

— Bishop Patrick Dunn



## Sacred Heart principal moves to Liston College

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Liston College in west Auckland is to have a new principal, Stephen Dooley, who has been the principal at Sacred Heart College in east Auckland since 2019.

The Board of Trustees of Liston College stated that Mr Dooley would join Liston College from the start of the 2022 school year.

NZ Catholic understands that former St Peter's College and St Paul's College headmaster Kieran Fouhy will be acting principal at Sacred Heart for one term while Mr Dooley's replacement is found. Mr Fouhy retired from his St Paul's role

in October this year.

Before going to Sacred Heart, Mr Dooley was associate headmaster at St Peter's, where he worked since 2009. Some of these years were with Mr Fouhy as headmaster.

The Liston board acknowledged Chris Rooney for his "unwavering support and dedication to Liston College over the past 45 years, including his 22 years of leadership as principal".

Mr Rooney announced his retirement to the board in June. In a final message to the college, he stated that he made the comment to the board "that they would have no difficulty in finding a suitable replacement for me. I stated

that the college has a committed and caring staff, a fabulous student body, a supportive parent community, and a board determined to do the very best for the college. This is what my successor, Mr Stephen (Steve) Dooley, inherits. I know he will build on the strong foundations and lead the college in the next stage of growth."

The Liston board stated that Mr Dooley, who is a parishioner at St Mary's, Northcote, "brings over 20 years' experience in school leadership experience, and has lived the Edmund Rice ethos and charisma, having served in three senior leadership roles over 11 years at a Christian Brothers' school".



Stephen Dooley

## NZCatholic

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## Balanced approach needed to teach maths

by MICHAEL OTTO

The chief executive of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office has suggested that a solution to this country's declining student achievement in mathematics lies in a balanced approach to teaching the subject.

Writing in the December issue of the NZCEO's Lighting New Fires newsletter, Dr Kevin Shore said that the teaching of mathematics in under the microscope in New Zealand and Australia.

Dr Shore noted reported significant declines in student achievement in mathematics in both countries.

Last year, *The New Zealand Herald* reported that the latest Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (Timss) showed that Year 9 New Zealand students dropped from a score of 493 in the last survey in 2015 to a score of 482 (ranking 23 out of 39 countries). This is based on a global average of 500, when the surveys started in 1995. In the first survey, Year 9 New Zealand students scored just above 500.

"At the heart of this debate," Dr Shore wrote, "is an ideological battle between student-led, 'constructivist' pedagogies and teacher-led 'instructivist' teaching approaches."

Dr Shore, a former teacher of mathematics, said he did not want to oversimplify a complex issue.

"... [B]ut academics in Australia propose that an emphasis on strategy over explicit teach-

ing has led to a lack of student self-confidence, resulting in diminished understanding and knowledge. They argue the emphasis in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes in Australia on constructivist pedagogies has resulted in limited emphasis on explicit teacher instruction in mathematics, resulting in declining outcomes for students."

Dr Shore noted that "pedagogical practice in education often swings between extremes".

But the solution would seem to be one of balance, he added. "Our students excel at something when they understand what to do, are knowledgeable, successful and stimulated."

"Explicit mathematics instruction will provide the skills and, once mastered, students will have sufficient expertise to engage in student-led activities in the classroom. It is never one or the other, but a beautiful combination of pedagogical approaches that masterful teachers integrate in their practice."

But Dr Shore added that teachers "deserve the support of a national coherent set of resources and strong leadership across the sector regarding those approaches that work best for student achievement".

A new report from the Royal Society Te Apārangi is reportedly calling for radical change in how maths and statistics is taught in New Zealand schools. Among the recommendations is one hour of maths every day in years 0-10, with all curriculum areas covered.



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## End of year publication

This is the final issue of NZ Catholic for 2021. Our first issue of 2022 will be published on January 30. NZ Catholic's office will close on December 23, and will open again on January 17. We wish all our readers, friends, supporters, advertisers and suppliers a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.

# Bishop Lowe appointed as Bishop of Auckland

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Stephen Lowe as the new Catholic Bishop of Auckland.

The appointment was announced in Rome at midnight New Zealand time on December 18.

Bishop Lowe, who had been Bishop of Hamilton, replaces Bishop Patrick Dunn, who was appointed as Auckland bishop in 1994, and is retiring.

The Diocese of Auckland has almost 40 per cent of New Zealand's 471,000 Catholics.

"I am humbled at being asked by the Holy Father to be the Bishop of Auckland and the successor of Bishop Pat Dunn, a much loved bishop," Bishop Lowe said.

"Auckland is our largest diocese and our first diocese. When I look at the bishops who have served Auckland, starting with Bishop Pompallier, they all had the challenges of their time and circumstances. But they also had their own unique gifts and talents, and the gifts and talents of the People of God. So I'm looking forward to becoming part of the diocese of Auckland as we work together for the building of God's kingdom."

Bishop Lowe was ordained as Bishop of Hamilton in February, 2015. Born in Hokitika, he was ordained as a priest for the Diocese of Christchurch in Hokitika in 1996.

He served as the assistant priest in the Mairehau, Ashburton and Greymouth parishes, before being appointed parish priest of Timaru North and chaplain of Roncalli College, Timaru, in 2000. From 2005-2007 he completed a Licence in Spiritual Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

He was appointed to Holy Cross Seminary in Auckland in 2008, where he served as formation director until the end of 2014. While based there, he served for a time as parish priest of Ponsonby.

Bishop Lowe is the vice president and secretary



Bishop Lowe preaches at the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Hamilton in Lent, 2021



Bishop Stephen Lowe at a session of the synod of bishops in Rome in 2018



Bishop Lowe gestures toward the centennial plinth at Totara Point in 2020 (Photo: Jacek Drecki)

of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, and is the bishops' representative on Te Rūnanga o te Hāhi Katorika o Aotearoa, the Church's national Māori advisory group. He is also a member of several other bodies, including the National Safe-

guarding and Professional Standards Committee. Bishop Lowe's appointment to Auckland means the dioceses of Hamilton, Palmerston North and Christchurch are without ordinaries, pending Pope Francis announcing new appointments.

## Bishop Lowe appointment is answer to Bishop Dunn's prayers

by ROWENA OREJANA

Auckland Bishop Patrick Dunn said the appointment of his successor, Bishop Stephen Lowe, by Pope Francis is the "answer to my prayers". Bishop Dunn cited his failing eyesight, which has been an issue for several years, as the reason for his retirement.

Bishop Dunn said that plans are tentative, but it is hoped that Bishop Lowe will move up to Auckland by the middle of February, 2022.

Bishop Dunn will move to St John Vianney House in Vermont Street, "but will still be available to help during these days of transition".

"I know you will join me in welcoming Bishop Steve as he takes up the rather daunting task of moving to Auckland at the start of next year," Bishop Dunn said in a letter addressed to the diocesan staff.

In the letter, Bishop Dunn revealed he had written to Pope Francis in June last year, seeking retirement.

"Most of you will be aware that, in recent years, especially from 2018 onwards, I have been facing significant eyesight issues. Despite the best efforts of my eye specialists, the situation has not improved. This led me, in June 2020, to write to Pope Francis, saying that I thought I was reaching the end of the road in my service as bishop, and that our wonderful diocese needed someone who could read easily and could drive, to take my place," he said. "The appointment of Bishop Steve is an answer to my prayers!"

In the letter, Bishop Dunn expressed his gratitude to the diocesan staff.

"I do thank you all for your support and friendship over the years, and especially for your patience in recent times as I have struggled with poor vision. I have told Bishop Steve that he will have the best staff in all the world to help him as he settles into his new role," he said.

Bishop Dunn, who celebrated on July 25, 2019, the 25th anniversary of his being Bishop of Auckland, noted that, as with the appointment of Bishop Lowe, it was around the Christmas season when he himself had been appointed as Bishop of Auckland.

When he was appointed as auxiliary bishop as



Bishop Patrick Dunn outside St Joseph's church in Takapuna a few hours after it was announced that Pope Francis had accepted his resignation as Bishop of Auckland

few months beforehand, at the age of 44, he said he was very hesitant, but was told by then-Auckland Bishop Denis Browne that the only answer he (Bishop Dunn) could give was "yes".

"My old friend, Brother Richard Dunleavy, FMS, turned 89 this week. He mentioned that he loves

the prayer of Dag Hammarskjold, the one-time secretary-general of the United Nations: 'Dear Lord, for all that has been; thank you. For all that is to come; yes!,' Bishop Dunn said.

"I am trying to make that my prayer also at this time," he said.

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# Otago church closed after more than 100 years

by PETER OWENS

On December 5, St Patrick's church in Lawrence, Central Otago, was closed as a parish church after being the centre for Catholic activity in the region for more than 100 years.

However, age took its toll on this historic church and, according to St Patrick's parish chairman Geoff Blackmore, the category-2 New Zealand Heritage-listed building had serious infrastructure problems which would cost well over \$1million to fix. An inspection by specialists revealed the church required a total re-roofing, refurbishment of some window installations, some minor earthquake strengthening, and an increasing rising damp problem.

According to Mr Blackmore, at a public meeting in February this year, parishioners and the Lawrence community said they would prefer to retain the building as a church. However, Mr Blackmore said the anticipated cost of restoration could not practically be met by the community. He said people have been very supportive of doing something, but unfortunately there was not enough money available to complete the repairs. He said "our own parishioners are ageing and dwindling, and the wider community is unable to help. That means, unfortunately, we've had to make the very hard decision to deconsecrate the building as a church, and move to have it sold".

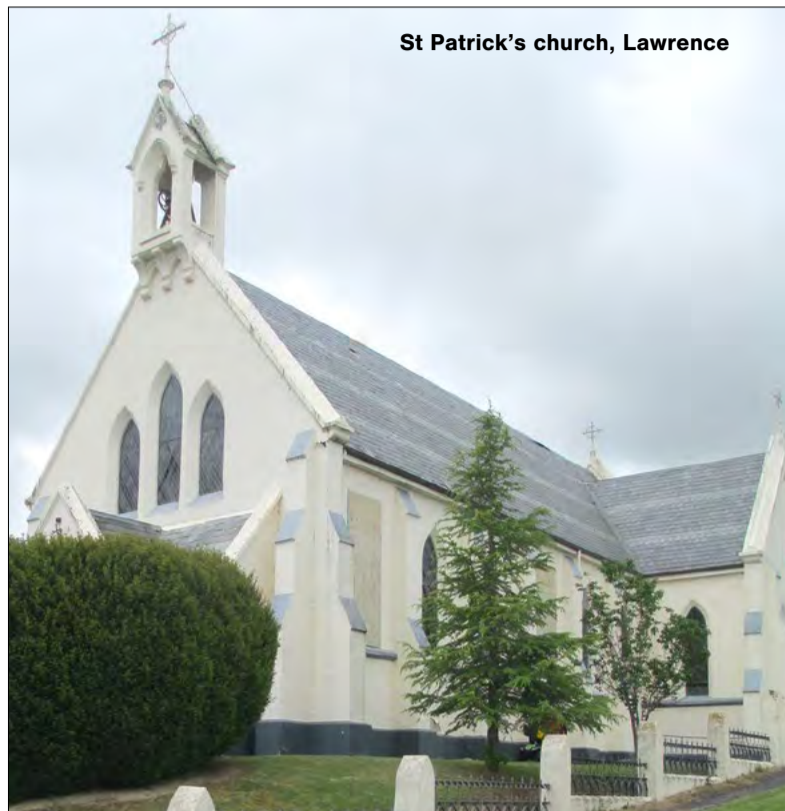
As a category 2 heritage-listed structure, new owners would need to preserve original architectural features wherever possible. "We haven't really thought how it might be used," Mr Blackmore said.

A final Mass in the church was celebrated by Dunedin Bishop Michael Dooley, with St Patrick's parish priest Fr Chris O'Neill concelebrating. Of the 100 present and past parishioners in attendance, many had travelled long distances, and displayed their double-vaccination certificates on entering the church. The Mass was also livestreamed.

In his homily, Bishop Dooley gave thanks for all the work that had been done over many decades in Lawrence in the service of the Gospel.

St Patrick's church had been a sacred space for many generations of people, he said. It has been a place where the Word of God has been proclaimed and where the sacraments have been celebrated.

"This very church, which we are sitting in here this morning, has played a very important role in preparing the way of the Lord, smoothing the path



St Patrick's church, Lawrence

“It is a mark of mature Christians to make those decisions after careful discernment and [placing] their trust in God, looking ahead to the future.”

— Bishop Dooley

so that many people have been able to express their faith and follow the Lord.”

But while people speak of sacred spaces in their lives, God is not limited to this building, Bishop Dooley said. God is present in many ways in Lawrence and in the district, including in the parish centre next door, which is now being used for Sunday Mass. People are still gathering, and the Gospel is still being preached, he said.

But this does not take away from the fact that there is a certain sadness about the closure of the church, which has been a huge part of the faith of people of this area and beyond, he added.

Bishop Dooley thanked the people of the parish for facing up to a hard decision, which was made after a lot of consultation and prayer. He admitted it had been a difficult decision to make.

"It is a mark of mature Christians to make those decisions after careful discernment and [placing] their trust in God, looking ahead to the future."

He added that difficult decisions are having to be made throughout the world because of the pandemic at this time too.

The present church is not the first Catholic Church in Lawrence. In the 19th century, many Irish workers were in the district as a result of a gold rush.

In October, 1862, Fr Delphine Moreau, SM, had a canvas church erected at the goldfield and this was much appreciated by the miners, many of who came from Germany and France, as well as Ireland. However, a more permanent church was soon erected in Lawrence, which was blessed by Bishop Viard in 1864. This building, which was close to the site of the present St Patrick's church, served the community until 1872.

In 1871, Bishop Moran established Lawrence as the first Catholic parish outside Dunedin city in the new Dunedin diocese. Fr William Larkin, the first parish priest, was responsible for the construction of a large Catholic church/school which opened in 1872. This building still stands and is now owned privately.

Among its celebrated alumni are Bill O'Leary "Arawata Bill" who is still remembered throughout the South, and Cardinal Reginald Delargy, who began his education at the Lawrence Catholic School.

He is commemorated in a stained-glass picture light designed by Beverley Shore Bennett of Wellington. This was installed in the present church in 1982. Another prominent person associated with the Lawrence Catholic School was "JJ" Woods, an early schoolmaster, who wrote the music for "God Defend New Zealand".

However, the present church, which was deconsecrated on December 5, superseded the then-church/school. In 1891, contemporary accounts reported "crowds of visitors, including a trainload from Dunedin, watched Bishop Moran lay the foundation stone . . .".

The church was built quickly, and was opened and blessed by Bishop Moran on January 6 in the following year. It was designed by the renowned Francis Petre, who later designed St Joseph's Cathedral, Dunedin, and the former Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch, as well as St Mary's Basilica in Invercargill and Sacred Heart Basilica in Timaru.

From 1892, St Patrick's Church in Lawrence has been the Mass centre for a wide area of Central Otago, but now demographics and economic conditions dictate a change in direction. From now on the Catholics of the Lawrence area will attend Mass in the Lawrence Catholic Centre, which operates from the former Catholic school.

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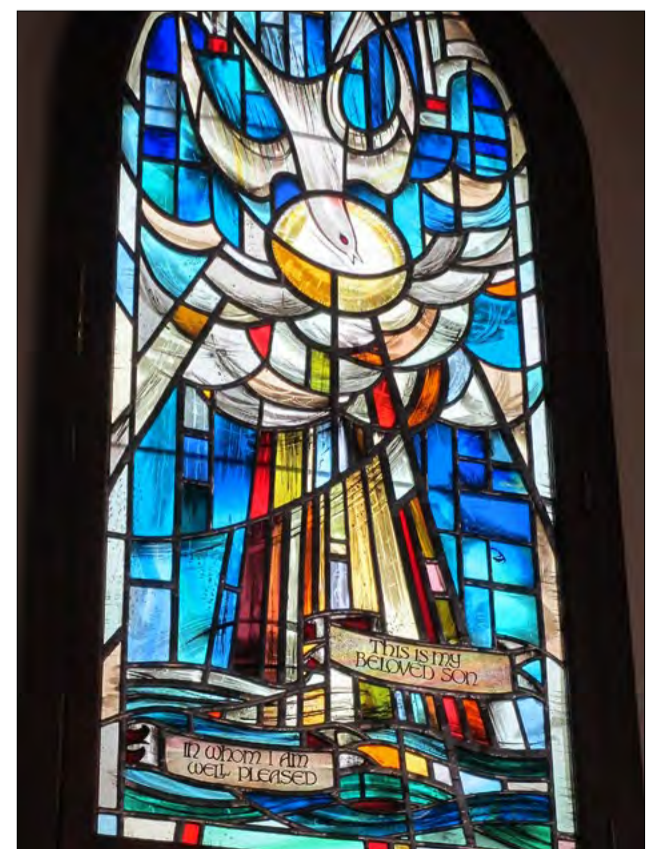
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Our Lady's shrine at St Patrick's



The Delargy window at St Patrick's

# Learning about the saint behind the Santa Claus legend



Full-length icon of Saint Nicholas by Jaroslav Čermák, (Photo: Wikimedia)

by ROWENA OREJANA

From an ascetic bishop to a jolly bearded man in a red suit, the story of St Nicholas is one that reached legendary proportions as it was passed on from person to person and culture to culture.

Te Kupenga lecturer Fr Merv Duffy, SM, who acknowledged a little resemblance to the modern-day version of the saint, said a “whole series of . . . popular devotion, artistic imagination, poetic convention and advertising” gave us the Santa Claus that we have today. Fr Duffy gave a talk called “The Saint behind Santa” on Zoom on December 15.

“All of this stuff is well beyond the control of any person or group. You’ve got artists imagining. You’ve got poets writing stories. You’ve got the songs that are popular, and you’ve got parents who want to give their children a figure of something fun at this time of year,” Fr Duffy said.

Santa Claus is originally Nikolaos, born in the port town of Patara, Turkey in 270AD to a rich Greek family. This enabled him to be well-travelled, visiting both Egypt and the Holy Land. A religious young man, he was ordained as a priest by the bishop, who was also his uncle. Years later, he became a bishop himself of another port town, Myra.

In the very early 300s, Bishop Nikolaos was arrested and tortured as part of the persecution of Christians by Emperor Diocletian. He was released in 313AD by Constantine and Maxentius, co-emperors who allowed Christians to worship freely.

Bishop Nikolaos was also among those who attended the Council of Nicaea called by Emperor Constantine

in 325.

He died on December 6, 343, at age 73. And his legend began.

Fr Duffy said that Bishop Nikolaos was considered a “Confessor”, one who suffered for the faith. His (Bishop Nikolaos’) tomb in Myra became a place of worship and intercession.

“We get evidence of what was referred to as the ‘cult of Nikolaos’, of prayers to Nicholas and holy prayers to Nicholas. In the Orthodox Church, Nicholas gets the reputation of the wonderworker because of the miracles associated with his intercession,” he said.

Fr Duffy said that the first written evidence of the cult dates from the eighth century, but the cult started earlier. The oldest prayer to Nicholas was for safe voyage, as Myra, where he (Nicholas) had been bishop, was a port town.

A natural extension of this was invoking St Nicholas for the safe passage of sea cargo.

“There’s a legend about Nicholas which claimed that, during a famine, he intervened to get food supplies for his city,” Fr Duffy said.

According to the legend, during a famine, St Nicholas intervened to get food supplies to his city of Myra from an imperial convoy shipping grain from Alexandria to Constantinople. The wheat taken from the ships was miraculously topped up as if nothing had been taken.

The most popular legend, though, was of Nicholas giving a man three bags of gold for dowry for his three daughters. This legend explains why St Nicholas’ symbol is three gold balls, representing the bags of gold for each daughter. This also explains why he is the patron saint of pawnbrokers, Fr Duffy said.

The symbol of the balls, though, was misunderstood in the re-telling. Some thought they (balls) were oranges and assumed St Nicholas was from Spain.

Fr Duffy said that the gold balls must have been misinterpreted as three blond heads, as another legend, that of the evil butcher, told of three blond children who wandered into his (evil butcher’s) shop. The butcher cut the children up, put them in a salting tub and, after seven years, St Nicholas came to the shop, told the butcher to open the tubs and asked the children to arise.

“Ever since, Nicholas has been the patron of children because of this legend,” Fr Duffy said. “And because of the charity of St Nicholas, he is associated with gift-giving.”

The story of Bishop Nikolaos was spread far and wide by seafarers. In Amsterdam, he became known as Sinter Claes (Saint Nicholas) and Dutch immigrants to America brought with them their devotion to the saint.

In America, St Nicholas underwent another transformation through the poem penned by Clement Clarke Moore, A Visit from St Nicholas, in 1823, where he was described as an elf with a miniature sleigh that goes through the chimney to leave gifts.

In 1931, clever advertising by Coca-Cola illustrated St Nicholas in the image that is now prevalent.

“Santa Claus was originally St Nicholas, and the wonderworker is the human figure behind the legend of Santa Claus,” Fr Duffy said.

“He’s been real to people in all sorts of different ways. And the idea that children have a patron who will look after them is a way of parents showing love, and also teaching them of the love of God.”

## Vatican Nativity crèche inspired by Peru’s Andean region

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The representation of Peru’s diverse indigenous communities in this year’s Nativity scene in St Peter’s Square embodies the joy and hope of their faith, said Peruvian Bishop Carlos Alberto Salcedo Ojeda of Huanavelica, Peru.

In October, the Vatican City State governing office said that the 30-piece Nativity scene from Peru’s Huanavelica region was chosen, in part, to mark the 200th anniversary of Peru’s independence.

Statues of Joseph and Mary, as well as the Three Kings, are dressed in the traditional bright, multicoloured garments of the region’s indigenous Chopcca people.

Unlike more traditional depictions of the Magi, trudging to Bethlehem with camels and

gifts of gold, incense and myrrh, the Andean interpretation has them accompanied by llamas and bearing sacks of food from the region, including corn, quinoa and potatoes.

In front of the llamas, an angel, dressed in traditional Andean clothing, hails the birth of the Messiah by playing a flute in one hand while banging a drum with the other. Overlooking the Peruvian Nativity scene atop a tree is an Andean condor, the country’s national symbol, with its massive wings spread preparing to soar the heavens.

The Vatican Nativity scene was unveiled on December 10, along with the lighting of the 90-foot-tall spruce tree. They will remain in the square through to January 9, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.



Statues of Joseph and Mary are pictured in the Nativity scene in St Peter’s Square this year (CNS Photo)



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

POPE FRANCIS

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# Why equity, diversity, and inclusivity are not absolute values

In the wake of the French Revolution, the triplet of “liberty, equality, fraternity” emerged as a moral compass for the secular society. Something similar has happened today in regard to “equity, diversity, and inclusion”. For most pundits and social activists, at least in the West, these three values function as fundamental norms, self-evident moral truths of absolute value that ought to guide our behaviour, at both the personal and institutional level. But this cannot be right. For whatever plays that determining role must be good in itself, valuable in every and any circumstance, incapable of being positioned by a higher value. Neither equity, diversity nor inclusion enjoy these prerogatives, and this can be shown readily enough.

## ■ Equity

First, let us consider equity. Fostering equality is indeed a high moral value, in the measure that all people are identical in dignity and are equally deserving of respect. This ethical intuition is embedded in the US Declaration of Independence: “All men are created equal and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights.” It is,

## Robert Barron

accordingly, a moral imperative that all people be considered one and the same before the law and provided, as far as possible, parity of opportunity in the educational, economic, and cultural spheres. But equity in all things? Absolutely not. Many inequalities that obtain within human society — differences in intelligence, creativity, skill, courage, energy, etc. — are naturally given, and could be eliminated only through a brutally-imposed levelling out. And what follows from these natural inequalities is dramatic inequity in outcome: varying levels of attainment in all arenas of life. To be sure, some of these differences are the result of prejudice and injustice and, when this is the case, strenuous action should be taken to right the wrong. But a blanket imposition of equity in outcome across all of our society would result in a massive violation of justice, and would be made

## Ronald Rolheiser

# Human(Kind) – Ashlee Eiland

I could never be a literary critic, not because I can't tell good literature from bad, but because I lack the hard edge. If I dislike a book, I hesitate to say so. Conversely, if I like a book, I tend to be more its cheerleader than its critical assessor. Be that as it may, I want to strongly endorse Ashlee Eiland's new book, “Human(Kind) — How Reclaiming Human Worth and Embracing Radical Kindness Will Bring Us Back Together”.

This is not some sentimental, feel-good book on how we need to be kind to each other. It's more like a Sermon on the Mount for our time, or at least how we might work towards living the Sermon on the Mount. How do we remain soulful, warm, and human inside all the things that tend to unhealthily either inflate or embitter our hearts? Here's how she describes her book.

“This is my story — a story of a black woman who grew up in the [US] South and who discovered some wholeness and some holes along the way. As I looked back over my life, there were moments I remembered so vividly. Upon reflection, they were vivid because they mattered. They marked me in both beautiful and painful ways. But as I sat with these moments and memories, I realised they mattered because they taught me to be kind to my own worthy self. Recalling them helped me acknowledge the good gifts I've been given, the gifts I now hope to give to others, and enabled me to see the painful and hard moments as opportunities to be more fully human, to remind myself to receive grace where there's been grievance.”

The book is a series of stories from her life, all of them told by a gifted storyteller, and all of them written with an aesthetics that never sinks into

possible only by the most totalitarian sort of political arrangement.

## ■ Diversity

Now, let us look at diversity. Arguably the oldest problem in the history of philosophy is that of the one and the many — which is to say, how to think clearly about the relationship between unity and plurality at all levels of existence. I believe it is fair to say that, in the last 40 years or so, we have massively emphasised the “many” side of this matter, celebrating at every opportunity variety, difference, and creativity, and tending to demonise unity as oppression. God knows that the awful totalitarianisms of the twentieth century provided ample evidence that unity carries a dark side. And multiformity in cultural expression, in personal style, in modes of thinking, in ethnicity, etc. is wonderful and enriching. So, the cultivation of diversity is indeed a moral value. But is it an absolute value? Not at all — and a moment's reflection makes this plain. When the many is one-sidedly emphasised, we lose any sense of the values and practices that ought to unite us. This is obvious in the stress today on the individual's right to determine his or her own values and truths, even to the point of dictating one's own gender and sexuality. This hyper-valourisation of diversity effectively imprisons each of us on our own separate islands of self-regard, and gives rise to constant bickering. We loudly demand that our decisions be respected, and our stances tolerated, but the ties that bind us to one another are gone.

## ■ Inclusivity

And finally, let us cast a glance at inclusivity. Of the three, this is probably the one most treasured in the secular culture of today. At all costs, we are told over and over again, we should be inclusive. Once again, there is an obvious moral value to this stance. Every one of us has felt the sting of unjust exclusion, that sense of being on the wrong side of an arbitrary social divide, not permitted to belong to the “in” crowd. That entire classes of people, indeed entire races and ethnic groups, have suffered this indignity is beyond question. Hence the summons to include rather

than to exclude, to build bridges rather than walls, is entirely understandable and morally laudable. Nevertheless, inclusion cannot be an absolute value and good. We might first draw attention to a conundrum regarding inclusivity. When a person wants to be included, she wants to become part of a group or a society or an economy or a culture that has a particular form. For example, an immigrant who longs to be welcomed to America wants to participate in an altogether distinctive political society; when someone wants to be included in the Abraham Lincoln society, he seeks entry into a very circumscribed community. In other words, he or she desires to be included in a collectivity that is, at least to some degree, exclusive! Absolute or universal inclusivity is, in point of fact, operationally a contradiction.

Perhaps this principle can be seen with greatest clarity in regard to the Church. On the one hand, the Church is meant to reach out to everyone — as is suggested symbolically by the Bernini colonnade outside of St Peter's Basilica. Yet, at the same time, the Church is a very definite society, with strict rules, expectations, and internal structures. By its nature, therefore, it excludes certain forms of thought and behaviour. Cardinal Francis George was once asked whether all are welcome in the Church. He responded, “Yes, but on Christ's terms, not their own”. In a word, there is a healthy and necessary tension between inclusion and exclusion in any rightly-ordered community.

Having shown that none of the three great secular values are in fact of absolute value, are we left in a lurch, forced to accept a kind of moral relativism? No! In point of fact, the supreme value that positions every other value, the unsurpassable moral good in which all subordinate goods participate, can be clearly named. It is love, which is willing the good of the other as other, which indeed is the very nature and essence of God. Are equity, diversity, and inclusivity valuable? Yes, precisely in the measure that they are expressions of love; no, in the measure that they stand athwart love. To grasp this is of crucial importance in the moral conversation that our society must have.

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles. This article was originally published on [www.wordonfire.org](http://www.wordonfire.org) It is republished here with permission.

sentimentality or self-pity. And they are stories both of being graced and being wounded. Eiland's life has been one of contrasts.

On the one hand, her life has been one of privilege — loving parents, the opportunity for a first-rate education, never economically desperate, and always with a supportive family and community around her. On the other hand, she has lived as a black woman inside a world of injustice and inequality. She has had to live as one who must forever be conscious of the colour of her skin who, every time she walks into a room, needs to look around to see how many others like her are in the room. She also had to endure the ultimate racial slur being shouted in her face. And so, as she says, she has been deeply scarred, both in beautiful and painful ways.

For example, one of her stories recounts an incident in which she went out to a restaurant with some Asian friends for a Korean specialty of pork dumplings. The evening went well and, driving back from the restaurant and laughing with each other in the car, she felt a life-long weight lift from her. “For the first time, I didn't feel as if I had to qualify the conversation with a reminder to my friends — or to myself — of my actual race. . . . Before that day, I felt I had to tiptoe out of one world into another. But that kind of posture, I realised, is laced with shame. It allows the ‘not fully enough’ narrative to run rampant, terrorising what is oftentimes the best part about sharing our lives with one another.”

We need her narrative. We live in a time of bitterness and division, when civil discourse and respect have broken down, where we demonise each

other, where injustice, inequality and racism still define us more than their opposites, and where kindness is often seen as a weakness. Moreover, there is an ever-intensifying hypersensitivity, where even a well-intended word is a potential landmine. Paranoia has replaced metanoia, bringing out the worst in us.

Ashlee Eiland gives us a formula for bringing out what is best in us. How do we react to injustice, offence and demonisation? For example, here is how she reacted after trying to be good to someone, and being repaid for her effort by the ultimate racial taunt being hurled in her face: “Humiliated, I went about my day, doing as much good as I could for an afternoon . . . but knowing that sometimes even doing good is not enough. Sometimes we just have to sit with what's hard and humiliating about the difficult work of unity, and do our best not to let it kill us. Instead, we need to let it shape us in some other way that sobers us up and forces us to take off our rose-coloured glasses, to admit that sometimes moving closer and trying to do good and closing the gaps between us and others doesn't work out the way we want. But maybe it's worth showing up anyway.”

Lacking the critical edge, I'm not always sure of what constitutes “soul music”, but I can still recognise “soul literature”.

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# Reflecting on cribs at Christmas

## Editorial

In the past few months, with “bubbles” limiting social interaction in some places, and restrictions on gatherings, for many Christians, their faith has had to be lived mainly in their homes - to a greater extent than it usually is. At this time of year, one of the traditions in many such homes is the assembly of a Christmas crib. This can be a sentimental custom, which is part of the delight of Christmas for children. It can also be a focus of profound reflection.

The scene depicted in a crib is there because “there was no room for them in the inn”. As Benedict XVI wrote in his book “Jesus of Nazareth - The Infancy Narratives”, there is “. . . an inner parallel between this saying and the profoundly moving verse from St John’s prologue: ‘He came to his own home and his own people received him not.’ Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head’ (Matthew 8:20). He who was crucified outside the city (c.f. Hebrews 13:12) also came into the world outside of the city”.

“This should cause us to reflect,” Benedict continued, “as it points towards the reversal of values found in the figure of Jesus Christ and his message. From the moment of his birth, he belongs outside the realm of what is important and powerful in worldly terms. Yet it is this unimportant and powerless child that proves to be the truly powerful one on whom, ultimately, everything depends. . . .”

Later in his book, Benedict reflected upon Mary wrapping the child in swaddling cloths. “Without yielding to sentimentality, we may imagine with what great love Mary approached her hour and prepared for the birth of her child. Iconographic tradition has theologially interpreted the manger and swaddling cloths in terms of the theology of the Fathers. The child stiffly wrapped in bandages is seen as prefiguring the hour of his death: from the outset, he is the sacrificial victim. . . . The manger, then, was seen as a kind of altar.

“Augustine drew out the meaning of the manger using an idea that, at first, seems shocking, but on close examination contains a profound truth. The manger is the place where animals find their food. But now, lying in the manger, is he who called himself the true bread come down from heaven, the true nourishment that we need in order to be fully ourselves. This is the food that gives us true life, eternal life. Thus, the manger becomes a reference to the table of God, to which we are invited so as to receive the bread of God. From the poverty of Jesus’ birth emerges the miracle in which man’s redemption is mysteriously accomplished.”

Cribs also feature angels and shepherds. Benedict wrote that, “the angel of the Lord appears to the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shines around them. . . . As a sign, the angels had told the shepherds that they would find a child wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. This is an identifying sign - a description of what they would see. It is not a ‘sign’ in the sense that God’s glory would be rendered visible, so that one might say unequivocally: this is the true Lord of the world. Far from it. In this sense, the sign is also a non-sign. God’s poverty is his real sign. But for the shepherds, who had seen God’s glory shining in their fields, this is sign enough. They see inwardly. They see that the angels’ words [about the birth of a Saviour] are true. So, the shepherds return home with joy. They glorify God and praise him for what they have heard and seen.”

Wishing all our readers a happy and a holy Christmas season.

**NZ Catholic welcomes readers’ letters, although receipt of a letter does not guarantee publication. No correspondence will be entered into concerning publication.** Letters should be no longer than 220 words and should be topical, to the point, and include the writer’s address and phone number. *Ad hominem* attacks are not welcome. Emailed letters should be sent as part of the text message - not as an attachment - to editor@nzcatholic.org.nz and include the writer’s physical address. Pseudonyms are not accepted, except by special arrangement.

## The Habit



## Catholic Worker Movement

In the wake of the French Revolution, the triplet of “liberty, equality, fraternity” emerged as a motto. There’s lots to say about Dorothy Day, whose cause for sainthood continues to advance, but one of the most pertinent for Catholics in New York is that she lived in our world.

While she’s not quite our contemporary - she died in 1980 at age 83 - she’s a modern woman in every sense of the word, and she’s one to whom we can relate.

A New Yorker based for most of her life in the archdiocese - mainly Manhattan, Staten Island and the northern counties - she co-founded the Catholic Worker Movement to serve the poor, and fought for justice and peace in the world.

Many people still active in the Church and community knew her, and many more still follow the style of Catholic service, commitment, activism and prayer that she modelled during her life.

For the past six years, the guild championing her sainthood cause has delved deep into that life, interviewing people who knew and worked with her, including her granddaughter, biographers and scholars, and reviewing her published and unpublished writings to prepare a lengthy report known as a canonical inquiry to determine if she lived a life of “heroic virtue”.

The New York Archdiocese, as sponsor of the cause, marked the completion of the inquiry at the monthly young adults Mass in St Patrick’s Cathedral on December 8, with New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan as the main celebrant, and Day’s granddaughter, Martha Hennessy, a lector.

The report is to be sent to the Vatican Congregation for Saints’ Causes for consideration, along with numerous boxes of source materials and other relevant items, including a CD called “Time With Measure” by the Philadelphia-area band The Chairman Dances, which has performed for guests at Maryhouse, the Catholic Worker centre in Manhattan.

The album includes a song in honour of Day and her Catholic Worker co-founder, Peter Maurin, written by Eric Krewson, 35, who heads the band, and has said he was inspired by Day’s life.

That’s the kind of positive inspiration that



Dorothy Day is depicted in a stained-glass window at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in the Staten Island borough of New York (CNS photos)

saints are meant to provide, and we hope that those who attended the young adults Mass will have learned something about her and will have been inspired as well.

In her time, Day frequently stepped out of the mainstream to take on causes that were not always popular, and was arrested several times for anti-war and anti-nuclear protests.

A talented journalist who grew up in an era of limited opportunity for women, she forged her own path with her work, setting up Catholic Worker shelters and soup kitchens in the Great Depression, leading to a network of “houses of hospitality” as they’re known, in rundown areas around the world.

And through it all, she maintained her commitment to the Catholic Church, the Gospel, and a life of prayer.

If the canonical inquiry is accepted by the Congregation for Saints’ Causes and Pope Francis, who extolled her virtues before the US Congress during his 2015 visit to the United States, Day will be elevated from “Servant of God” to “Venerable” and become eligible for beatification and ultimately canonisation.

We hope and pray that day will come soon.

This editorial, titled “New Yorkers should support this cause” was published online on December 1 on the website of Catholic New York, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of New York. Some of the editorial has been updated to account for events that have happened since. (CNS)

Except for our own editorials, opinions expressed in NZ Catholic do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the newspaper or of its owner, the Bishop of Auckland, unless otherwise indicated.

# New Zealand Year in Review

A pictorial look back at some Catholic events of note for New Zealand during 2021

For the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand, 2021 was a year of contrasts. From the early appointment by Pope Francis of Archbishop Paul Martin, SM, as Coadjutor Archbishop of Wellington, through to the Covid-19-related lockdown as the Delta variant of the virus came to our shores, the life of the Church continued and, as the year draws to an end, everyone is adjusting to the “traffic light” system and the widespread use of My Vaccine Pass.

These photos represent some of the ways the Catholic community in this country celebrated, commemorated and acted in the name of the Gospel in 2021.



**JANUARY:** On January 1, Pope Francis appointed Archbishop Paul Martin, SM, as Coadjutor Archbishop of Wellington.



**FEBRUARY:** Candidates and catechumens continued their journey towards the sacraments at Easter in a Rite of Election at the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Hamilton. Many of this group had been scheduled to receive the sacraments the previous Easter, but this did not happen because of the Covid lockdown in 2020. So they resumed their preparation for Easter this year.



**MARCH:** Cardinal John Dew, accompanied by Lisa Beech from Wellington archdiocese, was among several Church leaders who met with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and some cabinet ministers, as well as departmental officials, on March 12 in Auckland, to discuss matters including Covid-19 vaccination, welfare and housing.



**APRIL:** On Easter Sunday, Filipinos in Aotearoa New Zealand celebrated the 500th anniversary of the celebration of the first Mass in the Philippines. At the Wellington celebration, attended by 700 people at Bishop Viard College in Porirua, some Filipinos re-enacted the arrival of the Spaniards 500 years ago. (Photo: Imagery Photography and Design Studio).



**MAY:** St Joseph's Maori Girls' College in Napier won the O'Shea Shield competition for the first time in 46 years. The O'Shea Shield involves Catholic secondary schools in Wellington archdiocese and Palmerston North Diocese, competing in areas like speech, oratory, religious questions, debate and Scripture reading.



**JUNE:** Tofilau Bernadette Pereira, MNZM, (third from left) is welcomed at a mihi whakatau at the Catholic Social Services – Te Kupenga o te Atawhaitanga site in Otara, Auckland, to her new role of Care of the Poor Advocate for Auckland diocese. The role involves mobilising, assisting, and creating the focus of feeding and nourishing those in need.



**JULY:** Auckland diocese general manager James van Schie (left) was joined by St Mary's College, Auckland principal Sarah Dwan (centre) at a charity midwinter New Zealand Ocean Swim Series on Waiheke Island, with the aim of raising funds to support St Patrick's Cathedral. Cathedral administrator Fr Chris Denham (right) supported their efforts. The fundraiser brought in more than \$8600.



**AUGUST:** A special artwork, “E Hata Maria, e ta matua wahine o te Atua (Holy Mary, Mother of God)” by Christchurch artist Damien Walker, was unveiled and blessed at St Mary of the Angels church in Wellington on August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption. The nation's Catholic bishops renewed the dedication of this country to Our Lady Assumed into Heaven, and the artwork was taken on a hiko through six dioceses. The Covid-19 lockdown meant some alternative arrangements had to be put in place for a few weeks.



**SEPTEMBER:** During the Covid-19 lockdown, Father Malu 'Otutaha (right) and some volunteers in Panguru, Northland, helped fill up some 400 boxes of food and supplies for struggling households in the north. The food was made available after an emergency appeal was set up by the Catholic Caring Foundation of Auckland diocese.



**OCTOBER:** Jesicka Goei (left) and Yun Wang at their wedding ceremony at St Patrick's Cathedral in Auckland, with Fr Tony King-Archer. Covid-19 level 3 lockdown restrictions in Auckland meant only 10 people could be at the wedding. (Photo: Emily Chalk Photographer [www.emilychalk.co.nz](http://www.emilychalk.co.nz))



**NOVEMBER:** As the level 3 lockdown carried on, St Patrick's parish in Pukekohe organised several “Park and Pray” sessions, at which people could adore the Blessed Sacrament from their cars in the parish carpark. The monstrance was placed near the sacristy window (Photo: Cheryl Surrey).



**DECEMBER:** Geraldine Slovak shows her vaccine pass to Phil Eves, one of three checkers at the 10am Sunday Mass (Blenheim) at Star of the Sea parish in Marlborough on December 5. This was the first weekend of Masses throughout the country under the ‘traffic light’ system (Photo: Cathie Bell)



## Papal Year in Review

# Pope Francis puts *Fratelli Tutti* into action

by CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — From a vaccination clinic in the atrium of the Vatican audience hall to a visit to the ancient Iraqi city of Ur, and later to a refugee camp in Lesbos, Greece, Pope Francis demonstrated throughout 2021 what he means by seeing all people as brothers or sisters.

Pope Francis issued his social encyclical, “Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship”, in October 2020, then proceeded to explain and apply it in 2021 in meetings with migrants and refugees, in hosting religious leaders making a plea to governments to act on climate change, and in setting out his vision for a synod process that listens to, and relies on, the prayers of all Catholics.

In March, with representatives of Muslim, Christian, Yazidi and other religious communities in Iraq, Pope Francis made a pilgrimage to Ur, an archaeological dig on a dusty desert plain about 15 km from modern-day Nasiriyah.

There, at the birthplace of the patriarch Abraham, the first person to believe in the one God and father of all, the Pope called all believers to demonstrate their faith by treating one another as the brothers and sisters they are.

“From this place, where faith was born, from the land of our father Abraham, let us affirm that God is merciful, and that the greatest blasphemy is to profane his name by hating our brothers and sisters,” the Pope said.

And meeting in Cyprus and in Greece with refugees and asylum-seekers, he called for individual action, national policies and international cooperation that would recognise each one of them as a member of the human family deserving of a helping hand.

“God loves us as his children; he wants us to be brothers and sisters,” the Pope said on December 5 in the camp on the shore of the Mediterranean on the Greek island of Lesbos. “He is offended when we despise the men and women created in his image, leaving them at the mercy of the waves, in the wash of indifference.”

### ■ Pandemic

As in 2020, Pope Francis’ activities throughout the year were modified or impacted by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the precautions needed to slow its spread, and advocacy for greater access to vaccines for everyone.

In a public service announcement in August, Pope Francis had said, “Being vaccinated with vaccines authorised by the competent authorities is an act of love. And contributing to ensure the majority of people are vaccinated is an act of love — love for oneself, love for one’s family and friends, love for all people.”

In January and February, Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI got their two doses of the Pfizer vaccine; they both received their booster shots in October.

First in the atrium of the audience hall, and later in the Charlemagne Wing under the colonnade in St Peter’s Square, the Vatican vaccinated, not only its residents and employees, but also the residents of Vatican-owned shelters for the homeless, and



Pope Francis meets migrants during his visit to the Mavrovouni camp for refugees and migrants on the island of Lesbos, Greece, on December 5 (CNS photos)

many of the people who regularly seek showers, barbers, doctors and food at the Vatican.

But a different health concern landed the Pope in Rome’s Gemelli hospital for 10 days in July for colon surgery. The Vatican said that the Pope scheduled his operation to treat “a symptomatic diverticular stenosis of the colon”.

He underwent a three-hour surgery that included a left hemicolectomy, which is the removal of the descending part of the colon, a surgery that can be recommended to treat diverticulitis, when bulging pouches in the lining of the intestine or colon become inflamed or infect Francis skipped during his recovery was a Mass on July 25 to mark the first World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. He had been released from the hospital on July 14.

But the pandemic restrictions played more havoc with the papal schedule, forcing either the postponement of big events or a limit on attendance. In 2021, Pope Francis celebrated no Masses for the canonisation of new saints, and he held no consistory to create new cardinals.

Even one of the largest celebrations of the year — a day of reflection on October 9 and a Mass on October 10 to launch the process leading to the assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 2023 — included many key people participating virtually because of pandemic travel restrictions.

### ■ Travel

Vaccinated, and often masked, Pope Francis did some travelling of his own, visiting Iraq in March, Hungary and Slovakia in September, and Cyprus and Greece in December, just two weeks before his 85th birthday on December 17.

He also hosted a visit by US President Joe Biden in late October. The Vatican, citing Covid-19 re-

strictions, did not allow reporters into the Apostolic Palace for the visit, so the public record of the meeting consisted of a brief official statement from the Vatican and ad-lib comments from the president.

The meeting was an unusually long 90 minutes, including 75 minutes of private talks between the Pope and president.

Officially climate change, the pandemic, migration, peace and human rights — including religious freedom — were the top topics.

Asked if abortion was one of the topics of his meeting with the Pope, Biden told reporters, “We just talked about the fact he was happy that I was a good Catholic, and I should keep receiving Communion”. The Vatican offered no comment on the president’s remarks.

Although Pope Francis issued no encyclicals or apostolic exhortations in 2021, he promulgated two documents that made headlines around the world: “Traditionis Custodes” (Guardians of the Tradition), restoring limits on the celebration of the pre-Vatican II Mass; and the revision of the Code of Canon Law’s “Book VI: Penal Sanctions in the Church”, particularly to incorporate changes made over the past 15 years to protect children, promote the investigation of allegations of clerical sexual abuse, and punish offenders.

The Pope also showed some special attention to his “sisters” in the Lord, amending canon law to allow both women and men to be installed formally in the ministries of lector and acolyte; naming Xavière Missionary Sister Nathalie Becquart as one of two undersecretaries of the Synod of Bishops; and appointing Sister Raffaella Petrini, a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist, to be the first female secretary-general of the office governing Vatican City State.



Above: Pope Francis talks with a religious leader during an interreligious meeting on the plain of Ur near Nasiriyah, Iraq, on March 6. Right: Pope Francis gives a rosary to a member of the medical staff at Gemelli hospital in Rome on July 11, as he recovered following colon surgery.



# Catholic support for Matariki as a public holiday

by ROWENA OREJANA

Three Catholic organisations have expressed support at a parliamentary select committee for the establishment of Matariki as a public holiday.

The Archdiocese of Wellington Commission for Ecology, Justice and Peace, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand and Challenge 2000 made submissions to the Māori Affairs Committee supporting the Te Pire mō te Hararei Tūmatanui o te Kāhui o Matariki/Te Kāhui o Matariki Public Holiday Bill.

The Catholic organisations recognised the importance of respecting the rights of cultures of indigenous peoples, as emphasised by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, and in Catholic social teaching.

Challenge 2000 said this public holiday would recognise “the mana of matauranga Māori” and “revitalise traditional practices”.

“We support Matariki becoming established as a public holiday. There is not a day that recognises solely the mana of matauranga Māori, and yet we acknowledge the Queen’s birthday. Matariki holds as much mana, and arguably more than other days acknowledged and respected as public holidays,” the group said in its submission.

The Archdiocese of Wellington EJP commission cited the Statement on Religious Diversity made by the Catholic Bishops in 2019 that called for education and public services to “recognise and accommodate diverse religious beliefs and practices”.

“We see providing a public holiday to celebrate Matariki as a natural extension of that principle,” the commission said.

“We recognise that Christian holy days have been among celebrations privileged to be recognised formally as public holidays. We wish to express our strong support that this recognition be given also to Matariki, as one step in a much



Te Huihui-o-Matariki (Wikimedia Commons)

longer journey of recognising the ‘rich and ancient heritage’ of this land, as Pope John Paul II expressed it on his visit here in 1986.”

The Catholic organisations also recognised the need for “collective rest and restoration” that a public holiday would bring, but they expressed concern about how economic pressures would affect low wage workers and young people.

“We have seen in recent decades in Aotearoa the gradual erosion of ‘public holidays’ being readily available to all workers, as shop trading hours have become among the most liberal in the world,” Caritas said in its submission.

“There can be both overt and unspoken pressure on some workers to work, especially low-paid workers and young people. We ask that the committee and Government consider additional measures to promote Matariki as a collective rest, and protect the rights of more vulnerable workers.”

The EJP Commission added that fewer New Zealanders are able to take time off during holidays.

“With retail and other support services operating now almost every day of the year, our experience is that the designation of ‘public holiday’ no longer guarantees that the most vulnerable are able to participate in communal time off, such as at Easter. This is especially the case for low-income workers and young people,” the commission stated.

It called on the committee to “consider ways to overcome other economic and social barriers that make it difficult for people to share in such celebrations”.

The three groups recognised the traditional Māori way of telling time is different from the Western Gregorian calendar, and suggested that both can be accepted and co-exist.

Challenge 2000 also raised concern about the description of Matariki and Pleiades.

“We have concerns at the description in Part 1, clause 3 of the Bill: Ko Matariki te ingoa

Māori o Pleiades/Matariki is the Māori name for Pleiades. We think this would be better expressed that Pleiades is the Greek name for Matariki. In Aotearoa, Matariki is and always has been the name of the constellation. Describing it as a translation of Pleiades takes away from the mana of Matariki,” the Wellington-based rangatahi development agency said.

According to the bill, for many Māori, the eastern pre-dawn appearance of Matariki in the winter sky, during the last quarter of the lunar month of Pipiri (June), marks the beginning of the Māori New Year (also known as te mātahi o te tau).

This bill sets the dates for the Matariki public holiday from 2022 to 2052, and provides for future dates for the Matariki public holiday.

## No Christmas Masses at St Patrick’s Cathedral this year

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The extension of the red Covid-19 protection framework setting in Auckland until late December has led to a decision that no Christmas Masses would be celebrated at St Patrick’s Cathedral this year.

In a December 14 notice on the St Patrick’s website, the Dean of the Cathedral, Fr Chris Denham, expressed his sorrow, and wrote that “the numbers make it impossible to schedule enough Masses at a limit of 100 people, and we have no desire to choose amongst people and decide who can and who cannot come to church at Christmas”.

At the red setting, gatherings, such as Masses, where a Vaccine Pass is used for entry, have a limit of 100 people in attendance.

“Although we cannot gather to celebrate Christmas together, let us remember that we can still rejoice in the coming of the Lord as families and friends, and look forward to gathering in the cathedral in the New Year,” Fr Denham wrote.

Weekday Masses, with a limit of 100, and with entry by My Vaccine Pass, have been celebrated on alternate days at the cathedral since December 13. The cathedral website (www.stpatricks.org.nz) should be checked for updated information.

Auckland goes into the less restrictive orange setting on December 30, and Sunday Masses will resume at the cathedral on January 2, the Solemnity of the Epiphany,

with a My Vaccine Pass required for entry.

As NZ Catholic was going to press, the New Year schedule for the cathedral website stated that there will be no vigil Mass celebrated on December 31 for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (January 1) because of “security concerns”.

Other cathedral or pro-cathedral parishes throughout the country have varying approaches to the provision of Christmas Masses with and without vaccine passes under the orange setting.

At the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Hamilton, and at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Palmerston North, entry to all Masses on Christmas Day will require proof of vaccination. Provision has been made for one (Palmerston North) or two (Hamilton) open entry Masses, with limited numbers (maximum 50) at a nearby church at Christmas. Check these cathedral websites for Mass times and any registration requirements.

At each of St Joseph’s Cathedral (Dunedin), St Teresa’s Pro-Cathedral (Wellington) and St Mary’s Pro-Cathedral (Christchurch), one open entry Christmas Mass with maximum number 50 is scheduled for December 24/25.

Check websites or with the parish concerned for Mass times and any registration requirements. All other Christmas Masses at this cathedral and these pro-cathedrals require proof of vaccination for entry.



Cathedral of St Patrick and St Joseph, Auckland, (Photo Wikimedia)

## Covid restrictions see annual Totara Point Mass cancelled

By NZ CATHOLIC staff

The annual Mass at Totara Point in the Hokianga to commemorate the first Mass celebrated on New Zealand soil by Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pompallier has been cancelled for 2022 because of Covid-19 restrictions.

The annual Mass usually takes place on the second Sunday in January.

But a notice on the Pompallier Hokianga Trust website stated that the celebration scheduled for January 9, 2022, has been cancelled, “due to Covid-19”.

“Wherever we are on this special day, may we remember with thanksgiving the sacrifices made by Bishop Pompallier and the early Marists, as they journeyed far from their homeland to proclaim the Good News. Kia

Kaha Tātou,” the website stated.

While the rest of the country is set to be at the orange “traffic light” setting from 11.59pm on December 30, Northland will remain at the more restrictive red setting. That will be reviewed by the cabinet on January 17.

The Pompallier Hokianga Trust website also stated that the practice of raising the coffin containing

Bishop Pompallier’s remains from beneath the altar at St Mary’s church in Motuti — which normally happens four times each year — has been suspended until the green traffic light setting is reached.

St Mary’s church is closed until the green setting is reached. When this does happen, groups can once again arrange to be met and guided at the church.

# Pope closes Year of St Joseph with marginalised young adults

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis closed the Year of St Joseph with a private visit to a community in Rome that helps people experiencing marginalisation, crisis or substance abuse.

“Do not be afraid of reality, of the truth, of our misery,” he told volunteers and the people they assist at the Good Samaritan home on December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. “Don’t be afraid because Jesus likes reality as it is, undisguised; the Lord does not like people who cover their soul, their

heart with makeup.”

The Good Samaritan fraternity or home is part of the worldwide “Comunità Cenacolo”, which was founded in 1983 by Italian Sister Elvira Petrozzi, to offer “God’s tenderness to the cry of desperation of so many young people who were lost, deceived and disappointed”, and had been seeking “the true meaning of life in the false light of the world”, according to the community’s mission statement.

Dozens of guests and members of the community welcomed the Pope, who listened to the experiences that

several of them shared, and watched a segment of a film on the life St Joseph, which was produced by young people living at two fraternities in Medjugorje.

Among those welcoming the Pope were the two children of Andrea and Antonia Giorgetti, who both recovered from drug dependencies and now run the Good Samaritan fraternity, reflecting the fact that a number of young people who find help at the fraternities go on to assist others.

The Pope encouraged all the residents to “have the courage to tell

others, ‘there is a better way’.”

Pope Francis also visited and blessed the fraternity’s new chapel, built by residents out of discarded wooden beams, travertine marble, and other materials reclaimed from dumpsters and landfills.

Building something new and wonderful out of things that have been thrown away “is a concrete example of what we do here,” Father Stefano Aragno told Vatican News.

The Pope led the prayer dedicated to St. Joseph, to conclude the special year with those present.

## Holy Land Christians need more protection, Christian leaders in Jerusalem warn

JERUSALEM (CNS) — Christian leaders in the Holy Land have asked for “an urgent dialogue” with Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian leaders, “to ensure that no citizen or institution has to live under threat of violence or intimidation”.

They also want to discuss creation of a special Christian cultural and heritage zone in Jerusalem’s Old City to preserve Christian sites.

“Since 2012, there have been countless incidents of physical and verbal assaults against priests and

other clergy, attacks on Christian churches, with holy sites regularly vandalised and desecrated, and ongoing intimidation of local Christians who simply seek to worship freely and go about their daily lives,” the leaders said on December 13. “These tactics are being used by such radical groups in a systematic attempt to drive the Christian community out of Jerusalem and other parts of the Holy Land.”

The patriarchs and heads of churches acknowledged the Israeli

government was committed to preserving the Christian community “as an integral part of the tapestry of the local community”.

“It is therefore a matter of grave concern when this national commitment is betrayed by the failure of local politicians, officials and law enforcement agencies to curb the activities of radical groups who regularly intimidate local Christians, assault priests and clergy, and desecrate Holy Sites and church properties,” their statement said.

They noted that the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem’s Old City already was protected in Israeli law, but “radical groups continue to acquire strategic property in the Christian Quarter, with the aim of diminishing the Christian presence, often using underhanded dealings and intimidation tactics to evict residents from their homes, dramatically decreasing the Christian presence, and further disrupting the historic pilgrim routes between Bethlehem and Jerusalem”.

## TOP SCHOLARS 2021

### Chanel College, Masterton



Dux  
Nicki Thomson Schulz



Proxime accessit  
Sunia Kohitolu

### Garin College, Nelson



Dux  
Kellyanne Urquhart

### Roncalli College, Timaru



Dux  
Emillea Tate



Proxime accessit  
Hannah Lysaght

### St Mary’s College, Auckland



Dux  
Cynthia Zhang



Joint Proxime accessit  
Jessica Squire and Stella Srzich

### Sacred Heart Girls’ College, Hamilton



Dux  
Isabelle Da Cunha Fernandez



Joint Proxime accessit  
Paige Taylor and Melissa Bowkett



### Liston College, Auckland



Dux  
Michael Kennedy



Proxime accessit  
Caleb Susabda

### St Bernard’s College, Lower Hutt



Dux  
Callum Coyne

### McAuley High School, Auckland



Dux  
Mahalia Salea



Proxime accessit  
Melissa Sieu

# A cancelled year to regret

by NEVIL GIBSON

The past Covid-19-affected year was possibly worse for the cinema than 2020. Hollywood studios began the slow release of big-budget productions, as northern hemisphere theatres reopened, but this was rudely interrupted by another New Zealand lockdown that lasted even longer in Auckland, and in Hamilton to a lesser degree.

The biggest victim was the New Zealand International Film Festival, whose organisers gambled on a postponement of several months, only to be hit by a full lockdown. With no plan B, such as the theatre/online hybrid of the previous year, some 30-or-so star attractions were denied to Auckland and Hamilton audiences. The festival went ahead in other centres, but audiences tumbled.

Whether that was due to pandemic fatigue, the retiming to later in the year, or other factors such as its branding, remain to be explained. But the loss of nearly \$1million could be fatal to a venture that has been largely self-funded for the past 50 years.

It certainly wasn't due to the lack of quality foreign films, which is the sole purpose of such festivals and, I suggest, a principle that any future festivals should continue to uphold against pressures to do otherwise.

The cancellations leave me with a top 10 list for 2021 that will differ from many others because of its absences.

In alphabetical order they are:  
*Fanny Lye Deliver'd*: A remarkable account of an English farmer's actions during the 17th century Interregnum, a time of religious and political upheaval.  
*The Father*: Anthony Hopkins



Anthony Hopkins in *The Father*

## Movie Review

at his best as he battles dementia in surroundings where other people and the furniture keep changing.

*First Cow*: Another remarkable historical period piece, set in the American Northwest, where ingenuity is valued more than anything else.

*The Forgotten Battle*: A Dutch World War II film that differs from most others because the story is told from both sides.

*The Green Knight*: A medieval tale is given the modern treatment with spectacular backdrops and strong casting.

*I Care a Lot*: an acerbic exposé of a rest home racket that sends all the right signals about honesty in business.

*The Mauritanian*: This puts faces and names on innocent parties caught up in the whirlwind that followed the 9/11

attacks.

*The Nest*: A business drama in which the family suffers as heavily from failure as the financial wheeler-dealer's career.

*Pig*: A quirky black comedy in which Nicolas Cage goes on the rampage to recover his truffle-hunting animal from a cartel of foodie gangsters.

*Stillwater*: Matt Damon drops his Jason Bourne alter-ego to take on the French judicial system to free his ungrateful daughter, while finding a new family.

*Footnote*: Many of the 30 significant movies from the international film festival will be screened at two independent Auckland cinemas in late January. A few, such as *The French Dispatch*, are going into general release, while Jane Campion's *The Power of the Dog* is already on Netflix.

# A deeply-moving collection of poetry

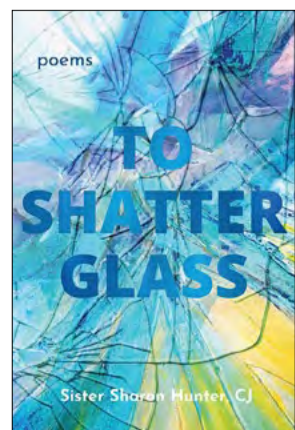
**TO SHATTER GLASS: Poems** by Sister Sharon Hunter, CJ, Paraclete Press (Brewster, Massachusetts, 2021). 97 pp., US \$24. Reviewed by EUGENE FISHER (CNS)

This collection of poems is a short book, but one well worth reading — and rereading. In it, Sister Sharon Hunter of the Community of Jesus delves into, and finds meaning, in her own life.

She searches into what it was like for her when she was a child to have an alcoholic, abusive father, the suffering she underwent, and how surviving helped her to become a better person, understanding the needs and woes of others.

Through learning how to heal herself, she learns how to help and heal others who have suffered and need serious help, both physical and spiritual, to get beyond the suffering and to become truly themselves.

And readers learn how to become able to help others. Such a network of helpers can become a community of grace and healing, which is what the community of people we call the Catholic Church should be and, at its best, is.



The beauty of the poems in this book is enhanced by the beauty of art, seven paintings by Sister Faith Riccio, who is, like Sister Sharon, a member of the religious Community of Jesus in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Sister Faith is also the author of the book, "Icons: The Essential Collection".

Different readers of

this book will focus on different poems, those which speak most deeply to their own experiences, whether painful, hopeful, joyous, or simply the reflection of their own everyday lives. If a small group of Catholics gathered to read this book and to dialogue over each poem, that community would learn how to articulate what is most meaningful to them as individuals and as a group.

The poems can also be read by a single person as a basis for meditation, spiritual reflection, and as a path to understanding the meaning of his or her own life experiences, whether painful or moments of self-understanding.

The verses can help readers to move forward to live their lives as they ought to be lived, with meaning and with a purpose in life to fulfil their own potential and to help others — family, friends or even strangers — to discover the meaning of their lives and become their own best selves.

The titles of the seven sections of this deeply-moving collection of poems will help the readers of this review to gain a sense of what will await them when they open its pages: "And So, I Begin"; "Orphans"; "Hardly an Oyster"; "Threads of Depression"; "A Complicated Grief"; "Judas in Waiting"; and "Shepherd of a Wayward Sheep".

It is perhaps not accidental that this book is organised by the number seven, the number of days of creation culminating in humanity created "in the image and likeness of God".

Following the path of this book, day by day, will help reflective readers to understand more deeply how they can fulfil their potential to be, for themselves and for others, an image and likeness of God within their community.

Eugene Fisher is a professor of theology at St Leo University in Florida.

## CLIPS

### Don't Look Up (Netflix)

American political satire ventures into the territory of apocalyptic science fiction as two astronomers discover a large comet that will end life on earth much faster than climate change. But the US President (Meryl Streep) and her White House adviser (Jonah Hill) aren't fazed, as the mid-term elections have greater priority. In addition, a high-tech tycoon (Mark Rylance) has a plan to capture the comet's rare earth minerals. The resemblance to Apple Computer's Tim Cook is unfair as the character is supposed to be a mashup of the much-different space-obsessed billionaires. Leonardo DiCaprio and Jennifer Lawrence look out of place as the scientists attempting to get their bad news through to those in power. However, Cate Blanchett is perfect as the cynical morning TV presenter who seizes the chance to further her career. Other big names in the over-stuffed cast include Timothée Chalamet as grungy skateboarder, pop singer Ariana Grande as herself, and Kiwi-born Melanie Lynskey as a frumpy, put-upon housewife with a heart of gold. Writer-director Adam McKay exposed the machinations of the financial world with *The Big Short* and the TV series *Succession*. But here his muddled messaging suggests end-of-the-world scenarios are already beyond parody. Rating: Mature audiences. 138 minutes.

### Tick, Tick ... Boom (Netflix)

The new generation of Broadway musicals is in good hands thanks to Lin-Manuel Miranda (*Hamilton*, *In the Heights*) and the subject of this biopic, Jonathan Larson. He died, aged 35, after one big hit, *Rent*, and Miranda is the director who brings that life to the screen. It's basically Larson's semi-biographical account of a composer struggling to create a big stage hit by the time he's 30. Andrew Garfield has the lead role, and Miranda stages the big cast numbers in a rehearsal-style presentation to a select audience. The tunes have a familiarity of well-enunciated musicals, in which the sung words move the story forward. This may account for the need to impress the late Stephen Sondheim, who is among those attending. Unlike *Rent*, this doesn't break any barriers, and won't please those who expect a strong behind-the-curtains drama. But it's ideal for toe-tapping fans. Rating: Mature audiences. 110 minutes.

### Best Sellers (Rialto)

When the founder of a New York book publishing business passes it on to his millennial daughter, she finds it struggling to compete. So she reaches out to a curmudgeonly author who hasn't finished a book since his first hit 50 years previously. The literary references in Anthony Grieco's script suggest the era of Mailer, Roth, Styron and Updike, but the action is mainly personal as the two lead characters, played respectively by Aubrey Plaza (*Safety Not Guaranteed*) and Michael Caine (age: 88), come to terms with each other. The nostalgic, feel-good story will appeal to older audiences, who may lament the decline in the book-reading, while holding out hope that good things will emerge from adversity. Rating: Mature audiences. 101 minutes.

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THE CHURCH YEAR

Advent

Christmas

Ordinary Time

Lent

Easter time

Ordinary Time

## The biblical view of family

Today's feast, with its special readings, reminds us that, as people of faith, we belong to a long, revealing story of God's presence among us.

The text from First Samuel introduces us to Hannah, and her simple trust that God will hear her heartfelt prayer for a son. And at that son's birth, Hannah acknowledges that he is a precious gift, so much so that she offers him back to the Lord to do whatever he wills with him. Thus, Samuel becomes a key player in the evolving story of God's plan, recorded throughout the Bible.

What we hear next in 1 John sets our sights on Jesus, the Son of God, who, in his earthly life, taught his followers to live according to the commandment of love. This biblical author is therefore directing us to be loyal children of God who have been initiated into a deep spiritual bond with the heavenly Father.

Everything about our lives is thus cast in the light of a lasting awareness of the divine presence

**December 26:** Holy Family. **Readings:** 1. 1 Samuel 1:20-22,24-28; **Psalm:** 128; 2. 1 John 3:1-2,21-24; **Gospel:** Luke 2:41-52.

that accompanies us.

For our enlightenment, Luke's Gospel story paints an interesting picture of the adolescent Jesus within the context of his relationship with Mary and Joseph. Seeing Jesus sitting among the teachers in the temple, instead of returning home to Nazareth with his parents, foreshadows his mission as God the Father's unique agent. And a bit later, after exchanging frank words — and perhaps somewhat surprisingly — Jesus obediently accompanies his parents to Nazareth to mature in their care.

Through these readings, it is the biblical view of family, and God's part in the well-being of family members, that leaps from the pages of Scripture. This Holy Family image is one that we need to take to heart in order to live the kind of life God wills us to lead.

## A distinctive focus

For this Sunday and its feast, the biblical texts have a really distinctive focus. And that helps us better picture the initial phase of Jesus' mission and ministry.

First of all, Isaiah voices words of comfort and consolation for Israel at a difficult time in their history. For him, this is his vocation, to proclaim a smooth path ahead. His view of the future is heartening, because in it the Lord God will make his presence a refreshing experience for his people. In saying these things, Isaiah wants to highlight the good news that is being announced afresh. Through Isaiah, God therefore assures Israel that he will take care of them and guide them into a new era.

The reading from Titus declares that the saving work of Jesus Christ stands at the centre of all that we profess. And it is because of such wondrous action that we should not hesitate to give the glory to Jesus as our saviour.

The manner of these words from Titus therefore makes it clear that

**January 9:** Baptism of the Lord. **Readings:** 1. Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11; **Psalm:** 29; 2. Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7; **Gospel:** Luke 3:15-16, 21-22.

we are called to do two things. We are to honour both the merciful hand of God at work in the Church, and the work of the Holy Spirit that enlivens and empowers that Church.

The brevity of Luke's version of Jesus' baptism by John takes the focus off the Baptist's actions, and instead emphasises what happens afterwards. For that is when the Holy Spirit appears, and God's voice affirms who Jesus is and what great things lie ahead. Jesus' mission and ministry are therefore given a public and official stamp of approval.

With readings like these, today's celebration takes on a different kind of emphasis. For Luke, the beginning of Jesus' saving work plainly brings to fulfilment what the other two biblical authors proposed.

## Scripture

by Fr Kevin Waldie sm

## The essence of celebration

This feast's word of the day is "epiphany", a word that comes from the ancient Greek language. It indicates the act of showing or revealing something. The function of these readings, therefore, aids a deeper understanding of why the birth of Jesus is such an important event.

Starting with Isaiah makes us think about the nature of his words. Their key image is the great light that will envelop all the earth and dispel the darkness that has held it captive.

This is a hopeful, uplifting message of future gladness. Its forward-looking outlook prepares us to welcome the most precious gift that the Lord can offer to all peoples on earth. So, Isaiah's line of thought here opens up the prospect of that looming historical moment when all will be revealed.

The verses taken from Ephesians add to that sense of the dawning of a new era. For this Pauline text speaks of the mystery that came to be fully revealed in the person of Christ Jesus, along with the Gospel

**January 2:** Epiphany. **Readings:** 1. Isaiah 60:1-6; **Psalm:** 72; 2. Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6; **Gospel:** Matthew 2:1-12.

he preached and enacted. Of great significance here is what is to be revealed. It is something for all humankind, both Jews and Gentiles, to ponder and recognise as a unique gift of spiritual insight.

Matthew's unique narrative recounting the visit of the foreigners from the East, that is the Magi, adds further significance to the Christ-child's birth. Providentially guided by the light of a bright star, their arrival in Bethlehem and then swift departure, herald the importance of their visit. The precious gifts they offered the child Jesus highlight this birth's universal significance.

These readings appropriately signal the essence of this festal celebration. As privileged members of the faith community, we rightly accept the joyful call to proclaim this message of Good News.

## Communion of believers

After a series of Sunday feasts, we now return to a more ordinary sequence of Sunday observance. And so these Scripture passages centre us on our everyday faith world.

Isaiah's message is one of hope and joy-filled expectation. At the heart of his prophetic words is great trust in the power of God to restore his people to happier times. And so what he proclaims in these verses is a promise that Israel will be given a new form of life. Much rejoicing and a renewed understanding of all that truly binds God's people together will visibly confirm the reality of the promise.

That vibrant sense of community is also evident in the almost hymnic words Paul addresses to the Corinthians. His use of repetition drives home the point that all, with their individual gifts, contribute to the well-being of the Church's life. That variety in unity, especially under the power of the Holy Spirit, is a genuine sign of God's plan at work among his people. And we today rightly participate in that vision

**January 16:** Second Sunday of Ordinary Time. **Readings:** 1. Isaiah 62:1-5; **Psalm:** 96; 2. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; **Gospel:** John 2:1-11.

through communion of life and our giftedness made visible to the world around us.

Found only in John's Gospel, the Wedding Feast of Cana event speaks to a similar expression of joyous communion. And, in addition, it proclaims the superabundant grace that the Lord Jesus bestows on the family of the Church. Every character present in this Gospel episode demonstrates what it means to play a personal part in gathering and rejoicing together, whatever the occasion may be.

Interestingly, each of today's biblical authors orients our thoughts in a certain direction. Fundamentally, then, each one leads us to contemplate what it is that makes us a communion of gifted believers who have received much, and are sent forth to share that richness with the community at large.

## An invitation to be caught up in the power of God's Word

Today the Word of God's power is foremost in the minds of Nehemiah, Paul and Luke. So, from each biblical author, we learn how to appreciate what is revealed through them.

For Nehemiah, reading from the book of the law is a most sacred act. When Ezra steps up to read from the hallowed text, he does so with great reverence for the Holy Scriptures. Nehemiah makes it very clear that the Word of God is to be received with an open mind. And it is to be understood in a way that profoundly

**January 23:** Third Sunday of Ordinary Time. **Readings:** 1. Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10; **Psalm:** 19; 2. 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; **Gospel:** Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21.

affects our care for one another, filling us with a joyful delight sourced directly from God.

In a similar fashion to last week in First Corinthians, this Sunday's passage focuses on the idea of the one and the many working together to

create a community of faith. However, it is Paul's aim today to consider in detail various parts of the body. By dwelling on the precise nature of each and every part of the human body, he draws a parallel with the Church whose many members are working for a common good. In that way, Paul drives home a simple but profound message.

Luke's purpose for writing is made very clear in the first four verses of today's Gospel text. Then Jesus' appearance in the Nazareth

synagogue follows. This is where he reads an important, revered text from Isaiah. His final words, however, reveal what Luke's Gospel will aim to do chapter after chapter. Thus, we note the overarching import of "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." As a result, Jesus is truly the narrative's supreme focus.

In summary, these biblical texts are an invitation to be caught up in the power of God's Word, while being joyous in showing reverence for it.

Family Matters

Helen Luxford



# The pandemic as seen by the future generation

**L**ockdown has had a profound effect on so many of us. While it's easy for us as adults to understand the impact this has had on our lives, it's really important to remember what this is doing to the future generations.

This has been an event without precedence; previously comparable pandemics happened in times when there wasn't as much travel and global interaction. As against those times, communication today is so instant and global and completely unfiltered. To get a different perspective, I'm sharing the view of the last two years from my 12-year-old son, who has gone through nearly half of his last year of middle-school in lockdown, and his entire middle-school experience has been cast in the shadow of the pandemic.

"When the pandemic started, I was sort of scared, because it was spreading fast and killing people all around the globe. Then when it got to New Zealand it threatened to spread like wildfire until we went into lockdown and then got rid of it so then we went back to school. Covid continued trying to come back and spread more, but we fended it off. Everything seemed to be going well, and life had really introduced a problem and we all had to get used to wearing masks to help protect us. It wasn't really that restricted when we weren't in lockdown, but then these lockdowns kept popping up and they would muck

everything up, annoying everyone and stressing everyone out.

"The news would make me worry that unemployment would be a huge issue, because companies would shut down due to bankruptcy and leave people jobless and sometimes even homeless because they couldn't pay their rent. It seemed like people were running out of money and the Government would go broke from spending so much keeping the country alive and running.

"Then, in July-August this year in Auckland, we had the longest lockdown and the worst. It lasted until December. For me, online learning was challenging because our teacher would give us even more homework, and the lesson was mainly spent listening to them talk for 45 mins to 1 hour. They would say that we couldn't do the work during the meeting, we had to do it during our own time. We also missed out on going to our school camp, which was a real disappointment. In some ways I felt like we had more work to do than normal.

"Eventually, when lockdown was finally over, I was ecstatic, and got to go back to school for two weeks. School was different — we were restricted as to where we could go, and we didn't move classes anymore. We did our work with iPads and masks on. We had two weeks of assessments rather than exams. Once we changed to the 'traffic light system',

we were able to do some special end-of-year events: we went to Long Bay for a picnic, then got to see a movie as a class, and finally went to Jump, a trampoline park, for fun. The last day of school was so much fun, it was really great. I was even able to celebrate the end of middle-school with my friends; being able to have a special gathering with them on the first day of the holidays.

"Overall, while it's made life strange, the pandemic has really changed my mindset for the better, reminding me how precious life and freedom are, and to make the most of what we have."

At this stage we don't really know what 2022 will bring. Will it bring stability and more 'normality'? We have been told there will be no more lockdowns — are we sure, can we be confident that this is the case? Will we be able to move freely around our own country? So many questions. So many prayers are needed to help get us through this next phase. We are praying for a more settled 2022.

2 Corinthians 3:17; "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

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.

## CAPTION CONTEST



Caption Contest is taking a break until the first issue in January, 2022. Thank you to all our participants over 2021. We've received some fabulous entries!

The winner of the Caption Contest from issue 626 (left) was **Michael Pui, Hurunui.**

Despite the Lockdowns, there is knight life in the supermarket.

Some other suggestions were:

- "This should be big enough to put salad in." — **John Lewis, Hamilton.**
- "Arthur felt it was important to take all necessary means to protect the last bottle of mayonnaise." — **Martin Kane, Pleasant Point.**
- "Tinman's crusade against Covid." — **Elias Martis, Auckland.**
- "Be very afraid, Covid — for lo, the conquering hero comes!" — **Sr Mary Scanlon, Christchurch.**
- "Look, I am crusading to help those who are worse off than me." — **Russell Watt, Remeura.**

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## EVENTS

### AUCKLAND DIOCESE

**NEW DATES: Triple Centenary**, Feb. 25-27, 2022. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School and the Sisters of Mercy, Epsom, Auckland will be celebrating their centenary. To celebrate our legacy and share in our successes, we invite our parishioners, students, teachers and alumni to attend one or all of the events planned to mark our 100th birthday. Please check our parish website for details on how to register: [epsomcatholic.org.nz](http://epsomcatholic.org.nz)

**RUAKAKA:** The Ruakaka Holy Family Catholic Community celebrates the 30th anniversary of the dedication of our new Church by Bishop Browne in Peter Snell Rd, Ruakaka on **Sunday the 13th February 2022.** We have changed the format to a family bring-your-own picnic, instead of the shared luncheon, with a sausage sizzle provided and entertainment for young and old. For further information, please contact Ray Timmins: 02102788867, email: [raydale.timmins@xtra.co.nz](mailto:raydale.timmins@xtra.co.nz) or Monica Johnson: 021382401, email: [monica.johnson01@gmail.com](mailto:monica.johnson01@gmail.com)

### TE AWAMUTU

**St Patrick's Catholic School, Te Awamutu Centenary** This event has sadly been postponed until 2022. For more information and registration details visit [www.stpatta.co.nz](http://www.stpatta.co.nz)

## SAINTED GLASS



After celebrating the birth of Jesus, I look forward to the Epiphany on January 2. Matthew tells of three wise men — Isaiah called them kings — who followed a star to Bethlehem. This colourful window in First Presbyterian Church, Invercargill, shows the three men following the star, and it fills me with wonder. Who were they? Where did they come from? Where did they get their faith? They are a sign that Jesus came for all people. Then they looked on Jesus with awesome wonder, just as we should — because he came for you and me. — **Glen McCullough**

# Hearts Aflame snuffed out by Covid

by ROWENA OREJANA

Hearts Aflame 2022 has been cancelled as organisers grapple with how to follow the Covid-19 Protection Framework (traffic light) protocols, and still keep the culture that defines the Catholic summer school.

Hearts Aflame Planning Team director Jemma Brunton released a video and a written statement explaining how they arrived at their heart-breaking decision.

"We've sought a lot of advice over recent weeks. We've prayed and we've discerned, and we have taken the Government guidance into account, whilst also reflecting upon what makes Hearts Hearts," she said.

Ms Brunton said that members of the team agreed they could not proceed under the current traffic light system without excluding some of the registered participants.

"During this time, you'll probably know people who have been excluded from workplaces, cafes, restaurants, family functions and maybe even Christmas. As a Catholic organisation [and] a Catholic team, we do not want to add further to the pain and exclusion people are already feeling for a choice they feel they have made in good conscience," she explained.

Ms Brunton said that they are following the guidelines issued by the bishops who "encouraged parishes to ensure that they don't exclude people from the sacraments, and particularly Mass, and where possible to limit division".



Jemma Brunton

She said that, when the decision was made, under the Covid protocols, the Hearts Aflame 2022 venue of Marton was at the red setting, with no certainty about future settings. (The Government subsequently announced the Whanganui region would move into orange on December 30.)

"A lot of people are also discussing the fact that, with the Auckland border opening, it will take probably a week or two after that for [case] numbers to start increasing significantly around the country, and it would no doubt have an impact on Hearts," she added.

Ms Brunton said that they have tried to hold off for as long as they can before making the inevitable decision. She said that all registered participants will be refunded, adding that it may take a few weeks to

get this sorted.

"If you haven't had a refund from us by the end of December please get in touch via Hearts Aflame Catholic Summer School [www.heartsaflame.org.nz](http://www.heartsaflame.org.nz) email [info@heartsaflame.org.nz](mailto:info@heartsaflame.org.nz)"

If you would like to leave your deposit or registration with us as a donation, please let us know via email to [info@heartsaflame.org.nz](mailto:info@heartsaflame.org.nz)," she said.

She also promised that 2022 registered participants "will get offered places first for next year before we open up general registrations".

Ms Brunton said that they have decided against holding a "virtual" Hearts Aflame as they feel there are already a lot of virtual conferences with good speakers around.

"The length and residential community experience is a really important aspect of Hearts Aflame, and we can't achieve that in a purely virtual experience, so our prayer for you is that you use this year to have a restful summer holiday and build up a thirst for Hearts Aflame 2023," she said, adding that the 2023 School, while not being the 30th consecutive year, "will still be the Hearts Aflame 30th Anniversary".

Ms Brunton acknowledged the speakers, and thanked the members of the planning team for the effort they have put into the 2022 summer school.

"Every single one of them kept planning and praying about how we could proceed. That to me is a remarkable testament to the commitment of every single person on the team," she said.

## WIT'S END

Some of these witticisms might be found in the more select Christmas crackers this year....

**The heftiest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.**

I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.

**She was only a whiskey maker, but he loved her still.**

A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.

**No matter how much you push the envelope, it will still be stationery.**

A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.

**Two silk worms had a race. They ended in a tie.**

**In the January 30 issue: Church responds to royal commission redress report**

## Sharing the hope of Christmas with Christian Refugees



In the face of suffering and persecution, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, the numbers of refugees, especially Christian refugees, has spiked.

For close to 75 years the support of Christian refugees has been a major pillar of the work of *Aid to the Church in Need* (ACN). These are our brothers and sisters in faith, born in the same baptism, but unable to live their faith and life freely. **ACN is supporting displaced Catholic families by attending to basic needs such as food and medicine, but these families also hunger for the healing power of the sacraments and the pastoral support of the Church.**

As such, the help we provide is not only material. Our support of priests, sisters, catechists, and **all those working to build up the faith offers true consolation and hope to those in desperate need.** From vehicles for priests and religious to offer pastoral care, to the provision of faith resources, to faith via radio to gifts for children this Christmas. These projects and many like them aim to reach Christian

refugees, so that in this season of waiting for the Christ Child, they too may receive the gift of hope and consolation.

**Can you give a Christmas gift to Christian refugees?**



Aid to the Church in Need

ACN NEW ZEALAND  
Administered by ACN Australia

*Aid to the Church in Need* is the only international Catholic charity dedicated to the spiritual and pastoral support of suffering Christians. Each year ACN supports some 5000 projects, helping to keep the faith alive where it is at greatest risk.



To donate scan the QR code, visit [www.aidtochurch.org/advent21](http://www.aidtochurch.org/advent21) or return the coupon

**Yes, I want to give a Christmas gift to Christian refugees.**

Please accept my offering of \$

*Note: Donations are processed at the AUD rate*

Make my gift monthly (*Deducted the 15th of every month. Can be adjusted anytime*)

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to *Aid to the Church in Need* OR debit my Visa / Mastercard:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Expiry date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

My personal details: (BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE)

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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Send the completed form to **Aid to the Church in Need** PO Box 90445 Auckland 1142