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On the front cover: “E Hāta Maria, e ta matua wahine o te Atua (Holy Mary, Mother of God)” by Damien Walker was unveiled and blessed at St Mary of the Angels church, Wellington, on August 15 (Photo: Catholic Discovery NZ)

NZCatholic

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Cardinal John Dew prays before the artwork

Nationwide hīkoi underway for new artwork honouring Mary

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

A special artwork to honour Mary was unveiled and blessed at a Mass at St Mary of the Angels church in Wellington on August 15.

After a welcome involving Māori, the artwork was processed into the church before the Mass, during which the dedications of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Church's mission in this country to Mary, Assumed into Heaven, were renewed.

In commissioning the artwork, the bishops wanted a depiction of Mary that connects her to Aotearoa New Zealand. The artwork is to be called “E Hāta Maria, e ta matua wahine o te Atua (Holy Mary, Mother of God)”.

According to commentary on the Te Ara a Maria website, the artwork, by Christchurch-based artist Damien Walker, “challenges us to see her as a woman of incredible strength and the place she holds in our hearts

and our community today”.

“The artwork aims to respect our different cultures and backgrounds. The painting captures details which are unique to our country and Catholic identity. It asks us to celebrate the things we share in our community and to learn more about our different worlds.”

The statement on the website also noted that Mr Walker's goal was to create a vision of Madonna and Child, with an emphasis on kotahitanga (unity). He collaborated with Anthony Te Keopa to grow his knowledge of Te Ao Māori, and to ensure he was connecting with authentic voices to help steer the project.

For Mr Walker, “the painting depicts Mary as a symbol of unity in her universal motherhood, uniting Heaven and Earth in her son, Jesus, the son of God”.

“She reflects the unity of the Church, which reaches to the ends of the earth, stretching not only across the oceans but across the centuries as well.

The work has a distinctly New Zealand depiction of Mary, emphasising also the unity of the tangata whenua with all the other peoples who have come to live alongside them in the partnership of bi-culturalism; called to live the same faith and baptism, each in their unique way.”

The artwork has now started its travel around the country visiting each of the six dioceses, as part of Te Hīkoi Wairua mo Te Ara a Maria

The first event was reportedly at Invercargill with a welcome on August 17 at Te Tomairangi Marae. The artwork is scheduled to travel throughout Dunedin diocese until September 11, when it will arrive in Christchurch diocese at Timaru.

At the conclusion of the tour the artwork will be permanently housed in a future shrine at St Mary of the Angels church in Wellington.

For more information, visit www.tearamaria.nz

Rome seeks more info about Aubert miracle

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The Vatican has sought clarification concerning some medical points that were in a final submission made in support of the cause for beatification of Venerable Suzanne Aubert.

In an August 10 e-newsletter from the Sisters of Compassion giving an update on the progress of the cause, it was stated that “we continue to trust God that the Vatican will soon recognise the alleged healing miracle granted a Christchurch woman through the intercession of Venerable Suzanne Aubert/Meri Hōhepa”.

“Recently the [Congregation] for the Causes of Saints in Rome was again in touch seeking clar-

ification of some medical points in the final submission that was made in support of her cause.

“We were fortunate that, with the assistance of a prominent Professor of Neurology in Auckland, we were able to provide the requested information, which is now with senior medical advisors to the Vatican.

“We are all continuing to pray that these final questions have now be satisfactorily answered, and that very soon the alleged healing miracle will be accepted. Please continue to pray for the beatification of Suzanne Aubert/Meri Hōhepa.”

Venerable Suzanne Aubert founded the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion in 1892.



Venerable Suzanne Aubert

NZ rededicated to ‘Mary Assumed into Heaven’

by MICHAEL OTTO

The Catholic bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand have renewed this country’s dedication to Mary, Mother of God, Assumed into Heaven.

The renewal of this dedication, and of the dedication of the mission of the Church in this country, took place during a Mass celebrated at St Mary of the Angels church in Wellington on August 15.

During the times of Covid-19 in this country last year, the New Zealand bishops received requests to make such a dedication to Our Lady, and they decided to renew the dedications made by Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pompallier in 1838.

The Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa, joined Cardinal John Dew, Coadjutor Archbishop of Wellington Archbishop Paul Martin, Hamilton Bishop Stephen Lowe, Dunedin Bishop Michael Dooley and Auckland Auxiliary Bishop Michael Gielen in celebrating the Mass in Wellington.

In his homily, Cardinal Dew said that, in letters received by the bishops during last year’s lockdown, there were many suggested titles of Our Lady under which the country could be dedicated.

“And there were suggestions that, if the country had been dedicated to her, that the pandemic wouldn’t have even occurred,” the Cardinal said.

“We know that Mary is not a magician. But that is how today’s renewal of the dedication came about — under the title of Mary Assumed into Heaven.”

Cardinal Dew stressed that the Assumption is a day of hope for all of humanity.

It highlights “the unbelievable dignity of our human bodies”.

Mary as “the first disciple”, was “the first to be welcomed body and soul, assumed into heaven”.

Referring to Catholic belief in the Resurrection of the Body and the life everlasting, Cardinal Dew said: “We are created to be with God, and when we live our lives with that intention, we come to know something of the presence of God in our lives as Mary did.”



Outside St Mary of the Angels church (from left) Cardinal John Dew, Bishop Michael Gielen, Bishop Michael Dooley, Archbishop Paul Martin, Bishop Stephen Lowe, Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa (Photos: NZCBC)

“So the Assumption is about each of us — it is about our future.”

The cardinal noted that people’s prayer that day is not only that Aotearoa New Zealand will be protected, but “we pray that people all over the world will be protected, particularly at this time, from the coronavirus”.

“It would be selfish of us to think only of Aotearoa. During this pandemic we pray for everyone’s safety. We pray that everyone will have the wisdom to keep themselves safe, and therefore keep others safe.”

Cardinal Dew added: “And as we think of the sad situations in the world today, and even, I

suppose in a particular way, the sad situations that many women in the world face, we know that we are called to live in hope, and hold out hope to others.

“Think today of the women overwhelmed by the weight of life and the drama of violence, women who are slaves to arrogance, the arrogance of the powerful. Girls forced into inhumane work in different parts of the world, women forced to surrender in body and spirit to the greed of men.

“Our prayer today is for a life of peace, justice and love to reach those women especially, in expectation of the day when finally they will feel gripped by hands that don’t intimidate them, but hands that lead them into the tender presence of God.

“So Mary helps us, particularly to think of women who suffer greatly — we ask the Lord to lead them by the hand on the way of life, freeing them from slavery and giving them hope. We pray that for everyone.”

He concluded his homily by saying that, “when we strive to live and love by his Word as Mary did, we know that we will have inner peace, and we will share that peace of God with others”.

During the Mass at St Mary of the Angels, an artwork specially commissioned to honour Mary was unveiled and blessed.

The artwork will tour New Zealand as part of Te Hiko Wairua mo Te Ara a Maria, before being permanently housed at St Mary of the Angels church which will become a National Shrine, with a dedication on August 15, 2022.

Other liturgical features at the August 15 Mass were a Samoan ifoga ceremony at the penitential rite, a sprinkling of the congregation with water, as well as a sprinkling of water for the land outside the church, and the Sign of Peace given in New Zealand Sign Language.

Every Catholic parish throughout the country also celebrated the rededication during their regular Sunday Masses.



Cardinal Dew blesses the nation from outside St Mary of the Angels church

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Truths and legends about Mary's Assumption

by MICHAEL OTTO

What did Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pompallier understand when, in 1838, he dedicated his mission in Aotearoa New Zealand to "the Most Holy Virgin under the name of the Assumption"?

That was the question posed by Te Kūpenga Catholic Theological College lecturer Fr Merv Duffy, SM, at a talk at Our Lady, Star of the Sea church in Howick on the evening of August 15.

Bishop Pompallier also consecrated the whole Vicariate of Western Oceania to Mary under the title of the Immaculate Conception, Fr Duffy added.

"Marian dogmas were a hot topic in the Church at that stage of history," the Marist priest said.

Sixteen years after these actions of Bishop Pompallier's, Pope Pius IX would declare that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore is to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful. And in 1950, Pope Pius XII defined the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in his Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*.

"So, Bishop Pompallier was good at backing titles that were to subsequently make it as infallibly defined dogmas of the Church," Fr Duffy said.

But what did he understand by "the Most Holy Virgin under the name of the Assumption"? What does the title mean?

Fr Duffy mentioned Mary in the Scriptures, where she is the Mother of Jesus, and is written about at places such as Bethlehem, Nazareth, Cana and Calvary. From the Scriptures, Christians also know that John took her from the foot of the cross into his house, and that she was one of those praying in the Upper Room at Pentecost.

"We then step from the firm foundation of Scripture into the wilds of Christian legend," Fr Duffy said.

According to legend, John went to Ephesus, in modern-day Turkey, and Mary lived out her life there. Other traditions say she stayed in Jerusalem.

"It is the end of her life that particularly features in legend and there is dispute as to whether she actually dies — her passing is called either a *dormition*, a falling asleep, or a *transitus* — a passing to heaven."



Fr Merv Duffy, SM, at Our Lady, Star of the Sea church

Fr Duffy then shared an example of a Christian legend on this topic — a fifth century sermon, attributed (wrongly) to Melito, bishop of Sardis. But this sermon still gives "a wondrous account", Fr Duffy said.

According to this story, Mary's Assumption happened one year after Jesus ascended into heaven. And, in this legend, Mary did die and was raised and then assumed into heaven.

In the legend, when Mary was at prayer — and before she died — she was greeted by an angel who delivered a palm branch from paradise, which was to be carried before her bier after her death.

Then the apostles were snatched up by the command of God from wherever they were preaching throughout the world, and were set down in front of the house where Mary lived.

"They and Mary spend the next three days in

praise of God," Fr Duffy said. Then, the legend stated, "Mary, reclined upon her couch, and giving thanks to God, gave up the ghost".

The legend went on to say that the Lord told St Peter to take Mary's body to a new tomb, towards the east, and wait for the Lord. Mary's soul was delivered by the Lord to St Michael the Archangel.

"There's more dramas," Fr Duffy said, "as they take the body — soldiers try to stop them. One of them tries to grab the casket and his hand falls off; it doesn't pay to muck with the Blessed Virgin!"

At the due time, the Lord orders St Michael to bring the soul of Mary, and the archangel rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb and the Lord said: "Arise, my beloved and my nearest relation . . ."

So Mary rose from the tomb, and blessed the Lord, and falling forward at the feet of the Lord, adored him, the legend stated.

"There are variations on this legend," Fr Duffy said, "including St Thomas missing out, and refusing to believe it — Thomas was a slow learner."

"Subsequently a girdle from Mary's burial train dropped down and was caught by Thomas. And there are three cathedrals that have parts of this girdle . . . that shows it's true," Fr Duffy said, wryly.

"Studying the legends of the passing of the Blessed Virgin makes me realise how restrained the Pope was in his [1950] pronouncement.

"We proclaim and define it to be a dogma revealed by God that the immaculate Mother of God, Mary ever virgin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven." Pius XII, 1950.

Fr Duffy noted that Pope Pius left open exactly how Mary's life finished.

"Cardinal Newman, who is now a saint," Fr Duffy said, "wrote on the motives for believing in the Assumption. And I thought his best line was this:

"One reason for believing in our Lady's Assumption is that her Divine Son loved her too much to let her body remain in the grave." (St John Henry Cardinal Newman).

Fr Duffy's talk came after Benediction at Our Lady, Star of the Sea church. Many of those present enjoyed supper afterwards.

A national feast day full of hope

Excerpts from an article by the late Bishop John Mackey on the Assumption

The bishops of New Zealand have made the feast of Our Lady of the Assumption the patronal feast of New Zealand. To me, this dedication is a sign of the vibrant hope in which the hierarchy faces our future. And hope is, I think, an appropriate virtue for a country as young as ours.

It was almost an accident of history that we became an English colony rather than a French one. For the first hundred years of our history, it was presumed that we would be a mirror image of the British Isles. It was only World War II and the decline of empires that forced upon us the reality that we are the tail of Asia. Our future is an uncertain one politically and even nationally. Roman Britain probably never imagined that it would become Anglo-Saxon.

So, with so uncertain a future before us, hope is an appropriate virtue. And why is the Assumption of Our Lady a feast redolent with hope, not only for the Church, but also for all of humanity? It is such because it is the fullest expression of Christianity's hope that God will be faithful to his promises, as these have been expressed in the Sacred Scriptures. The Assumption of Mary is, as it were, the dotting of the "i's" and the crossing of the "t's" in our understanding of the paschal mystery of Jesus, the Son of Mary.

Generalisations are not very inspiring or confidence-building. They are like the manifestos of political parties. What gives us confidence is the concrete fulfilment of a promise. Under divine providence the Church is, as it were, the generalisation of a policy, and the Assumption of Our Lady is the concrete fulfilment of that promise. In effect, the Church witnesses to the policy "God wants everyone to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4), and

the Assumption of Our Lady, body and soul, into heaven is the concrete example of how the policy will be worked out.

We live in the reality of our family relationships. These relationships not only bring us into being, but they also situate our persons in the living matrix of life in which we come to learn who we are and how to love, and so to fulfil our own potential for goodness. Since this is our environment, the heavenly Father gave us a parallel set of relationships for our supernatural life. In those relationships, which are rooted in Jesus and fleshed out in Mary and the Church, we learn to become and to behave as children of Mary, brothers and sisters of Jesus and children of God. The perfection of that reality we will discover in heaven. This is the hope we live by.

The life, death and Resurrection and ascension of Jesus is, of course, the only foundation upon which that hope exists. However, the Church's teachings on Mary are, as it were, grace notes on that reality of Jesus Christ. And so, in her, we see the fulfilment of the divine promises in a creature just like us. And so we can hope that, in due proportion, the divine promises will find their fulfilment in us too.

So, as we face the uncertainty of the future in this small country of ours, it is not inappropriate that the hierarchy should apportion us a national feast day so full of hope. If we persevere in the faith, which was Mary's, then we too can look with confidence to our future in the certainty that "We know that, in everything God works for good with those who love him" (Romans 8:28).

Bishop John Mackey was Bishop of Auckland from 1974 until 1983. He died in 2014.

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Māori Catholic history well worth knowing

by ROWENA OREJANA

The history of the Catholic Church in New Zealand, particularly that of Māori Catholics, is something that seems to be left out many times when people discuss this country's history. A project is underway to correct this oversight.

A Māori Catholic history book project is being led by University of Auckland lecturer and historian Dr Rowan Light, with the support of former Te Kupenga chief executive Dr Areti Metuamate.

Dr Metuamate left Te Kupenga a few months ago due to family reasons. But he said he will continue to support several of Te Kupenga's projects, particularly research on Māori Catholic history.

"What I want it to achieve is that . . . every student in every Catholic school knows the names of key Māori Catholic leaders in the history of our country," Dr Metuamate said.

"We expect Catholic students to know who the Pope is. We expect them to know who their patron saint is, patron saint of the school, who Pompallier was. And for me, it is equally important to know who Bishop Mariu is, know who the first Māori priest was, who the first Māori nun was."

He said the aim of the project is to capture some of the stories of key Māori Catholic leaders like Hamilton Auxiliary Bishop Max Takuirā Matthew Mariu, CNZM, Dame Whina Cooper and Pa Wiremu Te Awhitu, as well as present leaders such as Dame Georgina Kingi, principal of Hato Hohepa, St Joseph's Māori Girls' College in Napier.

Dr Light, who has carried out research on the repatriation of Bishop Pompallier's remains, said he and Dr Metuamate had a series of discussions, and realised that there is a real need for this project.

"I guess you can describe the project as bringing focus to people in our past and in our present who haven't really been given focus in the public stories of the Church," he said. "We tend to focus a lot on who are our bishops and priests, but we aren't very good at talking about, our katekita (catechists)."

Drs Light and Metuamate came up with a list of people to write about, and those they can interview or do research on.

Part of the project will be learning the stories of those who had helped Bishop Pompallier in spreading the faith.

"He (Bishop Pompallier) met a lot of people, and it's those people he worked alongside that we're really interested in, the katekita, the early converts and teachers of the faith, which is just part of the Māori society, ordinary men and women. They are really important because we wouldn't have the faith without them," he said.

Dr Light said it is a shame that a lot of the names of the katekita have been lost.

"They are often the silent servants of the parishes and communities who aren't there to promote themselves," he said. "But it's important that we recall their names because, otherwise, it's very hard for the next generation to understand the ways they can participate in the life of the Church. It's about



Dr Rowan Light

recognising different vocations and different contributions."

Dr Light said history is powerful in that "it allows us to see ourselves in the past and see ourselves in the future".

"We get to think about how people lived out their faith in the community in a way that enriches culture. In this case, a particular

question we're interested in is: how do Māori understand their faith? What does it mean to be Māori and Catholic?" he said.

Dr Light said it is important for Catholics to tell their own story.

"In our wider culture, if Catholics don't tell the story, then nobody will because there are so many stories to tell," he said.

Catholic appreciation of Māori knowledge and science

by ROWENA OREJANA

Catholics have a lot to contribute in the public discussion on mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and science, said University of Auckland lecturer and historian Dr Rowan Light.

"We've been critiquing science for many, many years . . . For hundreds of years, we've had an engagement with what science is as a form of knowledge, and its limits, and how, in fact, it can do quite awful things if it's detached from . . . faith," he said.

Dr Light was reacting to a recent

controversy involving seven University of Auckland professors who wrote a letter entitled "In Defence of Science" in response to proposed changes to the Māori school curriculum, which puts mātauranga Māori on par with science.

The letter was published in the NZ Listener's Letters to the Editor section.

In the letter, the professors wrote that "to accept it [mātauranga Māori] as the equivalent of science is to patronise and fail indigenous populations; better to ensure that everyone participates in the world's scientific enterprises. Indigenous knowledge

may indeed help advance scientific knowledge in some ways, but it is not science."

Dr Light said it is important to listen to everyone involved in the discussion because there is a danger that "public discussions like this become like, it's either science or it's mātauranga. It's either you're racist or you're not".

"Catholics can provide the third way. There are different ways of thinking about this, and we can bring a very different perspective because we understand reason and we understand faith," he said.

Dr Light said mātauranga is

knowledge shaped by values and practices, and Catholics are comfortable with this idea.

"We've always believed that we're not just brains producing facts. We understand that our beliefs, what we know, should shape what we do," he explained.

"The Church teaches that we worship as we pray as we live. All those things should be brought into alignment. And mātauranga Māori is an attempt to express that in a Māori way, that we know the world in a certain way and that should shape who we are and how we react and how we relate to each other."



"I see the Church as a field hospital after battle."

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Communicating Christ: 60 years of the Catholic Enquiry Centre

by NEIL VANEY

After the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in 19th century England, the Catholic Missionary Society had quietly defended the nation's ancient Catholic faith. But a new approach came to birth in the 1950s — not just to confront anti-Catholic prejudices head on, but also to persuade Sunday Mass-goers to share their beliefs; in short, to become evangelists.

The Church in New Zealand watched this development with interest. So, in 1959, the local bishops sent Frs Maurice Ryan and Brian Ashby to London to become familiar with this new emphasis and its methods. Back in New Zealand, the Catholic Enquiry Centre was launched at a national meeting at Holy Cross College in Dunedin on September 14, 1960, and it began operating in Wellington in February of the next year. Directors and office staff would work hand in hand with sponsors and donors throughout the land to promote the new missionary thrust, and raise finance to support the movement.

■ Staffing

In 1964, Brian Ashby was appointed bishop of Christchurch. Fr Ryan was to work a long stint as director until his retirement in 1988. As more and more inquiries came in, the original typists grew to include skilled computer experts and finance officers. After the reforms and new theological emphases of the Second Vatican Council (1961-65), it became necessary to include, as part of the staff, people skilled in theology and pastoral practice to answer the growing number of letters, then emails, that kept arriving. When Fr Ryan retired, the role of director passed on to Frs Paul Shannahan, SM, (1988-2006), Allan Jones, SM, (2006-16) and Neil Vaney, SM, (2017-present).

■ Reaching out

The missionary and pastoral dynamic of the CEC came in the form of parish visitation, promotion in different forms of the media, and response to the multitude of requests that came pouring in.

In the first ten years, Frs Ashby and Ryan (and later just Maurice Ryan) visited about 80 parishes a year. They would offer Sunday Masses, preach on the need to share the faith, and recruit willing parishioners to act as sponsors and promoters. Paul Shannahan and Allan Jones kept up this pattern of visitation, often attending sodality meetings, and Catholic gatherings such as the Eucharistic Convention.

The CEC office launched its newspaper ads in February, 1961. On the first day, there came 42 replies — nearly all from Wellington. In successive days, as Auckland and Christchurch mail arrived, the numbers jumped to 89, then 95. By 1968, it had become clear that weekly magazines were a more effective source of inquiries, and by 1971 it was the *Sunday Times*, *Sunday News*, *Women's Weekly*, *Listener* and *The Truth*. In September, 1999, CEC marked its first appearance on television with a four minute slot on the Mary Lambie breakfast show.

The main response to incoming mail was the sending out of sets of booklets outlining Catholic beliefs and practices. Initially these followed the material used by the CMS in England. From 1980 onwards, however, there was a shift to locally written booklets. John Weir, SM, took over this role from 2000 onwards; the set of ten booklets, revised several times, was praised highly by a team of expert consultants in 2014.

■ Shifting currents in Church and society

When Paul Shannahan became director in 1988, he had just completed a three-year stint with the "Renew" process in New Zealand. He came with a new emphasis on the role of the laity and their work in sharing, praying and living the faith, especially in parish settings. As the century was drawing to a close, he was already beginning to note the smaller numbers of children in Catholic families, and the growing impact of immigrant communities in some regions. Though the CEC at this stage counted 600 promoters and 14,000 supporters on its books, he knew it would be very

difficult to maintain such numbers.

When Allan Jones took over in June, 2006, he was deeply aware of the strong currents of secularism and agnosticism running through New Zealand society, so saw his task, like Jesus, as one of sowing seeds. He continued the work of advertising, visiting parishes and religious groups, and studied the emerging perspectives coming out of Pope John Paul's promotion of the New Evangelisation.

The appointment of Neil Vaney in 2016 as chaplain/pastoral director came against the background of the changing face of Catholic parishes in New Zealand. Many of the original promoters and sponsors of CEC were ageing and dying. Numbers of young and middle aged people in parishes were in decline, and dioceses were working to attract youth in quite different ways, as many of them no longer watched TV or read papers very much, shaping their world by phone or tablet, sharing the digital world with their friends.

Many dioceses and parishes were working hard on motivating worshippers to become more active in the sharing of their faith. The bishops were aware of the need for such efforts to be stimulated and coordinated. Working with other agencies such as Catholic Communications, CEC might be able to reach out in new ways. So joining Fr Neil in his half-time role came Joe Serici as engagement manager, bringing skills of planning and recruitment in the digital and training world. Mely Kartawidjaya, who had worked part-time on special projects, was taken on as office manager.

Though there would be loss in personal and parish contact, it was hoped that these structures would provide new ways of reaching Catholics who had wandered from their faith commitments, and the secularised and digital-focused world of many younger New Zealanders. This is the challenge that CEC is fronting as it enters into its seventh decade of trying to bring Christ and the Catholic faith to the people of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Fr Neil Vaney, SM, is pastoral director of the Catholic Enquiry Centre.

Ronald Rolheiser

Can we prove that God exists?

I wrote my doctoral thesis on the value of various philosophical arguments that try to prove the existence of God. Can there be such a proof? Brilliant philosophers, from Anselm, through Aquinas, through Descartes, through contemporary intellectuals like Charles Hartshorne, submit that the existence of God can be proven through rational argument. Except, except, a lot depends upon what exactly we mean by the word "prove". How do we prove something?

There's a legend about St Christopher that's pertinent here: Christopher was a man gifted in every way, except faith. He was physically strong, powerful, goodhearted, mellow, and well-liked. He was also generous, using his physical strength to help others, but he found it hard to believe in God, even though he wanted to. For him, the physical was what was real, and everything else seemed unreal. And so, as the legend goes, he lived his life in a certain honest agnosticism, unable to really believe in anything beyond what he could physically see, feel, and touch.

However, this did not prevent him from using his gifts, especially his physical strength, to serve others. This was his refuge, generosity and service. He became a ferryboat operator, spending his life helping to carry people across a dangerous river. One night, as the legend goes, during a storm, the ferryboat capsized and Christopher dove into the dark waters to rescue a young child. Carrying that child to the shore, he looked into its face and saw there the face of Christ. After that, he believed, for he had seen the face of Christ.

For all its piety, this legend contains a profound lesson. It changes the perspective on the question of how one tries to "prove" God's existence. Our

attempt to prove God's existence has to be practical, existential, and incarnate, rather than mainly intellectual. How do we move from believing only in the physical, from believing only in the reality of what we can see, feel, touch, taste, and smell, to believing in the existence of deeper, spiritual realities?

There's a lesson in the Christopher story: Live as honestly and respectfully as you can, and use your gifts to help others. God will appear. God is not found at the conclusion of a philosophical syllogism, but as the result of a certain way of living. Moreover, faith is not so much a question of feeling, as of selfless service.

There's a further lesson in the biblical account of the apostle Thomas and his doubt about the Resurrection of Jesus. Remember his protest: "Unless I can (physically) place my finger in the wounds of his hands and stick my finger into the wound of his side, I will not believe." Note that Jesus offers no resistance or rebuke in the face of Thomas' scepticism. Instead, he takes Thomas at his word: "Come and (physically) place your finger in the wounds of my hand and the wound in my side; see for yourself that I am real and not a ghost."

That's the open challenge for us: "Come and see for yourselves that God is real and not a ghost!" That challenge, however, is not so much an intellectual one as a moral one, a challenge to be honest and generous.

Scepticism and agnosticism, even atheism, are not a problem, as long as one is honest, non-rationalising, non-lying, ready to efface oneself before reality as it appears, and generous in giving one's life away in service. If these conditions are met, God, the author and source of all reality, eventu-

ally becomes sufficiently real, even to those who need physical proof. The stories of Christopher and Thomas teach us this, and assure us that God is neither angered nor threatened by an honest agnosticism.

Faith is never certainty. Neither is it a sure feeling that God exists. Conversely, unbelief is not to be confused with the absence of the felt assurance that God exists. For everyone, there will be dark nights of the soul, silences of God, cold lonely seasons, sceptical times when God's reality cannot be consciously grasped or recognised. The history of faith, as witnessed by the life of Jesus and the lives of the saints, shows us that God often seems dead and, at those times, the reality of the empirical world can so overpower us that nothing seems real, except what we can see and feel right now, not least our own pain.

Whenever this happens, like Christopher and Thomas, we need to become honest agnostics who use our goodness and God-given strengths to help carry others across the burdensome rivers of life. God does not ask us to have a faith that is certain, but a service that is generous and sustained. We have the assurance that, should we faithfully help carry others, we will one day find ourselves before the reality of God who will gently say to us: "See for yourself, that I am real, and not a ghost."

Can we prove that God exists? In theory, no; in life, yes.

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

Giving the elderly care and attention

Guest Editorial

Have you called or prayed for your grandparents lately? Have you visited your elderly neighbour? The first World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, July 25, marked the perfect opportunity to reach out to the aging individuals in your life in a special way that reassures them of your love and care.

An annual event, the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly will be celebrated on the fourth Sunday of each July from now on, and it joins the World Day of the Poor (33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time) and the Sunday of the Word of God (Third Sunday in Ordinary Time) as prominent days established by Pope Francis that reflect his priorities.

The feast is timed to fall close to the July 26 liturgical memorial of Sts Joachim and Anne, the parents of Mary.

In some ways, the establishment of a World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is simply a formalisation of Pope Francis' well-established teaching on respect and care for the aging, whom he, in 2013, called "the ones who give life's wisdom".

And it is a teaching that has great value, for, as Pope Francis said in 2015, "the elderly person is us. Soon, or many years from now — inevitably anyway — we will be old, even if we don't think about it".

For those of us who may fall into the demographic honoured, this moment is an opportunity to reflect upon how we may continue to answer the Lord's call in our lives. In his message commemorating the day — a very personal letter addressed to "elderly friends" — Pope Francis, being 84 years old himself, seemed to write less as the Holy Father and more as a peer, describing how, no matter the season of life, the Lord remains close to his people with "new possibilities, new ideas, new consolations".

"I was called to become the bishop of Rome when I had reached, so to speak, retirement age, and thought I would not be doing anything new," he said. Vocation, he added, never ends — and for the elderly that vocation is "to preserve our roots, to pass on the faith to the young and to care for the little ones".

"It makes no difference how old you are, whether you still work or not, whether you are alone or have a family, whether you became a grandmother or grandfather at a young age or later, whether you are still independent or need assistance," he continued. "Because there is no retirement age from the work of proclaiming the Gospel and handing down traditions to your grandchildren. You just need to set out and undertake something new."

These words are a gift and an inspiration, underscoring the dignity of each person, no matter his or her age, and helping those who are growing older remember that they continue to play an important role in society, especially where the faith is concerned. May the Holy Father's words take root and flourish.

For those of us who have yet to enter into our golden years, the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is an opportunity to be mindful of those growing older around us who deserve our attention and devotion.

We can assist them, providing physical, emotional and spiritual care in their final years. We can learn from them, sitting by their sides to soak in their stories and ask questions. We can pray for them, helping to prepare them for the inevitable day they will meet the Lord. And in doing so, we can help prepare for our own.

Excerpts from an editorial titled: "A call to give the elderly the care and attention they deserve", published online on July 13 by *Our Sunday Visitor*, a national US Catholic newsweekly based in Huntington, Indiana. It was written by the editorial board and made available by the Catholic News Service. The text has been edited in places to allow for the fact that it is published here after July 25.

The Habit



Letters

Dawn Raids

On August 1, the Prime Minister formally apologised to Pacific communities for the racially exploitative "Dawn Raids" — and the policies that underpinned them — of the 1970s.

Authorised by both Labour and National governments, it saw Pacific Islanders (including New Zealand citizens) targeted, whilst the majority of overstayers were from Europe and the United States. The raids targeted homes, workplaces and places of worship. It led to separation of families and the placing of some children in state care homes, where their suffering continued.

As Catholics, let us not forget that some of our parishes sheltered them. Some of our Catholic schools hid children from police. Catholic leaders and parishioners were on the front line protesting. They exemplified our cardinal virtues of prudence and justice. For that we thank them. We should all be pleased that this dark time in our history will now be taught as part of the New Zealand curriculum.

Tiumalu Peter Fa'afiu,
Pukekohe.

Eucharist

I wish to warmly endorse Kevin McCormack's letter on the Eucharist (*NZ Catholic*, July 25).

Kieran Fenn, FMS,
Onehunga,
Auckland.

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.

More and more, I am convinced that the proof of the Real Presence of Christ is in lives moved to put into effect the values that Christ puts before us in the Gospels.

We are sent out at the end of Mass to "Go, you are sent forth" to live these values in the way we relate, as a Christian community, to one another in family life, in our workplace, in all our relationships.

The proof of the Real Presence is in the living of Christian lives. The Eucharist gives the strength to live the Christ life that should be put before us in the Liturgy of the Word.

Did Jesus tell us to adore him or to be him? Adoration has its place if we live lives that move towards Gospel values.

The Risen Christ is also the Suffering Christ. Gospel that does not find expression in Eucharist is greatly impoverished; Eucharist cut from Gospel is pastorally ineffective.

Is Eucharist today isolated from the life of today's Christians? Real Presence is the transforming power in our lives through the Eucharist and the Scriptures, recognising that we are fed from both tables.

I thank God for the goodness of the communities in which I see the truth that we grow into what we receive — "Be what you see; receive what you are." (St Augustine).

Sign of peace

In the editorial (*NZ Catholic*, July 25) the question is raised regarding The Sign of Peace at Mass post-Covid restrictions. Signs need to be clearly understood. . . . We are at peace when we recognise that God has forgiven us from all eternity, that we have forgiven anyone who has offended us, and that we have been forgiven by those we have offended.

The person standing next to us at Mass is usually not someone who has offended us. But the Sign of Peace is a ritual — the person next to us stands in for the offender and it is to the offender that we express our forgiveness. The rite comes between the "Our Father" (where we ask God to give us the strength to forgive others in imitation of the forgiveness and love God is giving us) and Communion (where we receive Christ's Body sacramentally and share in his life) and links the two.

The Sign of Peace is more than a simple greeting. Could the gesture of joined hands and a bow as a sign of respect — familiar to many of our migrants — be used? It could be argued that it is not necessary that everyone uses the same sign. But in a country the size of New Zealand there is a lot to recommend having an agreed sign nationally — no surprises, no matter what part of the country we may be in. The two-handed handshake

has a lot to commend it as something distinctive and religious with a long history in Catholic tradition, and was commonly seen at ordination Masses here pre-Covid.

A. Williams,
Napier.

■ *Abridged* — Editor.

Mass

Firstly no, I've never attended a "Latin Mass". Secondly, yes, I have led a song in Latin at Mass, on guitar even! (*Ave Maria, Gratia plena, Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu*).

I suspect Pope Francis' curtailing of the traditional Latin Mass (*NZ Catholic*, July 25) is less to do with the Latin rite than it is to do with Church politics.

I would hope the Church is big enough to accommodate all legitimate expressions of our beautiful Mass. My fear is that the unbelieving world looks at the Church squabbling, shakes its head and walks away.

Mike Baird,
Hamilton.

Altman

Thanks for the important report on Fr James Altman (*NZ Catholic*, July 25).

Father echoes many Catholics' opinion, even though this is not politically correct. Is President Biden truly Catholic? The matter is sensitive, but important.

John Sellars,
Lower Hutt.

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.

Peter Cullinane

Unmoored

An image has been occurring to me of boats that have become unmoored. They end up on the rocks, or colliding with one another. There are features of our Western world's culture that seem to fit the image. Important aspects of our lives seem to have become disconnected from what gives them meaning. If this is true, it is hardly healthy. I offer the following examples:

1. 'Me' disconnected from 'we'; and 'my' from 'our'.

To say modern culture suffers from acute individualism is, by now, a truism. Clamours for "my rights" often involve little or no sense of "my responsibilities". It seems incredible that some would regard public health requirements as infringements of their rights — it's as silly as regarding the road rules as violations of their freedom. During the pandemic, some have been willing to put other people's lives at risk for no better reason than to enjoy themselves. Obviously, legal restrictions are no substitute for moral formation.

But all is not lost: catastrophes can still bring out the best in people. It is still easy to admire individuals who are generous, even risking their own lives for others. It is still easy to dislike gross forms of self-centredness and self-aggrandisement. People still give generously to charitable causes. And it is still easy to pity individuals caught up in over-anxious self-concern.

But there are also subtler forms of disconnect that we can become used to; they become "normalised". For example, in most, if not all, cultures, marriage has been a moment of celebration for whole communities. Now, "what we do is nobody else's business". Within an individualist culture, it isn't easy to see anything wrong with this. It's the culture that has become reductionist.

Work used to be regarded as an expression of one's person and relationships with others. Now, within the culture we are regarding as "normal", it is reduced to a commodity and business transaction. Commercial value attaches to the work, not the person doing it, so work becomes unmoored from its own deepest meaning.

The common denominator to all forms of self-centredness is failure to realise that we can become our own true selves only through being "for others". This paradox is at the centre of Jesus' teaching. The drift away from his Gospel has become a drift away from what we need to become our own true selves. This will show up in the uglier kinds of self-centredness.

2. 'Facts' unmoored from truth.

When truth is reduced to whatever we say to get whatever we want — whether it is true or not — we are targets for manipulation. We become vulnerable to every kind of spin — commercial spin, political spin, and agenda-driven ideologies.

Scientists work hard to establish facts. They know we need to act on what is objectively true. Solving crimes, the judicial system, and research in every field are all based on the premise that truth matters. All these, and most of life, would be turned up-side-down if it were enough to say: "truth is whatever the individual thinks it is — it is true for her/him", and "right is whatever the individual chooses — it is right for him/her". How could we even say rape or sexual abuse are wrong if it might be "right" for the person doing it? So, we cannot escape the need to acknowledge an objective difference between true and false, and right and wrong.

Conspiracy theories during the pandemic duped some people into believing claims that were far more bizarre than anything the sciences ever present us with. What kind of culture is it when they are so gullibly believed?

Parroting clichés is a lazy alternative to serious thinking. For example: lazy thinkers don't distinguish between judging a person's actions (which we may do, and sometimes must), and judging their conscience (which we may not — because we cannot know whether or how much they are guilty before God.) That is the meaning of the saying: "who am I to judge?" It doesn't mean we can't judge their actions!

But even when we rightly judge that another's actions are wrong, it is often necessary to look further. Their offending can have deep roots in early experience of abuse or deprivation or cultural alienation. If we are personally attached to truth, we will look more deeply, and avoid superficial judgments and demonising.

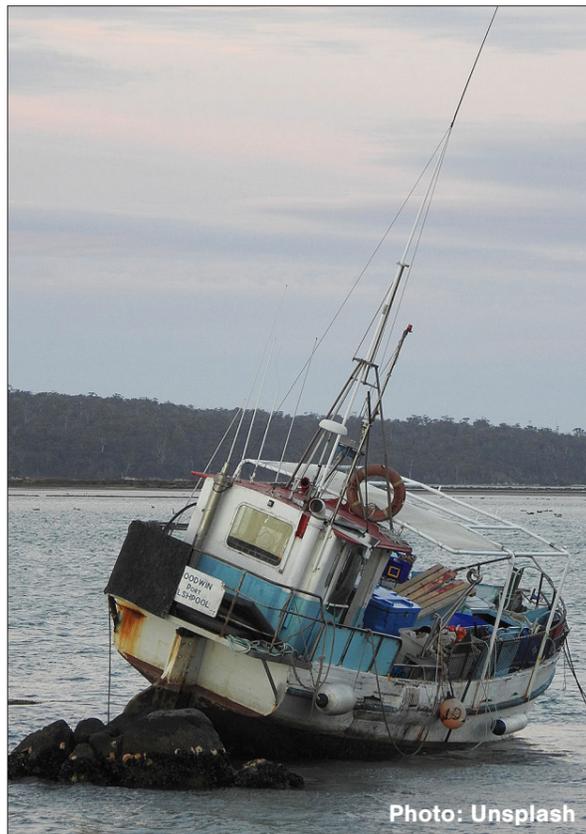


Photo: Unsplash

Lazy thinking also buys the slogan used to justify abortion: "it's my body", even though the sciences leave no doubt that the embryo is actually someone else's body.

3. Sexual activity unmoored from sexuality's meaning.

I recently heard some young people say they felt it was wrong to send sexual imagery on line, but they didn't know why. They will not come any closer to knowing through "consent education". "Consent education" is right to teach the need to avoid activities that are not legal or consensual or safe. But that is as far as it can go because it is unconcerned with sexuality's meaning — other than it being a source of pleasure. That kind of "education" allows, if it doesn't promote, the idea that anything goes, provided it is legal, consensual and safe. But is it?

A more holistic education would allow young people to learn about virtue. Modesty is the virtue that protects chastity. Of course, if society has given away the virtue of chastity, then it won't feel any need for modesty. Chastity is the virtue that applies self-respect, restraint and respect for others, to sexuality. Unchastity involves a lack of self-respect, restraint and respect for others. The Department of Internal Affairs' statistics regarding the extent of attempts in New Zealand to access child sex sites, and the increasing demand for younger children, and more violent forms of abuse, show where we go when the meaning of sexuality is ignored, or reduced to pleasure.

There have been strong, organised and determined cultural movements whose agenda has been to "liberate" sexuality from all previous restraints. We look back incredulously to the 1960s through the 1990s when some activists described themselves as "victims" of harsh laws aimed at preventing "man-boy love"; and children as "victims" because harsh parents didn't want them to have that kind of loving care!! "Inter-generational sex" and "man-boy love" were euphemisms intended to promote the acceptability of what society calls pederasty. For some, the aim was to shed categories such as "heterosexual" and "homosexual" in favour of more fluid and non-binary language. Even though, by the 1990s, those movements had mostly lost their credibility, the underlying ideologies have a way of re-surfacing.

So sooner or later, we do need to come to the question: what is sexuality's meaning? What is its purpose? Yes, it is for pleasure. But so is unchastity. So, there must be some meaning beyond that. Honest reflection recognises two purposes that are entwined and come together uniquely in marriage: they are sexuality's potential for deeply nurturing the love of two people, and in a way that is also designed to generate new life as the fruit of their love. And because new life needs to be protected and nurtured, the child's parents need to be in a relationship that is stable, committed and faithful.

Whatever allowances we rightly make for people of various orientations or preferences (see below), ultimately it is marriage that can fulfil sexuality's deepest meanings. Detached from marriage, sexual activities are detached from sexuality's meaning.

4. Gender identity unmoored from sexual identity.

Gender identity is not a label that is put on us, by ourselves or by others. It is given by nature long before we start making our own decisions. But what about the tensions between biological reality and psychological/emotional reality that some people experience? We move closer to an answer when we allow both faith and the sciences to be part of our thinking: the world is a work in progress, and we are part of this evolving world. This means that none of us is a finished product. We are all at one stage or another of being unfinished.

We can be born with deficiencies, or incur disabilities, some of which last through life. In fact, we are never finished while death is still in front of us. When there is something that cannot be resolved or fulfilled within our present span of life, it helps to remember that our life was not something we had a right to in the first place; it is simply gift. And our present life is not the whole of it.

In that kind of world, personal development does not always take place at the same pace, or even follow the usual pattern. Those who are caught in any of the dilemmas resulting from different stages of, or lines of, development have a right to the same respect and unconditional love as everyone else. Still, as Professor Kathleen Stock, herself a lesbian, writing about "Why Reality Matters for Feminism", reminds us, there are only two biological sexes and no amount of hormonal or surgical treatment can change that. She is aware that by seeking surgical or hormonal treatment to support gender change, people are implicitly acknowledging the link between gender identity and sexual identity.

But she is also aware, and critical of, the more recent claim that they should not need to; it should be enough simply to declare that you are male or female, regardless of biological reality. Is that where the separation of gender identity and sexual identity can take us?

If reality matters, then it matters to acknowledge that, both socially and biologically, male and female find a certain completion in each other, precisely by being each other's "opposite" — which is what the ancient Genesis story has been saying all along.

5. Politics unmoored from the common good.

Politics unmoored from the common good is politics unmoored from its own purpose. The purpose of political involvement is to create a social and economic environment in which everyone has the opportunity to progress towards achieving their own potential and a fulfilling life. In a true democracy, political parties differ over how to do this, while being united in a common pursuit of the common good.

Partisan self-interest placed above the common good is a throw-back to tribalism and, like ancient forms of tribalism, it undermines the unity that is needed for achieving the common good. The alternative to the common good is mere partisan power. This gives rise to all kinds of inequalities and absurdities (for example, being duped by misinformation and lies that have been discredited by the courts; basing decisions about masks and social distancing not on science, but on which political party you belong to!)

We might be surprised at such fickleness, though perhaps less surprised that it happens in a country where states can still pass anti-democratic laws, and that does not yet have a proper separation of powers. But the lesson for ourselves is — how foolish and self-destructive we too could become through unmooring rights from responsibilities, "facts" from truth, and politics from pursuit of the common good.

Conclusion

A culture in which so many aspects of life have become unmoored from what gives them meaning is a culture that is reductionist, superficial, utilitarian . . . The question is: Within that kind of culture, how well equipped can we be to deal with the epic issues of our time — those that degrade human life, human dignity, human rights and the planet itself?

Bishop Peter Cullinane is Bishop Emeritus of Palmerston North diocese

Legion of Mary 'is an extension of my faith'

by MICHAEL OTTO

Being a member of the Legion of Mary can involve travelling many a mile — especially when visiting people in one's area — and John Tagiilima started at a young age.

When he was a boy, Mr Tagiilima, who is now president of the Legion's Senatus that covers New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands and Fiji, was sent by his parents to a junior praesidium meeting in his native Samoa.

He remembers having to walk a couple of miles to get to the house of the family who were hosting the meetings.

As an adult, Mr Tagiilima moved with his wife to Fiji, where they joined a praesidium, of which he was later to become president.

"To me, [being a member of the Legion] is an extension of my faith. It keeps my faith going and refreshed every day," he said.

Now Mr Tagiilima, who lives in Te Atatu, is working on another challenge, alongside other Legion members — helping put together Legion of Mary centenary celebrations next month. Modern members are following in the footsteps of the many who went before them.

According to the Legion of Mary's New Zealand website, the Legion of Mary is "the largest apostolic organisation of lay people in the Catholic Church, with well over three million active members in almost every country of the world".

"The main purpose of the Legion is the glory of God and the holiness of its members through prayer and active co-operation in the Church's work of sanctification of the world."

The Legion of Mary began in Dublin in Ireland in 1921, with Frank Duff as its founder. A New Zealander, Elizabeth Kirwan, was the first president of a Legion praesidium and the first president of the overall association. The Legion started in Dunedin with an inaugural meeting in 1933, and in Christchurch the next year, and five years later started in Auckland — at St Michael's

parish, Remuera, on June 16, 1938.

The Remuera meeting was attended by Bishop James Liston, Vicar General Msgr Cahill, two other monsignors, five parish priests and seventeen laywomen and one layman. Bishop Liston had encountered the Legion when he had attended the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in 1932.

Mr Tagiilima said it is fitting that the centenary celebrations in Auckland this year are taking place at St Michael's, Remuera, with a novena starting on September 2 (with a Mass on that day too) and finishing on September 10, before a one-day celebration on September 11, which includes a centenary Mass at 11am. The day will also involve talks from Legion spiritual director Fr Andrew Matthew and from other Auckland priests, and from past-Senatus president Mark Gasparini. Food will be provided.

Mr Tagiilima said the Legion is preparing to welcome some 500 people to the celebration. All are welcome.

In 2008, in Auckland diocese, the Legion had about 100 praesidia, in about 36 parishes, and eight junior praesidia. Mr Tagiilima expects that more recent numbers will be included in an updated history of the Legion in this country, which he hopes will be available by the end of the year.

The ethnicities of Legion members in New Zealand might have changed somewhat since 1933, in line with changes in the Church itself in this country in this regard, but the Legion's work is very similar to that done all those years ago, he added. Among Legion's works are going door-to-door in parishes and meeting people, visiting the sick and elderly and the newly baptised, religious education, and taking special statues of Our Lady from home to home.

Mr Tagiilima said that the work follows the Legion's handbook pretty closely. Active members try to do two work hours a week, which they report back to a weekly meet-



Mr Tagiilima

ing, at which they pray and receive guidance and help from a spiritual director. There is also a commitment to prayer.

However, the current pandemic environment means some changes might be ahead for visitation work, Mr Tagiilima said.

"I think with Covid this is going to change a little bit in terms of us going into contact with people, with the new viruses and such. We might have to come up with another safer way of approaching these people."

Mr Tagiilima said that the Legion does is very helpful for parish priests, because the clergy cannot be everywhere. The work helps in recruiting

new members to the Church, and in reaching out to lapsed Catholics as well.

Currently, in New Zealand, the Legion is strong in its Filipino and Korean praesidia, as well as in its Samoan and other Pasifika praesidia. But when it starts in a parish in this country, the Legion tries to establish an English language praesidium first, unless there are sufficient numbers to have two praesidia there, with one being an English language one.

As the number of priests and religious available decreases, it can sometimes be a challenge to provide spiritual directors for the different praesidia, Mr Tagiilima said, adding his gratitude for the work that Fr Matthew does in this regard.

Another challenge is a lack of knowledge about the Legion of Mary, Mr Tagiilima said.

"When we go and try to recruit new members, some people have never heard of the Legion of Mary. We don't publicise and are known by people by word of mouth. I think it is a work in progress to try to get the word out there. . . ."

"The Legion of Mary is for people who want to do a little more work spiritually and be hands-on with the work of Mary."

Preparations for the centenary celebrations are well underway. Celebrations are also being held on September 11 at St Anne's parish church and hall, Newtown, Wellington, starting with Holy Mass, and in Christchurch as well.

Further comment on the ministry of the Legion of Mary is in the Family Matters column on page 14.

Divine Renovation conference to be held in Taupō in October

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Tongariro Catholic, with the support of the Catholic Diocese of Hamilton, is hosting a nationwide conference in Taupō in October to promote the "Divine Renovation" approach as a good model for parish renewal.

According to a post on the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference Facebook page, the conference is open to anyone who wants to find out more about how the Divine Renovation model can transform parishes of all sizes, and for those who have already adopted the DR model and want to continue to learn and connect with others.

Parish priests and their parish pastoral councils are especially invited to come and see what this model has to offer the life of their parish.

The conference is scheduled to run from October 19-21.

On August 6, Hamilton diocese announced the first of the keynote speakers for the conference — Fr

James Mallon, a Canadian priest who is the founder of the Divine Renovation Ministry and the author of the best-selling book *Divine Renovation: From A Maintenance To A Missional Parish*.

According to a facebook post by Hamilton diocese, Fr Mallon's latest book, *Beyond the Parish*, released in April, 2020, offers a thought-provoking analysis of the challenges the Church faces, along with the practical tools that will support parish and diocesan leaders in bringing about parish renewal.

The MC for the conference will be Kevin Bailey, director of Divine Renovation Australasia. According to the organisation's website, Divine Renovation Australasia provides intensive support to parishes throughout Australasia seeking to pursue a missional mindset. "We help transform parishes across the region, developing strong leadership teams and a culture of evangelisation."

For more information, visit www.cdh.org.nz/divine-renovation-conference

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U.N. climate change report can spur prayerful action

by DENNIS SADOWSKI

Amadou Diallo, a programme manager for Catholic Relief Services in his native Senegal, knows from talking with the farmers and cattle herders that the cyclical droughts the country experienced occurred about once every 10 years for generations.

More recently, he has learned from conversations with them that the droughts occur more often, perhaps every three or four years, and are unpredictable in duration.

The more frequent droughts cause the herders to take their cattle elsewhere, possibly opening the way to conflict. For people who grow crops to sell, their yields are smaller, limiting their ability to provide enough food for their families. At times, parents pull their children from school and send them to work to help support their families.

It's all a sign of climate change, Diallo said.

Such changes in traditional practices of the Senegalese people, 80 per cent of whom depend on agriculture as their source of income, are an example of the impact of a changing climate in communities around the world, according to the latest climate assessment report from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC.

Severe floods, long-term drought, wildfires and extremes of heat and cold are all resulting from climate change, the report said.

Released on August 9, the massive document, covering 3900-plus pages, serves as a "reality check" on how the planet is being reshaped by rising global temperatures, said Valerie Masson-Delmotte, co-chair of one of several working groups that compiled it.

The report was written by 234 climate scientists, and draws its conclusions based on more than 14,000 studies since the last assessment report in 2013.

It says that temperatures have risen by 1.1 degrees (Celsius) since the 19th century, reaching their highest level in more than 100,000 years. The report concludes that human activities, through the burning of fossil fuels, like wood, oil, coal and natural gas, accounts for almost all of the temperature rise. Burning those fuels releases heat-trapping greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane.

The warming atmosphere is affecting virtually every corner of the planet, the report said. Rising temperatures are leading to the melting of glaciers, ice packs and sea ice, contributing to rising sea levels that threaten coastal communities; increased extreme weather events such as stronger hurricanes, torrential rains — like those that have recently caused widespread flooding in Europe and China — and droughts that can lead to wildfires and the loss of tillable farmland.

The report also outlines a series of paths that describes increasingly greater warming, and projected progressively dire outcomes across the planet by the mid-21st century. It also said that it's not too late to slow those changes and avoid the worst environmental catastrophes.

Catholic leaders in the environmental protection movement said the Church can cement a leading role in addressing climate change based on the report's conclusions.



A girl in Falmouth, Britain, plays with sand during a climate protest in June, 2021 (CNS Photo)

Dan Misleh, executive director of the Catholic Climate Covenant, told CNS that the science behind the report makes clear it is time for people to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels in an effort to slow climate change.

"These reports come out regularly, and each time the scientists are saying this is a problem and we need to address it," he said. "The difference now is more and more people are experiencing the impact of climate change. Perhaps this time the message will fall on a few more ears than it has in previous IPCC reports."

Misleh turned to a Gospel story to stress his concern. He cited the passage in Matthew's Gospel in which Jesus asks the disciples "What parent among you would hand your child a stone when your child asks for bread?"

"Young people are asking of us older people to give them bread and nourishment, and we keep handing them stones. We don't do what we need to do, to pass the gift of God's creation to them as we've done before," Misleh said.

■ Platform

Key to the Church's response will be the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, introduced in May by Pope Francis. It is designed to carry out a global grassroots movement to create a more inclusive, fraternal, peaceful and sustainable world, based on the Pope's 2015 encyclical on the environment.

Marianist Sister Leanne Jablonski, director of the Marianist Environmental Education Center in Dayton, Ohio, said people, especially young people, are interested in taking steps to protect the environment.

One such effort she identified emerged in Dayton, where a group of University of Dayton graduates developed Mission of Mary, a community-supported agriculture programme to provide food in a "food desert" in one of the city's neighbourhoods. "Graduates started living in the neighbourhood, forming relationships. They took an abandoned swimming pool lot and are helping neighbours grow a garden," she said.

Such efforts also can help address environmental injustices that find people of colour and low-income communities adversely affected by polluting practices, with no plan for corrective action, said Sr Jablonski, who also is a scholar for faith and environment at the university's Hanley Sustainability Institute.

The report also points to the need for Catholics to "understand the stakes and the realities" warming temperatures pose to all life on earth, said Michael Schuck, co-director of the International Jesuit Ecology Project at Loyola University Chicago.

"We have to go again with Pope Francis' emphasis on integral ecology, not only the integration of the ecology and the social, but the integration of the inner self and the outer. Our own souls need transformation," Schuck explained.

He also encouraged people who are passionate about protecting God's creation to talk about it with others, and that the report which made headlines can be a starting point for small steps that can lead to significant action.

And it's also time to allow the younger generation to lead, Schuck added.

"We elders, we have to keep listening and empathising with the next generation."

Integrated approach needed as climate change response

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand said that the IPCC's latest report on climate science only confirms with greater certainty and immediacy the need for rapid action to cut greenhouse gas emissions, and prioritise the poor and future generations in adapting to an uncertain climatic future.

"Oceania peoples on the frontlines of climate change have seen significant impacts of climate change and other environmental losses since before the turn of the century," said Caritas director Julianne Hickey.

"Eroded shorelines, salination

of soil and water, and destruction of food crops, livelihoods and shelter through increasingly severe extreme weather events. We have documented those impacts in often overlooked communities through our Oceania environment reports since 2014.

"We know climate change is hitting the poor the hardest. We know climate finance is not reaching some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in Oceania. And we know they are often left out of key decisions being made on adaptation and mitigation."

Recent extreme weather events affecting Aotearoa New Zealand — and power blackouts in mid-Au-

gust — are a further reminder that people need to address energy sources as well as supply and demand issues. Humanity must exercise careful stewardship of earth's resources for the benefit of all, Caritas stated.

"We cannot tackle the climate crisis solely through new technology and spending money," said Mrs Hickey.

"We need to address intertwined social, economic and environmental issues together. Reduction of greenhouse gases and real climate justice can't be at further cost to the earth, the poor or future generations."

The Caritas network and other

Catholic civil society personnel will be present at critical United Nations conferences later this year on biodiversity and climate. They will be calling for strong action to protect and restore the environment for future generations, and ensure the poor of today are not left out.

"We need an integrated approach that recognises the good things of the earth, and the products we derive from nature are to be shared fairly and equitably. We need to ensure all people can lead healthy, sustainable lives with dignity, and connected to their respective cultures and communities. We are one human family, sharing a common home," Caritas stated.

Voices lifted to heaven in Jubilate 2021

by INFORM EDITORIAL TEAM

The Transfiguration, where Jesus was seen as the clear bridge between heaven and earth, became the focal point on August 6 for more than 700 primary and secondary school singers from 26 schools from throughout Christchurch diocese.

They converged on the recently-restored Christchurch Town Hall for Jubilate, 2021, the Catholic Schools Music Festival. This day was all the more anticipated as Jubilate in the Town Hall was planned for August, 2020, but was postponed for a year due to Covid-19.

For students of Greymouth's St Patrick's Primary School and John Paul II High School, travelling to Jubilate in time for the morning rehearsals meant an early start and a long day. They also had an overnight stay before returning to the West Coast in the nick of time, a day before Arthur's Pass was closed due to heavy snow.

Young singers from Timaru's Sacred Heart School and Fairlie's St Joseph's, joined St Joseph's, Ashburton, on their pilgrimage north in time to join singers from Christchurch city for a morning of rehearsals. Two rehearsals prepared all these singers for a midday Mass, celebrated by Vicar for Education Fr John Adams, and concelebrated by some of his brother priests.

The Jubilate choir was joined by family and friends to form a thousand-strong congregation to sing in Latin, Te Reo Māori and English, hear the words of Sacred Scripture, and receive Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Quality hymnody expressing the Catholic faith was supported by the associate city organist, Nicholas Sutcliffe, on the newly-restored Town Hall organ.

In his homily, Fr Adams invited students to seek for the transcendentals, "The Good, the True and the Beautiful". He promised the congregation that, in Jubilate, those present would experience "a little slice of heaven".

After a beautiful and reverent Mass, students stepped out into a cool, wet Christchurch day, ready to return for a two-and-a-half-hour evening concert with an anticipated audience of more than 1400. Before that, a diocesan-sponsored organ recital was given at 5pm to an appreciative audience, fulfilling Mozart's claim that the organ "is the king of instruments", and the Church's teaching that it is its chief liturgical instrument.

A near capacity Town Hall audience witnessed the talent of this 700-strong body of singers. The audience were invited to join their voices with the choir in singing core



Priests at the front of the altar before the Mass at Jubilate, 2021 in the Christchurch Town Hall

Catholic hymnody. They listened to featured choirs, St Mary's Manchester Street, St James' Aranui, and St Teresa's Riccarton share their faith in song. They enjoyed the sight and sound of senior choirs from St Bede's and Marian Colleges share from their "Big Sing" repertoire. The talent and experience of the Cathedral choir was also present. All this music was led by a range of conductors and accompanists drawn from these schools and knitted together by St Mary's principal and master of ceremonies, David O'Neill. Tertiary brass and string instrumentalists demonstrated to their young audience the artistry and beauty that can be achieved with talent and commitment. The organ remained a feature, with the famous

Bach and Widor toccatas concluding each half.

Diocesan sacred music advisor Ken Joblin has directed Jubilate for six years. Five of these events have taken place in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. He invited the audience to "really sense we are joining our voices with heaven as we sing the great hymn, 'For All the Saints'."

This they did, lifting the roof in singing the alleluias which conclude each verse. With the immediacy of cellphones and social media, Jubilate was being celebrated as soon as the event ended.

"We will evaluate all feedback and we are thrilled by what took place," said Mr Joblin. "I think heaven heard us and joined us in song."

Olympic medals for former students of Catholic colleges

by MICHAEL OTTO

At least three former students of Catholic secondary schools in New Zealand won medals at the recent Tokyo Olympics.

Grace Prendergast, who went to Villa Maria College in Christchurch, won a gold medal alongside Kerri Gowler in the women's pair event in rowing. Prendergast was also a member of the New Zealand women's rowing eight that won a silver medal.

Posts on Villa Maria College's facebook page expressed the school community's pride in Prendergast's achievements, and also in those of Maddie Davidson, another former student, who was placed tenth in the women's trampoline event.

Grace Prendergast responded to video of the Villa Maria students cheering and applauding during the women's eight final. Prendergast wrote "Thank you so much!! This is an incredible thing to watch!! The support has been absolutely amazing."

Villa Maria responded by saying

"you continue to be an inspiration to our whole community! We are so proud of you! Thank you for all the time you take to mentor our rowers too, they can't wait to see you again soon!"

Two former students of Catholic colleges won Olympic medals for rugby in 2021. Ruby Tui, who went to John Paul II High School in Greymouth, was a member of the New Zealand women's team that won gold. Sam Dickson, who went to St Thomas of Canterbury College, Christchurch, was in the men's team which won a silver medal.

According to information in a table prepared by Stuff, other former students of Catholic secondary schools in New Zealand to compete in Tokyo were:- Teneale Hatton, Carmel College, Auckland (Canoeing); Zac Reid, Francis Douglas Memorial College, New Plymouth, (Swimming); Erika Fairweather, Kavanagh College, Dunedin (Swimming); Carina Doyle, Kavanagh College, Dunedin (Swimming); Ethan Mitchell, Sacred Heart College, Auckland (Cycling); Michael Woud, Sacred Heart College, Auckland (Soccer); Hope Ralph, Sacred Heart Girls' College, New Plymouth (Hockey); Holly Edmonston, St Kevin's College, Oamaru (Cycling); Marco Stamenic, St Patrick's College, Silverstream (Soccer); Quentin Rew, St Patrick's College, Wellington, (Athletics — walker); Clayton Lewis, St Patrick's College, Wellington (Soccer); Liberato Cacace, St Patrick's College, Wellington (Soccer); Stephen Jones, St Peter's College, Auckland (Rowing); Paige Satchell, John Paul College, Rotorua (Soccer).



Grace Prendergast (Photo: Vera Bucsu/Wikipedia)



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Pope: Crises are signs that Church is still alive

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Difficulties and crises within the Catholic Church are not signs of a church in decline, but one that is alive and living through challenges, just like men and women today, Pope Francis said in a video message.

"Let us remember that the Church always has difficulties, always is in crisis, because she's alive. Living things go through crises. Only the dead don't have crises," he said.

In a video message released by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network on August 3, the Pope offered his prayer intention for the month of August, which is dedicated to the Church's mission of evangelisation.

At the start of each month, the network posts a short video of the Pope offering his specific prayer intention.

The Church's call to evangelise and not proselytise, he said, is more than just a vocation; it is a part of the Catholic Church's identity.

"We can only renew the Church by discerning God's will in our daily life and embarking on a transformation guided by the Holy Spirit. Our own reform as persons is that transformation. Allowing the Holy Spirit, the gift of God, in our hearts reminds us what Jesus taught, and helps us put it into practice," the Pope said.

Catholics can renew the Church only by "discerning God's will in our daily life" and putting Jesus' teaching into practice, he added.

"Let us begin reforming the Church with a reform of ourselves, without prefabricated ideas, without ideological prejudices, without rigidity, but rather by moving forward based on spiritual

experience — an experience of prayer, an experience of charity, an experience of service," the Pope said.

Before reciting his prayer intention, Pope Francis expressed his hope for "an even more missionary option" that "goes out to meet others without proselytism".

"Let us pray for the Church, that she may receive from the Holy Spirit the grace and strength to reform herself in the light of the Gospel," he said.

The Pope Video was first launched in 2016 to encourage people to join an estimated 50 million Catholics who already had a more formal relationship with the prayer network — better known by its former title, the Apostleship of Prayer.

The prayer network is more than 170 years old.

Aussie Mass becomes longest-running show on national TV

SYDNEY (CNS) — A weekly 30-minute Mass broadcast into people's living rooms has become the longest-running programme on Australian television.

Celebrating its 50th year in early August, "Mass For You at Home" was originally aimed at those unable to attend their local parish due to illness, infirmity, being homebound or in prison, but today has attracted a new audience due to Covid-19, and its small but loyal following is flourishing since churches were forced to close.

With an emergency currently declared across the state of New South Wales, and large numbers of the country's most populous state in lockdown indefinitely due to an outbreak of the delta strain, the programme is more relevant and popular than ever.

And it's not just Catholics tuning in; producers are receiving increasing numbers of requests from non-Catholics wanting more information about the faith after watching a Mass.

Filmed at Fairy Meadow's St John Vianney Co-Cathedral in the diocese

of Wollongong, south of Sydney, the broadcast has come a long way since the first Mass was recorded in a television studio featuring fake stained-glass windows and a recorded choir, in August, 1971.

Today, produced by the diocese of Wollongong in partnership with the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, it features state-of-the-art technology, as well as signers for the deaf community.

Wollongong Bishop Brian Mascord said that, while much has changed in the 50 years since it was first broadcast on free-to-air television, the need for the Mass remains.

He said, over the five decades, hundreds of priests and laypeople contributed to the ministry's history by celebrating Mass, reading Scripture and singing.

"Father Michael King's vision from the early 1970s was to provide spiritual nourishment to the housebound, and that is still relevant today," he said.

"To bring a real sense of the sacred to people, inviting them to be part of a scattered yet connected



A Sydney family watches 'Mass For You at Home' on television during the latest Covid-19 lockdown in early August (CNS photo/Giovanni Portelli, *The Catholic Weekly*)

worshipping community, is a privilege and a great responsibility that we take seriously," he said, adding

diocesan staffers were "humbled by the letters, emails and calls we receive from our grateful community".

Spiritual abuse more frequent than thought, Vatican official says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican is investigating about a dozen founders of congregations of consecrated or religious life, and the most common allegations involve abuse of power or conscience, financial corruption or problems associated with "affectivity", said a top official.

Spanish Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, spoke about his office's work overseeing religious congregations, in an interview on July 30 with "Vida Nueva", a Spanish weekly magazine on religion.

He said the Church has very "clear and precise criteria" when it comes to discerning the authenticity of a religious charism when determining whether to approve a new congregation or religious order.

Among these criteria, he underlined: "communion with the Church; the presence of spiritual fruits; the social dimension of evangelisation;

high regard for other forms of consecrated life in the Church; and the profession of the Catholic faith", referring to the doctrinal congregation's 2016 letter "Iuvenescit Ecclesia" to the world's bishops regarding charismatic gifts in the life and the mission of the Church.

"Sadly, it must be confessed that, at times, it is difficult to discover the authenticity and originality of a charism in some realities," the archbishop said.

At the moment, the congregation is investigating about a dozen founders of institutes that come under his office's authority, he said, without naming the founders or the communities involved.

"In most cases, these are associations whose canonical recognition is underway," he said.

However, he said, in addition to that number, there are some institutes which had already been canonically recognised and whose founders are being investigated, too, "so the number increases significantly".

Archbishop Rodríguez also said he was not counting communities or institutes of consecrated life that the congregation has already investigated and responded to, such as by appointing an outside delegate or, in some cases, suppressing the institute.

"It should also be noted that there have been some cases in which, after the necessary investigation, the female founder has left consecrated life or the male founder has been reduced to the lay state," Archbishop Rodríguez said.

"All of this does a lot of damage to consecrated life and to the Church itself," he said. "Therefore, much more attention should be paid when discerning the need, benefit and usefulness for

the Church when approving associations whose canonical recognition is underway."

It is a bishop's right to approve such associations, he said, "but also a grave responsibility", and discernment is needed.

He said the most common motives for opening an investigation are one or more of the following: problems with the institute's assets being used for personal gain; abuse of power or spiritual abuse, including abuse of conscience; and "problems related to affectivity".

Abuse refers to "any psychological, physical or sexual violence that takes place in a religious context, or any manipulation that damages a person's relationship with God and with their own inner being", he said.

When asked whether spiritual abuse was very common, the archbishop said such abuse or the abuse of conscience "is usually more common than you might think. Pope Francis defines it as spiritual harassment, manipulation of consciences, brainwashing. This type of abuse usually occurs in the sphere of spiritual direction or within a community, especially when the internal forum (the individual's conscience and spiritual state) is not distinguished from the external one".

This is abuse rooted in "clericalism", which affects not just clergy, but any man or woman with authority, he added.

When it comes to sexual abuse, in general it is against other members of the religious institute, "but sometimes also against minors or vulnerable people", he said. It is also important to remember that sexual abuse is not always the only problem, but can also have spiritual abuse or an abuse of power at its core.

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Vaccine proof not needed for Mass in Italy

ROME (CNS) — Proof of vaccination will not be required for people going to Mass in Italy, but will be necessary for access to Church-run museums, conferences and for wedding receptions and other festivities held in a church hall, the Italian bishops' conference said.

The Italian government announced in late July that, beginning on August 6, people over the age of 12 must have a European "green pass", a vaccination certificate available both as a printout and a QR code on a smartphone, to enter a variety of indoor venues, including gyms,

restaurants, museums and movie theatres.

The Italian bishops' conference posted a note about "the green pass and liturgical celebrations" on its website on July 29.

The pass, it said, is not required for going to Mass or joining in processions, but health measures adopted in May, 2020, when the Covid-19 lockdown ended remain in effect: People going to Mass must wear a mask; pews or chairs must be spaced at least three feet apart; the faithful may receive Communion only in the hand; there should be no shaking

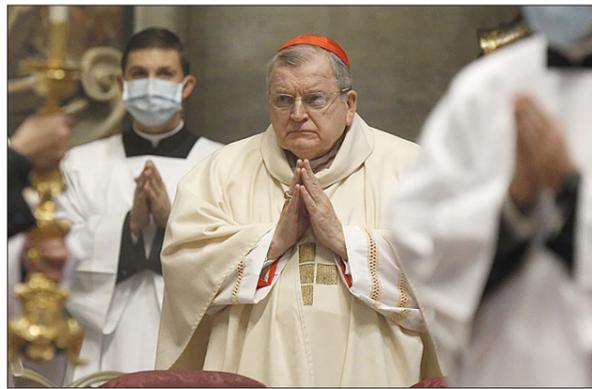
hands at the sign of peace. However, the note said, the green pass is required for people entering Church-owned or Church-operated movie theatres, museums, restaurants and coffee bars, sporting events, conferences, indoor swimming pools, gyms, social centres and reception venues. Children under the age of 12 and people with a medical certificate proving they should not be vaccinated are exempt.

The note on the green pass was published along with a letter from Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti, president of the Italian bishops' confer-

ence, thanking health care workers, priests, the elderly and families for all the sacrifices they have made during the pandemic, and urging them to continue to be cautious.

"The resumption of pastoral activities in the fall probably will still be conditioned by the pandemic," he said. "We are convinced, however, that the synodal process, which will be in full swing right after the summer, will be a propitious occasion for relaunching and accompanying communities, as well as a prophetic voice with respect to the demands of the present and the future."

US Cardinal Burke says he has tested positive for Covid-19



Cardinal Raymond Burke (CNS Photo)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — United States Cardinal Raymond Burke said he has tested positive for the virus that causes Covid-19.

In an August 10 tweet, he wrote: "Praised be Jesus Christ! I wish to inform you that I have recently tested positive for the Covid-19 virus. Thanks be to God, I am resting comfortably and receiving excellent medical care. Please pray for me as I begin my recovery. Let us trust in Divine Providence. God bless you."

The 73-year-old cardinal, a native of La Crosse, Wisconsin, served as bishop of that diocese from 1995 to

2004, as archbishop of St Louis from 2004 to 2008, and as prefect of the Vatican's Apostolic Signatura from 2008 to his resignation in 2014.

While the cardinal often resides in Italy, he travels extensively, and was believed to be in Wisconsin at the time of the tweet.

The Catholic News Agency reported that the cardinal's tweet put to rest speculation circulating on social media about his health.

The cardinal was a keynote speaker at Family Life International's "Living the Splendour of Truth" conference in Auckland in 2018.



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Bishop of Plymouth calls for prayers after shooting

MANCHESTER, England (CNS) — An English bishop called on Catholics of his diocese to pray for the victims of a shooting spree in which a 3-year-old girl and four others were murdered.

Bishop Mark O'Toole of Plymouth, a diocese that covers the southwest corner of England, described the August 12 massacre as "terrible", and offered prayers and support for those killed and for their loved ones.

"Let us pray in our churches this weekend for all those affected, and for the people of Plymouth," the bishop added.

The gunman has been identified as Jake Davison, 22, a body builder and apprentice crane driver, who reportedly has links to the Incel ("involuntary celibate") movement.

Italian postal workers intercept suspicious letter to Pope

ROME (CNS) — Italian police have launched an investigation after postal workers discovered an envelope containing three bullets, and addressed to "the pope".

News reports said the stamp on the envelope indicated it came from France, and the bullets were 9mm Flobert-round bullets.

Reportedly, there was a message inside making reference to the Vatican's financial

operations.

The envelope had written on it in pen and with poor handwriting: "The pope. Vatican City. St. Peter's Square in Rome."

The envelope was flagged by employees at a mail sorting facility near Milan in the early hours of August 9, and was handed over to Italy's military police as authorities coordinated their investigation.

According to Wiki-

pedia, 9mm Flobert shotguns are most often used for pest control and face very little to no restriction in Europe, even in countries with strict gun laws, due to their limited power and short range.

German archbishop pledges to name pastoral minister for LGBT community

BERLIN (CNS) — Archbishop Heiner Koch said he would appoint a pastoral minister as a contact person for gays, the Berlin Archdiocese announced.

The German Catholic news agency KNA reported Archbishop Koch made the pledge when he met with representatives of the Lesbian and Gay Association of Berlin-Brandenburg, with the archbishop saying this was important so that the marginalisation and discrimination against the LGBTQ community could be addressed in the Church without fear. Archbishop Koch said he regarded the double marginalisation of Catholic gays — within the Catholic community as well as in the LGBTQ community — as "problematic and painful".

The reason behind the dis-

ussion, which the Lesbian and Gay Association had requested, was to look at the contradictions within the Catholic Church and the simultaneous solidarity shown toward LGBTQ people in the wake of the Vatican's renewed rejection last February of any Church blessing for same-sex couples, KNA reported.

Ulrich Kessler, a member of the board of the Lesbian and Gay Association of Berlin-Brandenburg, said he had been surprised and thrilled "that the rainbow flags were also waving from Catholic Church spires, decorated Internet pages and posts in the social media, and that many church congregations had called out for blessing services".

Archbishop Koch asked for understanding that, as bishop, "for the sake of the unity of the

Church, I cannot disregard such a position from Rome". At the same time, he said he was committed "without reservation to award God's blessing to the love and relationship of people". He pledged that he would continue the discussion, including within the framework of the Synodal Path reform project of the Catholic Church in Germany.

But he said he regarded it as problematic "when Church political pressure should be exerted by means of blessing services".

This remark was seen as a reference to an action last May dubbed "Love Wins", when blessing services were held in many Catholic churches around Germany for same-sex and divorced and remarried couples in a protest against the Vatican.

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South Island students win Caritas songwriting comp

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Two South Island students have won categories in Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand's 2021 SINGout4JUSTICE songwriting competition.

Theo Parker, a Year 12 student at Garin College, Nelson, was the winner of the senior category (Years 11-13).

And Oliver Lodge, a Year 10 student at Kavanagh College, Dunedin, took out the junior category (Years 7-10).

The theme for this year's competition was "A new way forward".

A Caritas statement noted that, since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the world has changed, and everyone needs to find a new way forward.

"There is a real need for love, justice and peace to be at the heart of any change, as we have come to see so clearly that we are all part of one global family."

A team of judges at Caritas scored each entry in SINGout4JUSTICE 2021 based on composition and performance. Submissions for this year showcased so much talent that it was difficult for judges to choose a winner, Caritas stated.

Many songs reflected messages "of reflecting, healing, uniting together and creating peace where peace may be a challenge", that tied in neatly with the theme this year. The judges enjoyed listening to every song and were impressed with the quality and diverse range of compositions.

Theo's song, *New Day*, was inspired by the



Above: Theo Parker; Above right: Oliver Lodge with Anamika Jones, who sang the song for him.

negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic experience felt by the global community and encourages listeners to care for each other, ensuring "truth and love in every place".

Oliver's song, *He Ara Whakamua*, was inspired by the quiet and slow pace of life during the lockdown last year, in which people were given the time to reflect. *He Ara Whakamua* reflects Pope Francis' message in his prayer of solidarity reminding people that "we are all in the same boat", and that people need to support each other.

"The SO4J competition always inspires me," said Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand director Julianne Hickey, "as the young people's talents and gifts are shared through their song-writing. This year's winners are creative, meaningful and show their commitment to a better, more just world".

All are invited to listen to the winning entries on the Caritas website, caritas.org.nz/singout4justice. The website also lists those students who were highly commended by the judges of the competition.

Cullinane College students can have Covid-19 vaccines this term

by ROWENA OREJANA

Cullinane College students will soon be able to get the Covid-19 jab after the Whanganui District Health Board moved forward the availability of the vaccine to term 3.

Cullinane College principal Justin Harper said they are happy for their students to make "informed decisions around their health care".

"We here at Cullinane College recognise the seriousness of this pandemic and the dramatic adverse implications involved should New Zealand have open transmission like other parts of the world," Mr Harper said.

"The vaccination programme is supported by MOH, MOE and our diocese. Our students are in-

formed, intelligent and responsible citizens and, for many of them, they will be happy to volunteer for an inoculation."

A spokesperson from the Whanganui DHB said the Ministry of Health was looking at term 4 for the vaccination of secondary students, but realised that that time period may not be convenient for the students.

"As term 4 is busy with exams, and senior students leaving school early and possibly going into work experience or similar schemes, Whanganui DHB has decided that term 3 will be better to make the vaccine available to the greater number of students," the spokesperson said.

Nationally, people aged 60 and over were able

to get vaccinated from July 28, people aged 50 and over from August 13, those aged 40 and over from August 18, those aged 30 and over from August 25, and over-16s by September 1.

Whanganui DHB is rolling out the Covid-19 vaccine to everyone over the age of 16 who wants it, as per the national rollout plan.

"As we have good relationships with our schools and have delivered HPV and other vaccines on school premises, our plan is to visit each school and vaccinate all students, teachers and other staff who wish to be vaccinated," the WDHB spokesman said.

Cullinane College had been beset by anti-vaccine protesters distributing vaccine misinformation materials to students and staff.

Family Matters

Helen Luxford



The Legion of Mary

The Legion of Mary turns 100 on September 7, 2021. It was founded in Dublin, Ireland, by Frank Duff, a layman. Such a beautiful milestone. The Legion of Mary is an apostolic organisation of lay people in the Catholic Church that has more than 3 million active members. The Legion is represented all over the world. The Legion received an apostolic blessing from Pope John Paul II on October 30, 1982, and this Pope said in his address to them "you intend to render your service to every person, who is the image of Christ, with the spirit and solicitude of Mary".

The work of the active members of the Legion includes door-to-door evangelisation, parishioner visitation, prison ministry, visitation to the sick and aged, crowd contact, religious education and visiting the newly baptised. They are an extension of the hands of the parish priest. During Covid, the works continued through zoom and phoning parishioners, providing a friendly social contact to them in the times of isolation in lockdown.

Prayer — and specifically the rosary — is a core component of the works of the Legion. There are roles for active members and auxiliary members. As a Church and a faith, we know how important prayer is. Being an auxiliary member complements being an active member. An auxiliary recites the

prayers on the Tessera (the Legion's prayer card) every day, as well as five decades of the Rosary offered for the intentions of Our Blessed Lady. This is a blessed way to actively support the Legion.

Marian spirituality has always been a strong part of my faith. I do marvel at how many struggles Mary went through as a young, unmarried woman, as she had a rocky start to motherhood. Then, as Jesus grew, it seems to me that she would have slowly had an awakening to the divinity of her son, and to the glorious mission for which he was here on earth. Having to watch your son be crucified would have to be one of the most painful and heart-breakingly desolate moments that any mother could possibly imagine. Mary was present at Pentecost, showing the special bond she had with the disciples. She was a woman of incredible strength and fortitude.

I do feel like my life, in many ways, is very different from Mary's — we have four children, different challenges in this modern world, and I have a vocational job outside the home. My inspiration about Mary comes from many corners. I spent a memorable four weeks with the Missionaries of Charity in my early 20s in Manila, Philippines. We joined them saying the rosary while kneeling on a hard wood floor in the oppressive heat. The multiple sacrifices were raw, and led to a much deeper sense of prayer and heavenly

connection. I remember the introduction of the Luminous mysteries as recommended by St John Paul II, in his apostolic letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (October, 2002). These made perfect sense to me, as the public ministry of Jesus was missing between the original three sets of mysteries. "Through you, O Mary, we have a most sure pledge of our resurrection": St Ephraem.

St Michael's, Remuera, is hosting the centenary celebrations on Saturday September 11, from 8.30am to 4.30pm. The Centenary mass will be celebrated at 11am. The day will include inspirational talks. This will be preceded by a Novena starting Thursday September 2, with novena and Mass at 7.15pm, concluding Friday September 10 with novena and Mass at 7:15pm. For more information go to www.legionofmary.org.nz

John 19:25-27: "Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son', and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother'. From that time on, this disciple took her into his home."

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.

Neeson's driving on ice

by NEVIL GIBSON

Cinema owners have reason to be grateful to Liam Neeson, a Northern Irish Catholic whose late-stage career is riding high since he became a favourite antihero in action movies. This upturn occurred in 2008 with *Taken*, a revenge thriller that spawned two sequels, in 2012 and 2014.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the 68-year-old Neeson drew audiences back to theatres with two action shows, *Honest Thief* and *The Marksman*. They were released over three months from last November, going to No. 1 at the box office when multiplexes were being starved of new releases.

They resonated because Neeson — a stage actor who starred in a number of prestige movies (*Schindler's List*, *Love Actually*) — had honed the persona of a loner, sometimes even a loser, who could deal rough justice to a wide range of baddies.

Rather than an awesome man of action, he was usually past his prime, and was given one last shot to make a difference.

In *The Marksman* (2021), he was a Vietnam vet, bankrupt rancher and grieving widower, who helps an illegal immigrant mother and son to escape from a Mexican crime cartel.

Some roles involved using past experience in law enforcement for private assignments (*The Commuter*, 2018; *A Walk Among the Tombstones*, 2014), or reluctantly being pushed into settling some injustice or egregious crime (*The Grey*, 2012; *Non-Stop*, 2014; *Cold Pursuit*, 2019).

Other parts put him on the other side of the law as a bank robber trying to go straight (*Honest Thief*, 2020) or a former hit-man defending his son against the mob (*Run All Night*,



Liam Neeson (right) in a scene from *The Ice Road*

Movie Review

2015).

The Ice Road (Rialto Distribution) also arrives in cinemas through independent channels, rather than through the major studios.

Neeson plays a big-rig driver who throws in his job rather than see his war-damaged brother and mechanic (Marcus Thomas) becoming the victim of an over-demanding boss. They pick up an "impossible" mission to drive some heavy lifesaving equipment to a diamond mine collapse in northern Manitoba, Canada.

The three-truck convoy also comprises the organiser and old-timer (Laurence Fishburne) and a young Native American (Amber Midthunder), who adds a Millennials' political angle, as well as having a brother among the trapped miners.

Their journey takes a short-cut over winter-only roads along

iced-over rivers that are already thawing. The freight is on the upper limit on what is safe and time is limited to save the miners.

Plenty can go wrong in this set-up and, of course, it does so with accelerating speed.

The physical hazards aren't the only ones standing in their way. These include the mining company's corrupt management, a dodgy insurance agent, and politicians trying to cash in (literally) on the media publicity.

The script is well below par as against Neeson's better outings, but he is nothing if not stoic in carrying on regardless.

Writer-director Jonathan Hensleigh is best known for his script work on the *Indiana Jones* and *Jumanji* series, as well as *Armageddon* (1998).

Rating: Parental guidance. 109 minutes.

CLIPS

Pig (Madman)

Nicolas Cage concedes to no one, even Liam Neeson, when it comes to being endlessly battered and beaten before he reaches some form of redemption. In one of his best roles, he is a top chef-turned-recluse, who leaves his off-the-grid hideaway in Oregon to recover his prized truffle-hunting pig. It has been stolen by connections to a shady restaurant owner, whose son (Alex Wolff, *Hereditary*) has ambitions of his own in Portland's mafia-like food business. A tangled story unfolds as the duo travel around the city in a yellow Camaro. The plotting and sparse dialogue are as dense as Cage's bloodied and dishevelled appearance, which reaches absurdist heights in a lunch at one flash eating establishment. Writer-director Michael Sarnoski's feature debut is headed for cult status among Cage's fans, if a preview audience's reaction is any guide. Rating: Mature audiences. 91 minutes.

Juniper

(Rialto Distribution)

Admirers of Charlotte Rampling need little convincing that her past roles and performances are worth seeing, whether it's arthouse fare (*45 Years*) or dramatic television (*Broadchurch*). She was the central character of *I, Anna* (2012), directed by Barnaby Southcombe, her son from her marriage to the late Kiwi PR man Bryan Southcombe. The Kiwi connection helped when first-time feature writer-director Matthew Saville chose her for his autobiographical relationship story between a grandmother and grandson. Wheelchair-bound and addicted to gin, Rampling is no conventional nanny. She was a news photographer in world trouble spots, and is spending her twilight years as the reluctant guest of her uncaring son (Marton Csokas) in the New Zealand countryside. The grandson (George Ferrier) is also an indifferent part of the household but, in a character-driven plot, they eventually come to terms with each other. The slow pace and laconic storytelling are typical of many debut Kiwi productions. But Rampling fans are likely to overlook these flaws. Rating: Mature audiences. 94 minutes.

The Godmother (La daronne)

(Rialto Distribution)

Isabelle Huppert is seven years younger than Rampling, but has a similar profile in French cinema. As a translator of Arabic in the Paris police's narcotics unit, she is bottom of the pecking order. She is struggling to support an ailing mother in a nursing home and two daughters, as well as having a relationship with her boss. While transcribing tapped phone calls, she becomes aware of a big drug deal involving the son of her mother's Moroccan carer. This offers a path to instant wealth, something Huppert seizes by adopting the flashy mantle of "Mama Weed", an Arabic-speaking drug queen. Also in the racial mix is a money-conscious Chinese landlady, who runs a rival crime gang of sorts. This is a crime caper that works both as a farce and as a thriller. It is directed at breakneck speed and efficiency by Jean-Paul Salomé who, with his son Antonie, adapted the screenplay from a novel by Hannelore Cayre. Rating: Mature audiences. 104 minutes.

Using papal guidance, author offers practical, purposeful online habits

#RULES OF ENGAGEMENT: 8 Christian Habits for Being Good and Doing Good Online by Ann M. Garrido. Ave Maria Press (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2021). 112 pp., US\$13.95. Reviewed by NANCY ROBERTS (CNS)

Social media can be a maelstrom. This "sea of pings and dings, tweets and posts, 'likes' and hashtags", as author Ann M. Garrido calls it, grips us and won't let go. Yet it also gives us many opportunities to respond to the Gospel call to do good in the world. In this succinct, practical guide, she shows how we can practise Christian values online.

Garrido is a homiletics professor at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St Louis (Missouri) who has written seven books, including "Redeeming Conflict". Her gift of inspiring thoughtful approaches to everyday challenges shines in "#Rules of Engagement".

In lively prose, she outlines eight practical habits for Christians using social media, based on recent World Communications Day addresses of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. They include, first of all, to "clarify your purpose", which means to think intentionally about why you use social media. "If your purpose . . . has nothing to do with building connection and community, you should step away from the keyboard; you are not yet ready to engage social media as a Christian", Garrido writes.

Another key habit is to "know your sources", and she offers precise, practical tips to evaluate their truthfulness and accuracy. It's more important than ever to identify and rely on trustworthy news sources, especially after the last two US presidential elections, which have highlighted

the dominance of bots and troll farms that seek to create societal discord.

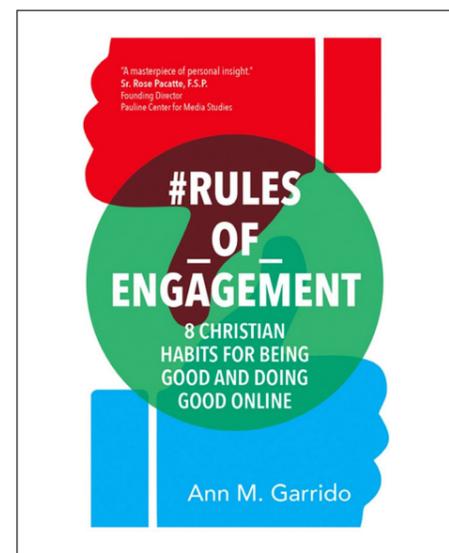
No one has the time to fact-check every single social media post in their feed, so Garrido recommends that either you "scroll on by" or run the source by Media Bias/Fact Check (mediabiasfactcheck.com), or other fact-checking sites she lists. She cautions that, if a story has a strong emotional effect on you, first check on its factualness before sharing it online. This can go a long way toward reducing the onslaught of online "fake news".

And resist the temptation to post content that's "intentionally inflammatory . . . for the sake of the common good".

Garrido also shares the insight that it's vital for Christians to recognise their own biases. Here she quotes the words of Pope Francis from his 2018 World Communications Day address: "Many people interact in homogeneous digital environments impervious to differing perspectives and opinions. Disinformation thus thrives on the absence of healthy confrontation with other sources of information that could effectively challenge prejudices and generate constructive dialogue; instead, it risks turning people into unwilling accomplices in spreading biased and baseless ideas."

To avoid these online "echo chambers", we can seek to enlarge our social media bubble to include people and sources (fact-checked, of course) that offer a broader perspective. The goal here is not to react, but to learn.

Ultimately, it's vital to recognise that there's a real person present behind the messages they post on social media. This is "a person who feels



and struggles and has up and down days, just as I do", Garrido writes. Aim to treat this person with dignity, even when you disagree with their ideas. And remember that face-to-face, in-person contact is the gold standard.

Use your social media presence to "develop and deepen" the relationships that are most important to you.

Nancy Roberts directs the journalism programme at the University at Albany, SUNY, and has written/co-edited two books about Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker.

THE CHURCH YEAR

Advent

Christmas

Ordinary Time

Lent

Eastertime

Ordinary Time

We are here: ▼ Twenty-first Sunday

A duty to care for and respect one another

Scripture

by Fr Kevin Waldie sm

Today's Scripture passages make sense when we view them with eyes of faith. For at their heart lies a message that invites us to respond to what is revealed through each biblical author.

Joshua's carefully crafted words open up the choice every believer must make. The relationship that Israel's God has forged with his people demands commitment. Therefore, all who are members of God's holy people are obliged to adhere to whatever distinguishes them from other groups. That is why Joshua repeatedly uses the word "serve" to signal the degree of commitment it takes in order to belong to the

group.

The advice Paul offers in Ephesians acts in a fashion similar to Joshua's verses. But here it is the relationship with Christ that is central. All within the Church are bound together in a like-minded undertaking. As a communion of persons, whoever they may be, every member's duty is to care for and respect one another. In faith, this connectedness thus reminds us to be constantly attentive to our mutual needs and so build up the example set by the Church.

At the end of chapter six in John's Gospel, the words uttered by Jesus are somewhat chal-

August 22: Twenty-first Sunday of Ordinary Time. **Readings:** 1. Joshua 24:1-2,15-18; **Psalm:** 34; 2. Ephesians 5:21-32; **Gospel:** John 6:60-69.

lenging. In essence, they ask everyone who is listening to decide whether they want to be genuine members of Jesus' band of disciples. Simon Peter's response to Jesus' challenge comes as a clear expression of faith in the spirit and power of what he has just heard. For all of us, the key to the future is revealed through Jesus.

The message delivered to us in Joshua, Ephesians and John is really quite a simple one. If, in faith, we know to what we belong, then day by day we are duty-bound to act according to the demands of being a communion of believers.

The standard by which we are to measure our daily lives

The tenor of these biblical texts is similar to that of the readings of last week. The authors are different, but their focus is on the way in which we conduct ourselves in our everyday lives.

In Deuteronomy, the repeated vocabulary is oriented towards a proper appreciation of the human-divine relationship. The biblical author is rightly concerned to impress upon us that all statutes, ordinances and commandments are a guide. They help us lead the kind of life that has been lovingly decreed for us while we honour the Lord as our God. Interestingly, the lectionary text concludes by noting that the divine instructions are to be carried out today. In our reception of what the Lord has to say to us, the present mo-

ment is, therefore, vitally important.

For James, acknowledging God's presence in our lives is a must. The divine Word we hear is spoken to help us live grounded in sound conduct and proper concern for the good of our brothers and sisters. As James expresses it, we are called not only to pay attention to God's Word, but also to act upon it. This kind of instruction clearly intends to ensure we remain dedicated to the holy life willed by God the Father.

Central to the passage from Mark's Gospel is the call to align ourselves with the teaching of Jesus. This call comes in the wake of the controversy sparked by the Pharisees and Scribes. They

August 29: Twenty-second Sunday of Ordinary Time. **Readings:** 1. Deuteronomy 4:1-2,6-8; **Psalm:** 15; 2. James 1:17-18,21-22,27; **Gospel:** Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23.

have failed to recognise the deeper significance of Jesus' bonds with his disciples. Therefore, the heart is given extra-special importance. For it is out of someone's deep experience of the divine that due observance of God's commandments and right behaviour flow.

Clearly, today's readings present the standard by which we are to measure our daily lives. Knowing our religious duties, we consciously choose which direction our lives take.

SAINTED GLASS



On September 2, Luke's Gospel records the calling of the first disciples. Jesus appropriated Peter's boat and preached to the crowd from it. Then he astounded Peter and his crew by providing them with a huge catch of fish. He told them they would now be fishers of people, and they left everything and followed him. This window from St Mark's church, Carterton, shows the scene from Matthew's account, rather than Luke's. I have always wondered how much they knew about Jesus before they dropped everything. In any event, the call was impossible to resist. Have you ever been called to do something for Jesus?

— Glen McCullough

Jesuit biblical scholar and world's oldest cardinal dies

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — French Cardinal Albert Vanhoye, a well-known New Testament scholar, and the world's oldest cardinal, died in Rome on July 29, just five days after celebrating his 98th birthday.

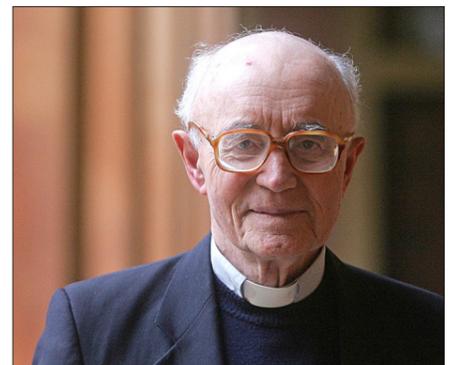
In a message of condolence, Pope Francis praised the cardinal as "a zealous religious, spiritual son of St Ignatius, expert teacher, authoritative biblical scholar, esteemed rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, (and) diligent and wise collaborator of several dicasteries of the Roman Curia". "I think also of his love for the ministry of preaching, which he exercised with generosity, animated by the passionate desire to communicate the Gospel," the Pope wrote.

Cardinal Vanhoye began teaching at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome in the 1960s, eventually serving as rector of the institute. He also was a long-time member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, which engages in scholarly studies at the behest of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

As secretary of the commission from 1990 to 2001, he worked closely with the commission president, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Cardinal Ratzinger was elected pope in 2005 and made then-Father Vanhoye a cardinal in his first consistory in 2006.

Cardinal Vanhoye was born in 1923, in Hazebrouck, France.

Announcing his death, the Jesuits said, "In 1941, at the age of 18, he crossed all of France on foot to enter



Cardinal Albert Vanhoye (CNS Photo)

the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in Le Vignau. It was a courageous undertaking, as half of France was occupied by the Germans; to reach the free zone, he had to cross the demarcation line clandestinely in order not to be caught and sent to Germany to join the number of young men working for German industry."

Prior to his ordination in 1954, he studied literature at the Sorbonne in Paris; philosophy in Vals, France; and theology in Enghien, Belgium. After ordination, he earned his degree in sacred Scripture from the Jesuit-run biblical institute in Rome in 1958, and gained his doctorate there in 1961. He taught New Testament exegesis in Chantilly, France, for three years before returning to Rome as a professor at the institute.

Cardinal Vanhoye's death leaves the College of Cardinals with 220 members, 123 of whom are under the age of 80 and eligible to enter a conclave to elect a new pope.

Local Diocese News

Philip Sherry farewelled in Mt Maunganui

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Family and friends of the late Philip Sherry gathered on August 2 with parishioners at St Thomas More church in the parish of All Saints By the Sea, Mt Maunganui, where Philip and Margaret Sherry have been parishioners for the last 17 years.

Requiem Mass was concelebrated by Hamilton Bishop Emeritus Denis Browne, Fathers Stuart Young, Prakash Somu, Richard Laurenson, Matthew Gibson and Chris Brady. Also present on the altar were Deacons Henk Gielen and Vince Shaw.

In welcoming the congregation, Bishop Browne said he would be "having words" with Philip Sherry when they next met, as Philip had insisted there was to be no eulogy. This, said Bishop Browne, was a mark of Philip Sherry's humility, but it prevented him from saying what

could be said of "this amazing man. Philip was always putting other people above himself".

Mr Sherry's wishes were that his Requiem Mass would be "a celebration of life, joy and happiness".

Fr Young, who has been parish priest at St Thomas More church for the last six and a half years, gave the homily in which he referred to the Gospel reading of the Beatitudes, "because Philip truly lived out the values contained in them. The Beatitudes describe people who put their total trust in God — and that describes Philip, the gentle, compassionate, and loving way in which he lived his faith."

"Our Scripture readings today, chosen by the family, reflect Philip in so many ways. Philip was devoted to his family; he was devoted to his community. Philip was a great example of faith for his parish and for his

family."

"His family was his very heart. As was his service to the wider community, he did it with no noise or fanfare; he was a caring humble man."

Philip Sherry was one of New Zealand's pre-eminent broadcasters last century. He also served for many years in local government in Auckland, and in the Bay of Plenty.

He was a former president of the Knights of the Southern Cross, and was Master of Ceremonies at the Auckland Eucharistic Convention for many years.

In 2018, Mr Sherry was made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to broadcasting and to local government.

He was a papal Knight of the Order of St Gregory the Great and was also a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.



Philip Sherry was carried from the church by his children and grandchildren in a simple plain wooden casket with a single flower.



Sister Helena Kearns, LCM, presents Sr Mary Scanlon, LCM, with a congregational blessing.

Sr Mary Scanlon, LCM, celebrates platinum jubilee

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

On Thursday, July 1, Sr Mary Scanlon, LCM, celebrated her platinum jubilee at Nazareth Chapel, Christchurch. Some 60 guests rejoiced with Sr Mary achieving 70 years in the Little Company of Mary. Friends and colleagues, Fathers Jeff Drane, SM, and Peter Head, SM, led a liturgy which reached a highlight when Sr Mary lit a jubilee candle and renewed the vows she had made in 1951.

Equally as moving for the congregation was a song played during Communion that had been written by Mary's sister, Norah Rumble, who had died recently. Entitled "The Spirit of Calvary", it personalised the spirit Sr Mary lived by for 70 years, providing a poignant moment in the

liturgy.

Representing the region leader Sr Kathleen Cotterill, LCM, who was unable to attend because of Covid, Sr Helena Kearns presented Sr Mary with a congregational blessing. Sr Mary's brother Patrick and his granddaughter came from Wellington for the event. The congregation of 60 friends and neighbours then gathered in a nearby hall for a happy time of fellowship. The afternoon celebration was completed when Sr Mary cut the jubilee cake, baked for the occasion by Margaret McGowan. Sr Mary expressed her deep thanks to God, her family and the many people who nurtured and supported her over these years of life and service in the Little Company of Mary.

Sr Mary's motto is: "All for Jesus through Mary."

Rare Pompallier portrait to be auctioned in Sept.

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

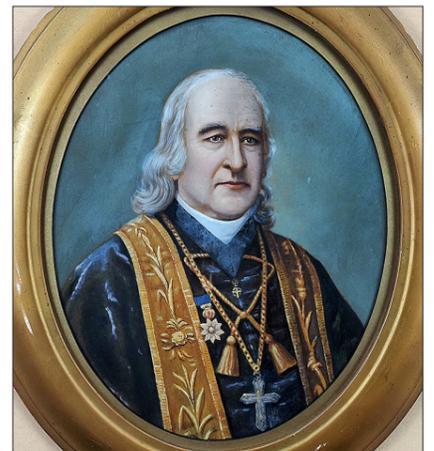
A rare 19th century portrait in oils of Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pompallier is being sold by auction on September 11.

The portrait image will go online on September 1 (for auction on September 11), along with an extensive collection of historic New Zealand artworks, said Henry Newrick of Heritage Art Auctions in Whanganui.

Mr Newrick said that, in his 50-plus years of dealing in art and monitoring auctions, "I have never seen a picture of him come to the market before".

The work is in an oval frame, measuring 36cm x 47cm at the widest points. It is unsigned and, at this stage, the artist is not known.

A free catalogue featuring the Pompallier portrait is available from early August. It will only



The portrait of Bishop Pompallier

be available online as a PDF file and readers can receive a copy by emailing: Henry@HenryNewrick.com, giving their name and email address.

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40 YEARS AGO

NAPIER CHURCH GUTTED

A few blackened stumps mark all that is left of historic St Patrick's Church, Napier, after fire destroyed the 87-year-old building on Saturday afternoon.

The blaze, which began in one of the confessional boxes, appears to have been set deliberately, and the police are treating the fire as suspicious.

Parish priest, Monsignor Tim Hannigan, and Father Mark Richards were watching the Springbok All Blacks Rugby test on television when the fire broke out. They ran to the church, where Father Richards attacked the flames with a hand extinguisher without success.

They managed to save the Blessed Sacrament and a couple of chalices, but everything else was lost.

It is only three years since renovations costing \$100,000 were completed on the church, a survivor of the 1931 earthquake. The renovations included new kauri shingles for the spire, supplied by the Historic Places Trust.



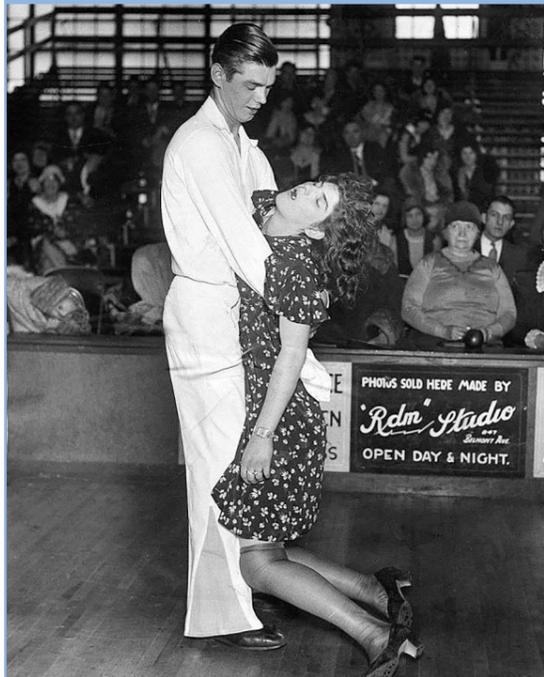
Masses last Sunday were celebrated in the parish centre close by. It seems certain they will continue to be celebrated there until a new church is built.

The historic church was blessed and opened by Archbishop Redwood in November, 1894, at a ceremony attended

by Bishop Luck of Auckland and the future Archbishop Thomas O'Shea, who was then on the staff of the Marist Seminary at Meeanee. The building cost £3160.

— *Zealandia*, August 23, 1981

CAPTION CONTEST



Write the best caption for this photo and win a \$30 Countdown voucher. Send in your ideas by Tuesday, Aug. 31 to Caption Contest 620, NZ Catholic, PO Box 147000, Ponsonby, Auckland 1144. Or email: design@nzcatholic.org.nz Please include your postal address so that your prize, if you win, can be sent to you.

The winner of the Caption Contest from issue 619 (right) was **Christine Cruise, Wellington.**

Some other suggestions were:

"Mummy, Jack's blowing out all the candles! — **Sr Mary Scanlon, Christchurch.**

"When is it my turn to blow out the candles?" — **Russell Watt, Remuera.**

"...H.ee's st...a..a.nd..ing..oo...nm..y.. TO..E..!!" — **Chris Stoddard, Auckland.**

"1, 2, 3, huff, puff and BLOW!" — **Ron Ingram, Hawera.**

"Why did he get a big one?" — **Joan Leonard, Auckland.**

"I've only got two!" — **Eddie Rodden,**



It's my party and I'll cry if I want to!

Christchurch.

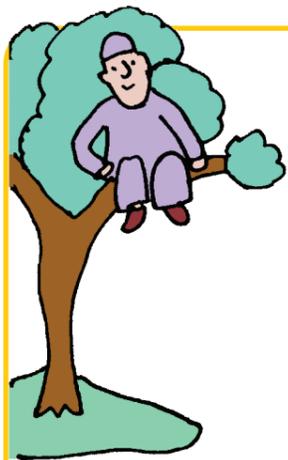
"Now that's wick....ed!!" — **Brian Wilson, Albany**



Papal Prayer

The Pope's universal intention for August: The Church

Let us pray for the Church, that she may receive from the Holy Spirit the grace and strength to reform herself in the light of the Gospel.



Kit's Corner

In the **Bible** there are many stories about **Jesus** sharing **meals**. Of course, Jesus knew that **everyone** has to eat and drink to stay **healthy and strong**, but he also knew there are more things that happen at a meal than just eating and drinking.

Some of the meals we know Jesus shared were: With **Zacchaeus**, the man up the tree (Luke 19:1-10); he had dinner with **Simon** the Pharisee, where something very different happened (Luke 7:36-50); he went to a **wedding** at Cana, where a miracle happened (John 2:1-10); and he had meals with his friends **Mary, Martha** and **Lazarus** (John 12:1-12).

Jesus did not just go to eat and drink. After they had **thanked God** for the meal, they all stayed around and **talked** and **shared** their **stories** and **news**. Sometimes Jesus had something very important to tell the people at the table. At other times they just **enjoyed** being together.

What are **your** meal times like? Do you eat at the table with your family, or in front of TV? Do you **thank God** for the meal (Grace)? Do you listen to the others and talk to them? Do you thank the person who did the cooking? Do you help to tidy up?

It is a **good idea** to **thank God** for our food. Some people ask God to bless the food before the meal and say thank you afterwards. Other people ask God to bless the food and they say thank you at the same time.

Your family might have your own mealtime prayer (**Grace**). If you do not, you might like to use one of these:

*God, we thank you for this food.
For rest and home and all things good.
For wind and rain and sun above
But most of all for those we love.
Amen*

*Bless us, O Lord
and please bless this food.
Bless those who got it
ready and help us to
Be thankful. Amen*



TEXT: SUZIE MCCARTHY ART: PATSY NEALON

Catholic women to mark suffrage day with a challenge to the Church

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Those taking part in an art installation challenging the Church to recognise women's leadership will be received by Cardinal John Dew at the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Wellington on September 19.

Catholic women in Wellington, and in Auckland, are marking Women's Suffrage day with a challenge to the Church to reset itself.

Called "Pink Shoes into the Vatican", an activist art installation will be created in the centre of both cities.

On this Sunday morning, the women will place old shoes, some painted pink, in a walking pattern on the route to St Patrick's cathedral in Wyndham Street, central Auckland. The Wellington installation will start in the afternoon from the steps of Parliament, which gave women in New Zealand the right to vote in 1893, and lead up Molesworth and Hill Streets to Sacred Heart Cathedral.

The shoes signify the largely unpaid work women have done for the Church throughout the ages, which will be recorded in short vignettes accompanying the shoes.

According to the Catholic Parish of Wellington South newsletter of August 8, an "eye-catching pathway from Parliament to the Sacred Heart Cathedral" will be created.

"Cardinal John Dew will meet us there and accept a message we ask him to convey to the Vatican," the newsletter stated.

In a media statement from "Be The Change Aotearoa", organisers said that this year the Church is 128 years behind the country which granted women the vote on September 19, 1893.

According to the statement, the women of "Be the Change" are committed to journeying towards a new inclusive model of Church.

Caritas launches winter appeal

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand has launched its 2021 Winter Appeal, and is hopeful of reaching its \$100,000 goal by the end of August.

"We want to thank all those supporters who have already made a contribution to our Winter Appeal. This appeal helps us to support those communities most in need of assistance. To date our donations total \$38,000," said Caritas director Julianne Hickey on August 2.

In addition to providing funding for vulnerable communities, impacted by cyclones and floods, the Winter Appeal also helps fund Caritas's education work in Catholic schools to promote Catholic social teaching, and to help young people

live out their faith with compassion and justice in mind.

"During this year, our education team has already engaged with Catholic schools in all six dioceses in New Zealand," Mrs Hickey said,

"This includes [engaging with] 33 colleges for Justice Leadership days (220 students), and more than 40 Catholic schools — involving more than 6000 young people — for Caritas Challenge events. This is a huge impact on a national scale, with production of high-quality educational resources to help support our teachers," Mrs Hickey added.

Donations can be made through the Caritas website www.caritas.org.nz/donate-online, or over the phone by calling 0800 22 10 22.



WIT'S END

Since this is a newspaper, some newspaper humour is in order. . .

I asked my granddaughter to give me the newspaper. She said that newspapers are so out of date, and that people now use tablets, so she handed me her iPad. The fly didn't stand a chance!!

Every morning on my way to work, I slip on the frozen newspaper on my front step. I have fallen on some hard Times.

The Obituaries section of my local newspaper is quite concerning. Everyone seems to be dying in alphabetical order.

Dracula always read the best-selling local newspaper because he heard that it had a good circulation.

I got upset when I couldn't find any scissors to cut a coupon out of a newspaper. I was reduced to tears.

What do you call a man with a newspaper on his head? Russell.

EVENTS

AUCKLAND DIOCESE

Triple Centenary, Sept. 24-26, 2021. 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

Ruakaka: Sunday 14 November, 2021. The Ruakaka Holy Family Catholic Community is celebrating 30 years since moving into the new church in Peter Snell Road, Ruakaka. Mass at 10.30am followed by a shared luncheon and entertainment. Of course, present parishioners and friends are warmly invited to attend, but we are specially reaching out to past members and friends who could be interested in coming along and sharing a few memories. Please contact either; Ray Timmins: 02102788867, email: raydale.timmins@extra.co.nz or Monica Johnson: 021 382401, email: monica.johnson01@gmail.com

TE AWAMUTU

St Patrick's Catholic School, Te Awamutu Centenary
22 October: 12.30pm, Powhiri, classroom tours, mix and mingle. 23 October: 1.30pm, liturgy, speeches, class photos; 5pm, Centenary Mass celebrated by Bishop Steve Lowe; 6.30pm, dinner and dance at the TA Sports Club. For more information and registration details visit www.stpatta.co.nz

ASHBURTON

Sacred Heart College Ashburton's Nor'Westers and Panamas book, documenting the history, will be launched at a reunion on Labour Weekend, 50 years since it closed its doors. The 150-page book is included with the registration for those attending. Late registrations will be accepted. If unable to attend, and interested in early education with the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, you are welcome to order the book by pre-paying \$25 plus p&p. Contacts: Audrey at abjleath@gmail.com Ph: 027 292 4443 or Kath at kath_bryant@hotmail.com Ph: 027 688 6889

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sub621

Sations sow seeds of faith through music

by ROWENA OREJANA

This is what happens when one decides to switch off Netflix and let the Holy Spirit move you instead.

When husband and wife Dominic and Laura Schryvers — with Dominic's sister Rachel Wilson — decided to try writing a song together one night in 2018, they didn't have a clue that they would win the International Songwriting Competition the following year, or be releasing their first CD album three years later.

"It's hard to conceive of . . . even the things that we've already been able to experience," said Dominic, a Religious Education, Media Studies and English teacher at St Paul's College, Auckland.

The dream, they say, is to eventually be making music as a career. And with the launching of the CD on August 6, it seems they are already on track.

Laura said it was Life Teen CEO and president Randy Raus who first encouraged them to do a recording after hearing them play at a John 15 retreat run by Life Teen at St Mark's, Pakuranga, in 2018.

"He [Mr Raus] said, 'why don't you record your music?'," she said. "What do you mean record? We just have one song. And he said, 'just try'."

Their first song, which they made into a music video, is called "The God Who Knew Our Pain", inspired by a talk given by Fr Jeremy Palman on suffering.

The music video got a positive reception on Facebook, Spotify and YouTube, and they decided to write

more songs.

It was "Floodgates", though, that won first place in the Christian genre of the 2019 International Songwriting Competition. ISC is a US-based annual song contest, the aim of which is to help aspiring songwriters and artists further their careers by providing an outlet. Among the judges that year were American contemporary Christian music singers and songwriters Kari Jobe and Matthew West.

Rachel said this song was based on her experience as a mum praying to God for help for her sick baby, only to drop off praying after her son became well.

"I had a very difficult baby. He had silent reflux, and every time we fed him, [I'd] have to pray. And I put up a picture on the wall of the Divine Mercy and I just prayed to that picture every time," she said.

When he became better, she prayed less and less.

"One day, I just noticed that the picture had fallen to the floor. It was really a visual presentation of how I had stopped needing God so much. I was just overwhelmed by the sense of remorse," Rachel said.

In her remorse, she said she felt the floodgates of mercy open up to her. "When we come to God repentant, the floodgates of mercy open up to us. I guess, it was a moment of feeling God's mercy," she said.

Most of the songs the Sations members wrote come out of their own "conversations with God". Some are lively and upbeat, while others are reflective and devotional.

Their first album, "Panels", is a



The Sations (from left) Rachel Wilson, Laura Schryvers and Dominic Schryvers

collection of songs that they have written over the past few years.

"Symbolically, each song in the album is a different pane of glass. It's a different way of seeing God's work in our lives. If you want to take the analogy further, each pane of glass is also formed by fire, the way we are formed by trials," explained Dominic.

"The last image, I guess, is the purpose of the window panes, is for light to shine through . . . and the beauty doesn't come from the pane itself, but from the light shining through."

Their name, "The Sations", has an equally compelling meaning, even though it was something Rachel came up with on the spur of the moment.

"We typed it up on Google and, sure enough, it came up with the fact that it was an obsolete noun, which

means a planting or a growing," he said.

"Like a mustard seed," Laura added.

"From a faith perspective, that struck us as quite a good symbol that we were just very much beginning our journey as a band. And also, that we like to plant seeds of faith in other people and keep that seed growing for others, too," Dominic said.

They also thanked Auckland Auxiliary Bishop Michael Gielen for encouraging them to put up a Give-a-little page to fund the production of their CD.

The Sations will put on a concert at St Paul's College, Richmond Road, Ponsonby, Auckland, on September 18.

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From its beginnings **Aid to the Church in Need** (ACN) has provided means of transport to ensure that the faith could reach the people.

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'Chapel Trucks', travelling across Germany bringing spiritual and material relief to displaced German Catholics. The founder of **ACN** once said, "Christ no longer needs a donkey, as in Jerusalem, but a Volkswagen."

The provision of transport for the pastoral care of God's people continues to this day. In 2020 alone the benefactors of Aid to the Church in Need financed the purchase of 280 cars, 166 motorbikes, 783 bicycles, 11 board, 2 buses and 1 truck. We have even provided mules and donkeys in mountainous regions!

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PONTIFICAL FOUNDATION



Aid needed for crises in Afghanistan and Haiti

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Caritas is responding through its global network to people in crisis in Haiti and Afghanistan. “The turmoil in both Haiti and Afghanistan requires a global response, as these crises unfold against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our global network of Caritas agencies enables us to reach out and help in most places around the world. Caritas is there working with displaced people and vulnerable communities in great need,” said Caritas Aotearoa NZ director Julianne Hickey.

A large earthquake in Haiti on August 14 has killed more than 700 people and injured more than 2800. The toll is expected to climb with many people missing, and more than a thousand buildings razed to the ground, including churches, schools and hospitals.

Caritas Haiti has mobilised teams to reach areas most affected by the quake in the south-west of the Caribbean nation, and is assessing the damage and needs of people in different parts of the country.

“The entire Caritas Haiti network, especially the emergency team, is participating in coordination and aid operations in the three affected departments,” said Caritas Haiti director Father Jean-Hervé François, speaking from the affected area.

While reaching some locations is difficult, the needs of the population are immense. “There is an absolute demand for food, water, tents, hygiene kits and first aid”, said Father François.

According to a Catholic News Service report, Haiti was reeling from the pandemic and the damage from Tropical Storm Elsa, which swept through southern Haiti and the Dominican Republic on July 3, tearing off roofs, downing trees and flooding farms.

Four days after the storm, in the early hours of July 7, 28 foreign mercenaries, including specially-trained Colombian soldiers, assassinated Haiti’s President Jovenel Moïse, creating a deeper vacuum in the country’s governance.

Meanwhile, thousands of people have been displaced and are in need of support in Afghanistan in the midst of a rapidly-changing and volatile conflict.



A woman collects water from a heavily polluted bay in Cap-Haitien, Haiti, on July 21, 2021. As the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has to deal with issues of poverty and water scarcity on a daily basis. The recent earthquake will make matters much worse. (CNS photo)

In Afghanistan, Caritas works through Catholic Relief Services (CRS, a US-based Caritas member). CRS has been working in Afghanistan since 1998 on agriculture, education and disaster response. Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand worked with CRS for many years on rural development in Bamyan province in Afghanistan, promoting soil and water conservation to improve farming, and savings groups to provide food and earn income from crops, sewing and handicrafts.

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand has already pledged \$10,000 to each country, and is receiving donations to its general Emergency Fund, which can be tagged for Haiti or Afghanistan. Caritas will send the funds to its partners on the ground.

Donations can be made through the Caritas website www.caritas.org.nz or by calling 0800 22 10 22.



Internally displaced families from northern provinces of Afghanistan, who fled from their homes due the fighting between Taliban and Afghan security forces, take shelter at a public park in Kabul on August 10 (CNS photo)

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