



ARCHBISHOP OF WELLINGTON

4 March 2024

Dear Brother Priests and Seminarians

Greetings to you as we reach the halfway point of our Lenten journey. I hope that for each of you this Lent is going well in terms of your own personal prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and that you have been able to help your people to experience Lent in the same way. These are precious days for us and if things have begun to slip a bit this is a good time to pick them up again.

Last week the bishops spent six days together in Kerikeri. At our meeting at the end of last year we decided, since we are a new group, that we would spend some time getting to know each other better and trying to look at some of the ways we might work together on a national level for the Church in our country. It was a privilege to be in the North and to visit the places where the Church began in this country. Particularly poignant was celebrating Mass at Motuti in the church where Bishop Pompallier was buried. We have so much to be grateful for in terms of our forebears in the faith, as well as appreciating the challenges that they faced and the need they had to keep adapting their plans to the ever-changing nature of this country. It is a good reminder to me that we too must do the same if we are to be able to work with the people of our age.

One of the benefits of being together was the opportunity to tell our stories of where we came from and what has shaped us in our lives and ministry. It took a bit longer than I suspect we imagined, but it did help us to understand one another better and appreciate the different backgrounds and experiences of one another. Also, just spending time with one another enabled us to enjoy each other's company, rather than just coming together for an agenda focused meeting, which is often the case.

We need to do the same with one another in our Archdiocese. There are many of us who were not born in the archdiocese, not formed in this country, and whose experiences of life is very different. If we are to be a group of priests who support one another, we need to know one another. Many of the structures of the past allowed that to happen, whereas it is not so easy to do today. We need to be more deliberate about it than we once were. This is one of the reasons why we are gathering in May, not only to look at matters relating to us as Church and our Archdiocese, but also to spend time together and getting to know one another. It is a priority for us, and as I wrote last month, I am expecting everyone to attend who is in parish ministry.

One of the aspects of Catholic life that I want us to focus on and think about is the reality of what is happening in our parishes between Monday and Saturday. When we think of what is available for our people to link into apart from Mass on Sunday is there much for them? This can be in many areas: spiritual opportunities for prayer and reflection, study groups, support groups for people at various stages of their lives, or groups that focus on social justice and outreach. It would be helpful to perhaps have a preliminary discussion with your pastoral council or leadership group about this. I am not looking for everyone to rush out and start groups, but I would like us to have a focused approach to how we might find ways for people to link in with us which is not only attending Mass on Sunday.

At the moment there is a feedback process going on regarding the report from the first stage of the Synod on Synodality. Members of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council with the support of the Church Mission Team are running these. I encourage you to participate where possible and if you have any feedback you would like to send in then please do so to Jude McKee (ea.abp@wn.catholic.org.nz) and she will forward them on to the appropriate people collating this material.

Just another reminder to keep promoting the Caritas appeal during Lent. The envelopes are available as you know but people can give one-off donations if that suits them better. Your promotion of this will help to raise the awareness of this in our people. You may also consider contributing to Caritas yourselves.

Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington

Level 2, 204 Thorndon Quay, Pipitea, Wellington 6011 - PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

T: 04 496 1766 E: abp@wn.catholic.org.nz W: wn.catholic.org.nz

Some of our brothers from other countries had the opportunity to be with their families over January in their native country and I hope that returning for them has been okay. For those of us who come from New Zealand appreciating the challenge of living outside your own culture is something we need to be aware of as we support one another as priests.

Congratulations to David Dowling on his appointment as Rector of Holy Cross Seminary. We are well represented there with Ron Bennett in residence and three seminarians. I know you will keep David and all these men in your prayers.

Archbishop Novatus was due to return to Rome last week but unfortunately got an infection which prevented him from going. The intention is for him to go again in a couple of weeks' time. In the bed opposite him in Kenepuru hospital is David Orange. He is continuing his therapy after his stroke. We have several of our brothers who are carrying these crosses and our prayers and support for them are much appreciated.

On Wednesday 12th March we are having a memorial Mass for John Carde to which you are all invited. It is organised by the Clergy Trust and partly in recognition and thanks for John's generous gift to the Trust from his will. It was a very practical expression of solidarity and care for his brothers. I do encourage you all to consider this in your own circumstances when you are making your wills.

Please keep in your prayers our brothers who are not well: Frank Maguire; Petelo Mauga; David Orange and Peter O'Connell.

I look forward to seeing you all over Holy Week at the Christ Masses which we are celebrating. In Wellington we will gather at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday 27th March for prayer at Connolly Hall followed by some food together at Viard House. The Mass will be at 7:30 p.m. at the Pro-Cathedral in Karori. This will allow a little more time for people to get there after work. Please encourage your parishioners to gather for this important Mass. The South Island Mass will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. on the 26th of March at Garin College. This is a chance for us all to renew our vows as priests and to pray together. I know that for some there are significant distances to cover, but I do encourage you to bring people from your parish with you for these Masses.

This newsletter is a chance for me to write to you my brothers. I would ask that it isn't published on websites, distributed, or put up on notice boards. I do write one also to the people of the Archdiocese and I am keen that that letter be distributed widely.

May this month of March be a blessed one for you all as we prepare to celebrate Easter.

In Christ



+Paul Martin SM
Archbishop of Wellington

March Birthdays

- 7 Pat Maloney
- 12 David Gruschow
- 13 Michael McCabe
- 14 Gerard Burns
- 22 Maurice Carmody

Anniversary of Ordination March

- 6 Tikoua Kautu
- 9 James Kershaw
- 19 Nicholas Myint MF
- 25 Marlon Maylon

We pray for our Dead March

- 3 Daniel McLaughlin (1935)
- 4 Thomas Walsh (1932)
- 6 James Moynihan (1992)
- 7 Chris Penders (2014)
- 11 Thomas Connolly (1958)
- 12 William Clancy (2020)
- 13 Edward Bergin (1942)
- 14 Patrick McCullough (2017)
- 15 Kieran Hynes (1989)
Gerald Donoghue (1993)
- 16 John Lane (1924)
Philip Fallon (1930)
Peter Mulvaney (2008)
- 17 Noel O'Sullivan (1959)
- 18 John Simson (2002)
- 19 John Fletcher (1981)
Leo Connor (1993)
- 20 John Finnerty (1962)
- 22 Cecil Barr-Brown (1986)
- 28 Colin Karalus (2016)
- 30 Brian Sherry (1986)
- 31 Bartholomew Kaveney (1935)