



13 December 2023

Member of Parliament
Parliament
Wellington

Tēnā koe

I write on behalf of the Catholic bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand to thank you for your willingness to serve the people of our nation as one of our elected parliamentarians. Please be assured of our prayers and the prayers of the Catholic community for all of you in Parliament. Our hope is that you may govern for the common good of all in our land, especially those most vulnerable.

As parliamentarians you are in the public arena and increasingly face all kinds of scrutiny. In our pre-election statement, we wrote of our concern at the growing trivialisation of politics. We lamented that politicians and media often focus on the mistakes, misdemeanours or scandals of individual parliamentarians and tear each other apart. We said we believe the real scandals in our land are the growing indifference to the sanctity of life, rising levels of poverty and the lack of affordable housing, mental health, and the storm events that have beset our islands as global climate change impacts on us and so many in our world.

Our election statement also affirmed our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi as offering a pathway of unity for our nation. At the same time, we expressed our dismay at the rapidly growing toxicity in our communities, which is dividing us as a nation and generating anger, hate and even violence.

These issues especially affect our most vulnerable people. For too long they have been treated as political footballs. Successive election-season promises and the changing of policies in line with the agenda of each new government are not working. More and more people in our land are becoming disillusioned and feel disenfranchised. We need you, our parliamentarians, as a House united, to work together across party lines to make real progress in finding genuine, lasting solutions to solve our problems. Without this, rising levels of discontent will further divide our beautiful land and peoples.

To this end we would like to present you with the enclosed copy of our new teaching statement, *Te Kahu o te Ora: A Consistent Ethic of Life*. This document is a reminder that the issues dividing us as a nation are all connected. So too is the solution— a lens that sees all life as sacred taonga.

We in our respective positions as parliamentarians and bishops are expected to lead and make decisions for the common good. Each of us is also given a lot to read. Nonetheless we hope that you will find *Te Kahu o te Ora* is a worthwhile summer read and a resource to dip into as you reflect on the issues we face in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Like you, we are actively involved in the communities you represent. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you. Here are contact details for your local Catholic bishop:

Bishop
Email
Office Phone :

Finally, we take this opportunity to wish you and those you love a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.

Yours sincerely in Christ the Good Shepherd,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "† S. M. Lowe". The signature is written in a cursive style.

✘ **Stephen Lowe**
President – NZCBC and Bishop of Auckland
Te Huinga o ngā Pihopa Katorika o Aotearoa