



Naming Our Cathedral

Pastoral letter from Bishop Michael

25 May 2024

Tēnā koutou katoa

I recently shared with you the announcement that our new Cathedral will be built on Barbadoes St, the spiritual home of the Christchurch Diocese for 160 years. I am grateful for the positive response that decision has received, and I look forward to walking this journey towards a new Cathedral with you in the coming years.

The next important step on that path is the selection of the patronal name for our Cathedral.

While the naming of a Cathedral is a decision for the local Bishop, I wish to hear from the faithful to assist with my discernment.

By selecting a patron, we will choose someone on whom we can rely for intercession in our new Cathedral. We will be choosing someone whose life and example can inspire us and influence the building's design. Our liturgy tells us that the example of the saints "lends us courage" and "their fervent prayers sustain us in all we do".

I invite you to enter into your own consideration of a patron prayerfully, reflecting on how your choice can encourage, challenge and comfort the people of our Diocese.

As Scripture advises, when seeking a way forward on an important matter like this:

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." (Prov 3:5-6)

Over the next two weeks, you are invited to nominate a worthy patronal name for our Cathedral and, if you wish, explain your reasons for that choice. Please refer to the attached guidelines when making your nomination. Submissions can be made via the diocesan website or in writing at parishes. The final date for contributions is Sunday, 9th June.

A short-list of suggestions that have emerged will then be shared with the community, and an opportunity offered to again provide your prayerful guidance on those names.

I will then spend time discerning what has been shared, considering the final three options with my advisers – priests, religious and laity – and mindful of the exhortation above from the Book of Proverbs.

I plan to announce the name of our new Cathedral by the end of July.

I thank you for your ongoing prayers and support as we enter this historic moment in the life of our Diocese. May it be a time when we deepen our love of God and love of neighbour.

Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us.

St John the Baptist, Patron of our Diocese, pray for us

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads '+ Michael Gielen'.

+ Michael Gielen

Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch

Welcome, worship and witness

Our Future Cathedral Patronal Name

Guidelines

Bishop Michael invites you to enter into your own consideration of a patron for our Cathedral prayerfully, reflecting on how your recommendation can encourage, challenge and comfort the people of our Diocese.

Canon law offers the following guidelines for choosing a church name. It can be:

- the name of the Trinity; or
- a name for Christ, invoked in the liturgy, or a mystery of his life; or
- the name of the Holy Spirit; or
- a name for Mary, invoked under a title for her used in the liturgy*; or
- the name of a holy angel; or
- the name of a canonised saint as it appears in the Roman martyrology (or appendix); or
- the name of a blessed – if the Apostolic See has given its permission.

Bishop Michael also offers the following advice in light of our local context:

- It has been asked if the name “Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament” can be used again. Nothing prevents it from being the name of the new Cathedral.
- The Cathedral will not share the name of a parish in Christchurch city, nor the name of a church that remains in use in the city.
- *With several parishes and/or churches currently under the loving patronage of Our Lady (using various names), it is unlikely that a Marian name will be chosen.



Please advise of your preferred patronal name, via the online form by scanning the QR Code or visiting our website cdoc.nz. If you would like to fill out a paper copy of the form visit your parish office. There is a commentary area to briefly explain why you support that choice. Please keep the guidelines above in mind when making your nomination.