

Te Reo o Hewa

OUR DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS

TE ROHE
PIHOPA O TE
PAPAIOEA



DIOCESE OF
PALMERSTON
NORTH

Ko te whakaaro tahi ki te whakapono
Togetherness in faith and purpose

Diocesan Synthesis

FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION, AND MISSION
CONTRIBUTION FROM THE DIOCESE OF PALMERSTON NORTH

Ko te whakaaro tahi ki te whakapono *Togetherness in faith and purpose* *Whakataukī (Māori Proverb)*



PASTORAL CONTEXT

The Diocese of Palmerston North (**the diocese**) was established in 1980. Since 2019, the diocese has been under the care of Apostolic Administrator Cardinal John Dew, after the resignation of the previous bishop. The pastoral context of the diocese includes ongoing changes to the diversity of its people, increasing secularisation in society, declining numbers of clergy, and most recently, the impact of Covid-19 on pastoral life.

More information about the diocese is available in Appendix A.

In the areas of Aotearoa New Zealand that make up the diocese, the Covid-19 pandemic was mostly contained until the more contagious Omicron variant spread significantly throughout the community in early 2022. Disruption by the pandemic to people's lives over the past few years has affected participation in parish life and, subsequently, in this synodal process.

The identity of Aotearoa New Zealand and its people is complex. Aotearoa New Zealand is a bicultural country, as established by the Treaty of Waitangi, which over time has welcomed significant numbers of migrants from other cultures. In the reading of the submissions and reflecting on the experience of this synodal process, this cultural complexity is important to acknowledge.

Further information about this is available in Appendix B.

Aotearoa New Zealand is also an increasingly secular nation, which continues to impact on the pastoral life of the Catholic Church in this country.

This is explored further in Appendix B.

CULTURAL IMAGE | TŪRANGAWAEWAE

As the synodal process evolved in the diocese, the importance and role of belonging emerged in various ways. The concept of **tūrangawaewae** may capture the essence of this. For Māori as tangata whenua, the indigenous people of the land, this is a concept that is deeply embedded. **Tūrangawaewae** is often translated as 'a place to stand', and these are sacred or special places where people feel they can be themselves and are most connected. These places are our foundation, our place in the world, our home.

References to the cultural image of **tūrangawaewae** will be made throughout this synthesis document.



PART 1: PARTICIPATION AND EXPERIENCE

**Kimihia! Rapuhia!
Rukuhia ki te hōhonutanga o te pō kia kite mai i te māramatanga e
whitiwhiti mai ana i te marama.**

To search and seek courage to put pen to paper, we must delve deeply into the past in order to seek clarity and understanding.

- a. Extensive efforts were made to ensure all people in the diocese had the opportunity to participate in the synod discernment process via a range of resources that encouraged group, individual, postal, and online submissions.**

The diocesan consultation process involved inviting submissions from all people in the diocese, in two stages. This approach evolved from the extension to the timeframe given by the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, which was made just as the local process began in the diocese.

During the **Initial Listening Stage**, people were encouraged to gather in groups and participate in a synod discernment session (**Spiritual Conversation**) based on the fundamental questions and one of the ten themes. Individual submissions were also welcome, but the hope was that people would participate primarily as part of a group.

The fundamental questions posed in the Initial Listening Stage were:

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, 'journeys together'.

How is this 'journeying together' happening today in your particular Church?

What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our journeying together?

From submissions received during the Initial Listening Stage, it was apparent there was a dominance of participants from certain demographics and a high number of individual submissions.

Understanding this meant a **Further Listening Stage** could focus on encouraging those voices not initially heard.

This was a significant turning point in the process. In February 2022, updated resources were provided to both parishes and schools. Material was further simplified, the questions were reworked, and there was a focus on engaging school children, young people, and their families in the process.

The two main questions posed for the Further Listening Stage were:

In your experience, how have you felt welcomed and supported by the Catholic faith community?

In what ways could the Catholic faith community journey with people better?

For the most part, the ability to communicate with those not connected to the Church is limited; however, the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference commissioned an online survey in March 2022. Using various media platforms to promote this survey meant that a number of people contributed to the process who may not have otherwise engaged or been reached.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 on the ability for some to gather in person, combined with the knowledge that people had not been able to take part in a Spiritual Conversation group for various reasons, the diocese hosted several Spiritual Conversation online sessions towards the end of the Further Listening Stage.

More detailed information about the process is available in Appendix C.

b. Submissions made by particularly noteworthy groups of participants were identified as well as the absence of other voices and underrepresented groups.

In **both Listening Stages**, the diocese placed a strong emphasis on the importance of discernment and participating as part of a group, to varying degrees of success. It is evident that those who participated as part of a group had a different experience as a result and this is reflected in the submissions.

Participation by children and teenagers from schools in the diocese was especially noteworthy. They expressed powerfully, and often simply, the essence of what it means to be welcoming and supportive. They also reiterated many things that emerged in other submissions.

Although the Further Listening Stage allowed for focus to be placed on encouraging particular groups to participate, it appears that there are voices still missing. Most of the participants came from New Zealand European backgrounds. There were challenges engaging with Māori and various migrant groups for a variety of reasons. While cultural practices of many of these peoples are well aligned with the synodal practices, the environment in which this process took place did not enable participation for many.

Other people who may not have participated include those who expressed frustration at a predetermined set of questions and the overall process, some who were unsure about the purpose, people who had not been approached or encouraged to participate, and some who simply didn't see the value.

It is acknowledged that there were some who did not participate because they did not know about the opportunity to do so. This highlights the challenges the diocese faces regarding communication. In some cases, this also illustrates a lack of personal interest by those who were aware of the opportunity to participate in the process but did not share it with fellow members of the community.

The above sentiments seem to be held regardless of how people are involved in the Church and includes both the ordained and non-ordained.

It was difficult at times to reconcile how this synodal process, which has been indicated as a clear priority by Pope Francis and supported by the Apostolic and Local Administrator(s) of the diocese, would not be promoted and encouraged by all parishes and faith communities locally.

c. Several significant milestones and turning points during the course of the synodal process enriched the experience and encouraged an experience of synodality among participants.

The forming of the **Submission Discernment Group (Discernment Group)** was a significant moment in the synodal process in the diocese. It took time for this group and the process they would follow to emerge but in its commitment to discernment, it has been one of the gifts of the overall experience.

The role of the eight members of the Discernment Group was to read each submission and together discern what was emerging, working towards writing a document that aptly conveys the synodal experience and the diverse feedback in the submissions. This group was made up of individuals from across the diocese from diverse backgrounds with different skill sets. There was a commitment to this process being carried out in partnership with Māori and this was reflected in those who were part of the group.

All members of the Discernment Group were impacted by the intention, emotion, and consideration with which participants responded. It was painful reading from those who have felt ignored and excluded and been deeply hurt by the Church, including the personal experiences of abuse, yet the repeated need and desire for a fulfilling Catholic community was clear.

The **Pre-Synod Meeting**, held a fortnight prior to finalising this document, was a significant part of this synodal experience. Representatives from across the diocese were invited, including members of religious institutes, diocesan clergy and staff, school representatives, ethnic and minority groups, and people on the peripheries.

Participants offered reflections on understandings of synodality and after being presented with the emerging themes, began to explore how the people of the diocese are being called to respond. Some of the practical suggestions that had emerged through the submissions were integrated into the day. This resulted in an experience of small group sharing opportunities, the use of both Māori language and cultural practice, tikanga, and concluded with an interactive celebration of the Eucharist. Overall, there was a strong sense of the Holy Spirit throughout the day.

d. The synodal process has been both rewarding and challenging for those involved, exposing a multitude of attitudes and feelings prompted by the fundamental questions.

Those who participated in group discernment sessions spoke of the solidarity they experienced, even in simply having an opportunity to hear that others are feeling the same. The sharing process allowed participants to learn from each other and experience the awareness that can result from listening to and discerning another's point of view, even those which may have challenged their own opinions.

For a small diocese, an encouraging number of people participated in the process. Participants were passionate and thorough in their responses, both mourning the decline in numbers and the generation, or generations, that seem to be missing; and offering suggestions as to how Catholics can journey together better. They also questioned how the Church can be more relevant in today's world.

Some questioned whether this synod will make any difference, or whether the people's voice will be overruled by clerical authority. Whatever the outcome of this process globally, this synodal process has given the local church much to deliberate on and address.

There was a proportionally high number of individual submissions compared to group submissions. This was interesting to note as it suggests something about how people are journeying together (or not) currently. This will have been impacted in part by Covid-19. There is a wider reflection here about the way people chose to, or were able to, participate in this process.

This engagement in the process may also have been influenced by the experience of other consultation processes that have been run locally ahead of previous Synods of Bishops. These have tended to take a survey approach, where people have been invited to individually choose between options or express their own opinion.

It was difficult to communicate that the Spiritual Conversation process itself is a vital component of this particular synodal journey. Small faith sharing groups have been a feature in some communities in the diocese, but the Spiritual Conversation method at times seemed to be hampered by the expectation of people having an opportunity to share what needs to change, rather than discern together.

e. The consultation process revealed diverse points of view, tensions, and frustration from participants.

Some participants named the Church a place of alienation, and irrelevant, especially as long as it fails to address the science concerning human sexuality, fertility, and other bioethical matters. This was in contrast to others' desires for a return to the values and traditions that characterised the pre-Vatican II era, to resist liberal theology and focus on the doctrine of the Church, which in their minds is being lost sight of amidst other cultural pressures.

The submissions expressed a variety of views around parts of Church teaching. Some expressed the need to be clearer and stronger about these teachings; others questioned how Catholics can journey together with everyone when parts of these same teachings imply that some people are unwelcome. This was true, for example, in relation to those who identify as LGBTQIA+ or people who have divorced and remarried.

Existing liturgical gatherings were generally considered by participants to satisfy an individual's Sunday obligation. However, a large proportion of submissions shared the view that

“the Eucharist does not meet people's needs for fellowship, engagement, information and empowerment.”

There were also differing opinions about the synodal process itself. Some participants were unconvinced about synodality as a concept; others expressed that they have had enough of listening and now want to see action.



PART 2: FEEDBACK

**Mahia ngā mahi i runga i te tika, i te pono,
i te mārama kia kite mai koutou i tō tātou ata tipua.**

*Do the work in truth, righteousness, and understanding
so that we can then see our divine reflection.*

a. The local submissions offered many thought-provoking reflections on how the Church is currently journeying together, both locally and globally, and inspired ways this could be achieved more successfully.

A desire for fundamental change towards a true church of Aotearoa New Zealand was expressed, reflecting the country's biculturalism and partnership with Māori through more use of te reo, tikanga, and other elements in liturgical celebrations. The church of Aotearoa New Zealand is also, increasingly, a multicultural church and there is a desire for that to be reflected too.

There was much discussion about Mass and 'the Church' but less about other ways in which people can express being Catholic, nor about the person of Jesus.

Many of the concerns and hopes raised through the submissions reflected a desire to reorientate towards mission, in this time and place. Participants spoke of ways they were active in mission individually but expressed some uncertainty about how to do so collectively.

A number of responses highlighted the Church's need for a robust digital strategy to progress and connect with younger generations in particular, not simply to accommodate the restrictions placed on communal gatherings during a pandemic – although that proved how receptive the Church can be to change and technology. People would like to see greater use of technology, enabling online faith learning, entertainment and media, and the possibility to grow parishes virtually, removing geographical obstacles and increasing diversity.

b. There were common reflections and points of view that strongly resonated throughout the submissions.

That 'things need to change' was one of the strongest messages received. This came from people of all ages,

ethnicities, genders, and levels of involvement in the Church. Submissions from eight-year-old children through to ninety-year-old lifelong parishioners indicated there is great hope and need for renewal within the Church.

Specifically, the calls for change included communication, current leadership models, how liturgy is celebrated, how past failings of those in leadership have been dealt with, and what churches in the diocese look and feel like.

"Great changes will happen within the Church if reality is seen not from the centre or common viewpoint (leaders, hierarchy, people of power – the powerful majority) but from the peripheries (those who are deprived of their rights and needs within the Church)."

"If we don't change ... our children will make a change – God will remain with them on their faith journey but will the Catholic Church remain with them?"

c. Less prominent but noteworthy reflections were presented by individuals and minorities, which offer important insights in this synodal process.

During the Pre-Synod Meeting, one woman shared: ***"Our Marae is where we as Māori can go to express every part of our being."*** Many other participants were struck by this, reflecting upon whether they could say the same for themselves in the Church.

There is a reciprocal link between belonging and participation. The synodal process in the diocese illustrated many diverse experiences of belonging. For example, for many new migrants it may be that the local parish church becomes *tūrangawaewae*, a place to stand, for them in their new country. However, for many other people in Aotearoa New Zealand the opposite appears to be true, especially for those who

feel unwelcome for a variety of reasons, including having experienced some form of harm in the context of the Church.

Another notable voice came through strongly from many young people who spoke of the hurt felt by the treatment and silencing of LGBTQIA+ members of society, and the fear that the Church may be unsafe in its discriminatory outlook.

d. The concept of synodality and its occurrence in the diocese was widely questioned in the submissions, with examples of successful, Spirit-led synodality offset by the many who journey separately on different paths.

It was challenging to communicate the concepts and desires of a synodal way of being church and encourage participation as many in the diocese are unfamiliar with synodality. This was further impacted by the fact that this diocese is currently led by administrators and not a diocesan bishop. In many ways, this process illustrated how little synodality occurs locally. Submissions noted a lack of formal synodal structures (pastoral councils at diocesan and parish levels, for example) and a lack of clarity regarding current pastoral priorities.

There was wide acknowledgement among responses of the valuable faith education and sense of community provided by Catholic schools in the diocese. Often more than parishes, schools were considered welcoming, inclusive, and supportive. The younger participants credited their understanding of the Mass, the Sacraments, and prayer to their school environment. Catholic school staff testified to students living out Jesus' teachings and Gospel values at school, active in mission every day. For many students, teachers, and families, the Catholic school is *tūrangawaewae*, a place of belonging.

When prompted to consider how the Church is journeying together today, a great number of submissions pointed to those they feel are being excluded from that journey. They called for the Church to be much more inclusive than it is, or is seen to be. Some people have felt excluded personally, while others identified exclusion and marginalization of other individuals and groups.

Covid-19 changed the landscape of how Catholics practice their faith. Some have enjoyed the online liturgies as a means of private reflection, but many more emphasised the need for physical community – they longed for vibrant, music-filled celebrations to

inspire their faith, and hospitality after Mass to foster their sense of belonging. Many have not returned to the Sunday Mass in local parishes. The post-Covid Church will require a renewal process as its people rebuild relationships and establish new connections.

The submissions revealed that people across the diocese are journeying on very different paths. While some were vocal about how things need to change, others appeared content with how things are now. In a sense, perhaps there are a number of 'parallel churches' within the diocese, driven by ethnicity, age, and other components of identity.

However, there was a shared desire from people regardless of culture, ethnicity, and age to be able to have an experience of encounter with God. Individuals' expectations around the environment and style for these experiences seem to be a source of tension.

That there were more individual submissions than group submissions said something about how journeying together is currently happening. Many people either chose to make a submission alone, did not know about the Spiritual Conversation component, or were unable to gather as part of a group. Covid-19 restrictions, particularly during the Further Listening Stage, were a barrier for some to participate in group sessions.

Some submissions highlighted that in many places in the diocese it is still predominantly older New Zealand Europeans who assume leadership or decision-making roles, despite the changes in demographics of those who regularly participate in parish life.

e. Submissions revealed many areas where the Church is in need of healing and transformation.

LEADERSHIP

Many submissions reflected on the current leadership style, or styles. There was a strong call for less clericalism, and clerical leadership, and instead to move towards more lay leadership, and more opportunities for involvement by women and from other thus far excluded groups. One young child wrote:

"I am a bit confused at the reason why women can't be priests. What rights do men have that women don't?"

As well as being an equity issue, as expressed above, participants regarded their offers of ministry

as something of value that they can contribute, especially in this time of decreasing vocations. Some participants stated the need for more personal and vocational support, especially for clergy.

Another submission spoke about becoming

“a Church in which laypeople will be truly involved in shared and equal leadership, decision-making and the pastoral structure of the Church, with committed clergy who have the option of being married.”

There was also a call in the submissions for more transparency, especially in the way that things are handled within parish communities and in the diocese.

CREDIBILITY

The Church as an institution, and its people, have suffered greatly through the acts of some church leaders, in combination with the institution's failure to act, or act appropriately. This was expressed in submissions in terms of personal damage, shame, and embarrassment at being associated with an institution with this history. For some others who were less connected, the negative reputation of the Church was the main focus of their submissions. It was significant that this synodal process took place at the same time as the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care was being held in Aotearoa New Zealand.

One participant highlighted the Church's response being one of protecting its own interests and reputation, its communications couched in process and legalise:

“The organisational behaviour of the Catholic Church troubles me deeply. It behaves as if it is preoccupied with its own processes and reputation.”

A significant number of submissions articulated the way in which people feel their voice has been silenced, particularly due to the Church's lack of credibility in society. Many are not confident to share with others that they are Catholic and some carry a sense of shame about the failures of others within the Church, especially with regards to abuse.

This has implications for the relational element of mission, of sharing faith with others *kanohi ki te kanohi*, face to face. Others identified a lack of connection with and understanding of the Catholic faith, prompting many to avoid instances where they

may be questioned about their beliefs, including when engaging with other Christian denominations and religions.

“How do we communicate to anyone who and what we are if we can no longer know or identify who or what we are?”

EXCLUSION

Those who were identified as being on the margins, and kept on the margins by church practices, resourcing, and teachings included: the young; the elderly; women; Māori; migrants; the deaf; the poor; those divorced or separated; those who identify as LGBTQIA+; those who value more conservative or traditional faith practices; as well as non-Catholic Christians. More recently, Covid-19 vaccination status has also led to some feeling excluded.

“I think that if the Catholic Church can be more diverse or add more awareness of human dignity to its teaching [it] would be great.”

- High School Student

The type of exclusion people wrote of included the inability to receive the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. One young boy wrote of his non-Catholic father not being able to receive the Eucharist when the family went to Mass together, and the anguish he felt. These sorts of exclusions were written about as the Church ***“putting rubrics and rules ahead of relationships”***.

“These ‘rules’ also make it difficult for blended families too where perhaps one parent is Catholic but the other is not.”

Many submissions acknowledged a disconnect in liturgy, especially at Mass, whereby people feel intimidated or ignored by what they consider as outdated traditions and clericalism, where women are excluded, and by irrelevant scripture and unexplained rituals.

There were submissions that spoke about the cultural 'gap' that is sometimes evident in the ministry styles of some priests. This gap sometimes had to do with language or expression of church teachings, or was articulated as being due to the way in which those in ministry were at times 'out of touch' with the realities of people's lives. Other submissions spoke of this being due to the cultural background and training of some of those in ministry.



PART 3: DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS

**Ko te kākara o te Wairua Tapu e pā mai ana,
Ka piki ake, kake ake ki o mātau moemoea, o mātau wawata.
Kia tupu, kia puāwaitia mo to tātou oranga tonutanga.**

*May the fragrance of the Holy Spirit ignite our senses!
To extend our dreams and aspirations
As they grow and blossom to make for a better future.*

a. Collective discernment grounded in the Holy Spirit identified longing for inclusive communities; a stronger connection between Catholic schools and parishes; culturally diverse celebrations; and synodal structures and experiences within the diocese.

There was a strong desire for a more loving community, where all people can be involved and be spiritually nourished. Participants considered this achievable through the use of inclusive and accessible language, and relevant homilies that help parishioners navigate their way through today's moral, environmental, and cultural issues. There was also a willingness to set aside differences and reach out to each other:

“We need to focus on becoming far more welcoming, inclusive and responsive to the needs of members of our own parish and the wider community.”

“From our session came a desire that the Church break rigid boundaries and be a channel of God's non-judgmental, unconditional love for all of humanity based on the premise that whatever we do to others, we are doing to him.”

One person termed schools **“agents for change”**, living examples of successful Catholic life and opportunities for evangelising. The pressure schools are under to strengthen students' faith, often without support from parents, parish, and clergy, was highlighted. Many expressed concern over what happens when young people finish their Catholic schooling. There is an opportunity to strengthen the connection between parish and school life. Although this is not a new area of priority, it seems that Covid-19 has created further disconnect between parish and school.

Liturgical gatherings were regarded by many as exclusive. People longed for liturgical celebrations that

reflect the needs of parishioners and inspire them to have stronger witness of their faith outside of Mass. There was also a strong call among submissions for liturgical celebrations that reflect and acknowledge the cultural diversity within congregations.

b. Dreams and aspirations were expressed by participants across all age groups and demographics, all desiring to better journey together in their faith and worship.

Throughout the process participants have expressed a desire that the Church will be **tūrangawaewae**, both for them personally and also for many others. For some people, their sense of belonging would be strengthened by being able to participate equally and knowing that their voice has been heard.

Small faith-sharing, education, and charitable groups were identified as successful ways for people to deepen and live out their Catholic faith and mission. Prayer and Scripture study groups; youth groups and camps; cultural groups gathering to pray and share a meal; retreats; and service groups all provide a sense of community and belonging, of **tūrangawaewae**, that many believed is not received via the parish Sunday Mass.

“We need to focus first and foremost on being a Christian community. We need to recapture some of the spirit of the early Christian communities, sharing more of our time, talents, and resources; to become known for our active love, sharing, and service of others; to challenge the growing individualism of our times.”

The younger participants admitted finding the parish Mass at odds with their need for informality, enjoyment, and familiarity, both in terms of where

and how they worship. They spoke of wanting to be seen and involved in liturgical celebrations and social settings beyond the Church walls. In the words of one teenager:

“[We] want, and require, more engagement and inspiration from the faith community – particularly physical connections in the form of youth groups and bible studies. Young people want and need to feel connected to the Church.”

The Marae, with its generous hospitality and song-filled occasions, was presented as a stark contrast to the Sunday Mass, and regret was expressed at the lack of te reo, tikanga, and Māori cultural influence in Mass and churches. One participant spoke of a lack of acknowledgment:

“There is a resistance in the Catholic Church of New Zealand to accept and unite with the Māori people in their deep spirituality and their places and form of worship, for example the Marae, which is their most sacred place, their stamping ground.”

This reflection illustrates the significance of the Marae for Māori, which is often seen as *tūrangawaewae*. The Marae is where Māori are formed and learn important lessons. The Marae is the place where one can proclaim their views about the world and life.

c. Participants shared a number of ways in which the diocese can grow in synodality and a desire to do so, with the hope that similar action will be taken to encourage greater communion within the global church.

A number of responses included ideas for change, which must be seen as a hopeful next stage, particularly at the local level. That there is a will to stay with the Church on this journey, and be part of the change, was reflected in many submissions.

“We believe this is an opportunity to renew the Church.”

“We want people to have a really good experience of participation in the Church.”

Some regarded Mass as a celebration of the initiated; older people and migrants appearing more comfortable at Mass than younger New Zealand Europeans. There was concern that catechesis has largely been reduced to RCIA and sacramental programmes, and a desire for further faith formation opportunities for all.

“Too many people grow up in the faith but do not grow in their faith.”

There was a call for more small group gatherings, enabling people to really get to know one another and establish connections. These need to be regular informal opportunities for formation that are well-advertised and focussed on hospitality.

However, while a need for more faith formation and small group opportunities to gather was identified, the complacency of many to pursue such faith-growing initiatives was also acknowledged.

Having experienced this synodal process, the need for people in the diocese to learn more about one another's identities, beliefs, ways of doing things, and reasons why, was highlighted. This requires an open disposition from all in order to be able to listen, learn, and connect with one another.

Throughout the process many expressed a strong call for action. Some of the areas highlighted by participants as in need of change, especially in relation to exclusion, are unable to be responded to fully on the local level and require addressing by the whole Church. For example, one submission said:

“The traditional approach or model of authority and governance needs to change fundamentally. There needs to be a re-imagining of the governing structure, and the role of the parish priest.”

From some participants, there was a sense of expectation about the outcomes of the process. Given the pastoral context in which this process has and is taking place, there is both opportunity and risk here. There is a pressing need to review the lack of formal synodal structures within the diocese and to consider what is possible, given the absence of a bishop and the length of time already passed since the resignation in 2019. There is also a need to review how decision-making processes can be more inclusive, as well as an opportunity to develop more informal synodal experiences at the local level.

In relation to past hurts, especially regarding abuse, there is a need to conceptualise and implement processes of healing, both personal and communal. The synodal process revealed some hurt, and anger. If unaddressed, it may be difficult for other pastoral initiatives to flourish.

The Church has an opportunity to grow in synodality through learning from Māori and strengthening that partnership. As one member of the Discernment Group said: **“We’re used to synodality as Māori because we hui a lot.”**

Although hui is often translated into English as ‘meeting’ (which can also translate to ‘synod’), the foundations that underpin hui are distinct from western understandings of a meeting, which often involve competition and individualism. During a hui, existing relationships are renewed or strengthened, and new ones are established.

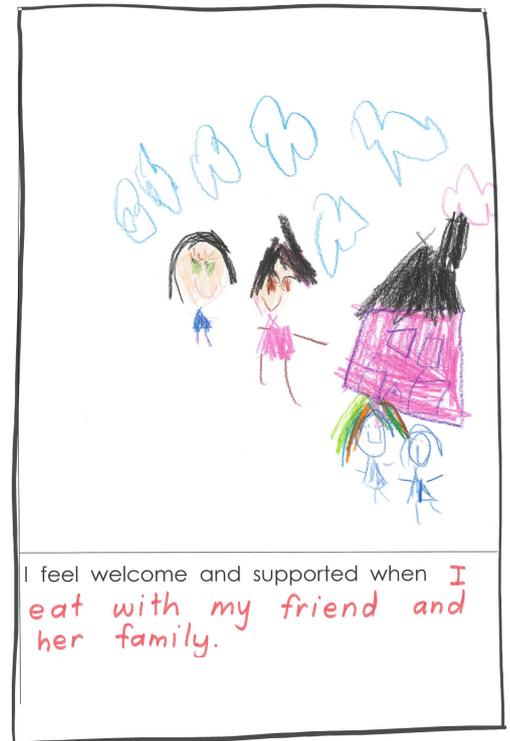
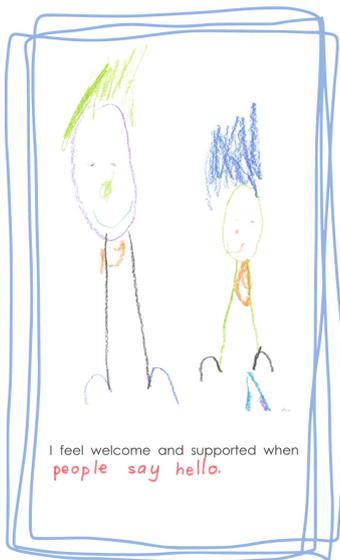
There are many other Māori concepts that will enrich our synodal journey together.

Finally, there is a sense of gratitude for the opportunity for the local church to participate in the synodal process in this way.

As one Whakatauaākī (Māori proverb) says:

Ka totoro atu tōku ringa ki ngā tōpito e whā o te ao, e kore e taea te whakahoki mai.
When my hands stretch out to the four corners of the world they will not return fruitless.

- Te Kooti Rikirangi



These drawings come from a submission from a group of five-year-old students. More examples from young people in the diocese are available in Appendix F.

Te Reo o Hewa

OUR DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS

APPENDICES TO THE DIOCESAN SYNTHESIS

FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION, AND MISSION
CONTRIBUTION FROM THE DIOCESE OF PALMERSTON NORTH

TE ROHE
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PALMERSTON
NORTH

APPENDIX A

ABOUT THE DIOCESE OF PALMERSTON NORTH

522,726 TOTAL POPULATION

42 CHURCHES

7,255 SUNDAY MASS-GOERS



16 MĀORI EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITIES



51,345 AFFILIATED CATHOLICS



22 PARISHES

24 Priests and 2 Deacons
in active ministry

36 SCHOOLS

28 Primary and 8 Secondary
(including 2 Māori Boarding Colleges)



7,671 STUDENTS

These numbers provide a snapshot of the profile of the Diocese of Palmerston North.

The number of affiliated Catholics (those who identify as Catholic from Census data), Sunday Mass-goers, and students in our Catholic schools are all taken from 2018, as this was the last time a Census was undertaken in New Zealand.

The impact of the changes that have occurred over the past four years is only anecdotal but is expected to have affected these numbers.

As the Diocese of Palmerston North, we reach from the mountain in the north to the Manawatu river in the south, from Mokau across to Wairoa, and from Foxton to Eketahuna. The diocese has an area of approximately 36,200 km².

In 1980, Pope John Paul II established the diocese and appointed its first bishop, Peter Cullinane. There was a strong commitment to Vatican II at the beginnings of the diocese.

Prior to 1980, the parishes, priests, and people of the Diocese of Palmerston North were part of the Archdiocese of Wellington.

PASTORAL CONTEXT | AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

SUPERDIVERSITY

Aotearoa New Zealand is a very different country from just a few decades ago. The changes, even just in ethnic diversity, have a significant impact on the way we make sense of who we are.

"What it means to be a New Zealander or to be in this place (and these are not necessarily the same things) may be quite different for different people."

New Zealand has been described for a long time as 'ethnically diverse' but it is increasingly described as 'superdiverse'. This term describes "the 'level and complexity' of diversity that now exists in many migrant host nations" such as Aotearoa New Zealand.

This creates "increasingly complex social formations" that "produce a dynamic interplay of country of origin, ethnic identification, migration pathways, languages spoken, religious affiliation and socio-cultural practice and values."

Because of the ethnic diversity of those who identify as Catholic in Aotearoa New Zealand and those clergy who serve our parishes, this is an immensely complex pastoral landscape to understand and respond to.

Quotes from:

Cain, T., Kahu, E. and Shaw, R. (2017). *Turangawaewae: Identity and Belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Massey University Press.

AN INCREASINGLY SECULAR NATION

Over the past decade, secularisation has been steadily increasing. In the last Census undertaken in 2018, almost half of all people in New Zealand stated they had no religion (48.6%).

There is a need for further research into the specifics of why this is the case, but the busy pace of modern life and increase in individualism are often noted as key factors.

For many in Aotearoa New Zealand, there appears to also be a trend away from membership of many other forms of community groups and organisations.

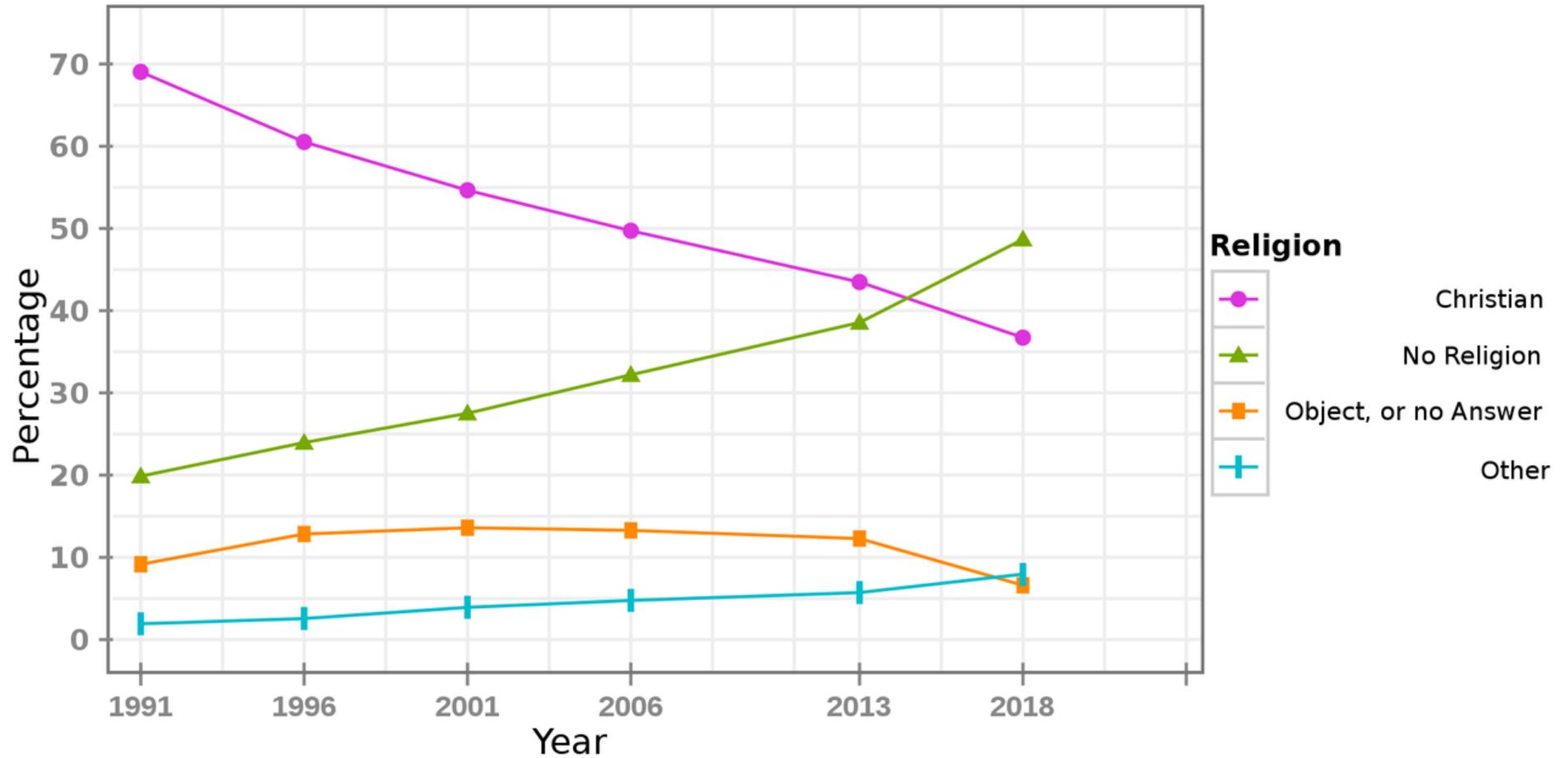
Despite increasing secularisation, there is research that suggests people remain open to exploring religion and spirituality. While some recognise the positive influence of Christianity in Aotearoa New Zealand, there are substantial barriers for many people and many have little knowledge of the Church in this country.

Research related to Faith and Belief in New Zealand can be accessed at <https://faithandbeliefstudynz.org/>

In the 2013 Census data, Catholicism became the largest Christian denomination for the first time. This is due to immigration patterns, especially of those from countries such as the Philippines and India.

APPENDIX B

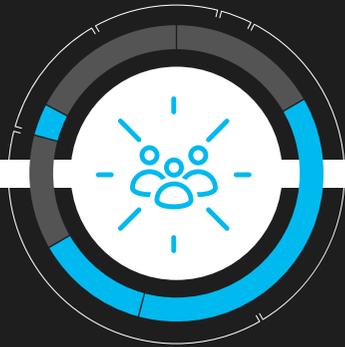
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF NEW ZEALANDERS IN THE LAST SIX CENSUSES



By Fanx - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=82444002>

APPENDIX C

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL PHASE IN THE DIOCESE OF PALMERSTON NORTH



Initial Listening Stage

People in the Diocese of Palmerston North were invited to participate and make submissions, beginning in November 2021.

Initial resources were developed and people encouraged to gather in groups and participate in a discernment process.

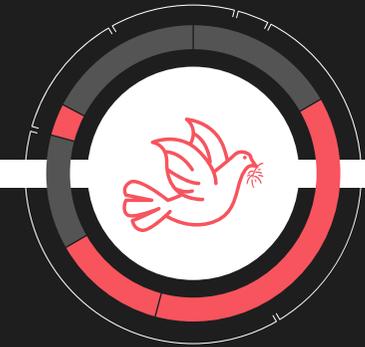


Further Listening Stage

After an extension to the global process, more time was made available for submissions to be made in the diocese.

Updated resources were provided, focussed on engaging particular demographics.

All submissions were due by the end of March 2022.



Summary Stage

A group was formed to discern the submissions made in the Listening Stages.

A pre-synod meeting was held.

A synthesis document was written and sent to the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference to be included in the global process.

APPENDIX C

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROCESS UNDERTAKEN

The synodal process in the Diocese of Palmerston North began with an Initial Listening Stage. An Opening Mass was celebrated by Cardinal John Dew, Apostolic Administrator, in October 2021.

A small group was appointed, including three lay leaders and one diocesan priest, ranging in age from their early 30s to 60s. They focussed on establishing and promoting the process in the diocese. Working closely with the Archdiocese of Wellington, resources to be used locally were developed.

During this Initial Listening Stage, the resources were developed based on the Preparatory Document and Vademecum and adapted for the local context. The primary response tool for submissions was a national online form, with rephrased questions agreed by all dioceses in the country. Submissions were also able to be made through either email or post.

Other components of the process included:

- Online information and formation sessions for leading the Spiritual Conversation were held initially.
- A dedicated webpage was established for accessing resources and information around how to make a submission.
- Invitations to participate were distributed through parishes, newsletters, diocesan social media, and schools.

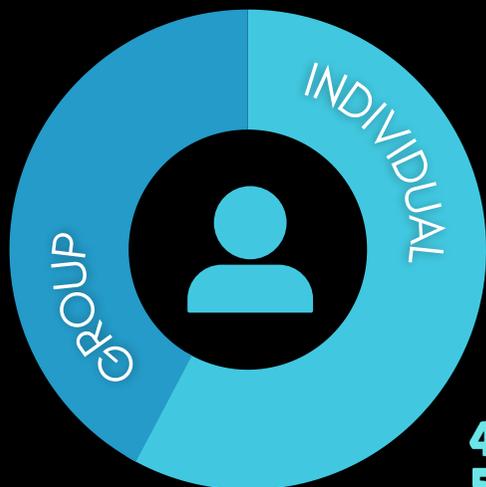
Due to the nature of the various ways in which people participated in the process, it is not clear exactly how many people have been involved. However, from a total of approximately 230 submissions received, it appears that around 500 people have taken part in the consultation phase in some way.

APPENDIX C

HOW PEOPLE PARTICIPATED

AROUND
230 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

REPRESENTING OVER 500 PEOPLE



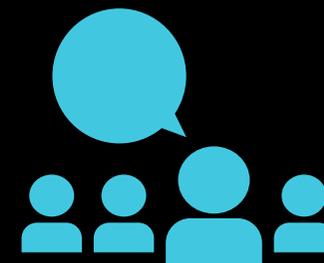
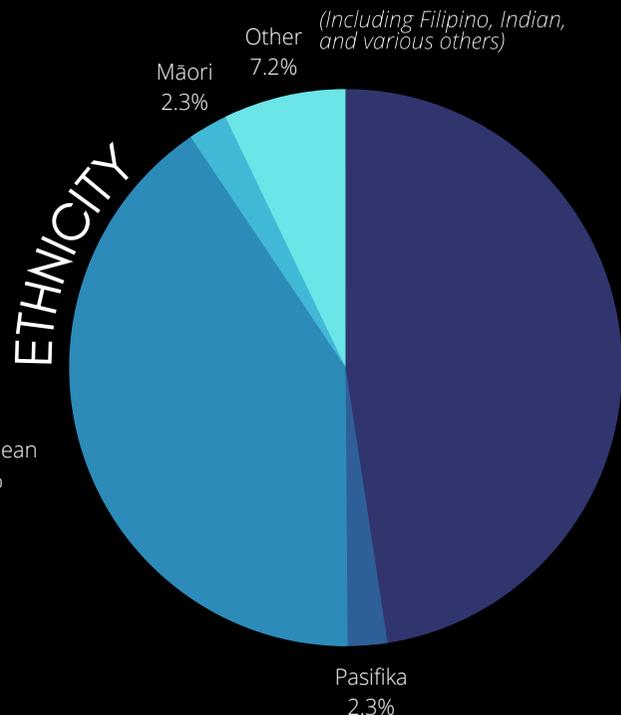
OVERALL THERE WERE **MORE INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS THAN GROUP SUBMISSIONS** RECEIVED

44 PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS & 5 CLASSES – FROM 3 SCHOOLS

84 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS & 16 GROUPS – FROM 5 SCHOOLS

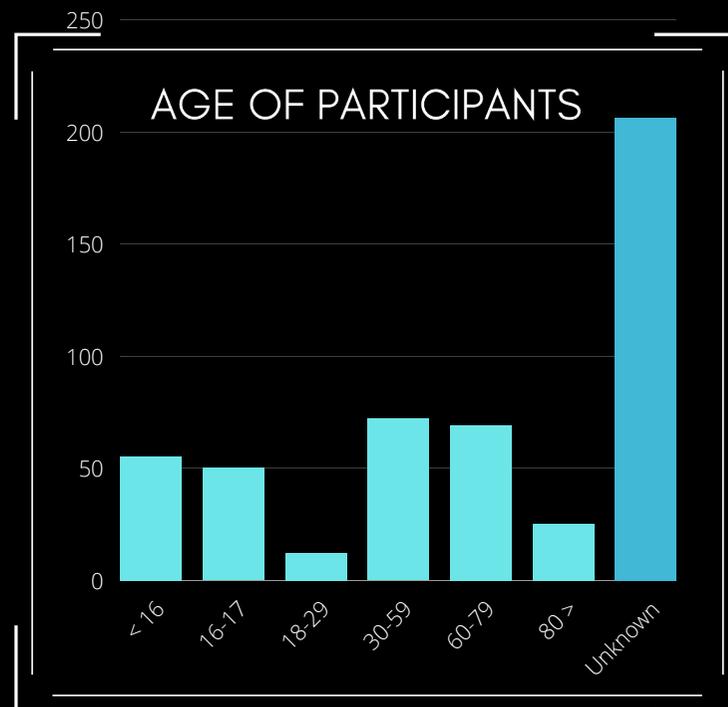


THE MAJORITY OF SUBMISSIONS WERE MADE BY THOSE CONNECTED TO A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



Unknown
47.6%

SUBMISSIONS WERE MADE IN DIFFERENT WAYS, THIS MEANT THE **AGE AND ETHNICITY OF THOSE MAKING THE SUBMISSION WAS OFTEN UNKNOWN**



APPENDIX D

EXPLANATION OF THE NAME OF THIS SYNTHESIS DOCUMENT

From the peaks of Maungā (Mount) Ruapehu and rays of the rising sun, the name 'Te Reo o Hewa' was gifted to this synodal process and to this document.

This name was gifted following a gathering of families at Mihiroa Marae, in Pakipaki, for the Hinepuaraurangi Rā Wairua (a form of retreat). This gathering is connected to the Māori movement of Māramatanga, and has taken place in Pakipaki for 35 years. The Marae is where Māori can go to express every part of our being.

"The Rā is a day set aside to give thanks and share dreams and aspirations, and to help bring them to fruition. We pray, sing, dream, eat, and celebrate miha (mass), and five mokopuna (young people) were baptised. The hardest part of our Rā is that we have to say goodbye."

This Rā is named after Hinepuaraurangi, which in Greek is the star called Atik, part of the Perseus constellation. There is a smaller cluster surrounding this constellation that is called Te Paki o Hewa/Te Paki o Hiwa.

Hewa/Hiwa help us form our dreams and aspirations and it is the star Hinepuaraurangi/Atik who brings these dreams and aspirations to 'Divine Fruition'. Each sunrise gives hopes to our dreams and light to our plans.

This document is about giving light to the dreams and aspirations that have emerged from the local synodal process, which took place under the southern skies and with these stars overhead.

APPENDIX E

KUPU MĀORI | GLOSSARY

WORD/PHRASE

Aotearoa
Hinepaururangi
Hui
Kanohi ki te kanohi
Marae
Māramatanga

Māori
Maungā
Miha Māori
Mokopuna
Rā
Tangata Whenua
Te Paki o Hewa/ Te Paki o Hiwa
Te Reo Māori
Tikanga
Tūrangawaewae
Wairua Tapu
Whakataukī
Whakatauākī

DESCRIPTION

The land of the long white cloud and the Māori name referred to as New Zealand

Māori name for the star Atik, part of the Perseus constellation

Often translated into English as "meeting" (which can also translate to "synod"), focussed on relationships

Face to face, in person

The focal point of Māori communities throughout Aotearoa New Zealand

Meaning an enlightenment, understanding. A term used for the prophetic movement of a family from the foothills of Mount Ruapehu

The indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand

Mountain

Mass in Te Reo Māori

Grandchild, young person

Commemorative celebration day(s)

A Māori term that literally means "people of the land"

Māori name for the smaller cluster of stars surrounding the Perseus constellation

Also known as te reo, it is the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is one of three official languages

Māori customary practices or behaviour

Māori concept. Literally tūranga (standing place), waewae (feet), often translated as "a place to stand"

Holy Spirit

Māori proverbs that the person who first said it first, is not known

Māori proverbs where the person who said it first is known

APPENDIX F

SUBMISSIONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE DIOCESE

Dear Pope Francis. Our class is answering your questions. I'll be honest, I don't attend mass on Sunday. I'm not baptised, but I'd like to be so I can attend a catholic high school. There is a couple of ideas for church, that I think you should concedere.

I don't really know why why woman shouldn't be able to be come a priest. It really just dosent make sence. Shouldn't woman be able to do any job.



Hi Pope Francis.

We drew some pictures of when we felt comfortable in our Catholic community. We really enjoyed sharing this with you.