

NZ Catholic

The national Catholic newspaper

October 3 - 16, 2021 • No. 622

Tech takeover?

A close-up photograph of a hand with fingers touching a smartphone screen. The background is a blurred mix of purple and blue light. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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NZCatholic

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NZ Catholic is published fortnightly. Subscriptions: One year, \$73; two years, \$135. Overseas airmail extra. The contents of NZ Catholic are copyright and permission to reprint must be obtained in advance. ISSN 1174-0086
 Member Australasian Religious Press Association and Australasian Catholic Press Association

St Dominic's Catholic College
 Founded by the Dominican Sisters
 Catholic School For Girls Years 7-13

- Uplifting weekday Whānau Pānui from our Principal during Lockdown.
- Follow our Student Leaders Lockdown Instagram page @stdoms.2021
- PTFA student leaders: **Christie Amiscua** and **Juliana Romero**, both Yr 13
- Year 12 have begun their leadership preparation programme for 2022

www.stdoms.ac.nz

A message from the editor

When the whole country was under Covid-19 alert level 4, NZ Catholic could not be printed or delivered under the rules for non-essential businesses. Similarly, the rules did not allow printing and distribution if an essential business is in a level 4 area, but some of its customers are in level 3. NZ Catholic does not qualify as an essential business. This was determined last year.

Advice this year from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage led to the conclusion that NZ Catholic, as a non-essential business, should not be printed and distributed if Auckland is at alert level 4, even if some customers elsewhere are at alert-level 2.

But now that the whole nation is at alert level 3 or lower, NZ Catholic is resuming printing and distributing to subscribers. When the whole nation is at alert level 1, NZ Catholic will resume

printing and distributing to parishes. In the meantime, we are continuing to produce and distribute free digital editions of NZ Catholic for parishes. Free digital editions do not count against subscriptions.

In the print version of this paper, we have included several of the stories that appeared in the digital editions as archive stories, so that our print subscribers do not miss too much. We appreciate the patience and loyalty of our subscribers at this time. We ask for your prayers. It was not easy to live and work at alert level 4 — and we hope we do not have to return there any time soon.

I hope you enjoy this edition of NZ Catholic in whatever form you read it. This edition has again been produced by the newspaper's staff, working from our homes.

— Michael Otto, Editor

Multiple awards for NZ Catholic

NZ Catholic received three awards at the 2021 Australasian Catholic Press Association awards held online on September 15.

NZ Catholic received the award for Best Feature Content — Multiple Content Producers, for coverage of the episcopal ordination of Bishop Michael Gielen last year. The judge praised the broad range of articles and photos, which captured the joy and significance of the occasion. The diversity and faithfulness of the Auckland Catholic community was clearly evident, the judge stated.

The award for Best News Content — Multiple Content Producers also went to NZ Catholic for coverage of the acceptance by Pope Francis of the resignation of the former Bishop of Palmerston North in 2019. The judge's comment noted that the coverage was sensitive and comprehensive, while also demonstrating balance and courage. The judge commented that this was an example for all Catholic publications and journalists.

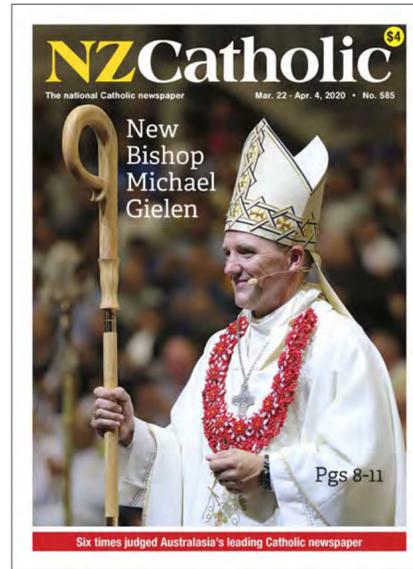
NZ Catholic also received a runner-up award in the Best Content — Climate and Environment category for an article by Southland correspondent Peter Owens about an "urban forest" in Lumsden.

This success comes on top of NZ Catholic receiving two awards at the Australasian Religious Press Association awards held on September 4, for which publications from many different denominations submitted entries. The ARPA awards related to NZ Catholic's ongoing coverage on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

An article by Rowena Orejana on the pandemic and conspiracy theories won a silver award in the best news story category, and a front page by Anne Rose won a gold award in the best cover newspaper category. The headline was "light in the darkness" over a photo of a silhouette of Pope Francis holding a candle at the Easter Vigil Mass at St Peter's Basilica last year. This was the cover for one of NZ Catholic's editions produced during lockdown last year.

NZ Catholic editor Dr Michael Otto said the recognition at both the ACPA and ARPA awards shows the consistent and ongoing quality of NZ Catholic's writing, design and production.

"We were recognised as publication of the year



Bishop Gielen ordination cover

by ARPA last year, and these awards show the continuing high regard of our peers in Christian and Catholic media for NZ Catholic," Dr Otto said. "It is gratifying to receive these awards," he said.

Other New Zealand publications to receive ARPA awards were Kete Korero (Hamilton), which won a bronze award in the best regional publication category, as well as a silver award in the best original photography category, and Tui Motu Interislands, which received a bronze award in the best feature, multiple authors category.

At the ACPA awards, Kete Korero also received runner up awards for its education coverage and artwork.

Catholic events affected by lockdown

The Rejoice festival scheduled to be held in Auckland diocese on October 16 has been postponed until next year, at a date and time yet to be set.

It had been planned to hold the festival at Sancta Maria College in Flat Bush in East Auckland on the final Saturday of the school holidays. Volunteer registrations were being taken from July, and registrations for people and groups opened on August 15, two days before the nation went into lockdown.

NZ Catholic understands that organisers believed that the fact that the delta variant is still

present in the community made it unrealistic to plan a large church gathering as planned in October.

There will still be some digital content provided that weekend.

Also postponed was the planned activist art installation "Pink Shoes into the Vatican" that was to have taken place between the steps of Parliament and Sacred Heart Cathedral in Wellington on September 19, Women's Suffrage Day. This was to have been a challenge to have a new, inclusive model of being church.

The new date, which is dependent on Covid restrictions at the time, is March 13, 2022, which is the first Sunday after International Women's Day.

Bishops have say on conversion therapy ban bill

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The Catholic Bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand have expressed general support for the aims of the Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill, but the bishops have said to MPs that parents and advisers to young people should not be restricted in giving advice for fear of breaking the law.

The bishops presented their submission on the bill to Parliament's Justice Select Committee on September 23.

The bishops' submission generally supports the aims of the bill as being in line with the Catholic Social Teaching principles of human dignity and common good, but the submission said parents and advisers to young people should not be restricted in giving advice for fear of breaking the law.

Hamilton Bishop Stephen Lowe and National Centre for Religious Studies resource developer and lecturer Lyn Smith spoke to the committee by Zoom on behalf of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference.

The Government bill would ban practices that seek to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Justice Committee received more than 100,000 submissions on the bill.

The bishops' submission said: "The Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand does not support, provide or participate in any kind of 'conversion therapy', by which we understand to be any programme that seeks by medical, psychological and/or spiritual means to 'convert' people from a homosexual or transgender orientation or identification

towards a heterosexual one. Evidence shows that such programmes cause harm and suffering. Any harmful, coercive or abusive practice under any name is abhorrent to the Church and the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

It added: "We would not wish to see parents and advisers to young people restricted in giving advice consistent with both moral theology and Catholic Social Teaching out of fear of being seen to be breaking the law."

Ms Smith told the Justice committee that Catholic teaching was pastoral, and promoted the dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God: "Children and young people seek out those in their lives they feel comfortable talking to when it comes to matters regarding sexuality. The Church's pastoral approach to this area, especially under

the guidance of Pope Francis and our bishops here in New Zealand, means that staff in Catholic education need to feel safe in continuing to provide this vital support to children and young people without the risk of, or fear of, prosecution."

Bishop Lowe, who is also secretary and vice-president of the NZCBC, told the committee that "conversion therapy" did not respect a young person's sacred journey from childhood to adulthood, and that was why the Catholic Church supported the legislation.

"At the same time, I would like to say... that I am concerned that there are many influences that our society is putting on our rangatahi which are sexualising them far too young, and encouraging them to make big decisions before they have adequately come to adulthood," said Bishop Lowe.

Level 2 Sunday Masses resume in parts of NZ

by ROWENA OREJANA

Sunday Masses have resumed in parts of the country after the Government increased the limit on the number of people gathering in an indoor defined space at alert level 2 from 50 to 100.

The dioceses of Christchurch, Hamilton and Dunedin announced the resumption of Masses, with a reminder to strictly adhere to Covid-19 health and safety protocols.

Wellington archdiocese, however, decided to continue the suspension of Sunday Masses, according to Cardinal John Dew's pastoral letter released on September 21, 2021.

"Now that we know that we are going to be at Level 2 for the near future, I write to say that I have consulted with the Council of Priests, and we have agreed to stay with the current arrangement of no Masses in the meantime. I will update parishes again on 5 October," he wrote.

"The reason for this is that the Delta variant of Covid-19 is very highly transmissible, and we have the responsibility to take care of each other and ensure that the virus is not passed on," he said.

Cardinal Dew cited canon law 223 which states that the Church's faithful must "take account of the common good of the Church", and that "ecclesiastical authority is entitled to regulate, in view of the common good, the exercise of rights which are proper to Christ's faithful".

Cardinal Dew called for prayers, vigilance in keeping one another

safe, patience and kindness.

"This is a time to be kind and merciful, and to remember that public safety is more important than personal preference," he said.

In Palmerston North, though, local administrator Fr Craig Butler said churches will be opened for public Masses beginning on September 22, based on conversations with Cardinal Dew, apostolic administrator, and the Council of Priests.

"The only real change announced... is the increase of gatherings from 50 to 100 people, which means we need to be just as vigilant in terms of keeping our people and the wider community safe. To be clear, everyone is obliged to follow the public health requirements, because public safety comes before personal rights and personal opinions," Fr Butler said in a letter.

In Hamilton diocese, Bishop Stephen Lowe said Sunday Masses will resume, though not everyone may be accommodated, as priests may celebrate two Masses a day only.

"The indoor gathering limit of 100 means we are not going to be able to accommodate everybody across the whole diocese. Some parishes will have extra Masses. However, given we don't know how long we will remain at level 2, I have decided each priest may offer two Masses per day," he said in a pastoral letter dated September 21, 2021.

He said the parishes will have the details about what Masses are being offered and how a booking system may apply.

"For those who are sick or uneasy

about returning to Mass immediately, the dispensation from attending Sunday Mass continues," he said.

He reminded everyone to adhere to the Covid-19 protocols when going to Mass.

"Please, do not give grief to those who ensure we do not exceed 100 people at each Mass," he said.

"As we look forward to returning to Sunday Mass, let us pray for an end to the pandemic. Let us be grateful that New Zealand has not been impacted in the same way other countries have. Let us continue to work together to ensure the health and well-being of others. And, finally and most importantly, let us not lose sight of Christ our hope who cannot be locked down as he continues to redeem and re-create us."

In the meantime, Dunedin Bishop Michael Dooley announced the resumption of Sunday Masses in the diocese on September 25.

"The celebration of Mass will be dependent on a restriction of 100 people and a venue in which people have adequate space," he said, reminding the faithful that the dispensation for those uneasy about returning to Masses is continuing.

"The Covid pandemic has thrown up many challenges for us but, as people of faith, we remember the Christian message that we are God's children and God is with us. With this hope, we can undertake those sacrifices that we are called to make for the health of our community," he said.

He added that it is good to join together as a community "in a limited

way on Sundays, but we remember following restrictions is our practical means to love our neighbour in this time of pandemic", he said.

The Christchurch diocese announced on its Facebook page that, if parishes are able to meet Government requirements, Sunday Masses can resume.

"Parishes will communicate their own arrangements regarding Sunday Mass," the post said.

"Some parishes will require Mass registration, and a link will be available Wednesday evening."

The parishes also need to provide a means for people to record their visit, physical distancing of 2 metres between bubbles, and clean and sanitised shared surfaces.

Some parishes outside metropolitan Auckland in Auckland diocese could be resuming Sunday Masses over the next few weeks, according to Bishop Patrick Dunn.

"Thames will keep an eye on the outbreak near them, but may aim for a start on Sunday, October 3 if parish councils feel it will be safe," he said.

Bishop Dunn said there seem to be two categories now to level 2: level two Delta, which imposes a maximum number of 50 people for public gatherings indoors, and level two ordinary, at which the maximum number allowed is 100.

"When metropolitan Auckland leaves level 3, there is a thought that we may go to 2 Delta [50], where the general consensus is that most parishes will not open on a Sunday," he said.

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- Hopeful of a return to school on 18th October.
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Having honest conversations on technology use

by MICHAEL OTTO

During lockdown, we have developed bad habits, haven't we?

This was a question put frankly by Auckland auxiliary Bishop Michael Gielen to viewers of a September 16 Facebook event titled "Who's using Who?" on September 16.

The bad habit to which he referred concerned the misuse and overuse of devices such as smart phones, tablets and computers, as well as TV.

While these have many good aspects, "we are becoming more and more consumed by devices and technology", and "we can forget who we are called to be as humans", Bishop Gielen said.

Speaking about times he had seen people use their phones rather than engage with those around them, Bishop Gielen said "We have all done that".

Being consumed by media is not living life to the full, and it is not living one's baptismal mission for Christians, he added, citing passages from Pope Francis' encyclical "Fratelli Tutti". Christians are called to be participants in life, not mere observers of it, the bishop added. And it is not just teens and young people who are impacted in this area — it applies to parents and other older adults as well, he noted.

So Bishop Gielen suggested a device-use check-up. He posed the following questions.

Is checking your phone the very first thing you do in the morning?

Do you use your phone while driving or walking?

When you go out for dinner with friends — where is your phone?

How do you feel after a prolonged period of scrolling on your phone or blobbing in front of a TV?

Where do you plug your phone in at night? Where is your phone right now?

What is the last thing you do before you go to bed at night? If you wake up in the middle of the night, do you check your phone?

Do you regularly find yourself mindlessly scrolling on platforms or on TV longer than you would like? (But you have no time to pray).

Do you check your phone at Mass?

How many times in a month of evenings at home would you not use a device?

Answering these questions would give a useful indication of where and how people are spending their time and energy.

Bishop Gielen next introduced Sam Brebner, who works for Auckland diocese as manager — ministries for young people. Mr Brebner used to



Photo: Creative Christians on Unsplash

work for Real Talk Australia, a non-profit organisation which uses personal sharing from presenters to engage young people to "get real" on sex, relationships and personal identity. Bishop Gielen noted that Mr Brebner is "a millennial and a digital native", and is well placed to talk about digital media and device use.

Mr Brebner pointed to research showing that, on average, Kiwis are spending eight hours a day on their devices, with only some of this being work-related. For Kiwi teens, the stats are even more eye-opening, with a quarter of teenagers in this country spending more than six hours a day — out-of-school time — on devices.

While technology, being a tool, has good aspects, when things get out of balance, there are unhealthy flow-on effects, Mr Brebner said.

He said research has shown that unhealthy device use has a strong correlation with depression and anxiety.

"Also, at the level of values, it creates this really unhealthy culture of comparison, of self-criticism, of materialism", and can lead to isolation, he added.

"We are more connected than ever before, but too many times, I think, it can lead to quite shallow connection that is missing the depth of a real encounter between different human beings."

Mr Brebner acknowledged the attraction that social media has for many, and there is a real science behind this, and the big media companies know it.

Engaging with social media feels good and releases chemicals, such as dopamine, in people's brains. Over time, people's brains become trained to respond to certain stimuli.

Mr Brebner said that, in many cases, people's brains are being trained to gravitate to distraction. But what is being rewarded is a particular way of putting oneself across, showing the best of oneself on social media. The highlights of life are shown, but the rest is left out.

"The truth is that this is not a realistic portrayal of life and relationships. This is not setting up our young people, even at a cognitive level, for relationships, where they are going to have resilience for those times that aren't quite as exciting, those times that are challenging," Mr Brebner said.

It is also easy to go into auto-pilot, or go into auto-play around technology use, he added. It is not uncommon for people to come off social media feeling a bit "blah" or low. Mr Brebner said such feelings should not be ignored.

"That feeling wants to teach you something, and there is an action that needs to take place if you are feeling like that," he said.

Mr Brebner suggested five steps or questions that people can take towards being more "intentional" in the way technology is used.

1/. Start with prayer — invite Jesus into this space. God wants to speak into every area of our lives, including this one.

2/. We have to make a choice — how do we want to use our time? We need to think more intentionally about time use and the way we use technology.

Not my life message

Sam Brebner related the following story: "A friend of mine, [for whom] I have a lot of respect, her favourite platform was Instagram, and she was spending at least a couple of hours on Instagram every single day. But one day she told me that she had decided to stop doing that. She had deleted Instagram off her phone completely. When I asked her why, she said — 'you know Sam, I just started reflecting — every time I logged off Instagram, I was feeling great. And the truth was, I wasn't feeling great. When I was logging off Instagram, I was feeling dissatisfied with my own life and how exciting it was, with my body and the way that I looked. When I thought about the people I was following on Instagram, the messages that I was getting, the overwhelming message was that I wasn't good enough, and my life wasn't good enough. I knew that that wasn't the truth, and so I knew that if that was the message that I was getting from this platform, then that wasn't a message that I should let be spoken into my life'."

3/. Make a plan before using a device. Sort out places and times where and when device use is allowed. For instance, agree that no-one takes smart phones or tablets into their bedrooms at night. Parents can make agreements with their children. "It is never too late to start making steps in this direction," Mr Brebner said. He recommended taking things step-by-step, treating this like a journey, and not trying to enforce all-or-nothing measures straight away.

4/. Intentionally choose alternative entertainment. Mr Brebner mentioned board games, family prayers, reading a book, calling someone. He also stressed the importance of families talking with each other at meals. "Think about these alternatives [entertainment] and choose them."

5/. Have honest conversations on technology use. Mr Brebner said that this is foundational. "We need to be willing to bring this into the light, and even the habits — whether that is about too much device use or looking at things that are inappropriate — bringing it to the light takes courage, but it is often the biggest step for creating that change, for creating that shift towards some healthier patterns."

Bishop Gielen encouraged parents to have conversations with their young men and women, including about the viewing of inappropriate material. "It means that you love them, when you say 'I know this is a struggle', and not just hope that they are not using it."

Bishop Gielen concluded the Facebook event by saying, "In the end we are children of God called to live life to the full. I pray that, as an outcome of this conversation, that you choose again to live life more fully, to be more available to those you love, and to inspire others to live their lives in a similar way."



A screen shot of Sam Brebner (top) and Bishop Michael Gielen

Some elderly need practical help in lockdown

by ROWENA OREJANA

Eighty-three-year-old Gloria Rae has fared well during this lockdown, but there are some things she needed help with.

"Each time there's a lockdown, I've joined the Age Concern. I rang them this time, and one of the ladies was nice enough to pick up my groceries and leave them outside my house," she said. "I thought that was bloomin' marvellous."

During lockdown, Age Concern Auckland chief executive officer Kevin Lamb said they received a lot of calls from older people who just needed practical help like picking up their groceries or prescriptions.

"We sometimes forget that simple practical things [are] difficult and challenging for an older person who can't have help coming into their home," he said. "Imagine if your lightbulb goes in your bedroom. You can't change it because you don't have the ability to go on a chair. You can end up being in the dark every evening because you simply can't do that."

Mr Lamb said Age Concern Auckland has a group of staff and volunteers to call older people to make sure they are OK and offer what help they (staff and volunteers) can offer, whether it

is picking up groceries or prescription medicine or coordinating transport to a vaccine centre.

Mr Lamb said that, for many of our elderlies, a day in lockdown is the same as any other day. He said 20 per cent of older people "live and cope with isolation and loneliness".

"Absolutely, we need to focus on supporting older people during lockdown. We need to have that focus throughout the year," he said.

More worrying, he said, is the increase in the number of people seeking mental health support. In New Zealand, he said, 10 per cent of people over the age of 65 are experiencing abuse and neglect. And, in most cases, the abuse is within families.

"For many of them as well, we do see the difficult divide appear. For a lot of the marginalised people, they don't have access to online shopping or anything else online," Mr Lamb said.

"When the advice is always to go online to try and find out where your nearest vaccine centre is, or do your shopping click and collect or whatever it may be, if you don't have access, you're just marginalised."

TOA Pacific Inc. chief executive office Malia Hamani said that, for older Pacific people, living with their families is a saving grace that goes

both ways. TOA Pacific advocates for "treasured older people".

Both Age Concern and TOA are supported by the Auckland Bishop Patrick Dunn's Catholic Caring Foundation.

Ms Hamani said older people with superannuation are able to help their families financially. On the other hand, living with their families means they are not isolated.

She said TOA drops off food parcels and face masks. "We took it for granted that they have face masks until one Pakeha lady asked the staff for some," she said.

Ms Hamani said one of their challenges is "ascertaining the support required with every request".

"We are not a big organisation," she said, adding that the Caring Foundation has been "most gracious to support us with our home visitations".

She asked people to pray "for all of us who are doing our best that we may be guided by the Holy Spirit to do the right call at the right time".

Mr Lamb also encouraged everyone to "just reach out and make a phone call" to older people whom they know. "Don't worry if you can't think of how to give them practical help. Just call us and we'll take over."

Wellington's Compassion Soup Kitchen asks for help

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The Compassion Soup Kitchen in Wellington is seeking financial help from the public after it was forced to cancel its annual street appeal for a second year due to the pandemic.

Compassion Chief Executive Dr Chris Gallavin said the cancellation is ill-timed as the pandemic also escalated the need for their service.

"The street appeal is our biggest fundraiser of the year — it ensures we can continue to provide food for Wellington, but we had to prioritise the health and safety of our volunteers and wider community," Dr Gallavin said.

He said they knew lockdowns brought increased demand, "but we did not imagine we'd be serving these many meals daily".

Over the past 12 months, the soup kitchen served 31,588 meals in the capital, and set a record for the number of meals served, with 200 meals leaving the kitchen in one day.

However, this record was broken during this lockdown as they provided meals for individuals and other social service providers such as Wellington City Mission, Women's Refuge, and Wellington Homeless Women's Trust.

"Within the first few days of Level 4, we were providing 230 meals a day, and now we are serving around 220 meals a day, seven days a week — quite possibly the most sustained demand we have seen in our 120-year history," Dr Gallavin said.

Providing meals during the lockdown had its challenges, which included having to adhere to

Covid-19 guidelines. The Soup Kitchen adapted by serving takeaway meals and running with two teams.

The Soup Kitchen is not rescheduling the street appeal, but instead is asking people to donate to them online.

"Our mahi is only made possible through the generosity of New Zealanders, and we need their support more than ever," he said.

"As an essential service, we are committed to serving nourishing meals to those that need it most as we usually would, so we ask that the public show us the same generosity they usually would, albeit online."

People can donate to the Compassion Soup Kitchen's annual appeal at: soupkitchen.org.nz/donate/donate-money

New General Manager for Christchurch diocese

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Archbishop Paul Martin, SM, has announced the appointment of Simon Thompson as the new general manager of Christchurch diocese. Mr Thompson takes over from Andy Doherty who, after six years in the role, is moving overseas.

Mr Thompson, who is currently strategy and planning manager at Otākaro Limited, said that one of the great attractions of the position was working for a faith-based organisation, where

priorities are often different to the business world.

"It is all about the greater good. The Catholic diocese has a mission statement and set of values focusing on the wider benefits to their communities rather than just bottom-line profit," he said.

"The diocese is also undergoing a period of change and regeneration, similar to what I experienced at CERA and Otākaro, and this is exciting."

Otākaro Limited is the Crown company responsible for the construction and operation of Te Pae Christchurch, New

Zealand's newest large-scale convention centre.

Mr Thompson also held positions at the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Christchurch International Airport and Air New Zealand.

"CERA and Otākaro also gave me extensive experience in complex and significant commercial negotiations, strategic planning and feasibility, and an appreciation for the need to build strong trust-based relationships," he said.

Mr Thompson takes up his new position on November 1.



Simon Thompson



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

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AUCKLAND CATHOLIC DIOCESE

cda022

Knitting our way towards the mind of the Creator

Although never having mastered the craft of knitting, I am the grateful recipient of a magnificent hand-knitted winter jersey, courtesy of my wife's stellar knitting skills. The project commenced early during the first Covid lockdown in 2020 and was completed in time for this year's chilly winter.

Quizzing my wife during the course of the jersey's creation, I began pondering over the concept of a knitting pattern. Can it be likened to a cooking recipe, which lists an exact set of steps to be followed in correct sequence, leading hopefully to say a tasty cake? A slightly posher name for the instructions comprising such a recipe is the word "blueprint".

Neil Broom

Now if a blueprint type of recipe or pattern was used to knit, say, my winter jersey, it would have to specify, for example, every single knit, purl, slip and cast operation for every individual row. For non-knitters, these somewhat odd terms describe different wool connecting or stitching methods using the needles to "grow" the garment row by row. Given the many hours of knitting that it took to produce my jersey, the size of the pattern, if it were a blueprint, would have been enormous, running into many pages of instructions. However, the pattern that was actually used occupied barely more than a single page. So somehow all the essential information had been squeezed into a much smaller space without the loss of any knitting instructions.

In fact, a knitting pattern is not a recipe or blueprint. Rather, it has the form of a precise, but highly-compressed, set of instructions written in coded form. The technical name for this instruction type is "algorithm". Instead of specifying every single stitching operation in each row, the algorithm might, for example, specify "knit, re-

peat one hundred times", or "knit one, purl two, repeat thirty times", and so on.

Further, if any of the rows are required to be identical, a single instruction specifies the number of repetitions of that row, thereby shortening greatly the length of the pattern.

Now imagine having to knit two jerseys, one twice the size of the other. If a blueprint pattern were used, the size of the knitting instructions for the larger jersey would need to be around twice that for the smaller jersey. However, because all knitting patterns are in the form of an algorithm, a single doubling instruction is all that is required. This then keeps the patterns for the two different-sized jerseys the same length.

Well, the algorithm-type pattern seems to be the way to go. But are there any disadvantages? Any experienced knitter knows that, if the pattern says "knit, repeat one hundred times", but it is misread as "knit, repeat ten times", this single mistake would have disastrous consequences for the shape of the completed garment. Much tedious unstitching is then required. Contrast this with a single misread of a



Photo: Pixabay

blueprint knitting pattern for the same garment. The mistake would amount to a single discordant stitch and thus go largely unnoticed.

What should now be obvious is just how much more slick and efficient is the algorithm method for storing, copying and communicating crucial information, compared to a recipe or blueprint type of pattern. But what has all this got to do with working our way towards the mind of the Creator?

Well, when it comes to the living world, we know that the biological cell employs a highly sophisticated communications system. It is able to transfer, at high speed, enormous amounts of complex information from the genetic library to the cell's manufacturing apparatus. With this information, the cell is able to perform all those life-promoting tasks such as the construction of vital body-building components. The sheer complexity of this communication system within the cell, and its efficiency of operation, suggest that it functions more like an algorithm than a recipe or blueprint.

Further, just as minor errors in a knitting algorithm may result in massive distortions in the final form of the garment, so living organisms may similarly exhibit gross malformations and pathologies when their genetic material is damaged by radiation or other toxic agents. Again this is entirely consistent with the communication system in the cell being algorithm-based.

But algorithms don't come cheap, and this is so whether we are considering a knitting pattern or the information system operating in our body's living cells. The former is always the expression of an ingenious and wonderfully artistic human mind. And it is not hard to believe that the information system operating in every biological cell bears witness to a profoundly clever and creative mind — the mind of God.

Neil Broom is an Emeritus Professor in the Faculty of Engineering, University of Auckland, and has a particular interest in the relationship between science and faith.

Ronald Rolheiser

Twenty years later

Twenty years ago today, struggling to digest the events of September 11, I wrote this column. Two decades later, my reaction is the same. Here's the column.

Iris Murdoch once said that the whole world can change in 15 seconds. She was talking about falling in love. Hatred can do the same thing: On September 11 (2001), the world changed. Two huge passenger planes, hijacked by terrorists, crashed into, and collapsed, the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York, killing thousands of people, as television cameras recorded the event live, showing horrific, graphic scenes over and over again. Shortly afterwards, a third hijacked plane slammed into the Pentagon, even as a fourth crashed in an open field. Inside of what is supposed to be the most secure place on earth, thousands of innocent people were killed within the space of an hour.

Stunned, muted, we nonetheless tried to speak to the situation. Many of the voices we heard were hard, angry, calling for retaliation and vengeance. Most voices though were gentle, looking only for a safe, intimate place to cry, for someone to hang onto. One Internet media site simply had a blank screen, a silent gesture that spoke eloquently. What, after all, can be said?

The opening lines from the Book of Lamentations offer this haunting description: "How deserted she sits, the city once thronged with people! Once the greatest of nations, she is now like a widow."

Later, this same book tells us that there are times when all you can do is to put your face to the dust and wait. Rainer Marie Rilke would agree. Here's his advice for times like these: O you lov-

ers that are so gentle, step occasionally into the breath of the sufferers not meant for you . . . Do not be afraid to suffer, give the heaviness back to the weight of the earth; mountains are heavy, seas are heavy.

The earth knows our pain. Sometimes silence is best.

Yet a few things need to be said even in the raw immediacy of this thing. What?

First, that each life lost was unique, sacred, precious, irreplaceable. None of these persons had ever died before and none of them should have his or her name lost in the anonymity of dying with so many others. Their lives and deaths must be honoured individually. This is true too for the suffering of their families and loved ones.

Second, clear voices must call us, especially our governments, towards restraint. Many see this as an attack on civilisation itself. They are right.

Accordingly, our task is to respond in a civilised way, holding fast always to our belief that violence is wrong, whether it be theirs or ours. The air we breathe out is the air we eventually inhale. Violence begets violence. Terrorism will not be stopped by bitter vengeance. Catharsis doesn't bring about closure. We shouldn't be naive about that. Nor, indeed, should we be naive in reverse. These terrorist acts, with their utter disregard for life, offer a very clear picture of the world these people would create were they ever given scope and licence to do so. They must be stopped and brought to justice. They pose a threat to the world; but in bringing them to justice we must never stoop to their means and, like them, be driven by a hatred that blinds one to justice and the sacredness of life.

No emergency ever allows one to bracket the

fundamentals of charity and respect for life. Indeed, horrific tragedies of this sort, call us to just the opposite, namely, to fiercely re-root ourselves in all that is good and Godly — to drive with more courtesy, to take more time for what is important, and to tell those close to us that we love them. Yes, too, it calls us to seek justice, and it asks for real courage and self-sacrifice in that quest. We are no longer in ordinary time.

Most of all, this calls us to prayer. What we learned again on September 11 (2001) is that, all on our own, we are neither invulnerable nor immortal. We can only continue to live, and to live in joy and peace, by placing our faith in something beyond ourselves. We can never guarantee our own safety and future. We need to acknowledge that in prayer — on our knees, in our churches, to our loved ones, to God, and to everyone whose sincerity makes him or her a brother or sister inside the family of humanity.

Moreover, we are called to hope. We are a resilient people, with faith in the Resurrection. Everything that is crucified eventually rises. There is always a morning after. The sun never fails to rise. We need to live our lives in the face of that, even in times of great tragedy.

I end with Rilke's words: Even those trees you planted as children became too heavy long ago — you couldn't carry them now. But you can carry the winds . . . and the open spaces.

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/

Being online and being kind

During the lockdowns, most Kiwis will have consumed more than their normal portions of online material, including on social media.

According to a study by Mosh, reported in a *New Zealand Herald* article, in 2020, Kiwis on average spent seven hours a day online.

This has its positive aspects, but it can have serious consequences for mental health, especially that of young people. A new international study published in *The Lancet*, which involved more than 577,000 school-aged children from 42 European and North American countries, found that prolonged periods of screen time had negative impacts on mental health (including depression, anxiety and attention

Editorial

issues), whereas increased physical activity was associated with mental wellbeing. Girls are especially impacted, *Women's Forum Australia* reported.

Another recent article in the *UK Telegraph* noted that, since 2012 — when Facebook bought Instagram — suicides among girls and young women in the UK have risen by 94 per cent. Depression and self-harm have increased markedly among teenagers of both sexes, but girls are especially afflicted. Health service referrals in the UK for eating disorders are now at their highest rate ever.

And it is not as if the huge social media platforms are unaware of this, the *Telegraph* article noted.

The impartial observer might think there is something inhuman going on here. The observer is partially correct. According to a BBC article, Twitter has removed tens of millions of suspected "bot" (automated) accounts in recent years. A 2020 US study found that nearly half the Twitter accounts spreading messages about the pandemic were likely automated accounts.

And in Instagram, so-called "beauty filters" use artificial intelligence to detect facial features and automatically edit images, reported a recent ABC article. Young people are increasingly wanting to look like their "filters", which contributes to "body dissatisfaction".

That is not to say all "bots" are bad. *Newsroom* reported that Kiwis Jacqueline Comer and Rebecca Lee have created the FairPlayBot — which can be attached to the social media accounts of sportspeople to automatically respond to negative messages with positive ones.

While not all bots are bad, plenty of human behaviour is. As Pope Francis noted in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, "social aggression has found unparalleled room for expansion through computers and mobile devices" (FT44).

Even some Catholic interaction online is not free of this, the Pope pointed out. Recently, the US bishops launched a resource called "Civilize It: A Better Kind of Politics" aimed at overcoming the polarisation that finds an outlet on social media platforms and elsewhere.

As Pope Francis said in *Fratelli Tutti*: "We need constantly to ensure that present-day forms of communication are in fact guiding us to generous encounter with others, to honest pursuit of the whole truth, to service, to closeness to the underprivileged and to the promotion of the common good. As the Bishops of Australia have pointed out, we cannot accept 'a digital world designed to exploit our weaknesses and bring out the worst in people.'" (FT205)

One of Pope Francis' recommendations in the encyclical was that people choose to cultivate kindness. The Pope wrote that St Paul described kindness as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). "He uses the Greek word *chrestotes*, which describes an attitude that is gentle, pleasant and supportive, not rude or coarse. Individuals who possess this quality help make other people's lives more bearable, especially by sharing the weight of their problems, needs and fears. This way of treating others can take different forms: an act of kindness, a concern not to offend by word or deed, a readiness to alleviate their burdens. It involves 'speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement' and not 'words that demean, sadden, anger or show scorn'." (FT223)

Let the other fruits of the Holy Spirit also be manifest in Christian people at this time — love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The Habit

Lockdown haircuts...



Letters

Demographics

Abortion is moral and economic suicide and "a country that murders its young has no future". These words, certainly very simple truths, align with the fifth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill".

The extremely low birth rate in New Zealand currently, and the loss of 600,000 babies to abortion, are leading to major social and economic disruption. We have a rapidly-aging population, and a massive shortage of workers across the whole spectrum of society.

We, as a country, are not alone, of course, in this situation. Suddenly, China, after a 70 year one-child policy and brutal abortion policy are begging mothers to have children. The same problem exists in the US, Europe, Japan, etc. It is a worldwide problem.

But the consensus of lawmakers is still to follow the path of "choice", and to mistakenly offer easier abortion access to the populations.

Sadly, we as a Catholic community do not stand out as living examples of families who have higher birth rates than the rest of the community. No longer do you hear the taunt, "Oh, you Catholics, that's why you have so many kids!" Tell me about it!

Our attitudes must change. We Catholics, instead of criticising the lawmakers who believe "choice" gives freedom, must accentuate, by ex-

ample, the values and benefits of family life. Then, and only then, will it be shown that the most beautiful thing, the most important thing in society, is a baby boy or baby girl.

John Farrell,
Pukekohe.

Climate

I thought the final few sentences in a recent article in *The Irish Times* would be of interest for our Catholic friends in New Zealand.

The article was written by Caoimhe de Barra, the chief executive of Trócaire, an agency of the Irish Catholic Church that is working around the world to tackle poverty, inequality and injustice. The sentences read as follows:

"Ahead of COP26, Trócaire is supporting a petition endorsed by the Vatican called 'Healthy Planet, Healthy People'."

"It calls for a joined-up, just response to the Covid-19, climate and biodiversity crises. It calls for an end to fossil fuels and damaging agricultural approaches, and the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities."

"Signing the petition at www.healthyplanetandpeople.org is one simple action we can all take today and invite our friends and communities to do the same."

"We must all play our part."

Indeed we must. I hope

our Catholic friends in New Zealand who read your fine newspaper join in signing the petition too.

We are all citizens of this one planet, and we are all children of our loving God. Let us care for this beautiful creation that God has given us.

J. McAuliffe,
Dublin, Ireland.

Latin Mass

It is 60 years since Vatican II engendered the dear hope for a rejuvenation of the faith, but there are as yet only a few tender shoots of renewal appearing above the ground, while the weeds have spread everywhere.

Pew Research Center tells us that 75 per cent of us have a Protestant understanding of the Eucharist, and more than 75 per cent of us don't bother to attend the new . . . liturgy.

These were God's precious infants created by him in his own image and likeness. These children have been cruelly murdered by the state as a core health service funded by the state as health care. Their murder is a violation of the fifth commandment, Thou shalt not kill, and a grievous offence to God, the author of life. The most dangerous place for a New Zealander today is in its mother's womb. It is important that, while we are supporting health carers, that we do not forget the plight of God's precious infants and their mothers, and continue to lobby our Government for increased legal protection for the unborn.

The Ministry of Health, however, advises that there were 13,236 abortions reported in New Zealand in 2020, 288 more than 2019 when 12,948 abortions were reported. These were God's precious infants created by him in his own image and likeness. These children have been cruelly murdered by the state as a core health service funded by the state as health care. Their murder is a violation of the fifth commandment, Thou shalt not kill, and a grievous offence to God, the author of life. The most dangerous place for a New Zealander today is in its mother's womb. It is important that, while we are supporting health carers, that we do not forget the plight of God's precious infants and their mothers, and continue to lobby our Government for increased legal protection for the unborn.

Ken Orr,
Christchurch.

Gamaliel's intervention in Acts 5:39 would have been more appropriate.

Tony Molloy,
Morrinsville.

■ Abridged — Editor

Support life

It is important that we support health carers. We are advised by the Catholic bishops' conference that the Catholic focus needs to move beyond political debate or legal argument, and extend to active practical support for people facing a range of life challenges at the beginning of life and at the end of life. These objectives are commendable and necessary.

The Ministry of Health, however, advises that there were 13,236 abortions reported in New Zealand in 2020, 288 more than 2019 when 12,948 abortions were reported. These were God's precious infants created by him in his own image and likeness. These children have been cruelly murdered by the state as a core health service funded by the state as health care. Their murder is a violation of the fifth commandment, Thou shalt not kill, and a grievous offence to God, the author of life. The most dangerous place for a New Zealander today is in its mother's womb. It is important that, while we are supporting health carers, that we do not forget the plight of God's precious infants and their mothers, and continue to lobby our Government for increased legal protection for the unborn.

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Ken Orr,
Christchurch.

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Pope: Bishops must handle Communion debate as shepherds, not with censures

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM SLOVAKIA (CNS) — The debate about denying Communion to politicians who support abortion must be handled in a pastoral way, not by public condemnations that seek to “excommunicate” Catholics who are not in line with Church teaching, Pope Francis said.

During his return flight from Bratislava, Slovakia, on September 15, the Pope said that, while there is no question that “abortion is homicide”, bishops must take a pastoral approach rather than wade into the political sphere.

“If we look at the history of the Church, we can see that, every time the bishops did not act like shepherds when dealing with a problem, they aligned themselves with political life, on political problems,” he said.

The Pope told journalists that, when defending a principle, some bishops act in a way “that is not pastoral” and “enter the political sphere”.

“And what should a shepherd do? Be a shepherd. Not going around condemning,” the Pope added. “They must be a shepherd, in God’s style, which is closeness, compassion and tenderness.”

“A shepherd that doesn’t know how to act in God’s style slips and enters into many things that are not of a shepherd.”

The Pope said that he preferred not to comment directly on the issue of denying Communion in the United States “because I do not know the details; I am speaking of the principle” of the matter.

During their virtual spring general assembly in June, 75 per cent of US bishops approved the drafting of a document, addressed to all Catholic faithful, on eucharistic coherence. During long discussions on the document before the vote, several bishops specifically pointed to President

Joe Biden and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who are Catholic, for not actively seeking to end legal abortion, and they said such politicians should be denied Communion.

When asked if he had ever publicly denied Communion to someone, Pope Francis emphatically said, “No, I have never denied the Eucharist to anyone; to anyone! I don’t know if someone came to me under these conditions, but I have never refused them the Eucharist, since the time I was a priest”.

But, he added, “I was never aware of anyone in front of me under those conditions that you mentioned”.

Recalling his apostolic exhortation, “*Evangelii Gaudium*”, the Pope said that “Communion is not a prize for the perfect”, but rather “a gift, the presence of Jesus in his Church and in the community. That is the theology”.

However, Pope Francis also said he understood why the Church takes a hard stance because accepting abortion “is a bit as if daily murder was accepted”.

“Whoever commits an abortion, murders,” he said. “Take any book on embryology, those books on medicine. At the third week of conception, many times before a mother even realises it, all the organs are there. All of them, even their DNA.”

“It is a human life. Period,” the Pope added. “And this human life must be respected. This principle is very clear.”

Pope Francis said that those “who don’t understand” this principle must ask themselves whether it is “right to kill a human life to solve a problem”.

He also recalled the reaction to his apostolic exhortation “*Amoris Laetitia*”, and the debates surrounding giving Communion to divorced or remarried Catholics.

Some called it, “heresy, but thank God for Cardinal (Christoph) Schön-



Pope Francis answers questions from journalists aboard his flight from Bratislava, Slovakia, to Rome (CNS Photo)

born, a great theologian, who cleared a bit of the chaos”, he said.

Nevertheless, “there was always this condemnation”, the Pope said. “These are poor people who are temporarily outside, but they are children of God and need our pastoral action.”

The Pope was also asked about his recent public service announcement in August encouraging people to receive the Covid-19 vaccine, and whether his statement that “vaccinations are an act of love” would alienate Catholics who are sceptical about taking the vaccine.

Pope Francis said he found it “a little bit strange” because “humanity has a history of friendship with vaccines”.

He also said that doubts about the vaccines may be a consequence of

“the uncertainty of the pandemic, of the vaccine itself”, or the notoriety of some vaccines in the past that were practically “distilled water”.

“Even in the College of Cardinals, there are some deniers. One of these, the poor guy, recently recovered from the virus,” the Pope said, alluding to American Cardinal Raymond Burke.

In Slovakia, recent legislation requiring vaccinations sparked protests in the country, causing divisions and tensions, including within the Catholic Church.

Although the government initially mandated all participants of papal events to be vaccinated, authorities relaxed their initial regulations and allowed participants who presented a negative Covid-19 test or proof of recovery from the coronavirus.

In Plenary Council, Australians search for ‘a new way of living as church’

SYDNEY (CNS) — After years of planning, committee work, Vatican approval and listening sessions, the first of two Plenary Council assemblies in Australia will be held on October 3-10.

This will be Australia’s fifth Plenary Council; the last was in 1937. Rules for a plenary council are outlined in canon law, which determines who must be included as well as who may be included, said Gavin Abraham, spokesman for the Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference. Laypeople are among those who may be included, and the Australians sought permission to increase those numbers.

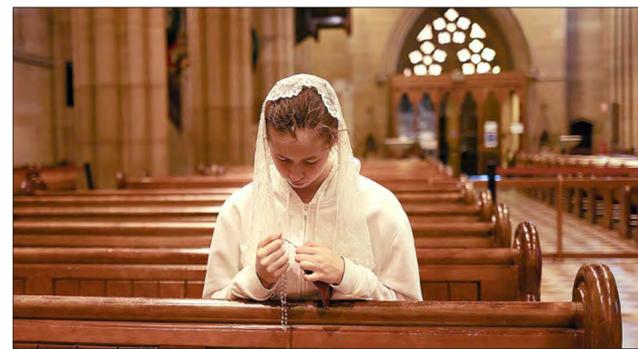
“Our understanding is that this is the first time laypeople have been members of a plenary council,” he said.

Abraham said each diocese and eparchy, depending on size, was allowed to send anywhere from 1-4 people who “may be called”. When organisers were allowed to increase those numbers, they looked for under-represented groups, such as younger women, members of migrant communities and ecclesial movements.

On most mornings from October 4 to 9, all 279 Plenary Council members will meet in a large group — at least virtually — for Mass, prayer and formal proceedings. In the afternoon, they will join smaller virtual groups to discuss one of 16 questions developed as a result of the listening and dialogue phase of the council.

The small-group discussions will be summarised and submitted in a report the following day during the large morning session. Abraham told CNS the October 7 session will be slightly different, because “there is an understanding that seven hours online for seven days in a row” is difficult.

The session that day will include much offline time for people to pray and discern over two questions: “How might we heal the wounds of abuse, coming to see through the eyes of those who have been abused?” and “How might the Church in Australia meet the needs of the most vulnerable, go to the peripheries, be missionary in places that may be overlooked or left behind in contemporary Australia? How might we partner with others



A young woman prays with a rosary inside St Mary’s Cathedral in Sydney earlier this year (CNS Photo)

(Christians, people of other faiths, neighbourhood community groups, government) to do this?”

The same delegates will meet again — they hope in person — from July 4-9, 2022. Between the assemblies, as pandemic restrictions allow, organisers hope to have a Liturgy of Lament for abuse victims, and perhaps meetings with other religious

leaders, Abraham said. The results of the assemblies will be sent to Rome for papal approval, which is to ensure that what has come from the plenary is in harmony with the doctrine and discipline of the universal Church. This will lead to the promulgation of the decisions and decrees, which are binding on the Church in Australia.

Pope Francis says German cardinal can take a sabbatical

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki of Cologne will take a “spiritual sabbatical” after a Vatican investigation found he did nothing illegal in his handling of clerical sex abuse allegations, but he did contribute to a “crisis of trust” in his archdiocese.

The German bishops’ conference announced on September 24 that Pope Francis had “a long conversation” with Cardinal Woelki earlier in September, and agreed with the cardinal’s request to take a break

from mid-October until March 1 because it was “obvious that the cardinal and the archdiocese need a time of pause, renewal and reconciliation”.

Cologne Auxiliary Bishop Rolf Steinhäuser will serve as apostolic administrator of the archdiocese, and will lead “a spiritual process of reconciliation and renewal”, the statement said.

In May, Pope Francis ordered an apostolic visitation of the Cologne Archdiocese “to obtain a compre-

hensive picture of the complex pastoral situation” there, and to investigate how accusations of clerical sexual abuse were handled by the cardinal and by Auxiliary Bishops Dominik Schwaderlapp and Ansgar Puff, both of whom had offered to resign.

After an onsite investigation and review by offices of the Roman Curia, Pope Francis “has decided not to accept their resignation from office.

In the case of both bishops, there are isolated deficiencies in the

handling of procedures”, but “not an intention to cover up abuse or ignore those affected”, the German bishops’ statement said.

Bishop Puff will resume his regular ministry immediately, the statement said, while Bishop Schwaderlapp “has asked to be allowed to work for one year as a chaplain in the Archdiocese of Mombasa, Kenya, before returning to his ministry as auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Cologne. The Holy Father has granted this request”.

Vatican letters emphasise Pope’s respect for Judaism

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis has not devalued the Torah and does not question the fact that the Torah is crucial for modern Judaism, Cardinal Kurt Koch told two prominent Jewish leaders.

“Pope Francis fully respects the foundations of Judaism and always seeks to deepen the bonds of friendship between the two faith traditions,” wrote the cardinal, who is president of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews.

The cardinal’s remarks were in response to concerns and requests for clarification regarding a catechesis the Pope gave during an August 11 general audience talk on St Paul’s teachings regarding the role of Mosaic law for non-Jewish Christians.

The cardinal’s remarks were contained in two letters published on September 10 on the website of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, which the cardinal also heads.

The letters, whose main text was the same, were addressed to Rabbi Razon Arussi, chair of the commission of the chief rabbinate of Israel for the dialogue with the Holy See based in Jerusalem, and to Rabbi

David Sandmel, vice-chair of the New York-based International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations. The two rabbis had both written separately to the cardinal in August, expressing similar concerns that the Pope had seemed to suggest in his audience talk that Jewish law was obsolete.

The cardinal told the two rabbis that he had formulated his response only after consulting with Pope Francis, “who has instructed me to respond to your letter”.

Cardinal Koch told both Rabbi Arussi and Rabbi Sandmel that “in the Holy Father’s address, the Torah is not devalued”.

The phrases concerning “the law does not give life”, he wrote, “should not be extrapolated from its context, but must be considered within the overall framework of Pauline theology”. The Pope had explained in successive talks that his catecheses were reflections on St Paul’s words and teachings — not his own — and that the apostle was speaking to Christians — not the Jewish people.

Cardinal Koch wrote that, “The abiding Christian conviction is that Jesus Christ is the way of salvation. However, this does not mean that

the Torah is diminished or no longer recognised as the ‘way of salvation for Jews’.”

The Pope was not referring to modern Judaism in his talk, but to the historical context of St Paul’s letter, the cardinal wrote.

“The fact that the Torah is crucial for modern Judaism is not questioned in any way,” Cardinal Koch

A complete rebuild and expansion of the living quarters for the Swiss Guard

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A complete rebuild and expansion of the living quarters for the Swiss Guard will not only improve life for guards and their families, it will also allow for the future possibility of recruiting women.

Currently, applications to serve in the 515-year-old corps are open only to Swiss male citizens who served in the Swiss Army and are Catholic, under 30 years of age and athletic, stand at least 5 feet 8 inches tall and boast an “unblemished reputation”.

But, at least since the new mil-

lennium, the overriding obstacle that stood in the way of opening the door to women had been housing, not gender. There is one barracks with most men living in cramped and shared spaces.

But a massive rebuilding project breaks ground with a projected completion by 2026 — the 520th anniversary of the founding of the Swiss Guard. It is scheduled to be inaugurated on May 6, 2027 — the 500th anniversary of the Sack of Rome, when 147 Swiss Guards lost their lives defending Pope Clement VII.

Vaccination can be prudent, SSPX leader says

ROME (CNS) — While denouncing as an “abuse of power” coercive measures to promote vaccination against Covid-19, a leader of the traditionalist Society of St Pius X said getting vaccinated “may sometimes be an eminently prudent act in the moral sense of the term”.

Father Arnaud Sélégné, secretary general of the SSPX, also said if hospitals or nursing homes admit only chaplains who are vaccinated, priests should comply.

“If it is impossible to approach the dying to confer on them the sacraments without being oneself vaccinated, we should prefer the salvation of our neighbour to our own health or tranquility,” he wrote in an article posted on September 24 on the congregation’s website, fsspx.news.

Considering the reality that several available Covid-19 vaccines have been manufactured or tested using cell lines developed from tissue of foetuses aborted decades ago, Fr Sélégné said, “In the present case, it should be remembered that, while abortion is a particularly heinous crime, the manufacturing and testing of the vaccines is indirect and remote.

“Thus, when there is a valid reason proportionate to the possible dangers, it is not immoral to be vaccinated with a product which has been prepared or tested with the above-mentioned foetal cells.”

Church suffers temptation to go backward, Pope tells Jesuits in Slovakia

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church suffers from a temptation to attempt to return to attitudes and practices of the past, an attitude that blocks pastoral outreach to many of those who are marginalised, Pope Francis told Jesuits in Slovakia.

“We are suffering this today in the Church: the ideology of going backward. It is an ideology that colonises minds. It is a form of ideological colonisation,” the Pope told his Jesuit confreres on September 12 during a meeting at the apostolic nunciature in Bratislava.

He also said the purpose of the 2015 Synod of Bishops on the family was “to make it understood that couples in second unions are not already condemned to hell”.

Today, he said, many in the Church are afraid of accompanying people “with sexual diversity”. “That is why today we look back to the past: to seek security. It frightens us to celebrate before the people of God who look us in the face and tell us the truth. It frightens us to go forward in pastoral experiences,” the Pope said.

“This is the evil of this moment: namely, to seek the path in rigidity and clericalism, which are two perversions,” he said.

As is customary when the Pope meets Jesuits during a foreign trip, a transcript of his remarks was released weeks later by the Jesuit journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

According to the text published on September 21, a Jesuit asked the Pope about his words regarding “diabolical ideological colonisation”, specifically his criticism of gender theory.

The Pope warned that “ideology always has a diabolical appeal”, which must be exposed, and said gender theory is dangerous because “it is abstract with respect to the concrete life of a person, as if a person could decide abstractly at will if and when to be a man or a woman”.

“Abstraction is always a problem for me,” he said. “This has nothing to do with the homosexual issue, though. If there is a homosexual couple, we can do pastoral work with them”, helping them grow in faith and their relationship with Jesus.

“When I talk about ideology,” he said, “I’m talking about the idea, the abstraction in which everything is possible, not about the concrete life of people and their real situation.”

Pope Francis was also asked about how he deals with criticism against him by “people who look at you with suspicion”.

Without naming it, the Pope said there was “a large Catholic television channel that has no hesitation in continually speaking ill of the Pope”, and that, while he feels he personally deserves “attacks and insults because I am a sinner”, the Catholic Church does not.

“They are the work of the devil. I have also said this to some of them,” he said.

67,000 LEGO pieces built into a Vatican City replica

by PETER FINNEY

NEW ORLEANS (CNS) — We all know Rome wasn't built in a day, but LEGO architect Rocco Buttliere had three months, which definitely gave him a running start over Julius Caesar.

Working quietly in his Chicago-area home during the lull of the pandemic in 2020, Buttliere cobbled together 67,000 tiny, plastic LEGO pieces to create an improbably realistic 3D replica of Vatican City State.

The 1:650 scale model is so faithful to the cobblestones shaded by Bernini's colonnade that it even includes a tiny red tile marking the top-floor window of the Apostolic Palace from which Pope Francis recites the Angelus each Sunday.

For a kid who began playing with his two older brothers' LEGO sets as child, and who even brought his LEGOs to college while pursuing a degree in architecture, those 800 hours he spent last year were the cornerstones of one his greatest artistic achievements.

"What inspired me was just the fact that there's almost 4000 years of human history represented in the architecture and the museums and the artifacts themselves," said Buttliere, 26.

His LEGO artwork of Vatican City State, and another of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, were two of the major attractions at BrickUniverse, a multicity LEGO exhibition that came to the New Orleans area from August 14-15.

"That level of spiritual resonance was something that really made me want to tackle the whole (city state)," he told the *Clarion Herald*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Since he began tinkering with LEGO sets — taking apart the sets and using loose bricks to craft

his own works — Buttliere has created more than 60 different models, and managed to make a full-time living based on travelling exhibitions and commissions.

He was nearing completion on his most ambitious work yet — a 1:650 model of first-century Jerusalem — for a museum in Brazil. That work is composed of 114,000 pieces and has taken eight months.

"I started on New Year's Eve 2020 and have one box left to ship to them," Buttliere said. "That's like the project will never end. But I'm so grateful to have clients like that who will pay me to do what I love."

■ Dome

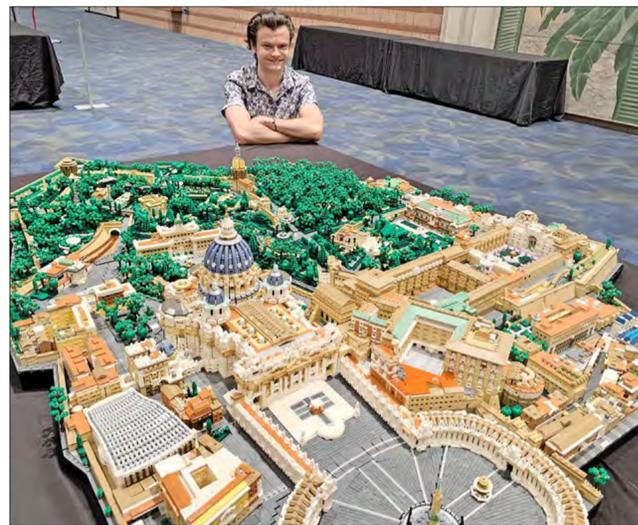
The most challenging aspect of the Vatican piece was figuring out how to create the dome of St Peter's Basilica, Buttliere said. His knowledge of everything LEGO drew his mind to a box of rare, sandstone blue dinosaur tails, which he expertly repurposed into the dome's shell.

"That really got the ball rolling," he said. "Those dinosaur tails have come in so many different colours over the years, and blue is the one that's trickier to track down."

Buttliere visited Rome only once — there was a LEGO convention in the Eternal City — and spent only a half-day walking through the basilica and Vatican museums. He spent much of his time sitting inside the Sistine Chapel (although Michelangelo's interior frescoes can't be seen on his piece even if someone were to peel off the roof).

He tackles a huge project in sections, starting with the most challenging, in this case the basilica. He relies on 3D images from Google Earth, and then lays out the landscapes in AutoCAD, a design software, to draw construction lines.

"The medieval walls kind of follow an irregular pattern, and then you are kind of going uphill as you



Rocco Buttliere next to his LEGO Vatican City State replica (CNS Photos)

move toward the back of the landscape," he said. "The colonnade is an oval, and LEGO likes to fit squares really well, so anything with curvature is going to be inherently challenging. In this case, it uses a combination of those square and circular parts to get the curvature of the 'ovato tondo'."

Of the 67,000 pieces in the Vatican work, about 1300 are "unique" pieces, meaning they are rarer and are included only in certain LEGO sets.

"If you buy a LEGO set off the shelf, even the largest ones tend to only have 100 to 150 unique elements in them," Buttliere said. "In terms of my own work, Vatican City is the most differentiated and stylised, but that makes sense when you consider that it represents a

landscape that has different buildings from over the millennia."

For ease of travel, the Vatican piece can be subdivided into 13 subsections. The only collateral damage of the most recent trip to New Orleans were a few broken tree branches in the papal gardens.

"But I always bring some replacements for fragile things like that," Buttliere said. "Everything except the trees are glued."

Since his models are built basically to the same scale, Buttliere said a little-known fact becomes readily apparent: "You could fit the entire country of Vatican City underneath the mid-span of the Golden Gate Bridge."

That would not have pleased Caesar.

Family Matters

Helen Luxford



Lockdown fatigue

As I write this, Aucklanders are still in level 4, the longest lockdown we've had. I'm not sure that moving to level 3 will offer much relief to some households. In fact, for us it will just mean we are more stretched. It will bring a much-needed light at the end of the tunnel. Even more important, it will allow so many amazing and now struggling businesses get back on their feet. It does mean that takeaways and Uber Eats and so on are back on the table. That's something, because I think we all have lockdown fatigue.

We haven't had it nearly as bad as other nations — think of the UK where the kids virtually missed an entire year of in-class school. I've lost count for Sydney, New South Wales, I think they are in their twelfth week of lockdown. We are seeing more and more disquiet, and indeed there have been a number of sizeable protests in Australia against lockdowns. I think the biggest stressor is the question for which we don't yet have an answer. When is this over? What is the end game? Will life go back to normal? What will a new normal look like? Throw that uncertainty into the mix, and we have a problem.

Lockdown fatigue has been described worldwide, and it's the state of exhaustion caused by the long-term effects of Covid-19 and the changes it has caused to every aspect of life. We all need to grieve the loss of our "old" "normal" life. We have all lost one way or

another. In my house, it's not just my losses, but the kids' losses. Suddenly that last game of rugby and soccer was the last of the season. That tournament the kids had been working so hard for is probably cancelled (but we're not sure yet), at least for Aucklanders, because it's out of Auckland. And even harder on the kids, it may go ahead without them! We are all on an emotional rollercoaster, and we're not in the same place at the same time. This can lead to tension and unpredictability within a household and family.

Why we get lockdown fatigue can vary from person to person. Ultimately, it's about not being able to do what you want when you want. Having to juggle work and home schooling and all the normal chores and worrying about income. I think that, in New Zealand, it's really easy to feel sick of being cautious — we have cut off our social interactions and our life to prevent a flood of cases overwhelming the hospitals, but the threat somehow doesn't seem so real. It's hard to be believe and get your head around all the big numbers of cases and deaths from overseas when we've managed to avoid that. We are all feeling uncertain and anxious about where we go to from here. We get really angry when we see people breaking the rules. This lockdown gig only works if we all do it.

Lockdown fatigue can look different for different people. You might see or experience

short temper with outbursts of frustration, anger and irritability, feelings of sadness, depression, anxiety and fear. You may feel physical exhaustion, even though you feel as if you haven't "done" anything. People complain of having difficulty focusing, prioritising, problem-solving and making decisions, with the added difficulty of trying to maintain a routine. An overwhelming sense of exhaustion and negative thoughts can creep in.

For Catholics, most of us will have missed being at the celebration of the Mass for weeks now. We can watch Mass online, and I am so grateful for it, but it's not the same. It must be a really odd time for the priests. Our Church is made up of people and, when we are unable to gather, it feels like the life of the Church is hard to grasp. Praying is one of the most important things we can do right now, including praying for our leaders that they can be blessed with the wisdom to guide us to a place where lockdowns are not interrupting our lives.

James 1:5; "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

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.

Big budgets, small screens

by NEVIL GIBSON

Cinemas lost their exclusivity for big-budget blockbusters during the Covid-19 lockdowns. While some prestige features, particularly those expected to be box office winners, were put on hold, others surfaced on streaming services instead.

This was forced on the major Hollywood studios as they went head-to-head against Netflix and Amazon Prime Video.

The first was Disney, followed by Warner Bros and Paramount, which is owned by a media conglomerate, Viacom CBS. They announced most of their future movies would head straight into streaming, with perhaps a mixed release through theatres.

Hence the release on Sky TV's Neon of *Infinite*, a science-fiction epic filmed in a James Bond-sized series of international locations: England, Scotland and Wales; three places in Mexico, including a car chase in Mexico City; Thailand and Nepal in Asia; New York and, finally, the French Riviera.

It has a big-name cast as well, headed by Mark Wahlberg (*Deepwater Horizon*) and Chiwetel Ejiofor (*Locked Down*, *12 Years a Slave*). Based on *The Reincarnationist Papers*, a novel by D. Eric Maikranz, *Infinite* contains elements of *The Matrix* and its three sequels, Netflix's *The Old Guard* (2020), and also starring Ejiofor and *The Fifth Element*.

Reincarnated warriors fight a centuries-old conflict between the goodies, called "infinite", and the baddies, who are "nihilists". Ejiofor is one of the latter, looking for the hidden weapon that can end life, including reincarnation.

Wahlberg knows the secret, but is haunted by hallucinations and memories from places he



Chiwetel Ejiofor and Mark Wahlberg star in *Superdeep*

Movie Review

never visited. The infinite, led by a wheelchair-bound professor (Liz Carr), hope they can get to him before the others.

Sadly, the exotic locales are wasted, and the good stuff is as poorly executed as the many stunt players' roles, perhaps avoiding Paramount the embarrassment of a box office flop. Sometimes big budgets count for nothing.

This is not the case with Arseniy Syukhin's Russian horror-thriller *Superdeep* (Shudder), where the money is well spent recreating a top-secret polar science station with the world's deepest shaft.

"It's hell down there," survivors of a mysterious accident tell a team going down to find out what happened. It's led by a viral scientist, played by Serbian actress Milena Radulovic, who is charged by her Soviet bosses with recovering any compromising evidence before an official investigation. Warning: It has a monster.

Two lookalike thrillers, *Kate* (Netflix) and *Jolt* (Amazon), add to the burgeoning cinematic

lineage of female action shows: think *Nikita*, *Lucy* and *Atomic Blonde*.

Mary Elizabeth Winstead (the huntress in *Birds of Prey*) has the better story as *Kate*, an underworld sniper in Japan wanting to retire after one last job. Her hopes fade when she is injected with polonium and has only 24 hours to hunt down her final victim.

Director Cedric Nicolas-Troyan has an exotic setting and colourful characters, including Woody Harrelson plus Miku Patricia Martineau as a spoiled brat, but does little more than keep the action going.

In Tanya Wexler's *Jolt*, Kate Beckinsale has an anger problem that carries her through a dizzying number of action scenes and victims to avenge her blind boyfriend. High-octane action has not lost its appeal, but it has become smaller.

Ratings: *Infinite*, Mature audiences. 106 minutes.

Superdeep, Not rated. 115 minutes.

Kate, R16+. 106 minutes. *Jolt*, R16+. 91 minutes.

CLIPS

I'm Your Woman (Amazon Studios)

Rachel Brosnahan, star of *The Marvelous Mrs Maisel*, shows her dramatic side as a gangster's wife who leads a laid-back life that is oblivious to the seedier side of his profession. She is soon thrust into a cat-and-mouse plot when he suddenly turns up with a baby boy, and gives instructions to go on the run with a protector (Arinzé Kene). The plot takes them to various safe houses and uses the subtlety of race to explore the character of a helpless, abandoned woman — completely unlike *Mrs Maisel* — and how she becomes a resourceful mother in a world without rules. Director Julia Hart, working with her producer-husband and co-writer Jordan Horowitz, confirm the originality they showed in *Stargirl*, on the Disney+ channel. Rating: R16+. 120 minutes.

Afterlife of the Party (Netflix)

Hyper-energetic former Nickelodeon star Victoria Justice (*Naomi and Ely's No Kiss List*) injects fresh enthusiasm into the familiar Hollywood territory of *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), *Heaven Can Wait* (1943, 1978) and *Ghost* (1990). After a hard night's partying, in which she rejects her best friend (Midori Francis), Justice wakes up to find herself in a candy-coloured purgatory with a guardian angel (Robyn Scott) explaining she has to apologise for some of her actions in her previous life before she can move on. This includes making up to her BFF as well as her divorced parents. One compensation is that she can dress how she pleases. Inevitably, the party girl starts to tone down her choice of clothes as she evolves into a more mature being. Director Stephen Herek and writer Carrie Freedle both have form in formulaic romances, so there's no danger of unpleasant surprises. Rating: 7+. 109 minutes.

Martyrs Lane (BFI/Shudder)

The ghostly angel in this British Film Institute-backed feature haunts an intelligent but lonely 10-year-old girl (Keira Thompson) as she comes to terms with her mother's hidden grief. They share emotionally distant lives in a vicarage with the girl's older sister (Hannah Rae) and a spiritually introverted father (Steven Cree). The girl is visited regularly by an angel-winged friend (Sienna Sayer), and their games become increasingly tense. The visitor's identity is revealed near the end as she becomes physically decayed. The painful background story of the mother (Denise Gough) also emerges. Director Ruth Platt wrote the original story, and its emotional impact depends heavily on her two young characters. This is a classy study in human loss and how it's seen through a child's eye. Not rated. 96 minutes.

Overview of Catholic fiction deserves to be a modern classic

HOW TO READ (AND WRITE) LIKE A CATHOLIC by Joshua Hren. Tan Books (Gastonia, North Carolina, 2021). 462 pp., US\$34.95. Reviewed by MITCH FINLEY (CNS)

If you want a book that will introduce you to the depth and breadth of Catholic literature, this is the one for you. However, if you want actual instruction on "how to read (and write) like a Catholic", note that this book is aimed at fiction writing only, and it's theoretical, not practical.

Writers of nonfiction or poetry, for example, will not find helpful practical insights here. What you get is extensive, detailed — and not infrequently entertaining — essays on various themes found in classic works of fiction by Catholic authors.

This isn't light reading, but the reader who is prepared to focus and pay attention will learn

a great deal. Co-founder of the online master of fine arts programme at Houston's University of St Thomas, the author of this book clearly knows what he is talking about when it comes to discussing the Catholic literary tradition.

His book is organised into five parts and 35 chapters. Two appendices offer "101 Books to Read Like a Catholic", and a supplemental list of books titled "Further Forays" into reading and writing like a Catholic.

The titles of the five parts give a good overview of the material the book covers: "Reading (and Writing) Like a Catholic", "Reading Christ-Haunted Fictions", "Reading Human Nature", "Reading Catholic Fictions", and "How to Write (Like a Catholic)".

Broadminded — in the technical sense of the word, "catholic" as it can

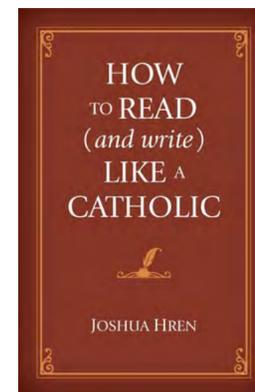
be — Joshua Hren's book includes not only writers who were or are "practising" Catholics, such as Flannery O'Connor, J.F. Powers and Walker Percy, but also some who left Catholicism behind but — consciously or unconsciously — retained a Catholic worldview.

These "cultural Catholics" include James Joyce, contemporary short story writer and novelist George Saunders, and the 1950s and '60s "Beat" writer Jack Kerouac, all of whom Hren discusses at some length. Further evidence of this book's wide focus is the author's inclusion of Russian and French authors of classic works, as well as the 14th-century Italian Dante Alighieri.

Some readers may be surprised by the author's inclusion of American Walter M. Miller's 1959 post-apocalyptic science fiction novel, "A Canticle for Leibowitz". Surprise, however, is likely to be replaced by gratitude, for valuable insights to be gleaned from "Canticle" soon become clear.

"How to Read (and Write) Like a Catholic" deserves to become a modern classic itself.

Mitch Finley is the author of more than 30 books of popular Catholic theology.



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God has made known his plan for us

Scripture

by Fr Kevin Waldie sm

Today's Scripture passages drive home the point that, from the beginning of creation, God has made known his plan for us. It highlights us as men and women called to live a specific vocation. And tied into that is a plan to be a family, both naturally and spiritually.

By its careful wording, the Genesis text alerts us to God's original intention in the act of creation. The man and the woman are a fit match for each other. It is their task to aid one another, while forming a particular family unit. Notably, their relationship is superior to any other kind of connection. What is therefore revealed here

has deep significance for our worldview and our assigned work on this earth.

The verses from Hebrews identify a further vital participant in the execution of the original divine plan. Coming in the flesh, just like us, Jesus acted in cooperation with God the Father to aid our spiritual well-being. By his birth, life, suffering and death, we have been graciously granted the holy privilege of being called brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Interestingly, Mark's text opens with two questions that stimulate us to reflect on what it means to be children of God. And, as such, we

October 3: Twenty-seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time. **Readings:** 1. Genesis 2:18-24; **Psalm:** 128; 2. Hebrews 2:9-11; **Gospel:** Mark 10:2-16.

see ourselves, men and women together, building up all family life in the context of the coming of God's kingdom. These Gospel words therefore spell out life's meaning, just as God, from the beginning, mapped it out. It is our calling to live life according to God's intention, and so create a stable community that believes in a graced future.

All these thoughts today make us reflect on the vocation we have been called to embrace. In communion with God and Jesus, we rightly find ourselves realising the life mission designed for us.

The insight that will steer us through this life's trials

These readings contain a simple message. It is each biblical author's purpose to arouse in us a yearning for the insight that will fundamentally steer us through this life's trials.

The Wisdom extract puts before us a choice. To learn what is truly precious in life, we must put our trust in Lady Wisdom. Her words, as they stand here, offer insight and understanding based on a wealth of life's experience, especially in light of divinely-inspired guidance. Listening to her, therefore, introduces us to what is truly precious, as opposed to the fleeting riches of this world.

The second reading's brevity should not deceive us. For its few words get to the nitty-gritty

of how true insight can inform our lives for genuine, lasting good. Taking the Word of God as a key reference point, the author here advocates for relying upon the insight that comes to us through this means. By turning to divine revelation, we learn to look at life with a discerning eye. And in that manner, we begin to comprehend the right direction that our lives should take.

In Mark, Jesus' encounter with the rich man graphically demonstrates where true wisdom lies. Jesus is clearly a teacher. But it is the man's question about inheriting eternal life that reveals his inability to appreciate the real essence of Jesus' wise teaching. Being greatly attached to his earthly wealth blinds him to the teacher's

October 10: Twenty-eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time. **Readings:** 1. Wisdom 7:7-11; **Psalm:** 90; 2. Hebrews 4:12-13; **Gospel:** Mark 10:17-30.

words. And once the man has left the scene, Jesus instructs his disciples about the real riches that await those who see the eternal value of the Good News that he is revealing.

Through the wisdom of these biblical texts, we gain insight into the kind of life we should be endeavouring to foster. Our commitment to the revealed Word of God therefore assures us of a secure future.

SAINTED GLASS



On October 4, we remember St Francis of Assisi. When I think of St Francis, I remember entering a Franciscan church in Lucerne, Switzerland, on a hot day in 1994. There was a very heavy curtain between the foyer and the nave, and inside the church it was cool, silent and beautiful in its simplicity. The atmosphere of prayer was intense. My wife and I both remember that church because of its aura of simplicity and prayer. This window depicting St Francis in St Mark's, Drummoyne, Sydney, reflects the simplicity and prayer that were his. — Glen McCullough

Carmelite Nuns
Auckland

www.carmelites.org.nz

The Carmelite Nuns' website is available for you to email your prayer requests

Digital initiative seeks to 'unlock' Catechism of the Catholic Church

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A new global project, Real + True, seeks to "unlock" the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and modernise the way Church teaching is presented to a digital age.

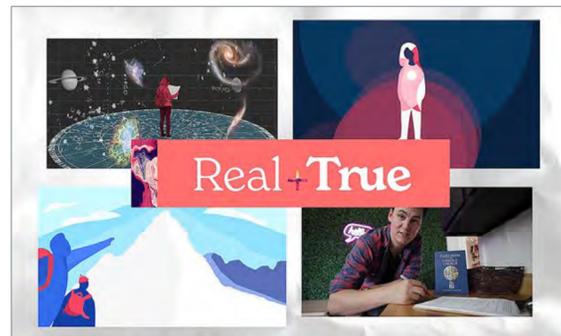
Launched on September 7, the initiative includes videos, social media content, and a podcast organised along the four pillars of the catechism. Each month a new unit will be released, with 12 units for each pillar, totalling 48 units.

Aimed at millennial and Generation Z audiences, the content is meant to supplement evangelisation and catechesis efforts that already exist, as well as be a resource for those seeking answers to questions online, said co-founder Edmundo Reyes.

Reyes said the inspiration for Real + True came six years ago in Portland, Oregon, when he encountered BibleProject, a nonprofit organization with a library of resources to help people read and understand the Bible.

While the organisation isn't Catholic, he was impressed by their work, which he'd "never seen done in a church setting". After learning about BibleProject's creative process, he came back "with the hope of one day doing something similar with the Church".

Co-founder Emily Mentock



An image for the Real + True digital project (CNS Photo)

explained that the project's goal of "unlocking the catechism for the modern world" means bringing the "content of the text into more digital media channels to better reach the audience that we're after" - people that are not against the church but are curious and open to learning more about their faith.

Each Real + True unit contains three videos — a proclamation video, an explanation video and a connection video — as well as a podcast that is geared toward formal and informal catechists.

Co-founder Edmund Mitchell, 32, who worked in parish ministry for 10 years, said his training in a methodology of catechesis called, "the ecclesial method" by

Msgr Francis Kelly, influenced the approach to developing the structure and scripts of the videos.

The first stage is preparation, he said, by "getting the attention of the heart of someone who isn't yet ready to hear the catechesis". The proclamation videos are meant to rouse "spiritual curiosity" and prep the person to have a "burning question on their heart" that connects to the section of the catechism the unit covers.

Funded by a grant from Our Sunday Visitor, the Real + True initiative is also seeking donations to translate content into more languages, and produce videos at a faster pace.

Local Diocese News

Interfaith virtual prayer held for attack victims

by MICHAEL OTTO

Members of Interfaith Councils throughout New Zealand came together on September 19 for a virtual prayer vigil for the victims of the New Lynn attack. Members of many faith traditions spoke and prayed at the vigil. Among them were Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu and Hare Krishna representatives.

The attack on September 3 by knife-wielding militant Ahamed Athill Mohamed Samsudeen saw eight people injured and seven hospitalised, and resulted in Samsudeen being shot dead by police.

Many speakers at the interfaith vigil stressed that the actions were those of an individual and not of a community.

Dr Pushpa Wood, Founding and Life Member of the Wellington Interfaith Council, called on all people to do everything in their power to ensure that Aotearoa New Zealand remains a "peaceful slice of heaven".

Wellington Catholic priest Fr Ron Bennett was one of those who offered prayers at the virtual vigil, asking for wholeness and unity in this country, and in all of planet earth, "the one place God had given us to live in and look after".

Fr Bennett read a passage from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (12.31-13.13) concluding that three things endure — faith, hope and love — and the greatest of

these is love.

The priest prayed that God would help "us discover the goodness in ourselves and in each other, and the wonderful resources you have given us. Help us to work together to build a world that is happy, contented, joyful, and considerate of each other".

Another Christian speaker, retired Methodist minister Greg Hughson of Dunedin, prayed for victims of the attack and for their families, that they might find healing and support.

"We pray for healing for all who have been hurt in whatever way by this tragedy," Mr Hughson said.

"We pray also for the family of the man shot by police, the family who unsuccessfully did all they could to dissuade him from his violent beliefs. In their grief, may they know your comfort and the support of friends who care."

"We pray today for all the members of the Sri Lankan and Muslim communities of our land, who have been understandably upset and distressed by what has happened. We know, Lord, that the actions of this one man in no way reflect the character and ethos of either the Sri Lankan and Muslim communities."

"May all of us, whatever our culture, whatever our faith, work intentionally to deepen our relationships with one another, and help us to work effectively together . . . to prevent events like this ever happening again."



Father Maliu 'Otutaha (right) and some of the volunteers in Panguru

Help for North Hokianga

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Father Maliu 'Otutaha and a group of dedicated volunteers worked for several days in September to fill up more than 400 boxes of food and supplies for struggling households in the North Hokianga.

A good part of the floorspace in St Peter's church in Panguru was filled up with supplies, which were sorted and placed in whanau food parcels. More than 15 people put their hands up to help with this work.

The food arrived from Auckland in bulk — more than 2000 kg of flour, 600 kg of rice, 675 kg of sugar and 237 kg of milk powder was divided, measured, and repacked into 2-3kg ziplock bags. Other supplies were either in smaller amounts or already in pre-packed in "per whanau" quantities.

Boxes were distributed to Motukaraka, Kohukohu, Mitimiti, Rangipoint, Waihou, Panguru, Pawaranga, Te Karae, Broadwood, Mangamuka Bridge and other places.

The food was made available after an emergency appeal was set up in August by the Catholic Caring Foundation of Auckland diocese.

Parish programme coordinator for Northland Wiga Autet helped with the work in the North Hokianga, and she expressed her gratitude to the Caring Foundation.

"Immense thanks. Nga Mihi Aroha to the Catholic Caring Foundation for their generosity and support, and to Ann Marie Parker (manager CCF) for the leadership and swift organisation of this help. There will be many happy faces and families thinking of you with gratitude."

Parliamentary recognition for southern volunteer

by PETER OWENS

St Peter's College in Gore has a long tradition of assisting in volunteer work among people with disabilities in the South. The college community and the people of Central Otago were delighted at the recent recognition by Parliament of the voluntary work of Lorenzo Chambers, a student at the college. At the end of August, he was presented with a framed certificate at the Minister of Health's Volunteer Awards in Wellington.

Health Minister Andrew Little presented the certificate to Lorenzo in recognition of the care and support he gave young adults and children with disabilities in Arrowtown, where he lives.

While Lorenzo, 16, is a weekly boarder at St Peter's College's Rosmini House, he travels back to his family home at Arrowtown at weekends and holidays.

Lorenzo, who said he is delighted to have been presented with the award, spends his time at home in Arrowtown, assisting young people and children in the region who have disabilities. He does this on behalf of the Living Options and Hugo Charitable Trust. Each of those organisations provides a range of services. However, the care and support of people with disabilities is primary.

Lorenzo, who has undertaken volunteer work at both organisations over the last three years, helps the young adults and children with paint and paper artwork, ball games outside and other activities. This is quite difficult work, and can be quite exhausting for volunteers in this field. He was nominated for the Volunteer Awards by Living Options chief executive Alison Wildey and her daughter Olivia Wildey, who is operations manager.

His grandparents, Mark and Maryanne Owens, of Arrowtown, Olivia Wildey and Hugo Charitable Trust chief executive Aoi-beann Monaghan, all accompanied Lorenzo to the ceremony in Parliament's Grand Hall. There were more than 200 people in attendance at the ceremony.



Lorenzo Chambers (left) and Andrew Little

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Mercy sister was top teacher and master linguist

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Sister Mary Leonie (Helen O'Neill), RSM, QSM, one of New Zealand's most distinguished teachers of speech and drama, died in Christchurch on September 12.

Aged 90, she was in the 69th year of her religious profession as a Sister of Mercy.

Born in Cromwell in Central Otago, she trained at teachers' training college in Christchurch and taught in primary schools.

Entering the Sisters of Mercy in 1951, she was a secondary school teacher of subjects such as English, French, Latin, Social Studies, as well as speech and drama, until 1973. Thereafter, she reportedly concentrated on speech and drama teaching, examining for Speech New Zealand, then Trinity College London,

and adjudicating, until beginning her doctoral studies.

Having earned a BA in English in 1963, a Masters Degree followed, and her PhD thesis was published in 2006 — when she was in her 70s. The thesis was published as "Once Preferred, Now Peripheral: Poetry and Pedagogy: The Place of Poetry in the Teaching of English for Years 9, 10 and 11 Students".

She was awarded the Queen's Service Medal for public service in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2004.

At a requiem Mass celebrated under adjusted alert level 2 restrictions on September 15 at St Mary's Pro-cathedral in Christchurch, it was said by Sr Mary Catherwood, RSM, that much of Sr Leonie's ministry drew on her love of literature, especially poetry.

She remained faithful to her

ministries and activities, and she engaged with people from all walks of life.

Sr Mary noted that Sr Leonie responded to requests from many parishes for training sessions for readers at liturgies. Sr Leonie wrote and self-published several books on teaching speech for all ages. A manual she wrote reminded these readers that their focus was to be God's Word. Sr Leonie was also generous in helping schools on many occasions.

"As her Mercy sisters, we knew her as a warm and engaging woman, an effective communicator, a born actor and a delightful entertainer," Sr Mary said.

A note on the Christchurch Catholic cathedral facebook page described Sr Leonie as a "master linguist".



Sr Mary Leonie, RSM (Photo: Facebook)

Celebration day for Suzanne Aubert moves online

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Two special virtual celebrations are planned for October 3, the national celebration day for Venerable Suzanne Aubert Meri Hōhepa.

A statement from the Sisters of Compassion stated that, in previous years, parishes have included special intercessory prayers and an informative video at the Sunday Mass. But with many churches closed around the country and Sunday Masses not possible under current Covid-19 restrictions in many places, arrangements have been made for liturgies that can be viewed remotely.

Cardinal John Dew has agreed to celebrate a special Mass at Our Lady's Home of Compassion in Island Bay. The Mass, which will be broadcast on Shine TV on October 3 at 2pm, will be celebrated in the chapel beside the crypt where Su-

zanne Aubert Meri Hōhepa lies.

The Mass will also be available to view later in the day on YouTube and on Facebook.

"In addition to the Mass, we are holding a special liturgy from the crypt at 5pm. This will include karakia and material written and presented by the Sisters of Compassion," said congregation leader Sr Margaret Anne Mills, DOLC.

"If you have a special prayer request, or there is someone in your parish who would like to be remembered at either of these events, please send confidential details to Sister Josephine Gorman via email: sr.josephine.gorman@compassion.org.nz

Sr Margaret Anne also noted that Cardinal Dew will offer this special Mass for the intentions of all those who ask him to do so. Sister Josephine can be contacted about this too.

"At the conclusion of the Mass, all prayer requests will be placed on the tombstone of Suzanne Aubert Meri Hōhepa and the Sisters will continue to pray" for everyone during October.

There are also other resources available at www.suzanneaubert.co.nz

For those who would like something special to use at home on Celebration Sunday, the sisters have

prepared some devotional material. This will be available from late September. Those who wish to receive this can register their interest with Sr Josephine.

The sisters asked for prayer for the beatification and eventual canonisation of Meri Hōhepa /Suzanne Aubert. "And, let us remember her constant prayer, 'Thanks be to God for all He has done and is doing for us.'"



Write the best caption for this photo and win a \$30 Countdown voucher. Send in your ideas by Tuesday, Oct. 12 to Caption Contest 622, 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 621 (right) was **June Jarka, Dunedin**.

Some other suggestions were:

"I am literally swept off my feet." — **Eugene Leone, Christchurch**.

"Looks like it'll have to be a two-step." — **John Lewis, Hamilton**.

"Guess he's really fallen for her." — **Peter Foster, Silverdale**.

"I knew you cared, but you didn't need to go down on

your knees." — **Russell Watt, Auckland**.

"Into thy hands I commend my spirit." — **Elias Martis, Auckland**.

"This mannequin is becoming a barrier to my stellar dancing career; she'll have to go." — **Sr Mary Scanlon, Christchurch**.

"Now Torvill and Dean, lets see if you can translate this to the ice?" — **Margaret Wong, Auckland**.

"I was so overwhelmed, I fainted in his arms." — **Ron Ingram, Hawera**.



"It's a knockout on the dance floor!"

Catholics should debate issues, not debase each other, cardinal says

ROME (CNS) — Honest and open debate about different points of view in the Catholic Church are fundamental, but Catholics should not be demonising the individuals with those views, Cardinal George Pell said.

Asked about the different polarised positions among Catholics that can be found online, he said that many of the issues being discussed are "very important, and I don't think there can be any compromise on the fundamental issues of what is the apostolic tradition".

The Church's stance on issues should be clearly explained, but there is "a hierarchy of truths, not everything is equally important", which means Catholics "should not be disagreeing violently over too much at all, but certainly not over matters which are of less importance," he said in an interview in Rome streamed live on September 23.

As Catholics try to choose among many sources and offerings online, what they should be looking for and contributing to "is regular courtesy, a regular commitment to the truth, to dialogue, debating, arguing about the issues" themselves, and not attacking the people who hold a different point of view, said the cardinal, who is the former prefect of the Vatican Secretariat for the Economy and retired archbishop of Sydney.

The interview was part of the university's biennial "The Church Up Close" seminar offered to journalists who report on the Catholic Church. This year's seminar was held online and focused on "Covering Catholicism in the Age of Francis".

The interview with Cardinal Pell covered a wide variety of topics, including Cardinal Pell's experience in an Australian prison for 13 months on child sex abuse charges until he was cleared by a unanimous decision of the High Court in 2020 and the vital importance of due process for both victims and the accused.

"Denouncing somebody in the press so they've got almost no chance of defending themselves, I think, a violation of due process," he said.

"Everybody has a right to the truth, and in the long term it is the best protection for the victims too", because any manifestly false accusation "poisons public opinion against the genuine victims", he said.

"We need to follow the commandments, we



Cardinal George Pell, left, participates in a live interview broadcast on YouTube from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome. Also pictured are Opus Dei Father John Wauck and Ashley Noronha, who conducted the interview (CNS Photo)

need to practise what Christ taught, if we did that there would have been no sexual abuse. The authorities would have faced up to the problem in truth," he said.

"What the Church was doing in terms of muddle and cover-up 20 years ago was generally done in all of society — now that is not excusing it, but it is setting it in context," he said.

Cardinal Pell also noted that many countries have seen a "dramatic fall" in the number of reported incidents since the 1990s.

"Very often we're not given credit for that" and, in terms of prevention, "we broke the back of the problem", he said.

The late St John Paul II "was a powerful antidote" to scandals in the Church because of his teachings about moral truths, the cardinal said. "He made it quite clear that he believed there was such a thing as right and wrong."

Cardinal Pell praised retired Pope Benedict XVI as "a prodigious intellect, a dear friend" and said he never imagined the pope would resign, adding, "I never really approved of it either".

Pope Francis has "a great gift of empathy and sympathy", and a great capacity to show closeness to people who are suffering and those who care for them, he said.

Asked why there is so much opposition to Pope Francis among conservative Catholics, Cardinal

Pell said, "I think a lot of conservative Catholics feel a little bit confused, a little bit uncertain, they wonder just what is being taught".

Pope Francis, he said, has "a great gift, like Jesus did, of reaching out to those on the peripheries and 'sinners', and categories that are not always seen in the front row at church and that can and has confused people."

However, the papacy is something that is willed by Christ, "we have to respect the office", have reverence for the man who holds that office, and "obey the papal directions", he added.

When asked about the polarisation in some Catholic media, he said, "we shouldn't get into personal abuse, demonising people who have a different point of view".

He listed a number of well-known Catholic authors who have different analyses and approaches for living the faith today, encouraging they be read, even if one disagrees.

For example, he said he did not agree with the so-called "Benedict Option", which, according to the book by Rod Dreher, calls for building a small Christian community that can act as a protective "ark" against the flood of a morally weakened society.

"I'm not sympathetic to just a small little elite church. I would like to keep as many of the semi-religious slob like myself in the stream," he said. To want a church made up of just heroes and martyrs is "not the Catholic tradition".

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40 YEARS AGO

SALE WILL HELP SEMINARY

The bishops of New Zealand have decided that proceeds from the sale of the former Holy Name Seminary will be used for the training of students for the diocesan priesthood.

In what looks like a change of policy, the bishops agreed at their September conference in Wellington that money from the sale of the Riccarton Rd property — estimated at around \$825,000 — would be held in trust for capital expenditure at Holy Cross Seminary, the national seminary at Mosgiel.

Earlier reports indicated that proceeds from the sale would go to help integration of Catholic schools into the national Catholic education system. But in a statement to the Catholic people of New Zealand, Archbishop Williams, as president of the bishops' conference, outlined the new proposal.

"We are especially conscious of the fact that Holy Name Seminary was purchased and subsequently enlarged by your generosity — the offerings of our Catholic people," he said.

"Your concern for the education of our priests has never lessened. We want to assure you that this loyal support is appreciated and will always be honoured."

He said that since the amalgamation of the two national seminaries at Mosgiel, "further building is foreseen in the near future. The formation of the trust fund means that the offerings you made in the past for the training of priests will still be used for that purpose".

Bishop Ashby of Christchurch, as the legal owner of the former seminary, will retain responsibility for managing the new trust.

In his statement, Archbishop Williams said the bishops were pleased that the new owners of the Riccarton Rd property intend to continue its use as a hostel for tertiary students.

He said that other tertiary institutions in Christchurch were approached before its sale, but they had shown no interest in purchasing the premises. The Catholic Church in Christchurch currently maintains Rochester Hall as a hostel for 100 university students.

— *Zealandia*, October 4, 1981

WIT'S END

With the season of spring now well underway, here is some gardening humour. . .

Yet again, someone has added more soil to my allotment.
The plot thickens . . .

What is the gardener's favourite novel?
War and Peas.
What do you get if you cross a four-leaf clover with poison ivy?
A rash of good luck.

Why shouldn't you tell a secret in a garden?
Because the potatoes have eyes and the corn has ears!

EVENTS

AUCKLAND DIOCESE

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@xtra.co.nz or Monica Johnson: 021382401, 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 abjeath@gmail.com Ph: 027 292 4443 or Kath at kath_bryant@hotmail.com Ph: 027 688 6889

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Giving to the environment what it is due

by ROWENA OREJANA

Education, research and action are needed in order to implement eco-justice, which is giving the environment what is its due.

This was the message driven by Te Kupenga theology lecturer Dr Christopher Longhurst in a workshop called Caring for Our Common Home facilitated by the Wellington Theological Consortium on August 28, 202 through Zoom.

During the workshop, Dr Longhurst played Marvin Gaye's *Mercy, Mercy Me (Ecology)*, a song which deplored the exploitation and destruction of the environment. The song was first released in 1971, exactly 50 years ago.

Since then, the degradation of the planet has accelerated. Climate change had a disproportional impact on the poor and marginalised, while young people had become objects of intergenerational injustice.

"Why is eco-justice taught last? Why do we teach eco-justice after individual justice, after social justice and after we got environmental justice?" he said. "It's because... eco-justice involves all of them. Eco-justice is about giving what is due to myself on the land, giving what is due to the land and giving what is due to the planet in distributing the equity of our resources justly."

He said eco-justice comes under environmental ethics, which "believes that humans are a part of society, as well as other living creatures".

"It's not just about us. Plants and animals speak, too," he said.

"Ethics has to do with the capacity to connect theory with practice, general principles with political will and global awareness with local actions. We can ask ourselves, what is my choice? Must I look after my own back yard, or do I have a right to demand that you look after your own back yard too?"

He said climate justice and climate equity, for example, are international and intranational concerns.



Environmental activist and campaigner Mya-Rose Craig, 18, holds a cardboard sign reading "youth strike for climate" as she sits on the ice floe in the middle of the Arctic Ocean, hundreds of miles above the Arctic Circle on September 20, 2020. (CNS photo)

Climate justice refers to the disproportionate impact of climate change on poor countries, while climate equity deals with who should bear the responsibility for addressing climate change.

Dr Longhurst cited Romans 8:22-23 which states, "we know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth, right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to discipleship, the redemption of our bodies".

"How does creation groan? And how do we find ourselves in the middle of a groaning creation?" he asked. "When someone groans, do we hear them? Do we respond?"

Dr Longhurst also stressed that young people

had become victims of intergenerational injustice.

"When we offend [against] the environment, we offend [against] the future generations," he said.

This is probably the reason why, he said, we are seeing so many young people advocating for the environment, and why the United Nations created a Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change.

Dr Longhurst stressed that people on the ground are needed to persuade the Government and huge multinational corporations to take action for the environment.

"How can we commit ourselves in working with the earth in the face of the present crisis? There are actions [we can take] and it starts with education leading to law change," he said.

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