

# NZ Catholic

The national Catholic newspaper

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**On the front cover:** Newly-ordained Fr Mark Napa (left) blesses Auckland Auxiliary Bishop Michael Gielen outside St Joseph's Church, Takapuna, after the new priest's ordination Mass on December 18, 2021. (Photo: Cheryl Surrey – All The Daisies Photography).

## NZCatholic

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- Staff retreat day to begin the new school year.
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# Clergy moves in 3 dioceses

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Cardinal John Dew, apostolic administrator of Palmerston North diocese, has announced clergy appointments in the diocese, saying he is limiting the changes because of "staffing challenges" that will impact the provision of Masses and pastoral care.

"I hope this gives everyone the bigger picture. Changes will need to be made when it comes to local planning and sharing resources, including priests. We cannot provide all the Masses and pastoral care as we have known it. These changes will impact all our parishes," he said in a letter to priests and parish leaders.

The cardinal said the situation was already complex with Fr Freddie Barte returning home to the Philippines, and Msgr Brian Walsh retiring from full-time ministry last year.

Early this year, another priest will return home to the Philippines and another priest will retire.

Another international priest is expected to return home during the year, while a senior priest is on leave.

"As you can imagine, we have had some difficult choices to make. Because the diocese is awaiting the appointment of a new bishop, we have limited clergy changes to a minimum," the cardinal said.

Cardinal Dew announced that Fr Adonis Rancho will be returning home to the Philippines, and Fr Bernard O'Donnell will retire from Ohakune-Taihape parish.

Fr Robin Kurian, IC, will be appointed parish priest of St Mary's in Palmerston North.

Fr Peter Brockhill will serve Marton, Ohakune, Taihape parishes and Waiouru military base.

Fr Joseph Saw Tha Khu will be based in Stratford and will serve collaboratively with Fr Craig Butler (Hawera) across the South Taranaki region, including Stratford, Kaponga, Eltham, Hawera, Patea and Waverley.

Cardinal Dew pointed out that priests in Palmerston North diocese will care for multiple parishes and church communities, with a lot of ground to cover.

"I know you will be understanding when it comes to change, and I encourage you to support your priests as they care for you. None of this is easy, and I cannot see it getting any easier in the immediate future," he said.

## Wellington

In the meantime, Cardinal Dew has announced the following clergy appointments for 2022 for the Archdiocese of Wellington, effective from February 1, 2022:

Fr Michael McCabe will be the parish priest of Te Whetu o Te Moana — Our Lady Star of the Sea, Marlborough, while Fr Raymond Soriano will be parish priest of Te Whaea Tapu o Kāpiti — Our Lady of Kāpiti.

At Holy Family parish (Nelson, Stoke), Fr Marlon Tebelin was appointed parish priest.

Fr Joy Thottankara will become assistant priest at Te Awakairangi (Lower Hutt, Avalon, Naenae) until he leaves New Zealand for an appointment

in the Diocese of Metuchen, USA.

Deacon Alfred Tong will serve his pastoral placement at Holy Trinity (Kilbirnie, Miramar, Seatoun, and Strathmore) from mid-year when his seminary formation finishes, while seminarian Matthew White's pastoral placement will be at the Catholic Parish of Otari (Karori, Wilton).

Cardinal Dew said that the provincial of the Passionist Congregation has informed the archdiocese they are no longer able to provide priestly service to the Parish of Our Lady of the Sea.

"I record with deep gratitude to those of the Passionist Congregation who have served in Marlborough over the years," Cardinal John wrote. "In the meantime, Fr Jaco Kuman, CP, will stay on for a few weeks," he said.

The cardinal also said this will be Fr Paul Finlayson's (SSC) last year of ministry in the archdiocese. As from 2023, it is likely there will be only one priest available for Our Lady of the Bays parish.

"I am most grateful to Fr Paul and to the Columbans for his ministry," the cardinal said.

The archdiocese will have one deacon and four seminarians at various stages of formation in 2022. They are Alfred Tong, Matthew White, Kinh Nguyen, Emilio Capin and Gerson Badayos.

## Auckland

Last month, then-Auckland Bishop Patrick Dunn announced the appointments of priests in the diocese. It was one of the last few responsibilities he discharged as Bishop of Auckland.

Fr Falaniko Leota was appointed as supply priest to Blockhouse Bay with Fr Ephrem Tigga, OFM Cap, as parish priest from late February.

Fr James Walsh had been appointed assistant priest at Hibiscus Coast.

The Manurewa parish will have Fr Kevin Murphy, SM, as assistant parish priest.

Fr Mario Dorado, OFM Cap, was appointed parish priest of Newton.

Fr Soane Lomu, SM, will become assistant parish priest at Otara/Clover Park.

Fr Andrew Matthew was moved to Papatōe as parish priest, with Fr Albert Suprpto as assistant.

Fr Stephen Berecz will be the parish priest of Parnell.

Fr Thomas Park was moved to Pukekohe as assistant priest.

Newly-ordained Fr Mark Napa was appointed assistant parish priest of Takapuna.

Fr Brian Prendeville, SM, will become Whangarei's parish priest.

Meanwhile, Fr Mathew Vadakkevettuvazhiyil will replace Fr Brendan Ward as rector of Holy Cross Seminary. Fr Ward will be returning to Dunedin.

Fr John Allardyce, SM, will be moving to St John Vianney House.

The following priests are leaving the diocese: Fr Chris Martin, SM, to the Marist Community in Napier, Fr Francis Poon eventually to complete post-graduate studies in Canada, and Fr Kerry Prendeville, SM, to become superior of the Marist Community at Nazareth Care, Christchurch.

# Bishop Lowe asks for prayers

by ROWENA OREJANA



Bishop Stephen Lowe

Newly-appointed Auckland Bishop Stephen Lowe has asked Catholics in the diocese to pray for him as he takes on this new role.

Bishop Lowe was appointed by Pope Francis to replace Bishop Patrick Dunn, who had requested retirement because of sight problems.

"Can I also ask you to please pray for me as I promise to pray for you," Bishop Lowe asked in a letter to the people of Auckland diocese, dated December 23.

"As we journey together as the people of God of Auckland diocese, may we ponder and share the mystery of God who is with us, so that we might help and encour-

age each other in faith, in hope and in charity — that divine love — that helps us grow together in holiness, so that we may become the people God calls us to be."

Bishop Lowe also expressed his gratitude to Bishop Dunn for his (Bishop Dunn's) 27-year ministry.

"He (Bishop Dunn) is a beautiful pastor who knows the mystery of Christ with him. He has spoken and lived Christ and he has recognised Christ in you, the people of the diocese of Auckland. Let's pray, as Bishop Pat moves into retirement, the Lord may bring to birth new graces and blessings within him."

"... may 2022 bring new graces as we face the challenges of our days," Bishop Lowe wrote.

# New priest wants to journey with people

by ROWENA OREJANA

Sunlight poured through the roof windows of St Joseph's Takapuna as Auxillary Bishop Michael Gielen laid his hand on the head of Mark Napa, who was being ordained priest on December 18, 2021.

It lent the atmosphere a sense of rightness amidst the prevailing pandemic. Auckland had just moved into the traffic light system (at red). Gatherings were socially-distanced and were limited to 100 people. Masks were given away to those present.

"The journey of priesthood does not have a map, a big salary, or a guarantee of comfort, even a guarantee of who your bishop will be. Quite the opposite, you are only promised that Jesus will be with you throughout," Bishop Gielen told the new priest.

"It has not been easy for you, Mark, a new culture, a worldwide pandemic, two postponed ordinations, through it all you have been tested and found worthy."

## ■ New ordinary

One the eve of Fr Napa's ordination, Pope Francis appointed Bishop Stephen Lowe, formerly Bishop of Hamilton, as Bishop of Auckland.

"While we were practising the day before with Bishop Michael, on the part when he said 'do you promise obedience and respect to your ordinary?', he (Bishop Michael) smiled," Fr Napa told *NZ Catholic*. "But I didn't have any idea that there would be a new bishop on the day of my ordination."

Fr Napa said that he knows that his promise of obedience is not limited to the current ordinary, but to future ones as well.

"Being under Bishop Pat's care . . . he is really kind and has a listening heart to people, not only to his priests. And I think people would really miss Bishop Pat although he really needs to pay attention to his health," he said.

## ■ 'Be a priest'

Fr Napa is considered a "late vocation". He heard the call literally at age 28.

"Bishop Socrates Villegas, our bishop in Bataan (Philippines), was visiting our parish priest who was sick at the time," he said.

Fr Napa said he knew that the bishop knew him professionally, as he was the branch manager of a micro-finance company at the time, and he would submit financial reports to Bishop Villegas every month.

Bishop Villegas approached him (Fr Napa) after the pastoral visit and had a little chat.

"At the end of our conversation,

he told me, 'Mark, magpari ka' (Mark, go into priesthood)," Fr Napa said. "I was struck that I wasn't able to answer immediately. I wasn't able to answer 'yes' or 'no'."

A while later, as he was assisting his parish priest to a buffet table, they met the bishop again. The priest told the bishop, "I have a candidate for you."

"I think that was the time that I really felt God is calling me through the touch and gentle tap of Bishop Soc's hand on my shoulder," Fr Napa said.

## ■ Muslim boss

Fr Napa studied chemical engineering at the Mapua Institute of Technology, the top IT school in the country. But not wanting to burden his parents financially, he applied to be a loan officer for a micro-finance company.

"The name of the micro-finance company is Asa Philippines Foundation which started from Bangladesh. Our president was a Muslim. But they tied up with Serviam Foundation to recruit church people to cater not only for Muslims, but also for Catholics and Christians," he said.

The Serviam Foundation was founded by the late Manila Cardinal Jaime Sin and Assisi Development Foundation, which was run by the daughter of the late Philippine President Corazon Aquino.

"The micro-finance caters for women in poor areas . . . mostly those in the depressed areas and slums. We gave them initial capital and taught them how to save. It's not only giving loans, but also assisting them in how to maximise their profit and how to save. Most of our Filipino men and women . . . don't usually save for our future. We inculcate the value of saving," he said.

"I think that's where I developed my people skills, and the encounter with the poor helped me encounter Christ."

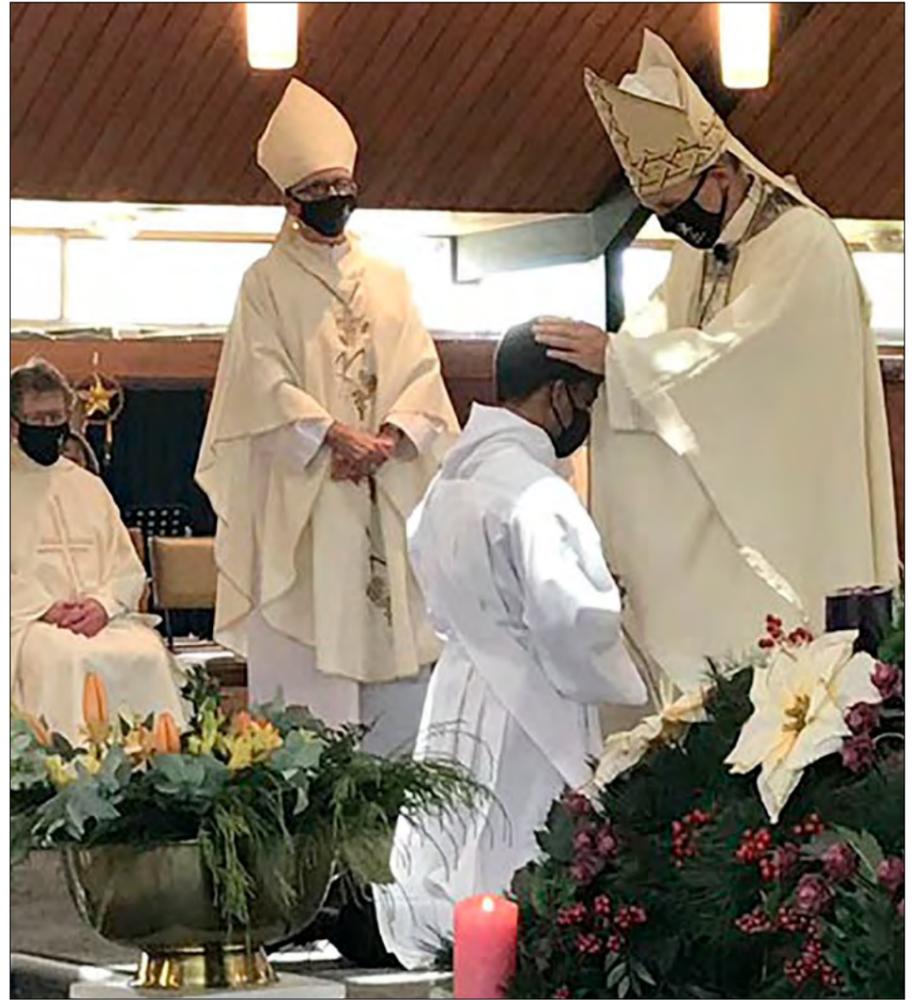
He quickly became branch manager and, eventually, human resources manager. When he resigned, he was told that he was up for another promotion.

"My heart was torn when I was asking him (the company president) to accept my resignation letter," Fr Napa said.

"I was also inspired by my boss, his life of commitment to his faith in Islam, his prayer life, and how he values human dignity. He's very caring. He treats us like his own children, not only as employees. So, I really appreciated him."

The president, Kamrul Tarafder, valued faith, and supported Fr Napa financially as he studied at the San Jose Seminary, a Jesuit seminary.

Because he had no background



Bishop Michael Gielen lays hands on Fr Mark Napa

in philosophy, Fr Napa had to take two years of philosophy courses at Ateneo de Manila University, where he had ups and downs and wondered about his vocational path. Painting was an important outlet for him at this time.

## ■ Comfort zone

Fr Napa said that God must be pushing him beyond his comfort zone because, after he finished at the Loyola School of Theology, Bishop Villegas once again tapped him on the shoulder and asked if he (Fr Napa) would want to go to New Zealand, particularly the diocese of Auckland.

Now being well-versed in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius de Loyola, Fr Napa spent eight days in retreat to discern, and his path became clear.

His parents were saddened by his decision, but he assured them that they would still be able to see him on holidays or they could visit him in New Zealand. He arrived in New Zealand in 2019 and the following year, Covid-19 struck.

"I haven't been back home. That's why my Mum, during my ordina-

tion, (her video) message was really emotional. Because they were really looking forward to bringing me to the altar," he said.

The ordination Mass was livestreamed in Fr Napa's home parish at 6.30 am. and a celebration was held there after the event.

## ■ Goal

"My goal as a priest is just a simple one: to really journey with people in their life, whatever situation they are in," he reflected.

Visiting the sick is his first passion in terms of ministry, and even the simple rite of blessing houses becomes an opportunity to know the parishioners.

"I love listening to stories. I probably developed that skill when I was doing the credit investigations. I learned how to listen to their stories," he said.

He also wants to inspire young people to follow the Lord.

"I also want, since I'm Jesuit-formed, to teach them the way of discernment. I learned from my formation in San Jose Seminary, how to listen to the voice of God," he said.

# Caritas key responder in Tonga

by ROWENA OREJANA

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand has given an immediate Solidarity Grant to Caritas Tonga, and are raising funds in the wake of the undersea volcanic eruption that has devastated some parts of the country with tsunami waves and ashfall.

Outgoing Caritas director Julianne Hickey said, "Caritas is a key responder on the ground right now".

"We know that the recovery will be a difficult one, but the Caritas Tonga team are supported by a strong team of volunteers across all the island, she said."

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said: "Pre-positioned supplies held in country with our partners Caritas Aotearoa NZ and

Caritas Tonga have been released. These supplies include a water purification unit, jerry cans, hygiene kits, buckets and water taps."

Mrs Hickey said that thoughts and prayers of Caritas are with the people of Tonga, particularly their partners and communities they have worked with in past years.

"Communications are proving very difficult at the moment, but we were in touch with Caritas Tonga as recently as (January 15)," Mrs Hickey said.

"Together we have completed the pre-positioning of emergency supplies at three locations in Tonga, so are well prepared for this kind of eventuality."

She said the biggest concern at the moment is

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# Bishop 'Bob' Leamy was a born leader

by MICHAEL OTTO

Bishop Robin "Bob" Leamy, SM, was a born leader and, if he had been an All Black, he would have been the captain.

"[But] he became a Marist, so he ended up [as] provincial, and later a missionary bishop," said Msgr Paul Farmer during a homily at the funeral Mass for Bishop Leamy celebrated at the Church of St Therese, Mangere East, Auckland, on January 7.

Cardinal John Dew was the principal celebrant at the Mass, and among the concelebrants were the current Bishop of Rarotonga, Bishop Paul Donoghue, SM, and Bishop Emeritus of Rarotonga, Bishop Denis Browne, as well as the apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa, and Bishops Patrick Dunn, Michael Gielen and Michael Dooley. The new Bishop of Auckland, Bishop Stephen Lowe, sent his apologies.

During the Mass, Archbishop Rugambwa read out messages of condolence from Pope Francis and from Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.

Bishop Leamy, who was Bishop Emeritus of Rarotonga, Cook Islands, died at St Joseph's Home, Ponsonby, on January 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. He was aged 87.

Msgr Farmer, who worked as a priest in Rarotonga when Bishop Leamy was bishop there, described him as a "beautiful man".

"And I wondered where this gift of God's love got its maturity, and its groundedness and togetherness," Msgr Farmer said.

"I often thought, you don't get this in a boarding school. You don't get this in a seminary. You don't get this in an institution. As I got to know Bob's family, I realised that it was from his family that he got the precious gifts that made him who he was."

Bishop Leamy grew up in Khandallah, Wellington, and attended St Patrick's College, Silverstream, after winning a boarding scholarship. As a young man, he excelled at many sports — rugby, tennis, cricket, boxing. But cricket was his first love, and he captained the first XI when he was aged 16 and 17, and he also played club cricket.

Speaking at the funeral, his brother Terry noted that the New Zealand cricket hierarchy saw him as a future captain of the national side, and tried to talk him out of going to the seminary.

The young Robin Leamy was selected as captain of the New Zealand Brabin Shield under-21 side that was scheduled to tour Australia early in 1952. But a waterfront strike disrupted travel plans, and the tour was cancelled. So Robin headed for Greenmeadows. (Msgr Farmer noted that Bishop Leamy also spoke of Archbishop McKeefry visiting the family home in Khandallah, and trying to convince Robin to be a priest of the Archdiocese of Wellington and not a Marist.)

After being ordained as a priest by Archbishop McKeefry in Wellington in 1958, Fr Leamy went to the University of Canterbury, where he would gain an MA degree in Latin and History. During his first year there, he also taught at St Bede's College. Terry Leamy noted that his brother played rugby and cricket during this time, and was selected for



Bishop Robin Leamy, SM, in the 1990s  
(Photo: Truly Blessed — My Story)

the New Zealand Universities cricket team.

## ■ Missionary

According to his autobiography, "Truly Blessed — My Story", published in 2011, Bishop Leamy spent 14 years as a missionary in Samoa, from 1963 to 1977. He next served as Marist provincial for Oceania, living in Suva, Fiji, from 1977 to 1983.

Speaking at the funeral Mass, Sr Patricia Leamy, SMSM, the youngest of Bishop Leamy's siblings, said that she and her brother were both called to be missionaries beyond New Zealand.

"While never living in the same country, except for recent years in Auckland, our paths have crossed in 11 countries," Sr Patricia said. "I believe this is part of the 'one hundred fold' given to those who follow Christ."

Msgr Farmer said that it is often said that extroverts make the best missionaries, or that they are the best to work in a cross-cultural environment.

"Extrovert he was. He loved people — [he] was energised by them. You could be with him in his office, talking about something ever so serious, and he'd see somebody walk past the window, and hello, he's out on the street being greeted and energised. He was drawn to people."

Bishop Leamy was appointed as Bishop of Rarotonga in 1984.

Msgr Farmer related a tale of how, during Bishop Leamy's first full day in Rarotonga, he was not to be found in the office — instead, he went out in shorts and tee shirt, with racquet and tennis

shoes, found a tennis court and enjoyed playing a game with complete strangers.

"He was a mature man," Msgr Farmer said, "well-grounded and put together in every way. He knew how to give himself space, and this he would not compromise on. He didn't get his identity from his work. He wasn't one to rush around in order to save the world. His love of sport — especially cricket, tennis, rugby and golf — all of these opened avenues to people of all walks of life."

Msgr Farmer told of how he once received a memo from Bishop Leamy. When the two met later in Rarotonga, Bishop Leamy asked Msgr Farmer's opinion on the content of the memo. Msgr Farmer said he thought "Leamy's lost his marbles". And Bishop Leamy responded: "God, we had better have a gin!!"

"You couldn't threaten him. That was the kind of person he was. He could speak his mind, he was always honest," Msgr Farmer said.

Sister Patricia said that her brother was "a man of deep faith — not in a preachy way, but in his life. He was sensitive to injustice, and would go to bat and advocate on behalf of the underdog. The photo in *The New Zealand Herald* some years ago of him sitting in a cage in downtown Auckland, to draw attention to Ahmed Zaoui's situation, graphically illustrates this".

Msgr Farmer said that Bishop Leamy was "a man of faith. It was a simple faith. It was an uncluttered faith. He didn't clutter it with piety and religiosity".

## ■ Retirement

In his autobiography, Bishop Leamy wrote that he fell ill in 1996, and was diagnosed with pancreatitis and a heart disorder. St John Paul II accepted his resignation as Bishop of Rarotonga, and Bishop Leamy returned to Auckland, where he assisted Bishop Patrick Dunn.

He also served the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference as delegate to the Mixed Commission, and as the bishops' representative on the board of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

His final years were spent at St Joseph's Home in Ponsonby, and these were "challenging, as age took control", Msgr Farmer said. But Bishop Leamy knew how to grow old gracefully.

Msgr Farmer also noted that Bishop Leamy had "always very strongly identified himself as a Marist, a son of Mary, a disciple of Mary. How fitting it was that he should die in the first hours of January 1, the great solemnity of Mary, Mother of God?"

"For Bob, Mary was his mother. Whenever he spoke of Mary, there was something very personal about it," Msgr Farmer said.

Sr Patricia added that "It is beautiful that Jesus and Mary came for you [Bob] on a Saturday, and on the solemnity of the Mother of God".

"Bob, thank you for being such a thoughtful, loving, generous brother," she said.

Msgr Farmer concluded by saying, "You have sailed the Pacific in rust buckets, like the apostle Paul, for the sake of the Gospel, but now you are at home [in the Father's house]".

Bishop Leamy's remains were interred at Panmure Catholic Cemetery.



Bishop Leamy's casket at St Therese church



Bishop Leamy's crozier is processed out of the church

# Saving historic window in former Dunedin priory

by JEFF DILLON

The project undertaken recently to save and restore a significant stained glass window in the former Dominican Priory beside Dunedin's St Joseph's cathedral has produced a little mystery which begs to be solved.

The window is on the south wall, facing the steps leading up to the cathedral. It was in the section of the priory that was added and opened in 1890 for more classrooms for the school, which was staffed by the Dominican Sisters.

In recent years, it was noticed that the window was under severe stress and in danger of catastrophic collapse. The leadlight window is in three large sections, and is approximately 2.5 metres in length at the base and about 3.5 metres high from the base to the apex of the arch, and is very heavy.

The Dunedin Heritage Committee committed to putting the funding in place to save the window and fully restore it. The priory is a Category 1 building, and the window is viewed as a vital integral element in the building. Funding of \$60,000 has been promised to the Diocese of Dunedin to enable the work to be done. The initial step was to put up bracing to stop the window collapsing. Once things could be organised, the three distinct panels were carefully removed in a delicate operation, and have been taken to Kevin Casey, a local stained glass expert craftsman.

It is thought that, at some stage, the lowest section of each panel had had original coloured glass removed for some reason and replaced with clear glass.

Mr Casey is tasked with sourcing similar coloured glass to repair damaged pieces and restore those three lower sections. Some glass will be sourced within New Zealand, some will be found in Australia, and some may have to come from the United States. Under present restricted conditions, that alone may take six months.

Sean Toomey, the priory project manager, indicated that the scaffolding and plywood covering could be in place for up to a year. The scaffolding and covering are supporting the integrity of the window frame, since the central mullions are broken and no longer there.

Once the window panels are fully restored,



The mystery markings in the stained glass (image flipped for readability)



The window in place, with one of the mullions broken and cracked, and no longer supporting the weight bearing down from above.

then stone masons will come in and cut out deteriorating sections of Oamaru stone in the frame, and replace them with newly-carved pieces.

The window sections and new mullions can then go back in. Again, that is a delicate operation involving putting in one side of the frame blocks, then placing the window panels in, followed by securing the other side of the frame blocks, plus the central mullions in place to encase the windows.

Mr Toomey is particularly puzzled by an unusual element in the window. There is a special central glass portion which has been created using two thin panes. On one appear some details

inked in on the glass, while on the other colour has been used. Then the two panes have been sealed together. Unfortunately, the seals around it have degraded over time and moisture has got in and some details have been affected.

"Why is it there and where did it come from? It must have represented something very important when it went in, but we don't know," said Mr Toomey. He said that, so far, no one has been able to explain the details. While there are indications that some details seem to relate to St Dominic, there is no complete understanding of what it all represents. He would love to hear from anyone who can offer some further insights.

## Online event to celebrate World Marriage Day

by FELICITY GILTRAP

An online, livestream event to celebrate World Marriage Day is happening on Sunday, February 13, 2022 at 7.30pm. Promoted and sponsored by the Catholic Network of Marriage Educators, the event, called "Building a Love that Lasts", will feature Megan and Nahum Kozak of Lighthouse Relationships as the keynote speakers.

For the past 22 years, the Catholic Network of Marriage Educators board (CNME) has supported and promoted the annual St Valentine's Day Mass, celebrated in some New Zealand dioceses with the support of local (arch) diocesan staff. This year,

with the uncertainty of gatherings due to the pandemic, CNME has decided to plan an online Catholic marriage enrichment event as well, which they hope will support, enrich, and encourage married couples throughout the country. Couples will be able to view this event in their own homes.

Earlier last year, CNME and supporters of the marriage network wrote to the New Zealand bishops to ask if World Marriage Day could be added to the NZCBC National Calendar. The bishops kindly agreed. The inclusion of this date in the National Calendar means that parishes and communities throughout Aotearoa New Zealand will be encouraged to celebrate and support married life at their Masses on Sunday, February 13, 2022.

Resources are available at: [www.nlo.org.nz/about/liturgical-calendar/](http://www.nlo.org.nz/about/liturgical-calendar/)

"Building a Love that Lasts" date night for couples is happening on the evening of World Marriage Day, starting at 7.30pm. The CNME board wishes to thank Hamilton diocese for hosting this event.

Save the date! Book in some intentional time as a married couple to enrich your relationship, right from the comfort of your own home! Grab some wine and cheese and tune in at 7.30 pm for a live talk for approximately one hour. It will suit couples who are engaged, newly married, and those married for many years who would like to enrich their relationship on this special day. See [www.cdh.org.nz/events](http://www.cdh.org.nz/events)

**WORLD MARRIAGE DAY 13 FEB**

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13TH FEB 7.30 PM

- Stay at home with some wine + cheese
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## The gift of tears

The time of year that most associate with gift-giving has been and gone already. Where does time go? But because the Christmas season is over, it is not a time to stop being generous. Here's a suggestion: What about trying to offer the "gift of tears" throughout 2022?

Pope Francis, in his apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate (Rejoice and Be Glad)*, invites us to "discover the meaning of life by coming to the aid of those who suffer, understanding their anguish and bringing relief".

### John Evangelista

He commends such persons who share in the suffering of others: "They sense that the other is flesh of our flesh, and are not afraid to draw near, even to touch their wounds. They feel compassion for others in such a way that all distance vanishes. In this way, they can embrace Saint Paul's exhortation: 'Weep with those who weep' (Romans 12:15)." (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 76)

The Church has always valued this "gift of tears" — and has proposed this as a way to holiness, following the teaching of the Divine Master: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

The past two years have been a time of trial and uncertainty for almost everyone. The risk of contracting Covid-19, and the fear of the unknown, have adversely affected the mental health and well-being of people of all ages. It saddens us to hear of incidents of self-harm (many times fatal), especially among young people. People have been isolated from family and friends. The economic

impact of the lockdowns has brought despair to many families and businesses. Anecdotes of increased crime in communities are common. There are many out there who "mourn", and are in need of the "gift of tears".

The ability to offer the "gift of tears" presupposes an act of mercy. In *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis explains that mercy has two aspects: "(Mercy) involves giving, helping and serving others, but it also includes forgiveness and understanding. (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 80)". It is the latter that is intrinsically linked to offering the "gift of tears". We care to understand and put ourselves in the shoes of the person with whom we are mourning. This is empathy.

We are also reminded in *Gaudete et Exsultate* that the Lord expects us, not only to extend our hand to others, but to offer our pure hearts as well. "A heart that loves God and neighbour (cf. Matthew 22:36-40), genuinely and not merely in words, is a pure heart; it can see God. (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 86)". We offer the "gift of tears"

without expecting anything back.

We do not need to be a professional counsellor or a social worker to be able to offer support to those who "mourn". Nor do we need to offer support for people to reach that "breaking point" so as to need professional help. Many times, a phone call to ask how one is coping, or even a subtle "coffee invite", would suffice.

We do not need to look far to find someone who needs a shoulder to cry on, or who is in need of just a "listening ear". Many among our family members and work colleagues are waiting for that call or that invitation. A lot of elderly people in our communities are living alone and are just waiting for someone to knock at their front door to say "hi". Or it could be your parish priest who needs some company outside of his Sunday activities. If we are bold enough, we can even volunteer to visit the sick or those in prison.

Many times, if not always, the offering of the "gift of tears" leads to peace and happiness, not only for the one receiving,

but also to the one giving. Thus, Pope Francis challenges us in *Gaudete et Exsultate* to be sowers of peace: "Peacemakers truly 'make' peace; they build peace and friendship in society. To those who sow peace, Jesus makes this magnificent promise: 'They will be called children of God' (Matthew 5:9) . . . We need to be artisans of peace, for building peace is a craft that demands serenity, creativity, sensitivity and skill. (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 88, 89)."

There are a lot of opportunities to share the "gift of tears" this coming year. Let's make each day of 2022 a gift-giving day!

Dr John Evangelista is a medical doctor and a practising counsellor. He studied theology and is currently the Dean of the Catholic Theological College.



Photo by Brian Matangelo on Unsplash

### Ronald Rolheiser

## What we do in private

No one is an island; indeed, no one is ever really alone. If you are a person of faith, or even just someone with a highly-attuned intuitive sense, you will know that there is no such thing as a truly private act, for good or bad. Everything we do, no matter how private, affects others. We aren't isolated monads whose private thoughts and acts have no effect on anyone else. We know this, and not just from our faith. We know it intuitively by what we sense in our lives.

How do we sense what lies hidden in the privacy of other people's lives? Conversely, how does what happens in the privacy of our own lives affect others?

We don't have a metaphysics, a phenomenology, or a science through which we can tease this out explicitly. We just know it is true. What we do in the private recesses of our hearts and minds is, in some ways, sensed by others. Every religion worthy of the name teaches this, namely that we are all in some real, mystical, symbiotic communion with each other, where ultimately nothing is truly private. This belief is shared by basically all the great world religions — Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, and American and African Native religions. No religion allows for a private sin that does not affect the whole community.

This explains some of Jesus' teachings. Jesus teaches that it's not only our outward actions that help or hurt others; it's also our innermost thoughts. For him, not only may we not do harm to someone we hate, we may not even think hateful thoughts about him in our private thoughts. Likewise, it not enough to discipline ourselves sexually so as to not commit adultery. We have to discipline even the erotic thoughts we have

about others.

Why? What's the harm in private thoughts? It is more than the danger that, if we think certain bad thoughts about others, we will eventually act them out (true though this may be). What is at issue is something deeper, something contained explicitly in the Christian notion of the Body of Christ.

As Christians, we believe that we are all members of one living organism, the Body of Christ, and that our union with each there is more than metaphorical. It is real, as real as the physicality of a living body. We are not a corporation, but a living body, a living organism, where all parts affect all other parts. Hence, just as in a live body, healthy enzymes help bring health to the whole body, and infected and cancerous cells threaten the health of the whole body, so too inside the Body of Christ. What we do in private is still inside the body. Consequently, when we do virtuous things, even in private, like a healthy enzyme, we help strengthen the immune system within the whole body. Conversely, when we are unfaithful, when we are selfish, when we sin, no matter that this is done in private, like an infected or cancerous cell, we are helping break down the immune system in the body. Both healthy enzymes and harmful cancer cells work in secret, below the surface.

This has important implications for our private lives. Simply put, nothing we think or do in private does not have an effect on others. Our private thoughts and actions, like healthy enzymes or infected cells, affect the health of the body, either strengthening or weakening its immune system. When we are faithful, we help bring health to the body; when we are unfaithful,

we are an infected cell challenging the immune system within the body.

Whether we are faithful or unfaithful in private affects others, and this is not something that is abstract or mystical. For example, a spouse knows when his or her partner is unfaithful, irrespective of whether or not the affair is exposed. Moreover, the spouse knows this, not just because there may be subtle betrayals of the infidelity in the other's body language and behaviour. No, she knows this at a gut level, inchoately, mystically, because in some dark inexplicable way she senses the betrayal as a strain on the health and integrity of their marriage. This may sound more metaphorical than real, but I invite you to check it out in life. We feel infidelity.

We know some things consciously and others unconsciously. We know certain things through observation and others intuitively. We know through our heads, our hearts, and our guts, and through all three of these faculties, sometimes (because inside of a body all parts affect each other) we know something because we sense it as either a tension or a comfort inside our soul. There are no private acts. Our private acts, like our public ones, are either bringing health or disease to the community.

I leave the last words to the poets: If you are here faithfully, you bring great blessing. (Parker Palmer) If you are here unfaithfully, you bring great harm. (Rumi)

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](http://www.ronrolheiser.com) Follow on Facebook [www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser/](https://www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser/)

# Thanks to our former publisher

## Editorial

Observant readers will have noticed a change on page 2 of the Christmas 2021 edition of *NZ Catholic*. It was a small change, but a very significant one. The name "Bishop Patrick Dunn" no longer appeared as publisher of this newspaper. This was after it was announced that Pope Francis had accepted Bishop Dunn's resignation, and had appointed Bishop Stephen Lowe as Bishop of Auckland.

The previous 627 editions of *NZ Catholic*, going back for more than a quarter of a century to 1996, had been published under the name of Bishop Dunn.

These editions have reported upon the life of the Church in this country and throughout the world over the course of three pontificates — those of St John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis. The paper, and its associated digital outlets, have reported on an incredibly broad and diverse range of topics, and have also presented a broad range of opinions on the implications of these topics for the life of the Church, and for our country.

Bishop Dunn has been there through it all. He deserves high praise for his commitment to Catholic media in this country. As part of a special feature celebrating the 500th issue of *NZ Catholic* in 2016, former managing editor Gavin Abraham wrote of Bishop Dunn's commitment to a newspaper that looked at the Church "warts and all".

"Many Catholic publications were and are hampered by the Church hierarchy," Mr Abraham wrote. "Every article must be run through a vetting process. In many places, coverage of the Church's flaws is forbidden."

Mr Abraham added: "In my four years as editor, on the rare occasions when I sought his counsel on editorial decisions, Bishop Pat always erred on the side of open debate and dialogue — even when he knew it could cause him headaches."

That is not to say that Bishop Dunn has not been prudent in his advice to editors. Open debate and dialogue should not be without limits. But all the editors of this newspaper since its inception have appreciated the faith and trust that Bishop Dunn placed in them to make editorial decisions prudently. The result is a publication that has won many dozens of awards from Australasian Catholic and religious press organisations. The name *NZ Catholic* is widely respected internationally, and this is in no small part due to the stance of its former publisher.

Bishop Dunn has faithfully followed the instructions of Vatican II and its post-conciliar documents about Catholic communication and the Catholic press.

The Pastoral Instruction "*Communio et Progressio*" (1971), written by order of the Second Vatican Council stated that "*Since the Church is a living body, she needs public opinion in order to sustain a giving and taking between her members Without this, she cannot advance in thought and action. . . . Something would be lacking in her life if she had no public opinion. Both pastors of souls and lay people would be to blame for this*" (CP115).

This pastoral instruction added: "*It is hard to see how people can keep in touch with what is happening in the Church without the Catholic press. Neither can people keep a Catholic attitude towards what happens in the world without the help of commentaries on the news written in the light of Christian principles.*" (CP140)

A Catholic press has been operating in Auckland for more than a century. *NZ Catholic* has continued the distinguished traditions of publications such as *The Month*, *Zealandia*, and *New Zealandia*. It is especially poignant that, in recent years, Bishop Dunn struggled to be able to read his own publication, because of his failing eyesight. But he stayed loyal to the paper.

It falls to me as the current editor to express the great gratitude and appreciation of myself, *NZ Catholic's* staff, its readers, its contributors, and many others associated with the paper, to Bishop Dunn for his support and encouragement over so many years.

We wish Bishop Dunn well in his retirement. May God bless him. — MICHAEL OTTO

## The Habit



## Letters

### Changes

Old habits sometimes die slowly. I still have to keep reminding myself to put my seat belt on as I back out of the driveway.

And mask-wearing is still not an ingrained habit. Calling into the supermarket recently, I forgot my mask, and suddenly found myself feeling rather naked in a carefully-distanced sea of masked customers. Fortunately, I was rescued by a very helpful staff member.

Covid changes were also evident for last Sunday's socially-distanced parish Mass, where I read in the newsletter that the bishop had allowed that, for the duration of the pandemic, a weekday Mass could replace a Sunday one.

In writing for Christmas, Cardinal Tom mentioned that Covid restrictions allow no more than 24 for Mass in their retirement village cinema, but numbers keep increasing so he's had to add a 6pm Saturday Vigil Mass, as well as the 9.30am Sunday Mass, and Monday to Friday weekday Masses.

I wondered if perhaps we were moving to a "new normal" of smaller community Mass gatherings — a bit like the early Church.

May we continue to open our eyes and ears to the promptings of the Holy Spirit urging us to read the "signs of the times".

Peter Garrick, Auckland.

### Women

I am a passionate Catholic woman and I love the community. And I live in Auckland (sigh). Lockdown and Covid has really made a dent in my community prayer life, and have made it hard to walk together side-by-side with other like-minded women (even though I tried). I've been back a year now and I've found it difficult to form a close-knit Catholic community, Church connections and sisterhoods here, even though I am an extrovert who's lived in Auckland (before) for a long time.

Women in their mid-20s to mid-40s can go through tough things. . . There are some really wonderful women out there whom I know might look fabulous on the outside, but maybe are going through isolation, loneliness, uncertainty and anxiety, or maybe having a faith crisis or weakening of morals or doubts about God, or slipping away from the faith or wanting to come back to the faith, who need fellowship and need sisters to walk with.

I want to walk with these ladies. And for them to walk with me. We need sisterhood, for love, for support and for prayer for each other.

I feel I've always needed a small group of Catholic women in my life to cheer me on, and to pray for me, love me, and carry me when I need carrying, for me to carry them along when they need me, to add

value and be a friend; this way we all get closer and more intimate with Christ, Do any women out there feel the same way?

Name and address supplied.  
 ■ Women wishing to make contact with this correspondent can email editor@nzcatholic.org.nz — Editor.

visive. They are being told that theirs is either merely a matter of personal taste, or a negative political stance, and that their longing for this most venerable rite is bordering on indecent.

K.A. Benfell, Whanganui

■ Abridged — Editor.

### Traditional rite

Throughout the history of the Church there have been multiple rites of the Mass existing at the same time without causing disunity. [After Vatican II and the introduction of the revised rite] . . . it was made to appear that any priest or faithful who wished to continue with the rite they had always known, and been ordained to celebrate, were disobedient or worse. In reference to this, Cardinal Ratzinger said: "A community is calling its very being into question when it suddenly declares that what until now was its holiest and highest possession is strictly forbidden, and when it makes the longing for it seem downright indecent. Can it be trusted any more about anything else? Won't it proscribe tomorrow what it prescribes today?"

The Catholic Church is not a political or secular institution that goes wherever the current winds blow it, trying to gain secular power or chase the popularity of the world.

Yet, today we see faithful Catholics, including priestly societies and orders set up by the Church with the traditional rites as part of their charism, being told they are di-

### Darkest day

Sunday, November 7, 2021, will be forever noted as one of the darkest days in New Zealand history; the day when our Government authorised the killing of the vulnerable terminally ill with a lethal injection or assisting in their suicide.

It is ironic that this law comes into effect while we are experiencing a worldwide Covid-19 virus pandemic, when our Government and governments worldwide are trying to portray their concern for their citizens' health and well-being. They tried to save lives from this virus by implementing severe lockdowns to control the spread of the virus. Hypocrites!

It is frightening to see how our Government is continuing to implement acts like this one and the Abortion Legalisation Act to decriminalise the killing of the unborn (our potential Kiwis), acts that are eroding the very core moral values that we have been brought up with. Our present Government has absolutely no moral compass. . . . May God our Father, Son and Holy Spirit protect New Zealand from this and further laws that destroy lives.

Anne Cotton, Auckland.

Except for our own editorials, opinions expressed in *NZ Catholic* do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the newspaper or of its owner, the Bishop of Auckland, unless otherwise indicated.

**NZ Catholic welcomes readers' letters, although receipt of a letter does not guarantee publication. No correspondence will be entered into concerning publication.** Letters should be no longer than 220 words and should be topical, to the point, and include the writer's address and phone number. *Ad hominem* attacks are not welcome. Emailed letters should be sent as part of the text message — not as an attachment — to editor@nzcatholic.org.nz and include the writer's physical address. Pseudonyms are not accepted, except by special arrangement.

# Royal Commission interim report welcomed

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The bishops and congregational leaders of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand will closely study the interim redress report of the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care, and will look at how they can implement the recommendations.

The report — “He Purapura Ora, he Māra Tipu; from Redress to Puretumu” ([www.abuseincare.org.nz/our-progress/reports/from-redress-to-puretumu/](http://www.abuseincare.org.nz/our-progress/reports/from-redress-to-puretumu/)) — was tabled in Parliament on December 15, and it makes recommendations on how survivors of abuse in state- and faith-based care should be heard and obtain redress for the harm suffered.

The report has been welcomed by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference (representing the country’s Catholic bishops), the Congregational Leaders Conference of Aotearoa New Zealand (representing Catholic religious orders and similar entities) and Te Rōpū Tautoko (the group formed to coordinate Catholic engagement with the royal commission).

Sister Margaret Anne Mills, DOLC, president of the Congregational Leaders Conference, said: “I welcome this report and acknowledge the harm suffered by survivors of abuse and proposed actions to address and provide redress. We see the report as part of the vision to transform what we are doing today and into the future.”

Cardinal John Dew, president of the NZCBC, said: “We have been listening closely to what survivors have been telling the royal commission. We have previously indicated our support for the establishment of an independent redress scheme. This report gives a series of recommendations we can study to help us as we walk alongside survivors of abuse.”

Catherine Fyfe, chair of Te Rōpū Tautoko, said: “Te Rōpū Tautoko members thank the commissioners for their work in preparing this report, and look forward to helping Church leaders along the journey of reviewing and implementing the recommendations.”

The Church has been working proactively while waiting for the commission’s report. Te Rōpū Tautoko has created a roadmap of work that needs doing across all areas of the Church to make improvements in response to reports or disclosures of abuse in the care of the Catholic Church (NZ Catholic, December 12).

“Setting it out in the roadmap makes it clear to everyone the work that is needed and the progress being made,” said Ms Fyfe. “This provides a sense of transparency and accountability.”

## ■ Ministers

According to a statement by Public Service Minister Chris Hipkins and Internal Affairs Minister Jan Tinetti, the Government is starting work on developing a new, independent, survivor-focused redress system.

“The new system will be designed from the ground up in collaboration with Māori, who were heavily over-represented in state and faith-based care. The collaborative design will also be guided by the views of survivors and key communities, including Pacific peoples and disabled people,” Mr Hipkins said.

“The Government is moving on this now, before the royal commission finishes its other investigations, because we want to minimise delays for survivors who are waiting for their claims to be resolved. We are conscious of the age and ill-health of many of the survivors who suffered abuse at a time when care was heavily institutionalised.

“The royal commission has flagged areas where urgent action is needed before a new system is in place, such as advance payments for older or terminally ill survivors. They will be prioritised,” Mr Hipkins said.

Early this year, discussions will begin with key interested parties on options for how the collaborative design process could work, before the detailed design process begins in mid-2022.

The aim is for final decisions about the new system to be made by Cabinet around mid-2023, with the new system to be introduced soon after that.



Parliament House, Wellington (Photo: Wikipedia)

## ■ Recommendations

The royal commission report recommended that “the Crown should establish a puretumu torowhānui system to respond to abuse in state care, indirect state care and faith-based care that acknowledges and apologises for tūkino, or abuse, harm and trauma, done to, and experienced by, survivors, their whānau, hapū, iwi, and hāpori or communities; aims to heal and restore individuals’ mana, tapu and mauri; takes decisive and effective steps to prevent further abuse”.

Among the several dozen other recommendations in the report were that: “The Crown should have overall responsibility for funding the puretumu torowhānui scheme so survivors receive financial payments in a timely manner. Faith-based institutions and indirect state care providers, should contribute to the scheme’s funding. Those designing the puretumu torowhānui scheme should determine how the Crown or the scheme should collect financial payments awarded against individual faith-based institutions and indirect state care providers, and how to apportion the scheme’s costs, including the costs of oranga services.”

The report also recommended that the “puretumu torowhānui

scheme should be open to all survivors, including those who have been through previous redress processes, those covered by accident compensation, and those in prison or with a criminal record, and should enable whānau to continue a claim made by a survivor if the survivor dies, or make a claim on a survivor’s behalf if there is clear evidence that the survivor intended to apply to the scheme or had taken other steps to make a claim before their death”.

Another recommendation was that “the Crown give faith-based institutions and indirect state care providers a reasonable opportunity, say four to six months, to join the puretumu torowhānui scheme, voluntarily before considering, if necessary, options to encourage or compel participation”.

As well as consulting with other named parties, including survivors, Māori, Pacific peoples and Deaf and Disabled people, it was recommended that the Crown should also consult faith-based institutions, indirect state care providers, other interested parties and the public, in the design and running of the puretumu torowhānui system and scheme, and the implementation of recommendations in the royal commission’s report and other reports it may produce.

# Cardinal O’Malley speaks of polarisation, effects on opposition to Pope

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Boston Cardinal Seán O’Malley, in a December 17 interview with a newspaper from Argentina, spoke about how some Church factions in the US drive views opposing Pope Francis via polarising media messages.

The cardinal, head of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, also spoke of how the sex abuse crisis has impacted evangelisation.

In the interview with *La Nación* on the occasion of Pope Francis’ 85th birthday, Cardinal O’Malley said polarisation and opposition to Pope Francis includes some conservative prelates in the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, but he did not name anyone.

“Yes, the episcopal conference is polarised, but it is difficult to put a (figure on the) percentage of the opponents.

There are also some bishops who are linked to a more conservative policy, and the Holy Father himself has commented on the situation of EWTN television, where, many times, the commentators are very critical of the Holy Father, at least of his ideas,” Cardinal O’Malley said.

Even so, the vast majority of Catholics, and even non-Catholics, favour the Pope, and are very much on his side, Cardinal O’Malley said, adding that there are concerns about the influence of some of the polarising content on members of the clergy.

“We have a young, conservative clergy, and sometimes they are very influenced by social media, and it is a problem,” the cardinal told the newspaper.

In the published question and answer, the interviewer asked whether the bishops are

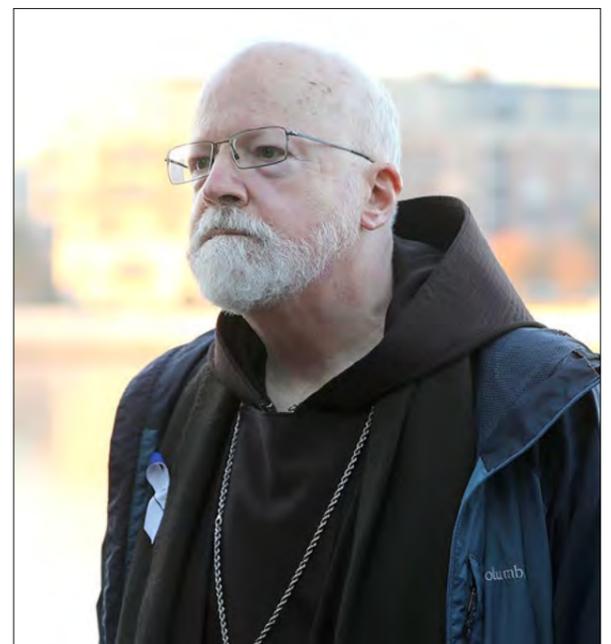
the problem.

“Not all of them,” he answered. “Some.”

Cardinal O’Malley also addressed the sex abuse crisis and how it is linked to evangelisation efforts in the Church.

“The reputation of the Church has been badly damaged, and we have lost the trust of the people. As I always say to bishops: How can they believe us if they think we don’t care about their children? It is impossible,” he said.

“That is why it is very important that there is transparency and zero tolerance. Although it is a difficult issue, there is nothing more important in the Church at this time because, if we do not solve the problem of sexual abuse and the protection of minors, how are we going to carry out evangelisation? People will not trust us.”



Cardinal Sean O’Malley (CNS Photo)

# Study on meaning should make Church leaders think

by MICHAEL OTTO

Family is the main source of meaning and fulfilment in the lives of many people, according to the findings of a survey conducted in nations with advanced economies, but faith and religion are well down the list.

Last month, the Pew Research Center in the US published the results of a survey taken with 18,850 adults in 17 advanced economies on what gives them meaning in life.

People's responses were coded into 17 broad topics.

According to the Pew website, for most of the nations, family was the top "topic" for giving meaning in life. In 14 of the 17 advanced economies surveyed, more respondents mention their family as a source of meaning in their lives than any other factor. In Australia, New Zealand, Greece and the United States, around half or more say their family is something that makes their lives fulfilling. (The three nations that did not have family as the top category were Spain (the top "topic" was health — maybe reflecting Covid), South Korea (the top topic was material well-being) and Taiwan (the top topic was society)).

In the US, 15 per cent of those surveyed mentioned God or religion as a source of meaning. This was the fifth most frequently mentioned category in that nation. But outside of the US, religion was not among the top 10 topics for any nation. Nonetheless, out of the 17 nations, New Zealand had the second highest percentage of people mentioning God and religion as a source of meaning (5 per cent — which was higher than the percentage in New Zealand who mentioned pets as a source of meaning at 4 per cent. New Zealand had the highest percentage among the nations surveyed in terms of pets being a source of meaning and fulfilment). People generally mentioned religion with the same frequency regardless of age, income, education or gender.

For New Zealand, the top five topics for giving meaning in life were — family, occupation, friends, material well-being, society. This was identical to the results for Australia. In the US, the top five were family, friends, material well-being, occupation, faith.

New Zealand-based theologian Fr Neil Vaney said that, when he first

read the summary of the Pew research, he was mildly surprised that "family emerged very clearly as the prime candidate in establishing and providing meaning for people's lives in many developed nations".

"On reflection, however, I could see a constant thread running through the last years of the pandemic," he added.

"It came through in the constant media reports of families separated by border restrictions grieving over inability to be at the bedside of dying parents or siblings, or by long absences from loved partners. This was reinforced by the conclusion that it was not Covid itself that rocked individuals' value systems, but rather problems like such separations that it forced upon them."

Another finding of the Pew research was that 14 per cent of New Zealand respondents mentioned nature as a source of meaning and fulfilment, which was ahead of all the other nations.

"The United Kingdom, Australia, France, New Zealand and Sweden also stand apart for the relative emphasis they place on nature compared to many other places surveyed. In each of these countries, nature is one of the top eight sources of meaning," the survey summary stated.

Fr Vaney was "not too surprised that Kiwis rated nature high among elements that brought fulfilment to its citizens".

"Though we have some larger cities, all lie in easy reach of beaches, mountains and forests accessible to all," Fr Vaney said.

"There are still many areas of our land that are, relatively speaking, unspoiled and marked by pristine beauty. Our education system and climate make good use of these assets available to nearly all of us."

## ■ Reflection

Fr Vaney thought that the Pew findings "should lead to reflection by Catholic Church leaders and ministries".

"Clearly the joy and support that families provide should emphasise the need to provide the best staff and programmes available for work in marriage preparation and support (where we are thin on the ground), and aid for needy families and com-



Family members attend the Festival of Families in Croke Park stadium in Dublin, Ireland in August, 2018 (CNS Photo)

munities," Fr Vaney said.

"It also means that Sunday homilists, mostly celibate men, need to learn and mirror the concerns, images and needs of married and family life, and reflect these positively in their preaching."

Fr Vaney added that it is also significant from the survey that younger people are more focussed on friends, education and hobbies, as against an older generation, which may be preoccupied with retirement and health issues.

"If we are to promote lively and attractive parishes, it is therefore important that active ministry does not get too locked into the needs of this older group, who form much of our Sunday congregations."

The findings that faith and religion did not generally rank highly as sources of meaning and fulfilment in very secular Western nations did not surprise Fr Vaney.

"This would seem to point to the Church's need to propose faith, not so much in terms of commandments and structures, but more to stress how faith can lead to deep personal fulfilment in relationship with Jesus, to strong mutual bonds in community, and a deep appreciation of the world of nature of which we are

an integral part — all themes strongly proposed by Pope Francis".

Asked if he thought the responses might have differed had the survey been carried out among people in developing economies, Fr Vaney said that two issues came to mind for him — work and health.

"Work and career rank highly in nations like Italy and the USA, but these were clearly linked to dimensions of personal ambition and fulfilment," Fr Vaney said.

"In many developing nations, work is often onerous, poorly-paid and dangerous; it is a burden needed to support one's family. The same dynamic is reflected in the sphere of health needs. Taiwan reported great satisfaction in social organisation, partly because its government deployed resources and strategies quickly and effectively in the face of Covid, and this was especially true in the field of health and medicine.

"Many developing nations lack effective infrastructure in doctors, clinics and medicines for coping with such emergencies. We have already seen how... countries such as Papua New Guinea and Fiji have struggled in these areas."

# Carer for seafarers farewelled

by MICHAEL OTTO

A parishioner honoured by the Pope for his service to seafarers was farewelled at St Michael's church in Remuera on January 18.

Philip Dromgool died in Auckland on December 19. He was 85. In 2014, he received the Benemerenti Medal from Pope Francis. A report in NZ Catholic at the time stated that he had given



Philip Dromgool in 2014

20 years of service at that stage in the Apostleship of the Sea in Auckland. His work over those years reportedly involved management of the seafarers centre in Auckland, taking seafarers to Mass at the cathedral, and supporting them when required.

At the Mass at St Michael's, Mr Dromgool's many contributions to the parish and to other Catholic groups were noted. He had also had a leadership role in a Legion of Mary praesidium. He was noted for providing transport to take several elderly parishioners to and from Sunday Mass in Remuera, and he also assisted with weekly community meals in a nearby suburb for many years.

In his homily, Fr Stephen Berecz said the Gospel reading about the beatitudes fitted with Mr Dromgool's "practicality".

"Life can be so complex," Fr Berecz said. "Philip had the solution. Keep it simple."

"Do the simple things well and appreciate the extraordinary things — God's grace and God's love."

"I'm going to miss the hand that would shoot out because he wanted my keys to put the collection in the presbytery. The greeting at the end of Mass, the occasional chat, and the wonderful faith that this man had," Fr Berecz added.

"There is something about the simplicity of faith that one has to be humble before."

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# Group calls for Catholic recognition of Anglican ordinations

ROME (CNS) — A group of Catholic and Anglican theologians has publicly called on the Vatican to review and overturn a papal document from 1896 that declared Anglican ordinations “absolutely null and utterly void”.

“Where we once walked apart, we now walk together in friendship and love,” wrote members of the Malines Conversations Group, after tracing the history of ecumenical agreements between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion and, especially, reviewing examples of collaboration and gestures of recognition.

The judgement made by Pope Leo XIII in his apostolic letter “*Apostolicae Curae*” in 1896 “does not accord with the reality into which the Spirit has led us now”, said members of the group, which is an informal Catholic-Anglican dialogue that began in 2013.

Members of the group, who are not appointed to represent their churches, but keep their respective ecumenical offices informed of their studies and discussions, presented their document on December 15 at Rome’s Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas.

The 27-page document is titled, “*Sorores in Spe — Sisters in Hope of the Resurrection: A Fresh Response to the Condemnation of Anglican Orders*”.

Bishop Brian Farrell, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said that, while his Vatican office does not sponsor the group’s dialogue, “we are very happy” that the question of Anglican orders is “being examined in the wholly different ecumenical

context of today, when so much has been achieved in Anglican-Catholic relations”.

“From the Catholic point of view, it is a question of finding the theological and canonical language that would better reflect what we do in practice, which is to acknowledge a genuine ministry in other churches,” he told the Catholic News Service. “As the Second Vatican Council teaches, the Holy Spirit does indeed work through them for the salvation of their members.”

The context for “*Sorores in Spe*” is the theological and practical difference in Catholic-Anglican relations over the past 125 years and, especially, since the formal Anglican-Roman Catholic theological dialogue was established in 1967 by St Paul VI and Anglican Archbishop Michael Ramsey of Canterbury.

The theological and canonical motivations for Pope Leo’s decision, as explained in the document, were “defects” of both form and intention in the Anglican ordination rites because, in the Vatican’s eyes, “it was not made clear that the priest received ‘the power of consecrating and of offering the true Body and Blood of the Lord’”, and because the Anglican Communion had introduced a rite not approved by the Church.

But the official agreed statements of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission since 1970, including statements on the Eucharist and on ministry, “testify to an intimate family likeness between our traditions, which reveals a communion already shared”, stated “*Sorores in Spe*”.

That likeness is especially underlined by a succession of gifts from the Pope to Anglican clerics, said members of the Malines Conversations Group. They cited: St Paul VI’s gift of his episcopal ring to Archbishop Ramsey in 1966; the pectoral crosses several popes have given to Anglican bishops over the years; and the stole St John Paul II gave Anglican Father Henry Chadwick in 1982.

The progress over the past 50 years is such that it is no longer unusual that “our deepest mutual friendships, our spiritual directors, our trusted confidants and prayer partners and theological interlocutors all cross the Anglican-Roman Catholic divide”, said the Rev. Sarah Coakley, an Anglican theologian.

## ■ Women

In the formal theological dialogue’s conversations about ministry and ordination, the issue of the ordination of women as priests and bishops in most churches of the Anglican Communion keeps coming up. The Catholic Church has insisted it has no right to ordain women to the priesthood, since Jesus chose only men as his apostles.

But those who drafted “*Sorores in Spe*” insisted that the arguments for or against the ordination of women are different from the arguments used by Pope Leo in “*Apostolicae Curae*” to declare Anglican orders null and void.

“The fact that women can, in most Anglican provinces, now be ordained, does not in itself mean that the pope’s condemnation of 1896 must be applied to the present

situation,” they wrote.

In presenting the document on December 15, Sister Gemma Simmonds, a member of the Congregation of Jesus, told the audience that one aim of the Catholic Church’s synodal process is to overcome “toxic clericalism and misogyny” within its ranks.

But, she said, the ordination of women priests and bishops “has not entirely banished misogyny from within the Anglican Church, and illustrates that neither theological discourse nor ecclesial action is sufficient to convert minds and hearts”.

Still, Sister Simmonds said, many Catholic women have drawn hope from the Anglican Communion’s willingness to “take bold steps” to affirm what is written in the Letter to the Galatians: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”.

Since the original Malines Conversations in 1921-27, the group said, “Anglicans and Catholics have learned to pray together and for one another, our shared study of Scripture and tradition has brought renewal, we have engaged in joint projects of dialogue, discipleship and witness, we have experienced growing friendship”.

“In a world utterly transformed since the end of the 19th century, facing difficulties and threats on a scale beyond imagining at that time,” the group said, “we have learned what it is to share a common hope. We long for our churches to be able to embrace one another as sisters in Christ.”

# Archbishop Tutu had strong ties to Catholic Church

by GUNTHER SIMMERMACHER

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (CNS) — Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who died on December 26, made his clerical career in the Anglican Church, but at one point, he is said to have contemplated the Catholic priesthood. Instead, he got married in a Catholic Church.

Born in 1931, in Klerksdorp, as one of four children of Zachariah, a teacher, and Aletta, a domestic worker, Desmond Mpilo Tutu’s first exposure to Christianity was in the African Methodist Episcopal Church that his parents attended. But he fell in love with Nomalizo Leah Shenxane, a Catholic. The two were married in 1955, in the Catholic Church of Mary Queen of the Apostles in Johannesburg.

Oblate Father Jean Verot officiated. In the marriage register, kept in Latin, Father Verot noted that this was a “mixed marriage”, listing Leah as a Catholic and Desmond a Protestant.

The two had four children together. The oldest, Trevor, was named after Anglican Father (later Archbishop) Trevor Huddleston, who had a great influence on Tutu. The second was named Thandeka Theresa Ursula; the two middle names were a nod to Leah’s Catholic background. The family worshipped in St Paul’s Anglican Church, where Desmond was involved in several lay roles.

He found his vocation there and studied at St Peter’s Theology College in Johannesburg, before he was ordained an Anglican priest in 1960. His final college report praised his

exceptional skills and intelligence, but also noted that he “seemed to be suffering from a touch of ‘Roman fever’.” The report recommended that “perhaps his bishop might do well to question him about that before ordination”.

The apparent affliction of “Roman fever” insinuated that Tutu was exhibiting signs of subscribing to the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church, as South African biographer John Allen noted in his 2006 biography of the archbishop, “*Rabble-Rouser for Peace*”.

That flirtation with Catholic practices continued even after Archbishop Tutu had been made a bishop. When he was appointed secretary-general of the South African Council of Churches in 1978, he introduced staff prayer meetings, retreats and the like. His daily prayer routine remained one of disciplined devotion, including the Eucharist in the morning and the Angelus at noon, complete with the Hail Mary.

Archbishop Tutu had a great devotion to St Thérèse of Lisieux, whose spirituality was rooted in prayer.

“As I am not part of the Catholic tradition, I think my interest in her indicates that she has an ecumenical appeal,” he once said. “She encourages us to grasp the significance of retracting into oneself for inner peace, to seek solitude, silence and waiting, to be with God. It can’t have been easy to reach such a prominent position in the Church at a time when women were often seen rather than heard,” he is quoted as saying in the 2018 book, “*Beautiful*



Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 2017 (CNS Photo)

Thoughts for Beautiful Minds” by John Scally.

Archbishop Tutu’s social and political engagements were based on what he discerned to be the mandate of the Gospel. In that, he followed in the path set by older Christian leaders, including Catholic Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban who, in 1958, had pushed the Catholic Church to be the first ecclesial body to declare the racist apartheid system a “structural sin”. Archbishop Tutu would later say that Archbishop Hurley, a man of tall build, was the giant “on whose

shoulders we stood”.

Archbishop Tutu visited the Pretoria court where Archbishop Hurley was charged in 1985 for revealing atrocities committed by the apartheid regime in what is now Namibia. From the dock, Archbishop Hurley did not address the court, but during breaks, he’d talk with supporters, jokingly inviting Archbishop Tutu and Leah to join him in the dock. Charges against Archbishop Hurley were dropped before the trial could even begin.

After becoming Archbishop of Cape Town in 1985, Archbishop Tutu — with Catholic Archbishop Stephen Naidoo and the Rev. Allan Boesak — formed a trinity of church negotiators in defusing crises in Cape Town. After police shootings in Cape Town killed more than 20 people on election night in September, 1989, Archbishop Tutu prayed intensely, and unilaterally decided to call a protest march that started at St George’s Anglican Cathedral.

Put on the spot, newly-elected President Frederick W. de Klerk allowed the march to go ahead. Some 35,000 “Rainbow People,” as Archbishop Tutu dubbed them that day, took part. According to De Klerk, that march pushed apartheid over the cliff.

By then, Archbishop Tutu had already been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1984. In 1987, he received a prestigious Catholic honour: the Pacem in Terris Award, named after St John XXIII’s landmark encyclical on peace on earth.

Gunther Simmermacher is editor of The Southern Cross, Cape Town.

# Catholic connections in 2022 New Year Honours

Among those whose services were acknowledged in the 2022 New Year Honours were several Catholics and people with links to the Catholic Church.

**Jan Maree Rutledge** of Auckland was awarded the Queen's Service Medal for services to transitional housing.

Mrs Rutledge has worked in the emergency housing and social services sector for 15 years.

Mrs Rutledge has been general manager of De Paul House since 2014, providing essential housing and support services for vulnerable people on the North Shore, particularly families with dependent children. As general manager, she has overseen an expansion of De Paul House's services from 11 apartments to more than 50 properties. She played a key role in De Paul House becoming registered as a Community Housing Provider. She is active with a number of networks, including the Housing External Focus Group for the Ministry of Social Development, the Auckland District Council of Social Services' housing subcommittee, Auckland Catholic Housing network, Housing Connections network, and New Zealand Council of Christian Social Service Impacts of Policy and Exclusion Policy Group. Mrs Rutledge has been a board member of Auckland North Community and Development since 2016.



Jan Rutledge, QSM

**Tuita'alili Vaitava'e Su'a-Aloese Moe** of Auckland was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to the Pacific community.

She has been contributing to the health and education sector for the Pacific community for more than 40 years.

She was a registered obstetric nurse with Middlemore Hospital between 1975 and 2000. She discovered a common concern for young Pacific mothers was the struggle of finding Pacific early learning services for their children. She helped her Samoan Catholic Community establish Sagato Josefa Aoga Amata Early Childhood Education to meet this demand. She completed studies in early childhood education and, alongside her Pacific community leaders, established the Mangere Pacific Early Childhood Education Trust, and was appointed the inaugural chair between 1997 and 2011, with five centres established today. She founded the Tava'esina Trust Board and Fetu Ta'iala Aoga Amata and, with community encouragement, opened another Pacific early childhood education centre in

Mangere, Fetu Aolele, in 2015. She helped establish Malaeola Community Centre, set up for the Catholic Samoan communities of Auckland, and has been a member of the parish pastoral council since 2011. She has been a Justice of the Peace since 2012, and a member of the fundraising committee for St Therese Catholic parish, Mangere East. She was recognised for her services to education and health by the Head of State of Samoa, who bestowed the honour of a matai for her contributions.

**Bronwyn Elizabeth Hayward** of Wellington was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to people with disabilities and the arts.

Ms Hayward was born with the spinal condition diastemietiamyelia, and has been a life-long advocate for vulnerable persons, disability issues and mental health in both paid and voluntary capacities.

Ms Hayward has furthered inclusivity for disabled people in the arts, as a dancer with national mixed ability dance troupe Touch Compass, and has advocated for many years for setting up an integrated mixed ability dance company in Wellington. She wrote, produced and starred in the short dance film "Beauty", supported by New Zealand Ballet. She wrote Dance Aotearoa New Zealand's Disability and Dance Strategy in 2010. She has volunteered with CCS — Disability Action, Disability Rights Promotion International, Disabled Persons Assembly (DPA), Youthline, and New Zealand Disabled Skiers. She drove the establishment of a network of disability advisors, Kaituitui, nationally with the DPA, and led this team from 2012 to 2014. She has coordinated International Day of Disabled People events, and organised a New Zealand Disability Pride Week red carpet function in 2017. She co-wrote and presented "Inside Out", a TVNZ show raising awareness of disability issues running from 1996. She has designed and led disability youth leadership programmes, undertaken accessibility inspections and reports, worked with DHBs on disability strategies and facilitating disability community engagement and liaison. Ms Hayward was Disability Support Counsellor at Victoria University of Wellington, expanding the services offered.

**Christopher Patrick Thomas Farrelly** of Whangarei was made a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to health and the community.

Mr Farrelly, who was in ministry as a Columban priest in his younger life, was founding CEO of the Primary Health Organisation (PHO) Manaia Health in Whangarei from 2003 to 2016, and recently retired after five years as Auckland City Missioner.

As Auckland City Missioner, Mr Farrelly led the development of the soon-to-be-opened "Home Ground", an innovative purpose-built healing facility to stand against homelessness, hunger, poor health and poor access to health care. Prior to his work at the Mission, he gave long service in health in Te Tai Tokerau. Under his leadership, Manaia PHO achieved a significant Te Tiriti-based partnership between Maori Health



Tuita'alili Vaitava'e Su'a-Aloese Moe, ONZM



Sir Christopher Farrelly, KNZM (Photo: Office of the Governor-General)

providers, local hapu and general practitioners.

Recognising the social determinants of poor health, and the role of social service agencies in health improvement, he was part of the formation of the Northland Intersectoral Forum, and was instrumental in initiating discussions with Fonterra that led to the establishment of the Milk in Schools programme. He was a founding member and chair of the Te Tai Tokerau Healthy Homes Project, which has now insulated more than 12,000 homes, and helped establish two "one stop shop" youth initiatives.

Mr Farrelly was an Executive Leadership Team member of the North-

land DHB, serving in a range of health leadership roles between 1991 and 2003, including HIV-AIDS support, and actively campaigning against discrimination on the grounds of health status, leading up to the Human Rights Act of 1993.

**Venkat Raman** of Auckland was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for service to the Indian community.

Mr Raman, a founder of the Saint Mother Teresa Interfaith Committee, has dedicated more than 20 years as editor of Indian Newlink to disseminate current affairs and news to the Indian community and wider migrant communities.



**Te Huinga o nga Pihopa  
Katorika o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

## NZCBC Manager Position

### Manager sought for NZ Catholic Bishops Conference, Wellington-based

Applications are invited for the position of Manager for the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference (NZCBC). The NZCBC coordinates the national activities and ministries of the Catholic Church.

The Manager reports to the NZCBC Executive Officer and holds a leadership role. This is a broad and interesting position that will vary every day. Key functions include:

- Coordinating projects, people, and agencies, to ensure the 20-plus NZCBC staff are supported in their work and that the bishops are well advised in their decision-making.
- Leading or supporting a broad range of ad-hoc events and initiatives as they arise, examples could include a national Mass or event, online training for staff on a specific matter, production of publications and so on.
- Supporting the Secretariat with the strategic planning and change management needs of Conference and its agencies.
- Fostering relationships with agencies, dioceses, and external bodies.

Our office is in the Catholic Centre in Wellington, across from Parliament, and a five-minute walk from the Wellington central train station. Along with your Secretariat colleagues you have the assistance of an Administrator. This is a permanent role, 25 to 37.5 hours negotiable.

Applications close Wednesday 9 February at 5:00 pm. Please submit your cover letter and CV via email to Siobhan Dilly, Executive Officer, [sdilly@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:sdilly@nzcbc.org.nz)

**Inquiries to Siobhan Dilly, NZCBC Executive Officer, 04 496 1747, [sdilly@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:sdilly@nzcbc.org.nz)**

**The full job description is available at:**

**[www.catholic.org.nz/news/media-releases/nzcbc-manager-apply/](http://www.catholic.org.nz/news/media-releases/nzcbc-manager-apply/)**

# Pope calls for 'reality check' against vaccine misinformation

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Covid-19 pandemic calls for an urgent reality check against baseless information, and for increased efforts so that everyone has access to vaccines, medicines and diagnostic tools, Pope Francis told diplomats from throughout the world.

He urged individuals, governments and the international community to recognise the effectiveness and importance of immunising as many people as possible as part of fighting the pandemic, which he called a "grave moment in the life of humanity".

"Vaccines are not a magical means of healing, yet surely they represent, in addition to other treatments that need to be developed, the most reasonable solution for the prevention of the disease," the Pope told ambassadors from the 183 countries that have diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

At his annual meeting with the diplomatic corps on January 10, the Pope also told them that facing

today's challenges "will require humanity to join together as one great family that, starting from different viewpoints, should prove capable of finding common solutions for the good of all".

In his speech, the Pope highlighted his hopes and concerns regarding the state of the world, ongoing wars and violence, the arms trade, today's "cancel culture", the treatment of migrants, the importance of increased funding for education, and the need to step-up efforts for universal vaccinations against Covid-19.

Recalling the passing of Archbishop Aldo Giordano, a well-respected Vatican diplomat who died of Covid-19 in December, the Pope told the ambassadors that the fight against the pandemic still calls for "significant effort" by everyone — on a personal, political and international level.

Effective vaccination campaigns have decreased the risk of the "severe repercussions of the disease", he said. "It is therefore important

to continue the effort to immunise the general population as much as possible."

Individuals have a duty to care for themselves and their health, which includes "respect for the health of those around us", he said. But "sadly we are finding increasingly that we live in a world of strong ideological divides", where people let themselves be influenced by ideologies built upon "baseless information or poorly-documented facts".

"Every ideological statement severs the bond of human reason with the objective reality of things," he said. "The pandemic, on the other hand, urges us to adopt a sort of 'reality therapy' that makes us confront the problem head on and adopt suitable remedies to resolve it."

Governments can help by engaging citizens more and fostering constructive discussion, he said. "The lack of resolute decision-making and clear communication generates confusion, creates mistrust and undermines social cohesion, fuelling new tensions. The result is a 'social relativism' detrimental to harmony and unity."

The Pope also criticised a "form of ideological colonisation" that "leaves no room for freedom of expression". He said it "is now taking the form of the 'cancel culture'

invading many circles and public institutions".

"Under the guise of defending diversity, it ends up cancelling all sense of identity, with the risk of silencing positions that defend a respectful and balanced understanding of various sensibilities," he said.

The Pope lamented the ongoing conflicts or tensions in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ukraine and Myanmar, among other places.

And he encouraged Israel and Palestine to "rebuild mutual trust and resume speaking directly to each other, in order to reach the point where they can live in two states, side by side, in peace and security, without hatred and resentment, but the healing born of mutual forgiveness".

He told the diplomatic corps that these conflicts are worsened by the abundance and ready availability of weapons. "We deceive ourselves into thinking that these weapons serve to dissuade potential aggressors."

Autonomous weapons systems must come under international scrutiny, and nuclear arms must be abolished, he said, saying they "are an inadequate and inappropriate means of responding to security threats", and their possession "is immoral".



Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica to inaugurate the Jubilee Year of Mercy at the Vatican in 2015 (CNS Photo)

## Holy Year 2025 planning begins

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Preparations for the Holy Year 2025 have already begun, and Pope Francis has asked the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation to take charge of the efforts.

In a brief note on December 26, the Vatican press office said that Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the pontifical council, had had meetings with officials of the Vatican Secretariat of State and with the offices that will be involved in funding Holy Year activities: the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See and the Secretariat for the Economy.

A holy year or jubilee is a time of pilgrimage, prayer, repentance and

acts of mercy, based on the Old Testament tradition of a jubilee year of rest, forgiveness and renewal. Holy years also are a time when Catholics visit designated churches and shrines, recite special prayers, go to confession and receive Communion to receive a plenary indulgence, which is a remission of the temporal punishment due for one's sins.

For the Year of Mercy, and traditionally for holy years, the celebrations begin with the Pope opening the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica, and ends with the sealing of the door one year later.

The Vatican announced that the theme for the 2025 Holy Year would be "Pilgrims of Hope".

## Southern Italian diocese temporarily bans naming of godparents

ROME (CNS) — A second diocese in Sicily, where the Mafia has had a significant presence for decades, has announced a temporary ban on the naming of godparents for baptisms and confirmations.

In a decree that went into effect on January 1, Bishop Domenico Mogavero of Mazara del Vallo said the ban would be in effect "ad experimentum" (on an experimental basis) until the end of 2024.

"The office of godparent in the two sacraments of baptism and confirmation has lost its original meaning, limiting itself to a purely formal liturgical presence that is not followed by the accompaniment of the baptised and the confirmed on the path of human and spiritual growth," the bishop wrote.

Rather than having godparents or sponsors, he said, those being baptised, confirmed or welcomed into the Church as adults will be joined by their parents or the person who prepared them for the sacrament.

In October, the Diocese of Catania introduced a similar three-year ban due to the use of godparents as

means to strengthen family bonds, particularly within local Mafia families, rather than as an aide in the spiritual development of those who are baptised or confirmed.

Mazara del Vallo was once the home of the late Sicilian mob boss Mariano Agate, who led several Mafia families in the region.

It was also where mob boss Gaetano Riina — head of the Corleone, Sicily, clan which inspired the last name of the fictional mafia family depicted in Francis Ford Coppola's "The Godfather" — was arrested in 2011.

Throughout his papacy, Pope Francis has strongly criticised the Mafia and its use of popular religiosity and violence to exploit the poor and the suffering. During a 2014 visit to Calabria, the Pope said members of the Mafia "are not in communion with God; they are excommunicated".

In May, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development also announced the formation of a working group that would aid bishops in the excommunication of those involved in organised crime.

## Indian government reversal: Missionaries of Charity can get foreign funds

NEW DELHI (CNS) — The Indian government has restored the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act registration of the Missionaries of Charity, clearing the decks for the globally-renowned charity to receive and utilise foreign funds, reported ucanews.com.

"I am delighted that the Indian government has restored our FCRA license," said Sunita Kumar, spokeswoman for the order founded by St Teresa of Kolkata.

The change of decision comes less than a fortnight after the federal ministry for home affairs declined to renew the order's FCRA registration,

citing "adverse inputs".

"We never expected that our registration could be cancelled, but it happened," Kumar told ucanews.com on January 8, a day after the government restored the licence of the charity organisation. "We are happy that the restoration of our licence happened without much delay."

The congregation was finding it difficult to carry forward its charitable works ever since news broke on Christmas Day that its application for renewal had been refused.

The ministry issued a statement on December 27 saying the charity

did not meet "eligibility conditions" under the FCRA, and cited "adverse input" for its decision, without further details. The congregation confirmed this on the same day while announcing that, "as a measure to ensure there is no lapse, we have asked our centres not to operate any of the FC (foreign contributions) accounts until the matter is resolved".

The government, however, allowed the order to operate its foreign contributions accounts until December 31. Since then, the congregation had faced difficulties in raising resources, struggling to maintain its regular supply of food, nutritional

supplements and medicines for those it served in orphanages and homes for the elderly and destitute.

Poor Hindus form nearly 99 per cent of the people served in facilities run by the Missionaries of Charity.

Naveen Patnaik, chief minister of Orissa state, directed his officials to release \$100,000 to the 13 Missionaries of Charity institutions functioning in the state and promised more if required.

"We are immensely indebted to him for coming to the rescue," said Kumar, while also thanking all those who stood with the sisters in their time of crisis.

# Caritas Aotearoa NZ organises aid for Tonga

◀ Continued from page 3

drinking water, as the ash fall has contaminated most of Tonga's water supply.

Ms Hickey said donations can be made to Caritas online through the Pacific Relief Fund ([www.caritas.org.nz/donate-online](http://www.caritas.org.nz/donate-online)) or their bank account 03-0518-0211216-00 (please include first & last name and put Tonga as the code).

According to posts on the facebook pages of Bishop Patrick Dunn and Bishop Michael Gielen, Bishop Gielen has met with Fr Patele Line and members of the Tongan chaplaincy in Auckland diocese to discuss providing support for those affected by the natural disaster in Tonga.

An online fund-raiser is scheduled for Saturday, February 12. More details were to be released after *NZ Catholic* went to press. All money raised will be distributed on the ground in Tonga through Catholic agencies to those in most need.

Pope Francis also appealed for prayers for the people of the region.

"My thoughts go to the people of the islands of Tonga, struck in recent days by the eruption of the underwater volcano, which caused enormous material damage. I am spiritually close to all the people suffering, imploring God for the relief of their suffering," the Pope said at the end of his general audience talk in the Vatican's Paul VI audience hall on January 19.

"I invite everyone to join me in praying for these brothers and sisters," he said.

The massive eruption on January 15 triggered a series of tsunamis that inundated coastal communities, destroying homes, contaminating water supplies, and cutting off power and communications.



People clean debris following a volcanic eruption and tsunami in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, on January 18, in this picture obtained from social media. (CNS photo/courtesy of Marian Kupu/Broadcom Broadcasting FM87.5 via Reuters)

Mounds of ash, which continued to fall from the volcano days after the blast, were also contaminating water sources, and hampering efforts to bring in outside aid and rescue teams. However, there are concerns that bringing in aid from outside the region and distributing relief might spread the virus that causes Covid-19: Tonga recorded its first case in October.

At least three people have been reported dead in the Tonga region and two in Peru from tsunamis triggered by the eruption.

Meanwhile, Caritas Australia appealed for funds for Tonga, which was covered in a thick blanket

of ash. The ash was preventing airplanes from landing to bring in needed aid.

It said coastal communities in Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu were also impacted by tsunami waves, along with communities in Australia, Japan and the Americas.

Tonga's one and only undersea communications cable was badly damaged, and it may take days or weeks to repair. Roads, bridges and homes along the coast were also damaged by the waves.

More than 104,000 people live in Tonga, and the government has appealed for immediate assistance.

# Munich abuse report faults retired Pope; Vatican to study document submitted by lawyers

MUNICH (CNS) — A law firm's report on how abuse cases were handled in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising has faulted retired Pope Benedict XVI, with lawyers accusing him of misconduct in four cases during his tenure as Munich archbishop.

Lawyer Martin Pusch of the law firm Westpfahl Spilker Wastl said the retired Pope had denied wrongdoing in all cases, reported the German Catholic news agency KNA.

Pusch expressed doubt about Pope Benedict's claim of ignorance in some cases, saying this was, at times, "hardly reconcilable" with the files.

At the Vatican, Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said, "The Holy See believes it has an obligation to give serious attention to the document" on cases of abuse in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, but it has not yet had a chance to study it.

"In the coming days, following its publication, the Holy See will review it and will be able to properly examine its details. Reiterating its sense of shame and remorse for the abuse of minors committed by clerics, the Holy See assures its closeness to all victims, and confirms the path taken to protect the youngest, ensuring safe environments for them," Bruni said.

Retired Pope Benedict headed the Munich Archdiocese from 1977 to 1982, before being called to the Vatican to head the doctrinal congregation.

From 2001, when St John Paul II charged the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith — headed by then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger — with the authority to take over cases from local bishops for investigation, Pope Benedict was aware of many examples of abuse. It was his office in 2003 that expedited the process for laicising priests guilty of sexually abusing minors.

After his election in 2005, Pope Benedict worked to address lingering concerns. Although he has mostly stayed out of public view in retirement, in April 2019 the former Pope published what he described as "notes" on the abuse crisis, tracing the roots of the scandal to a loss of a firm faith and moral certainty that began in the 1960s. The Church's response, he insisted, must focus on a recovery of a sense of faith and of right and wrong.

The Munich investigation followed two years of research, and covers the period from 1945 to

2019, centring on who knew what about sexual abuse and when, and what action they took, if any, KNA reported. The report identified 497 victims and 235 abusers, but the lawyers who conducted the study say they're convinced the real numbers are much higher.

Four volumes with almost 1900 pages comprise the "litany of horror" that lawyers presented. They spoke of the "total failure" of a system, at least until 2010.

Pope Benedict's statements on the case of the repeat offender Peter H., who came to Munich from Essen in 1980, were described by lawyer Ulrich Wastl as "not very credible".

In a written statement, the 94-year-old former Pope had said he did not take part in a decisive meeting on the case when he was the archbishop of Munich. At the news conference where the legal report was presented, Wastl read out the minutes of that meeting. In it, then-Archbishop Ratzinger is mentioned in several places as a rapporteur on other topics.

The lawyers also identified misconduct by the former Pope in three other cases, which he denies. These involve the transfer of clerics who had committed criminal offences and were allowed to continue pastoral care elsewhere. The retired Pope wrote that he had "no knowledge" of their deeds.

Wastl repeatedly urged people to read Pope Benedict's 82-page statement for themselves. It provided "authentic insight" into how a top representative of the Catholic Church thinks about sexual abuse, the lawyer said.

It remains to be seen whether the report will have any legal consequences. The Munich state prosecutor's office is investigating 42 cases in which the lawyers found misconduct on the part of senior Church officials.

The lawyers refrained from making recommendations to their client, the archdiocese that commissioned the report. Cardinal Reinhard Marx, whom they mainly accuse of having delegated the handling of abuse cases, said he did not want to provide detailed comment for another week.



Retired Pope Benedict XVI, 94, in November, 2021 (CNS photo)

However, later in the day, he issued a statement, which began: "My first thought today is for those affected by sexual abuse, who have experienced harm and suffering at the hands of Church representatives, priests and other employees in the space of the Church, on an appalling scale. I am shocked and ashamed."

In early summer 2021, Cardinal Marx — the current archbishop of Munich — tried to resign from office to take responsibility for abuses — explicitly also for possible mistakes of his predecessors. Pope Francis rejected his request.

In his January 20 statement, Cardinal Marx reiterated that "as archbishop of Munich and Freising, I feel jointly responsible for the institution of the Church in recent decades. As the acting archbishop, I therefore apologise on behalf of the archdiocese for the suffering inflicted on people in the space of the Church over the past decades".

He said that he followed the new conference and hoped that, by January 27, the archdiocese "will be able to identify initial perspectives and outline the way forward. In doing so, the diocesan authorities will continue to work closely together".

The day before the report was released, the German bishops' Advisory Board for Victims of Abuse issued a statement noting that a series of reports on abuse in the German church showed that protection of perpetrators took precedence over protection of victims.

"If different investigations, whether forensic or with a systemic approach, always come to the same results, then there is no need for further analysis. Then it is finally time to take responsibility, then it is finally time for decisions and courageous action," the statement said. It noted that future abuse must be prevented, but the suffering of thousands of victims must be acknowledged in a way that changes attitudes.

"Seeing and judging is over, it is time to act — finally to act," the statement said. It added that all people, lay as well as priests and bishops, are responsible for factors favouring abuse.

# Francis laments choice by some for pets over children

by CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Context is everything. But sometimes Pope Francis assumes people know him and the context of his words.

When they don't, hackles are raised.

One case in point has garnered huge publicity, again: Pope Francis' view on couples having pampered pets instead of children.

The nervous laughter in the Vatican audience hall on January 5 should have tipped him off that he was heading for a mishap.

Speaking at his general audience about the importance of parenthood, both literal and spiritual, Pope Francis again brought up his concern about a "demographic winter", especially in Europe, where birth rates are consistently below death rates.

The Pope spoke about the suffering of couples who cannot have children, and about the bravery of those who choose to adopt.

But what stuck in many people's craw was when he said that "many couples do not have children because they do not want to, or they have just one — but they have two dogs, two cats. Yes, dogs and cats take the place of children".

When people laughed, he responded, "Yes, it's funny, I understand, but it is the reality. But this denial of fatherhood or motherhood diminishes us, it takes away our humanity".

In his audience talk, and when discussing the "demographic winter" on December 26, the feast of the Holy Family, Pope Francis mentioned the practical problems that declining birth rates have for a nation, especially when it does not have enough young workers paying taxes to support the pensions and health care of the elderly.

The issue has long been a concern for Pope Francis, who has made it clear that he does not believe Catholic couples need to have as many children as possible, but he does believe countries and companies should enact policies that make it possible for couples to have the children they long for.

But the idea of some couples being selfish has been part of his discourse, too. In fact, in "Fratelli Tutti" in 2020, he wrote, "a decline in the birth rate, which leads to an aging of the population, together with the relegation of the elderly to a sad and lonely existence, is a subtle way of stating that it is all about us, that our individual concerns are the only thing that matters".

And, seeming to pick on those who would rather dote on their dogs or cats, is not new for



Pope Francis greets dog owners during a general audience in St Peter's Square at the Vatican in 2018 (CNS Photo)

him either.

The fur also flew in June, 2014, after Pope Francis preached at an early morning Mass in the chapel of his residence with couples celebrating big wedding anniversaries.

Again, he spoke of the pain of couples unable to have children and of the suffering of parents whose child is ill. But that didn't cause alarm.

According to the Vatican newspaper, the Pope told the couples that "Jesus does not like marriages in which couples do not want children, in which they want to remain fruitless", who think "not having children is better, this way you can travel and see the world, you can have a house in the country and relax!"

Such a culture, the newspaper quoted the Pope as saying, suggests "it is more comfortable

to have a little dog and two cats" to love but, at the end of such a marriage, "old age arrives in solitude, with the bitterness of awful loneliness: it is fruitless".

Speaking to reporters returning to Rome with him from Panama in 2019, he said he saw something there that he didn't see in Europe. "They hold up their children and say, 'This is my victory, this is my future, this is my pride!' In the demographic winter we are experiencing in Europe — below zero in Italy — this should make us think: What is my pride? Tourism, a villa, a small dog or raising a child?"

Still, he has praised some attention to pets, like at the chrisem Mass in 2020 when he lauded priests who are so close to their people that they know even their dogs' names.

## Family Matters

Helen Luxford



## Walking into 2022, cautiously

I think everyone is a bit on edge. A bit nervous. What will 2022 bring? We all rolled into 2020 with distant news of some new virus in China with no idea what was ahead. We are still in the midst of a global pandemic, and it's the uncertainty that is wearing us down. We've had our lives interrupted, at very short notice, and we have been thrown into chaos over an unseen threat. We've been very lucky in New Zealand not to have the scenes of chaos, and not to have had our health system overwhelmed.

At this time of year, a lot of people set goals. I've seen a few people saying, "can we put a disclaimer on our goals — if Covid gets in the way, that's not our fault?" We all have our goals to reach. Often, these involve our health — weight, fitness, food intake, alcohol intake. People are moving to be more aware of the need for "me time", and some mindfulness, and taking time to ensure we look after our mental health.

Let's acknowledge that our faith and our spiritual souls need feeding regularly to help with our mental health. Let's have faith-based goals, maybe not the most popular or cool idea on social media, but perhaps more relevant than most goals.

It's easy to look back and see that, in this pandemic, our faith might have slipped. In

New Zealand, we have had prolonged periods of not being able to access the sacraments (at least in Auckland) over the last two years.

Prayer is always available to us. The Bible is always available to us. I have a few email subscriptions coming into my inbox now — Opus Dei, Theology of the Body and Amen (which links to an app).

This — and following some faith-based presence on social media — ensures that food for my soul is there for my attention, as well as the information on sales in shops, and updates from friends and so on. Practising our faith is, at least, partly habitual.

When we can't go to weekly Mass, we fall out of the habit of going to Mass. All of us need to make sure that we get back into that habit, now that Mass is available again. Our parish is scheduling Masses for the vaccinated and others for those who don't use a vaccine pass. While I don't like to see any of us divided, this is following the rules of the land that are currently in place, and allowing access to the sacraments to all.

In our prayers, we need to continue to pray for the leaders of our country, and to pray for unity and a way forward for all of us. Prayers that this pandemic will end. There has been extraordinary loss of lives overseas, and a lot of pain and suffering for

people financially who have lost their jobs. Many businesses have suffered, and some have closed. That is a big blow to many hard-working Kiwis.

There are so many families which have been split with border closures and being kept apart for a long time. With no clear end in sight, and rules that keep changing, it's hard to stay hopeful. We must have hope, though. This will end. The uncertainty will have built resilience for some of us.

Faith helps us in our resiliency. There is much hope that comes from practising and living our faith. It anchors us and keeps us strong in the difficult times in which we live. We will always continue to walk towards the light. Jesus is our light; he is the way, the truth and the light for each of us and for the whole world.

2 Corinthians 5:7-9: "For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it."

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.

# The wonders of Italy

by NEVIL GIBSON

The summer holiday season is usually noted for a strong list of Oscar contenders, as well as some crowd-pleasers. Like the 12 months before, New Year 2022 fell short of expectations.

While a few Oscar hopefuls emerged, the impact of Covid and shutdowns continued, affecting production as well as revenues. The annual box office take was 5 per cent below 2020's which, in turn, was half that of pre-pandemic levels. In dollar terms, that's a drop from \$123 million in 2019 to \$63 million in 2021.

This was boosted late in the year by the latest episode in the James Bond saga, *No Time to Die*, and a new Spider-Man movie. No less than seven reboots or remakes of popular franchises — *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*, *The Matrix Resurrections*, *The Addams Family 2: The Road Trip*, *West Side Story*, *The King's Man*, *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*, and *Dune* — confirmed there was little new on offer.

Arthouse had to depend on Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch*, along with a brief window for Dame Jane Campion's award-winner, *The Power of the Dog* (reviewed in side column).

The major streaming services compensated by releasing original features from some of the world's best filmmakers. One was from Italy's Paolo Sorrentino, whose career includes masterpieces such as *The Great Beauty* (2013). He was also responsible for the TV series *The Young Pope* and *The New Pope*.

*The Hand of God* (Netflix) refers to the Argentinian football legend Diego Maradona's famous comment when asked about a questionable goal that gave his team a 1-0 lead against England in 1986.

Maradona was later recruited by the local Naples team when



Olivia Coleman stars in *The Lost Daughter*

## Movie Review

the then-17-year-old Sorrentino was already dreaming of becoming a film director. The re-imagining of his youth involves scenes of almost religious fervour toward the footballer, as well as ones invoking Federico Fellini. He inspired the same adoration among moviegoers, both in Italy and abroad, for his flights of fantasy, extravagance and decadence. Sorrentino even indulges in Fellini's fascination with the grotesque in one celebratory sequence.

Italy is not just admired for the wonders of its great directors. It is the home of novelist Elena Ferrante, whose feminist novels have become worldwide bestsellers, and the source of several screen adaptations, notably *My Brilliant Friend* (2018-20), a TV series.

The latest is *The Lost Daughter* (Netflix), writer-director Maggie Gyllenhaal's debut feature. The setting is a Greek island during summer, with the main characters changed to American or British, and including an Italian family from Queens in New York.

A divorced middle-aged Olivia Colman, alone on a working

holiday, finds her solace rudely interrupted by the noisy family, whose dramatics over a lost child spark memories of her own emotional trials in bringing up two daughters.

Jessie Buckley plays the younger Colman, torn between the demands of raising a family and an academic career in comparative literature, giving the story its Italian edge.

At one point, she abandons them for an affair with a fellow scholar (played by Gyllenhaal's real-life husband Peter Skarsgard). After a somewhat confusing start, in which flashbacks disrupt the early storytelling, her meandering thoughts start to make sense of her strange behaviour. This involves a mother and her pregnant daughter in the Queens family, two males working at the resort, and the theft of a girl's doll.

All create a toxic brew that gives Gyllenhaal the opportunity to turn on the psychological tension as Colman attempts to cope with her past.

Ratings: *The Hand of God*: R16. 130 minutes. *The Lost Daughter*: Mature audiences. 121 minutes.

## CLIPS

### The Tender Bar (Amazon Prime)

George Clooney remains behind the screen as director in this adaptation, by William Monaghan (*The Departed*) of a Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir by American writer JR Moehringer. Like many movies with a literary theme, it is also about alcohol, and set largely in and around a bar in Long Island named after Charles Dickens. The story, told in two periods, covers the author's childhood (he is known only as JR) and the start of his adult life, as he heads to Yale University. The young JR is played by Daniel Ranieri, and the older by Tye Sheridan. But the star of both periods is Ben Affleck, the self-educated bar owner, uncle and father figure who encourages (and pays for) JR's education. His mother (Lilly Rabe) had to move back to the family home, unable to gain any stability from her loser husband, a peripatetic DJ, who eventually buries any faith JR had placed in him. This is a moving and uplifting story that breaks no barrier, but is uplifting in its message that hope comes in many forms, even in a bar full of books. Rating: Mature audiences. 106 minutes.

### The Last Duel (Disney+)

Affleck, who won an Oscar for directing and starring in *Argo* (2013), shares his talents as a screenwriter with fellow actor Matt Damon and Nicole Holofcener (*Can You Ever Forgive Me?*) in this 14th century epic based on a feud between the French knight Jean de Arrouges (Damon) and his rival Jacques Le Gris (Adam Driver). Affleck has a minor role as Pierre d'Alençon, but the third part of the triangle is Arrouges's wife, Marguerite (Jodie Comer), who accuses Le Gris of rape while her husband was on Crusade duties. The king agrees to a duel to settle the guilt, and the plot advances in Rashomon-style as the three tell their versions. Medieval jousting and period epics are familiar territory to director Sir Ridley Scott, and he doesn't disappoint. What is disappointing is that this blockbuster sank into obscurity under Covid and failed to get the big screen treatment it deserved. Rating: R16. 152 minutes.

### The Power of the Dog (Netflix)

The same could be said for Dame Jane Campion's award-winning adaptation of Thomas Savage's novel about cattle ranchers set in 1920s Montana, but completely filmed in New Zealand. It proved elusive for Auckland and Hamilton cinema-goers, and missed the deadline for this column's best of 2021. Instead, it will have a long life in Netflix's library of originals. Among its many standouts are the matching of the variegated cast with the landscape, which gives rise to the title. Most of the characters' motives are explained by the end, though I am still left puzzled by the fate of the central character (Benedict Cumberbatch) and the role in it of his young nephew, played by impressive Australian actor Kodi Smit-McPhee. This study of masculinity is a rare exception to the trend of feminist versions of history. Rating: R13. 126 minutes.

# Can religion and politics get us beyond the culture wars?

**RELIGION AND POLITICS BEYOND THE CULTURE WARS: New Directions in a Divided America**, edited by Darren Dochuk. University of Notre Dame Press. (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2021). 359 pp. US\$55. Reviewed by AGOSTINO BONO (CNS)

Mixing religion, politics, the culture wars and division in America can make for an explosive cocktail in a country where many people see issues — and often the people espousing them — in black and white.

This worsened during the presidency of Donald Trump, who demonised opponents and used ridicule more than arguments to shoot down ideas.

The result is today's society, in which such hot-button topics as abortion, immigration, race, climate change, and who can use which public bathroom are treated as a tug-of-war producing only winners and losers. Little room exists for grey areas, thoughtful compromise, and negotiations to resolve problems. It's universal truths versus moral relativism.

This book — a collection of 14 essays, mostly by academics — doesn't solve any problems, but it shows that divisions and culture wars are

nothing new in a society where religion and politics often combust. The difference today is a more polarised citizenry.

The essays avoid dealing directly with current incendiary issues or — in some cases — how they are framed today. Instead, many essays delve into the previous century and the beginnings of this one, to show how various religious communities and individuals intertwined with politics on key issues such as the Cold War and the environment.

Sometimes the issues divided different religions or produced splits within some, such as opposition to the Vietnam War. The essays are based on presentations at a 2014 "Beyond the Culture War" conference at Washington University in St Louis.

As these are essays, there is no common thread running through the book, nor is there a clear formula as to how religion and politics can go beyond culture wars and heal divisions. But individual essays present some interesting facts.

Early in the previous century, there was a struggle as to who should lead Christian workers in their labour struggles: the workers themselves or

clergy arbiters.

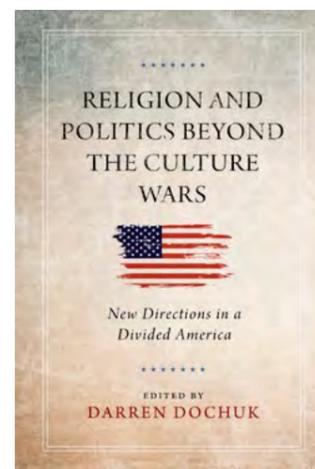
Catholics, Jews and some Protestants were favourable to immigration. Other Protestants were opposed, however, because it would open the door to more southern European Catholics in a country considered white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, now and forever.

One tantalising essay shows how the CIA recruited Catholic and Protestant missionaries on overseas assignments as spies.

But it commits an enormous historical error. It says that a CIA-aided Catholic movement helped replace Chilean Marxist President Salvador Allende with a Christian Democrat president. Allende was overthrown in 1973 by a military coup that inaugurated a brutal military regime headed by Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Perhaps the most interesting fact to emerge in the book is the difficulty in tagging people with preconceived political labels, even in divisive times. Many Catholics, especially priests and nuns, were actively engaged in Vietnam War protests, an activity considered politically liberal at the time.

Yet, they strongly opposed abor-



tion, considered a conservative view, but didn't align themselves with the anti-abortion Republican Party. Their reason for both positions was the same: opposition to the destruction of human life.

The book, while not offering solutions to today's dilemmas, indicates that we may learn some lessons about polarisation and culture wars by studying the past.

Agostino Bono is a retired CNS staff writer

We are here: ▼ Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time

THE CHURCH YEAR

Advent

Christmas

Ordinary Time

Lent

Eastertime

Ordinary Time

# Jesus declares himself to be heaven-sent for the sake of all nations

## Scripture

by Fr Kevin Waldie sm

To the fore in these readings is the role played by God's earthly agents, among whom the prophet who speaks for God is especially esteemed.

Jeremiah's focus is on the nature of his prophetic vocation. In some respects, his is a daunting task. And so he must have courage in the face of opposition from those to whom he must speak God's commands. But as these words make clear, God's choice of Jeremiah is accompanied by the assurance that God is always with him to empower and support his efforts, no matter what he may have to face.

When next we consider Paul's beautiful

words to the Corinthians, we hear him singing the praises of love, a love that is genuine and generous to all. Composed in a manner that is melodic and almost hymnic, they draw us in, to be in awe of the power of love that drives Paul's mission. By their nature, these words should inform the Church's work and presence worldwide. Love is, therefore, a big notion that we need to contemplate and make a reality in everything we do.

In Luke, we are made witnesses to the rejection of Jesus — the great prophet — by the Nazareth multitude. In parallel with Elijah and Elisha, two revered Old Testament prophets/

**January 30:** Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time. **Readings:**

**1.** Jeremiah 1:4-5,17-19; **Psalm:** 71; **2.** 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13; **Gospel:** Luke 4:21-30.

miracle-workers, Jesus declares himself to be heaven-sent for the sake of all nations. His saving power, though, will prove to be extraordinary in every sense. And although he escapes the crowd's rage, we know that, by the Gospel's end, he will have suffered, died and risen from the dead to truly benefit all humankind.

Clearly in focus today is the sweep of prophetic messages that have come down to us through biblical literature. But it is in Jesus that the ultimate power of God's words and action are made known to us.

## Opportunities for witnessing to the Good News arise daily

Today, Scripture reminds us of the special nature of the work to which God calls certain individuals. They are those commissioned for revealing God's will for us, as committed believers.

The detail within Isaiah's eight verses gives us a real sense of the spiritual experience the prophet had as preparation for his upcoming role. What he saw in this vision, therefore, readies him for the moment when he acknowledges, at its end, that it is his vocation to be sent to Israel with the holy message of God.

Paul's appreciation for his own vocation is brilliantly described in the passage from 1 Corinthians. In a similar vein to last week's text from

the same letter, Paul here expresses himself in a nicely-honed sequence of thoughts. He states that he is part of a tradition of handing on the Good News, so that it may be boldly proclaimed and transmitted to future generations. It is of note that his personal testimony to Christ forms part of a chain of transmission that sets out to bring the Good News to ever more believers.

The fishing scene in Luke highlights for us the mission Jesus initiates and establishes for those who will continue it into the future.

The degree of commitment the disciples are called to embrace is signalled in the Gospel text's final verses. For there, Jesus points to a change of vocation. Their normal work as

**February 6:** Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time. **Readings:**

**1.** Isaiah 6:1-8; **Psalm:** 138; **2.** 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; **Gospel:** Luke 5:1-11.

fishermen is to be relinquished in favour of the more pressing work of fishing for people. Their immediate response is to abandon their nets and follow Jesus.

As committed disciples, we ourselves cannot fail to see in Isaiah, Paul and Luke where exactly our own personal vocation will find public expression. Opportunities for witnessing to the Good News arise daily, and in a variety of circumstances.

## SAINTED GLASS



On February 2, we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of Our Lord. As required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took the infant Jesus up to Jerusalem so that an offering could be made for him as the first-born son.

This window in St Mary's, Timaru, shows the scene, complete with the two turtle-doves as the required offering for Mary's purification. The prophetess Anna, an old woman, praised God for the child. Simeon, an "upright and devout man", saw the child and declared he was "a light to enlighten the pagans".

What light does Jesus bring to your life?  
— Glen McCullough

## German Catholic bishop criticises delay in Synodal Way gender-neutral language debate

REGENSBURG, Germany (CNS) — Bishop Rudolf Voderholzer has criticised the Synodal Path in Germany for postponing a debate on gender-neutral language.

The German Catholic news agency KNA reported that, in an open letter to the Synodal Presidium published on January 11, the Regensburg bishop wrote that the debate on such language in the texts of resolutions should be discussed at the next Synodal Assembly, from February 3-5, as promised to the delegates at the last assembly in October, and also stated in the minutes.

With the planned postponement of the discussion to the fourth Synodal Assembly in the northern autumn, the presidium was "once again ignoring a wish of the members of the Synodal Assembly", Bishop Voderholzer wrote. "I protest against this procedure."

KNA reported that Bishop Voderholzer said the presidium had decided not to hold the debate until a text of the synodal discussion group on trans- and intersexual people was available in draft form. That justification was not "valid", the bishop said. The debate on gender-neutral language had been going on for years, and there was enough research on it, he said, so the debate should be held before the final adoption of texts.

In a news release accompanying Bishop Voderholzer's letter, the diocese of Regensburg said the issue should be addressed urgently because it went

beyond the writing style and readability of documents. Texts with the "gender star" — formed by placing an asterisk after the stem of a noun to denote that it refers to all genders, including nonbinary people — would also be "an unmistakable commitment to gender ideology, and thus a contradiction of biblically-based anthropology".

The German bishops' conference declined to comment, saying it never commented on open letters, KNA reported.

Bishop Voderholzer is considered one of the fiercest critics of the Synodal Path. Before the last Plenary Assembly, he launched his own website with counter-positions to the official texts of the Synodal Path.

The German Catholic Church has been struggling to regain its credibility and trust after a decade in which it was rocked by sexual abuse scandals, and saw Catholics in large numbers turn their backs on the Church. Bishops and laypeople launched the Synodal Path to discuss ways to lead the Church out of its crisis.

The vast majority is calling for far-reaching reforms, such as a change in sexual morality, more rights for women and laypeople, and greater control of power. However, the decisions of the Synodal Path have no binding legal force in the Church.

The 230-member Synodal Assembly is the supreme body of the Synodal Path project.

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# Local Diocese News

## 10 challenges to mark NPH 10 years in NZ



Hannah Macdonald looks forward to the skydive

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

This year marks the 10-year anniversary of NPH in New Zealand. NPH stands for Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos, Our Little Brothers and Sisters, which supports more than 6000 vulnerable children and families across nine countries.

This year NPH celebrates 10 years in this country, and NPH director Loren O'Sullivan is aiming to celebrate this with 10 challenges.

The first one is a skydive from 9000 feet, thanks to Auckland Skydiving.

Two supporters have pledged to jump on January 29. Jonathan Gabriel, treasurer on the NPH New Zealand board, said that "jumping out of a plane is not something I thought I'd

ever do, but when it comes to motivation — knowing it's assisting the kids in Latin America — I'm in!"

Carmel College student, Hannah Macdonald, 15, is not afraid to take a leap of faith. Her family has been sponsoring a girl from NPH Haiti for several years. The girl is now part of Haiti's national under-18 team.

"When I heard [about the] skydive," Hannah said, "I jumped at the chance to join them. I've always wanted to give it a go and I couldn't think of a better charity to support."

Other challenges proposed for later in the year include a walk from Long Bay to Devonport, a mid-winter swim, and eating a whole chili.

To join NPH on one of the challenges, or to support NPH through a donation, visit: [www.nph-nz.org/events](http://www.nph-nz.org/events)

## Bible study lockdown initiative in Beach Haven

by BEATE MATTHIES

"One, two, God loves you . . . one, two, three, God loves me!" This joyful song by Michael Mangan will be remembered by the Maria Assumpta Parish Youth as a lockdown-song.

When Auckland went into lockdown a few days after the solemnity of the Assumption of Mary, nobody expected that it would take four months until people could get back to parish communities and back to Mass.

Beate Matthies, parishioner of Maria Assumpta Parish, Beach Haven, and founder of Titipounamu Study and Joy, decided to offer online Bible studies for the young people in her parish.

Fortunately, since the 2020 lockdowns, many people had become familiar with online events and online studies. Together with the parish's youth convenor, Emma Ah-Kuoi, they organised a group of 8-15 chil-

dren, aged 7-16, who joined every Sunday at 1pm for one hour of Bible studies, stories and Liturgy of the Word for Children.

The content of the sessions was inspired by the resources for families, which was provided by Judith Courtney (Diocesan Liturgy Department, Auckland). This material was adapted to the needs and understanding of the specific group of young people, who were all of Tongan and Samoan background. Video-clips with songs by Michael Mangan were added, as were stories of saints and other relevant information.

Br Kieran Fenn, FMS, one of the main presenters of Titipounamu Study and Joy supported Ms Matthies in her online teaching and facilitating.

The young people started the sessions with the sign of the cross in English, Te Reo Māori, Samoan and Tongan. They learned that the Gospel is the Good News, and

that God loves each one of them. They were able to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan, and were fascinated by hearing about the origins of St Nicholas and Santa Claus.

The 2021 sessions ended with a knowledge quiz for the young people — and a little prize for everyone.

During Advent, the young people had been asked to create Christmas cards. The results were scanned and were sent to the presenter. A collection of these cards was then combined into a special Christmas card, and print outs were distributed to the children's families and the senior members of Maria Assumpta Parish.

Many parishioners have been back in church but, at the request of the participants, and with gratitude from parish priest Fr Aleki Piula, the online sessions for the parish youth will continue into 2022.



(Top) Br Kieran Fenn, FMS, and (above) Beate Matthies

## Rosminian's book launched in Southland

by PETER OWENS

Father Michael Hill, IC, has released his latest book on the impact of the Rosminian fathers, who generated a new enthusiasm among English Catholics in the 19th century.

This was shortly after the repeal of the Penal Laws and the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act. The launch of this third book, on the strong influence of members of the Institute of Charity on the fledgling and newly-legalised Catholic Church in England and Ireland, took place in the Gore Art Gallery on the evening of November 23.

About 40 people from Southland and Otago were welcomed by Katie O'Connor of northern Southland, who chaired the occasion and provided light refreshments for the attendees.

The book, titled *Angelo Maria Rinolfi, The Preacher*, which Fr Hill wrote and published, recounts the life in England and Ireland of Rosminian Angelo Maria Rinolfi, who, while being born and educated in northern Italy, became a renowned

preacher in English — at which he became very proficient. This was important because many of the continental priests sent by the authorities to assist in the evangelisation of England and Ireland were unskilled in the English language. There was also a centuries-old British suspicion of foreigners.

Fr Rinolfi was highly skilled as a preacher. This was important as the Rosminians had introduced the parish mission to England and Ireland. This was introduced because so many of the faithful were somewhat ignorant of the tenets of their ancestral faith. These missions had a strong emphasis on "the word of God". There was also a strong demand from many others, who were seeking a spiritual home away from the established Church of England and the various types of Methodism,

According to records held in England and Ireland, Fr Rinolfi preached about 200 parish missions all over those nations. He is credited with having converted thousands of people to the Faith, and was responsible again for similar numbers



Katie O'Connor (left) and Fr Michael Hill, IC, at the book launch

returning to the practice of their religion. This all took place over the 30 years he was based in the British Isles, and included 30 parish missions in Ireland.

Fr Angelo Maria Rinolfi founded no institutions: no schools, no new parishes, or other charitable works bear his name. His influence was purely via the spoken word.

40 YEARS AGO

NUNS SEEK NEW WAYS OF MERCY

New Zealand's Sisters of Mercy may introduce a freer exchange of nuns among their four congregations, so that they can better meet the Church's national needs.

This was the thrust of one of the recommendations brought forward at the end of the week-long assembly of 400 Sisters of Mercy at Silverstream earlier this month. There are about 600 nuns in the order's four New Zealand congregations.

The policy of interchanges, followed to a limited extent in the past, was affirmed in principle by the four superiors-general, and will be examined more closely by the Mercy Sisters' national federation.

A number of other recommendations and statements, made either from the assembly floor or in writing, will also be circulated and examined.

The Silverstream assembly was a follow-up to the international gathering of 133 representatives of the order in Dublin last year, marking the 150th anniversary of its founding by Catherine McAuley.

New Zealand's ten delegates to the Dublin meeting formed a panel for questions and discussion at Silverstream. The nuns saw a video report of the Dublin gathering, as well as other audio-visual presentations from New Zealand and other parts of the world.

They adopted a statement issued by the Dublin meeting, committing themselves anew to "search for ways to express God's mercy, by standing with the poor, reassessing our ministries, working to alleviate and eradicate poverty, injustice and oppression, in collaboration with all people of goodwill who make the Gospel live in today's world".

Speakers at the Mercy assembly included the apostolic pro-nuncio Archbishop Magnoni, Sister Carmel Bourke of Australia, Bishop Cullinane and Archbishop Williams, Capuchin Father Matthias Murphy, Marist provincial Father Frederick Bliss and Father Tom Curran of Holy Cross College, Mosgiel.

— *Zealandia*, January 24, 1982

CAPTION CONTEST



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Papal Prayer

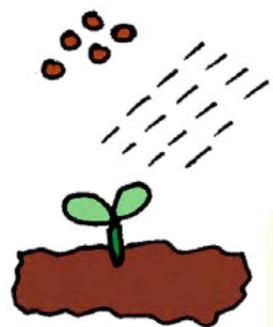
The Pope's January universal prayer intention: For true human fraternity.

We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution; may their own rights and dignity be recognised, which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human family.

Kit's Corner



It is back to **school** time again. Your **mind** will be very busy as you **learn** all sorts of new things. There will be computer skills to learn, maybe a different sport or new games, books to read, maths to do, countries to learn about, science and technology experiments. There will be places to go and people to meet and things to make. Your family, teachers, coaches and friends will **show you how**. If you make a mistake they will **help you**, and very soon you will know how to do the new thing **all by yourself**.



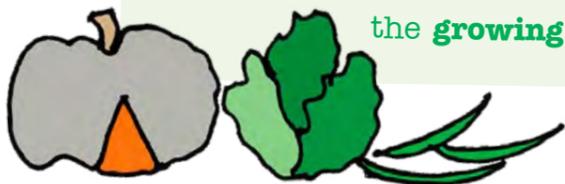
It is a bit like **planting a seed**, then **watering** it and **watching** it grow. A **little learning** seed gets planted in your **mind**. Someone waters it by showing you and helping you until you understand it all by yourself, just like a beautiful plant that pops out of the ground.



A little **learning seed** gets planted in your **heart** too. Your family, priests and parish people will **show you** what makes a good Christian person. They will **help you** to get good at being loving and helpful, kind and caring, going to church and saying your prayers. Then **you** can **show** someone else. It will be **your turn** to do the watering and watch the seed grow. Of course, **God** is **in charge** of the **growing**. It is like being **partners** in God's family.



Find the seed story in the Bible  
1 Corinthians 3:6-9



Can you learn this verse off by heart?  
1 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 9:  
"For we are partners working together for God."



Fr 'Otutaha and people after the Mass



Readers at the centennial plinth



Fr 'Otutaha celebrates Mass at Totara Point on January 9

# Small, committed crowd has memorable experience

◀ Continued from page 20

icon was modified, interrupted and re-scheduled a number of times; and the usually well-attended commemoration Mass at Totara Point was transformed to a local celebration only. However, the very special and expected manuhiri (guest): the Icon of Holy Mary, Mother of God, was there for the occasion!

A small but committed "crowd" of local parishioners (from Panguru, Motuti, Broadwood, and Pawarenga) with their parish priest, Fr Maliu 'Otutaha, gathered on the Sunday morning at the site of the first Mass celebrated at Totara Point by Bishop Pompallier 184 years ago, and welcomed the icon with a traditional karanga. The Mass which followed had a very distinctive wairua, and praying together the re-dedication prayer at that very place where Bishop Pompallier had first dedicated Aotearoa to Our Lady Assumed into

Heaven, in the presence of the same, yet always different awa (Hokianga waters), and with a caring and loving presence of Ko Hāta Maria, te Matua Wahine o te Atua (Holy Mary, Mother of God) became an indelible and extraordinary experience for all present. Mary, Mother of God, Assumed into Heaven, pray for us!

After a traditional — though also very minimalist — hospitality and kai, the icon was taken to the St Peter's church in Panguru, where it stayed for a few days. A special Mass was celebrated there on the exact anniversary day (January 13) before the artwork went on its way again, to communities and churches in Mitimiti, Pawarenga and Motukaraka, and then back to Auckland.

At the conclusion of the nationwide hiko in August this year, the artwork will be permanently housed at St Mary of the Angels in Wellington.

Wiga Autet is faith formation coordinator for Northland, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

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Fr Maliu 'Otutaha with the Marian icon at Totara Point

# Special 'visitor' at Totara Point

by WIGA AUTET

It is a long-standing tradition that people gather at Totara Point in Hokianga on a Sunday closest to January 13 to commemorate the anniversary of the first Mass celebrated there by Bishop Pompallier on January 13, 1838. It was during that service that Bishop Pompallier consecrated his mission in Aotearoa to Mary, under the title of Mary Mother of God Assumed into Heaven, and his vast Pacific vicariate to Mary under the title of the Immaculate Conception.

This year's commemoration of that very special Mass was meant to be particularly exceptional and

distinctive, as an extraordinary "visitor" was expected and awaited, the recently created icon: Ko Hāta Maria, te Matua Wahine o te Atua (Holy Mary, Mother of God). This artwork, created by New Zealand artist Damien Walker, had been commissioned last year by the Catholic Bishops of New Zealand, to mark and celebrate the re-dedication of this country to the care and protection of Our Lady Assumed into Heaven. The re-dedication and unveiling of the icon took place in Wellington on August 15, 2021. Since then, the icon has been travelling throughout Aotearoa as part of Te Hikoī Wairua mo Te Ara a Maria, visiting parishes, churches and Catholic schools in the

South and now, in the North Island.

Another extraordinary experience was also planned to take place at this time, to allow for a spiritual enrichment, in a form of a "4-day pilgrimage," Ngā Tapuwāe (Sacred Footsteps), offering visits to places in Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) that are significant for the faith. That pilgrimage would have concluded at Totara Point on January 9.

But things have not gone exactly to plan, because of Covid-19.

So some adjustments and changes were sadly necessary. The Sacred Footsteps pilgrimage had to be cancelled/postponed; the hikoī of the

► Continued on page 19

## WIT'S END

Some intergenerational humour. . . .

A grandmother was telling her little granddaughter what her own childhood was like: "We used to skate outside on a pond; I had a swing made from a tyre — it hung from a tree in our front yard. We rode our pony. We picked wild raspberries in the woods." The little girl was wide-eyed, taking this all in. At last, she said, "I sure wish I'd gotten to know you sooner!"

**Grandma:** My young grandson called the other day to wish me Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, 72. My grandson was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at 1?"

No cowboy was ever faster on the draw than a grandparent pulling a baby picture out of a wallet.

**In the February 13 issue:  
Word of God Sunday**



In Nepal, all young Maya wants is to go back to school. Her father passed away from TB and her house was destroyed by floods. To make matters worse, Maya then contracted leprosy. She was forced to quit school and faced awful discrimination. But there is hope for Maya.

Through The Leprosy Mission hospital in Anandaban, she is receiving a treatment that will cure her of this crippling disease. Every day 50 children around the world contract leprosy. You can help make it Zero by donating to The Leprosy Mission today.

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# US March for Life



Tens of thousands walk up Constitution Avenue headed toward the US Supreme Court while participating in the 49th annual March for Life on January 18 in Washington, DC (CNS Photos)



Above: People carry a banner past the US Supreme Court building

Right: Young pro-life advocates pray outside the US Supreme Court while participating in the 49th annual March for Life on January 18

