

# WelCom

Newsletter of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand

## New Archdiocese website launches

### Say hello to cadw.nz

The Archdiocese of Wellington has a new website.

Designed in cooperation with Dartworks, the new *cadw.nz* address still has all the important information from the old website, such as Mass times, information about our parishes and schools, and other activities of the Archdiocese. You'll also find news about what's happening in parishes across our Archdiocese, history and more.

There's also a section on the important work Catholic Social Services does serving the community – this formerly was a separate website, but now redirects to the new Archdiocese website.

You can also find information about vocations and discernment

for religious life, including the priesthood. This, too, used to be a separate website.

An important part of the new website is it's a website where you can do things. From finding Mass times, paying school fees, exploring resources to learn more about our Catholic faith, how we work to promote peace in our communities and more, there's something for everyone.

The new website is meant to be easier to navigate, more accessible and simpler to understand. The design is also softer, with an emphasis on being welcoming and inclusive.

The old Archdiocese website will automatically redirect to this new one.

Happy browsing!



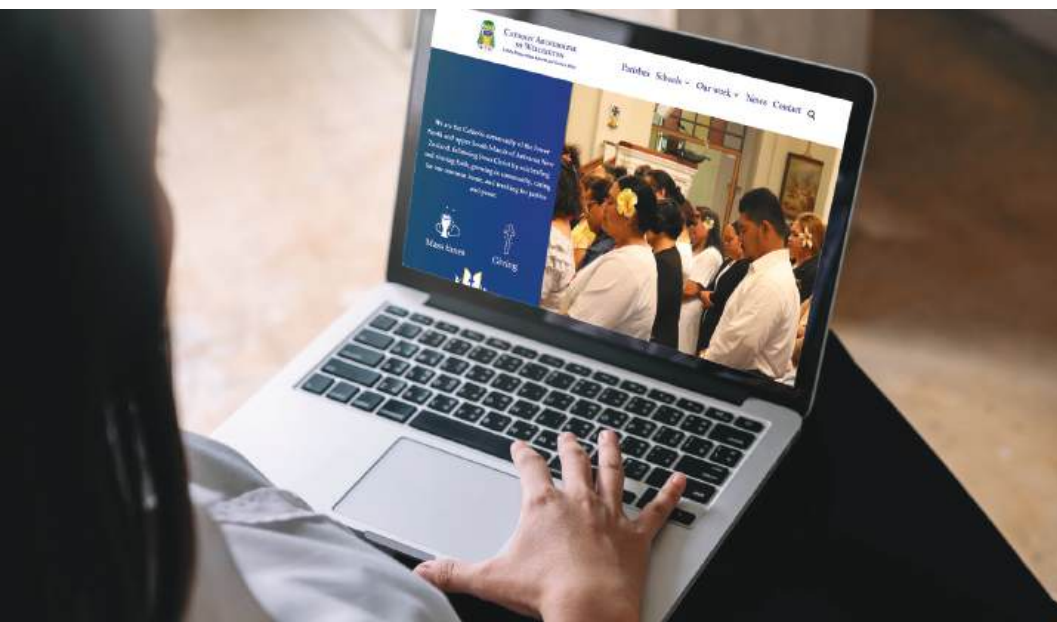
## New award for Sacred Heart restoration

The restoration project at Sacred Heart Cathedral has won another award.

The restoration work by TEAM Architects Wellington and Paul Cummack Conservation Architect won the Resene Total Colour Master Nightingale Award at the recent 16th annual Resene Total Colour Awards.

The award – named after the Nightingale family who founded and still run Resene today – is the latest accolade for the six-year journey to restore the Cathedral. A particularly striking example of the use of colour in the Cathedral is the ceiling. White moulding is complemented by blue that's evocative of the sky.

The restoration work also won the Resene Heritage Tone-e Award.



# WelCom

*Have an event coming up in your parish? Something you're proud of, or would like to get the word out about? Need volunteers or help with something?*

Please let us know! Info can be sent to [b.mack@cadw.nz](mailto:b.mack@cadw.nz)

We look forward to hearing from you!



## From Archbishop Paul

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

Recently I was a guest at the assembly of Marian College in Christchurch. I was interviewed by a panel of pupils who asked a mix of questions which the girls had submitted. One of them was what I thought about the interaction between Pope Leo and Donald Trump.

I have been struck by the way that the Pope has conducted himself, while presenting the truth of the situation regarding the war with Iran. His words have been hard-hitting but, as I said to the girls, he has been dealing with the issue, not attacking the person. It would be fair to say that has not been the response of the president to the situation.

I think that this has been a good example to us in terms of our dealings with one another. So often discussion about an event or issue quickly becomes a personal attack. We see it in our society and sadly we have seen it in our Church community as well.

We seem to be losing the ability to listen without attacking the other. It does not augur well for good community life and social cohesion. It also shows a lack of charity in terms of loving our brothers and sisters and treating one another with respect. I encourage all of us to reflect on this as we face upcoming political elections in our country and as we deal with the rapidly changing world in which we find ourselves.

When the Synod on Synodality concluded in October 2024, Pope Francis reminded us that this moment marked not an ending, but a beginning – that, in fact, the Synod's Final Document "now needs its shared words to be accompanied by actions".

A month later, he inaugurated the Implementation Phase, calling the whole Church to move from discernment to lived practice. This work was taken up and reaffirmed by Pope Leo at the beginning of his pontificate, making it clear that synodality is not a passing initiative, but an enduring way of being Church.

In this Implementation Phase, which will culminate in an Evaluation Assembly in 2027, we have been asked to examine the practices and structures of our local Church so that synodality becomes embedded in our governance and pastoral life. To support this work, I have established a Synodal Team, made up of members who have received appropriate formation in synodal practices.

Their task is to promote and facilitate the growth of synodal approaches across the Archdiocese, working both at diocesan and parish levels. I encourage all of us – clergy and lay faithful – to engage openly with this process, so that habits of listening, shared discernment and co-responsibility may deepen as we continue to walk together in faith.

I have asked the parishes of Te Awakairangi and Te Wairua Tapu to begin a discernment process regarding becoming one parish for the Lower Hutt Valley. As part of this I have asked that they look to close the churches in Waiwhetu and Eastbourne so that the new parish would have five churches within it.

These processes are never easy and there is significant pain in trying to work through what is best for the future and also farewelling churches and faith communities we have loved and cherished. We do have to be courageous in faith and ask some important questions: What is the Holy Spirit asking of us now? What are the financial realities that we need to face in order to maintain our faith communities? How might a larger parish enable more opportunities for faith experiences?

It also asks what are we doing in our parishes to create smaller groupings to support one another. Sunday Mass is not enough to support and grow our faith and community life. Please pray for our brothers and sisters in these two parishes as they go through this discernment process.

Nga mihi nui

+ Paul Martin SM  
Archbishop of Wellington

# Welcoming our newest parish: St John Paul II

It was a blessed day at the Garin College gym in Nelson on Sunday, April 19. The occasion was the inaugural Mass for our newest parish: St John Paul II Parish.

Celebrated by Archbishop Paul, the gym was packed for the Mass, which also highlighted the diversity of the new parish as a place where everyone is welcome.

The new parish covers Nelson and Tasman Catholic churches. It merges the Holy Family Nelson-Stoke and Our Lady of the Bays parishes.

Please pray for the new parish and parishioners as this new era begins.



Photography: Gio Vinluan



# Catholic Directory edition for 2026 published

The 2026 edition of the New Zealand Catholic Directory has been published, supporting collaboration between those working in Church ministries throughout the country.

For decades, the Catholic Directory has served as the comprehensive record of people and organisations of the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand. It lists all official Church ministries and groups.

New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference executive director Damian Dempsey said with dozens of Catholic entities contributing to the Church's wider mission, it is valuable to collate their information in one place.

"People are called to support the Church in a wide variety of ways, including dioceses, parishes,

schools, social service agencies and chaplaincies, among many others," Mr Dempsey said.

"While it is not the Directory's purpose, this publication helps demonstrate just how widely the Church and her people reach into the life of New Zealand communities, from our largest cities to remote towns and villages."

Hard copies of the Catholic Directory can be purchased for \$40, including GST and postage. They can be ordered by emailing [directory@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:directory@nzcbc.org.nz)

There is also an online version of the Catholic Directory. The annual online subscription costs \$22 plus GST and can be activated at <https://directory.catholic.org.nz/>



## Bishop Lowe elected to second term as NZCBC president

Auckland Bishop Steve Lowe was elected to a second term as president of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference in Hamilton in late April, during the NZCBC's quarterly meeting.

The president and vice-president of the NZCBC are appointed to three-year terms. Bishop Michael Dooley of Dunedin was elected to a second term as vice-president, with Archbishop Paul Martin SM

reappointed as the Conference's general secretary.

Bishop Lowe said the New Zealand bishops work very collaboratively, which is a source of comfort for him as president.

"There are some tasks that I am required to undertake as president of the Conference, but I am grateful for the constant support that my brother bishops offer in our shared ministry of leadership," he said.

One of the NZCBC's four meetings each year is hosted on a rotating basis between Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Christchurch and Dunedin.

During the recent meeting, Hamilton Bishop Richard Laurenson blessed a new statue of the diocese's patron, St Peter Chanel, on his feast day of April 28. It was placed within the courtyard of the new diocesan offices, adjacent to the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Bishop Lowe said the NZCBC meeting examined some key issues for the Church in New Zealand, including the recent increase in people becoming Catholic, the work of key national agencies and initiatives to engage with the wider community.

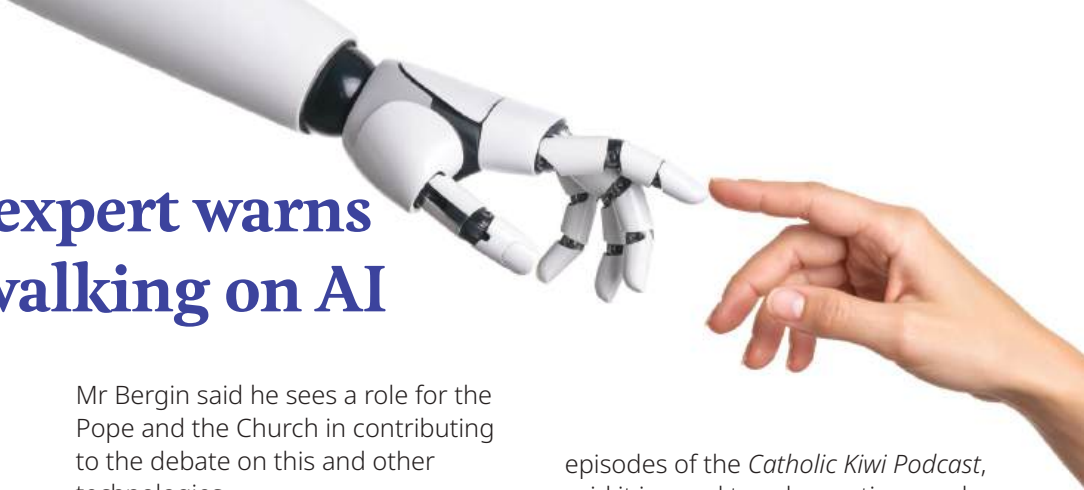
"Each meeting of the Bishops Conference provides us a chance to assess how the mission of the Church is being carried out through our country, and that is a source of joy and pride," he said.

"But we also look at ways in which we can better serve our people – laity, priests and consecrated – and contribute to the national debate."



The New Zealand bishops, with Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Gábor Pintér, at the blessing of the new statue of St Peter Chanel at Hamilton's new diocesan offices. (Kirsty Muir photo)

# Catholic tech expert warns against sleepwalking on AI



As artificial intelligence becomes more prevalent, a leading Kiwi Catholic expert on technology says people shouldn't assume they are helpless, but should try to contribute to debate about using AI for the greater good.

In the latest episode of the *Catholic Kiwi Podcast*, self-described "broad technologist" James Bergin acknowledged people's fears and concerns in this area.

Asked by host Joanna Kearney for a simple definition of AI, Mr Bergin said it is the ability for computers or machines to mimic human intelligence, "and it is important to focus on the word 'mimic'", he said.

"I think because of the expert mimic behaviour that they can present, there are some particular challenges associated with this technology," Mr Bergin said.

"Pretty much for the first time that I can recall, we now have technology coming and meeting us in our language and in our domain, whereas historically it has been us meeting the computers in their domain . . . using things like a mouse, icons and a keyboard.

"Now we have machines able to talk to us with human language. Human language is imprecise and messy and creative and fascinating – all those aspects need to be factored in when we think about how we deploy these technologies."

Mr Bergin said he sees a role for the Pope and the Church in contributing to the debate on this and other technologies.

"Who is helping me figure out what a moral or good or right use of this technology is, in addition to an efficient and productive application that is going to help with business?" he asked.

*"I worry about us just stumbling into the future... That is not what I think we are called to do."*

"I think the Popes have a role to play in that, the Church has a role to play in that, and the Church is us, it is not just the magisterium, it is also us, and how we can help each other inside the Church, but also our friends and family who aren't in the Church. I'm not saying become a preacher and tell them how it should be done, but leave space for the conversation. What can we do to try to shape a future we prefer?"

But Mr Bergin said he has concerns about society "sleepwalking" in this area.

"I worry about us just stumbling into the future, and it will be whatever it will be. That is not what I think we are called to do as people made in the image of God. I think what we are called to do is try to shape the future."

Mr Bergin, who has also hosted

episodes of the *Catholic Kiwi Podcast*, said it is good to ask questions and also "to sit in the discomfort of not knowing".

"It is not a matter of knowing all the things, but it is a matter of connecting with others and exploring what might be possible," he said.



Among other topics discussed in the podcast were the use of technology by the Church, human creativity, beauty, art and the need to have "humans in the loop" of technology application.

Find the podcast by searching "Catholic Kiwi Podcast" on YouTube or Spotify.



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# Archdiocese to celebrate Flores de Mayo

by Maru Bautista-Juanta, Maria Evita Docdocil and Michelle Angeles

Flores de Mayo or Santacruzán, a devotion to the Mother of God, is a cultural tradition in the Philippines that invites people to gather together with the Blessed Virgin Mary towards Jesus Christ.

The Filipino saying “Pagkahaba-haba man ng prusisyon, sa simbahan din ang tuloy” means that no matter how long the procession may be, it always leads back to the church, where people gather to celebrate the Holy Mass. This saying also serves as a metaphor for our own homecoming, inviting us to encounter and accompany others on our life’s journey towards God.

The devotion is held in May in the Philippines, and is a month-long celebration. May is when flowers bloom abundantly, allowing appreciation of the beauty of God’s generosity and providence. We offer flowers to the Mother of God, which is why the devotion is called Flores de Mayo. On the final day, a ritual pageant called the Santacruzán is held. Santacruzán is the Spanish word for “Holy Cross”.

In 2024, the Holy Spirit Parish-Te Wairua Tapu held its first Flores De Mayo/Santacruzán celebration. It was organised



by the Filipino coordinators of the parish – Maru Bautista-Juanta, Michelle Angeles and Maryanne Jacobs – under the spiritual guidance of Fr Marlon Maylon SVD. In 2025, the celebration continued under their coordination.

This year continues the tradition, and is organised together with the Filipino Community Council and Archdiocese of Wellington. It will be held on May 30 at the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, beginning with Rosary at 10am, followed by Mass at 10.30 am, at which Archbishop Paul will preside.

As Catholics, we remember the words Jesus spoke from the Holy Cross, recorded in John’s Gospel: “When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother ‘Woman, behold your son,’. Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.”

We remember Mother Mary’s instruction: “Do whatever He tells you” (John 2:5) during the miracle at Cana, when Jesus turned water into wine. She gives clear instructions for all of us to do what Jesus taught us. We are to follow Jesus’ teachings, and one of those is to accept His mother as our mother, bringing her with us on our journey home.



## 150th Anniversary

### FATHER ANTOINE HALBWACHS, SM

**First catholic resident priest in the Wairarapa**

You are cordially invited to the celebrations commemorating Fr Antoine Halbwach’s appointment as the first official Catholic priest in the Wairarapa Valley.

**Heritage and Horizon**  
180 Years of Wairarapa Catholic History  
a book by Claire Hills.

Please email Claire to express your interest in obtaining a copy at [clairehillsnz@gmail.com](mailto:clairehillsnz@gmail.com)

**20 JUNE**  
SATURDAY  
**07 - 11**  
PM PM  
Parish Socials  
and Dance

**21 JUNE**  
SUNDAY  
**10 - 03**  
AM PM  
ANNIVERSARY MASS  
BOOK LAUNCH  
LUNCH  
CONCERTS

**CPW**

Chanel College  
Gymnasium and Hall

☎ 027 225 6722
🌐 HELEN MORGAN
✉ [helenm808@gmail.com](mailto:helenm808@gmail.com)

# Celebrating faith and love: Couples for Christ wedding in Blenheim

by Johnny Montalan, Star of the Sea Parish

On February 14, faith, family, and community came together in Blenheim for a wedding celebration. Organised and sponsored by Couples for Christ (CFC), the event was a testimony of love, commitment and renewal of faith within the local Catholic community.

At the wedding, held fittingly on Valentine's Day, most of the couples had already been legally married. But they chose to receive the sacrament of marriage in the Catholic Church.

Among the participants, four couples were previously married through civil marriage, while my wife and I had gone through separation previously. Our decision to receive the sacrament in the Church showed a deep desire to restore and strengthen our relationship with God and to live according to the teachings of the Catholic faith.

The ceremony was officiated by Fr Sony Kannanaikal CP, who reminded attendees that marriage in the Church is also a covenant with God.

Couples for Christ in Blenheim began in 2021. Since then, it has grown into a place where families support one another and where couples are encouraged to live Christ-centred lives.

The wedding was a deeply emotional and spiritual experience. Although all of us had already shared years together, standing before the altar and receiving the sacrament brought a renewed sense of purpose and grace to our relationship.



Many expressed feelings of gratitude and joy as we exchanged vows in the presence of God, our families, and the community. For us, it was not a simple ceremony; it was the fulfilment of a long-awaited dream to have our union blessed in the Church.

More than just a ceremony, the event reminded the community that marriage is a sacred vocation – one that flourishes when nurtured by faith, love and the support of a caring community.

As we begin this new chapter of our lives, our journey stands as an inspiration to others in Blenheim, showing that with faith in God and support from the community, love can grow stronger and families can become living witnesses of God's grace.

## Catholic Foundation scholarship recipients

The Catholic Foundation of the Archdiocese of Wellington is proud to announce the recipients of their scholarships for the 2026 Tertiary year. We wish them well in their studies.

Each scholarship is valued at \$4,000, with \$2,000 payable in the first

and second year of tertiary study, subject to achieving a pass rate.

For further information on the scholarship, visit [catholicfoundation.org.nz](https://catholicfoundation.org.nz)



Joseph Alipia  
Marlborough  
Boys' College



Helena Basile  
St Catherine's  
College



Joseph Falaniko  
St Bernard's  
College



Carmel Fernandes  
St Mary's College



Louis Ludham  
Kapiti College



Kate Rankin  
Garin College



Nadya Shelton  
St Catherine's  
College



## Living Wage Movement Aotearoa New Zealand

by Deirdre Meskill, Catholic Social Services

St Mary of the Angels Parish and the Catholic Parish of Ōtari have recently joined the Living Wage Movement as part of their living out of Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching.

To start the year, they have held Living Wage Cities Table Talks with the vision of making Greater Wellington the first Living Wage City in Aotearoa. Stories shared have centred on the growing inequality that has emerged in society. These Table Talks are leading into a Living Wage Cities Assembly on May 27 at Loaves and Fishes, with arrival from 6pm for a 6.30pm start.

The Living Wage Movement Aotearoa New Zealand was formed in 2012 to address working poverty impacting New Zealand workers, their families and the economy. The values of the movement align with *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical that laid the foundation for Catholic Social Teaching and with principles of respect for the dignity of work and a just and fair wage for all workers. The Archdiocese Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission joined the Movement in 2022.

The Movement brings together community, secular, union and faith-based groups to campaign for a living wage. It calls on the government, employers and society to strive for a living wage for all households as a necessary and important step in reducing poverty in New Zealand.

In September 2026, the living wage will increase from \$28.95 to an hourly rate of \$29.90. This is \$6 more than the minimum wage of \$23.95.

The living wage is defined as the income necessary to provide workers and their families with the basic necessities of life, enabling workers to live with dignity and to participate as active citizens in society. It is independently calculated annually by the Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit.

For more information on the Living Wage Movement or holding a Table Talk, contact: [info@livingwage.org.nz](mailto:info@livingwage.org.nz)

## EJP publishes paper on Palestine

The Archdiocese Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission has released a position paper on Palestine. Among the points the Commission makes in the paper is supporting Aotearoa New Zealand recognising Palestine as a state.

"We consider that even though the form of a Palestinian state (institutions, political system, etc.) has yet to be defined by its people, this recognition will enable more just treatment of the Palestinian people and more accountability by all involved," the paper states.

"The ultimate goal is not only a Palestinian state but a just and lasting peace and equality for all who dwell in the Holy Land."

Let us pray for lasting peace in the Holy Land, and around the world.

You can read the paper at <https://bit.ly/EJPPalestine>



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