WelCom
Newsletter of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand
ISSUE 16 - November 2026



World Mission Sunday 2026 celebrated

Songs and prayers in many Pacific languages filled Sacred Heart Cathedral on a warm Wellington spring evening on October 18 for the Mission Sunday Caritas Oceania Forum Mass.

The church was full for the 7pm Mass. As the service progressed, the pastel-toned sunset outside made the cathedral's windows glow pink, purple, blue and gold.



Joining Archbishop Paul at the Mass were the Caritas Oceania representatives, Bishop Richard Laurenson from the Diocese of Hamilton, Cardinal Soana Mafi of Tonga, Archbishop Peter Loy Chong of Fiji, Bishop Justin Ain Soongie of Papua New Guinea, Cardinal John, and Msgr Tomasz Gdula, Deputy Head of Mission and Secretary at the Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See, along with Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand CEO Mena Antonio.

Songs and prayers were in Te Reo, Samoan, Tonga, Fijian, Hiri Motu (from Papua New Guinea) and English.

In delivering his homily, Archbishop Paul spoke of how every person belongs to God and how people from different backgrounds can work together in genuine communion.

"Mission begins with our relationship with Jesus Christ," he said.

He also spoke of the importance of recognising and respecting our shared humanity, saying "Every human person bears the dignity of being created in the image of God".

World Mission Sunday is a day set aside by the Catholic Church to publicly renew a commitment to missionary movements. It is celebrated every year on the second-to-last Sunday of October

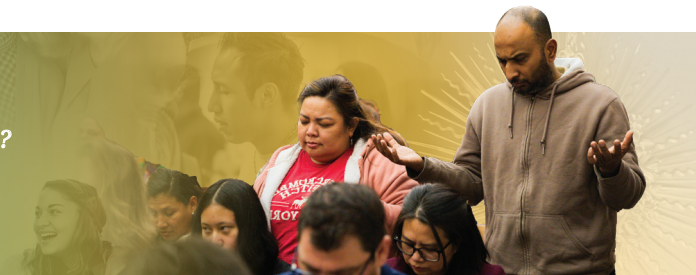
This year held extra significance, as the Catholic Church celebrated the first World Mission Sunday in 1926.

A special collection was also held to support missionary movements around the world while a video message from Pope Leo was played.

"Every human person bears the dignity of being created in the image of God."

WelCom *Something happening in your parish? An event, celebration or call for volunteers?*

Please let us know! Info can be sent to b.mack@cadw.nz
We look forward to hearing from you!





From Archbishop Paul

Tena koutou katoa

Very soon we begin the season of Advent. It seems strange to be celebrating the beginning of the Church's year when we are heading towards the end of the year! In the Southern Hemisphere we are heading into summer, whereas in the North they are heading into winter. Their days are getting shorter and darker; ours are getting longer and hotter.

Having had the experience of living in the Northern Hemisphere, there is something about the weather and the rhythm of the seasons that makes Advent more focused. People tend to head home to their warm houses and the short days mean that there is not the same sort of activity going on. For us, however, we are having our end-of-year parties, work dos, school break-ups, frantic Christmas shopping and plans for the long holidays to which we are looking forward.

Yet, in these coming four weeks, if we make the time, we can really benefit from this holy season. When we take the readings for Mass for each of the days of Advent, we see the pattern of preparing for the birth of Our Lord. We see the promises in the Old Testament of God to his people that he will send the Messiah. We see Jesus' ministry – healing people, bringing the truth that sets people free, encouraging his disciples to spread the Good News. As Advent progresses, we hear of how the birth took place and all involved in it. Finally, we reach the birth of Jesus at the end of Advent.

Advent is a key time for us to reflect and prepare. We have many ways of being able to do this in our religious tradition. We can gather for Mass each day and be fed by the Word and the Eucharist. We can make time to read the daily Scriptures and reflect on what God is saying to us in this time of waiting. We are encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, to receive the grace of God's forgiveness so that our hearts will be ready for Christmas.

The Filipino community have brought their tradition of the nine days of Masses before Christmas to our parishes. Those of us who bought the reflections last year for Advent, coordinated by Fr James Lyons, can use them again this year.

My challenge to you, and myself, is to make the most of this Advent season. Get up early and spend some time reading the Scriptures by yourself or spend time in prayer asking God's grace for this Christmas season. Families can use the Advent calendar (minus chocolate!) to be a focus and have a little time of prayer when it is opened. Perhaps, too, you can see how to help those who are in need in the community, either with financial support or doing something extra for those around you.

Whatever it is, decide to do something, and then do it. It gives God a chance to speak to us, and for the Holy Spirit to inflame our hearts as we ponder again the mystery of God coming to us in his Son, Jesus Christ.

May this Advent be a graced time for us all and, through us, may others come to know the power of Christ among us.

Yours in Christ

+ P. G. Martin

Tuākana 2027 applications now open

Applications for Tuākana 2027 – a 20-hour paid youth ministry opportunity for young adults aged 18 to 24 – are now open.

Tuākana will journey alongside college students, leading faith activities, retreats and community-building experiences. As a member of the Archdiocese of Wellington's Young Church Ministry team, you will work closely with the director of religious studies and the principal to foster growth and connection.

SCAN ME!

This is a great chance to develop your leadership skills, gain valuable ministry experience and become part of something truly inspiring.

Applications close on Friday, December 18. For more info, contact Susilo Kentjana at *s.kentjana@cadw.nz*



"Being a Tuākana is a wonderful opportunity to inspire students to influence their peers positively."

Adrian Argete – Chanel College

"The Tuākana role is special because it helps young people feel they belong."

Semanaia Agafili – St Patrick's College Town



Chanel College celebrates milestone for Marist Brothers in New Zealand

By Kōka Pepe, Director of Religious Studies

Chanel College in Masterton marked 150 years of Marist mission in Aotearoa New Zealand with a whole-school Mass on October 30 celebrated by Fr Matt White. Parishioners Br Martin Pattison and Br Chris Maney joined students and staff to celebrate the college's Catholic education story and the communities that have shaped it.

In his homily, Fr Matt invited students to imagine the challenges faced by the first Marist Brothers when they arrived in New Zealand in 1876. They had travelled from France with few resources, trusting that faith and education could make a difference in the lives of young people.



Fr Matt traced the story of Catholic education in Masterton from the founding of St Joseph's College for boys in 1945 to the formation of Chanel College in 1978. Chanel also carries the Brigidine legacy of St Bride's. The Marist and Brigidine traditions came together in one college community under the patronage of St Peter Chanel and continue to shape the school's special character.

The Marist heritage was brought into the present through a student voice video. Students reflected on how they live the Marist mission at Chanel, alongside a tribute to the missionaries, teachers, families and brothers who helped shape the character and heritage of the College.

After Mass, Fr Matt blessed the trees for planting and the stream marker, Te Kuripuni. Brs Martin and Chris then planted five native trees beside the stream. The kōwhai, whauwhaupaku (five finger) and coprosma represented the five characteristics of Marist spirituality. The planting put the values of service and care for creation into action, continuing a kaupapa inspired by the Ruamahanga Restoration Trust and its work with schools, encouraging environmental care in the community. The anniversary was also marked with a whole-school "150" photograph and morning tea.



The celebration was an opportunity to give thanks for the generations who have contributed to Catholic education in Masterton and carried the Marist mission in Aotearoa. At Chanel, the Marist and Brigidine heritage remains part of the life of the College, reflected in the welcome, service and care shown to others and to creation.

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Intentional liturgy depth the answer to rote action: Expert

A temptation in a ritual-based Church is to go through the motions and say the words, but full, active and conscious participation in the liturgy done in an interior and exterior way is very beautiful, said a US liturgist visiting Aotearoa New Zealand.

Fr Paul Turner from the Diocese of Kansas City-St Joseph in Missouri spoke with host James Bergin in the latest episode of the Catholic Kiwi Podcast during the priest's recent New Zealand tour.

Asked about the idea of "full, active and conscious participation" in the liturgy, Fr Turner said "one of the key words I try to impress on people is 'intentionality'".

"It's especially a temptation in a ritual-based Church like ours to just say the words, just do the actions, go through the motions and say we've done it. But to enter inside them with intentionality is something really very beautiful.

"One of my professors in college seminary used to say, 'what you do daily you do dully, unless you do it deeply'. And his point was you can get deeper and deeper inside a ritual if you let it come forward.

"So I think full, conscious, active participation is something that we can do interiorly and exteriorly, something we make more and more our own through a conscious reflection on the words and actions of worship, but also by participating, singing, responding to the dialogues and taking part in the fullness of Catholic worship."

Fr Turner, a consultant to the Vatican and several international groups, said that "when a community is singing well or responding well, you can just kind of read the attentiveness, the intentionality of the people and the other ministers. And it really is a beautiful thing".

He stressed the importance of attentiveness when people are addressing God in the liturgy.

Fr Turner, who has been a priest for 47 years, expressed his encouragement for parents of children at Mass.

"...[I]f parents are taking care of children, it's a different kind of participation. They are helping us, the rest of us participate and they're training their children for the future."



> *"What you do daily you do dully, unless you do it deeply."*

Among the topics discussed in the podcast were the many biblical allusions in prayers at Mass, the deep meaning of the private prayers said by priests in the liturgy, Gregorian chant, polarisation in culture and in the Church, and the work of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, with a lot of work being done recently on the Liturgy of the Hours.

Fr Turner addressed complaints about the liturgy, as well as the flexibility the Church offers, even in daily Masses.

"There's more flexibility [and] choices than people may realise. We do need to take advantage of those to add the proper variety to the Mass and let people experience the many options that are there."

Fr Turner also spoke about being a server at Masses before and during the Second Vatican Council, and about how his love for the liturgy developed at a very early age, as did his sense of a vocation.

"My own story was one of excitement and faithfulness within the Church," he said.

Fr Turner also reflected on his ministry as a parish priest and working at a cathedral, as well as serving in prison ministry and among multicultural communities and in supporting the homeless.



CathNews
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Content on this spread provided by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

Mass attendance grew 8 per cent in 2025

The number of Mass attendees in New Zealand grew by more than 8 per cent between 2024 and 2025, according to data collected by the country's six Catholic dioceses.

Christchurch Diocese saw the greatest increase in that period, with the Mass count rising from 10,711 to 12,594 – an increase of 17.6 per cent.

Auckland Diocese, which has about 48 per cent of the country's practising Catholics, saw an 8 per cent increase, while Dunedin Diocese saw 11.9 per cent more people in the pews regularly.

The dioceses of Palmerston North (7.6 per cent) and Hamilton (6.9 per cent) also saw significant jumps, while the Archdiocese of Wellington's Mass count remained steady.

Bishop Michael Gielen of Christchurch said he has seen two significant factors driving the large increase in Mass attendance in his diocese, which covers all of Canterbury and Westland.

"As the population of the greater Christchurch area continues to increase, we see the number of Catholics, including from some countries and regions with strong Catholic roots, growing quickly," he said.

"But we're also mindful of the increasing number of people who have chosen to become Catholic, including as adults, across our diocese and around much of the western world. Many people are also returning to the Church of their childhood. That is a source of much joy."

Auckland Bishop Steve Lowe, who is also president of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, said the statistics present a tangible measure of the sense many Catholics are feeling.

"This emergence of an interest in faith generally, and in Catholicism specifically, runs counter to the narrative of a dwindling Church," he said.

"Statistical variances can often be attributed to a number of factors. That said, these numbers seem to suggest that the ancient message of the Gospel, presented through the lens of our contemporary Catholic thought, is resonating with people."

Data from recent years suggests it took until 2023 for Mass counts to return to pre-COVID levels (adjusted for population growth). In the two years since, Mass counts grew from 80,618 in 2023 to 90,462 last year – an increase of 12.2 per cent.



"Many people are also returning to the Church of their childhood. That is a source of much joy."

Catholic Enquiry Centre asks parishes for initiation data

The Catholic Enquiry Centre is taking steps to gather a clearer picture of those being initiated into the Catholic Church throughout New Zealand.

Parishes were recently asked to report the number of catechumens and candidates in recent years, including their age groups, so that trends can be identified and a better understanding gained as to who is coming into the Church.

This information is also contributing to a wider international picture being gathered by the Dicastery for Evangelisation.

CEC director Carly Mulqueen said "we're working alongside parishes and others across the Church to better understand what is happening, to equip people to accompany those who are searching and to help ensure there is a welcoming pathway when someone takes that first step".

"Every day at the Catholic Enquiry Centre we hear from people across New Zealand who are asking life's biggest questions," Mrs Mulqueen said.

"Some are searching for purpose. Others are returning to the faith they left years ago. Some have never stepped inside a Catholic church before but are curious about Jesus, prayer or what Catholics actually believe.

"One thing has become increasingly clear: God is moving. By the end of June, we had received more than double the enquiries of the first half of last year."

The CEC has noted that, across many nations, particularly among Generation Z, people are approaching Christianity with fresh curiosity and fewer preconceptions.

It was noted that behind every enquiry is a person – someone searching, questioning, perhaps sensing for the first time that God is drawing them closer.

"By the end of June, we had received more than double the enquiries of the first half of last year."

Catholic Enquiry Centre
Tūhuratanga Katorika
catholicdiscovery.nz

Giving thanks for the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity

It was an emotional day on October 17 as the Porirua community said farewell to the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity at Holy Family Church.

Archbishop Paul celebrated the Mass of thanksgiving, with Cardinal John among the concelebrants and well-wishers.

The Missionaries of Charity had been discerning where God is calling them to be and what are the needs of the poor. As a result, the Sisters have decided to open a new house in East Timor and to finish their ministry in Wellington and in two communities in Australia.

We thank the Sisters for their years of tireless service in our community, and pray for them on the next steps of their ministry.



Photo credit: Angelina Polutea

A tribute to the Sisters from a student at Holy Family School

Thank you for all the years you have served our school and parish. Thank you for teaching us about Jesus and our Catholic faith, and for coming into our classroom and teaching us religious education. I am also grateful for the way you helped us prepare for the sacraments and taught us how to pray and understand God's love.

Thank you for all the wonderful lessons, stories and prayers you have shared with us. You have always shown kindness, patience and care towards our students and teachers.

A special memory I have is when you helped me during a difficult time. Your kind words, support and encouragement meant a lot to me, and I will always be grateful for the way you cared for me. You also helped me become better at things that I found difficult, and I really appreciate that.

One important thing I have learned from Sr M. Hannahri is the importance of being kind, patient and caring towards others. You taught me that even small acts of kindness can make a big difference. The sisters have also taught me to show love, kindness and patience to everyone and to help people whenever I can.

Your teaching has helped me grow in my faith. You taught me to pray, trust in God and follow Jesus' example of love and kindness. Your guidance has helped me become a better person and has made my faith stronger.

As you move on to your new journey, I hope you continue to inspire and encourage everyone you meet. May God bless you with happiness, peace and strength wherever your journey takes you.

I will always remember your kindness, guidance and encouragement. Please know that I will always remember you and the sisters in my prayers. I will ask God to bless you, guide you and keep you safe and happy.

Thank you, Sr M. Hannahri and Sr M. Mediatrix, for everything you have done for us. I am very grateful for all the love and care you have shown our school and me.

God bless you always.

With love and gratitude,

Henry
Wharenui Class – Room 4



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Archdiocese of Wellington

Saying farewell to St Pius X School

It was an emotional day on October 31 in Titahi Bay as the local community said farewell to St Pius X School after more than 70 years of providing Catholic education.

The afternoon began with a Mass next door at St Pius X Church. The church was full with current and former students, staff and community members.

In his homily, Archbishop Paul said a school is much more than a building.



"The faith lessons, and values nurtured will continue in this community," he said.

"As a Catholic community, we know the Church is bigger than any one building or institution. We are part of one family in Christ."

Following the Mass were speeches, including from Archbishop Paul and St Pius X principal John Young, and performances from students in the St Pius X School hall.

Opened with 51 pupils in 1954, by 1955 the St Pius X School roll grew to 75. It continued to grow, reaching a roll of 383 pupils by 1958.

The school will officially close at the end of the year. Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira will be opening a new charter school on the site from 2027.

Men's Day Out on retreat in Island Bay

By Peter Woods, Joshua Wellington

Joshua Men's Fellowship celebrated their annual retreat along with the men from Joshua Palmerston North on October 10. The retreat was led by Murray Adams, a spiritual director trained in Ignatian spirituality, at Our Lady's Home of Compassion in Island Bay.

About 40 men gathered for praise and worship and a set of guided talks from Murray. There was a focus on being present and aware of the senses. Participants were invited to ponder: "What am I seeing? What am I hearing? What am I feeling?"

This presence is underpinned by an acknowledgement that God loves us as we are and loves us unconditionally. "Nothing can separate us from the love of God," was the reminder.



The men were introduced to the terms consolation and desolation. When we move towards God, this is consolation; when we move away, we are in desolation. There was also an introduction to discerning whether we are where we are meant to be – with God or not.

There are several exercises that can help us achieve this. The first step is to be aware. The second is to understand what is happening. The third is to take action.

The men enjoyed being able to share their faith and have lunch together. There was an opportunity for reflection and reconciliation in the afternoon before gathering to celebrate Mass at the end of the day.

We are very grateful to Murray for sharing his wisdom and insights and practices from Ignatian spirituality, which will help us to grow our faith. We remember the loss of Des Davies; may he rest in peace.

Annual Grant Invitation

The Knights of the Southern Cross, Wellington, Charitable Trust Board is seeking applications from organisations based in, and operating primarily within, the Archdiocese of Wellington who need financial assistance to carry out religious, charitable or educational works.

Requests for the new application form can be made to: patrickmcgill46@gmail.com.
Applications for grants should be made by **Friday, 22 January 2027** and should be sent to:
KSC Wellington, Charitable Trust Board, PO Box 56029, Tawa, Wellington 5249

Landing the Waka: Helping missionary clergy find their place in Aotearoa New Zealand

By Msgr Gerard Burns, Vicar-General

On October 27, seven recently arrived missionary priests serving in parishes across the Archdiocese of Wellington gathered at Pukekaraka for a day of welcome and orientation to Te Ao Māori. The visit formed part of Landing the Waka, a cultural integration programme for newly arrived migrant priests, which has been running since 2011.

The event was organised with the support of the Marist Educational Trust through project facilitator Tim Gordon. He was joined by Fr Phil Cody and Fr Peter Healy of the Marist Fathers, together with members of the local iwi, Ngāti Kapu.

Participants were given a guided tour of Pukekaraka Marae and adjacent hill before taking part in a facilitated kōrero exploring the history of the Catholic Church in the region, the significance of Pukekaraka and key perspectives within Te Ao Māori.

Those attending included Fr Jacob Kuman CP and Deacon Tuan Joseph CP from Te Whetū o Te Moana Parish; Fr Bill Burt SVD and Fr Satheesh Voora SVD from Te Awakairangi Parish; Fr John Le SVD from Te Wairua Tapu Parish; Fr Christian Marave from Sacred Heart Cathedral; Fr Bibin Thomas from Wellington South Parish; and Fr Beniata Bakatete MSC from St Joseph's Parish, Levin, and St Mary's Parish, Ōtaki.

The day offered opportunities for learning, relationship-building, prayerful reflection and a deeper appreciation of the cultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The arrival of overseas clergy is not new to Aotearoa New Zealand. The first Catholic missionaries came from France, while Wellington's first priest was the Irish Capuchin Fr J.J.P. O'Reily. Many early missionaries learned te reo Māori as well as English, serving both Māori and settler communities. Through the 19th century, priests arrived from Ireland, England, Italy and elsewhere, helping to build and sustain the Church in New Zealand.

From the 1960s, New Zealand society became increasingly diverse. Migration from the Pacific, Asia, Latin America and beyond meant a more multicultural Church. Today, missionary priests arrive not only to minister within communities of their own cultural background, but to serve the whole people of God.

The Church in Aotearoa New Zealand is enriched by many cultures and traditions. At the same time, clergy arriving from overseas face the challenges of a new language, history and way of life. Landing the Waka was established to support that journey, recognising that cultural integration takes place over years, rather than days.



The Landing the Waka formation is not a silver bullet, nor does it guarantee a priest's successful adjustment. Other factors, such as health or immigration decisions, may affect a priest's ability to remain in New Zealand. Its purpose is to equip priests as fully as possible to adapt and flourish in ministry for the benefit of both themselves and the communities they serve. And the priest himself will need mentors and good counsel for particular challenges.

International clergy leave behind family, language and familiar ways of life in order to serve here. Local parishes are invited to welcome newly arrived missionary clergy with open hearts, patience and encouragement. It is a process of mutual learning that on both sides requires listening deeply and being honest with each other. We trust that the God who calls us into this common canoe will guide us safely to shore.

As Pope Leo reminds us, diversity is not a burden but a strength. When we honour the gifts that each culture brings, we reveal more fully the face of Christ among us.

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