

HOLY CROSS SEMINARY NEWSLETTER



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June 2026

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Rector's Message

Dear friends of Holy Cross Seminary,

Seven new seminarians commenced formation in 2026 and twenty-four returned to continue their formation. Three seminarians are on pastoral placement this year in a parish in their diocese.

The seminary year began with a four-day hikoi/pilgrimage in the Diocese of Christchurch. Mass was celebrated in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral with Bishop Michael Gielen, followed by a talk on the early history of the diocese. Other activities included Mass and engagement with the parish community in Timaru, pilgrimages to the St Mary MacKillop Chapel and Heritage Centre in Temuka and to Akaroa where the first Catholic Mass was celebrated in the South Island, and a BBQ with local priests. The seminarians also participated in a gathering with youth leaders and had a day of recollection at the Beatitudes Community in Leithfield.

The annual hikoi/pilgrimage in one of the New Zealand dioceses helps the seminarians to understand and appreciate the Catholic Church in New Zealand, its history, culture and people.

Please pray for our seminarians and for all those discerning the call to priesthood and religious life. Pray too that more young people will generously say "yes" to God's call. Vocations are fostered within faith communities. So, who can you encourage? **Pray** for them. **Invite** them to consider priesthood or religious life. **Affirm** their gifts and qualities. **Encourage** them to be open to God's call.

Prayerful good wishes.

Fr David Dowling
Rector, Holy Cross Seminary

A few words from Pope Leo XIV

"Real progress is not measured by power, speed, or efficiency, but by our ability to live in communion with others--listening with openness, seeking wisdom, and choosing unity over division. " - *From Pope Leo XIV's First Encyclical: Magnifica Humanitas*



Hikoi | Christchurch | 2026

"This year, we began our time in the Diocese of Christchurch with a *hikoi* to several significant sites. We started with Sunday Mass at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, then continued on to Akaroa, Timaru, Ashburton, and central Christchurch. Exploring the early history of the Diocese and the connection of St Mary MacKillop to this region was especially inspiring; it made tangible the living witness of the saints in our midst.

Bishop Michael addressed us as seminarians, encouraging us in our discernment to be men of prayer, to love the Church, and to serve the People of God. Those words resonated even more deeply after encountering the life of the local Church throughout our journey."

In Christ,

Matthew Clark

"Holiness consists simply in doing God's will." - St Therese of Lisieux



Holy Cross Seminary Community visiting the Carmelite monastery in Christchurch.

Holy Cross Seminary Community in front of Saint Patrick's Church, Akaroa.

Here we learned about Bishop Pompallier and Akaroa, where the first Catholic Mass was celebrated in the South Island.

We remembered the missionary roots of our faith in New Zealand.



Holy Cross Seminary Community in Saint Joseph's Catholic Church, in Temuka during our Hikoi in the vibrant Christchurch Diocese at the beginning of the year.

Welcome

Fr Anthony Nguyen, SDB

Fr Anthony Nguyen is a member of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB), Australia-Pacific Province. He is Vietnamese born and joined the Salesians in 1997. Since being ordained to Priesthood in 2008, he has worked as a formator and lecturer in the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Australia. He was assigned as the Rector of the Salesian Community in Massey, Auckland last year. This year, he joined Holy Cross Seminary as a part-time human formator.



Fr Francis Poon

Fr Francis Poon is a priest of the Auckland Diocese and is a canon lawyer. This year we welcome Fr Francis to Holy Cross Seminary, as Dean of Studies.



Thank You to Dr John Evangelista who was our Academic Advisor in 2025. We are grateful for John's contribution and commitment to the role; and for the academic advice given to the seminarians at Holy Cross Seminary.



At the Josephites Sisters, for a collaborative community day, to synodally discuss our vision and mission for 2026.



Working Bee



Safeguarding Seminar: to deepen our understanding of creating safe environments within ministry and the Church.

Some Activities In Semester 1



Visit to Whaiora Marae: a meaningful opportunity to gather in fellowship, deepen our appreciation of Māori culture, and reflect on the rich ways faith is lived and expressed in Aotearoa.

New Seminarians 2026



Pictured from left to right:

Peter Hung Nguyen (Diocese of Palmerston North), Hoa Tran (Diocese of Christchurch), Long Tran (Archdiocese of Wellington), Rodney Rebecca (Diocese of Palmerston North), Angus Garrity (Diocese of Dunedin), Ele Oh (Archdiocese of Wellington), Thang Pham (Diocese of Christchurch)

"Dear God, you taught: The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest (Matthew 9:37-38). Raise up for your Church, we pray, men after your own mind and heart, to serve your people with wisdom and courage, humility and strength, for the common good of all and the glory of your name. Amen."

— *Prayer for Vocations*



Congratulations to fourth-year Auckland seminarians Rewi Pene and Peter Jang who were recently installed as acolytes by Bishop Steve Lowe.

NZ Diocesan Vocations Directors:

Auckland – Fr Marchellino Park aucklandvocations@gmail.com

Hamilton – Fr Adam Kirkeby vocations@cdh.org.nz

Palmerston North – Fr Trung Nguyen vocations@pndiocese.org.nz

Wellington – Fr Andrew Kim andlekis@hotmail.com

Christchurch – Fr Tien Cao vocations.chch@gmail.com

Dunedin – Fr Mark Chamberlain machamberlain61@gmail.com



Can You Help?

Donations Sought for our Seminary Chapel Upgrade

We wish to upgrade the seminary chapel to provide the seminary community with a better environment for prayer.

This includes restoring our chalices and candle holders, new curtains and repainting all the interior walls at a total cost of \$11,200.00.

Can you help us to fund these upgrades? All donations are very much appreciated and gratefully received.

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To all those who support Holy Cross Seminary, through prayer, supporting students in their pastoral placements and for those who support us financially. With your support we can train seminarians to be the future priests of New Zealand. We remember you all, in our prayers for all benefactors.

Individual Donations

Individual donations made directly to Holy Cross Seminary greatly aid necessary funding for staffing and student education, formation, accommodation, teaching and administration needs and costs. Such donations are very appreciated and gratefully received.

Online Donations to:

Holy Cross Seminary Ponsonby

Bank Account - 06 0199 0093928 00

Please include 'Donation' as reference and your name and send us an email so we can send you a receipt.
If you require a receipt please contact us with your details at office@holycross.org.nz

