

WelCom

Newsletter of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand

ISSUE 4 - September 2025

Hundreds celebrate Assumption feast at national shrine

A packed national Marian shrine was the site for a renewal of the country's dedication to Mary, Assumed into Heaven on New Zealand's patronal feast day on August 15.

The six diocesan bishops were at St Mary of the Angels Church for the second of two joint pilgrimages they have made during the current Jubilee Year.

Archbishop Paul Martin, who celebrated the Mass, drew on the Jubilee theme of "Pilgrims of Hope" in his homily.

"In this Year of Jubilee, we can take concrete steps to live as people of hope," he said. "In our parishes and dioceses, we want to foster communities where all are welcomed, heard and valued.

"In our personal lives we can make space for prayer, and especially the Rosary, which keeps us close to Mary and her Son. In our public witness we can be a voices for peace, for care of creation, for those whose voices are rarely heard.

"If we live this way, then the patronage of Mary will not just be

a nice idea, it will be a living reality shaping who we are as Church."

New Zealand's first bishop, Jean-Baptiste Pompallier, dedicated the nation to the patronage of Mary, Assumed into Heaven soon after arriving in 1838.

"In doing so, he was not merely honouring her, he was entrusting the mission of the Church here to her maternal care," Archbishop Paul noted.

That dedication was renewed by the country's bishops in August 2021. St Mary of the Angels was designated the national Marian shrine on the Feast of the Assumption 12 months later.

Archbishop Paul expressed his desire for the Church in New Zealand, almost 190 years after the arrival of its first bishop, to be known for "lifting up the lowly, for walking alongside those on the margins, for standing with the poor, for protecting the dignity of every person from conception to natural death".

"Mary, as a mother, embraces all her children – Māori, Pākehā, Pasifika, Asian and all peoples who now call



this land home," he said. "The unity that she desires is not uniformity, but a harmony that honours the gifts of each culture."

Archbishop Gabor Pinter, the Pope's ambassador to New Zealand and the Pacific, joined the six bishops as one of the concelebrants at the Mass.





From Archbishop Paul

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

October is traditionally known in the Church as the month of the Rosary. It is a time when we turn with special affection and gratitude to Our Lady, who is both mother and companion to us on our journey of faith.

What a remarkable gift Mary is to the Church. At the heart of her life is a simple and profound "yes" to God: "Let it be done to me according to your word." In that moment of trust, she opened herself fully to God's plan and allowed the Saviour to enter our world. Mary shows us what it means to be disciples, listening deeply to God's call, surrendering to grace and carrying Christ into the lives of others.

As we mark this Marian month, I invite each of you to rediscover the Rosary as a prayer for our time. It is not an old-fashioned devotion best left in the past; rather, it is a living prayer that draws us into the mystery of Christ through the eyes of Mary. With every bead we touch, we are reminded that our lives are held in God's hands. The Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious mysteries are not abstract episodes, but moments of Jesus' life that shed light on our own joys, struggles and hopes.

Mary also helps us grow in solidarity with one another. She stood with



the poor in Nazareth, she walked with the disciples, she remained at the foot of the Cross and she prayed with the early Church at Pentecost. In Aotearoa New Zealand, where so many cultures gather in one family of faith, we see in Mary a mother who embraces us all. She speaks every language of the heart, and she draws us together not only as Catholics but as people seeking hope and peace in a fractured world.

This month, as families, parishes and schools, let us place our lives under her care. I encourage you to pray the Rosary together, around the dinner table, in your parish, in your classroom or even during a quiet walk. Pray it for peace in our homes and in our world, for those who are struggling to find faith and for our young people who need the courage to follow Christ in today's society.

Mary's presence is gentle yet strong. She never points to herself but always to her Son. In her company, we are never alone. As we honour her in October, may she help us to listen more carefully to the voice of the Lord, to love more generously and to live with the joy of the Gospel.

Kia tau te rangimārie o te Karaiti ki a koutou katoa.

May the peace of Christ be with you always.

+ P. B. Martin SM

+Paul Martin SM
Archbishop of Wellington

Image: Ko Hāta Maria, te Matua Wahine o te Atua (Holy Mary, Mother of God) by Damien Walker (Studio of Saint Philomena, Rangiora)

Catholic Social Services director says farewell

It was a morning of laughter, but also tinged with sadness, on September 1 at Catholic Social Services (CSS). As staff gathered for their usual Monday morning meeting at the offices above the Sisters of Compassion Soup Kitchen, they also said farewell to CSS director Chris Ward.

Chris joined CSS in August 2024, coming to the role after stints with the Nelson Anglicans and Nelson City Council. With a real passion for social justice and belief that the Church plays a key role in helping people in the community who are in need, he first came to Aotearoa with his wife and three children in 2008.

Chris has left for a new role within the Anglican Church. A new CSS director will be appointed in coming months.





Family Pilgrim Walk – a pilgrimage to celebrate the 2025 Jubilee Year

By Patricia Alfonso-Sison

On the morning of June 28, the first Family Pilgrim Walk, “Walk for a Cause”, took place in Wellington. Trekking through the streets of Wellington, more than 100 pilgrims offered up their walk for various prayer intentions, witnessing to their faith through their hymns and prayers. They also raised funds for pilgrimage sites and charitable causes to help advance the mission of the Church in New Zealand and around the world.

The Walk began at Parliament grounds with an Opening Liturgy. Pilgrims sang the New Zealand national anthem and paid tribute to the Holy Family, singing songs in honour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Most Chaste Heart of St Joseph.

From the Cathedral, pilgrims visited two designated Jubilee Year sites. The first stop was Sacred Heart Cathedral, where they spent time adoring the Blessed Sacrament while praying the joyful and

Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary.

Pilgrims then split into groups taking three different routes named after patron saints of New Zealand: the St Peter Chanel route via the Terrace, the Venerable Suzanne Aubert route via Lambton Quay, and the St Francis Xavier route via Customhouse Quay. Walking



to St Mary of the Angels Church, each group prayed the Sorrowful Mysteries and sang songs to Our Lady, witnessing to their faith and the joy of Christian life.

The culminating event was Mass, where pilgrims honoured Mary Assumed into Heaven, Patroness of New Zealand, full of hope that what God has done in, through and for her will be their reward as they humbly submit to his will. It was made even more special by the Anointing of the Sick that took place during the Mass. Pilgrims then came together in fellowship, breaking bread with tea and specially made JMJ (Jesus, Mary and Joseph) cookies courtesy of Arobake after the Mass.

Though the pilgrimage may have ended, our journey has only just begun. We pray that the graces of the 2025 Jubilee Year poured forth through the Walk may bear fruit so that we may together reach our final destination – life in Christ with Mary, our Mother, and St Joseph in the eternal Banquet of Heaven.

IMAGINE PEACE FOR ALL

POHEWATIA TE RANGIMĀRIE MŌ TE KATOA



Social Justice Week 2025 Bishops' Statement: Let's Build Peace Together!



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

"My peace I give to you, not as the world gives..." (John 14:27)

These words of Jesus remind us that peace is not merely the absence of conflict, nor something we experience only when the world is calm. The peace of Christ is something deeper, something mysterious, enduring and alive within us even through the storms of life. It is a peace that can remain, even in the face of disagreement, tension and change.

St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) sought to capture that kind of peace in this way: "God is there in these moments of rest and can give us, in a single instant, exactly what we need. Then the rest of the day can take its course, under the same effort and strain, perhaps, but in peace..."

There is a quiet strength in the moments when Christ seems absent.

Before His departure, Jesus assured His disciples: "And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). In the silence of the empty tomb and the stillness of our own hearts, we are invited into a deeper trust.

This is the peace of the Risen Christ – a peace that is "unarmed and disarming, humble and persevering", as Pope Leo XIV described it. It is a peace that does not depend on circumstances but flows from the God, who loves us all unconditionally.

This year marks the final stage of our three-year journey reflecting on peace through Social Justice Week. We began by seeking peace within ourselves, then explored how forgiveness helps us share peace with others. Now, in 2025, we are invited to look outward again – to come together and take up our shared responsibility to build peace in the world around us. Although this may be the last step in a structured focus, the call to peace is never finished. We must continue to walk this path with courage, faith and hope.

True peace is not passive. It is something we build each day through prayer, through kindness, through listening and through action. Every one of us is given opportunities to be peacemakers. Sometimes, this means speaking out against injustice. Other times, it looks like quietly serving someone in need, showing respect when it's difficult or standing in solidarity with those who

are suffering. Often, it begins in the quiet moments of prayer, where we allow the Holy Spirit to renew us and guide our hearts.

This year's theme – Let's build peace together! – reminds us that peacebuilding is not a task for others; it is not something to be left to governments or leaders. It is the vocation of every Christian. Our world needs people who are willing to engage in dialogue, act with compassion, and build relationships grounded in dignity and love. As Pope Francis has reminded us, peace is crafted not with weapons, but with open hearts and outstretched hands.

As we mark Social Justice Week 2025, we encourage you to reflect on the resources offered by Caritas. We invite you to make time in your communities, schools, parishes and homes to talk, to pray and to act for peace. Through small daily choices and courageous love, may we help create a more just and peaceful Aotearoa New Zealand, and world, for the generations to come.

With fraternal blessings,

+Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Auckland
President of NZCBC

+Michael Dooley, Bishop of Dunedin
Vice-President of NZCBC

+Paul Martin SM,
Archbishop of Wellington

+Michael Gielen, Bishop of Christchurch

+John Adams, Bishop of Palmerston Nth

+Richard Laurensen, Bishop of Hamilton



Holy Family Parish celebrates multicultural Mass

It was a beautiful morning in Porirua on Sunday, August 31. The reason wasn't only the sunny, warm weather on winter's final day, but the beautiful diversity of cultures represented in a multicultural Mass.

Celebrated by Archbishop Paul, the 9.30am multicultural Mass at Holy Family Parish brought together many of the cultures represented in the parish and the wider Archdiocese of Wellington.

Thank you to everyone who attended!



WORLD YOUTH DAY 2027

Expressions of interest

Are you interested in attending World Youth Day in 2027? Expressions of interest are now open.

With a theme of "Take courage! I have overcome the world," the XVIII World Youth Day will take place from August 3-8 in Seoul, South Korea. Held once every three or four years, this edition is expected to be the first World Youth Day attended by Pope Leo XIV. It will be a time of celebration, reflection and meeting other young people from all over the world.

For more information, please email Regina Fernandes at rfernandes@wn.catholic.org.nz, or complete the form at: <https://forms.gle/tk41DJ2YDgFExPCVA>

We hope you can join us.



Inside the Conclave

The Conclave is one of the most secretive and sacred gatherings in the world. Few people have seen inside. In fact, there is only one living New Zealander who has.

Come along for a very special morning event to find out just what it's like to be there. Pulling back the curtain, Cardinal John Dew will talk about his time at the Vatican during the funeral of Pope Francis, and then taking part in the Conclave that elected Pope Leo XIV.

Tickets are \$40 per person. There will be light breakfast nibbles, tea and coffee available from 6.30am, with the presentation commencing at 7am.

We hope you can make it!



"My Time Inside The Conclave" with Cardinal John Dew

Tuesday, 7 October 2025 | 6:30am | The Wellington Club (88 The Terrace, Wellington 6011)
BOOKING: trybooking.com/nz/YVJ





Register now for the last marriage preparation courses of the year

Are you getting married in the coming months? The Commit / Love is a Decision programme is a course designed for couples as they prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage.

The courses are meant to be completed by the couple together in person, one after the other in Wellington. By doing both courses, couples are involved in a comprehensive programme to prepare for marriage.

Open for couples of any faith – not just Catholics – the total cost is \$130 per couple.

The last courses of the year run on November 2 and 9 in Wellington, just in time for the summer wedding season.

For more information, please email marriage@wn.catholic.org.nz or call.

If you're getting married, we hope you can join us!

Anniversary of Archbishop's ordination

Archdiocesan office staff gathered on September 4 to celebrate the 32nd anniversary of Archbishop Paul's ordination.

The future Archbishop Paul Martin SM was ordained "on a very wet day" in 1993 by Bishop Peter Cullinane. His ordination took place in Hastings, but in the St John's College gym, as the local parish church had been destroyed by fire. After numerous roles in New Zealand, Rome, and service as the Bishop of Christchurch, he became Archbishop of Wellington in 2023.

As he told staff at a morning tea celebrating his anniversary of ordination, "there's a great freedom in saying 'yes', and trusting in God."

Thank you Archbishop Paul for your ministry and service.



Te Tiriti from a Catholic perspective

About 30 people participated in a seminar on Te Tiriti o Waitangi/ The Treaty of Waitangi, held at Sts Peter and Paul Church in the Hutt on August 30. Pā Gerard Burns, Vicar-General of the Archdiocese and Vicar for Māori, led the group through a presentation on the history and background to Te Tiriti/ The Treaty, significance of the Māori and English versions and Catholic perspectives and social teaching relevant to Te Tiriti, as well as considering the meaning and significance on the document today.

The seminar included a visit to Nuku Tewhatewha at the nearby Dowse Art Gallery. This is a pātaka whakairo (carved storehouse) commissioned by Te Āti Awa chief and Catholic layman Wiremu Tako Ngātata to symbolise his iwi's connection and support for the Kīngitanga movement. Looked after for many years by the Beetham family – friends of Wiremu Tako Ngātata – it remains at the Dowse as a symbol of struggle and resistance, unity and peace.



Cardinal McKeefry School says farewell

Cardinal McKeefry School, in the Wellington suburb of Wilton, will close its doors at the end of the 2025 school year, after 55 years as a Catholic primary school in the area.

Cardinal McKeefry School has a proud and vibrant history stretching back nearly 150 years. Its story began in 1876, when the Marist Brothers first opened a school in Boulcott Street in Wellington. In 1911, the school relocated to Hawkestone Street, providing Catholic education for boys in years 4-8.

With the construction of the Wellington motorway, the school moved in stages to its present Wilton site. The new buildings were officially opened in 1970 by Cardinal Peter McKeefry, after whom the school was later named. Boys came from across the Wellington region to attend and, in 1979, Cardinal McKeefry, together with St Bernard's School in Brooklyn, became one of the first Catholic schools in New Zealand to enter the state-integrated system. A further milestone came in 1987, when the school became co-educational and a full primary for years 1-8.

The vision of the school has been to foster a lifelong love of learning and to nurture each student's faith. These goals have been underpinned by values grounded in the five Marist pillars: Presence, Simplicity, Family Spirit, Love of Work, and In the Way of Mary. These principles encourage kindness and genuine care for others,

dedication to one's responsibilities, a welcoming sense of community, and humility in responding to God's call – values that have been lived in classrooms, playgrounds and beyond.

The school Board of Trustees is inviting current and past staff, pupils and community to a final celebration and Mass. See the ad below for more details on those events.



Final celebration and Mass for our school closure



When

Saturday 18th October

Celebrations will start at school from **3pm**.
Sharing memories, photos, stories, food,
and refreshments together.
4 to 4:30pm: Short reflection speeches

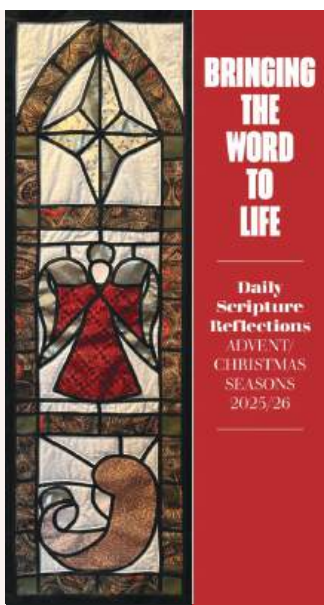


Mass

**Final Mass at 6:00pm
St Thomas More Church, Wilton**

All past and present students, staff, whānau,
and friends are warmly invited. Let us come
together to give thanks, celebrate, and farewell
our special school community.

Where there is love,
there is God.



Advent: A hīkoi for Pilgrims of Hope

In this new book, Fr James Lyons and other Catholic leaders and writers, including Cardinal John Dew, offer timely reflections for each day of Advent and Christmas. Connecting Biblical truth with modern-day examples, they provide valuable spiritual nourishment for Catholics as this Year of Jubilee comes to a close – and a new year begins.

As Archbishop Paul says: "I highly recommend it, and I know that you will find the reflections by fellow Catholics relevant and reflecting our faith experience within the context of this beautiful country we live in."

Speak to your parish leaders about a copy of this book.

Applications open for Suzanne Aubert Tertiary Scholarship 2026

The Sisters of Compassion are pleased to announce that applications are now open for the Suzanne Aubert Tertiary Scholarships 2026, which are designed to provide financial assistance with tuition fees.

This scholarship is intended to support students across all disciplines, within the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North. Preference will be given to those pursuing study pathways that reflect the values of the Sisters of Compassion and Catholic Social Teaching.

To be eligible, applicants must be New Zealand citizens who are enrolled in their second year at a recognised university or training provider in 2026. They are expected to demonstrate a commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi of Aotearoa New Zealand, and to show active participation in their Catholic parish, or to have attended a Catholic secondary college.

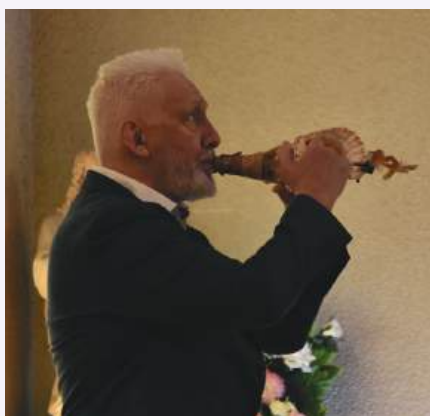
Since 2011, more than 40 scholarships have been awarded, providing vital support to students in need. The Sisters of Compassion remain committed to continuing this legacy, helping future leaders contribute to Aotearoa New Zealand in the spirit of Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert.

A poster for the Suzanne Aubert Tertiary Scholarship 2026. It features the logo of the Sisters of Compassion (te pūaroa) at the top left. The text reads: "SUZANNE AUBERT Tertiary Scholarship 2026". Below this, it states: "APPLICATIONS OPEN | 1 SEPT 2025", "APPLICATIONS CLOSE | 6 OCT 2025 AT 12:00pm (midday)", "For students studying their second year of tertiary studies in 2026.", and "For more information on how to apply: compassion.org.nz/suzanne-aubert/scholarships". At the bottom, it provides the website www.compassion.org.nz, the phone number 04 383 7769, and the email felicity.g@compassion.org.nz. The background of the poster shows a person's hand writing in a notebook.

Jubilee of Priests and Vocations

St Teresa's and St Thomas More held a combined Mass on August 10 celebrating priests and vocations.

Henare Walmsley, kaumātua from Te Ngākau Tapu, welcomed the priests with three calls from the pūtātara, as they processed into the church. Later he carried out the Priests' Blessing for Fr Joy and Fr Tikoua,



who prostrated themselves near the altar – echoing what they did on their ordination day. Hēnare carried out a sprinkling rite using kawakawa leaves over the priests, and then blessed attendees.

The St Thomas More music group provided music and the Tongan family group provided the kai after Mass.

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@wn.catholic.org.nz

We look forward to hearing from you!



Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington

Level 2, 204 Thorndon Quay, Wellington 6011

PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140

04 496 1777

wn.catholic.org.nz

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