



From +John...

Dear Friends,

I was reminded a few days ago of a prayer I had discovered and used almost 30 years ago. I was delighted that it popped up in my life again. The prayer began with the words “Lord, my God, when your love spilled over into all creation you thought of me. I am from Love, of Love, for Love.” When I saw this prayer again and reflected on the words, “when your love spilled over into all creation” I also thought of the message of Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si* – on the “Care of Our Common Home.” The letter of the Holy Father was not just about the environment and the challenges we face in trying to protect and save creation. It was also very much about the fact that all that we have is a gift from God. “God’s love spilled over into all creation”. God wants us to enjoy and delight in the creative world around us. That prayer went on “let me hear O God, always recognise, cherish and enjoy your goodness in all creation”. It is God’s goodness in creation, and we are asked to take care of it and to leave it such a way that those who will come after us can also enjoy it. That is why we are also challenged to do small things daily to protect the beauty of our world and the bounty of creation.

We are privileged to live in Aotearoa, New Zealand. We don’t have the problems that some countries face but we are challenged to ensure that we love and cherish the created world around us and not just use it as a resource to do with as we please. Pope Francis’ encyclical is focused on the idea of connecting care of the natural world with justice for the poorest and most vulnerable people. Therefore it is only by radically reshaping our relationship with God, with our neighbours and with the natural world that we can hope to tackle the threats that face our planet today.

The Pope insists that science is the best tool to listen to the cry of the earth, that dialogue and education are two keys that help us to escape the spiral of self-destruction which currently engulfs us. At the heart of the reflections of the Pope is this question. What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us? To children who are growing up? He challenges us and suggests that we need profound changes to the political, economic, cultural and social systems as well as our own individual life styles. We will make those changes only when we know that God’s love “spilled over into all creation and he thought of us”.

With blessings to you all + John

NEWS . . .

- Please remember in your prayers **Fr Ray Stachurski** who died on Wednesday 8 February. There will be Vigil Prayers for Ray tomorrow, 10 February, at 7pm at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. His Requiem Mass will be celebrated on Saturday 11 February at 11am at the Cathedral, to be followed by burial at Karori. May he rest in peace.
- We also remember in prayer **Msgr David Price**, Judicial Vicar of the Tribunal of the Catholic Church of New Zealand who died suddenly on Friday 3 February. May he rest in peace.
- **Valentine’s Day Mass** will be celebrated at the Cathedral at 7pm next Tuesday 14 February. Please join me for this annual Mass to celebrate the gift of married love.
- **Teachers’ Commissioning Mass:** All teachers, school staff and priests are welcome to attend the 2017 Commissioning Mass.
North Island: Tuesday 21 February at 5.30pm, Cathedral.
South Island: Friday, 24 February at 5.30pm, St Mary’s Nelson.
- Saturday 11 February is the 25th anniversary of the celebration of the **World Day of the Sick**. Pope Francis will celebrate Mass in Lourdes on this day. I ask all to pray for sick people and their families, for health care personnel and for all who provide pastoral care for the sick.
- **Friday 3 March**—1st Friday in Lent will be a day of prayer and penance for the victims of violence and abuse in New Zealand. Resources will be available on the website www.catholic.org.nz
- **2016 Mass Count:** The Annual Mass count for 2016 is an important tool for us in planning for the future. The 2016 numbers are essential for our synod planning. If parishes have not sent their mass count in yet would you please do so.

Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out.

Vaclav Havel

“Go, You are Sent”