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SYNOD '17

Issue No: 149

From +John...

Dear Friends

The last two Saturdays have been spent in two different parishes, Ohariu and Marlborough. Along with other diocesan staff I have been in those parishes for Stewardship Workshops. They were both very well attended and there was wonderful participation by those present. Both times we have used the Gospel for the Sunday, one week the Transfiguration and then last Sunday's Gospel story of the Woman at the Well. Using those Lenten Gospels started me thinking about other parts of the Gospel and Stewardship, and particularly about Lent and the lead up to Easter.

In trying to understand the true power of Stewardship I don't think we need to look any further than the cross. The cross serves as a powerful example of giving everything away freely for God and for the people of God. The example of course is Jesus, Jesus who answered the call, regardless of the cost, the cost being life itself.

Most of us will never have to sacrifice our lives in response to God's call. There are however Christians all around the world who do that every day. Missionaries in many places have faced violence and lost their lives, or have succumbed to fatal diseases. People standing up for the basic rights of others have lost their own right to live. Men and women who have sworn to keep the peace or to rescue others from disasters have given up time with family and friends for the sake of the vulnerable. Everywhere there are people who respond to the call of God with courage and commitment.

Our sacrifice may not be as great, but it does not diminish the power of our response. Maybe through our small everyday actions, God will touch someone else and their life will be transformed. It is not the size of the sacrifice that counts but the complete willingness to give that sacrifice. Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient for the salvation of all humanity. What we are asked to do is to translate that reality into our own somewhat simple lives.

On those days when being a good steward seems too difficult, we look to the cross and find strength in a God who knows how hard life can be at times. We also look to fellow stewards and find empathy and companionship. We reflect on the lives of the saints and those who gave their lives because of their love for God. We give thanks and go out to the world around us which needs the presence of Jesus – and we acknowledge how hard the day would be without him.

With every blessing.

+ John

NEWS . . .

- Please remember Fr Pat McCullough in your prayers. Fr Pat died on 14 March 2017 following heart surgery in Wellington Hospital. May he rest in peace.
- Also remember in prayer the **sick priests** of the Archdiocese. Fathers Eric Ulrich, Bill Clancy, Maurice Carmody, Leone Iosefo and John Berry are all suffering ill health at the moment.
- The South Island **Chrism Mass** this year will be celebrated on Monday 10 April at 7pm at St Peter Chanel, Motueka. The North Island Chrism Mass will be celebrated at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Tuesday 11 April at 7.30pm.
- Invitations have been sent to clergy for the **Retreat Day** at St Thomas More Church, Wilton, from 10am-4pm on Tuesday 11 April. Please remember to send an RSVP to my office advising your attendance to this and whether you require the light meal before the Chrism Mass.
- **Archdiocesan Synod 15-17 September**
The weekend itself and the whole process leading up to the Synod needs prayer. The prayer has been sent twice to all parishes. I would be very grateful if all parishes prayed the Synod prayer at every Vigil and Sunday Mass.

"I live by the mercy of Jesus, to whom I owe everything and from whom I expect everything."

Saint Pope John XXIII

"Go, you are sent"