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From +John...

Dear Friends,

Last year at World Youth Day in Poland Pope Francis said to the young people of the world: ***“Get off your couch, put on your walking shoes and set off on new and uncharted paths.”***

Almost a year later parishes all over France are taking Pope Francis at his word. They evidently understand that, for many, the summer is a time for spiritual replenishment: the awakening or reawakening of one’s faith, the recovery and enhancement of one’s faith.

In some places in France people will take part in open-air masses or in “spiritual breaks”. These “breaks” consist of days of hiking, and reflection on the theme of protecting the natural environment (*Laudato Si*).

Other parishes have planned weekly walking tours to the seven chapels on the high plateau of Gavot, which offers breath-taking views.

Such spiritual experiences and activities in the mountains benefit both the body and soul, encourage visitors to turn or return to prayer.

It is not summer here in New Zealand, far from it, but any time is the right time for reawakening our faith.

The Holy Father’s words apply to us too ***“Get off your couch, put on your walking shoes and set off on new and uncharted paths.”***

In these winter months we may not feel like heading out for a walk, setting off on new and uncharted paths. But it may be the very thing which gives us a new perspective on life, exercise and food for the soul.

The Encyclical *Laudato Si* gives us some very specific and practical examples, which are good for us as human beings and for God’s created world. For example: Get back to nature – “the caress of God” – to recharge. Be more attentive to its beauty and wonder and revisit places that left you with happy memories. (*LS* 84, 97, 215, 233)

Plant a tree. Take public transport, or walk. Turn off the lights when you leave the room. Chilly, wear a sweater. Little things add up. (*LS* 211)

Less is more. Stop needless consumption (*LS* 193, 203, 222)

Get to know the poor and suffering; it will wake up a numbed conscience and inspire real action. (*LS* 49), Sing as you go. (*LS* 244)

Nothing stops us “walking uncharted paths.” Some winter activities may re-awaken our faith so that it does not lie dormant, as some plants do in winter.

With every blessing

+ John

NEWS...

- **Sick Clergy.** Please remember in your prayers Frs Michael Sweere, Michael Anderson and Kevin Purcell, who are all suffering ill health at present.
- **Clergy Day of Prayer:** Tuesday 1 August at the Home of Compassion Island Bay 10.00am to 4.00pm. Please keep this day free. More information will be sent out next week. Those participating in “Landing the Waka” will be in attendance at this prayer day before heading over to the Magnificat community in Featherston to continue their week of orientation in the Archdiocese.
- **Election Housing Forum:** Anglican Bishop Justin Duckworth and I are hosting an election forum at St Paul’s Anglican Cathedral, on Wednesday 9 August from 5.45pm. All are most welcome to attend.
- **Couples for Christ Oceania Youth for Christ Conference.** Congratulations to the Wellington CFC YFC chapter on hosting this conference at El Rancho this coming weekend 14–16 July. 700 young Filipinos from New Zealand, Australia and Oceania will be present at this event.
- **Say No** postcards will be distributed at Masses this coming weekend to sign and return to your Member of Parliament speaking out against David Seymour’s End of Life Choice Bill. I encourage people to support this campaign. **Say No!**

“If we fall in love with creation deeper and deeper, we will respond to its endangerment with passion”

Hildegard of Bingen

“Go, you are sent”