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From +John...

Dear Friends

Happy New Year and all good wishes and blessings for 2018.

Over the last few days I have been really delighted and heartened to hear of a whole range of initiatives that parishes and Archdiocesan organizations are taking or planning for this year. I have been particularly delighted to hear about how last year's Synod proposals are being reflected on, prayed with and discussed so that they can be built into goals and plans for the year ahead.

In the latter part of last year a few people said to me that they hoped that the Synod would be effective and that the final document of the Synod would not just lie on a shelf and be forgotten. The Synod will be effective if we ALL continue the kind of discernment process we used, and look to see what we can do to make those 96 proposals reality. The Synod reflected on being sent to find new leaders, about adventurous people with initiative who can lead the parish in identifying and responding to community needs, and how to encourage them to come forward. That is starting to happen and I am very grateful. An example of this is happening this weekend in Star of the Sea Parish, Marlborough, where there is to be a gathering of people from all over the parish in the Kaikoura end of the parish. Since the 2016 November earthquake Kaikoura has been isolated. Now that the road is open (most of the time) people will gather in Kaikoura for Mass, a BBQ and have time to reflect together on how they will respond to the Synod proposals.

As well as what is happening in parishes, the Archdiocesan General Manager and the Directors of Finance, Youth and Family, Parish Leadership, Education, Catholic Social Services, Tūrangā Māori have all reflected on the Synod and are building into their plans for the year ways they can focus on achieving some of the hopes and expectations of the Synod.

I love the quote from the writer Thomas Moore which says: *"It's my conviction that slight shifts in imagination have more impact on living than major efforts at change... deep changes in life follow movements in imagination."* We have a volume of rich material in our Synod document, the fruit of many hours of prayer and discernment and the collective wisdom of many people. It is going to be wonderful this year to see how parishes, organizations, and schools can use this material, not necessarily by making major changes, but by "slight shifts in the imagination" which will bring new life and energy to the mission we are privileged to share together.

Just a few days ago I discovered some words of Brother David Steindl-Rast: *"Live as if nothing is promised to you."* If we live this year as if nothing is promised to us, the world does not owe us a living, recognizing that all is gift and God is the Giver behind the Gift, then this will be a wonderful year.

I wish everyone a year of blessings, a year of making "slight shifts in our imaginations," a year recognizing that all is Gift.

With abundant blessings

+ John

Waitangi Day Mass

To celebrate Waitangi Day (Tuesday February 6), Mass will be celebrated at St Mary of the Angels, Boulcott St at 9am.

Episcopal Ordination of Fr Paul Martin SM

Warmest congratulations to Father Paul and all good wishes and blessings as he prepares for Episcopal Ordination as the 7th Bishop of Christchurch on Saturday 3 March. Please continue to remember Fr Paul in your prayer.

Assumptionist Fathers

In a few days' time the Assumptionist Fathers will relinquish the responsibility for pastoral care of the Parish of our Lady of Hope (Tawa and Titahi Bay). We owe them a great debt of thanks after 24 years of taking care of the parish. Fr John van der Kaa and Fr Paul O'Connor will continue to live in Tawa and Fr John will be available (after a break) for some supply work.

Father Rico de la Torre and Father Marlon Tebilin, from the Archdiocese of Carceres in the Philippines, will assume pastoral care of the parish. Father Rico has been here since last July and Father Marlon arrives in Wellington on 11 February. We extend a very warm welcome to them.

Date Savers:

- Monday 26 March, South Island Chrism Mass (Nelson)
- Tuesday 27 March, North Island Chrism Mass (Cathedral)
- Tuesday 27 March, Clergy Prayer Day

To this day I believe we are here on earth to live, grow, and do what we can to make this world a better place for all people to enjoy freedom.

Rosa Parks

Love not in word but in deed