



22 February 2018

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From +John...

Dear Friends

For the last few years Pope Francis has invited the world to participate in 24 Hours of Prayer for the Lord. He has requested this again this year with the theme being *With you is forgiveness*” (Psalm 130:4). This year the Church of Sts Peter and Paul (Lower Hutt) in Te Awakairangi Parish will host this time of prayer from 6pm Friday 9th March until 6pm Saturday 10th March. This 24 hours will be, as Pope Francis calls it, “a moment of grace.” I have written to all parishes asking that this be promoted and people be encouraged to come, and I have asked priests to be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This will all take place within the context of Eucharistic Adoration.

As well as the request to participate in the 24 Hours of Prayer for the Lord, Pope Francis has also called for an ecumenical day of prayer and fasting for peace for tomorrow 23rd February. This prayer is to have a particular focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. Pope Francis made his call on Sunday 11th February in his Angelus address. *“Faced with the tragic continuation of conflict in several parts of the world, I invite all faithful to a special day of prayer and fasting for peace on this coming 23 February, Friday of the First Week of Lent. We will offer this in particular to the populations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of South Sudan. As on other similar occasions, I also invite non-Catholic and non-Christian brothers and sisters to participate in this initiative in the ways they consider most appropriate, but all together.”*

I realise that this is late notice and that we have not had time to arrange anything ecumenically, although Archbishop Philip Richardson (Anglian Primate in New Zealand) and I have made a joint statement about this. Even with this late notice I reiterate the request of the Holy Father and ask for prayers for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of South Sudan.

As I make these requests for these two special times of prayer I also ask that you pray especially for Pope Francis. In the times I have met him over the last three years he has said every time “Pray for me.” He needs our prayers. He is a remarkable leader. He approaches world

problems with courage and humility and leads the Church with great pastoral sensitivity and concern for people. He deserves and needs our prayerful support. Please pray for him.

Finally remember that Lent in itself as “**a moment of grace,**” make the most of it and accompany your prayer, fasting and works of charity with a sincere desire for a conversion of heart.

With every blessing

+ John

Items of Interest

24 Hours of Prayer for the Lord “With you is forgiveness,” (Psalm 130:4)

This year's 24 Hours of Prayer for the Lord will take place at the Church of Sts Peter and Paul, Lower Hutt from 6pm Friday 9th March until 6pm Saturday 10th March. Priests will be available during that time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. All are invited to participate in this initiative requested by Pope Francis. He refers to this as a “**moment of grace**”.

Clergy Retreat Clergy are reminded of the opportunity to participate in a retreat at the Home of Compassion, Island Bay, from 13th – 18th May with Father Alan Roberts. For those who wish to make the most of this opportunity you are asked to please register with Fr David Dowling frdavidd@gmail.com

Memorial Mass, Fr Pat McCullough. On Wednesday 14th March there will be a Memorial Mass for the first anniversary of Fr Pat McCullough. The Mass will be celebrated at St Michael's Taita at 7pm.

Welcome to the Archdiocese I extend a very warm welcome to Fr Marlon Tebelin of the Archdiocese of Carceres (Philippines) who has arrived in Wellington and has joined Fr Rico de la Torre in the Parish of Our Lady of Hope

I also welcome Father Michael Bellizzi of the Archdiocese of Malta who has arrived here to work with the I C P E Mission

Thanks Sincere thanks to Fr John van der Kaa and Fr Paul O'Connor for their pastoral care of the parish of Our Lady of Hope and for Assumption Fathers in general for the way they have pastored the former parish of Our Lady of Fatima Tawa. THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE

“Lent summons us, and enables us, to come back to the Lord wholeheartedly and in every aspect of our life.”

Pope Francis