



From +John...

Dear Friends,

I invite you to look at the Holy Fathers prayer intentions video for this month. He tells us in this short video clip ***“the time in which we live calls us to develop a deep capacity for discernment.”***

www.thepopevideo.org

Last year in the process leading up to our Archdiocesan Synod we used a prayerful process of discernment. Time after time people spoke to me about how much they appreciated using this discernment process, and about how they were applying it to other areas of their life, the Parish Council, the Liturgy Committee, their family lives, and for many just the way they lived out their daily lives as disciples of Jesus. So many people appreciated this opportunity and how this “time of discernment” enabled them to make a better and more informed response to daily life situations, a Gospel response.

Later this year there will be a Synod in Rome, the theme of which is **“Young people, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.”** In his message about it, Pope Francis asks young people to reflect on their past and how “the Almighty has done great things” for them. He encourages young people to be aware of the present moment – not to be frightened by it or by their own self-doubts, but to take courage and be open to accepting the Lord’s invitation to engage and to lead in Church and in society.

Discernment is very important for Pope Francis. In this month’s prayer intentions, we see a woman walking through a park with a map in her hand while trying to find the right path. She decides to ask various people for directions. However, each one of them gives her a different answer. Desperate because she can’t find her way, the woman decides to sit down on a bench. She puts the map down and asks God for help. Through her internal reflection, she discovers the answer she was looking for.

The Pope is asking all Catholics ***“to discern the Lord’s voice among all the voices; which is His voice that drives us to the resurrection, the voice that frees us from falling into the culture of death.”***

The Holy Father explains that everyone needs to internally decipher what the Lord asks of him or her to live with love and continue his mission of love. He reminds

us that every Christian ought to grow in the ability to “read within” his or her life and to understand where and to what he or she is being called to by the Lord to carry on the mission God has for us.

Pope Francis also asks the Church to recognize the urgent need for formation in spiritual discernment, on an individual level as well as in communities. I have no doubt that this kind of discernment is needed today in a world where there are so many voices clamouring for our attention, where there are so many things distracting and pre-occupying us.

Are we open to learning more about discerning how to listen for the voice of the Lord? Remember ***“If only you would listen to him today, do not harden your hearts ...”***

Psalm 95:8

With every blessing

+ John

Items of Interest

This weekend we observe **“24 Hours of Prayer for the Lord.”** This will be hosted by Te Awakairangi Parish at the Church of Ss Peter and Paul, Lower Hutt from 6pm Friday 9 March until 6pm Saturday 10 March. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for Adoration for those 24 hours and priests will be available for the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Congratulations to Bishop Paul Martin SM who was ordained the 10th Bishop of Christchurch last Saturday, and to Fr Michael Dooley of Dunedin Diocese who has been appointed by Pope Francis to succeed Bishop Colin Campbell as Bishop of Dunedin. Please pray for Michael as he prepares for Episcopal ordination on 26th April.

Date Claimer for Clergy: On Tuesday 26 June there will be a one day seminar focussed on PREACHING (Pope Francis has said some important things about this lately). This will be at The Pines Houghton Bay and the following day will be the annual Clergy Jubilee celebration. South Island Clergy please make your airlines bookings early.

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

Chrism Masses: South Island - Church of St Francis of Assisi, Stoke on Monday 26 March at 7pm

North Island - Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Tuesday 27 March at 7.30pm

Clergy Prayer Day on Tuesday 27 March at the Church of St Thomas More, Wilton, led by Sisters Anne Powell and Clare O’Connor of the Cenacle. Gathering at 10am for morning tea. RSVP to my office by Friday 16 March 2018.

“Try to keep your soul always in peace and quiet, always ready for whatever our Lord may wish to work in you.”

Ignatius of Loyola