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From +John...

Kia tau te rangimarie ki a koutou,

Last Sunday, the First Sunday of Advent I asked for a special penitential rite to be used at all Masses in the Diocese. This was a way of making a response to the Pope's Letter to the People of God, which he wrote on 20 August of this year. At a meeting of the Council of Priests we thought very hard about what could be done in response to the Letter. We asked the clergy and religious of the Archdiocese to make Friday 5 October a personal day of prayer and fasting, in acknowledgement of the deep wounds and pain caused to victims of sexual abuse. The priests were very aware that as Pope Francis says in his Letter these were "crimes that inflict deep wounds of pain and powerlessness, primarily among the victims, *but also in their family members and in the larger community of believers and nonbelievers alike*".

The penitential rite last weekend was a further response to the Holy Fathers' call:

"I invite the entire holy faithful People of God to a *penitential exercise of prayer and fasting*, following the Lord's command. This can awaken our conscience and arouse our solidarity and commitment to a culture of care that says "never again" to every form of abuse."

I am very conscious of the anger among the laity at the damage done not just to victims, but to the Church and the trust among its members. You have every right to be angry. In his Letter Pope Francis is calling us to move beyond our anger in order to bring about change – a "conversion" – within the Church, and to do so in solidarity with one another: "...every one of the baptized should feel involved in the ecclesial and social change that we so greatly need. This change calls for a personal and communal conversion that makes us see things as the Lord does."

Pope Francis sees joining together in a penitential mode as the starting point of solidarity in our commitment to a culture of safeguarding and care, which must permeate all aspects of our life together. This is a solidarity which is challenging, but which has the potential to overcome division driven by anger. The change in the power dynamic needed in the Church is substantial and we all have a part to play in this change. As he says in the Letter "It is impossible to think of a conversion of our activity as a Church that does not include the active participation of all the members of God's People".

If you have not yet read the Pope's letter, please do so [here](#). It may cause, discomfort, anger and pain. However please reflect on it, talk about it with others. Pope Francis has asked the People of God to act in solidarity and to work towards communal conversion. We priests know that we cannot do this by ourselves. Your concern, care and interest is needed so that we can live and work in solidarity, and so that our Church will be strong, joyful, safe and full of energy.

Naku noa. Na + Hoane

NEWS...

- ◆ The 5pm Vigil Mass at St Teresa's Kaori this **Saturday 8 December** will be the Mass marking St Teresa's being designated as the **Pro Cathedral** for the Archdiocese. At this Mass, The Archdiocese will be once again consecrated to Our Lady under the title of the Immaculate Conception and a Decree will be read proclaiming the Church as the Pro Cathedral.
- ◆ **Parish Clergy** are reminded that the Prayer Consecrating the Archdiocese is to be prayed at each Vigil Mass this Saturday, and at every Mass on Sunday.
- ◆ Tomorrow **Friday 7 December** the RSVPs for the Advent Holy Hour and supper for all clergy and lay pastoral leaders are due. Please respond today to my office, 496 1766 or t.halliday@wn.catholic.org.nz.

Sometimes our light goes out, but is blown again into an instant flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this inner light.

Albert Schweitzer