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From +John...

Kia tau te rangimarie ki a koutou,

Greetings and all good wishes for 2019. It is hard to believe that the month of January has gone already. So many people have been saying "What happened to January?" The month went by so fast and if it is an indication of what the year is going to be like I think it is probably going to be a very busy year.

You will see in the notice part of this newsletter that I will be away in Rome for most of February. I ask for your prayers for this time and especially for the third of the meetings I am attending. In October this year the New Zealand Bishops will make our Ad Limina visit to Rome. This is the visit usually made every five years to meet with the Holy Father, to celebrate Masses and pray at the Tombs of St Peter and St Paul, and to visit various Roman dicasteries (departments). It is actually eight years since we made our last Ad Limina visit.

This year also brings the challenges of preparing for the Royal Commission into abuse in State and Church Institutions. We do not know yet exactly what is required, but we do know that there is much to prepare. It is also a year in which we are making very big efforts to educate those in any form of ministry that our mission is to ensure that the Church is a safe place for all.

A major effort will go into raising funds for the seismic strengthening and maintenance work to be done on our Cathedral. As well as those major events there are the usual round of many meetings, celebrations in parishes, Confirmations etc.

It is not just me that has a full year ahead. For everyone life is very full and very busy. The temptation for me is to get caught up in all these things and allow prayer to become a bit perfunctory, something to fit in amidst all the other demands. I know that this is not good enough and that it actually does not help me very much.

I need to pray, we all need to pray. For me that means being disciplined and making the time. If I don't do that the days just become full of tasks to be done, they can easily become chores and even meaningless. Just a few weeks ago Pope Francis said "*Prayer always transforms reality, even if things around us do not change, we do.*" I know that this is true. Time set aside enables me to respond to the invitation of Jesus "*Remain in my love.*" It brings me the gift of peace and the strength to carry on with purpose, hopefully knowing that this all is done with God's grace. I have recently been reading a wonderful book in which Brother David Steindl Rast is interviewed. He said in one part of the interview; "*Rightly understood, praying means facing the Mystery, facing life again and again. If we do that, life will show us what to do...life will inevitably challenge us to change. Openness for this change is what matters in prayer. Faith is trust in life, lived new again and again, new in each moment because life is changing every moment.*"

I love that idea of prayer being "*Facing the Mystery.*" This year, whatever it brings for any of us, will you join me in prayer every day, will you join me knowing that in prayer we support each other as we "*Face the Mystery?*"

Naku noa. Na + Hoane

NEWS ...

World Day of the Sick 11th February is the 27th World Day of Prayer for the Sick. Parishes throughout New Zealand are encouraged to mark this day through prayer, reflection, a communal anointing of the sick and reflecting on the pastoral response of care-givers. The Holy Fathers message for the Word Day of Prayer for the Sick can be found [here](#)

Commissioning Mass for South Island Teachers is Friday 1st March, St Mary's Blenheim at 5pm. The North Island Commissioning Mass will be Tuesday 5th March, Ss Peter and Paul Church Lower Hutt at 5.30pm. All are welcome to attend these Masses in support of our teachers. I particularly encourage clergy to come to these Masses and to show support and be in solidarity with the school and college communities.

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (we are a member Church) invites people to a service at St Paul's Anglian Cathedral at 5.15pm on Wednesday 20th February. This day is the United Nations International Day of social Justice, it is also 50 years since NZCCSS was established. Anyone is invited to come to the Cathedral from 12.30pm onwards to be part of a prayer vigil.

In the next few weeks I will be attending **3 Meetings in Rome**

- a meeting of the Congregation for Divine Worship,
- a meeting of the Board of ICEL (International Communion for English in the Liturgy), and a meeting with Pope Francis
- and the Presidents of Bishops Conferences to do with abuse issues.

I would be very grateful if you would keep this last meeting in your prayers please. I am attending that meeting as the Vice president of our Conference as Bishop Pat Dunn is unable to attend.

Prayers for the Sick Father Kevin Purcell has been unwell and currently is in Ward 5 at Kenepuru Hospital, please keep him in your prayers.

"I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this word."