



Kia tau te rangimārie ki a koutou

We are already as almost a full month into the New Year. Happy New Year to you all and all good wishes and blessings for this year ahead.

The year began in a very unusual way with the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict on New Year's Eve. It was quite unique to see the current Pope presiding at the Requiem Mass for another Pope, his predecessor. Thank you for your prayer for Pope Benedict and thank you to all those who were able to come to the Mass for him at St Teresa's Pro Cathedral on 4th January.

I said in my homily at the Mass for Pope Benedict that one of the things I believe Pope Benedict will be remembered for, apart from his courageous step to resign from the papacy, are some of the words he used at his first Mass as Pope. He said: ***“Each of us is the result of a thought of God, each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary. There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know him, and to speak with others of our friendship with Him.”***

Take time this year to reflect on and pray with these words, imagine God thinking of creating you, God willing you into existence, God loving us into existence, then think of these words ***“each of us is necessary.”*** Stop and think about how, when and where you are necessary, who you are necessary for, who needs you. If we do think and act along these lines then we will be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. That becomes a gift to us and to others. When we know that we are necessary for others, through acts of love and kindness, through forgiveness and thoughtfulness, or simply by being present to others, we find a new sense of purpose, and we become grateful.

Every day this year, know that:

You are the result of a thought of God.

You are willed.

You are loved.

You are necessary.

I hope and pray that this year is one of abundant blessings, that you are surprised by the gospel and you continually encounter Christ.

Nāku noa. Nā

John



NOTICES

- Please keep in your prayers all our clergy. The frail and those who are experiencing ill health at present are Mons John Carde, and Frs Frank Maguire, Peter O'Connell and Maurice Carmody. We also pray for our clergy who have tested positive for COVID and are now isolating. We wish them a speedy recovery.

Welcomes and farewells

- I am pleased to inform you that **Fr Joy Thottankara** who was with us for about five years is now returning to the Archdiocese. He will be back here early in February and an appointment will be announced then. Welcome back, Father Joy.
- **Fr Alan Roberts** is going to have a sabbatical year away from the Diocese. In that time, he will be taking care of the Parish of Stratford in Taranaki. He will be nearer to his family and will return to Otaki next year. Fr Alan, thank you for all you have done in Otaki and in other parishes for just over 50 years.
- **Fr John Pettit** - has been in the Archdiocese of Wellington since 2018 working in several parishes as a supply priest and more recently as Administrator at Sacred Heart, Reefton. Fr John is returning to Australia to be closer to his family. We wish him well as he resettles in Australia and thank him for time here.

New School Year

- I wish teachers, students, support staff and families all the very best for the 2023 school year. May the transition from holiday time to structured learning go smoothly for you all.

Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania.

- This meeting, which happens every four years, will take place in Fiji from 5-10th February. This is always an important gathering of the Bishops of Oceania and especially so this time as it involves the next stage of the Synod Process, the Continental Phase. The other major theme will be the ecological crisis change in the region. Please keep the bishops and all those who support us in prayer over this time.

Waitangi Day Mass

- The customary Waitangi Day Mass to pray for this land and all who dwell here under the guardianship of the Treaty will be celebrated on Monday, 6th February, 9am at St Mary of the Angels, Boulcott St. Celebrant: Cardinal John Dew. Please bring a plate of food to share for morning tea. All welcome.

Teachers Commissioning Masses

- At these Masses our Teachers are commissioned for their mission in Catholic Schools, often Board members also attend. Clergy are also invited to attend these Masses as a way of showing support for our Catholic Schools

North Island - Wednesday 15th February, - at St Mary of the Angels 5pm

South Island - Friday 17th February, at St Peter Chanel Church, Motueka 6.30pm

St Valentine's Day Mass

- The annual Mass for St Valentine's Day will be celebrated at St Joseph's Mt Victoria at 6.30pm. This is always a wonderful celebration of love and Marriage, all are welcome. Priests are also welcome and encouraged to concelebrate and meet with people after the Mass. All are welcome.

"As leaders, we are to 'avoid airs of authority' but to act with simplicity, humility and respect. Leaders are meant to serve, to work, to suffer and to give the example"

Venerable Suzanne Aubert