



ARCHBISHOP OF WELLINGTON

4 July 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Over the weekend I had the privilege of being in Blenheim for the 150th anniversary of St Mary's School. It is an impressive amount of time to be celebrating the life of a Catholic institution in our Archdiocese, indeed in our country. I was very aware, in being with the community, all that sits behind this celebration.

We have the first Catholic people there who began the faith community along with the Marist priests who went there to be their pastors. We have the Sisters of Mercy who came and established the school so that the young children could be taught. We have all the funds that were raised to build the school and to continue to support the Sisters financially. The De La Salle brothers came for a number of years to run a school for boys, and in later times the two schools combined together. We have all the lay staff who have continued to ensure that the children of the parish have a Catholic education.

Our forebears made great sacrifices to ensure that their children learnt of Christ and grew to be well educated young people. The religious sisters and brothers gave their lives for the education of these children, often with limited resources. Our teachers today continue to give their all for the good of our children.

We too are called to play our part in all of this in our time. We live in a very different world than those who have gone before us. However the essentials haven't changed. We are still in need of the Good News of Christ. We still need to form and feed our spiritual lives, we still want our young people to be educated well so they can achieve their God given potential. Each of us has a calling to fulfil so that we can be more fully the people we were created to be. This is a process that doesn't stop when we leave school. Hopefully we will continue to grow in our understanding of our faith, and our experience of God throughout our entire lives. This is the journey of our Christian lives, and we do it together.

This is what we were celebrating at St Mary's this weekend, the community of faith which has been educating its young people for 150 years. This is replicated throughout our Archdiocese, in our schools and parishes, where we gather to praise and worship God and to support one another in our faith journeys.

I give thanks to God for all that has happened in our Archdiocese in the past, the heritage of which we are the recipients. I give thanks for all that is happening now, for the great people who are members of our faith community, and those who have yet to join us. I look forward in hope to what lies ahead for us, as we continue to share our Christian lives together. I pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire us, that we will allow the gifts of the Spirit to really break loose in us and give us what we need to be disciples of Christ in our world. We have much to be thankful for.

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On a personal note I want to thank you for your kind wishes and support on my Installation. I am very grateful for the prayers of so many and to those who were able to attend the Mass. It was a very moving liturgy for me and I was so pleased that so many of the groups who make up the life of our Archdiocese were able to be present or watched on the livestream.

We have begun the time of Confirmations in the Archdiocese and there are lots of young people who are receiving the Sacraments of Initiation. I encourage you to keep seeking ways of connecting with their families and inviting them to join our faith communities for Sunday worship and in other parish activities.

May these school holidays be a time for families to enjoy the company of their children and of some rest for those involved in this ministry.

Nga mihi nui



+Paul Martin SM

Notes

- The Archdiocesan General Manager John Prendergast finishes at the end of this week and his replacement Mr Reuben Norris will begin on the 7th of August. Reuben comes from Australia where he has worked for the Archdioceses of Perth and Brisbane. We wish John Prendergast every blessing for the next stage of his life.
- Our sympathies to the SMSM Sisters on the deaths of Sr Rose McAloon and Sr Brendan Ward in the last two weeks.
- Please remember in your prayers all our clergy. The frail and those who are experiencing ill health at present are Fathers Frank Maguire, Peter O'Connell and Frank Whitaker.
- I have attached for your reflection part of the homily of Pope Francis on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul last week.

From the homily of Pope Francis on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul

Peter and Paul: two apostles in love with the Lord, two pillars of the faith of the Church. As we reflect on their lives, today's Gospel sets before us the question that Jesus posed to his disciples: "Who do you say that I am?" (*Mt 16:16*). This is the essential and most important question of all: Who is Jesus for me? Who is Jesus in my life? Let us see how the two apostles answered that question.

Peter's answer can be summed up in one word: *follow*. Peter knew what it was to follow the Lord. On that day in Caesarea Philippi, Peter responded to Jesus' question with a fine profession of faith: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (*Mt 16:16*). An impeccable, precise, exact and, we could even say, perfect "catechetical" answer. Yet that answer was itself the fruit of a journey. For only after the thrilling experience of following the Lord, walking with him and behind him for some time, did Peter arrive at the spiritual maturity that brought him, by grace, by pure grace, to so clear a profession of faith.


The same evangelist, Matthew, tells us that it all began one day when, beside the Sea of Galilee, Jesus walked by, called Peter and his brother Andrew, "and immediately they left their nets and followed him" (*Mt 4:20*). Peter left everything behind to follow the Lord. The Gospel stresses that he did so "immediately". Peter did not tell Jesus that he would think it over; he didn't calculate the pros and cons; he didn't come up with alibis to postpone the decision. Instead, he left his nets and followed Jesus, without demanding any kind of guarantee beforehand. He was to learn everything *day by day*, as a disciple, a follower of Jesus, walking in his footsteps. It is not by chance that in the Gospels the last recorded words of Jesus to Peter were: "Follow me" (*Jn 21:22*). *Follow*.

Peter tells us that it is not enough to respond to the question – "Who is Jesus for me" – with a faultless doctrinal formula or a set of preconceived notions. No. It is only by following the Lord that we come to know him each day, only by becoming his disciples and listening to his words that we become his friends and experience his transforming love. That word "immediately" is also meaningful for us. Many other things can be postponed in life, but not following Jesus; where he is concerned, we cannot hesitate or come up with excuses. We need to be careful, too, because some excuses are disguised as spiritual, as for example when we say, "I am not worthy", "I don't have it in me", "What can I do?" This is one of the devil's ploys: it robs us of trust in God's grace by making us think that everything depends on our own abilities.

To detach ourselves from all earthly forms of security, "immediately", and to follow Jesus anew each day: such is the charge that Peter sets before us today. He invites us to be a "Church that follows". A Church that strives to be a disciple of the Lord, a lowly servant of the Gospel. Only in this way will the Church be capable of dialoguing with everyone and becoming a place of accompaniment, closeness and hope for the men and women of our time. Only in this way will those farthest from us, those who often regard us with diffidence or indifference, come to realize, in the words of Pope Benedict, that "the Church is the place of our encounter with the Son of the living God and thus the place for our encounter with one another" (*Homily for the Second Sunday of Advent*, 10 December 2006).

We now come to the Apostle of the Gentiles. If the word to describe Peter's answer was *follow*, for Paul it is *proclaim*, to preach the Gospel. For Paul too, everything began with grace, with the Lord's prior initiative. On the road to Damascus, as he led a fierce persecution of Christians, barricaded in his religious convictions, the risen Jesus met him and blinded him by his light. Or better, thanks to that light, Paul came to realize how blind he had been: caught up in the pride of his rigid observance, he discovered in Jesus the fulfilment of the mystery of salvation. In comparison with the sublime knowledge of Christ, he came to regard all his former human and religious securities as "rubbish" (cf. *Phil 3:7-8*). Paul then devoted his life to traversing land and sea, cities and towns, heedless of privations and persecutions, for the sake of preaching Jesus Christ. If we look at Paul's life, it almost seems that the more he preached the Gospel, the more he grew in the knowledge of Jesus. By preaching the Word to others, he was able to peer more deeply into the depths of God's mystery. Paul could then write: "Woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel!" (*1 Cor 9:16*). He could then confess: "To me, life is Christ" (*Phil 1:21*).

Paul tells us that our answer to the question – "Who is Jesus for me?" – is not a privatized piety that leaves us peaceful and unconcerned about bringing the Gospel to others. The Apostle teaches us that we grow in faith and in knowledge of the mystery of Christ when we preach and bear witness to him before others. This is always the case: *whenever we evangelize, we are ourselves evangelized*. It is an everyday experience: whenever we evangelize, we are ourselves evangelized. The word that we bring to others comes back to us, for however much we give to others, we ourselves receive much more (cf. *Lk 6:38*). This is something necessary also for the Church in our day: to put preaching at the centre, to be a Church that never tires of repeating: "To me, life is Christ" and "Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel"! A Church that needs to preach, even as we need oxygen to breathe. A Church that cannot live without sharing with others the embrace of God's love and the joy of the Gospel.



**We pray for our Dead
July**

- 1 Terrence Crowley (1998)
- 2 Thomas Rillstone (1981)
- 3 David Bourke (2000)
Brian McAloon (2001)
- 4 Bernard Tottman (2003)
- 8 Thomas McDermott (1970)
- 9 Nicolaas Havenman (1975)
Sean Flynn (1978)
- 10 Patrick Hanratty (1970)
- 11 Lawrence Williams (2009)
- 13 John O'Rourke (1984)
- 14 Alphonsus Van Lier (1995)
- 15 Leo Houlihan (1975)
- 21 Bernard Scott (2009)
- 22 Bernard Jones (1981)
- 25 Michael Anderson (2017)
- 26 Francis Douglas (1943)
- 28 Michael Carroll (1984)
Hugh Convery (1989)
- 29 Vincent Healion (1980)
- 30 Joseph Dermody (1983)
James O'Dowd (1994)
- 31 Patrick King (2005)

**Anniversary of Ordination
July**

- 1 Peter Fitzgibbon (1965)
- 2 David Orange (1964)
James Lyons (1967)
- 3 Seph Pijfers (2004)
- 9 Francis Whitaker (1961)
- 10 Petelo Mauga (1961)
- 19 Denis Collins (1959)
Michael Stieller (1959)
- 25 Charles Cooper (1960)

July Birthdays

- 17 Leone Iosefo (1991)
- 20 Seph Pijfers (1965)
- 29 Petelo Mauga (1931)