



# HOLY CROSS SEMINARY

*TE WHARE O TE RIPEKA TAPU*

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April 2021

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### Message from the Rector

Greetings everyone, from Holy Cross Seminary, Auckland.

The year commenced with thirteen students on-site in Ponsonby, an additional two on their 5th Year pastoral placement in their home diocese, and two still in Vietnam due to Covid-19 restrictions. We are hopeful one of these last two may make it back to NZ for the start of the second semester, commencing 12 July.

A particular focus of the formation programme this semester is the Safeguarding programme, presented by the National Office for Professional Standards (NOPS) on behalf of the bishops of NZ, engaging all students and staff. What in the past was a predominant emphasis on spiritual and intellectual formation has been supplemented with enhanced emphasis on human and pastoral formation. As grace builds on nature, so there exists the need to understand ourselves first as human creatures initially made in God's image, but subsequently flawed, endeavouring to be more receptive to God's healing so as to become more fully Christ-like in the ways of charity, truthfulness, justice and peace.

'Leaky building' remediation work on the first residential block is well underway, due for completion in mid-July when work on the second block will commence. Remediation of the Administration building, including the chapel, lecture room, staff offices, and communal kitchen and dining room, is due to commence in early November, for completion by the middle of 2022. ie. It's a disruptive time at the moment but we are very aware that many overseas students, and many private home owners and businesses throughout the country, are caught up in similar circumstances and are suffering great uncertainty and financial hardship. We keep them in our prayers.

Thank you for interest in the formation of seminarians for the service of the Church in Aotearoa-NZ. May the peace of Easter be with you and all your families, friends and associates throughout the coming year. God bless you all.

**Fr Brendan Ward (Rector).**

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- ✝ Term two starts 19th April
- ✝ Holy Cross Seminary Founders Day—May 3rd at Sacred Heart Church—Vermont Street Ponsonby 5pm. All invited to share Mass with the seminary and priests of Auckland Diocese. +Michael Gielen main Celebrant.

### ORDINATION TO PRIESTHOOD

- ✝ Saturday 15th May —Chani Thomas Park — Auckland Diocese - St Patricks Cathedral 11.30am
- ✝ Saturday 17th July—Isaac Fransen — Hamilton Diocese - Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary 11am



**A few years ago I discovered this beautiful icon of the Beloved Disciple, leaning against Jesus at the Last Supper. In explaining the icon Dr John Philip Newell wrote:**

*“It was on Iona years ago that I first became aware of the need to reclaim some of the features of ancient Christianity in the Celtic world as lost treasure for today. Part of that treasure is the much-cherished image of John the evangelist, also known as John the Beloved, leaning against Jesus at the Last Supper.*

Celtic tradition holds that by doing this he heard the heartbeat of God. He became a symbol of the practice of listening—listening deep within ourselves, within one another, and within the body of the earth for the beat of the Sacred Presence.”

Listening for the beat of the Sacred Presence fits perfectly with one of the central themes in St John’s gospel. Over and over John uses the word “abide.” So he presents Jesus constantly inviting us to abide in Christ, just as Christ abides in us. But Newell wrote of listening to God also in our neighbour and indeed in all creation.

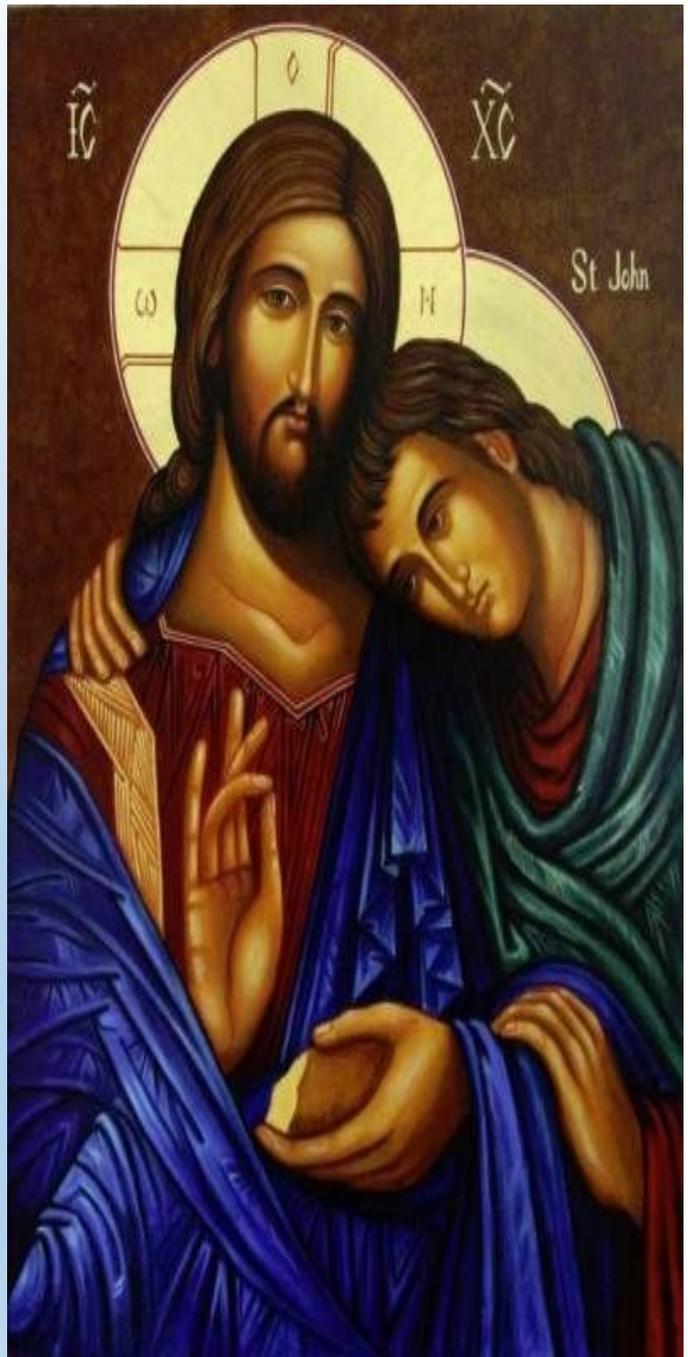
It was Pope John Paul II who had said that creation is the first book of revelation, reflecting for us who God is. This point was expanded by Pope Francis in his recent encyclical letter *Laudato Si’* about caring for our common home, the earth.

*“Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection. . . Each of the various creatures, . . . reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness (69).”*

Or as Neville expressed it, if we listen attentively we can even hear the heartbeat of the Sacred Presence within the body of the earth.

### **Fr. Stuart Sellar**

**Fr Stuart Sellar, is a retired priest of the Dunedin Diocese. Before retiring he was a lecturer for Good Shepherd College, led Catholic Social Services in Dunedin for fourteen years and in the Prison Chaplaincy. He was for some years a priest in resident at Holy Cross and passed on his wisdom to our seminarians.**



*Image Jesus and John the Beloved; source unknown*



At the start of this year some of our students travelled with Fr. Brendan Daly up to the winterless North to visit the sites of the Early Church in New Zealand. This was part of their Maori Pastoral paper that they had studied at Te Kupenga in 2020. They travelled the same path as many of our early Christians in New Zealand. They had the experience of staying on the Motuti Marae, attended mass at Hata Maria church where Bishop Pompallier is interned. They also attended mass at Russell at the Shrine of St Peter Chanel visited Totara Point where the first mass was celebrated in New Zealand and toured Pompallier House. It was a busy few days but a rewarding experience for all.



Kia ora, and Happy Easter! My name is Mark Bond, and I am a third-year seminarian for the Diocese of Auckland. I'm a Kiwi-American hybrid who has spent the last eleven years working and living in New Zealand. My family—Mum, Dad, my brother Matthew, my sister Mary, and our pug, Patrick—all live on the North Shore. I'm the oldest sibling, so naturally I'm much more talented, driven, good looking, and prone to exaggeration.

Because Dad is American and Mum is a Kiwi, we ended up moving around a lot. I was born in Mississippi, moved to Florida, then Hamilton, then Takapuna, then Waiuku, then back to the U.S., then back to NZ, and so on...it was often frustrating to adjust to new schools and new friends, but one of the blessings of moving so often was that I got to meet various priests and religious in our parishes, and from an early age, I was inspired by them. Two personal heroes of mine were Fr. Peter Durning (pictured), who in 1997 was parish priest of St. Anthony's in Waiuku, and Fr. Abraham Cueva, a Mexican priest on loan to our parish in Washington State. In my last years of secondary school, I discerned the idea of priestly or religious life, but even after going to "come and see" weekends at seminaries and staying with the Benedictines for a short time, I still wasn't sure what God wanted from me. I continued to discern priesthood during my undergraduate study at the University of Auckland, and finally entered seminary in 2012. There was just one little problem: I was young and immature, and wasn't ready to fully commit to the core requirements of priestly life. When I left the seminary in 2014, I thought to myself, *well, I gave it a go, but the priesthood isn't for me!*



I spent the next six years doing a Masters and PhD in English, and ended up lecturing at the University of Auckland. At that point, I felt I was "living the dream": I had a city apartment, a comfortable job, I made my own schedule, and I had articles with my name on them. But there was an indescribable emptiness inside me; an Augustinian restlessness in my heart that I couldn't shake. That restlessness was alleviated when I volunteered as a Summer Missionary at Life Teen Camp 2020, and, as I prayed alone in the chapel, had an incredible personal experience of God's power and love. Over the course of that week, which was the happiest week I'd had in years, I realised what had been missing in my life: a deep and human connection with others, a connection built upon Christ's radical service and self-giving. I felt God calling me back to the priesthood, which at first was a bit of a shock, but after a year of spiritual direction with Fr. Emile Frische, and a lot of prayer and support from my home parish of St. Joseph's Takapuna, I gave my yes to "round two" at the seminary.

It might seem a little clichéd, but this story isn't really about me. It's about what God does for His people—ordinary, worldly, sinful, stubborn people like myself—and how He waits patiently for us as we grow in our knowledge and love of Him. After I left the seminary, I chased what the world defines as "success," and spent so many years living for myself, doing what I wanted, treating God and His graces like accoutrements to my life...and through all of it, God waited for me. His love and mercy waited for me. And by the time I was ready to give my one little "yes" to Him, He had already been saying "yes" in my life a million times over. And now here I am, a product of His mercy, making my way through the seminary as I work to discern what He wants from me. I try to live each day as an opportunity to encounter God, because God Himself is a never-ending romance of first encounters. I wouldn't be here if not for Him, and not for the prayer and support of my family, friends, and seminary benefactors. You are all so important in the lives of us (and potential) seminarians, so I ask you to please continue to pray for and encourage vocations across New Zealand—you never know who God is working on, and if my experience is any indication, you're never too far gone to say yes to His call! So keep praying, and be assured of my prayers for you all.

### God Bless—Mark Bond



After many date changes due to Covid Lockdowns Christchurch Diocese were able to finally celebrate the ordination of Tang Phan to priesthood in October 2020.

A wonderful celebration was held in Christchurch. Sadly due to travel restrictions Tang's parents were unable to attend, but Tang was supported by both his sister, brother and the Vietnamese community. Fr. Tang is now in Greymouth Parish.





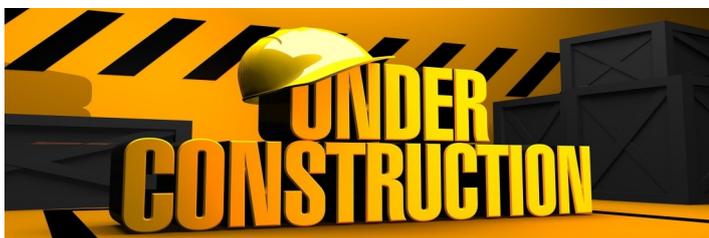
**Fr. Peter Murphy**, joined HCS at the start of this year in the role of Spiritual Formator.. Fr. Peter is a priest for the Auckland Diocese and had been parish priest for Papakura before joining us at the Seminary.

He brings with him a great love of Christian mediation and we are grateful to have his expertise here at the Seminary

## New Staff Appointments 2021

**Louisa Rani** joined us in the fourth term of 2020. She is a part of the Auckland Catholic Diocese team and has joined us part time as Pastoral Formator.

Louisa herself studies at Te Kupenga (CTC) and is completing her Bachelor of Theology. Louisa brings all her experiences and knowledge to her new role.



As Fr. Brendan mentioned we are nearly six months into our remediation work. The contractors are working on one block at a time so we can still live and operate on site. Mid year the staff and seminarians we will be moving from (accommodation) C Block over to the completed B Block. We are blessed to have great contractors who are working hard to minimise the disruptions and get through the work.



To all those who support Holy Cross Seminary, through prayer, supporting students in their pastoral placements and for those who support us financially. With your support we can train seminarians to be the future priests of New Zealand. We remember you all, in our prayers for all benefactors.

### Annual Seminary Appeal

*Each year the fourth Sunday of Easter is Good Shepherd Sunday and is designated as the 'World Day of Prayer for Vocations'. A special collection is taken up in parishes across all the dioceses on this Sunday; it is the main source of income for the training of seminarians in New Zealand.*

### Individual Donations

*Individual donations made directly to Holy Cross Seminary greatly aid necessary funding for staffing and student education, formation, accommodation, teaching and administration needs and costs. Such donations are much appreciated and gratefully received.*

### Online Donations to:

Holy Cross Seminary Ponsonby

Bank Account - 06 0199 0093928 00

Please include 'Donation' as reference and your name and send us an email so we can send you a receipt.