



ARCHBISHOP OF WELLINGTON

2 August 2023

Tena koutou katoa

I am writing to you on the day when the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care has released its report into Marylands School in Christchurch. It is a very sobering report of terrible abuse by the St John of God Brothers during their time running the school from 1955-1984 and of the Hebron Trust which operated from 1986-1992.

You may be aware of this because of the coverage during the time the Royal Commission was conducting the study last year. The conclusions that they have drawn from it are a stark reminder to us of the harm that was done to those who should have been safe and cared for and of the effect of this abuse on the lives of the survivors, both at the time and subsequently.

We want our Church to be a place where people are safe, receive support and are able to worship and praise God. Sadly this has not always been the case. We have to own our past, do what we can to help those who were not treated the way they should have been, and ensure that we are as safe as possible for all people into the future.

We have been trying to work on this for the last 30 years. We know that we still have more to learn from the experiences of those who were abused and it was one of the reasons why the Church asked to be part of the inquiry by the Royal Commission. We want to be better at supporting those who have been abused while in our care and we want to ensure that we do everything possible to keep people safe.

Jesus Christ came with the Good News and to show us what God is like. He came to a sinful world and what we are confronting here is the reality of that sin. One of the terrible consequences of the abuse of those in our care is that so often it affected their relationship with God too, because people who were supposed to be people of God were doing these things to vulnerable people.

We also have to ensure that there is justice for those who have been harmed in this way and that those who have offended in this manner are not able to do so again.

The sexual abuse of people, children and adults, within our Church community is part of our history. We cannot change the past but we can make sure that we make the present and future better for all in this area.

For those of you who have leadership or particular roles within the Church or in Church based organisations I encourage you to make sure that you have done all that is possible to be up to date on the safeguarding programmes and practices that we follow now. These are ways that ensure that all are safe. It is why our National Office for Professional Standards is running the course for those who are in ministry in some way. Parishes have programmes for those who are involved in particular ministries within the parish. Our schools have the practices and protocols that are there to keep children and adults safe. We do not tolerate any abuse.

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May we support one another in these days, talk with others if we need to about what we are feeling and experiencing, and continue to do all we can for those who have been affected by abuse.


Yours in Christ

+ Paul SM

+Paul Martin SM

Notes

- There are lots of young people receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation at present. Please keep these young people and their families in your prayers. Thanks to all those who prepare our young people for this Sacrament.
- On the weekend of August 19-20 I will be in Westport and Reefton to celebrate the establishment of the new parish of Buller-Inangahua. We give thanks for these two former parishes and pray for the life of this new parish.
- Seminarian Matthew White recently received the ministries of Lector and Acolyte as part of his journey to priesthood. Please pray for our four seminarians and keep encouraging other young men whom God may be calling to be a priest.
- I met recently with the leaders of the Religious congregations who have members in our Archdiocese. Many are now few in number and their members are elderly. We have been very blessed by the religious who have worked in our Archdiocese and for their continued witness to a life of prayer and support for the Church in the various communities around the Archdiocese.
- Please remember in your prayers all our clergy. The frail and those who are experiencing ill health at present are Fathers Frank Maguire and Peter O'Connell.
- We pray eternal rest for Sr Marcia Wilson RSM who died on 31 July.
- Fr Michael Stieller is moving from Our Lady of the Rosary Waiwhetu to Shona McFarlane Retirement Village. We give thanks for his wonderful service as a parish pastor and wish him well in this next stage of his life.
- Monsignor Charles Cooper has also recently retired from ministry. He will continue to live in the accommodation belonging to the parish of the Holy Spirit in Eastbourne. We are thankful to Monsignor for all his generous service and faithful witness as a priest for so many years.
- Fr Pene Patelesio, has been in Wellington for eye surgery and once that is completed he will return to his ministry in Tokelau.
- Welcome to Fr Akuila Taliauliu SVD who has come to join Fr Marlon Maylon SVD in Te Wairua Tapu Parish in Lower Hutt.
- Congratulations to the church community of St Bernadette's in Naenae who are celebrating 75 years of the church and the school this month. We give thanks for all those who have given witness to faith in this community and for those involved in the education of our young people in the school in the past and now.



**We pray for our Dead
August**

- 5 Kevin Burke (2009)
- 10 William O'Donnell ((1981)
Vincent Moody (2001)
- 12 Anthony Curry (1981)
Michael Sweere (2017)
- 14 Peter Mul (1999)
- 15 Donald Morrison (2021)
- 16 Vincent Callaghan (1977)
- 19 John Kirby (1997)
- 21 Edward O'Shea (1977)
- 24 David O'Neill (1989)
- 27 Noel Gascoigne (1980)
Benedict Clarkson (1982)
- 29 Louis Leuthard (2016)

**Anniversary of Ordination
August**

- 10 Dennis Nacorda (2013)
- 24 Douglas Shepherd (2012)

July Birthdays

- 27 Marlon Maylon SVD