



# Stories of HOPE

November 2021

News from Our Lady of Hope Catholic Parish in Titahi Bay and Tawa

*Year of St Joseph*      *Ends December 2021*



## Notice to contributors

We always like to hear about your group or parish organization. We generally prefer content relating to specific events and persons - as a guideline, 500 words will fill one page of this magazine. Short news articles, anecdotes, reflections, poems, family events and page fillers are also welcome.

E-copy is preferred but hard copy can be submitted. Photos enhance all content - high resolution please.

Send copy to the editor or leave for collection at the parish office.

Jane Langham

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**Deadline for next edition: 25 February 2022** The date will also be advertised in the weekly newsletter nearer the time and may vary from the one shown.

## Disclaimer

Any views or opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the author, and do not necessarily represent those of the Editorial Committee or the administrators of Our Lady of Hope parish. The editor exercises sole discretion as to the acceptance of items for publication, insofar as they reflect Catholic life in the parish and do not tend to give offence. All items submitted may be subject to editorial amendment, revision or rejection and all items published are without prejudice.

## Stories of Hope - Mission Statement

**Our mission** - To promote a sense of community in the Catholic parish of Our Lady of Hope, Tawa & Titahi Bay, by publishing the full variety of Catholic life in our parish.

Principal source of written contributions is the people in our parish.

**Our objective:** Every edition to every Catholic home in the parish.

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### With Thanks to:

Our sponsor, to all volunteers who help distribute copies, and to all others whose contributions and efforts have made this issue possible.

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**Cover:** *Statue of St Joseph at Our Lady of Fatima Church, Tawa*

### **Editorial committee:**

Fr Rico de la Torre, Jane Langham, Kingsley Ihejirika

### **Contributors this issue:**

Telesia Alaimoana, Jemma Brunton, Fr Rico de la Torre, Jane Langham, Jane Lee, Ian Munro, Marie Nicol, Fr John van der Kaa, Michelle Whiting, Joan Woods.

## From the Editor

by Jane Langham



Everyone likes to be appreciated and have their efforts acknowledged, but it is all too easy to take the good things in our life for granted.

At Christmas, many of us like to send cards, which may include a note of thanks for all that person has done for us over the year. Even better, there's no need to wait for Christmas - it can have a much greater impact to say thank you immediately and often. This helps all of us when we are facing challenging times like now.

In September/October I had been wondering about producing this edition of our magazine - if it would be possible to distribute it under current restrictions, if anyone would see the requests for material, given the limited weekly newsletter distribution. Two things persuaded me that it is not only possible, but important to keep going. One has been the many generous offers of help to enable personal delivery to every home. The other was a letter from Archbishop Emeritus Tom Williams. He receives a copy of Stories of Hope in the mail each edition.

He writes: *'Stories of Hope' is far and away the best of the many parish quarterlies ... may God continue to richly bless ... those who edit and contribute to Stories of Hope.* This reminded me of the importance of continuing to share the blessing of this magazine with all parishioners and also to acknowledge that this is not 'my magazine', the content is from us all, a reflection of who and what our parish is. So thank you to Archbishop Tom and to all the many parishioners who have contributed at any time to our magazine.

In this edition we remember St Joseph, as his special 'year' comes to an end. (p.22) We also meet some of the selfless parishioners contributing to the greater parish good: Telesia's moving story of her journey through the Launch Out programme (p.14); the beautiful statue created for our parish (p.10); and the behind-the-scenes work of many sewers and artists making baptism stoles for the parish and many more things for the St Vincent de Paul shop and Pregnancy Help. A challenging reflection from Ian combines thoughts from COP26 and Laudato 'Si (p.6) and news from our schools, as they conclude a difficult year for both students and teachers.

Whatever form our Christmas celebrations may take, in Church, online, with family, let us remember that the central message is always **Emmanuel - God with us.**

Many blessings for you and your loved ones. Jane

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## Christmas 2021

from Fr Rico de la Torre



### ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS TIMETABLE

Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions, we have been unable to confirm our Advent and Christmas timetables.

Once we know what level we will be operating at, our Advent and Christmas Mass times will be

- advertised on the [parish website](#)
- included in the weekly parish newsletters
- displayed on church noticeboards.

**Please be aware that if we are still at the current restriction levels, you will need to book a place to physically attend any Christmas Mass, the same as at present. This is done on the [Wellington Diocesan web site](#)**

Scroll down to click on [weekend mass registrations](#).

### Current Mass Schedules in the parish

**Weekends:** Saturday 5:30pm SPX; Sunday 8:30am & 10:30am OLoF

To attend these masses you must book online. (see above)

The 8:30 mass is recorded. You can watch live by following the link on the parish website: [ourladyofhope.org.nz](http://ourladyofhope.org.nz) This mass stays available to watch later in the day.

**Weekdays:** Monday - Saturday 9am OLoF, Thursday 10am SPX No need to book.

### If you would like to be kept informed

of parish updates regarding Mass and other parish activities, please contact the parish office ([ourladyofhope@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ourladyofhope@xtra.co.nz)) and ask to be included on our email list.

Those on the email list receive copies of the weekly newsletter as well as any other important notices.



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## The Cry of the Earth

by Ian Munro



Twenty-six years ago, we lived in Motueka and one of our favourite weekend outings was to take the 12-minute drive down to The Kumaras, a wilderness reserve on the Motueka foreshore.

Motueka sits to the side of Tasman Bay on the flood plain of the Motueka River, which emerges from the hills behind Motueka, runs across the back and down one side into Tasman Bay.

The foreshore is protected by a sand spit and, as well as The Kumaras, there's the saltwater baths and the wreck of the Janie Seddon.



Recently, the Tasman District Council released its 50-year sea rise predictions. This made climate change that much more real to me. Instead of a 12-minute drive it would be a short 3-minute

stroll from our former home to the beach. However, it would also mean that, while the tip of the rusting superstructure of the Janie Seddon might remain visible, the spit, The Kumaras, the baths and sizeable parts of the town would become footnotes in Motueka's history.

Of course, this presupposes that increased heavy rain events didn't overwhelm the Motueka River's stop banks and inundate the flood plain first.

Of late, we've had a different kind of climate change inundation – the doom and gloom and the informative reports leading up to COP26, the last-chance meeting to agree on how to keep global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees over pre-industrial levels.

The science is clear. The planet is already hotter than it's ever been in human civilisation. Until now, our civilisation has operated within a narrow, stable band of temperature. In the last 150 years, through the burning of fossil fuels and increased agricultural activity, we're now outside this band. It's at least 125,000 years ago since it was hotter than this, while the atmosphere has more heat-trapping carbon dioxide and methane in it than at any time in the past two million years.

Everything we've ever known has operated within climate conditions that we're rapidly leaving behind.

## Laudato Si'

So, I was particularly pleased in my reading on climate change to come across Pope Francis's encyclical, [\*Laudato Si'\*](#), and his call for decisive action. Here was a man who had a handle on what was going on and didn't mince his words.

*The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now.* [Laudato Si', 161]

In October this year, in a joint communique with other religious leaders, he



appealed to the world's political leaders not to turn the garden we've inherited into a desert for the next generation, but to *"take speedy, responsible and shared action to safeguard, restore and heal our wounded humanity and the home entrusted to our stewardship"*.

But what particularly resonated with me was a call in September by Pope Francis, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Bartholomew I, the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, *"to listen to the cry of the Earth."*

They concluded: ***"This is a critical moment. Our children's future and the future of our common home depend on it."*** Archbishop Welby added, ***"We have in the last hundred years declared war on the creation."***

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis described how we seem to be comfortable with being silent witnesses if we think that we can obtain significant benefits by making others, present and future, pay the extremely high costs of environmental deterioration. [36]

## The challenge

In reading these documents I became very aware that these weren't just pleas to world leaders but also an instruction, in fact a challenge, to me as a Christian.

We can cope with sea level rise and maybe a little more heat and new diseases, but we can't reinvent insects, we can't control changing agricultural environments, we can't necessarily get drinking and irrigation water where we need it, and we can only plant so many trees.

**So how should I be responding?** Well, I can continue doing the things we all can easily do – recycling, making less use of plastic, repairing and re-using rather than tossing away, using less petrol, and so on.

But in many ways, re-usable shopping bags, for example, feel token when faced with the enormity of the problem. It's tempting to shrug one's shoulders and say I can't really make a significant difference.

### **We hate uncertainty**

There are many studies that show that we hate dealing with uncertainty. We can cope with manageable risk, but random outcomes scare us. Our coping mechanism is to ignore the big things and focus on lesser matters. This gives us the illusion of control while we increasingly ignore the reality.

Pope Francis observed that, as often occurs in crises that require bold decisions, we're tempted to think that what's happening isn't actually all that serious.

*Such evasiveness serves as a licence to carrying on with our present lifestyles and models of production and consumption. This is the way human beings contrive to feed their self-destructive vices: trying not to see them, trying not to acknowledge them, delaying the important decisions and pretending that nothing will happen.*

[Laudato Si', 59]

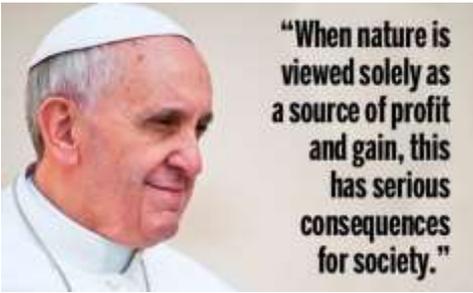
We tend to think things will eventually 'get back to normal' – after a war, a pandemic, a natural disaster. Unfortunately, we've reached the point from where there's no way back to 'normal'. There are only unknown futures.

### **Lack of leadership**

The problem, as Pope Francis sees it, is that we still lack the culture needed to confront this crisis. *We lack leadership capable of striking out on new paths and meeting the needs of the present with concern for all and without prejudice towards coming generations.* [Laudato Si', 53]

He sees the way forward to be through bringing pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power.

*This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products. They prove successful in changing the way businesses operate, forcing them to consider*



*their environmental footprint and their patterns of production. When social pressure affects their earnings, businesses clearly have to find ways to produce differently. [Laudato Si', 206]*

Environmental lead levels plummeted once we took lead out of petrol. We banned chlorofluorocarbons and the

ozone layer is recovering. We did this despite the protests from industry. Alternatives were found, the industries survived, and planet Earth is better for it.

So, there is cause for optimism. There's nothing about the physics that says we can't solve this. Most of the solutions we need are already available to us. We have innovative scientists and entrepreneurs. Nothing is too expensive, despite cries to the contrary, because the expense of doing nothing would be to leave human civilisation as a very thin layer in Earth's sedimentary rock.

## **Call to action**

Which brings me back to my original question: how should I be responding? Our religious leaders have made it quite clear. We need to listen to the cry of the earth, stop being silent witnesses, and stop ignoring the reality.

While we're all part of the problem, we're also all part of the solution. As individuals and as members of groups, whether it be of employees, employers, students, sports, or parishioners, we can apply the political and social pressure needed to force our politicians and business leaders to stop playing politics and jointly make the hard decisions, then legislate. Signing conference documents and making empty pledges is meaningless.

We know from recent experience that when we listen to the science and make and accept those hard decisions we get somewhere. It works. But when political smoke and mirrors take over and the science starts to be fudged by the decision-makers, things tend to come unstuck.

We need to challenge our leaders of every stripe at every turn and demand they make the necessary transformational changes happen and at pace. The call to action is in our hands. We can't sit on them any longer.

***"A Christian who doesn't safeguard creation, who doesn't make it flourish, is a Christian who isn't concerned with God's work, that work born of God's love for us."*** [Pope Francis, Meditation, Vatican City, February 9, 2015]

## Statue of Our Lady of Hope

by *The Sculptor*



**This is the story of how the statue of Our Lady of Hope, the patroness of our parish, came to our church in Tawa. It is also intended that this statue will sometimes be in the church in Titahi Bay.**

This statue was made by me, a parishioner of Our Lady of Hope. When Covid restrictions have eased, it will be decided where this statue will be placed and when it will be in Tawa and when in Titahi Bay.

One day, I came to Father Rico with a statue of Our Lady to be blessed. This statue was very old and had been badly damaged. It had needed a lot of

repair and painting work, which I had done, which was why I then wanted it to have a new blessing. Father was impressed and asked if I knew someone who could make a statue of Our Lady of Hope for our parish, as imported statues are very difficult to get into New Zealand at present, and for the last long while, because of Covid. But the answer was 'no'.

The reason I had been prepared to tackle the repairs on my own statue is that, many years ago, I had done some courses that involved art and craft. I like making and fixing things and also like new challenges. So, after some thought, I told Father Rico that I would give it a go to make one myself. In the past I have repaired and repainted a few statues of Our Lady. The statue in the side chapel at Our Lady of Fatima church is one of them, but never had I made one from scratch. I had never undertaken anything like it, but was of the opinion 'if it does not work out well, nothing is lost'. Father Rico probably did not know what he had got himself into!

**And after about 6 or 7 weeks, the statue was finished and it turned out to be very beautiful. Father was surprised and very happy - and so was I!**

How was it made? The first job was having a good look at the statues of Our Lady of Hope on the internet. What do they look like? There was also a picture on the front of this magazine in the March 2021 edition, so that was a good start. This picture in the magazine was used as a base for the modelling of this statue.



Cover image March '21

The statue is about 70cm tall and has four very thick wires inside. These are covered by chicken wire.

After that, it is built up with lots of layers of strips cut from a cotton bed-sheet dipped in plaster. In total, there are 8 kg of plaster used and nearly the whole of a single-size sheet. Of course, it took a while to have it totally dry, after which there was a lot of sandpapering to be done. After that, lots of layers of undercoat and then finishing it with painting the topcoat. That is the rewarding part. Many hours have been spent working on this statue.

A lot of thought had to go into it; how to do things and in what order. For example; how to make the crown, how to make the hair. Our Lady has a cross in her hand... this had to be made and attached last, as it would otherwise be impossible to sand and paint behind it. The whole statue had to be wrapped in plastic to protect it whilst this final piece was added and then sanded and painted. It was a bit of problem-solving, and challenging at the same time.

The face of Our Lady had to be perfect, so that took quite a bit of time too.

The statue has a solid plaster base. Again, there is a lot of wire in it and it had to be perfectly square. There is a wooden frame around the base for protection and it also gives the statue a nice finish.

***I hope and pray that this statue will be of comfort and support to all who pray to her as Our Lady of Hope. May Our Lady bring many blessings to our parish community.***

***Our Lady of Hope - Pray for us***

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## Super Sewers Community Sewing Group

by Marie Nicol

A group of keen sewing ladies has been meeting monthly (Covid permitting) for the last few years. Initially we met in Bishop Viard College sewing room, but because of renovation work there, we have been at Brandon Intermediate during this year. Not being able to meet during times of lockdown and Covid restrictions hasn't stopped our committed group from making useful items for those in our local community, including for Our Lady of Hope parish.



The items sewn include wheat bags, door snakes, and cushions for the Porirua Vinnies Op shop to sell. We also cut and fabric-back baby blankets, made from part-worn larger sized woollen blankets, for the maternity ward at Kenepuru Hospital. These are then gifted to new-born babies to take home when they leave hospital. Repairs are also made to donated clothing for both Pregnancy Help and Vinnies.



Another project this year was to sew velcro fastenings onto 75 swimming headbands for the Porirua Ear Van, for them to give away to children with ear grommets, so that they can go swimming safely without getting water into their ears.

Earlier this year, our parish secretary, Jane Lee, informed me that the elderly sister who used to make and supply our parish with white baptismal stoles had retired from making them. Her equipment was given to a Catholic supplies company, who now make them. But at almost \$40 each they had become unaffordable for most parents to buy.

Photo:

One of the finished baptism stoles

Fortunately, in early August, I had taken one home to trace a pattern from. During lockdown, with time on my hands, I was able to set about cutting out 20 or so from fabrics that I have at home for the Super Sewers group. I was confident about the cutting and sewing of them but was unsure of what I should do in regards to the hand-painted decorations. Jeanette Hawinkels, who is a very talented artist and a parishioner, was approached and asked if she would be willing to be part of this initiative. Very generously, Jeanette felt honoured to be asked to share her talents in this way.

After getting to alert level 3, she was able to purchase some fabric paints and, after a few practices, she was able to complete the decorative candle and wording on each stole. Painted and complete by the time we reached alert level 2, I was then able to deliver them to another Super Sewers member, Angela Birch, to complete the sewing, making it a team effort to benefit others and keep us all busy during lockdown.

Super Sewers Community Sewing group meet on the 4th Saturday of each month February - November. If you would prefer to sew at home on your own machine or by hand for repairs, projects can be delivered to you.

Our last meeting of this year will be held on the 27th November (Covid permitting). All abilities in sewing are welcome, even if you are wanting to learn the basics. Two of our members are sewing teachers and we are always learning from each other.



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If you:

- have any sewing projects that you or your community group need help with
- are down-sizing or having a spring clean and have any sewing materials/fabric you no longer require and would like to donate
- would like to join the sewing bees and help us help others

Please get in touch: [marienicol@xtra.co.nz](mailto:marienicol@xtra.co.nz) or phone 027 215 1553

## The Good Samaritan

by Fr John van der Kaa AA



SAMARITANUS BONUS – THE GOOD SAMARITAN is a Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life, 22 September 2020. Here are some of its teachings.



Euthanasia, even if it is done to eliminate pain, is a grave violation of the Law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person. Any cooperation in such an act is a grave sin. The involvement of a medical practitioner makes this worse because it implicates another person in one's own despair.

When gravely ill people ask for death, this is not to be understood as asking for euthanasia. It is almost always an anguished plea for help and love. In these cases, the guilt of the person may be reduced or completely absent, but the error of judgement into which the conscience falls – perhaps in good faith – does not change the nature of this act of killing, which must always be rejected.

The sick person needs, besides medical care, the human and supernatural warmth with which sick persons can and ought to be surrounded by all those close to them, parents and children, doctors and nurses.

When to stop giving medical care? Medicine can unnecessarily delay death, often without real benefit to the patient. When death is imminent – and without interruption of the normal care the patient requires – it is lawful to stop treatments that provide only a precarious or painful extension of life. Other cares, including hydration and nutrition should be provided up to the point when they are no longer therapeutic.

Most of the above is provided by palliative care. This implies compassion, remaining at the side of the suffering person, giving spiritual support to them and their families. It is leading to acceptance which overcomes denial, and hope which prevails over anguish. It always includes effective pain relief which allows the patient to face death without the fear of undergoing intolerable pain.

In some countries, NZ included, national laws provide, along with palliative care, something called Medical Assistance to the Dying that can include the possibility of requesting euthanasia and assisted suicide. Such provisions are a cause of grave confusion: by including under palliative care the provision of integrated medical assistance for a voluntary death, they imply that it would be morally lawful to request euthanasia or assisted suicide.

In providing care, the family is important. They can give help and joy based on strong relationships. The sick must never feel to be a burden.

The philosophy of hospice care, whether community based or in-service centres, is to always treat the whole person while never hastening death nor unnecessarily prolonging it. They are sanctuaries where suffering is full of meaning. They should radiate faith and hope directed towards God.

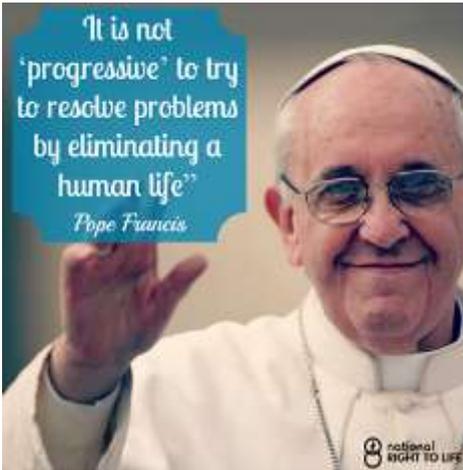
*The Good Samaritan* also talks about care for babies and children who are terminally ill. They are little patients and need to be assisted and accompanied in a manner respectful of life. That also means avoiding aggressive medical treatment and unreasonable tenacity, as well as intentional hastening of their death. In pastoral care we should be thinking of baptism and confirmation. Basic care must be offered for as long as feasible.

What about sedation? A deep religious sense can make it possible for a patient to live with pain through the lens of redemption as a special offering to God. However, sedation is allowed to ease the pain and suffering. This holds also for treatments that hasten the moment of death – always with the patient's informed consent. Those responsible for pastoral care should



prepare the patient in advance so that they may consciously approach death as an encounter with God. ***The use of painkillers is part of the care of the patient, but any use of those that directly and intentionally causes death is euthanasia and unacceptable. The sedation must exclude as its direct purpose the intention to kill, even though it may accelerate the inevitable onset of death.***

For doctors, healthcare workers and all of us: ***collaboration with euthanasia although allowed by civil legislation –contrasts with the Law of God.*** It is never licit to formally co-operate in evil. Governments must acknowledge the right to conscientious objection.



What should the Hospital Chaplain do when it is known that the Catholic patient has requested euthanasia or assisted suicide? The NZ Bishops have stated in new pastoral guidelines that it is the Church's expectation that spiritual accompaniment will be offered to those considering assisted dying who request this accompaniment from a bearer or servant of consolation and hope.

A final remark: when *The Good Samaritan* uses words like *lawful* and *acceptable*, those words are used

from a Catholic Teaching background. When in NZ euthanasia and assisted suicide are made legal and lawful, the practice is still unlawful on moral grounds.

The full text of *Samaritanus Bonus* can be found here:

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/09/22/200922a.html> [Back](#)

The NZ Bishops Pastoral Statement and Guidelines can be found here:

<https://www.catholic.org.nz/news/media-releases/eolca-catholic-guidelines>

*Edited by Fr Michael McCabe, founding director of the NZ Catholic Bioethics Centre*

## Encountering the Love ... my Launch Out journey thus far

*by Telesia Alaimoana (Launch Out Candidate)*

In December 2020 when the final assessment came back from marking, I realised that I had just completed and passed the last of the four papers I studied during that year! These were towards the New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies - Christian Leadership Strand, as part of the Launch Out requirements. I was not overly excited as I knew it would be another six months before I could finally hold that piece of paper in my hand and graduation was not yet confirmed. Instead, I looked back to 2016 and reflected on the tertiary journey from then to now.

It was not plain sailing, as some may think. Instead, it has been a journey full of ups and downs. The struggle for me was very real, especially when you have a family

and a full time job, coupled with online or distance delivery of the papers. I often felt isolated and alone, with many sleepless nights of reading and trying to make sense of the machinery of Catholicism. When I could not start a journal entry, I often asked myself, “*why am I punishing myself? Did I really need to stay up until 2am to try and write a journal?*” I often struggled to balance my work time, study time and my family responsibilities.



Mid-year 2017, I took on an extra family who became homeless while living in Wainuiomata. A mother with two primary-school children and a three-month-old baby. We only had one spare room in the house!! We managed and made do with the space we had for six months. Study time during that year was from 10pm at night when everyone else had gone to sleep. Annual leave was also taken to try and catch up with well-overdue journals and assessments .

***But WHY? Because I must be loving what I do for me to continue doing it.***

There are different kinds of LOVE that I encountered through this journey.

I often think of my mother whom I had looked after for several years with my younger siblings. Her love for me as a mother has made me the person I am today. Family love is loving those immediate members of your family. Like the love I had when I encountered a family in need of a home.

My love for my children is also another type of love that I don't think is the same as family love. I see my children as a gift from God and I ought to love and nurture them, like my mother's love for me.

The love between a husband and wife is yet another type of love. Falling in love can leave one 'spellbound'. This human love left speechless to a certain extent, not finding it necessary, or even possible, to accurately express what I felt. Love is the foundation of our lives as human beings made in the image of God.

During the study journey, I felt that no one cared for or loved me. That they

abandoned me, all alone during cold winter nights while they sleep in their warm beds. I don't cry often, but I shed a tear or two. Am I expecting a little too much from the others, especially my husband? Maybe I am, but this is the reality of what I was going through and it did not feel right for me.

There were days when I had felt overwhelmed on account of one thing or another. I found myself with much responsibility and anxious about being able to do well and complete what was in front of me, and there were times I felt overwhelmed for the opposite reason; finding that life seemed to be at a standstill and I was not sure what to do next.

***Prayer is the backbone of my strength to carry on. Those lonely nights by myself is when I often encountered God and prayers.***

It was during these encounters that I truly felt the love of God, the love that is beyond any experience of human love, and thus, when experienced on a profound level, I found myself sitting back in awe and admiration of the God whom I love. No words will be able to capture or express my admiration and amazement of the glory and splendour of the God I have been drawn to love during the struggles of the study journey.

In June 2021, graduation day, the reality had started to slowly sink in. Spending the morning with my husband, nervously awaiting something to happen. I had no idea what I was waiting for to happen that day ... but I was expecting something. It was the simple words of my dear husband "*Congratulations, I love you*" that made me feel I had accomplished something special.

'Falling in love', as it relates to God, is not only a human passion or emotion, it's a spiritual yearning that consumes your soul and leaves you content in His presence. The experience of this spiritual union with God is all that I need in life to find fulfilment and it will be the source of all that I do in life, that my actions will be solely directed toward the love of God. I reflected upon the depth of my love of God and if I could not see this love alive in my life, then I will need to tell Him that I desire that love and seek Him with all my might.

I will leave you all my friends and readers today, knowing that all of you including my family have always loved me as I journeyed through the last four years, into the next phase, but most of all knowing that God's love for me has made the impossible possible and I am truly grateful for that LOVE as I continue this Launch Out journey.

Fa'afetai.

*First published in LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL) August 2021 Used with permission.*

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## A Parable for the Vaccine Hesitant

author unknown

God will protect me . . .

There was once a farmer in an isolated area of the country - a good, honest God-fearing man who always prayed and trusted God.

It happened that a period of rain began, and the farmer was feeling concerned. In a dream, he was sure that God assured him that He would save him from any flood.



So when the rain continued and his farm was surrounded, he did not worry, and as a rowing boat passed by, he declined a ride out to safety, saying *“God will protect me”*.



The rain continued, and continued. The man had to move to the top floor of his house, from where he saw a motor-boat looking for anyone who needed help.

*“No thanks, God will protect me.”*



It rained and it rained. The man was forced to climb to the roof of his house and a helicopter spotted him there.

*“No, I’m OK. God will protect me.”*



The floods continued to rise and the farmer was drowned.

When he arrived at Heaven’s Gate, he complained to God;

*“You promised to protect me!”*

To which God replied

*“I sent you a rowing boat, a motor boat and a helicopter. What more could I do?”*



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## Hearts Aflame

by *Jemma Brunton*



Some of you will have seen me around over the years and many of you know me well. I have been a member of Our Lady of Hope parish since 2006. What many of you may not know is that I have been a member of the [Hearts Aflame Catholic Summer School](#) planning team, and since January 2015 I have been the Director of the school.

Hearts Aflame is a ten-day Catholic summer school open to young adults aged 18 to 35, held every year since 1992 - so January 2022 is our 30 year anniversary! It is organised by a team of passionate lay volunteers.

*The mission and purpose of Hearts Aflame is to help young people develop and foster authentic relationships with Jesus Christ and His Holy Catholic Church through participation in the Sacraments, prayer and formation, lived-out and experienced in a short-term community environment. Our aim is to actively promote each participant's discovery and living-out of their vocation in love, truth, and holiness.*

Over the years we have had young people from Our Lady of Hope attend and some have written in this magazine about their experience. I attended my first 'Hearts' in January 2005 and found the experience pretty intense. However, the Father used those ten days in a profound way to draw me closer to him; and most significantly, he opened my eyes to the depth and beauty of the Catholic Church. In that first school or subsequent visits, never would I have imagined that 7 years later I would be helping to organize it, and that 10 years later I would be in charge.

In the role of Director, I no longer long for the ten days of the school as my chance to connect back in with God in a deeper way than I have during the year, I no longer hold out for those ten days as a chance to take a breath and discern what God is asking of me in the following year. I am still very much blessed and God still very much uses Hearts Aflame to grow my faith - but these days it looks different.

God has shown me his goodness and made my faith deeper through this leadership experience. In 2019 we needed to fundraise \$16,000 in 6 weeks for the upcoming school (participants fees cover their accommodation and meals, but not the costs of speakers' attendance or other costs). I'll admit to a few sleepless nights, but then I knew that this was an awesome opportunity for me to see God at work because there was no possible human way for me to fundraise that much money, whilst holding down a full-time job and actually working with the team to organize the school. God showed up and we raised every cent we needed and more!

As the head of this national event, a big part of my job is discernment; discerning speakers, themes, new team members, and how to manage tricky issues with participants. I truly know that none of that is because 'I am super-wise', but rather that I have sought the Lord with all my heart to make the right call and then stepped out in faith. I have been blown away by the Lord's gracious mercy.



A big part of that is knowing that I don't make these decisions on my own. I believe part of wise discernment is having people you trust around you: those who have faith, are trying to follow the Lord's will in their life, who will challenge your thinking and won't be 'persuaded' by you. It's about

being open to those people and knowing they have your back. Leadership can be very lonely at times and I am eternally grateful for these people who have my back!

There are so many reasons why it's a blessing to be involved in this work; many young people who have vocations to religious life or the priesthood acknowledge their time spent at Hearts Aflame. Some have even said it was during the ten days of the school that they first heard God call them. Earlier this year, a young woman entered a religious community in the USA, *The Servants of Our Lord and the Virgin of Matara*. She had been in New Zealand nannying and was invited to Hearts Aflame. There she met a nun (a friend of mine) whom we had invited back from PNG to attend the school. These two struck up a friendship and my friend said right from the beginning she thought this woman had a vocation. It's stories like this that make it all worthwhile, and I am so grateful for the very small way the Lord allows me to participate in his work here on earth.

The 2022 school sold out within 3 hours of tickets being available - this blew myself and the team away. It brings me so much joy to see the hunger in young people in New Zealand to give God ten days so they can grow deeper in faith.

As I sign off this article, I also want to say farewell to the parish. I moved to Christchurch in October to be closer to family, friends and my god-children. I am looking forward to a new adventure in the South and to what God will continue to do with my life. I want to say a big thank you to the parish for being my spiritual home for most of the last 16 years. I am grateful to the priests we have had and to all those who serve the parish. I pray that Tawa/Titahi Bay will always be a thriving and faithful parish. United In Christ, Jemma

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## St Joseph and the Christmas Angels

**The Christmas story in Scripture probably has more angels than any other part of the Bible.** I've always thought of 'Christmas Angels' as those who appeared to the shepherds, even though careful reading of the gospels reveals several more. During this year of Saint Joseph I have read a number of features and listened to a couple of online podcasts about this saint. These helped me to learn a lot more about St Joseph and to rethink some of the story around Christmas. As we are now just about at the end of the Year of St Joseph, I would like to share some parts of what I have found.

We learn of the birth of Jesus from Mary's perspective in the Gospel of St Luke. First, the archangel Gabriel came to Mary to say she had been chosen to become the mother of God. A huge host of angels celebrated the birth of Jesus after the first angel had made the announcement to the shepherds on the hillside. On both these occasions the angels were 'seen' and 'heard' as if they were people present.

St Matthew begins his narrative with Saint Joseph. His genealogy is fully listed, showing that Joseph was "*of the house of David*" and therefore a member of the Jewish royal family. Joseph is described as "*a man of honour*".

The angels that came to St Joseph were different from those who came to Mary. Joseph did not 'see' them, we are told that they spoke to him in a dream.

The first time was after Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy. He knew that the child was not his, but even so, his reaction was not to do what would have been accepted in the culture of the time - that Mary should be publicly denounced and stoned to death.



Instead, Joseph had decided to "*divorce her informally*". Before this occurred, an angel spoke to him in a dream, telling him all about the child, to take Mary into his home and that he was to name the child 'Jesus'. (Matthew 1:19-24)

The child was born and the usual Jewish protocols were observed following the birth of a child. Then the Magi arrived, having followed the new star that appeared with the birth of the 'new king'. The Magi were 'warned in a dream' to return by a different way to their home - though angels are not specifically mentioned.



However, it is “*the angel of the Lord*” who appears to Joseph in a dream to warn him to take the child and his mother to safety in Egypt because of the threat posed by Herod. (Matthew 1:13-14)

On both occasions, Joseph trusts, has faith, and does what the angels have told him.

What can I learn from St Joseph and his angels? Primarily, to be attentive to whatever way God is sending me a message, even when I have already made my own plans. And then to follow through by doing what is asked.

Pope Saint Gregory the Great (c.540-604) said:

*“It must be realized that the word ‘angel’ is the name of an office, and not of a*

*nature (...) since they are angels only when something is announced through them. Those who make minor announcements are called angels, those who make important ones are called archangels. Hence it is that not just any angel was sent to the Virgin Mary but that Gabriel the archangel was sent: it was right that the proper one for this role should be of the highest rank of angels since he was to announce the greatest news of all.”*

Perhaps you have met an angel? It could have been in a vision, like the Archangel Gabriel who came to Mary. It could be in human form, like Raphael, who accompanied Tobias to find Sarah and to cure Tobit. Perhaps a person you know, or who was a stranger, who was ‘angel’ for a specific time or purpose of God. Or it may be through a dream, as happened for St Joseph.

**Perhaps God sometimes wants YOU to be an angel for someone else?**

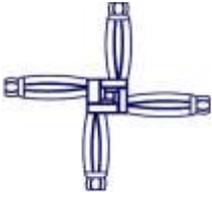
Do you have a personal ‘angel story’ that you would be willing to share with us all? It can be angels in any form you have experienced them.



You can have any help you need composing your story.  
Contact: [magazine@ourladyofhope.org.nz](mailto:magazine@ourladyofhope.org.nz) or parish office

## St Francis Xavier School

- by Joan Woods (Principal/Tumuaki)



### Term 3 & 4 News

How different school life is when in Covid lockdown levels! During Term 3 our students were learning remotely when we were in three weeks of lockdown at Level 4.

**St Francis Xavier School**  
Strength and Gentleness  
Tu Maia, Tu Aroha

Once we moved to Level 2 school was able to open again. We ensured the school day was as normal as possible for the children

and were grateful for all the support our parents gave to their children around attending school at Level 2.

We have been delighted to still be able to welcome students to school and it has been a busy two terms with children turning 5 and starting school. School life is still quite different as we are having to limit parents and visitors coming into the school. We look forward to the day when we can resume assemblies and formally welcome all our new students to the St Francis Xavier School community.

We have also had to cancel many of our usual activities we have in Terms 3 and 4 but the children have adjusted remarkably well and shown great resilience.

### Religious Education

Our plans to celebrate **Catholic Schools' Day** with the three other Catholic schools was not able to take place due to the changes in Alert Levels. Instead we went ahead and celebrated at school. During the day everyone took part in a liturgy celebrating our Catholic schools. Teachers had then prepared a range of fun activities for the children to take part in. The



buddies of our

junior children made sure their buddy could find their way around the school and take part in something they enjoyed.

To celebrate **All Saints Day** each syndicate held their own liturgy. The children shared knowledge they had about a saint and celebrated.

### Enhancements for School

We were lucky enough to be successful to get a grant from Hutt Mana Charitable Trust. This grant



enabled us to purchase a water table and equipment for our junior classes. We were also able to use some of this grant for three picnic tables. These tables were delivered just before lockdown and were made for us by members of the Tawa Menz Shed. The children have enjoyed using the tables during break times for activities and eating lunch.

Recently we were donated 10 lemon trees and 10 feijoa trees by the Sustainability Trust. Children were involved in the planting of the trees and classes now take responsibility for watering them. We look forward to being able to share the fruit with our community in the coming years.



**Enrolments for 2022** If you have a child who will turn five next year, please phone the school office on 232 8927 for an Enrolment Pack or visit [our website](#) for more information regarding enrolment forms and procedures. I am very happy to meet with any new prospective parents for 2022. The new school year starts on Thursday 3 February 2022.

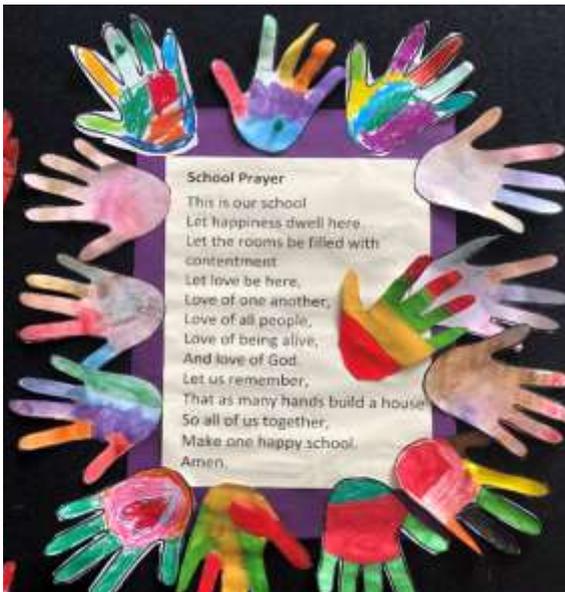
### **New School Roof**

We are very excited to hear that the reroofing of the main school building is expected to begin early in December. The work will be done in two parts with the first half of the building expected to be completed by the end of Term 1 2022. New lights, heat pumps and skylights will also be installed as part of this project.

While the reroofing is taking place the school hall will be used for classrooms and will not be available for use by any groups outside the school until this project is complete.

***“Be it known to all who enter here that Jesus is the reason for this school.***

***He is the unseen yet ever-present teacher in its classes. He is the model of its community and the inspiration of its children and teachers”.***



## End of School Year/Christmas

With the end of school year and Christmas in sight, many of our learning programmes will have a focus on **Advent**, as a time of preparation for Christmas.

We will also be farewelling our Year 6 leavers, and celebrating their time at St Francis Xavier School.

I wish you all, on behalf of the staff and Board of Trustees a Merry Christmas/Meri Kirihimete  
*Joan Woods*

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## St Pius X School - by Michele Whiting, (Interim Principal/Tumuaki)

### ‘WHANAU-ATUA-KURA-AROHĀ Together we Shine’



‘Kia ora e te whānau.

I’m writing this as we approach week 4 of term 4. The end of the term and school year is coming up fast! I have enjoyed the opportunity to step out of retirement to support the school during the two terms while the Board plans and prepares to appoint a new principal to start in 2022.

### Term 3 Happenings

#### Mass

Early in the term we were able to celebrate two special days with a mass. The first was grandparents day. The mass was held at St Pius X church and was followed by some fun activities with grandparents who stayed in the classrooms and then shared a morning tea with staff. The second was mass of the Assumption held at Bishop Viard College. It was great for us to be involved with our tuakana, reminding our students that there is a Catholic education pathway. The games in the gym were fun.

#### Home Learning

While lockdown was an unwelcome reminder of the threat of the pandemic, teachers and support staff were able to get our devices out to students and there were some great learning interactions during that time. One of those was a whole-school ‘zui’ (zoom hui), where students were able to share



some of their learning and we could give awards to two students from each class to acknowledge the ways in which they demonstrate one of the school's values: **care**.



### **Relationships for learning , interconnectedness, strategies for reconciliation**

There has been a big focus on developing student agency and voice to contribute to a positive school culture. This included unpacking each of our four values - Care, Respect, Excellence and Wisdom (**CREW**) linking them to the NZ curriculum's key competencies and the teachings of Jesus.

During terms 3 and 4 we are exploring how to integrate the concept of relationships across all learning areas, including religious education. Thanks to Anna-Maria Vissers for her support in this.

### **Physical Activities and Senior Camp**

During term 3 learners continued to have very positive experiences with the movement, dance and sport activities that were provided in term 2. For me, however, a real highlight of the term was the year 5 and 6 camp to El Rancho in the last week of term. The students rose to the expectations set in self-management, relating to others and participating and contributing. It was a lot of fun and, while we all went home exhausted, it was a great way to finish the term.



We are also very grateful to the amazing parents who stayed with us and the ones who visited on various days to help.

In term 4 the year 4-6 learners are part of the **Healthy Harbours** programme which looks at Titahi Bay's marine diversity, Porirua's histories, the geological features and impact of humans on our environment. This includes a great opportunity to go snorkelling at Titahi Bay.

## Whānau Support

We have a great group of parents and whānau who continue to provide amazing support to the school - by transporting students to activities, working in the breakfast club and organising fruit.

A disco, organised towards the end of term 3, contributed a large amount of grocery items for the Vinnies food banks. Thanks also to Amanda Joe, who does some great work with senior students on taking action to help others.

There is lovely Ahua in this school generated by the amount of generosity and kindness that surrounds it. For new enrolments, visit [our web site](#).

## Board and Staff

Our board chair, Rebecca Fayen, is stepping down this term. Rebecca has been committed to this school for 9 years, working as a board member, fundraiser and very involved parent. She will be missed.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who has supported me during this interim principalship - staff, board, parents, Catholic Education Office, and the Ministry of Education. Who would have thought that my education experience, starting at St Pius X school in Glen Innes, Auckland, (not sharing the date!!) would lead me to another St Pius X at this stage of my working life!!

It has been a joy. Nga mihi mahana ki a koutou.

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## Mass Times in Nearby Parishes

**Our Lady of Hope parish times highlighted.**

**(note: bookings must be made to attend these masses)**

<b>Saturday vigil</b>	5:00pm	St Andrew's Newlands
	<b>5:30pm</b>	<b>St Pius X, Titahi Bay</b>
	6:00pm	St Teresa's, Plimmerton & Holy Family, Porirua
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>8:30am</b>	<b>Our Lady of Fatima, Tawa</b>
	9:00 am	St Benedict's, Khandallah
	9:30am	St Teresa's, Plimmerton & Holy Family, Porirua
	10:00am	Te Ngākau Tapu (Māori Mass)
	<b>10:30am</b>	<b>Our Lady of Fatima, Tawa &amp;</b>
	10:30am	Sts Peter & Paul Johnsonville
	5:15pm	Te Ngākau Tapu (English Mass)

## Parish Notices - Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths

### Baptisms

Name of child	Parents	Date
Lauren Elizabeth Veitch	Genevra and Angus Veitch	7 August 2021
Calista Aurora Laureles	Pamela and Jamil Laureles	14 August 2021
Aria Alcaide Atkins	Elzerie & Paul Atkins	16 October 2021
Will Jose Fraser	Juanita Leynes & Fraser Sewell	31 October 2021

### Deaths

Veronica (Roni) Gray – 28 August 2021

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### **Remember you can receive e-copy of *Stories of Hope***

This is a good way to share the magazine with family away from Tawa.

**If you now live 'out of area' or for any other reason no longer wish to receive a printed copy of *Stories of Hope* you can request to receive a PDF e-copy.**

**This will be sent to you when each new edition is published.**

**Any parishioner can request this, as well as their printed copy.**

**Just contact: [ourladyofhope@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ourladyofhope@xtra.co.nz) or 232 5611**

Please notify the parish office if you wish to be removed from the printed copy mailing list because you are moving away or for any other reason.

## New Parishioners

If you are new to the parish, Welcome!

Please introduce yourself to the celebrant, another parishioner,  
or call the parish office 9:30am -12:00pm Tuesday-Friday phone: (04) 232 5611  
or email: ourladyofhope@xtra.co.nz

## Current Parish Pastoral Council Members

Fr Rico de la Torre - parish priest, Marie Prescott - chair; Telesia Alaimoana, Lagi Anamani; Jane Bolton; Raymond Fernando; Dorothy Jansen (St Pius X School rep); Ray Lindsay; Rupi Mapusua; and Litea Meli.

## Current Finance Committee Members

Fr Rico de la Torre - parish priest, Graeme Hansen - chair, Denise Dorman, Ted Gallen, Patrick McGill, Nicola O’Keeffe, Louis van Son.

## Regular events

**Joshua Catholic Fellowship for Men**, Third Thurs. 7:30 pm, at Loaves & Fishes

**Monthly luncheons** in Tawa church foyer, First Tuesday of each month. (Covid restrictions permitting - check weekly newsletter)

**Marian Mothers** - 2nd Monday am each month - see weekly newsletter

**Women of Faith** - 2nd Thursday am each month - see weekly newsletter

**Xavier Youth Group** - Years 9 to 13, alternate Fridays, 7:30 - 9:30pm OLoF church foyer. Check with Paul 027 304 0712

**Other events:** check website calendar: [www.ourladyofhope.org.nz](http://www.ourladyofhope.org.nz)

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**We hope you enjoyed reading this issue of *Stories of Hope*.**  
**When you've finished reading it, why not pass it on to a friend?**  
**We need your input. Keep those contributions coming!!**

**This edition of *Stories of Hope* is sponsored by  
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17 Kenepuru Drive, Porirua ph: 04 237 4174 fax: 04 237 4172  
email: info@ninness.co.nz web site: <http://ninness.co.nz>.

**Funerals in Level 2** - below are the Government regulations.

Numbers for specific venues may be less than 100, according to venue size.

- Funerals of up to 100 people are permitted within an inside venue. Included within those 100 people are the funeral director and celebrant.
- Funerals of up to 100 people are permitted at an outside venue. Included within those 100 people are the funeral director and celebrant, celebrant and cemetery or crematorium staff.
- Food and drink are permitted to be served, with special requirements.
- Funeral arrangements can be made in person.
- Viewings and dressings are permitted by arrangement with the funeral director.
- Each gathering of people, going to and from the funeral home must sign in using the COVID-19 tracing phone app. A physical register is also available.
- Masks are to be worn by all parties at all times.

**Live Streaming** is a cost effective and practical solution to reach relatives or friends who are unable to attend in person or due to travel restrictions cannot be here. Ninness Funeral Home are able to arrange for a live stream of the service from any venue. It is a secure link and only people with the log in details will be able to watch the live stream

**For further helpful information,** visit the Ninness Funeral Home website

### **Shuttle Service to Whenua Tapu Cemetery**

Ninness Funeral Home provides a complimentary shuttle service for people who either do not have their own transport or where the cemetery is not on a public transport route. The shuttle runs to Whenua Tapu cemetery every month (excluding December) on the last Wednesday.

#### **Whenua Tapu Shuttle - dates for the coming months**

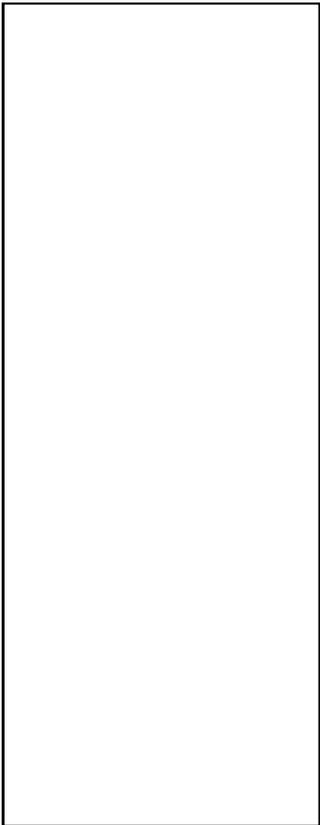
Wednesday – 24 November

Wednesday – 26 January

The shuttle will collect you from your gate or local bus stop.

**Reserve a seat by phoning (04) 237 4174 no later than 12 noon on the Tuesday prior to the shuttle leaving.**





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