



# Stories of HOPE

November 2023

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



*Ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest ...*

*Luke 10:2*

Please pray for these men on their journey to priesthood

See story inside

## 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, with no pictures, 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 021 189 5953 [magazine@ourladyofhope.org.nz](mailto:magazine@ourladyofhope.org.nz)

**Deadline for next edition: 23 February 2024.** 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.

### Copyright:

All items published in *Stories of Hope* are copyright and may not be otherwise published for general distribution without the prior approval of the editor. Items may be copied for the use of private individuals or small groups, providing that the source is acknowledged.

### With Thanks to:

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

## Contents for November Issue 2023

<a href="#">Magazine Policy Statements</a>	2
<a href="#">Editorial</a>	4
<a href="#">The Christmas Message</a>	6
<a href="#">Farewell to the Marist Sisters</a>	8
<a href="#">Assumptionists on the move</a>	10
<a href="#">Jesus, Light of the World</a>	11
<a href="#">The Journey from Parishioner to Priesthood</a>	12
<a href="#">The Joys of Mission</a>	15
<a href="#">From the Parish Council</a>	17
<a href="#">World Youth Day - Lisbon</a>	18
<a href="#">Fear Not!</a>	20
<a href="#">The Open Door</a>	22
<a href="#">Marist Spirituality is Still Here</a>	25
<a href="#">Marian Mothers' Retreat</a>	26
<a href="#">A Filipino All Saints' Day</a>	28
<a href="#">Sacramental Programme 2023</a>	29
<a href="#">A Word of Thanks</a>	30
<a href="#">St Francis Xavier School Report</a>	31
<a href="#">St Pius X School Report</a>	34
<a href="#">Parish records: Baptisms, Deaths, Marriages</a>	37
<a href="#">Notices, Coming Events</a>	38
<a href="#">Message from Ninness</a>	39

### Editorial committee:

Fr Rico de la Torre, Jane Langham,

### Contributors this issue:

Marie Andrewaratha, Gerson Badayos, Amie Fouhy, Bernie Griffin, Jane Langham, Jane Lee, Sophia Lopez, Nenah Kelemete, Joseph Mijares, Jing Moredo, Ian Munro, Marie Prescott, Michael Rayner, Erika Sison, Fr John van der Kaa, Matt White, Joan Woods.

## From the Editor

by Jane Langham



Welcome to our final edition of Stories of Hope for 2023.

As we approach Christmas once again, we are reminded that it is a time to think of all the Good News that Jesus' birth brings us. This does not include being afraid! Have you ever had a fear of something? A fear bad enough to be a phobia even? Amie had a fear of spiders and on [P.20](#) she tells us how she was released from this fear. Praise God!

This year is proving to be pivotal in our parish life. Assumptionist priests have been part of our parish from its very beginnings. From 1968 they established and ran Viard College in Porirua, for boys. (Brigidine sisters looked after the girls.) Whilst there, Fr Chris Penders helped establish and train a choir at Our Lady of Fatima. He and Fr John, both skilled woodworkers, built much of the sanctuary furniture for the newly built church, and continued to provide more, as and when required. The last two Assumptionist priests are soon moving out of Tawa. Fr John has written of their time as parish priests here, after the Assumptionists left BVC. [\(P.10\)](#)

Also now departed, after almost 30 years in Tawa and 70 years in Wellington Archdiocese, the Marist sisters have all gone to Auckland. [\(P.8\)](#) Both the Assumptionists and Marists will be greatly missed in our parish. But we are very blessed to have Fr Rico still here with us on loan from the Philippines, and may have Fr Pene back in February. And we still have Marist Spirituality here! [\(P.25\)](#)

More blessings to our parish are found through parishioners, some of whom are following the path of religious ministry and others who have inspiring stories to tell of their experiences. In this edition there is a feature on the seminary journey of three current seminarians at different stages of their journey [\(P.12\)](#) Also, Michael's year of Net ministry [\(P.15\)](#) and Erika's once-in-a-lifetime experience of World Youth Day in Lisbon earlier this year. [\(P.18\)](#)

Previous editions have featured the tremendous work some of our parishioners do in the community. In this edition, we learn about the Open Home Foundation, which was founded by Ewen and Gillian Laurensen. They have now retired from active involvement in OHF and have moved to live in our parish. I am sure you will be inspired by their story. [\(P.22\)](#) It might even encourage you to follow-through on something in your own heart that the Lord is inviting you to establish! As always, there's much more besides!

***Let us all pray for God's gift of peace for 2024.***

[Back](#)



## Advent and Christmas Timetable

**Monday 4 December 10am** Advent Service followed by morning tea  
Hosted by Marian Mothers & Women of Faith groups OLF, Tawa

### Friday 15 December – Saturday 23 December

**7pm** nightly Simbang Gabi Mass and fellowship  
Our Lady of Fatima church, Tawa

**Sunday 24 December** Morning masses as usual

**7pm** Family Mass Our Lady of Fatima church, Tawa

**12 midnight** Christmas Mass Our Lady of Fatima church, Tawa

### Monday 25 December

**9am** Christmas Day Mass  
St Pius X church, Titahi Bay

**10:30am** Christmas Day Mass  
Our Lady of Fatima church, Tawa

### Monday 1 January

**9:00am** New Year's Day Mass  
Our Lady of Fatima church, Tawa

**10:30am** New Year's Day Mass  
St Pius X church, Titahi Bay

### Adoration

Finishes for 2023 at 5pm on Wednesday 20 December

Resumes on Wednesday 17 January after 9am Mass

### Tuesday 19 December

Children's Fun Morning - [details p. 36](#)

**10am-12:30pm**

Our Lady of Fatima church foyer

Come let us  
*Adore*  
Him +

[Back](#)

## The Christmas Message

by Ian Munro



It seems to me that each year it gets that little bit more difficult to engage with the Christmas message, to cut through the commercial hoo-ha that surrounds it; hoo-ha that, these days, can start to build as early as September.

The Christmas trees, decorations and lights remind us that Christmas is coming and the marketing machine urges us to purchase ever new and ever more expensive gifts. “Buy! Buy! Buy! Now! Now! Now!”

Pope Benedict XVI, in an Advent homily in 2005, talked of joy being the true gift of Christmas rather than expensive presents, which demand time and money. Joy is something we can give *“with a smile, with a kind gesture, with some small help, with forgiveness. Let us give this joy and the joy given will be returned to us.”*

Pope Francis added to this in his 2022 Christmas message: *“Two thousand years after the birth of Jesus, after so many Christmases spent amid decorations and gifts, after so much consumerism that has packaged the mystery we celebrate, there is a danger. We know many things about Christmas, but we forget its real meaning.”*

### Only one message

When you look back over the years the papal Christmas messages are, for obvious reasons, similar in theme, after all there is really only one message: ***“To you is born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.”*** [Lk 2:11]

As far back 440, we find that Pope St. Leo I’s first Christmas sermon, one of the earliest recorded papal Christmas messages, was about how Christmas was a time of joy and that God coming to Earth as man is one of the greatest gifts he could have given us.<sup>1</sup>

It’s interesting, too, to see some of the words that crop up again and again in these messages. They are few but recurrent: humble, humility, poor, poverty, peace, love, compassion, kindness, light, joy, tenderness, true gift, true wealth, opening our hearts, harmony, children, and manger.

Each Christmas I find it grounding to stand in front of a nativity scene and think about what it is I’m looking at. And I see a small new-born child, wrapped in swaddling cloth who’s been lovingly and tenderly laid down in a rough, wooden, animals’ feeding trough. There are no bells, no triumphant fanfare, no twinkling

lights, no 'ho ho ho', no Bing Crosby, no brand managers wondering how they can pitch this.

Francis asks us to pray in front of the crib with our family and be touched by the tenderness of the child born poor and fragile among us, to give us His love. *"This is the true Christmas! If we remove Jesus, what remains of Christmas? An empty feast. Do not take Jesus out of Christmas! Jesus is the centre of Christmas. Jesus is the true Christmas."*<sup>2</sup>

And this is the problem. So often, even without thinking, we celebrate a Christmas where we put ourselves at the centre and Christmas really does become a celebration of consumerism, pointless gifts, and superfluous waste.

### **It will be Christmas if ...**

*"... it will be Christmas,"* Francis says, *"if, like Joseph, we give space to silence; if, like Mary, we say "here I am" to God; if, like Jesus, we are close to those who are alone; and if, like the shepherds, we come out of our enclosures to stay with Jesus. It will be Christmas if we find light in the poor grotto of Bethlehem. It will not be Christmas if we seek the dazzling lights of the world, if we fill ourselves up with gifts, lunches and dinners but do not help at least one poor person, who resembles God, because at Christmas God became poor."*<sup>3</sup>

As he said on the occasion of the lighting of a Christmas tree in 2014: *"In turning on the light of the Christmas tree, we wish for the light of Christ to be in us. A Christmas without light is not Christmas. Let there be light in the soul, in the heart; let there be forgiveness to others; let there be no hostilities or darkness. ... Let there be the beautiful light of Jesus."*<sup>4</sup>



1. Pope St Leo I, Sermon 21, 25 December, 440
2. Pope Francis, Address in St. Peter's Square to birthday well-wishers, 17 Dec, 2017
3. Pope Francis, General Audience, Vatican, 19 December, 2018
4. Pope Francis, Address of His Holiness Pope Francis on the Occasion of the Lighting of the Christmas Tree in Gubbio, 7 December, 2014

[Back](#)

## Farewell to the Marist Sisters

On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October there was a farewell afternoon tea (overflowing with sandwiches, biscuits, cakes and slices!) for Sisters Francine McGovern sm and Margaret Vaney sm. They are the last of very many Marist Sisters who have ministered in the archdiocese of Wellington over the last 70 years.

This photo is Sr Margaret and Sr Francine in their last Tawa home in Oxford Street.

On a sunny and wind-free afternoon and despite *'Spring into Tawa'* taking place at the same time, a large number of past and present parishioners, along with Sr Margaret's brother and sister, gathered to hear tributes from parish priest Fr Rico and from parishioner Eileen Mackey. Both Sr Francine and Sr Margaret spoke with affection of their many years in Tawa.



Marist unit leader for Aotearoa New Zealand, Sr Jane O'Carroll, was unable to attend, but sent her thoughts to be read by her stand-in for the day. Following is an extract from her words:

*"The story of the Marist Sisters in the Archdiocese of Wellington has its roots in 1940 when the Karori/Northland parish was formed. The Marist Sisters were invited to respond, but being wartime, their arrival was delayed! They arrived in Wellington on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1942, the Saturday before school opened!"*



*A house in Karori was made available to the Sisters and they stayed in the area of St Teresa's Karori school until the early 2000's. Sisters moved to Tawa in October 1996. October 2023 – twenty seven years (and 4 different houses!) later, we are about to leave. Time really flies so fast!*

*There is this verse of Scripture I love very much. King Solomon made a profound statement in Ecclesiastes 3:1 that there's "a season and a time for every purpose under heaven"!*

*That verse is like the fabric of our Marist religious life, lived out in mission and ministry, wherever we are and with whomsoever God sends.*

*We are missionary by the nature of our Marist charism – it is a life of being in a place and with people for a while and then moving on as needs change.*

*I thank God for the Assumptionist and present clergy and parishioners, past and present, in our parish of Tawa. You have all been a tremendous blessing, one way or another, to Francine and Margaret and to all the Marist Sisters who have been here. I'm sure their hearts are full of memories from their time here and I know they appreciate you all very much."*

The whole parish of Our Lady of Hope wishes Sr Francine and Sr Margaret every blessing for their next stage of life with the Marist Sisters in Auckland.



**Editor's note:** Sr Francine had intended to write a follow-up to the material in the August edition. The pressures of having to clear their home ready to relocate to Auckland means that she had no time for this. She hopes to have something for our next edition in March 2024.

[Back](#)

## Assumptionists on the Move

by Fr John van der Kaa

After 30 years in Tawa, the moment has come for Fr Paul and me to pack our bags and move to *Summerset on the Landing*. On paper, we have been given 6 months to sell our present house, pay for the apartments and organise the move.

Looking at the process it's a daunting task for the two of us, but it comes at the right time.



*Fr Paul and Fr John at Lyndhurst Road*

By the time we complete our move it will be close to 31 years since Cardinal Williams appointed Fr Chris, Fr Luke and me to the Tawa parish.

In 2003 Fr Paul joined us. Then he was invited to teach at Good Shepherd College in Auckland for six months each year. When in Tawa, he would continue working on his thesis. Fr Paul joined us full time in the parish after Fr Luke returned to the Netherlands for his retirement in 2005 (*he died in Singapore on his way there*).

In 2006 Fr Penders retired as parish priest. He died in 2014 and a year later Fr Paul had some serious health problems but he managed to return to our shared work in the parish.

In 2015, we went through the process of amalgamating with St Pius X parish in Titahi Bay. Three years later, in February 2018, Fr Paul and I retired from parish ministry and Frs Rico and Marlon were appointed to Our Lady of Hope parish.

This year Fr Paul has been ordained for 45 years and I am close to 58 years since my ordination. Both of us suffer from COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder).

As I am writing this sitting next to my wall planner, I can see a date marked for a small operation: 29 November. The oral surgeon will remove a wisdom tooth fully embedded in a cyst. It will stop me chatting to parishioners for a few weeks!

I hope to still be able to celebrate Mass in Johnsonville on Wednesdays and to assist Fr Gerard Burns when he needs help. I also pray the doctor will give me a positive report for renewing my driver's license in November.

We expect to move into Summerset before the end of March next year. That means getting rid of all the surplus 'things' in the house. I plan to have a garage sale, where parishioners can come and help themselves to whatever tools they want, in

exchange for a koha to the St Vincent de Paul Society. Just watch the newsletter for the date.

We are not really leaving the parish. Even from Summerset we will continue to feel connected to the parish community and endeavour to keep in touch. Let us not forget to pray for each other.



**Thank you for the love and friendship we had the privilege to share.**

## Jesus - Light of the World

*by The Editor*

If you were at the 8:30am Sunday Mass on 6th August, the feast of the Transfiguration, you may have seen the children from the Children's Liturgy session re-join the congregation carrying candles in jars. As it was also 1st Sunday of the month youth mass, you would have also noticed that several younger parishioners were filling many of the ministries that day, including helping lead the Children's Liturgy group. It was those young leaders who encouraged me to share this reflection with you.



The young girl in the row in front of me spent much of the remainder of the Mass opening and closing her jar, smelling the fragrance of the candle each time she opened it. I was reminded of a long-ago school science experiment where we learnt about the need for oxygen for fire (and life). A candle was lighted and when a bell-jar was placed over it, the candle soon went out for lack of oxygen.

'Inspiration' took over in my mind and I thought this a wonderful symbol of our life in God. Our 'candle' is lighted at our baptism and the 'oxygen' of the Holy Spirit keeps us burning brightly, replenished regularly by the grace of the Sacraments. The brightness and warmth of the candle can attract others to God and encourage them to let their own candle burn. But if we drop away from the Sacraments, or lose touch with God in prayer, that is like putting the lid on our jar – our spiritual life will gradually die.

*I am sure there is more symbolism that can be found in this image. Perhaps you would like to think of your own ideas. Especially, as we approach the feast of Christmas when the Light of the World first appeared among us, you could think of ways to "let your little light shine".*

## The Journey from Parishioner to Priesthood *by Three Seminarians*

In September this year Gerson Badayos spent two weeks in our parish as part of his third year seminary formation. Here, he writes of that time, as part of his journey. We are very blessed to have others associated with our parish also in the seminary. Joseph Mijares is completing his 4th year (see March 2020 before entering the seminary). Matt White is completing his 5th year (see November 2019 edition for his thoughts after his first year).



### **Who you are/where you are from?**

Kia ora! I am Gerson Badayos. Originally, I am from Davao City, Philippines. Back in the Philippines, I am a Licensed Mental Health practitioner and a Licensed Teacher with almost 7 years of professional work experience – doing counselling and teaching psychology/professional education courses.

### **How did you feel called to the priesthood?**

While I was doing my bachelor's degree, I also worked as a Pastoral Assistant to a Hospital Chaplain for 4 years (2009-2013). I helped the Hospital Chaplain (Priest) in almost all his sacramental and pastoral works: mass, anointing, and giving communion to the sick, among other things. Those were the years that priesthood seemed interesting to me. Also, those were the years when several people told me "You'll make a good priest."

However, it was during my professional years that I came across a video of Pope Francis sharing something about priestly vocation. What he said was very striking, and it made me emotional. Then, I strongly felt the desire to be a priest. I emailed some religious congregations seeking help to discern about it... some kind of spiritual direction. I got a reply from the Jesuits, and for years I discerned with them. I also recalled an encounter with a Filipino priest who is based in New Zealand who gave me an idea of the possibility of becoming a priest overseas. So, I sent an email to Fr. David Dowling, one of the Vocation Directors in New Zealand at that time. Surprisingly, he responded to me, and for a few years, I was discerning with him through our correspondence via email. Subsequently, I received an invitation from the Archdiocese of Wellington through Fr David for a "come and see experience." And now, I am a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Wellington, finishing my third-year of formation.

### **What significance/relevance/help was your time in Tawa?**

My time in Tawa parish was great. The encounters and conversations that I had

with the parishioners, the chance I had to observe and participate in the meetings of the parish's finance and pastoral committees, the mass we celebrated at the retirement home in Tawa, the house blessing by Fr. Rico when I accompanied him, a funeral mass and the special Samoan community mass that I served, and being involved at the Sunday and weekday Eucharistic celebrations were, for me, significant moments and vocation-enriching. And I am thankful for all these experiences. I am also grateful to Fr. Rico, Fr. Pene, and all the parishioners, especially those who offered their prayerful support. I look forward to visiting the parish, and I would be happy to be assigned to Tawa parish again for my next pastoral placement, given a chance.

### **Message to the youth/young adults**

Finally, I would like to encourage the youth and young adults in Tawa parish who may feel in their hearts the desire to serve God. Discern about it. Have faith and be courageous to respond to God's call in your life. Go on an adventure with the Lord, even to places out of your comfort (which in my case was from the Philippines to New Zealand). As the movie *God's Compass* reminds, "God doesn't choose us because we are confident in our preparation to go and do what He's called us to do. God chooses us because God knows what we are capable of. Follow God's north for your life's calling..." Being here in New Zealand is my adventure with the Lord, and God's north for me.



### **The Youngest Marist in Rome** - Joseph Mijares

I began formation with the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers) in Auckland at the start of 2020. Since then, many things have happened. Some expected and others unexpected! However, overall, the journey has been very positive, and I am blessed to have been called into this vocation.



I am currently living at the Marist International Theologate 'Casa di Maria' in Rome. My formation community for this year has 20 scholastics and 3 priests consisting of 13 different nationalities. It is a privilege to learn alongside men from around the world who are living this spirit of Mary. The common language in the house is English but our liturgical life is in Italian. I spent 4 months in Italian language school as well as a month in total immersion in an Italian parish. I really enjoy the language and culture of Italy. Despite being constantly surrounded by many different types of pasta and flavours of gelato, I really do miss a nice steak and cheese pie!

I have just started my Baccalaureate in Theology (S.T.B.) at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) Here, I hope to learn from the top theological and philosophical minds of the world. Over the next few years, I hope to complete this as well as start a Licentiate (S.T.L). Along the way, I will do international missionary experiences in various Marist communities around the world. I hope I get to visit home once or twice too!

To conclude, I would like to say that I began to realise that the best vocation promotion is seeing people living their lives joyfully. I'm glad to say that I love the Marist spirituality and living out this beautiful charism. I am blessed to have been called to profession within the Society of Mary in January 2023. Currently, I am the youngest professed Marist Father in the world, and I know I won't be the last!



Joseph makes his profession as a Marist



Kia ora and hello everyone

I'm Matt White currently a fifth-year seminarian training to be a priest in our archdiocese.

Before going to the seminary, I lived in the Porirua area for more than twenty years. I taught at both Tawa college and Bishop Viard college and worshipped from time to time at our Lady of Hope parish, so I know several people in the parish.



Recently I received the good news from Archbishop Paul that I am to be called to the Order of Deacon. The ordination will take place on Sunday November 12<sup>th</sup> in St Teresa's Pro-Cathedral in Karori. This will be before you receive this magazine copy - I hope some of you were able to attend.

I am excited though slightly nervous, but always trusting in the Lord. I am currently preparing for the diaconate and will be going on retreat next week. I humbly ask for your prayers as I move to this next stage on the journey to priesthood. Thank you.

For any of you that are maybe considering the idea of a priestly vocation, be brave, ask questions and check it out. Attend the *Come and See* mornings we have in the

Diocese. God may or not be calling you, but you have to take the first step.

To parents, we are a sacramental church, and we need priests.

Please remember your role as first and most important teacher of your child's faith. Model the faith to them. Be prepared to encourage young men to at least consider a priestly vocation. Guys often need a little encouragement to take the first step!

Nga mihi, Matt White

[Back](#)

## The Joys of Mission

by *Michael Rayner*



For those of you who don't know me my name is Michael Rayner. This year I have been serving a year of mission for an organisation called [NET Ministries](#). Last time you heard from me I was working in Christchurch, running retreat days in schools, helping at youth groups, camps and diocesan events.

I have spent the second half of the year in Auckland. The work I am doing here is very similar.

***A key part of our mission is helping teenagers in Catholic schools to consider whether maybe they want Jesus to be a bigger part of their life.*** This half of the year our team has led 24 retreat days, taken part in a conference in Brisbane for a week, run a youth group almost every week and ministered to approximately 3000 people.

### Prayer Ministry

One of the most important moments of the work we do with NET is prayer ministry. Every retreat day we run, in the final session we give the students an opportunity for some of us to pray for them - if they would like us to. At times, students are more receptive to this, other times they are very hesitant.

During this time of reflection we also have an option for students to write prayers on sticky notes and put them in a basket. My team ran a year 10 retreat a couple of months ago. To begin with, the students were very hesitant to receive prayer, or to write a prayer. I wasn't one of those praying for the students that day, so to set an example, I went up, got a sticky note, wrote a prayer and put it in the basket. After this, one student went up and did the same, then another 3 came up, then 5 more... Eventually, there were more than 15 kids sitting up in the front of the room writing



prayers. The prayer basket became more and more full. At the same time as all this was happening a brave student got up, walked to the back of the room and went to one of my teammates to receive prayer. A similar thing started to happen. Everyone else saw this and more and more students started to come up for prayer. Eventually, another member of the team began to pray for students so there was enough time to pray for everyone who wanted prayer.

At our retreats we give the students two options for prayer... The one students most often pick is that we pray for Jesus to become a bigger part of their life.

***This was such a wonderful moment because even though I wasn't one of the people who was praying that day I witnessed so many people choose to allow Jesus to become a bigger part of their life.***

The room was so peaceful and afterwards many of the students said they felt really amazing. Whether they just wrote a prayer or they received prayer many students encountered Jesus that day. I will never see the impact this has on the students' lives, but I trust God will continue to work in their lives... I'm grateful to have been a part of that. Moments like that remind me why mission so important.

### **Sponsorship**

To everyone who has sponsored my mission so far, I cannot thank you enough! I was absolutely blown away by everyone's generosity in June when I spoke at Mass. In the space of 2 weeks, I was sponsored for more than \$6,000! I was absolutely blown away by the support I received. I hope that God continues to bless you all for your generosity. It is so good to have the opportunity to share a story to show some of what your generosity has gone towards. I have only shared one story but there are so many more I could share with you.

For the past few months, I have felt the call on my heart to do a second year of mission. I have now said yes to that call. The work we do is so important and I can't wait to continue on the mission. This involves fundraising another **\$6400 AUD**. Many of you have already given so generously and I understand the time to purchase Christmas presents is coming! But if you are financially able, I would really appreciate your support. As well, or instead, your prayers are greatly appreciated! If you wish to support me you can email me: ([michaeldavidrayner@gmail.com](mailto:michaeldavidrayner@gmail.com)) I will send you a link to a website where you can donate to my sponsorship. Also, feel free to send me an email if you have any questions or would like to hear more about my time on mission.

That's all from me, God bless!

[Back](#)





## A Note from the Parish Council



In late February the Parish Pastoral Council held a meeting of interested Parishioners to seek guidance as to what people wanted to be in the Pastoral Plan. We met in conjunction with the Church Mission Team of the Archdiocese of Wellington. The Parish Council has been working on the updated document, which is not quite complete, but once it is finalized we will bring the draft document back to the Parish for their comment/input. It has taken longer than anticipated so my apologies for the delay.

Sunday Mass can be challenging for the neurodiverse. It can be loud, busy, bright and longer than they are able to comfortably cope with. To cater for these parishioners, we have begun monthly 'low sensory' Mass. It is held on the third Sunday of each month at Our Lady of Fatima Church. All are welcome, especially those who are autistic, intellectually disabled or neurodiverse, and their families or support. A big thank you to Simon Rayner who is organising this Mass.

Thank you to the rostered people who clean both churches regularly. Thank you to Peter Smith and his helpers who clean St Pius X Church on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month and thank you to those people who clean Our Lady of Fatima Church on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month.

On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023 we farewelled Sister Margaret Vaney and Sister Francine McGovern. (See feature on page 8.)

On Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 Father Pene returned to the Tokelau Islands. Father was with us for eight months during which time he cheerfully assisted Father Rico. Thank you Father.

Recently we conducted a Mass Survey to see what mass times parishioners preferred. The top times indicated by those who responded were to remain with the current three Mass times. Priests are only allowed to say three Masses on a Sunday so before we could introduce a fourth Mass we would have to speak to the Archbishop about the possibility of a supply priest helping us.

On behalf of the Parish Council I wish you all a safe and blessed Christmas.

*Marie Prescott*

PPC Chairperson.

[Back](#)

## World Youth Day—Lisbon 2023

by Erika Sison

For as long as I can remember, going to World Youth Day has been a dream of mine. My parents had gone to World Youth Day together in Paris, France in 1997, and growing up, I was able to hear many beautiful stories about their experience. Pope Saint John Paul had been the pope during that period, and my parents were blessed to be able to see him during their lifetime.

Because of their experience, I knew that I wanted to go and experience World Youth Day when I became older. I made a mental note that World Youth Day happens every three to four years and started working towards my goal. As I graduated from university and started my first full-time job, I started to save up for the next World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal. I knew in my mind, that I wanted to attend in a group, just like my parents did. It was important to me to be able to experience World Youth Day in community, with other young people who shared the same faith as I do. And so, I waited eagerly for the diocese to release an announcement for the World Youth Day pilgrimage.



Erika with friends at WYD

And lo and behold, one auspicious Wednesday evening, on 10 August 2022, I saw the World Youth Day announcement released by the Wellington diocese. I was ecstatic and my heart jumped for joy. I remember immediately texting my closest friends at 11pm in the evening and telling them that the announcement came out and that we needed to register. I made sure to take extra care in filling out my application as I had heard that the NZ delegation were only taking 100 pilgrims to World Youth Day. There ending up being 135 kiwi pilgrims coming instead! Thanks be to God!

The 135 New Zealand pilgrims were accompanied by Fr Michael Therese, Brother Yohanis and Sister Hope from the Community of St John, two diocesan priests - Fr Tien Cao and Fr Monty Bamford and Bishop Michael Gielen from the Christchurch Diocese.

***What a gift it was to be able to have priests and religious join us on the pilgrimage. The opportunity to have daily mass, receive the Eucharist every day and have the sacraments so easily accessible to us was a beautiful grace from the Lord.*** The sacrifices they made to ensure the smooth running of the pilgrimage is a testament to the love of God they have within them. I am so grateful for their presence.

Our New Zealand delegation stayed in France for about a week. We went to Paris, Lisieux, Nevers, Paray-le-Monial, Lyon, Ars, Toulouse and Lourdes. We were able to visit the home towns of saints, venerate their relics and see their incorrupt bodies. Among the saints we saw were St Therese of Lisieux, St Bernadette Soubirous, St Catherine Laboure, St Vincent de Paul, St John Vianney. We were also able to see the relics of Sts. Zelig and Louis Martin (parents of St Therese of Lisieux) and St Margaret Mary Alacoque (who had a deep devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus) and pray at the tomb where St Thomas Aquinas' bones are kept in Toulouse. Our pilgrimage also led us to visit the place where the Church's first approved Marian apparition took place in Le Puy and to also celebrate mass at the same church where Venerable Suzanne Aubert was baptised. I have a deep love for our Lady, so going to Lourdes was very special to me. There were candlelight vigils, a eucharistic procession, singing the rosary, mass at the grotto (twice!) and being surrounded by priests and religious sisters (my greatest joy on the trip!). God's graces were everywhere.



With the NZ pilgrims in Lourdes, in front of the Grotto

After our pilgrimage in France, we made our way to Portugal and visited Fatima, Pampilhosa da Serra, Coimbra and finally – Lisbon for WYD. Our accommodation ranged from sleeping on the floors of seminaries and classrooms, sleeping outside in tents and hotels. There were times when we would be walking for hours at a time

in the scorching heat. Sometimes, we would have limited food options, there would be scarcity of toilet paper and soap as well as long queues in the heat, but despite all that, there was an overflowing amount of joy. ***My highlight would definitely be the candlelight vigil we had in Lourdes and the traditional Portuguese dance party we had on our last night in Pampilhosa da Serra.*** It was also an honour for our group of kiwi pilgrims to perform the haka to a group of French and Portuguese pilgrims that we stayed with in Pampilhosa da Serra.

It was so much fun to meet other Catholics from around the world and to also journey with 134 other pilgrims from all over New Zealand. 1.5 million young adults from all over the world gathered together on the last night and we had a big outdoor sleepover. We were also able to see the Pope and celebrate mass with him on the very last day. To be able to see the Universal Church and the Body of Christ coming together from all over the world, united by our shared love of the one true God was such a powerful and beautiful sight to witness. ***The beauty and richness of the Catholic Church is undeniable, and I am so happy and proud to be Catholic.*** It has been an absolute gift to journey with the other 134 kiwi pilgrims who all possess the same desire to know and love God more.

My experience of World Youth Day will stay with me for the rest of my life. The laughter, singing, dancing, encounters, friendships, worship and prayer that we shared was a glimpse of the heavenly banquet we will all be celebrating in Heaven. Even the suffering brought us all closer together, and we were able to share in the suffering of Jesus. It has reminded me that *“the world is thy ship, and not thy home.”* Life is a pilgrimage, and we are all pilgrims on earth, waiting for the hope and glory of Heaven, our true home.

## Fear Not!

by Amie Fouhy

For as long as I can remember, I've had a fear of spiders. It didn't matter how big or small the spider was - it scared me. Spiders are creepy, scuttly, sometimes jumpy, unpredictable creatures!

I couldn't be near them in case they jumped or crawled onto me. If there was a spider on the ceiling, I couldn't walk under it.



If there was a spider in the bathroom, I couldn't have a shower.

If there was a spider in the furthest corner of my bedroom at night I couldn't fall asleep till someone had got rid of it.

As an adult, this fear affected my ability to tidy the house. I was scared to pick up clothes off the floor in case a spider lurked underneath. Or to reach behind or under something if I couldn't clearly see what was there.

Gardening was a nightmare. I tried weeding once, and a spider the size and colour of a big bark chip crawled out. I was immediately done. Suffice to say our garden became an overgrown wilderness.

***Then somewhere, somehow I heard this:***

***The Catholic should fear nothing except dying in mortal sin.***

How many times had I prayed to God for courage in a tough situation? How many times had I asked Him to take away my fear and anxiety going into labour and childbirth? How frequently had I read "*Fear not, for I am with you*"?

And yet I had never before thought that I could ask God to take away my fear of spiders! But that day, it clicked. Of course he wants me to be free from fear! Of course he wants me to be able to work around my house and garden freely and joyfully! So I began to ask God to take away my fear of spiders.

Days, weeks and months passed. And I was still scared of spiders!

Nine months passed. One beautiful day, the whole family was outside enjoying the sun, and I felt a sudden desire to weed the garden. So, I did.

First with trepidation, then with such overwhelming joy - that's the only way I can describe it - as I realised, for the first time in my life, I was free from this fear. The weeds were up to my waist, and I was able to get in amongst them, reach where I couldn't see, stand where spiders could crawl, and free the rose bushes from their weedy captors as my heart had been freed from its fear. It was a glorious day. I'll never forget it.

That was a few years ago now, and my fear hasn't returned. Sometimes I'll get a little grossed out by one of those big black hairy monsters, but even they don't scare me anymore.

God is so good! If you have a fear in your life that's holding you back, offer it to Him. Ask Him to release you from it. No matter how big or small, rational or irrational, He wants to free you from it.

So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

-Isaiah 41:10

[Back](#)

## The Open Door

by Bernie Griffin

*A long time ago at Victoria University, two young people met and fell in love. They talked of marriage, family and a future together. Both were very religious.*

*Problem.*

*He was Catholic. She was Presbyterian.*

*Mixed marriages were frowned upon.*

*"No worry" said Cardinal McKeefry. And gave his blessing.*

*So, the couple married in a special service at Wallis House in Lower Hutt before a Catholic priest and Presbyterian minister.*

*Everybody lived happily ever after. ... Not quite.*

*Children never arrived. Medical experts said it was unlikely to happen.*

*So, in time, children the couple yearned for came by way of adoption.*

*End of story ... not quite.*

*The couple believed every child in the world was entitled to a happy, loving and safe home. It was their birthright.*

*So, God told the couple to do something about it. And they did ...*

There was always room at their 'inn'. Always room for one more or two or three ...

Over the years, Ewen and Gillian Laursen opened their modest suburban home to more than 100 children and young people who needed 'away from home' care -- children and young people from unstable and often unhappy homes. The 'inn' door never closed.

***"It's God's work," says Ewen. "Love is an open door."***

"Too often", he says, "we looked into the faces of children coming to us and saw loneliness and sadness. Some were deeply traumatised."

"We set out to show them true family love. Christian love. Our idea was to help them deal with the loss in their lives and to imbue them with dignity and hope. We saw how when they have Jesus in their lives they are transformed."

Meeting Ewen and Gillian for the first time, it's clear their faith is the driving force in their lives, not just their work with children, but in everything they say and do. There's Christian openness and compassion with an underlying sense of steely resolve. Some might call it tough love.

Children usually came to the Laursens because of a family crisis. Some stayed with them for years and today still keep in touch. However, Ewen says the overall



Gillian and Ewan with 5 of their 6 grandchildren

mission was to settle children back into their own immediate or wider families. "The best home is their own family home. If the problem in the family home could not be resolved, then we looked for a permanent foster home through our network."

The couple say they understood right from the beginning that emergencies and trauma were part of the everyday work with foster caring.

One example came on a Christmas Eve with a plea from a social worker: "Four young children need a home urgently. Was there a family in the Laurenson network of families who could help at such short notice?" The network was still in its infancy, but a door opened. "Someone we knew offered to take them in, all four of them, straight away. It was the Christmas spirit in action."

The Laurensons' denominational differences have never been an issue. Yet, following 15 years of marriage and deeply immersed in their foster care ministry, Gillian decided to become a Catholic.

"I did it because I felt it was what God wanted," says Gillian. "Our work was so important; it was essential that Ewen and I were completely together -- fully in support of each other. But I still remember my Presbyterian roots and background which are in total communion with what we have been doing."

The couple's lifelong work of fostering is mostly over. They've moved away from their converted three-bedroomed home on the hillside in Johnsonville and now live in a retirement village within our parish.

It's a relatively quiet existence, now. Few people in their village know of their work. Yet, in the care and protection of children and young people they are known and respected around New Zealand.

***They founded both the Open Home Foundation of New Zealand (1977) and the Open Home Foundation International (2002).***

Both Foundations are powerful influencers in child protection and foster care. The couple say they are proud of their organisations. The organisations are overcoming

immense political and social difficulties in reaching out through skilled social work intervention and foster care to thousands of in-danger children of varying cultures.

Girls especially are vulnerable, in all countries.

"The first child referred to Open Home Foundation was a 10-year-old girl. An orphan. Amongst the youngest referred was a baby who arrived with his mother, a teenager. Where could they go and be safe and how could they cope without help?" They became part of the Laurenson family for six years.

The Laurenson's first experience of foster care was when they were asked to be 'house parents' in a family home for teenagers run by Catholic Social Services. While there, friends sent them a book called *Love is an Open Door* by Bill Bair. The author made a strong call to Christians of all denominations to open their hearts and homes to needy children and young people. This book inspired Ewen and Gillian to set up the Open Home Foundation New Zealand. They believed this was God's leading.

Foster caring has been their life work one way or another for nearly 50 years. The foundation is recognised as a vital force in child welfare, not only nationwide but also internationally.

"We haven't done it on our own," says Ewen. "There have been many wonderful people and organisations who have pitched in with us, given us their support, morally, practically and financially."

The couple say it has been amazing the number of families who from the very beginning opened their homes so willingly. "Christian families from all denominations." They mention how a neighbour with engineering skills and building knowledge came to their aid and helped turn their three-bedroomed home into a six-bedroomed home. "I knew nothing about that kind of work, so I was his apprentice," says Ewen, with a smile. As well, a professional builder gave three full days of his time and his apprentice's time in doing the finishing work.

"The whole project was completed at no cost to us. We didn't have the money, but it happened. We call it a miracle."

Ewen and Gillian no longer work actively with Open Home Foundation in New Zealand. And Ewen has recently stepped down as Director of the International Foundation although he still maintains some involvement.

Home is a different place for the Laurensons these days, but their faith is as strong as ever. And if they ever feel lonely, there are six grandchildren to keep them company.



Looking back, the Laurensens say their chosen path has been far from easy. Extremely difficult at times. But, they say, with God's grace and the help of many others it has been overwhelmingly successful and fulfilling.

"To know you are in the centre of God's will is a wonderful thing," says Gillian.

This Christmas, the Laurensens, along with Christians everywhere, will be remembering the family which faced closed doors in their hour of need ... and the baby born in a stable.

The Open Home Foundation's vision statement is their prayer:

***"Every child in the world will belong to a home,  
family and community where they are safe and loved,  
go to school, have a good diet and health care  
and know that God loves them"***



If you would like to know more about Open Home Foundation, or to join their work, see:

[ohf.org.nz](http://ohf.org.nz)

[Back](#)

## Marist Spirituality is still here!

by *The Editor*



The Marist sisters have left us, but there is still Marist spirituality in our parish. For very many years there have been men and women who follow Marist spirituality. And since 1987 there have been Marist lay groups, when the first Marian Mothers group began in Tawa and soon after another in Titahi Bay - these later combined. There are still two groups in the parish, the Marian Mothers and Women of Faith groups, comprising about 20 women in total.

Marist spirituality is not about devotions to Mary, but rather about being 'hidden and unknown', living as a disciple of Jesus in the way Mary was. Think of Mary at Cana - being on the look-out for needs and making sure they are met.

*Continued over page*

*Cont.* The groups are not 'service groups' in the way the SVdP group is, (*though founder Frederic Ozanam was from a Marist parish*). Rather, they support and empower us to individually be fully Christian, like Mary, and to take part in the ministries best suited to our skills, gifting and time availability.

They don't shout out about it, but all of the members are involved in one (or many) parish ministries and/or community activities. Here are some of the things they do (and I may have missed some!) each activity may have more than one member involved in that ministry:

**Parish/Mass ministries:** Parish council; reader; Eucharist minister; music/choir; children's liturgy lead; Liturgy of the Word lead; Stories of Hope production, sorting or delivery; Parish 'take them a meal' coordination or cooking; assist Youth Mass or Low sensory Mass; over 60's lunches preparation; SVdP group; driving people to mass; baptism preparation.

**Community and Diocesan:** ADW marriage preparation; school board of trustees; various school committees and parent help; sewing group (for our parish, Pregnancy Help; Kenepuru Hospital, SVdP shop etc); community lunches; Pop-In volunteer, Super-Grans volunteer. And all are 'good neighbours'!

## Marian Mothers Retreat

*by Amie Fouhy*

Our Marian Mothers group held its second annual retreat on the weekend of the 22nd - 24th September this year.

Our annual retreats are based on the need to step away from the demands of our usual routines and into the presence of each other - forming deeper bonds of friendship - and into a greater awareness of the presence of God, who is always with us.



The theme this year was Women of Faith. We spent the weekend in a bach at Raumatī Beach and attended mass at Our Lady of Kāpiti church in Paraparaumu.

Highlights of the retreat were presentations given by two of our members - Amara Ihejirika and Rebecca Newell, and the Rite of Reconciliation led by Father Rico.

Amara's presentation was entitled ***Believer's Confidence***. She drew on many scriptural passages to help us see first who God is, and secondly who we are in the eyes of God. This knowledge should help us to be filled with confidence in our daily lives. It was particularly based on Ephesians 1:17-23 (NIV)

Rebecca spoke on ***The Feminine Genius***. In particular we focused on some of the writings in *Mulieris Dignitatem* (the Dignity of Women) by Pope St JPII. We also discussed female saints and role-models of faith who have inspired us in our own faith journeys. There was a real variety of our role models, from our mums, grandmothers, sisters and daughters, to women from the Bible, and more modern saints. It was very special to get an insight into how these women appeal to each of us and galvanise us in our relationship with God.

We were so blessed this year to have Father Rico able to join us on Saturday afternoon and lead us in the Rite of Reconciliation with individual confession. This was a particularly prayerful and peaceful time.

Our hope from these retreats is that each one of us returns to daily life with food for further reflection, hopeful for the future and energised to continue serving others in our various ministries.

*Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 2 Peter 1:2-4 (NIV)*

You may wish to connect with [Marist Laity in New Zealand](#)

[Back](#)



## A Filipino All Saints Day

*By Jing Moredo*

1<sup>st</sup> November is a public holiday in the Philippines. All Saints Day, or *todos los santos* as we call it, a religious tradition from the Spanish - a day of remembrance of beloved family and friends who have passed.

Each year on this day, Filipinos will visit the graves, lay flowers, light candles and pray for their departed loved ones.

There will be the ones who make their way the day before, avoiding traffic, camp overnight just so they can set up tent early and get a prime spot to park. Others, like my family, will be up early and spend the whole day there. Others will just be visiting for a little while and still others will be going the next day.



### **My memories**

We would bring enough food and drinks for the day and any stuff we needed to set up our makeshift tents. The memorial park where my grandparents and father were laid had a long drive before you get to the actual plots. I remember how hard it was for me and my siblings

to walk a long way carrying all this heavy stuff under the hot sun! But it was all worth it because we got to play bare-foot on the grass and run around in an open space (well, weaving our way around all the other tents anyway). We didn't have much space where we lived in the city.

The atmosphere all around was like a big picnic, music everywhere. Relatives came and went during the day and it was like a family reunion of sorts. After prayers, us kids would eat, play, fight and chase each other and the adults played cards and drank beer. They would share stories and reminisce on old times, both happy and sad. I recall hearing lots of laughter and singing coming from other tents. I remember us going to other plots and asking if we could get the wax that had melted from the candles. We would burn our fingers (the best ones are those that have just melted!) and we would make different shapes from it. Mostly though, we took home balls of this melted wax, marbled with all sorts of beautiful colour.

Towards the end of the day we would pack up, our loads a lot lighter, and make our way home. Tired and sunburnt, but a great day out.

## Sacramental Programme 2023

by Marie Andrewartha

This year, candidates were confirmed by Archbishop Paul Martin on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, and received their First Communion on 10<sup>th</sup> September



### Candidates who took part in some or all of the programme:

Nathaniel, Bradley, Dane, Yanika, Maximilian, John-Paul, Zhyrus, Stefanie, Adriana, Ignatius, Jericho, Lalia, Rowan, Richard, Teuila, Wren, Aldreen, Stella, Theodore, Gabriel, Nathan, Joel, Carmel, Matiu, Catalina, Lauren, Kaera, Kendrick, Natalie, Jeremy, Clare, Evanna, Mataniu, Maci.

*O taste and see that the Lord is good:  
happy are those  
who take refuge in him.  
(Psalm 34:8).*



[Back](#)

## A Word of Thanks ...

by *Sophia Lopez*

Hi I am Sophia Lopez. You might have seen me in the last Stories of Hope sharing what I do in church. I am in year 6 at Saint Francis Xavier school; this means that this year I am going to graduate from primary school. So as I finish, I wish to thank a lot of people who have been a part of my life so far.

First of all I would like to thank my small family: my mum for looking after me at home, my dad for working hard and my big brother Julius for always being there to annoy me - I mean, to look after me when our parents are busy. Being the youngest has its ups and downs but I'm mostly enjoying the ups. We are a crazy bunch in our home!

Second, I would like to thank everyone in my school, especially my friends, from new ones I made this year to ones that I have been with from pre-school. We have made so many fun memories together. I could never be happy at school without them. Plus, I'm also thankful to all my teachers for all the opportunities they have given me and all the support they gave for my education. I learned and got involved in a lot of other stuff there too - such as being one of the leaders of KETE (Kids Enhancing Tawa Ecosystem), Young Vinnies, Scripture reading, learning to play the guitar with my tutor Eileen Brown, doing pest control, being a peer mediator and a lunch monitor and leading in Kapa Haka! So many opportunities to join in, that's why I am very thankful and proud to be in my school. I will miss everything about St. Francis because we are like one big family there!

And of course I won't forget the other activities and experiences outside of my school.

Thank you to our Tawa community which has everything I need! Thank you to our librarians at the Tawa library where I grew up going to almost everyday. I enjoyed their after-school activities like crafterschool, Lego club, and I also finished Saturday coding club there. I think I can actually use the stuff I learned there sometime in the future.

Thank you also to Girl Guiding Tawa, which has inspired me to explore outdoors more and make friends from outside of my school! I also



May 2014. MM meeting at church



August 2023 at the Takapu Stream Community Tree Planting Day of KETE



thank Easyswim where I finished my swimming lessons and my Zennin Blue Dragons Dojo in Tawa School where I do martial arts training. I really love and enjoy living here in Tawa!

And of course, I would like to thank you and everyone in our parish. Thank you to Fr. John, to Fr. Rico, Mrs. Andrewartha and to all the church leaders who help us to be the best we can be as a child of God. You have always been supportive and kind.



Since I was a baby, my mum has been bringing me to Marian Mothers, so I grew up being friends with the other children, too. Now that we've grown, we now all serve together at church! You will most likely see us during the youth mass. If you have read my last article in the Stories of Hope, you would know how much I love serving here in our church and am proud of all I have been doing!

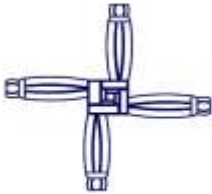
And most of all, I thank you Jesus for all your gifts and blessings to me, to our Blessed Mother Mary for her love and to my guardian

Helping as a Young Vinnie at J'ville SVP Shop

angel for always guiding me. Thank you for reading this and goodbye!

[Back](#)

## St Francis Xavier School - by Joan Woods (Principal)



We are very excited to finally have all our building work completed and everyone back in their classrooms. We now look forward to the completion of the roadworks on the Main Road to have everything back to normal.



**St Francis Xavier School** We are very grateful to our school community for their support while all the works have been taking place.

Strength and Gentleness  
Tu Maia, Tu Aroha

Meanwhile, school life for the children has continued to be filled with an exciting range of learning experiences. These have been wide and varied from cricket coaching to visits to Te Papa as part of science study on space. Several of our children have also taken part in the parish sacramental programme and have recently received the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.

**Parents and Friends** We are very fortunate to have a very active Parents and Friends group at school who have been tirelessly raising funds for our school, organising and supporting social events. Their hard work has been instrumental in the success of events such as our Matariki evening and our school disco among

other things. We are extremely grateful for their unwavering support and dedication to our school community.

**Dance Lessons** During Term 3 the children received dance lessons from Footsteps Dance Co. Then everyone enjoyed a fun dance display where the children shared



what they had learnt and gave the parents and friends who had come along an opportunity to share their dance skills.

**Grandparents' Day/Special Family Friends Day** In July we celebrated the Feast of St Anne and St Joachim, with our own grandparents' day. We started with a liturgy in the school hall. Classes then shared an item. After visiting classrooms, the visitors enjoyed morning tea in the hall.

**Pōwhiri to Welcome New Students** Each term a pōwhiri is held to welcome new students to our school. During the ceremony the new children wear a korowai as a symbol of them belonging to St Francis Xavier School. This year a group of senior students carried out the Karanga/call, the first and unique call of welcome in the pōwhiri and the whaikōrero/formal speeches, formal speech follows the karanga.



**5 Next Term Party** Each term we have a **5 Next Term** party at school. Children starting school in the next term are invited to come to school to meet their teacher and children who will be in their class. It is a fun afternoon with parents and children present. If you are aware of any parents considering enrolling their children at our school please ask them to contact the school office so we can include them on our invitation list.



**Mathswell Competition** This year, a first time for our school, a group of students competed in the Year 5 & 6 Mathswell competition held at Wellington College. Mathswell is an annual competition run by the Wellington Maths Association.



**Interschool Scripture Reading Competition**



The winners of our school scripture reading competition went on to compete against six other Catholic schools in the Kapiti/Mana area at St Theresa's School Pimmeton. The standard of presenting was extremely high and we were very proud of each of our three representatives. This year St Francis Xavier won the te Reo Māori section.

**KETE** Along with the other schools in Tawa, children from St Francis Xavier are part of the Tawa KETE group **KETE (Kids Enhancing Tawa Ecosystem)** This community initiative gives young people the opportunity to take

action in caring for the environment. Two of our Year 6 KETE leaders were treated to a night walk at Zealandia. They encountered nocturnal native wildlife and learnt a lot about the animals there and also had a very special interaction with a takahe.

**Science Exploring Day** Children spent time in each other's classrooms and shared a range of scientific activities. Each child had a buddy while they explored different experiments around the school.

**Art Splash** Year 5 and 6 children participated in an Art Splash Concert held at the Michael Fowler Centre. The children sang in a mass choir alongside hundreds of other students from schools across the Wellington region.

**Young Vinnies** One of the special task that our Year 6 Young Vinnies students did was to grow daffodils from bulbs to enter the Porirua Horticultural Society Spring Flower Competition where they gained 3rd place. The children then shared the lovely blooms with the residents at Longview Retirement Village.

**Book Character Day** During the last week of Term 3 we celebrated Book Week with our book character day. Both children and staff enjoyed dressing up as their favourite book character and shared a book they truly enjoyed.

*We wish you a joyous Christmas. May you feel the warmth of your family's love and may peace and hope fill your life throughout the year. Merry Christmas!*

[Back](#)

## St Pius X School - by *Nenah Kelemete (Principal)*



Tena koutou katoa,

It's amazing how fast this year is going. We are already just around the corner from Advent.

We have had some amazing learning experiences and opportunities since the last article. I hope you enjoy reading about them.

What an amazing start to term three with our **Matariki Concert**. It was such a great way for our tamariki to showcase what they had learned and welcome the Māori New Year. I'm sure you would agree when I say we have some very talented stars.



We have had so many memory-making experiences last term with singing at the Michael Fowler Centre for **Art Splash**, learning outdoors with **Bush Sprouts**, our annual **Book Fair** day, activities and sports at Te Rauparaha Arena and constructing with Lego.

In September our **Young Vinnies** kicked off our new *Vinnies Kura Orchard Project*. Every year at Matariki we will plant at least two fruit trees at our schools.



Over time this will grow into orchards of fruit that will sustain our kura, whanau, and foodbanks.

Our Vinnies will get to revisit their trees over the years and see their trees grow and provide for others.

Congratulations to **Kendrick Yue** who was **confirmed** in Term 3. May the Holy Spirit always be with you.



[Back](#)

## Christmas Fun Morning

*Leave your children for a fun filled morning  
while you catch up on Christmas preparations!*

**Tuesday 19th December 10am - 12.30 pm**

at Our Lady of Fatima church Tawa.

Our Fun Morning is suitable for children 4 years and upwards.

Younger children are welcome with an adult caregiver.

Enjoy games, crafts and snacks.



We will also be practising the play for the Christmas Eve Family Mass.

Helpers are required for this event (*teenagers, parents, other parishioners*).

Please contact Marie Andrewartha 021 476 153

### Mass Times in Nearby Parishes

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

<b>Saturday vigil</b>	5:00pm	St Francis of Assisi, Johnsonville
	<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>
	9:30am	St Teresa's, Plimmerton & Holy Family, Porirua
	10:00am	Te Ngākau Tapu (Māori Mass)
	10:00am	St Francis of Assisi, Johnsonville
	<b>10:30am</b>	<b>Our Lady of Fatima, Tawa</b>
	5:15pm	Te Ngākau Tapu (English Mass)

## Parish Notices - Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths

### Baptisms

Name of child	Parents	Date
Ari Astronomia MANGUIAT	Sheila & Christian Manguiat	15 July 2023
Asovale (Suzie) BRIGGS	Mi Mamea & Fi Leva	20 June 2023
John HAGUE	Alice Simmon	14 July 2023
Aldreen Dane QUE	Donareen Que & Alfonso Aban	23 July 2023
Jin Keilani VENUS	Jaena & Karol Venus	27 Aug2023
Zachary John MEDEL	Jo Marie & Norman Medel	3 Sept 2023
Christian Falaniko Peteru Paulo ANAE	Theresa Lafaele & Daniel Anae	16 Sept 2023
Boston BENTLEY	Miriam & Kim Bentley	23 Sept 2023
Emmanuel Jose Acabado ESCARO	Jennifer & Edgardo Escaro	23 Sept 2023
Na'oupu Chanel Fa'amativa MELI-TUALA	Makarita Meli & Mikeale Tuala	1 Oct 2023
Belen Grace SAPETIN	Armi & David Sapetin	7 Oct 2023
Dean Etuale Alan BOND	Apelila Bond & Reuben Leiataua	21 Oct 2023
Kaia REMUERA	Bronwyn Kumeroa-Bell & Jordan Remuera	21 Oct 2023
Valentine FAITOTOA	Takuna Taurima & Maea Faitotoa	22 Oct 2023

### Deaths

Trudie Alosio	13 August 2023
Brian James McCarthy	25 August 2023
Tala Faiva	26 August 2023
Maria Itagia Taulealea	11 September 2023
John Vincent Burke	2 October 2023

[Back](#)

## New Parishioners

If you are new to the parish, Welcome!

Please introduce yourself to the celebrant, another parishioner,  
or call/visit the parish office 9:30am -12:00pm Tuesday-Friday: (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, Jane Bolton; Dorothy Jansen; Ray Lindsay; and Rupi Mapusua.

## Current Finance Committee Members

Fr Rico de la Torre - parish priest, Graeme Hansen - chair, Jonathan Curr, Denise Dorman, Ted Gallen, Ramesh Ganesan, Nicola O'Keeffe, Tea Teofilo, Hans Wirawan.

## 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.

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

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

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

[Back](#)

**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  
Ninness Funeral Home**

17 Kenepuru Drive, Porirua ph: 04 237 4174 fax: 04 237 4172  
email: info@ninness.co.nz web site: http://ninness.co.nz.

**How we can help with Funeral Day Arrangements**

There is always a lot of preparation for a funeral - Ninness can take much of this load from the family, following your wishes and preferences.

Once you have selected hymns and reading for the funeral, these can be printed into a booklet, along with other funeral details. A photo of your choice can be used for the cover. A minimum of 24 hours notice is required to produce these. For help with preparing this, there is online Catholic funeral help available or directly from your parish office. There may also be a funeral service that the deceased had prepared in advance.

If desired, we can create a slideshow using your photos (printed or electronic).

Sometimes family members are unable to attend the funeral service or you may wish to have a recording for yourself. This can easily be arranged.

After the service, we can arrange catering in our reception area or at a venue of your choice.

If needed, cars or buses can be hired to take the family or congregation to the cemetery and back to the family home, place of the funeral or to a refreshment area.

-----

**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 – 29 November 2023

Wednesday – 31 January 2024

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.**





Brenden Jacobsen



Larry Greco

**Ninness Funeral Home**

for caring, friendly and professional, funeral services.

Call us for personal service today: 04 237 4174

**IF THIS IS NOT ADDRESSED TO YOU  
OR YOU NO LONGER WISH TO  
RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE PLEASE  
LET US KNOW.**

You can email: [ourladyofhope@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ourladyofhope@xtra.co.nz)  
or phone 04 232 5611

Or mail P.O. BOX 51-029, TAWA, 5249

