



Auckland Diocesan Pastoral Council Newsletter

MARCH 2025

The Diocesan Pastoral Council met on Saturday 8 March. They began this year of Jubilee by participating in a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Mary MacKillop. Also known as Saint Mary of the Cross, Mary made several visits to Auckland during her lifetime. She first arrived in New Zealand in 1883 and visited the Sisters of St. Joseph in various locations, including Auckland. This short pilgrimage visited a number of the sites that Mary spent time at. At each pause point there was a little information of Mary's story at this place, time of personal prayer and prayer together.

The journey finished at Mary MacKillop Centre Mission Bay the regional hub for the Sisters of St Joseph the Congregation that Mary co-founded. After a final time of prayer the counsellors enjoyed a picnic lunch in the grounds of the centre. They then journeyed back to the Pompallier Centre for the formal session of the Council meeting.



Members of the DPC with Sr Sian at St Benedict's, Newton. As part of the pilgrimage they spent time in prayer in this Church where Mary of the Cross had prayed.



Check
it
out

Bishop Steve's weekly reflection is posted each Sunday to his Facebook page and the diocesan YouTube where a playlist enables you to return and dip into his wisdom and insight at any time.

www.youtube.com/@AucklandCatholic



Conversation Notes



- It was noted that **questions put forward** for DPC delegates to ask do not always suit non-parish communities. It was pointed out that these are guidelines not set in concrete. The concept was initiated as a response to delegates and parishes who wished some kind of guidance in reporting.
- **Jubilee Year** resources provided by the diocese need to be unpacked at parish level.
 - Only Holy Doors are in Rome this Jubilee which is why Cathedral does not have one.
- **Catholic Schools**. Diocese Secondary Schools are very full.
 - Although ideally some Maximum rolls need to be lifted the government is reluctant to do so.
 - Attendance dues are compulsory. Proprietors have to borrow large sums as they are responsible for the building. Funds are needed to pay the interest on loans taken out for these capital works.
 - It was noted that so called voluntary donations can be very high and off putting.
- **Online Masses** have a place. They provided a space where people feel accepted. Parishes don't have to have them. There are always some live streamed from the diocese and elsewhere.
- **Pastoral Councils** - are mandated by the norms of the diocese and the Synod on Synodality emphasises their importance in supporting a synodal Church.
- There was a lovely spirit at the anniversary mass at **Totara Point**. Great work has been done to make it a welcoming prayerful space.

Listening to the Diocese

Having spent time praying with and considering reports submitted from faith communities, members entered a synodal process to consider matters of the diocese. Bishop Steve then joined them to dialogue around life and concerns in the diocese.

Jubilee Year Initiatives

The Jubilee Year is being marked by a variety of activities aimed at fostering community spirit and deepening faith. Key initiatives include the use of the Jubilee Song, developing volunteering opportunities, and the planning of a Parish Pilgrimages both local and international. Other parishes are organising monthly faith formation sessions to educate and engage parishioners. Additionally, a symposium, information drive, and social events are planned to bring the community together by a number of communities. One community is encouraging youth through a song competition. Other activities from parishioners include PowerPoint presentations on the Jubilee Year, Novena, Rosary walks, Lenten Walks, days of recollection, pilgrimages, and offering silent retreats. These initiatives are designed to create a vibrant and spiritually enriching environment for all members of the parish.

Support for Housebound Members

There seems to be a strong commitment to supporting housebound members of faith communities through various means. Vincent de Paul groups play an important role, prayer chains, and Morning Tea after Mass provide opportunities for social interaction and spiritual support. Communion is brought to the sick and housebound, and rest home masses are conducted to ensure that all members can participate in the Eucharist occasionally in some places. Food provision, transport support, and home visits are organized to meet the practical needs of housebound members. Social media updates, newsletter delivery and phone calls offer spiritual nourishment and connection. Communities also provide food parcels, groceries, and meals when needed. Needs are often identified through word-of-mouth and newsletter announcements. Visits by catechists, and priest visits ensure that housebound members remain connected to the parish community.

Concerns to bring forward to Bishop Steve.

There is a call for more events for non-leader youth. Workshops with the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) so that communities understand the DPC its role and their part in the process were also proposed. A structured process for priestly transitions was suggested to ensure smooth changes in leadership. Enrolment in Catholic schools and formation for migrant priests were other highlighted issues that need attention. The resumption of the Monthly Youth Mass at the Cathedral is seen as a vital activity for youth engagement.