



A NEW AND EXCITING PROSPECT!

See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

(Isaiah 43:19)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On Pentecost Sunday - 31st May - we three parishes will begin life as the **Catholic Parish of Christchurch North**. This is an exciting time for us as we set out on this journey together. We have been called to this task by Bishop Paul, whose pastoral vision - set out in *Our Faith, Our Future* - is for the whole diocese to be renewed in faith and mission.

Because of the difficulties brought about by the effects of the corona virus around the world, and in New Zealand, we are not able to farewell our three parishes at this time, and welcome in the new parish as we would have liked. We will do that at a later time. There will be some of you who are already experiencing hardship because of this worldwide virus so I ask that you, members of our community, keep alert to the needs of fellow parishioners and neighbours. We have made a valiant effort to contact all those on the rolls of our three parishes and I thank those who have been ringing and contacting others. Don't hesitate to contact us if you may be in need of help.

Firstly, I want to recognise the wonderful rich history of our three parishes!

What grace and life have been seen down through the years. So many people living the faith in joy and self-sacrifice. Think of all the work gone into the celebration of the sacraments and the liturgy; into the work of community through, ministries, sodalities, and small groups, through work for the missions and building projects; through the life of our four schools and the heritage they have left among us and are still doing so admirably today. In days past parish and school was one big community. Today with changes and the secularisation of our NZ society we will have to work all the harder to keep our communities together.

Think of priests, religious, chair persons and members of parish councils, finance committees and building committees, of principals and teachers. Think of the growth of cultural diversity of our parishes that has so enriched us and called forth greater love for each other. For this we praise God and give thanks.

We think too of our failures and sins, and the times when we have not lived the Gospel as we should; for those we have hurt sometimes badly. For these we ask God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of our brothers and sisters.

This reflection, thanks, and awareness of the life of Jesus Christ among us is what we take into the new parish. However the Bishop is asking us to do something new for the life and spread of the Gospel in the new parish.

He reminds us that we cannot simply continue the patterns of the past.

I am aware too that while many grandparents have also drifted from the practice of their faith, there is new life emerging among young people who are seeking a relationship with God in Jesus.

People of faith want to be with others who know that life on earth can only be lived fully in relationship with Jesus. It is clear to me that people who seek this life of relationship have rediscovered the heart of Pentecost faith. People today are weary of maintaining old structures (social, workplace or diocese) simply because they have inherited them. But these same people desire to discover the heart of human existence which people of faith have found in Jesus Christ. Where our structures serve this goal we do all we can to preserve them. Where new forms are needed we are not afraid. As our ancestors in faith did before us, we hear and listen to where God is leading us and we have the courage to follow.

(Bishop Paul Martin SM, Pentecost Sunday Pastoral Letter 2019)



Our mission is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus, so we need to ask ourselves; are our parishes evangelising in everything we do? Are our parishes making disciples and bringing new people into the church every year? Are we training all of our people to share the good news?

(Bishop Paul Martin SM, First Sunday of Advent Pastoral Letter 2019)

Following a gathering of the parish staff, pastoral councils, and finance committees of the three parishes in late February, a project group was formed. This group met together and worked to create a vision and leadership structure for the new parish. We have arrived at a vision for the new North Parish springing from the overall vision of the Bishop.

OUR VISION FOR THE CATHOLIC PARISH OF CHRISTCHURCH NORTH IS OF A MISSIONARY PARISH BRINGING PEOPLE TO COME TO KNOW JESUS CHRIST PERSONALLY, HELPING THEM GROW AS DISCIPLES, AND GOING OUT TO OTHERS WITH THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

Under this vision, we have created **Ten Mission Areas:**



LITURGY

**MARRIAGE, FAMILY,
AND SINGLE LIFE**



PRAYER

PASTORAL CARE



SMALL GROUPS

SCHOOLS



YOUTH

OUTREACH



YOUNG ADULTS

ECUMENISM



The Parish will have a Priests' Team, a Leadership Team, an Administration Team, a Finance Committee, and a Building Committee. The Parish will be led by the Parish Priest and the Leadership Team. I have formed a new Finance Committee and Building Committee. Both new Finance and Building Committees have representatives from our former Parishes.

PRIESTS' TEAM

Bishop Paul has asked the priests to work as a team, and the priests' team of our parish, as many of you may know by now, is made up of Frs. Kevin Wei, Edwin Colaco SDB, Alister Castillo and myself. We have begun meeting each week and are finding this regular meeting very valuable.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

The leadership team will be made up of the following positions:



PRIESTS



**FINANCE / BUILDING
ADVISOR**



**WORSHIP
COORDINATOR**



**YOUTH & YOUNG
ADULTS COORDINATOR**



**SCHOOLS
COORDINATOR**



**DISCIPLESHIP
COORDINATOR**



**ADMINISTRATION
COORDINATOR**



**EVANGELISATION
COORDINATOR**

These will have oversight over the various mission areas which are encompassed in these leadership roles. Currently we are in the process of appointing these pastoral and administration roles. We have not had to advertise because of the wealth of talent within our three parishes.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM?

The Leadership Team will, with me, lead the parish to achieve the parish vision.

They will begin by asking:

How do we live out the vision of the new North Parish in our area?

They will bring our celebration of the Sacraments and current activities in the three parishes under the spotlight of the new parish vision. They will ask the question:

How do we want the parish to look in five years time? Ten years time?

From these questions, the Coordinators of the Leadership Team - in their strand - will look at every aspect of parish life in the light of the parish vision. The Coordinators will reach out into the wider parish community asking for ideas and feedback in all these different areas of parish life, in particular from those already involved in ministry. Where new forms of evangelisation and pastoral activity and better practice of existing forms of ministry are required the Coordinators will form and train teams to achieve this.

We ask you to pray for the Leadership Team and for us all as we set out on this exciting task and reach out into the new parish community.



As with all change you will have many questions. Below are answers to a few questions that you may have.

WILL THERE BE MASSES AS USUAL?

When we come out of the restrictions associated with COVID-19, we will continue to have weekday and Sunday Masses in each of the three Churches as usual. However the Priests and Leadership Team will be looking at the Mass schedule to see if there are any changes that might be helpful as we proceed.

WHAT ABOUT SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMMES?

Sacramental Programmes already started and those prepared to the end of the year will continue as planned. Obviously we will be celebrating the sacraments each year into the future. However as we reflect on our ministries and practices in the light of the new parish vision we will want to think carefully about how we do sacramental preparation.

WILL CURRENT GROUPS CONTINUE IN THE NEW PARISH?

All our current groups and rosters will continue for the moment as usual. Thank you to all of you who participate in so many ways.

WILL PLANNED GIVING CONTINUE AS USUAL?

You will have already received (or will receive) your new set of envelopes which will be for the new North Parish. These can be returned to any Mass you attend. We appreciate that many will be struggling at the moment but, those who can, please support our planned giving and, if possible, go on to automatic payment.

WHAT ABOUT THE NEW CHURCH BUILDINGS?

I have formed a Building Committee which has begun meeting and working with the Diocese as we look forward to the building of a new parish church, parish centre, and presbytery at the Main North Road site. The Building Committee will be engaging with the Parish as we look into the future and its needs. We will also be forming a Fundraising Committee to support this. The plan to build will involve the realising of some assets as we proceed. The diocese will work with us to plan the stages of this. We will be talking to our parish schools before any decisions are made.

I am sure many of you will have other questions and valuable insights as we begin this journey together.

You are welcome to send us your thoughts and comments by emailing **northparishcomments@gmail.com**

We ask the Lord Jesus to guide us – going out ahead of us and giving us wisdom and patience, courage and enthusiasm as we take his love out to all here in this northern part of his city.

God Bless,



Fr Rick Loughnan

Parish Priest