



Kia tau te rangimārie ki a koutou

Many of you will know that Pope Francis has a prayer intention for every month. His prayer intention for February asks that parishes be generous and open, becoming communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need.

In a video about his prayer intention for February Pope Francis emphasizes the importance of parishes. The video begins with an image of the outside of a beautiful but empty parish church, followed by that of the same church full of people. He says, ***"Please, let us be daring. Let us all rethink the style of our parochial communities, (that they) may increasingly become communities of faith, of fraternity and of welcoming the most in need."***

In his *Evangelii Gaudium*, published very early in his pontificate, Pope Francis highlighted the centrality of the parish and spoke of the parish being ***"the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters."*** This is why it should be, he said ***"in contact with the homes and the lives of its people"*** and not become ***"a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few."***

It is a wonderful thing that everyone has great hopes and dreams of what their parish can be: welcoming, alive, prayerful, serving and caring for others, homilies that inspire, great music, etc. It can be a very long list of hopes.

Sometimes people expect that all these hopes and dreams will be implemented by the priest, but realistically one or two priests in a parish cannot do everything.

Another time when Francis was speaking about parishes he said: ***"... they need to really be communities, with the people at the centre, because we are truly a community when we know each other, know each other's names, needs, and voices. How often is it the case that parishes have become a group of more or less unfamiliar people who meet for Mass on Sunday, but without community life..."***

This February we can make the prayer intention of the Pope our own intention. Let us pray for all our parishes in a special way this month, as Pope Francis says: ***"Let us pray that parishes, placing communion – communion of people, ecclesial communion – at the centre, may increasingly become communities of faith, of fraternity and of welcoming the most in need."***

You can see the video at <https://thepopevideo.org/>.

Nāku noa. Nā

John



NOTICES

- Mons John Carde died on 30 January 2023. His Requiem Mass was celebrated last Thursday. Please keep John and his family in your prayers at this time.
- Please keep in your prayers all our clergy. The frail and those who are experiencing ill health at present are
Frs Frank Maguire, Peter O'Connell and Maurice Carmody. We also pray for our clergy who have tested positive for COVID and are now isolating. We wish them a speedy recovery.
- The Federation of Oceanian Bishops Conferences is meeting in Suva, Fiji, this week, that is all the bishops of Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Pacific Islands and New Zealand. This is a four yearly meeting and this is an important one as it is about the Continental Phase of the Synod Process on "*For A Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission.*" Please keep this meeting in your prayers.

Valentine's Day Mass

- The annual Mass for St Valentine's Day will be celebrated at St Joseph's Mt Victoria, 6.30pm on Tuesday 14th of February. This is always a wonderful celebration of love and marriage, all are welcome. Priests are also welcome and encouraged to concelebrate and meet with people after Mass.

Teachers Commissioning Masses

- At these Masses our Teachers are commissioned for their mission in Catholic Schools, often Board members also attend. Clergy are also invited to attend these Masses as a way of showing support for our Catholic Schools
North Island - Wednesday 15th February, - at St Mary of the Angels 5pm
South Island - Friday 17th February, at St Peter Chanel Church, Motueka 6.30pm

Ash Wednesday 22 February

- ⇒ Start thinking about Lent **NOW** and how it will change your life
- ⇒ What will you do this year to **PRAY** Lent?
- ⇒ How will you try to live each day with God at the centre of your life?
- ⇒ Try reading the daily Scriptures each night, and then throughout the next day.
- ⇒ Review each day, reflect on the fits and graces of each day, and on the progress you are making with Jesus.

"My father used to say, "Don't raise your voice. Improve your argument.""

Archbishop Desmond Tutu (January 2008)