



Kia tau te rangimārie ki a koutou

This newsletter is longer than usual and I do not apologise for that. The pandemic we are in the midst of is unique and it is dangerous. It is not the “common cold” that some people write to me about.

Worldwide there have been over 250 million cases and just over 5 million deaths - this pandemic is unique and dangerous. As of last week, in New Zealand there were a total of 7775 cases of people who have or who have had Covid in New Zealand, there have been 32 deaths. The Coronavirus has disrupted our lives, and we all have a responsibility to continue to keep safe and help keep others safe.

About a month ago, while on a flight from Slovakia to Italy Pope Francis spoke to reporters and said he did not know how to explain why some Cardinals are hesitant to **“get the jab”**. If you are wondering about the Cardinal who is writing this, yes, I have been vaccinated and so have all the New Zealand bishops. The Pope said, **“It is a bit strange because humanity has a history of friendship with vaccines...As children [we were vaccinated] for measles, polio - all the children were vaccinated and no one said anything”**.

Some believe that Catholics should be allowed to claim conscientious objection to the Covid-19 vaccines on religious grounds. Pope Francis has disagreed with this, and said the vaccines are **“morally acceptable”** and could be used **“in good conscience”**.

For well over a year now we have been reminded that as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, we can use the pandemic’s disruption to begin anew. This is a chance for all of us to think differently and hopefully to think of others, and not just about what suits me or what I see as **‘my right’**.

To begin anew is not something we can do on our own, to quote Pope Francis again: **“The Holy Spirit bestows wisdom and good counsel. In these days, let us invoke his aid upon those charged with making complex and pressing decisions, that they may defend human life ... we need a vision rich in humanity; we cannot start up again by going back to our selfish pursuits without caring about those who are left behind”**.

We have heard so much about how infectious this virus is, may be it will be a good to think about how at the first Pentecost God **‘infected’** the world with life. What can we do to be positive and overcome the threat of death and disease that has ravaged the world for months now.? How can we help others and help ourselves? Can we ‘infect’ the world, our part of it, with life and hope?

To **‘infect’** the world we can take these steps:

- Implore the Holy Spirit to pour into our hearts the life of God, who is love.
- Be willing to open their eyes and hearts and to change.
- Do for others that which we would hope for ourselves.
- Give encouragement to those who are afraid of being vaccinated
- Care for those who are alone and struggling with the changes in our world.

The way forward is not that difficult, if we need hope for tomorrow then we give hope today.

Nāku noa,

John



NOTICES

- Please keep in your prayers all our clergy. The frail and those who are experiencing ill health at present are Frs Colin Durning, Frank McGuire, Peter O'Connell and Mons John Carde.
Please also remember in prayer Fr Barry O'Connor sm, who died earlier this week May he rest in peace.
- **Archdiocese of Wellington World Day of the Poor webinar Sunday 14 November, 2-3pm**
We invite you to join us in a webinar sharing experiences from Archdiocesan Benefit Impacts. In these events, community advocates worked with beneficiaries to offer support and assistance in ensuring they received all their benefit entitlements. We will hear short presentations from organisers of the events, and there will be an opportunity to meet in small groups and chat with people who took part.
Register in advance for this webinar: https://us02web.zoom.us/.../reg.../WN_dXbxnC9tSYCK4jltVGXaxA or email l.beech@wn.catholic.org.nz to have the link sent to you.
- In the next few days a Pastoral letter from the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference entitled ***Living, Caring, Worshiping and Ministering in a Covid-19 World*** will be widely distributed to schools and parishes for sharing with their communities. Watch out for it.

In these times we need more than ever to draw on our faith and trust in an all-loving God. Thus, recalling the recent re-dedication of Aotearoa to Our lady Assumed into Heaven, we pray with Pope Francis:

Mary Most Holy and Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognise the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

(Excerpt from Pope Francis' prayer to Mary for the end of the pandemic – May 04, 2021.)