



A Catholic Parish of
The Archdiocese of Wellington

To Tatou Wahine O Nga Whanga Parahi Katorika

OUR LADY OF THE BAYS

MOTUEKA • RICHMOND • TAKAKA • WAIMEA WEST • WAKEFIELD

IMPORTANT PARISH NOTICE AS READ ON 29TH NOVEMBER 2020

Dear Parishioners,

You might recall last year our parishes were asked by Cardinal John to go through a review process of all parish property and assets. Importantly, the review process directed parishes to give serious, even radical, consideration, to how we might rationalise the use of our assets. This was to be done considering the number of people attending mass, the availability and number of priests, and the ideal location of churches.

Each of our parishes in the Nelson/Tasman region, Holy Family Parish and Our Lady of the Bays Parish, completed their reviews independently. Each parish review group consulted the other, looking for areas of collaboration that might best benefit our future circumstances. Considering all the information available, several options emerged. The preferred option at the time was that unless there was a foreseeable reduction in the number of priests in our region there was no necessity to change our present circumstances.

Notwithstanding the delays COVID-19 has brought, Cardinal John has now responded to our Parish Property Reviews. Cardinal John has been clear on several matters that will affect the way we need to consider our future.

- The availability of supply priests in case of absence or illness is now doubtful. In the future there is likely be only two priests permanently assigned to the Nelson/Tasman region
- Each priest is not to say more than three masses on a Sunday (including a Saturday vigil).
- Having just two priests means we cannot serve all our church communities the way we have been used to. This means we will need to change how we support each community along with our financial and physical structures.
- Services of the Word with Holy Communion on Sundays on a regular basis are not permissible when mass is available within reasonable driving distance.

- The role of laity and their involvement in various aspects of pastoral ministry is to be fully developed and empowered to enable a missionary focused, collaborative pastoral context.

To this end, Cardinal John has recommended that Holy Family and Our Lady of the Bays Parishes evaluate the proposal to amalgamate and explore the possibility of building a Catholic Hub.

How this happens is up to us. As your priests and leadership teams we are committed to doing this in a considered and open way. This is no small undertaking. This initial communication is just to put you in the picture as our leadership groups get to grips with the work to be done. At this stage, we envision a five-year time frame to work through all the practicalities of our property matters and new parish structures. The first step in this process will be to implement a feasibility study. This will begin next year with full community consultation. It will take some time to establish a proper scope of the work needed, so for the time being, please understand there is no change to our present circumstances.

The parish priests and leadership groups of each of our parishes appreciate the strong feelings these changes will arouse for some. This process signals a deep-sea change from the ways all of us, priest, and laity alike, have been used to understanding our roles, and the regular rhythms of parish life. The leadership groups of each of our parishes will work collaboratively and supportively with you as we respond to this call to create a positive future together.

God Bless, Fr. Bill, Fr. Seph, Fr. Andrew

Holy Family Leadership team and Finance Committee

Our Lady of the Bays Parish Council and Finance Committee