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‘One As We Are One’: Migrant chaplaincies celebrate faith and culture

Auckland’s Catholic migrant communities came together for the fifth annual Migrant Chaplaincies Festival on May 30 – a vibrant celebration of faith, culture and unity.

Fourteen chaplaincies participated in a Thanksgiving Mass attended by around 800 people, including two bishops, clergy chaplains and seminarians. The liturgy reflected the diversity of the universal Church, incorporating multiple languages, traditions and cultural expressions, highlighting the shared faith that unites Catholics across nations.

The Festival’s theme, “Rise Up & Shine”, drew inspiration from the prophet Isaiah, calling communities to renew their faith and return to God. The principal celebrant, Bishop Peter Brown CSsR, the former Bishop of American Samoa, represented Bishop Steve Lowe.

In his homily, Bishop Peter emphasised unity through diversity with the theme “One As We Are One”, saying “we do not need to become the same to be ‘one’ – we simply need to be open enough to hear each other, to listen and to receive our differences as gifts”.

Following the Mass, the celebration transitioned into a lively cultural festival. Food stalls offered a wide variety of international cuisine, including Pacific, Asian, African and European dishes. These stalls not only provided food but also shared the cultural stories and traditions behind them, fostering a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

Cultural performances were a highlight of the event, with

each chaplaincy presenting traditional dances, music and storytelling. These performances showcased the richness of each culture while promoting mutual understanding and appreciation among attendees.

Organisers described the Festival as more than a celebration; it was an expression of belonging and unity. They emphasised that despite diverse backgrounds, all participants are united in one faith. The Festival ultimately stood as a powerful witness to multicultural harmony within the Catholic Church, leaving attendees with a renewed sense of connection, gratitude and shared mission.



Bishop Lowe elected to second term as NZCBC president

Auckland Bishop Steve Lowe was elected to a second term as president of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference in Hamilton recently, during the NZCBC's quarterly meeting.

The president and vice-president of the NZCBC are appointed to three-year terms. Bishop Michael Dooley of Dunedin was elected to a second term as vice-president, with Archbishop Paul Martin SM reappointed as the Conference's general secretary.

Bishop Lowe said the New Zealand bishops work very collaboratively, which is a source of comfort for him as president.

"There are some tasks that I am

required to undertake as president of the Conference, but I am grateful for the constant support that my brother bishops offer in our shared ministry of leadership," he said.

Bishop Lowe said the NZCBC meeting examined some key issues for the Church in New Zealand, including the recent increase in people becoming Catholic, the work of key national agencies and initiatives to engage with the wider community.

"Each meeting of the Bishops Conference provides us a chance to assess how the mission of the Church is being carried out through our country, and that is a source of joy and pride," he said.



"But we also look at ways in which we can better serve our people – laity, priests and consecrated – and contribute to the national debate."

Diocesan GM attends ethical investment event

Diocesan general manager James van Schie recently joined Church leaders and experts from Europe, North America and Australia at the Vatican for a global gathering on faith-consistent investing.

Hosted by the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, the "Faith-Consistent Investing for a Global Church" conference brought together bishops conferences, religious institutions and investment practitioners to advance the implementation of *Mensuram Bonam* – a guide for aligning financial stewardship with the mission and teachings of the Church.

The discussions focused on how Catholic institutions across the world are working to put these principles into practice. A consistent framework is emerging across countries, built around three key elements:

- **Exclusions** – avoiding investments in activities that conflict with Catholic teaching;
- **Engagement** – actively working with companies to encourage responsible and ethical behaviour;
- **Enhancement** – proactively investing in organisations that contribute positively to society and the common good.

Encouragingly, international research and experience shared at the gathering revealed that it is possible to remain faithful to these principles while still achieving sustainable financial outcomes over time.

Beyond the technical discussions, the gathering was shaped by a broader vision – that economic decisions must always be oriented toward the good of all, grounded in human dignity and attentive to those most vulnerable.



Outcomes from the event are set to include the launch of new faith-aligned investment funds both here in Oceania and internationally; improved benchmarking, training and resource development on Catholic investment standards; and strengthened collaboration to support the Holy Father's work in shaping the development of artificial intelligence in a manner that is ethical and promotes human dignity, as highlighted in his new encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*.



NZ bishop: Leo places AI at service of common good

A New Zealand bishop says Pope Leo's encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* provides society with guidelines that can help ensure artificial intelligence is directed towards the common good.

Pope Leo's first encyclical was published on May 25, taking the subtitle "on safeguarding the human person in the time of artificial intelligence".

Hamilton Bishop Richard Laurenson said while there has been an explosion in the availability of various forms of AI in recent years, the trajectory to today was set decades ago.

Bishop Laurenson said artificial intelligence's impact on humanity has been pondered since at least 1949, and the place of computers in society has been critiqued in literature and films, including *1984*, *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *The Terminator*.

"Now, in his first worldwide letter, Pope Leo offers us a vision by which we can navigate this new thing – a thing that promises a revolution – without fear and with hope," he explained.

Bishop Laurenson said "this new technology we are calling AI" offers great opportunities, but also some caution.

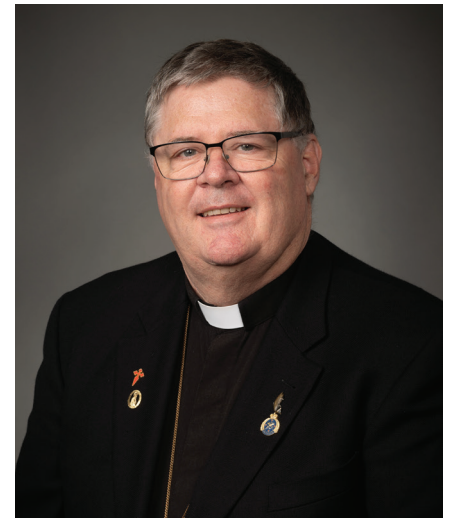
"All technology comes with risks and gifts," he said. "It is up to the human community to mitigate AI risks, and focus the gifts for the good of all people."

"Because of our fallen human nature, the negative side of new tech can be exploited quickly with damaging results. This letter from Pope Leo

provides us with a set of criteria where we can focus this new tech for the common good. This is true for individuals, families, communities and countries."

Julianne Hickey, an advisor to the Archdiocese of Wellington who participated in a major AI conference at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome last year, said Pope Leo posed important questions at that event.

"Pope Leo addressed our gathering and asked us to consider who we are becoming through the



“It is up to the human community to mitigate AI risks, and focus the gifts for the good of all people.”

technologies we build," she said.

"As a mother who is involved with AI across several sectors of our economy, I am thinking deeply on how we design and create – and what it will mean for future generations."

Mrs Hickey continued: "In this encyclical, Pope Leo calls on us to imagine, to build a world where all people can thrive. That challenges me and those working ethically in the field of AI to be intentional now, so that future generations flourish. We all have a part to play in building the future we want."

James Bergin, who has worked as a technology leader for more than two decades and has advised the Church in a range of digital ministries, said the Church has led many ethical conversations about AI in recent years.

"Back in 2020, the Rome Call for AI ethics was created at the Vatican, with signatories from some of the world's largest tech companies, urging moral decision-making at a time when such morals can be elusive," Mr Bergin said.

"Many popes have spoken about the opportunities and risks of technology, and Francis and Leo have made AI a significant focus in their papacies.

"In doing so, they remind Catholics and the world that responsible use of technology that places humans at the heart is a great gift. But they are unafraid when it comes to naming the harms that come when technology is devoid of morality.

"Pope Leo in *Magnifica Humanitas* carefully exposes the duality of current technology and urges us to avoid simply sleepwalking into the future," Mr Bergin said.

the Catholic Kiwi Podcast

Te Huinga o ngā Pihopa Katorika o Aotearoa
New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

Listen to a Kiwi Catholic technologist's take on AI

Pompallier Shield 2026: Whakawhanaungatanga wins again

by John Hall, Religious Education & Special Character Advisor

Sancta Maria College in Flat Bush hosted the Pompallier Shield for the first time on May 1. Verna-Lee Oliver, the assistant director of religious studies, did an amazing job of energising a team of staff and students to do themselves and their school proud. The newly appointed principal of Sancta Maria, Andrew McKenzie, was very impressed with the gathering and the way in which the staff swung into action.

Schools only get to host the event once every 16 years, so for the hosting staff and students it is often a steep learning curve and usually a once-in-a-career opportunity for the school community to showcase Christian values of aroha (love), whakawhanaungatanga (building connections) and manaakitanga (generosity) to the Catholic secondary school community.

Pompallier Shield is an annual highlight in the secondary calendar with competitors, staff, family members and most principals in attendance along with competitors. The waiata section is a crowd-puller. There are competitions in senior oratory, junior prepared speeches, junior and senior



Bishop Steve Lowe with some of the entrants in the senior oratory competition

Scripture proclamation, as well as a highlight of the open category of Scripture proclamation in te reo Māori.

St Mary's College Ponsonby won the competition for the fourth year in a row. As always, Pompallier Shield brings out the best in balancing competition with aroha. In fact, whakawhanaungatanga was the winner on the day. All participants enjoyed the gathering, whether or not they won their section.

OCIA: A renewed vision of Christian initiation

by Msgr Bernard Kiely, Vicar General

We are certainly living in interesting and hopeful days. This year, for the first time in the Diocese of Auckland, we had to hold two Rite of Election ceremonies at the Cathedral to cope with the number of people preparing for Baptism or reception into the Church.

We are experiencing an extraordinary amount of interest in people wanting to explore what it means to be Catholic. The normative process by which adults enter the Catholic Church has long been known as RCIA, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

In recent years, however, dioceses have been restoring a more accurate translation of its original Latin title, *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum*, now rendered in English as OCIA, the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. This shift in language is not merely cosmetic, but theological and pastoral in significance.

The key difference lies in the words rite and order. A "rite" refers to the liturgical ceremonies themselves – the formal rituals such as the Rite of Acceptance, the Scrutinies and the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. These are pivotal and grace-filled moments, marking important thresholds in a person's journey into the Church.

By contrast, the word "order", translated from the Latin *ordo*, points to the structured and unfolding journey as a whole. It emphasises that Christian initiation is not a single event or even a series of ceremonies, but a coherent process of formation, conversion and incorporation into the life of the Church. This process includes distinct steps and stages: the pre-catechumenate, catechumenate, purification and enlightenment, and mystagogy. Each stage carries its own spiritual focus, pastoral care

and communal dimension, as well as rituals.

The move from RCIA to OCIA therefore highlights a deeper understanding of initiation as a journey shaped by both formation and liturgy.

The rites remain essential, but they are moments within a broader "order" that accompanies individuals as they grow in faith and discipleship. In this way, the Church underscores that becoming Catholic is not simply about completing rituals, but about entering into a lifelong relationship with Christ within the community of believers.

In light of the increasing interest in becoming Catholic, all parishes should consider offering the OCIA. It is a tried and tested way of walking with others on their way to the sacraments. Importantly, for those involved in this ministry, there are some humbling moments where the faith of all, including "cradle Catholics", is wonderfully and surprisingly nourished!

The road to Emmaus is a journey still being travelled by us all.



Catholic Diocese of Auckland
Te Taumata o te Hāhi Katorika

 aucklandcatholic.org.nz
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