



Renewed By Hope, reflection day participants, 28th November, 2020

Gifts, Gratitude & Grace

Advent is a good time to reflect back on the year we've had, both the joys and struggles, and to see where God has been with us through it all. It always feels so ironic to me that this reflective season falls at our busiest time of year. We are finishing off the school year, there are university graduations, Christmas functions, Christmas shopping, the list goes on and on. But yet, what better time to stop and take stock of our lives than when we are so busy. It might not be a whole day of silence, but we can take a moment here or there if we are aware enough to do so. Maybe five minutes with our coffee in the morning, or ten minutes after the kids are in bed to do an examen, or replay of the day, to see where God was present. Because God is always there if we only stop for a moment to remember and give thanks. We had a lovely gathering on the last Saturday of November with 65 people from around our diocese. We came to hear about Pope Francis's latest writings, where he urges us to see the whole world as sisters and brothers, leading the way with healing peace. We had personal space to reflect on our year, and a time to think about the gifts all around us, with gratitude, remembering that God's grace is what brings it all together. We have so many gifted and generous people in our midst, who each in our own small way contribute to growing the Gospel Kingdom in our little patch of the world. It is a marvellous thing, when we

respond to God's invitation with our own 'yes', as Mary did, and to watch the generosity of God unfold before our very eyes. Thanks to all who took the time to gather and share, and a special thanks to the wonderful hospitality of the staff at Burns Lodge. Blessed Advent to all!



~Amy Armstrong Pastoral Ministry Coordinator

ADVENT REFLECTION



[Click here](#) to watch a 10 minute Advent Reflection video with a focus on Mary's journey along-side our own Advent journey.



A big thank you to Mark Currie who has acted as our diocesan volunteer youth coordinator for several years, flying up to Wellington for the national meetings. We are very grateful to Mark for his generosity in doing this and for his passion for youth in our diocese for many years. Mark has recently moved to the Christchurch Diocese to take up the role of *Parish Youth Ministry Support Co-ordinator*. We will miss you greatly Mark, but wish you every blessing for your new chapter!



[Click here to get involved with youth in our diocese](#)

Ethnic Communities

The Dunedin Catholic Samoan Community

was formally established within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dunedin in 1966 under the Pastoral care of Forbury Parish (now called Mercy Parish). What started as a small Catholic Samoan prayer group is now a well-established community, owning its own hall and church at the top of Corstorphine Road. Still very active, nearly 60 years later, the DCSC exists to support Samoan language and culture within a Catholic ethos. It creates a village context particularly for migrant families. Members are integrated within the wider mainstream Parish community and celebrate a Samoan Mass once a month. They meet regularly for choir practice, special prayer groups throughout the liturgical year, celebrations, commemorations and in times of need. DCSC sing once a month at St Patrick's Basilica. The Community has also been involved in public liturgical celebrations, in the last few years at celebrating 150 years of Catholic education in Dunedin, Priestly ordination of Fr Sani Lam and the Ordination of Bishop Michael Dooley. Popular annual events for the Community are Holy Week, White Sunday and the Family Christmas party. They have a very active Youth Group who have been involved in evangelisation and promoting the Gospel through the use of Samoan culture. Currently they meet once a month alternating for a cultural session or spiritual catechesis, but more regularly if invited to perform at an event such as the recent Catholic Social Service Corporate Dinner Fundraiser.



Polish Heritage Trust of Otago & Southland

In 1995, a group of recent Polish arrivals picnicked in the grounds of Mary Queen of Peace at Broad Bay (Church originally St. Hyacinth from Waihola). Little did they know, that the view towards Port Otago was where the first and largest contingent of Poles arrived in 1872, settling throughout Otago & Southland. In 1998, when the region celebrated 150 years of European settlement, the Polish Heritage Trust of Otago & Southland was born. A group of enthusiastic Polish and New Zealanders with Polish ancestry set out to research, preserve & promote Polish history & culture to the wider community. The Trust set out to preserve the church building, organ & grounds at Broad Bay. A dedicated partnership with the Toitu Museum & Dunedin Council has provided historical displays, seminars, Polish art, early Polish history in New Zealand & Polish culture to the community. Dance Polonia was created and entertained with many performances throughout Otago & Southland. Every year the Polish & local Broad Bay Community celebrate the coming of Christmas with a Carol Singing Service at the Church of Mary Queen of Peace.



This year we are celebrating the evening with Peter Hayden on the 15th December at 7pm and we welcome you all along. ~Paul Klemick.

We have many wonderful ethnic communities that enrich our Catholic experience here in the Dunedin Diocese. We'd love to hear from all of you. Please be in touch if you would like to share your community's story in future newsletters by contacting Amy: amy@cdd.org.nz

St. Francis of Assisi Trust

The St. Francis of Assisi Trust is evolving. We came together about 6 years ago to alleviate challenges from financial hardship that people experienced through high interest loans and mounting debt. We did well in this space, promoting small 'no interest' loans from Ngā Tangata Microfinancing and speaking up and supporting social service agencies submissions to Parliament for law change- great that there is now a cap on excessive interest rates and more regulation on lenders, including mobile traders. Very quickly, after the Trust was formed, we adopted the Coptic Friendship Icon' of St Menas walking with Jesus. We wanted to walk alongside people with their burdens and accompany them whatever the outcome. Now we do many different things: Supply washing machines and fridges, prams, pay for prescriptions, petrol vouchers and firewood. Our biggest contribution this year was 'Soup and Buns' at Mercy Parish every Thursday, during the winter months. It was a catalyst for community which is a beautiful, sacred thing. We also do a Christmas dinner every year at the St. Patrick's Community Centre on Christmas Eve. To get involved with the Trust by volunteering or donating contact Gerry O'Farrell: gerry.tracey@xtra.co.nz / 027 542 4916



Gerry serving up his famous soup

[Click here to donate to the Trust](#)

"We need people prepared to boldly and creatively initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter." (Fratelli tutti Ch 7)



Jesus and St. Menas

[Click here to watch the video series](#)

A special thanks to the St. Francis of Assisi Trust for organising some beautiful Taizé style reflection evenings on Pope Francis's latest encyclical, *Fratelli tutti*. In this encyclical Francis urges us to see everyone in our world as a sister and brother. Gerry invited eight different speakers to reflect on each of the eight chapters, reading out excerpts and personally reflecting on the text, followed by soup and buns. It was wonderful nourishment for the body and soul!

A chain of transmission

With Covid-19 the aim is to break the chain of transmission of the virus, particularly by practising social distancing. By contrast, the aim of our life as Christians is to participate in the chain of transmission of Jesus' message of transformation, love and healing- to be a link in that chain which stretches across time, place and distance. Recently, at the Diocesan Reflection Day at Burns Lodge, I was talking to a parishioner about JustPeace, which is a social justice group which meets monthly, usually via Zoom- so that we can join with people from around the Diocese and support each other. Everyone is welcome to attend these Zoom meetings. If Zoom isn't for you, perhaps you would be willing to link with JustPeace via email- like the parishioner I was talking to. She generously offered to join the JustPeace email list and receive social justice updates – news about upcoming talks, workshops, webinars and interesting resources which she can then share with people in her parish. Equally, it would be great to hear from parishioners about what's happening in our parishes when it comes to social action - the good ideas people have come up with to support people in our community. If you are interested, have ideas/stories to share or would like to know more about JustPeace, please contact me: lynne.toomey@gmail.com

Meri Kirihimete!

Lynne Toomey
Diocesan Social
Justice Coordinator



Marriage Preparation

Marriage preparation weekend camp, November 2020

It is our fifth year running Engaged encounter weekend and each year, at the end of camp, there is a deep sense of gratitude for graces received during the weekend. Tirohanga camp provides a beautiful, peaceful environment for engaged couples to be together and to be open with one another, with no distractions. The couples value this time of reflecting together, on different aspects of marriage, including forgiveness, managing conflict, making a decision to love as well as sharing their values and hopes.

As presenting couples, we share our joys as well as difficulties which we have all faced as married couples, acknowledging that once the honeymoon period is over, difficulties will come. When they do, it does not mean the marriage is a failure, the hard times are simply part of the human journey. It is during those hard times we need to make an extra effort to be life giving, to remember that marriage is a Sacrament not a contract; that Jesus understands suffering. He understands sadness, but most importantly he knows unconditional love. He never fails to be our companion and friend, in good times and in difficulties. Marriage is like building a house. Pope Francis says, "You would not wish to build it on the shifting sands of emotions, but on the rock of true love, the love that comes from God".

Feedback we receive from couples continually reassures us that they value this time of togetherness and guided conversations. Those who have had previous relationships wish they had done the course earlier in their life journey, as perhaps previous relationships may have turned out differently. For us presenters, this feedback encourages us to continue. In our society, we increasingly expect instant gratification and happiness to be part of our every-day life. Knowing that marriage is not about happiness only, but unity that requires commitment and a decision, is an important part of our growing as a husband and as a wife.

As presenting couples, sharing our journey with others also grounds us, in our relationship. When life is busy, it is sometimes easy to keep doing what needs to be done. We may forget to pause and to notice our partner, we may forget to take time to be life giving, we may lose our footing on the rock of love. For me each time we run the course, it is a reminder of what the Sacrament of marriage is about.

The camp would not happen without the help and prayer of many. Each year, with joy and love the team feed the troops, run kids camp, make a 'single match' bonfire, and play music. This community spirit, rustle of leaves, bird song, shimmering river, all result in an atmosphere of loving encounter and awareness, that the Holy Family is with us, encouraging, loving and supporting each one of us.

~ Jo Krysa



'You would not wish to build [marriage] on the shifting sands of emotions, but on the rock of true love, the love that comes from God'
-Pope Francis.



For more information on marriage prep in our diocese [click here](#). If you'd like to become involved as a marriage preparation couple please contact Amy: amy@cdd.org.nz