



# OUR VISION

## A Message from **BISHOP JOHN ADAMS**

To the Parishioners of New Plymouth

I am very happy to be able to offer these brief words of encouragement to your parish community as you begin now to live out a new vision and mission for your parish.

*Deus Caritas Est*, (God is Love) is the reality from which all human flourishing begins. That God has a love for each one of us beyond our greatest imagining transforms us, and imparts on us, both joy and the impetus for mission.

Being a bearer of the 'good news' has inherent challenges in a culture that too often has its focus on 'having' rather than 'being'. And so once again I encourage you to take up with good courage the task of becoming a missionary disciple.

Ask the Holy Spirit to be a companion with you on this journey, for

*"...beautiful indeed are the feet of those who bring the good news."* ROMANS 10:15

I recommend this vision to the whole parish to be taken hold of with both hands. It will inspire and unite the parish community in a common mission, with the Holy Spirit to the world.



+ John Adams

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF PALMERSTON NORTH



## A Message from **FATHER SIMON STORY**

Dear Disciples of Jesus Christ

Jesus of Nazareth shared God's vision of the kingdom with his disciples. The Evangelists have committed this to paper in the Gospel narratives. Down the ages, Christ's vision has been expressed and brought into renewed focus, through differing means by saints.

It is for our parish in our time, to dream – *moemoeā*, with the clarity the Holy Spirit brings. To paint a picture of what that kingdom of God, that Jesus spoke of, might look like in the Catholic Parish of New Plymouth.

The *moemoeā* presented here is a God-inspired picture of what could be, fuelled by the conviction that it should be. We, with the Holy Spirit, using the parish survey, and our dreaming of what could be, share this *moemoeā*.

Empowered with the Holy Spirit and with a mission plan, we will move from where we are to where we dream of being.

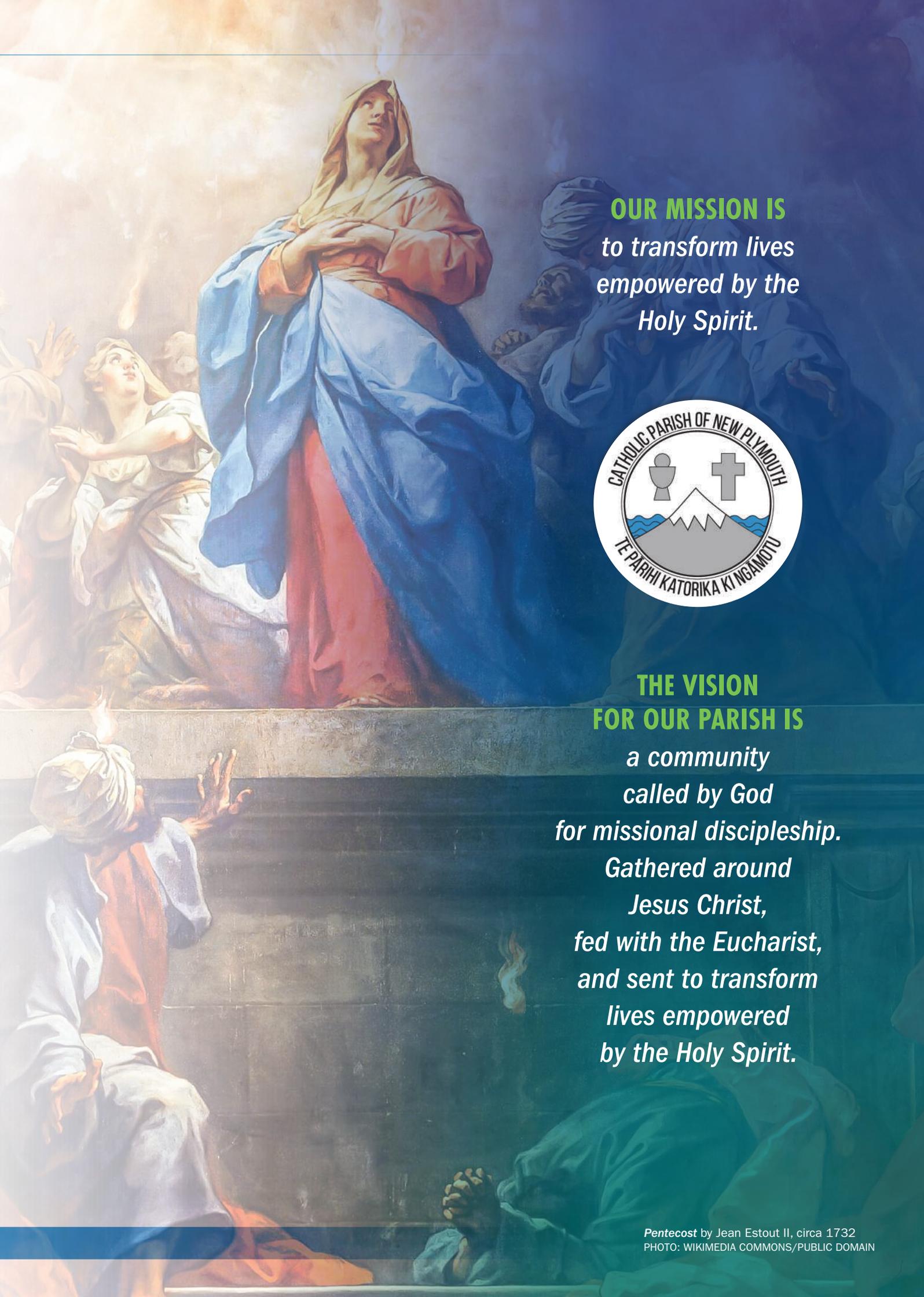


Fr. Simon Story

PARISH PRIEST OF THE CATHOLIC PARISH OF NEW PLYMOUTH

November 2023





**OUR MISSION IS**  
*to transform lives  
empowered by the  
Holy Spirit.*



**THE VISION  
FOR OUR PARISH IS**

*a community  
called by God  
for missional discipleship.  
Gathered around  
Jesus Christ,  
fed with the Eucharist,  
and sent to transform  
lives empowered  
by the Holy Spirit.*

## OUR VISION | Ō TĀTOU MOEMOEĀ

We dream that our parish family will be a community called by God to be missional disciples, gathered around Jesus Christ. People say, “see how they love one another.” This love spills over far beyond parish walls.

We the Catholic community are a magnet to all we encounter. People are irresistibly drawn to be fed with the Eucharist at our prayerful and vibrant Sunday Mass. The Day of the Lord will be the power source for release into the wider community.

We have surrendered to Him, attuning our hearing to the inner music of the Good Shepherd. Joy is written large on every face and there is peace with His purpose. There is a signature presence in the air, a sweet fragrance of the Holy Spirit binding us all together as a community of communities.

We are sent to share the love of Jesus to those who do not know Him. Our parish is united in continuing his mission, moving into the highways and byways, bringing all to the encounter with Jesus Christ. The sight of new people coming into relationship with Jesus the Lord is a common joy. We are grateful to the Holy Spirit who brings the growth. The transformation of people’s lives, the result of a mountain top encounter, is at the heart of our mission.

We as missional disciples worship passionately. We pray with and place ourselves under the scriptures. We love the Church and serve her gladly. We continually seek to grow and be formed as missional disciples throughout our lives. Like a fruitful vine, our parish is offering many formation opportunities.

Our schools and colleges are treasured in our hearts. They are integral to our parish family. From them families of missional disciples are formed.

There is a culture of leadership that activates people’s gifts. Through discernment, our parish is led by the Holy Spirit on a true path of transforming lives.



*We are sent to share the love of Jesus to those who do not know Him.  
Our parish is united in continuing his mission,  
moving into the highways and byways,  
bringing all to the encounter with Jesus Christ.*



## WORSHIP | WHAKAMOEMITI

*'... as they spent much time together in the temple,  
they broke bread'*

ACTS 2:46

We see **Worship** as the primary purpose of the Church, the source and summit of all the Church does.

Our churches overflow with people at **Mass** because of the tremendous irresistible summons of God the Father. We come to offer our lives to God in gratitude and surrender. The Mass is a **transformative experience** that draws us into union with Jesus Christ to the Father through the Holy Spirit and with the earthly and heavenly community gathered. We believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the **Eucharistic Bread and Wine**. The **homilies** are guided by the Holy Spirit and are inspiring, challenging and relevant, nurturing the spiritual life and leading people to a renewed sense of grace and encounter with God.

**Children** desire to come to Sunday morning Masses where there is a breaking open of the Word of God at their level. There is joy in community with their friends. The priests engage with children in their role as their spiritual fathers leading them to an encounter with God.

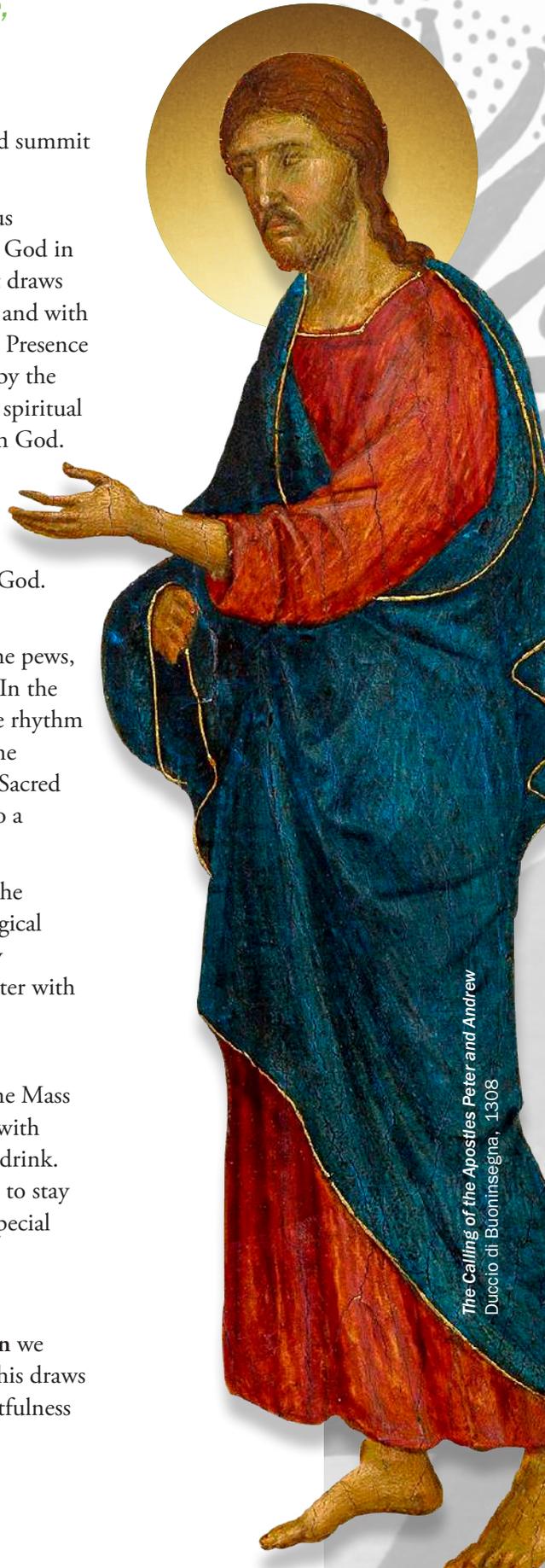
People experience great **beauty** in liturgy. In the **interior** set up of our churches; in the architecture, in the lighting, shapes and colours, in the pews, altar, and ambo, in the flowers and plants, and in the images and art. In the reverence and communication of our **gestures and movements**. In the rhythm and clarity of words and **sounds**, and in the capturing of **silence**. In the **fragrance** of flowers, candles and incense. This beauty symbolises the Sacred Presence of God and has an evangelising power that draws people into a reverent encounter with Him.

We have many **well-formed people** offering their gifts and talents in the **ministries** at Mass. We have beautiful, inspiring and appropriate liturgical **music**, both traditional and contemporary, in which everyone joyfully participates, lifting off the roof of the church and enabling an encounter with God.

We have a beautiful **culture of hospitality, welcome and connection**. Preceding Mass people are greeted as they enter our churches. After the Mass the community's connection with God is echoed in their connection with one another as a family in a beautiful environment, sharing food and drink. Visitors and newcomers are welcomed and after Mass they are invited to stay and meet others. As a community we anticipate and provide for the special needs of people.

**We prepare ourselves to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist.**

Outside of Mass in **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in Adoration** we continue to seek an intimate encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist. This draws us into the reverent celebration of the Mass and leads to a greater fruitfulness of the mission of our parish.



*The Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew*  
Duccio di Buoninsegna, 1308



Through the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** people seek forgiveness of sins and healing that Jesus offers restoring our intimate friendship with Him. There is great desire for this Sacrament, so much so that every member is knocking down the doors to get into the confessional.

Everyone is engaged in many forms of **personal and communal prayer**. People seek to pray and learn how to pray. Everyone has the habit of reflecting on the Sacred Scriptures prior to the Sunday Mass. We have praise and worship evenings. We have people gathering to contemplate in Christian meditation, Lectio Divina, and the Prayer of the Church (The Divine Office). We have people gathering to pray the Rosary, Divine Mercy and Stations of the Cross devotions. People are yearning for prayer from others. After the Sunday Mass people seek prayer from prayer teams to be filled with the Holy Spirit for discernment and healing.



*“The Sunday celebration of the Lord’s Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church’s life”*

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH 2177



*The Last Supper*  
by Vicente Juan Masip,  
c. 1562.

## EVANGELISATION | TE HORA KARAITIANATANGA

*“Day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved”*

ACTS 2:47

We live out a **culture of evangelisation** answering God’s call to “go therefore and make disciples”. This is core to our identity as a parish. Every member of the parish has had an **encounter** with Jesus Christ like the woman at the well. As disciples of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are intentional and deliberate in achieving this mission through the proclamation of the **kerygma**, communicating God’s ‘Love Story’, sharing the Good News through **words and deeds**.

As an Easter people we are **witnesses** who are willing to share with others that “we have seen the Lord”. We are deliberate in **inviting others** to experience the spiritual and social life of our parish, in asking questions, and in entering spiritual conversations. We recognise and celebrate the invitations and dialogue that call people to “come and see”.

We have a “missionary impulse” that transforms everything, so that “our customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures” are all channelled toward evangelisation. We have **Discipleship pathways**, where all our events, activities and programmes have evangelisation at heart and bring people into a personal relationship with Jesus.

We are **equipped** and have the courage to **witness** to our faith. We share our personal testimonies with people we encounter in our daily lives. Parents talk about the Lord with their children. Staff and students at our schools witness to their faith at a personal level with each other.

Through **prayer** we recognise, invite and trust the Holy Spirit as the principal agent of evangelisation and the one who gives the growth. We have a culture of praying for each other. Everyone, especially our elderly, is praying intentionally for the works of the parish. When people ask us to pray for them, we offer to pray for them there and then.

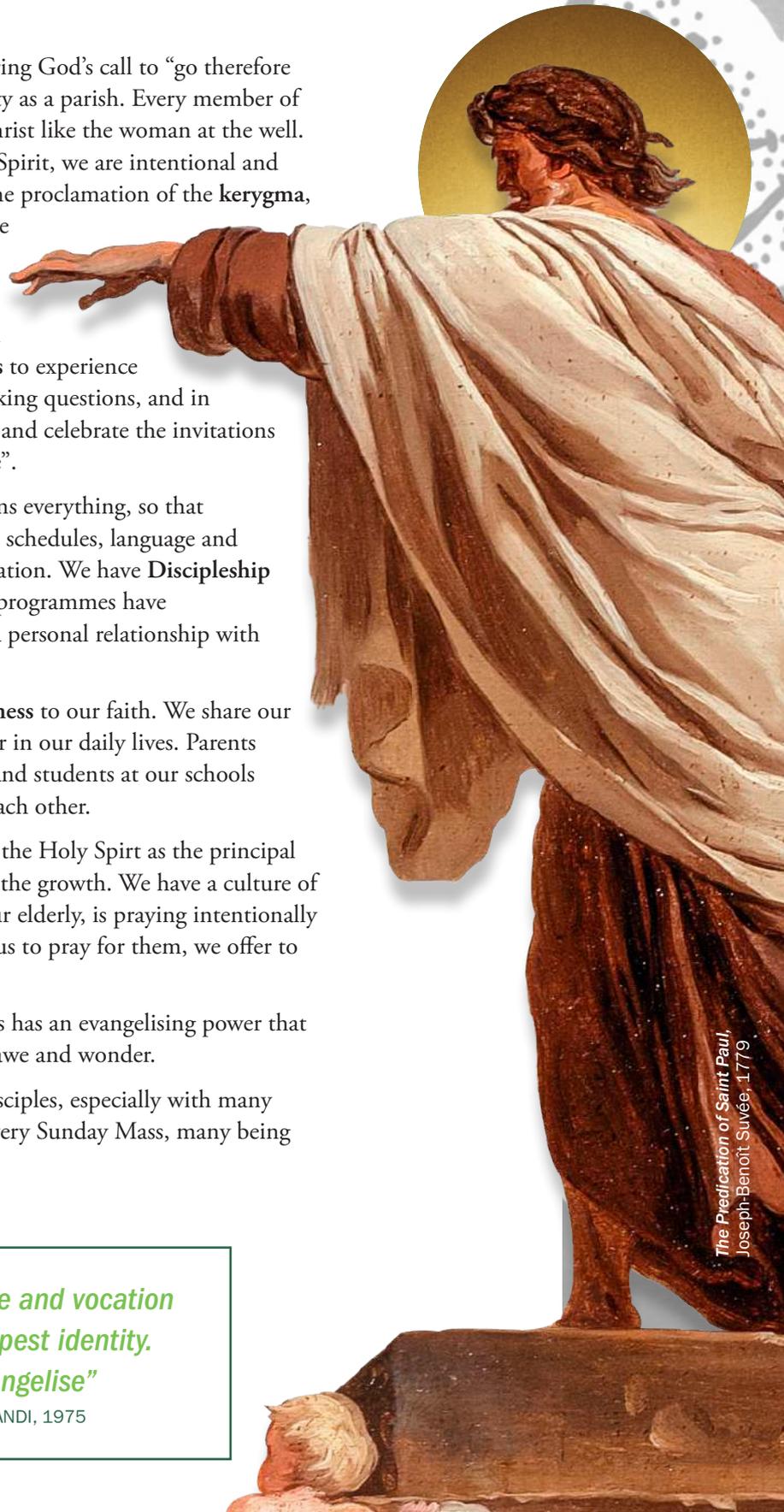
The **beauty** of our church buildings and spaces has an evangelising power that draws people towards God, filling them with awe and wonder.

We are a growing and active community of disciples, especially with many youth and families participating together at every Sunday Mass, many being added to our numbers through baptism.



*“Evangelising is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise”*

ST. POPE PAUL VI, EVANGELII NUNTIANDI, 1975



## DISCIPLESHIP | PONONGATANGA

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching”* ACTS 2:42

We all have the **kerygma** at the heart of our formation as disciples; it is the joyful proclamation of Jesus, a living person to be encountered, whose life, death and resurrection has revealed God’s saving love and mercy, defeating sin and death.

We have a **culture of ongoing formation**. It is intentional, encouraging and challenging. We are all life-long students striving to become saints. We especially meet together in small groups, in a personal environment, “willing the good of the other”, being equipped and formed as disciples.

We are all living out the universal call to holiness and God’s unique call for our life, conscious of the **four pillars of formation**.

In our **human formation** we understand that grace builds upon nature and that the glory of God is the human being fully alive. We are all growing in good habits, virtues and character, and seek to identify our God-given gifts. This formation gives us a disposition of joy, good soil from which fruit can grow.

Our **spiritual formation** focuses on the deepening of one’s relationship with God. Our Baptism calls us to holiness. We all have a deliberate ever-growing personal and communal prayer life, listening and speaking to God. Everyone in our parish is actively praying. The parish is providing regular formation events to help members grow in their personal relationship with God. The parish has well-formed spiritual directors within and outside the parish available to parishioners.

Our **intellectual formation** will deepen our faith. We are hungry to learn about our faith. There is regular planned faith formation. People are eager to learn about the faith. In every house, during gatherings and in small groups, we are discussing the topics of faith; our traditions, the scriptures, theology, and the sacraments. Resources are available, well used, and known by parishioners.

Our **pastoral formation** helps us better care for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of others. We are formed and ready to accompany, care and support our neighbour in many community spaces, as the face of Christ. We develop our sensitivity, our ability to engage in conversation, and ability to pray for each other. We prepare ourselves to confidently bear witness to our faith which paves the way for them to encounter Christ the Good Shepherd.

We especially seek to grow our youth and families as disciples, where parents’ nurture their children’s **vocational discernment**. We have vocations to marriage, religious life and the priesthood.

We have intentional and designed **Discipleship pathways** that form people as disciples of Jesus Christ. These pathways include events and activities such as RCIA, forming spiritual directors, developing people’s ability to give testimonies, engaging in leadership development, and attending courses, seminars & retreats.

We are all ultimately developing a deepening personal relationship with Christ, that is, becoming saints. This journey of ongoing conversion is nurtured through the regular and active development of prayer life, spiritual direction, learning about the scriptures, the Catholic traditions and sacraments, identifying one’s God-given gifts and how to care for others.



*“Formation is not the privilege of a few,  
but a right and duty of all.”*

ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II, CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI, 1988

## COMMUNITY | HAPORI

*“They devoted themselves ... to fellowship ...  
All who believed were together and had all things in common.”*

ACTS 2:42, 44

As the Baptised we are all members of a divine household of New Plymouth Parish where we belong and are **known** and **loved**. We are all together because we have been called by God.

In this calling we have all things in common, we are **one body**. When we gather together all our differences are transcended, as we profess in our Creed, by our worship of the one God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit the giver of life. We are not defined by our differences, but that we are all children of God, brothers and sisters.

We are **welcoming** of people who are unchurched, itinerant, strangers, orphaned and widowed. We meet people where they are at. We are all accepting of each other's uniqueness and differences according to God's terms. We seek to **accompany** people into the maturity of faith and living Christ's teaching in His Church.

We are a **lighthouse** to the people of New Plymouth. People outside of our community will see how much we love each other, a supernatural love that comes from God, where we will the good of the other. This is reflected in our hospitality and connection when we gather for Mass and parish events.

We are a **community of communities**, a family of families on mission with one another, sharing a common purpose to go make disciples of all nations. Small groups are intentionally meeting for the building of faith, belonging, identifying and encouraging the use of gifts and charisms that renew and build up the church.

Our families are our **domestic churches**, the foundation of our church and society. They are our children's first community where family life is centred on the Lordship of Christ and the love of husband and wife reflects the love of God. It is where the Lord is first encountered, and faith fostered through both the example and teaching of parents.

Our **schools** and **colleges** are an integral extension of our parish community together forming disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our community draws people into an encounter and relationship with the living God and helps guide them into an ever-deeper journey of discipleship.



*“It is a community of communities, a sanctuary  
where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey”*

POPE FRANCIS, EVANGELII GAUDIUM, 2013



## MINISTRY | MĪHANA

*'All who believed were together and had all things in common, they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.'*

ACTS 2:44-45

We are a parish where **all parishioners are actively involved in ministry**, both practically through active service and spiritually through liturgy and prayer, to those in need both within our parish and out to the highways and byways. So much so that we have an abundance of parishioners, especially our youth, young people and families, volunteering their time and money to meet the needs of our community and our outreach priorities.

The **works of our ministry are fruitful and memorable** for those whom we reach. With Christ as the vine and we as the branches this brings about a positive change to their lives and creates a sense of stewardship within our parish family, that grows leaders.

We have a culture within our parish where we **help each other discover our God-given unique gifts and talents**, and we encourage each other to serve in areas that utilise these gifts. People use their gifts serving with others as one body creating a sense of community.

We support and nurture marriage and family life by supporting **parents** in their vocation by identifying their needs and providing appropriate care.

The **elderly** in our parish are valued and honoured, we seek to remove the barriers to their participation, the amenities in church are accessible to them. They are actively involved in ministry, especially through the sharing of their wisdom and prayer.

The **homebound** are cared for through a hospitable attitude; they are visited, transported to liturgies, Holy Communion is brought to them and they are able to participate through the live-streaming of Masses.

We are a parish that integrates people from many **cultures**, some from many parts of the world. We welcome and befriend each other, finding ways to intentionally include all in the life of the parish.

We seek to connect with **migrant persons and refugees** and assist them to settle within our community. We do this, among other things, through language translation, sharing of homes when required, and in helping to find employment.

We have a common commitment to **justice**. Everyone in our parish is safe and protected. We care for children and families; those suffering, the sick and grieving, the poor and vulnerable, disabled and those with special needs.

We have a **formed conscience** which opens our eyes to see the needs of our wider community, which leads us to willingly support fundraising and the giving of our time and gifts for these various needs, especially through Caritas and the Society of St Vincent de Paul.



*"Never worry about numbers, help one person at a time and always start with the person nearest you."*

ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA

## LEADERSHIP | KAIHAUTŪTANGA

*“The gifts He gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and some teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”*

EPHESIANS 4:11-12

Leaders in parish life are called to discern and present a **compelling vision** of how the parish can cooperate with the Holy Spirit to continue Jesus’ mission today and call others to bring that vision to life. Leaders inspire people with the vision by communicating in different ways.

We make concrete **plans** to bring the vision of the parish to reality. We have an annual calendar that aligns the events and activities of all the groups and communities within our parish, sharing the gifts, creating unity, together building the Body of Christ.

We are clear on the roles and responsibilities of the different **leadership groups** within our parish; Parish Pastoral Council, Leadership Team, Finance Committee and other committees and groups who provide governance, stewardship of our buildings and finance, and lead and manage our parish. The decision-making is founded in discerning prayer and active listening. We have a Parish Pastoral Council that provide strategic direction and governance; they help the Parish Priest articulate the vision and create a plan for our parish. The Leadership Team supports the Parish Priest in their leadership of the parish helping him make wise decisions.

The leaders in our parish recognise, call forward and enable the expression of various **gifts** or **charisms** given by the Holy Spirit as well as the many natural talents within the community of faithful.

We have a leadership pipeline where we are deliberate in growing leaders in our Parish through **leadership formation**. People of all ages with leadership potential are identified and developed. We have many leaders who support worship and prayer, evangelisation, discipleship and formation, service and outreach, and fellowship and community ministries.

We have an abundance of **priests** in our parish. We have **deacons** that support our priests.

**Parents** are their children’s first teachers. They are equipped and encouraged to be the ‘domestic church’ leaders, leading formation, and fostering a sensitivity within their family to vocations.

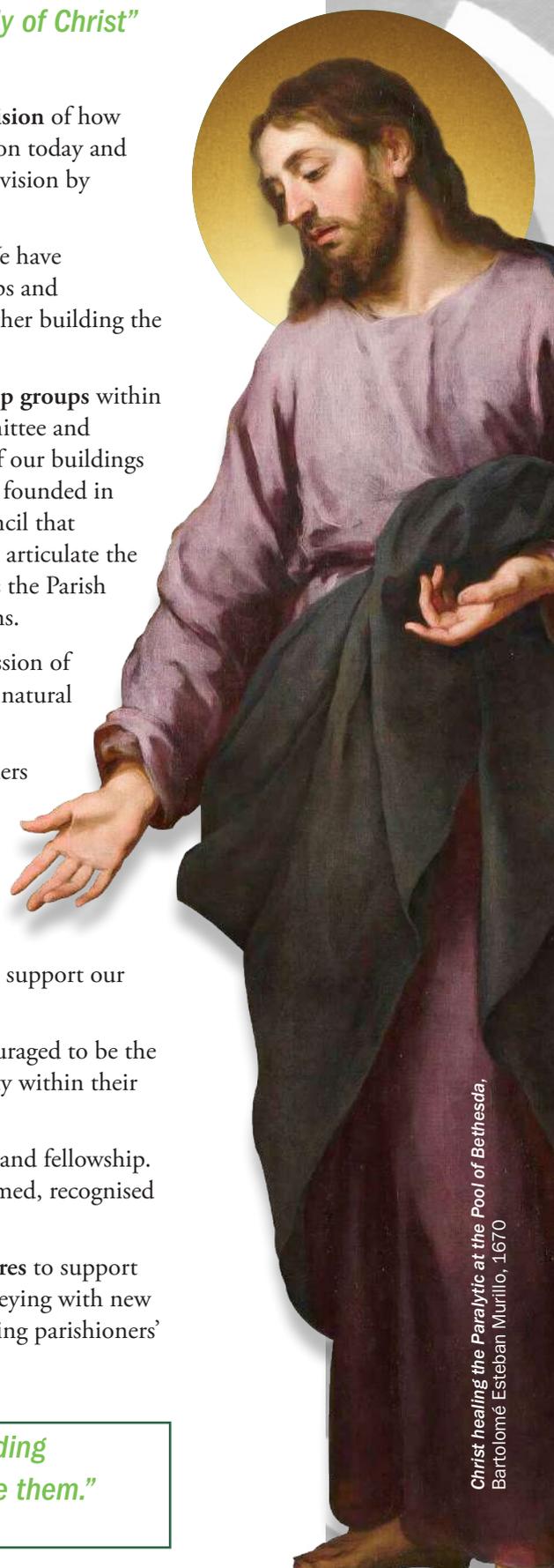
Our parish leaders work with the **school leaders** to bring about unity and fellowship. The staff of our schools are connected with the parish, they are welcomed, recognised and actively involved in the life of our parish.

We have good and effective **processes, systems, policies, and procedures** to support the collaborative and clear exercise of our mission; this includes journeying with new parishioners, our parishioner database, preference forms, and identifying parishioners’ charisms and talents.

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*“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.”*

ROMANS 12:6



Christ healing the Paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda,  
Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, 1670



The Catholic Parish of New Plymouth would like to thank all who made the birth of our vision - *moemoeā* possible.  
A special thank you to all those people who prayed for this mahi, the members of the Mission Discernment Team and the Archdiocese of Sydney Centre for Evangelisation for your support.



*Mary Help of Christians* by Tommaso Andrea Lorenzone, circa 1867.  
PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/PUBLIC DOMAIN