

We are not alone



Through Lent with the Saints

Lent 2026

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF WAIAPU

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My hope is that through these reflections you may greet the Easter Dawn with a new sense of the love God has for you and for all the world, and a new sense of heroes of the faith who journey with us.

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1 Welcome

Welcome to this study

We know there are two different ways in which people engage with these studies: as part of a group (either a regular one or one formed especially for Lent) or on your own at home. You might want to do it as a family. Whichever way you choose: you are welcome!



There are passages from the Bible to look at, some saints to meet, and questions to think about. Listen to the responses that others give, and rejoice in the diversity of views and experiences – isn't it great we don't all have to think the same!

There are six studies, corresponding to the six weeks of Lent. Each of these engages with some aspect of the values and strategic priorities we have here in the Anglican Diocese of Waiapu. For anyone doing these studies who's not part of our Waiapu whānau: we think they'll resonate with you anyway, as they lead us deeper into what it is to be one of God's people in this land.

- 1 Flourishing through aroha, rongo, and hari
- 2 Discipleship
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Welcome to Lent

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Lent is the period of 40 days preparing us for Easter. It begins on **Ash Wednesday**, when we're invited to receive on our foreheads a cross in ashes as we make up our minds to put aside the sins and failures of the past and seek a new beginning with God. The ash is made from the burnt palm crosses of the year before. Ash Wednesday services include these words:

"Dust you are, and to dust you shall return. Turn from sin and be faithful to the gospel."

This helps us get in touch with our humanness, as those (as the poem in Genesis 2 tells us) whom God created from the dust of the ground and breathed into life. We are creatures of a good Creator. We will all, eventually, die – but until then, we get to do life with God and with one another. Often we don't do this as well as we might: Lent gives us an opportunity for a new beginning, a chance to start afresh – again with God and with one another.

❖ ***How do you react to this? What appeals to you about the idea of a fresh start?***

Keeping Lent

Lent is traditionally a time for fasting, almsgiving (giving money or other things to those in need), and self-denial. Often people talk about “giving things up for Lent”, but another way to look at it is to “take something up” – perhaps a different prayer practice, reading the Bible in a new way, or volunteering with a service group. Key questions to ask ourselves are

- ❖ ***How do I want to be different, when Easter comes?***
- ❖ ***How do I want the world to be different, when Easter comes?***
- ❖ ***How do we, in this faith community, want to be different when Easter comes?***

(Will the world really be that different if we give up chocolate?)

A useful reminder: Lent is 40 days, but if you count up the days between Ash Wednesday and Easter there are 46 days – how does that work? The Sundays aren't fast days – and that means that whatever you give up for Lent, you can do or have on a Sunday.



Human Flourishing

Over and over the Bible shows how God persistently reaches out to us, wanting a loving relationship with us, wanting us to have good relationships with one another. The constancy of God's love assures us that we are not alone. We were created to flourish, to have a full and abundant life – and this life of abundance is one that is full of love (aroha), peace (rongo) and joy (hari) in the Holy Spirit.

Human flourishing and the flourishing of all creation – Te Oranga Ake o te Iwi, o Te Ao – is the good towards which people are meant to strive, working to make a world in which everyone is able to find a life worthy of our humanity, worthy of beings who are created in the image and likeness of God. This isn't



just about human well-being, but about the whole created order thriving. Flourishing is communal and ecological – we realise that our humanity is tied to the health of the earth and the dignity of all people.

Human flourishing and the flourishing of all creation is also a good way to understand a major theme in the Gospels: the kingdom (reign) of God. The world and all that lies within it, including human beings, was created good by a good God. When the world embodies this divine goodness, *that* is flourishing.

In his letter to the Christian community in Rome, St Paul had been helping to resolve a dispute about dietary customs and the foods people ate, and he did this by focusing them back to essentials:

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)

Flourishing is defined by life in God's reign, and this is marked by righteousness, peace, and joy. "Righteousness" in the Bible is tied up with justice and right relationships. It reflects God's covenant faithfulness, God's steadfast commitment *to* humanity, and the way God expects a reciprocal faithfulness *from* humanity. It's ultimately about love. Peace is a life of harmony in our relationships with God, with our neighbours and with creation. And joy is a deep gladness that's rooted in God's Spirit, not in our circumstances. This reminds us too that flourishing is something that's led by the Holy Spirit – not merely human effort. (That's a relief, isn't it!)

And so the key ingredients for flourishing of human beings and the rest of creation are:

Aroha (Love): The foundation: love of God, neighbour, and creation.

Rongo (Peace): Reconciliation and wholeness: shalom in relationships and ecosystems.

Hari (Joy): Joy as a sign of hope and resistance against despair; joy sustains flourishing.

- ❖ *How do our choices – personal and communal – contribute to or hinder Te Oranga Ake, a life of flourishing?*
- ❖ *Think of some concrete practices that embody aroha, rongo, and hari in your daily life – as an individual and in your faith community.*
- ❖ *How might you encourage one another in these?*

Why the Saints?

This series of studies invites us to journey through Lent in the company of this saints. *Why might we want to do that?*

Saints are witnesses of faith – people who lived out the gospel in their own time and place. Their lives show us what following Jesus looks like in real, often challenging circumstances. Lent is a season of repentance and renewal. Saints remind us that we don't walk this path on our own – they can be our companions on the journey, as ones who've gone through life before us, and encourage us by their example. Many of them experienced profound changes in their lives, struggle, and grace. Their stories remind us both of our own need for growth and change during Lent, and that such change is doable.



Vitaly Gariev, Unsplash

They show us that holiness is possible for ordinary people (yes, even you!). By their example they point us towards the ultimate goal for us as human beings: union with God and the flourishing of all creation. And above all, they connect us to the Communion of Saints. Lent reminds us that we're part of "so great a cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1): saints make that reality tangible. They assure us that we are not alone.

This is what the Church has always taught: that being the people of God, being Church, isn't just about our own small congregation – or even our diocese or our whole denomination. The Church is all of us, past, present, and future. The figures of the past, our ancestors in the faith, are part of us. We celebrate them on special days and on All Saints' Day, and we gather with them (or they with us) at the Eucharist:



All Saints c 1460 Getty Museum
Open Access

Therefore with the faithful who rest in him,
with angels and archangels and all the
company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and
might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

- ❖ ***The Communion of Saints connects us across time and space. How does this shape your understanding of Church and community?***
- ❖ ***At the Eucharist, we join “all the company of heaven.” How does that reality affect the way we experience worship?***
- ❖ ***What does the idea of “not walking this path alone” mean to you during Lent? How might it change your perspective on repentance and renewal?***
- ❖ ***The saints remind us that holiness is possible for ordinary people. Do you find that encouraging or challenging? Why?***

In this study you'll meet a number of saints, some ancient, some a lot more recent, some well-known, others you might not have heard much about. None of them were perfect. All have something to offer us. Here are some saints who reflect the qualities of love, peace, and joy:

Love (Aroha) – *St Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa)*

(26 August 1910 – 5 September 1997) Mother Teresa was known for her radical love expressed in service to the poorest of the poor. She founded the Missionaries of Charity, a religious congregation initially dedicated to serving in the slums of Calcutta (where she spent most of her time), but eventually active in over 100 countries. She and her nuns cared for "the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone." Her life reminds us that love isn't sentiment but action, caring for those whom society overlooks.



"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

❖ ***What might doing "small things with great love" look like in your life and circumstances?***

Peace (Rongo) – *St Óscar Romero*



(15 August 1917 – 24 March 1980) Óscar Romero was Archbishop of San Salvador, martyred in 1980 for speaking out against violence and injustice. He actively denounced violations of the human rights of vulnerable people, and upheld the principle of protecting lives and promoting human dignity. He embodied peace through nonviolent resistance and advocacy for human rights. His witness calls us to be peacemakers even when it's costly. Romero was shot while saying Mass, with his funeral described as the largest demonstration in Salvadoran history. "Romero presente" ("Romero is present") is a rallying cry, a declaration by which Salvadorans affirm that Romero remains a living, influential force for justice, hope, and solidarity, especially for the poor and oppressed, despite his death.

“Peace is not the product of terror or fear. Peace is not the silence of cemeteries. Peace is not the silent result of violent repression. Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all to the good of all.”

❖ ***What does being a peacemaker look like in your own context, and what risks might it involve?***

Joy (Hari) – St Francis of Assisi

(c. 1181–3 October 1226) Francis was an Italian mystic, poet and Catholic friar who founded the religious order of the Franciscans. Inspired to lead a Christian life of poverty, he became a beggar and travelling preacher. Francis was known for his deep joy in God’s creation and his simplicity of life. His joy wasn’t superficial – it came from humility, gratitude, and trust in God. He was famous for singing praises even in suffering and for his Canticle of the Creatures, celebrating all life as a gift. His life reminds us that joy often comes from letting go of possessions and embracing wonder.



“Do few things but do them well, simple joys are holy.”

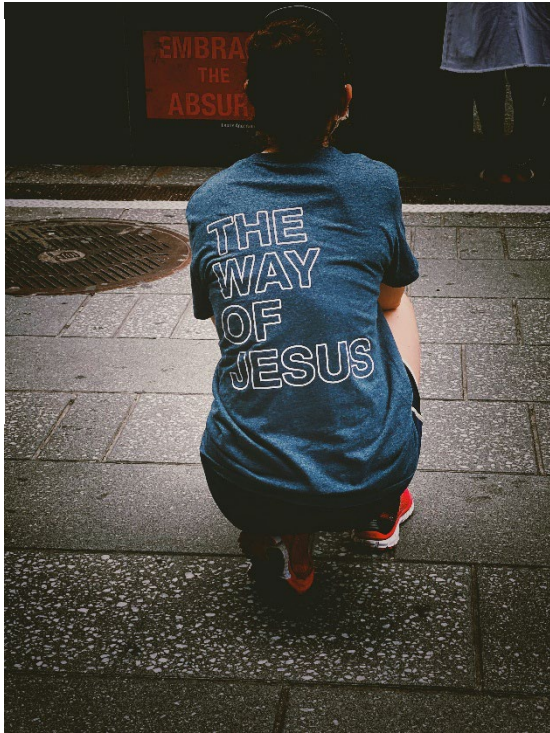
❖ ***Where do you experience deep joy in God’s presence, and how might you cultivate that joy during Lent?***

***This week, try to notice examples
of love (aroha), peace (rongo) and joy (hari)
in your daily life, and
in the life of your community.***

THOUGHTS / QUESTIONS

2 Discipleship

Photo: Jon Tyson, Unsplash



“Discipleship” is one of those church-jargon words, isn’t it. It actually comes from Latin *discipulus* (“learner, pupil”) – which tells us learning is part of discipleship – but not just the sort of learning that’s associated with teaching a pupil in a school. There’s a lovely definition for the Greek word for “disciple”: “one who is rather constantly associated with someone who has a pedagogical reputation or a particular set of views.” This idea of being “constantly associated” with someone is important. That’s what we see Jesus’ disciples doing in the Gospels – hanging out with him, learning from him and learning about

him. As disciples we’re invited to do this. We get to learn about God – but also about ourselves and the world around us.

A text about discipleship Matthew 4:18-25 Called to follow

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, [Jesus] saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Here were Simon and Andrew busy fishing, and Jesus seeks them out. Discipleship begins with Jesus’ call, not our own effort. There was something about Jesus which led these two – and others, in the Gospels and since – to leave behind their nets and their boat, their ordinary lives, and go off with Jesus. This speaks of trust, and a growing ability to surrender to what God wants for our lives. Notice the way nothing is wasted from their old life: Simon and Andrew will still be fishing, but now they’ll be fishing for people,

drawing others into life with God. Part of being a disciple is being willing to disciple others, and learning how to do this. Another part is making a difference in the world around us – building the kingdom of God, forgiving, loving, seeking justice, making peace.

- ❖ ***How might your own gifts, experiences, and “old life” be transformed for God’s purposes – like fishing becoming “fishing for people”?***
- ❖ ***Where do you sense God calling you to make a difference in the world around you?***

Ultimately discipleship is about following Jesus, knowing him and recognising his call on our lives. It’s about staying with Jesus – not just turning up now and then, but what the Fourth Gospel calls “remaining, abiding” in him. Rowan Williams uses the image of a bird-watcher: sitting around, expecting to see something. Being aware and attentive, so we don’t miss what God’s doing. (Rowan notes that the image relates to prayer, and extends it to discipleship.) All this is about relationship – and who you are is determined by your relationship with the Master, the one you’re following.



Photo: Annie Spratt, Unsplash

- ❖ ***How far is your life determined by your relationship with Jesus?***

Another text about discipleship Acts 2:42–47 Life Together as Disciples

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. 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. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Here’s a scene from the early Church, very soon after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It’s a life founded on commitment, generosity, joyful

worship, and mission. It helps to remind us that discipleship is sustained by particular practices: teaching, fellowship, Eucharist, prayer. It's also capable of transforming economic relationships – notice how the radical sharing of resources reflected the love and justice that's at the heart of God. Everything is underpinned by joyful worship – this is a community that delights in coming together to praise God. This life draws others towards it and so towards God – there's something really attractive about discipleship lived authentically.

❖ ***Which of these practices – teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, prayer – do you most need to deepen in your own discipleship?***

❖ ***Which most needs developing in the life of your community?***

It's about community

There's something else to note about discipleship – we do it together. When Jesus called Simon and Andrew, James and John, he didn't call them into isolation. He called them into a community of followers. Discipleship is never a solo project; it's life shared with others who are also learning to follow



Photo: Hannah Busing, Unsplash

Christ. We don't only join Jesus – we join the community that gathered around Jesus, the community we call the Church. This matters because we need each other for encouragement and accountability. Faith grows best in relationship, where we can pray for one another, challenge one another,

and celebrate together.

Discipleship is communal because the gospel is communal. Jesus' mission was to form a *people* who live God's kingdom values – justice, peace, and love – not just individuals. The Church is the Body of Christ. Each disciple is a member with gifts to share, and we can't embody Christ's mission alone. Shared practices sustain us: worship, Eucharist, prayer, and acts of service are things we do together, reminding us that we belong to something bigger than ourselves. In short, discipleship is about belonging as well as believing. We follow Jesus with others, and that shapes how we live and serve.

❖ ***What does it mean to you that discipleship is not a solo journey but a shared one? How has community shaped your faith so far?***

❖ ***How does gathering for worship and Eucharist remind you that you belong to something bigger than yourself?***

Remember the rallying cry “Romero presente” by which the Salvadorans affirm that Romero, despite his death, remains present as a living force for good in the world. This is true of all the saints – they are part of the Church, part of us, and can inspire, guide, and challenge us to live faithfully and courageously in our own time. Here are some people who might encourage us as we seek to live a life of discipleship.

St Clare of Assisi

(1194–1253) Clare was inspired by Francis of Assisi and she left her wealthy family to embrace a life of poverty and prayer. She founded the Order of Poor Ladies (later called Poor Clares), living in radical simplicity and deep trust in God. The Rule of Life she wrote for them was the first set of monastic guidelines known to have been written by a woman. As Abbess she was very shy and didn’t like giving orders; she did so rarely, and with great humility.



Her discipleship was marked by courage – defying social norms (such as her rejection of marriage and a wealthy lifestyle) – and by unwavering devotion to Christ. While she was inspired by Francis, part of her legacy to us is that she wasn’t just imitating him but was working out her own gifts and calling.

“We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become.”

“We are to become vessels of God’s compassionate love for others.”

- ❖ ***What might simplicity and trust in God look like in your own discipleship today? Where might God be calling you to let go?***
- ❖ ***How can you discern the difference between simply imitating someone you admire and discovering your own unique calling in Christ?***



Dietrich Bonhoeffer

(4 February 1906 – 9 April 1945) Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran pastor and theologian. He opposed the Nazi regime and was involved in the German Confessing Church, a movement that resisted government-sponsored attempts to unify all the

Protestant churches into a pro-Nazi German Evangelical Church. He was also active in the ecumenical movement. Bonhoeffer wrote about Christian faith, community, grace, and ethics, often coming back to the question, who is Christ for us today? Especially in his book *Discipleship* he emphasised costly discipleship, and the role of the Church in society, challenging Christians to live authentically, even where this meant sacrifices. He was implicated in the 20 July 1944 planned coup against Hitler and executed only a few weeks before the war ended.

“The Church is the Church only when it exists for others.”

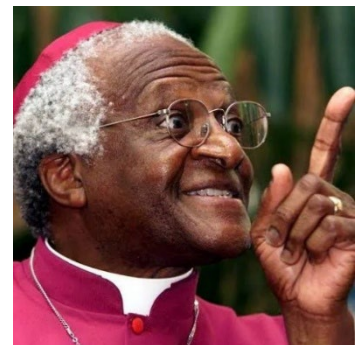
“I can no longer condemn or hate other Christians for whom I pray, no matter how much trouble they cause me.”

“We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God, who will thwart our plans and frustrate our ways time and again, even daily, by sending people across our path with their demands and requests.”

- ❖ ***What does costly discipleship mean for you? Where might following Jesus require courage or sacrifice?***
- ❖ ***When have you experienced God “interrupting” your plans? How might you cultivate openness to those interruptions as part of your discipleship?***
- ❖ ***Who is Christ for us today – and for you personally? How does this question shape your decisions and priorities?***

Desmond Tutu

(7 October 1931–26 December 2021) Tutu was a theologian and Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town. He was a prophetic voice against apartheid in South Africa, in which he stressed non-violent protest. Tutu believed everyone is made in God’s image, with inherent dignity and entitled to respect, a core principle for his anti-apartheid stance and his advocacy for the marginalised.



He combined justice with joy, forgiveness, and reconciliation, and chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which investigated past human rights abuses committed by both pro and anti-apartheid groups in South Africa. His discipleship was rooted in hope and laughter, even amid struggle, and it was centred around spiritual practices like the Eucharist, Daily Office, and prayer.

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

“Forgiveness does not mean condoning what has been done. Forgiving means abandoning your right to pay back the perpetrator in his own coin.”

“God refuses to give up, and we who are enlisted to be fellow-workers with God know that the only reason we continue is that death did not have the last word; that Good Friday was not the end of the story.”

- ❖ ***How can joy and forgiveness shape your discipleship? Where might God be calling you to be a reconciler?***
- ❖ ***Where do you see opportunities to “do your little bit of good” in your community or daily life? How might small acts of goodness contribute to God’s work of justice and reconciliation?***
- ❖ ***Tutu’s discipleship was grounded in hope, joy, and spiritual practices: what grounds your following of Jesus?***

***This week, try to discern practical ways
of following Jesus and recognising his call on your life.***

THOUGHTS / QUESTIONS

3 Connection

Photo: Shane Rounce, Unsplash



Connection is about belonging to God and to one another, so parishes, people, communities, and our diocesan boards and social services are linked in prayer, support, and mission. It's how we move from individual effort to shared life – from “my parish” to “our diocese, our communities, our common call in Christ.” And it doesn't “just happen” – it needs to be an intentional practice. We look at this in two ways: spiritual (connection with God) and relational (connection with one another and the wider community. God is a communion of love, the Trinity

of Father, Son, and Spirit in eternal relationship. Connection reflects God's nature.

Theologically the Church is the Body of Christ, not a set of isolated congregations and social agencies. We're part of each other, across space and across time. Just as Jesus loves us, so we're to love one another – because this is how everyone will know that we follow Christ: if we have love for one another (John 13:34–35). Praying for one another and sharing what we have sustains faith when resources are thin (when are they not?) and challenges are large (ditto). With such a geographically spread-out diocese it's easy to get stuck in siloes: connection bridges isolation and builds resilience. Put simply, we are stronger together, and better able to face challenges – social, environmental, and spiritual.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, whanaungatanga (relationships, kinship) resonates deeply. Connection embodies this culturally, in mutual care, shared responsibility, and hospitality – all gospel values. This has implications for mission, doesn't it. A connected church – connected to other parts of the church and with the wider communities in which we're situated – listens deeply to those around it and can respond collaboratively. Mission, in all its senses (evangelism, justice, and service) flourishes when it's grounded in trust and partnership.

❖ Do we know enough about each other's lives to support and encourage one another?

A text about connection Romans 12:4-13

For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in

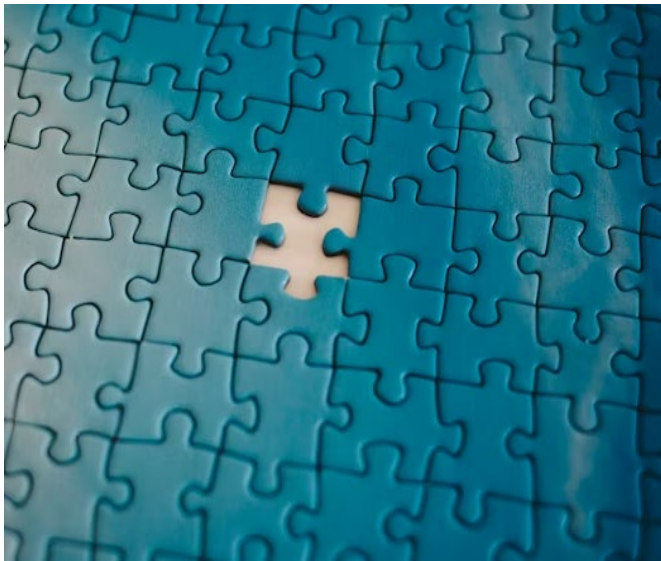


Photo: Tanja Tepavac, Unsplash

ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.

Paul here emphasises interdependence: we belong to each other, not just to God. The world around us often encourages independence, doing things on our own, thinking we have to be “enough” by ourselves. This challenges that sense of isolation and competition; instead, it calls for mutual care and shared responsibility. Connection means valuing diverse gifts across parishes, social service agencies, and ministries. The Body of Christ needs every part, and so each community matters – rural, coastal, and urban. Because we all have different gifts – and it’s a good thing that we do – everyone’s contribution counts. Living like this extends beyond the Church to welcoming the stranger – that’s partly where mission comes in.

Paul paints a picture of connection as belonging, diversity, mutual care, and outward-facing love. It’s not just about being linked – it’s about living interdependently for the sake of God’s mission and delighting in one another’s flourishing.

- ❖ ***What does it mean to you that we're "members one of another"? How does this challenge the idea of being an individual Christian – or an isolated parish?***
- ❖ ***How do you recognize and value the diverse gifts in your ministry unit? What gifts might you share more widely to strengthen the Body of Christ?***
- ❖ ***Paul urges us to "extend hospitality to strangers." Who are the "strangers" in our context, and how might connection lead us to welcome them?***

Another text about connection

Colossians 3:12-17

Photo: Jonathan Taylor, Unsplash



Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms,

hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Think of your ministry unit – if you're doing this study as part of a group, look around at one another. Our belonging to God is the foundation for our belonging to one another. We're not isolated individuals but a community formed by grace ("as God's chosen ones"). Nevertheless, we are a bunch of diverse people, which is why we need all those relational, community-

building virtues like compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and love. Often we need to show grace to one another – bearing with differences, forgiving hurts, not taking offence isn't easy sometimes (ever?).

- ❖ ***How does our identity as “God’s chosen, holy and beloved” shape the way we relate to others in the Body of Christ?***
- ❖ ***Which of those virtues (compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience) feels most challenging for you in building connection?***
- ❖ ***The Letter to the Colossians recommends practices like worship and Scripture to help the Christian community stay connected to God and to one another. What practices could deepen our sense of belonging and harmony?***

It's still about community

Like discipleship, being truly connected to God is something we don't do our own. It's worth remembering that the commands to love God “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind ... and your neighbour as yourself” were given to a community, not to individuals. Our faith is never a solo project – it's something we live together. Loving God and loving our neighbour aren't private tasks – they're shared responsibilities that shape how we act as a community.



Photo: Elaine Casap, Unsplash

- ❖ ***What does it mean for us to follow Jesus together rather than individually?***
- ❖ ***How can our parish – or our diocese – make these shared responsibilities more visible in daily life?***

Here are some people who might encourage us as we seek to deepen our connection with God and with one another.

St Augustine of Hippo



(13 November 354 – 28 August 430) Augustine was a North African bishop, theologian, and philosopher whose writings profoundly shaped Western Christianity. After a spiritual search, he converted to Christianity and was eventually ordained priest, then Bishop of Hippo. He established a monastic community and wrote his Rule for the community's continued direction. Augustine emphasized God's grace, the centrality of love, and the communal nature of Christian life. Augustine believed that holiness is never solitary.

His phrase "The life of the saints is social" (it's in his *City of God*) expresses the conviction that we're created for relationship with God and with one another. Being Church means living interdependently, supporting one another, and embodying Christ's love in community.

"O Lord you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

"No one ought to live a life of leisure in such a way that they take no thought in that leisure for the welfare of their neighbours."

- ❖ ***What does Augustine's statement "The life of the saints is social" mean for how we understand Christian discipleship today?***
- ❖ ***How can our parish, social service agency, or diocese reflect this in practical ways, so that faith is lived together, not alone?***
- ❖ ***How might we deepen our sense of community?***

St Hildegard of Bingen

(1098–1179) Hildegard was a Benedictine abbess, mystic, scholar, theologian, musician (music she composed is still listened to today), botanist and a teacher with a unique perspective of the world and the origin of the surrounding universe. She saw all creation as interconnected in God's design – humanity is interwoven with everything. Hildegard's leadership emphasised harmony within the community and in the wider Church. She believed spiritual growth happens in shared life, not isolation.



“Everything that is in the heavens, on earth, and under the earth is penetrated with connectedness, penetrated with relatedness.”

“There is the music of heaven in all things, and we have forgotten how to hear it until we sing,”

- ❖ ***Hildegard led her community with a vision of harmony and mutual care. What does harmony look like in your parish or social service today? Where might God be calling us to nurture it?***
- ❖ ***Hildegard believed spiritual growth happens in shared life, not isolation. How do you experience God through relationships with others in the Church?***

Mary Sumner



(31 December 1828 – 9 August 1921) Mary Sumner was an English Anglican laywoman (her husband was a priest, then Bishop of Guildford) who founded the Mothers' Union in 1876. Initially this was a small parish group, but it grew, first into a diocesan organisation, and then into a worldwide movement promoting Christian family life, prayer, and practical support for parents. In many ways the Mothers' Union (and a similar group in New Zealand, the

Association of Anglican Women) is a model of connection, linking people across cultures in prayer, mutual support, and its shared purpose of advocacy for family life. Her vision was rooted in the belief that strong families and communities are essential for living out the Gospel.

“God’s plans are better than our own, and he has ordained that the training-place for his human creatures should be the home; the training-place for parents as well as children.”

“All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee; and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live. Amen.”

- ❖ ***How does your faith shape the way you nurture relationships at home and in your wider community?***
- ❖ ***Her vision connected women across social and cultural divides. What barriers to connection exist in our context today, and how might we overcome them?***

Henri Nouwen

(24 January 1932 – 21 September 1996) Henri Nouwen was a Dutch Roman Catholic priest, theologian, and spiritual writer. He taught at Yale and Harvard Divinity Schools before leaving the academic world to join L'Arche Daybreak community in Canada, where he



lived among people with intellectual disabilities. His life there embodied mutual relationships, where everyone's gifts matter. His writings (over 40 books, including *The Wounded Healer*) focus on themes of vulnerability, community, and the spiritual life.

Nouwen believed true healing and transformation happen in community, not isolation. Connection requires openness and the courage to share weakness, not just strength. Hospitality meant creating space where others feel safe and valued.

"You have to trust that every true friendship has no end, that a communion of saints exists among all those, living and dead, who have truly loved God and one another. ... Those you have loved deeply and who have died live on in you, not just as memories but as real presences."

"Dare to love and be a real friend. The love you give and receive is a reality that will lead you closer and closer to God as well as to those whom God has given you to love."

- ❖ ***How does vulnerability help or hinder connection in your experience? What might it look like to create spaces of safety and belonging in your parish or this diocese?***
- ❖ ***Nouwen emphasized hospitality as making room for others. Who might God be calling you to make room for – within your church and beyond?***

This week, try to discern practical ways of deepening your connection to those you encounter each day.

THOUGHTS / QUESTIONS

4 Koru

Photo: Sebastian Schuster, Unsplash



The koru (often used in Māori art as a symbol of creation) is based on the shape of an unfurling fern frond. Koru ministry is our ministry to children, young people and their families – it speaks of the nurturing of new life and new growth, care for the smallest of shoots. The koru’s spiral shape represents growth, renewal, and potential, something that reminds us

that ministry with children and families is about nurturing life that’s unfolding. Imagery of God bringing forth plants and life is present from the very beginning (see, for example, Genesis 1:11-12) – indeed, God frequently calls forth fresh shoots and growth, announcing that something new is about to happen (Isaiah 43:18–19 – “I am about to do a new thing...”). Renewal and hope are never very far away.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. Isaiah 61:11

❖ ***What can the image of the koru teach us about patience and care in ministry?***

Koru imagery builds on our themes of discipleship and connection: each new frond is linked to the whole plant, just as young people belong within the wider Body of Christ. It invites us to see this ministry as organic and relational, not programme-driven. Including children and youth fully in worship and community life, not as an “add-on,” is important here: they aren’t “the church of the future” – they’re part of the church of today. Koru ministry isn’t only about age-specific activities but about forming disciples across generations. It calls the Church to invest in its future development by tending the smallest shoots with care and hope – some of these will become lay leaders, clergy, theologians and musicians in later years. Part of this is about providing safe, loving spaces where faith can grow naturally. It’s also about partnering with parents and caregivers, and supporting them as

primary shapers of faith in children and young people. After all, Jesus first learned about God from Mary and Joseph.

Jesus welcomed children and placed them at the centre of God's kingdom (Matthew 19:13-15). Koru ministry reflects God's care for the vulnerable and the promise of new beginnings.

❖ *How do we currently nurture the "small shoots" of faith in our community?*

❖ *What might Jesus' welcome of children challenge us to do differently?*

A text about Koru: nurturing

Hosea 11:1-4

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
The more I called them,
the more they went from me;
they kept sacrificing to the Baals
and offering incense to idols.

Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk;
I took them up in my arms,
but they did not know that I healed them.
I led them with cords of human kindness,
with bands of love.
I was to them like those
who lift infants to their cheeks.
I bent down to them and fed them.

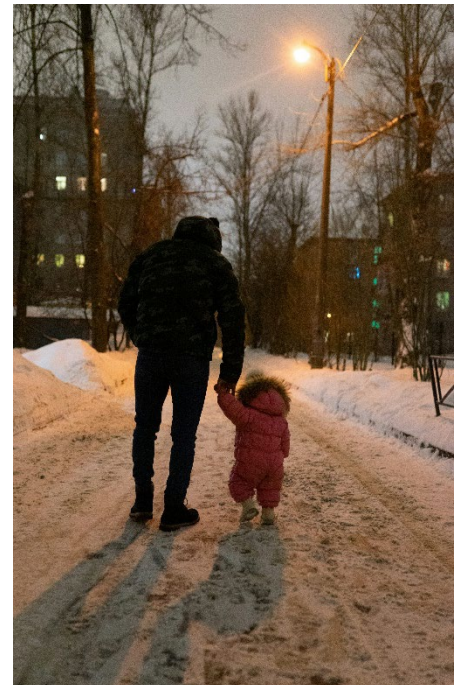


Photo: Anna Deli, Unsplash

Here's a picture of God's tender, parental love and care, patiently teaching a child to walk, stooping down to tend and feed infants. Our role is likewise to guide and support young people, not rushing the process – a koru unfurls slowly, faith grows gradually. Just as God leads with kindness, not force, creating safe, loving spaces for growth, this sort of ministry involves creating environments of trust and grace where children and families feel secure. All this imagery is deeply relational – parent and child, not master and servant – centred on connection and belonging.

- ❖ *How does God's tender love for Israel as a child shape the way we view children and young people in our community?*
- ❖ *God bends down to feed God's people. How do we "bend down" to meet the spiritual and practical needs of children and families? What resources or support might we need to offer parents and caregivers?*
- ❖ *Teaching a child to walk sometimes takes a while: what can help us practise patience as faith slowly unfolds in children and families? Where might we need to slow down and allow growth to happen naturally?*

Another text about Koru: calling

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Photo: Vitaly Gariev, Unsplash



Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy,' for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you.

Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord."

Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth.

See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

This speaks of God's call, purpose, and nurturing from the very beginning. Every child and young person is known and loved by God from the start. Sometimes God's call to ministry comes early, and parishes and other ministry units have a role in recognising a calling and nurturing gifts that may already be stirring. Young people, like the young Jeremiah in this passage, often feel small, unsure, or inadequate. (OK, we know it's not just young people who can feel like that, don't we.) Older members of the church have a role in encouraging and affirming their voice and participation.

- ❖ *How does knowing that God calls and knows us from the beginning shape the way we value children and young people?*
- ❖ *What gifts might already be present in the youngest members of our community? How can we nurture them?*
- ❖ *Jeremiah felt inadequate because of his age. How do we help young people find confidence in their calling?*

Where do older members of the church community come in?

Remember this, tucked away in 2 Timothy 1:5:

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.

The writer looks back to the legacy of faith the past has given us, to the worship his ancestors offered as God's people in previous times, and then to the way the faith was passed on to Timothy by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. Let's face it: we wouldn't actually know about Timothy if the women in his life hadn't passed the faith on to him. And remember, the Christian faith was kept alive in Soviet Russia by the grandmothers, quietly and consistently passing on prayers and the knowledge of church festivals to their grandchildren, so that when communism fell religion could blossom again.



Photo: Seriu Valenas, Unsplash

- ❖ *Rekindling faith and passing it on to future generations is part of living as people of faith. How can we help each other to do this?*

You see – it is still about community! Here are some people who might encourage us as we seek to deepen our guiding and nurturing of children, young people and families.

Simeon



Simeon's Lullaby by Rembrandt

(5CE?) We meet Simeon in Luke 2:25–35. He was a righteous and devout man, living faithfully and waiting – for a long time – for God’s promise to be realised. The Holy Spirit guided him to the temple the day Mary and Joseph came to fulfil the requirements of the law, and revealed God’s plan to him. Simeon blessed the infant Jesus; he embraced the vulnerable child, affirming God’s presence in the smallest shoot. He recognises Jesus as salvation and speaks truth about the future. Then he spoke to Mary and Joseph, blessing them and the child. They were also greeted by the prophet Anna, another faithful older person. This is an example of intergenerational faith, of older and younger generations sharing life and hope.

“My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

- ❖ ***How can older generations in our church bless and encourage younger ones, as Simeon did?***
- ❖ ***What hopes do we carry for the children and young people in our community? How do we express those hopes?***

Tarore of Waharoa

(1824-18 October 1836) Tarore was about 12 years old, the daughter of Ngākuku of Ngāti Hauā. She learned to read at the mission school and treasured her Gospel of Luke in Māori. Her faith was nurtured by family and community. Tarore was killed in 1836 during tribal conflict – the night before she had read to the others from her Gospel around the campfire. At her tangi her father chose forgiveness over utu (revenge). Her Gospel book was carried away and later used to bring reconciliation and spread the gospel among iwi. Her story, one of the taonga of our Church, is remembered as a witness to Christ’s peace and the power of



Image: portion of Tarore window, St Aidan's Anglican Church, Auckland, designed by Suzanne Johnson.

the Word. Tarore reminds us that tamariki aren't "future church" but active bearers of God's Word.

- ❖ ***Tarore's faith began with learning to read Scripture. How do we plant similar seeds of faith in our children today?***
- ❖ ***Her story shows that children can influence whole communities. How do we honour and encourage their voices?***
- ❖ ***Tarore's Gospel travelled far beyond her life. What might God do with the small acts of faith we nurture?***

Brother Roger of Taizé

(12 May 1915 – 16 August 2005, born Roger Schutz) Brother Roger was the



Founder of the Taizé Community, an ecumenical monastic community committed to reconciliation among Christians and peace in the world. Taizé became a global meeting place for youth, as young people from all over the world gathered there for worship and reflection. It's a community rooted in prayer, community, and gentle rhythms.

Brother Roger's writing on prayer and reflection asked young people to be confident in God and committed to their local church community and to humanity.

"Jesus, joy of our hearts, you send your Holy Spirit upon us. He comes to reawaken trust within us. Through him, we realize that the simple desire for God brings our soul back to life. Holy Spirit, come and breathe upon the worries that can keep us far from you."

- ❖ ***Brother Roger created spaces of prayer and welcome for young people. How can we do the same in our context?***
- ❖ ***How can we foster intergenerational relationships that reflect the unity Brother Roger sought?***
- ❖ ***Where do we see opportunities for reconciliation and peace in our ministry – and how can we model it for young people?***

St Carlo Acutis

(3 May 1991 – 12 October 2006) Carlo Acutis, dubbed “the first millennial saint” was an English-born Italian computer programmer. He died of leukaemia at the age of 15. Carlo’s passion for tech became a tool for evangelism. He was known for his deep devotion to the Eucharist – he created a website cataloguing Eucharistic miracles so he’s been called the “Cyber Apostle of the Eucharist” – and for how he lived faith joyfully in ordinary life. His life shows us holiness is possible in the digital age and that young people can be powerful witnesses. Carlo’s example bridges tradition and technology, encouraging creative, faith-filled engagement with the digital world. Koru ministry calls us to help young people discover and use their gifts for God.



"To always be close to Jesus, that's my life plan."

"Our lives will truly be beautiful only if we discover how to love God above all things and our neighbour as ourselves."

"All people are born as originals but many die as photocopies."

- ❖ *How can we encourage young people to integrate faith with their everyday interests and talents?*
- ❖ *Carlo used technology for good. What opportunities do we have to model and teach healthy, faith-filled digital engagement?*

***This week, try to connect with someone of a different generation to you: what questions do you each have about faith?
What might you learn from one another?***

THOUGHTS / QUESTIONS

5 Vocation

Photo: Sandie Clarke, Unsplash



“Ministry” is a word used to describe how we live out our call – as individuals and as members of a Christian community – to follow Jesus and live as he did, loving God and loving our neighbours. Ministry isn’t just for a few people – it’s for every baptised member of Christ’s body.

And it’s not just about “doing things in or for the Church” (the rosters!): it’s about living as God’s people in our daily life and work, bringing Christ’s love into ordinary life. The word we use for this is Vocation.

Vocation is God’s call to all of us: every Christian has a vocation (it’s not just clergy or church leaders). Vocation isn’t the same as “job” or “career” in the sense that it’s a bigger idea than the work we do to earn an income.

The word *vocation* is a rich one, having to address the wholeness of life, the range of relationships and responsibilities. Work, yes, but also families, and neighbors, and citizenship, locally and globally – all of this and more is seen as vocation, that to which I am called as a human being, living my life before the face of God. It is never the same word as *occupation*, just as *calling* is never the same word as *career*. Sometimes, by grace, the words and the realities they represent do overlap, even significantly; sometimes, in the incompleteness of life in a fallen world, there is not much overlap at all.

Steven Garber, *Visions of Vocation*

Vocation is about our identity and our purpose – who we are matters as much as what we do, and our gifts, passions, and circumstances are part of God’s call. If you’ve ever had the feeling “I was created to do this work” – that’s part of what we mean by vocation. Poet Gerard Manley Hopkins describes it as “What I do is me: for that I came.”

One of the things about vocation is that it's dynamic. It can change over time: different seasons of life bring different ways of serving God and those around us. So it's important to keep listening for God's guidance. What we're called to do connects to God's mission of bringing healing, reconciliation and renewal to our world. When we're living well our lives will reflect Christ's love and justice.

❖ *Where do you sense God's presence in your daily life?*

❖ *What gifts has God given you to share?*

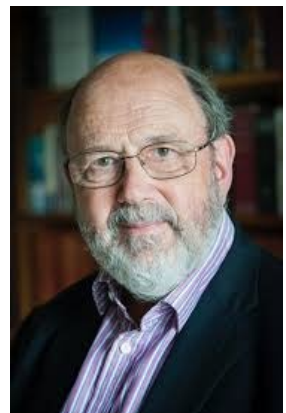
❖ *How are you living your faith in your workplace, family, and community?*

❖ *Is vocation about being or doing?*

The Catechism (see *ANZPB* p 932) describes the ministry of lay persons: "From baptism, their vocation is to witness to Christ in the world using the gifts the Spirit gives them." It then adds, "Within the Church they share in the leadership of worship and in government" – a reminder that lay ministry is first of all in the world, and then within the Church. All work can be God's work. Our calling is primarily to follow Christ, to live as God's people. Our work is an expression of this. We're invited to find ways of connecting our work with our calling to follow Christ.

"The task may appear unimportant or trivial, but the person doing it is never that. And he or she has the opportunity to turn the job into an act of worship."

NT Wright



Vocations in the Bible

In the Bible we see people being called to a variety of roles – not just prophets or disciples of Jesus. There's also leadership: Moses (Exodus 3-4), Gideon (Judges 6:11-18), Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8), and public service (Joseph, Daniel). Some are called away from their original occupations, like Matthew/Levi being called away from the tax booth; others are called to remain where they are and do it differently, like Zacchaeus and Lydia. Paul was an apostle (a church-planter), but he was also a tent-maker, an early example of what today we call a "bi-vocational life."

Bezalel and Oholiab (Exodus 31:1–11) were called and gifted to create the furnishings and objects used for worship in the tabernacle, an example of vocation in craft.

A text about vocation Matthew 25:31-40

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are

Photo: Zac Durant, Unsplash



blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked

and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’

This is part of Jesus’ teaching on the final judgment, where the Son of Man (Jesus’ frequent way of describing himself) separates the sheep from the goats. The key thing here is acts of compassion: feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned. These actions are evidence of people living out love for God and their neighbour. Service to others is service to Christ. Vocation here is practical and relational, living faith through compassion in everyday life.

- ❖ ***How does this passage challenge our understanding of what matters most in following Jesus?***
- ❖ ***How can you make space in your life to serve Christ through acts of compassion?***
- ❖ ***How might this passage shape your priorities as an individual or as a church?***

Here are some people who might encourage us as we seek to connect with a sense of our own vocation. These saints show us that vocation takes many forms: prayerful presence, spiritual discernment, prophetic justice, and radical hospitality. Everything is rooted in Christ's love.

Brother Lawrence

(c 1611 – 12 February 1691)

Brother Lawrence was born Nicolas Herman in Lorraine, France. After serving in the Thirty Years' War he joined the Discalced Carmelite monastery in Paris as a lay brother. He worked as a cook and later repaired sandals, connecting deeply with God while doing mundane kitchen chores, especially washing dishes. His spiritual legacy is the practice of God's presence in everyday activities, in daily, humble tasks, captured posthumously in *The Practice of the Presence of God*. Lawrence's life demonstrates that vocation isn't defined by clerical status or grand gestures, but by a continual awareness of God in the ordinary.



“The most holy and necessary practice in our spiritual life is the presence of God – that is, every moment to take great pleasure that God is with you.”

“The time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were on my knees.”

- ❖ ***How might you cultivate awareness of God's presence in your everyday routines?***
- ❖ ***In what often-overlooked activity could you offer yourself as an act of worship today?***

Ignatius of Loyola



(23 October 1491 – 31 July 1556) Born Iñigo López de Oñaz y Loyola, he was a soldier who experienced a profound conversion after being wounded at Pamplona. He devoted himself to prayer, founded the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) in 1541, and developed the *Spiritual Exercises* (a collection of meditations, prayers, and guidelines for growth in the spiritual life). Ignatius emphasised discernment and caring for the whole person. When making decisions – including on what we should do with our lives – we should pay attention to God’s guidance, and listen carefully for what leads us closer to God and what doesn’t. We should treat each person with respect and compassion, seeing their full humanity. Ignatius shows that vocation flows from personal encounter with Christ and leads to a life of spiritual discernment and service, wherever God calls.

“Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me.”

“People are created to praise, reverence and serve God the Lord, and by this means to save our souls. Everything in our lives are meant to help us to this end. Therefore, we should use those things as long as they help us to achieve the end for which we are created.”

- ❖ ***When you make decisions, what helps you notice which choices bring you closer to God and which ones don’t?***
- ❖ ***How can you look after yourself and others in a way that cares for the whole person – body, mind, and spirit?***

Josephine Butler

(13 April 1828 – 30 December 1906) Josephine Butler was an English social reformer and Christian feminist. Her charity work, particularly relating to the rights of woman) initially began in an attempt to cope with her grief after her six year old daughter died. She campaigned against the Contagious Diseases Acts (under



which police were permitted to arrest women living in seaports and military towns whom they believed were prostitutes and force them to be examined for venereal disease.) Josephine advocated for women's education and suffrage, and led efforts to end child prostitution and human trafficking; she was part of a group which forced parliament to raise the age of consent from 13 to 16. Her Christian faith inspired a life dedicated to justice and compassion. She exemplifies vocation as prophetic action: she was called to challenge injustice, speak for the marginalised, and transform society in line with gospel values.

"I became possessed with an irresistible desire to go forth and find some pain keener than my own... to say to afflicted people, 'I understand. I, too, have suffered.'"

"I pray you, O God, to give me a deep, well-governed and life-long hatred of all such injustice, tyranny and cruelty."

- ❖ ***Where in your community do you see injustice needing a prophetic voice?***
- ❖ ***How might your faith inspire you to speak out or act for someone who is vulnerable or overlooked?***
- ❖ ***Has personal pain ever led you into a calling to help others?***

Eglantyne Jebb



(1876–1928) Eglantyne Jebb was educated at Oxford. She lived at a time when child labour and exploitation were common. She carried out a huge and important survey of poverty in the city of Cambridge (including child poverty) which revealed the misery and squalor of working class conditions there. When World War I ended she and her sister set up a fund to provide emergency relief to starving children in Germany and Austria, called "Save the Children." Later they established the "International Save the Children Union" which became a worldwide movement. In 1923 Eglantyne drafted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Her work grew from compassion and a conviction that

every child deserves care, and she used her gifts in research, advocacy, and action to express God's love publicly.

"The only international language in the world is a child's cry."

"All wars, whether just or unjust, disastrous or victorious, are waged against the child."

- ❖ ***In your community, is there a need or group that God is calling you to stand with, care for, or speak up on behalf of? How might you use your skills or knowledge for this?***
- ❖ ***What practical steps could you take to turn compassion into action in your own community, as Jebb did on a global scale?***

***This week, think about who you are:
your identity and purpose, and the gifts and passions you have and
the circumstances you live in: what might God be calling you to be
and do in this season of your life?***

THOUGHTS / QUESTIONS

6 Whakapapa

Te Awa o Waiapu: Image credit:
te Runganganui o Ngati Porou



Waiapu's story started with encounters with te Ao Māori, and this has shaped who we are: our life as a diocese began with mission by Māori for Māori. The whakatauki *ka mua, ka muri* ("walking backwards into the future") reminds us to look to the past to

inform the future. Our encounters with Māori are part of who we are, part of our whakapapa. One way of approaching whakapapa is to see it not just as genealogy, but as a framework of connections between people, creation, and God that spans ages and traditions.

The early legacy of bi-cultural practice has always been a part of the Waiapu story. Waiapu's history includes early Māori evangelists, our first four synods being held in te reo Māori, and collaboration with Te Pīhopatanga and hui amorangi. But our past also includes pain, betrayal, colonisation, and appropriation of land, as in the decades that followed those early years when the diocese (and the society around it) became a far more Pākehā centred community. We need to acknowledge both the positive and the negative parts of our past – and our present – in this place in order to lead into a future in which we become what God is calling us to be. All of this, the good and the bad, is part of our whakapapa: it's made us who and what we are.

Our history includes support for Te Pīhopatanga o Aotearoa, with the Bishop of Aotearoa originally a suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Waiapu. With the 1992 constitutional change, te Pīhopatanga became a fully independent bishopric. Since then, Waiapu has sought to foster a strong relationship between itself and te Pīhopatanga, as well as the hui amorangi with which it shares land and people: te Manawa o te Wheke and te Tairāwhiti. There's still a lot of work to do, but this relationship is a core part of who we are and who we feel called to be in the future.

We believe we're called to live into our relationships with Te Pīhopatanga and together nurture the proclamation of the gospel in Waiapu. We intend to live into the whakapapa of our Diocese and grow in our understanding of this through the sharing of gifts, taonga, and wānanga to understand the mātauranga and worldview we each carry. Living in partnership with Māori communities includes honouring shared stories, language, and responsibilities.



Photo: Lou Lou B, Unsplash

- ❖ ***What relationships – family, whenua, culture, community – ground and shape your sense of belonging?***
- ❖ ***How does your presence in the church reflect your place within these whakapapa connections?***
- ❖ ***In what ways can you nurture stronger bonds across generational, cultural, and geographic lines within Waiapu?***

If you're engaging with this study series somewhere else and you're not part of the Waiapu whanau, *you're still part of somewhere*. What connects you to the people, places, and history of *your* setting? What stories are told, what people are remembered? How can you deepen your encounters with the past and allow these to send you forward to live well in the future?

A text about Whakapapa

Romans 11:17-24

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted among the others to share the rich root of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember: you do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." That is true. They were broken off on account of unbelief, but you stand on account of belief. So do not become arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen but God's kindness toward you, if you



continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And even those of Israel, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.

Paul uses the image of an olive tree to describe belonging to God's covenant people. Gentiles are "grafted in" to Israel's story, not replacing it but sharing in its roots and nourishment. The metaphor reminds us that life flows from deep roots. The tree is nourished by its whakapapa – the generations that have gone before – and every branch depends on that shared source of life. This speaks of connections and interdependence. This passage in Romans has sometimes been misused to justify harmful attitudes (the metaphor of "broken off because of unbelief"); here, we read it as a call to humility and respect for the deep roots that sustain life. The "grafted in" isn't about replacing or excluding others, it's about humility and gratitude for the roots that sustain us. In this way, the olive tree invites us to honour the connections that give life across time and culture, and to recognise that we flourish together, not apart.

- ❖ ***What does the image of the olive tree say about the importance of roots and whakapapa in our faith?***
- ❖ ***How does being "grafted in" to this land challenge attitudes of superiority or isolation?***

Another text about Whakapapa Jeremiah 17:7–8

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.
They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.
It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;
in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

The tree planted beside water is stable and fruitful because of its deep roots. In the same way, trust in God is the source of life and resilience. Roots are often unseen, but they're essential: they connect us to what sustains us, just as with whakapapa: unseen connections give strength for the future.

- ❖ ***How do deep roots of faith and whakapapa help us withstand challenges?***
- ❖ ***How can we nurture those roots of our connection with Te Pīhopatanga for future generations? And what fruit might result?***

Here are some people who might encourage us as we seek to deepen our connections with our brothers and sisters in Te Pīhopatanga.

William Williams

(18 July 1800-9 February 1878) William Williams was born in England, ordained in 1824, and served with the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand from 1826. His brother was the missionary Henry Williams. He was a linguistic scholar who led CMS missionaries in translating the Bible into Māori and published an early dictionary and grammar of the Māori language. He became the first Anglican Bishop of Waiapu on 3 April 1859. William Williams advocated for Māori rights, justice, and social integrity during and after the New Zealand Wars, and was a vocal critic of the unjust land confiscations. He also mentored Māori clergy, planting roots for future generations in ministry.



Williams acknowledges the work of Māori evangelists: *“The missionaries commenced as usual by singing a hymn, but what was their surprise when they heard the whole assemblage join and sing correctly with them; and in the prayers also the responses were made correctly by all as by the voice of one man. Nothing like this had been witnessed before, and they believed that the Lord had now led them to the spot where his altar should be erected.”*

- ❖ ***In what ways can connection and mutual collaboration (like Williams’ training of Māori clergy) strengthen faith across generations?***
- ❖ ***How does advocacy for justice shape a whānau’s spiritual identity and connection to God?***

Piripi Taumata-ā-Kura

(fl. 1823–c. 1868) Piripi Taumata ā Kura was a lay Ngāti Porou evangelist, born at Whakawhitira near the Waiapu River, probably in the late 18th century, who planted the seeds of the gospel within his own iwi. After

St Johns Church Rangitukia



captivity in the Bay of Islands (1823), he returned to Waiapu and preached Christianity, giving the very first Christian sermon in the East Coast at Te Hātepe in Rangitukia on New Year's Day 1834. His work helped shape the uniquely Māori expression of

Anglicanism in the East Coast, incorporating Christian values into tribal traditions. He taught literacy, led peace-based conduct during warfare), and set the foundation for CMS mission training in the region. He's remembered in the church calendar on 15 May.

"Whatungarongaro he tangata, Toitū ko te hāhi (People perish, but the church remains.)"

❖ ***How can local leaders like Piripi inspire us to take responsibility for our own whakapapa in faith?***

❖ ***How does grassroots spiritual leadership shape future generations?***

Īhāia Te Ahu

(c.1820–1895) Īhāia Te Ahu (Ngāpuhi), one of the earliest Māori clergy, was a missionary among Te Arawa for over 50 years. Born near Ōkaihau, he attended the CMS station at Kerikeri around 1832 and served in Rotorua and Maketu. He was ordained deacon in 1861 by William Williams and built St Faith's Church, Rotorua; later he became vicar of Ohinemutu. His service grounded the church in local whakapapa and leadership. He's commemorated in our church calendar on 13 May.



St Faith's Church Rotorua

- ❖ *What does long-term ministry like Īhāia Te Ahu's teach us about sustaining connection in community?*
- ❖ *How does serving in one's own tribal region deepen cultural and spiritual roots?*

Manuhuia "Manu" Bennett



(10 February 1916 – 20 December 2001)
 Manuhuia Bennett (Ngāti Whakauae, Ngāti Pikiao, and Ngāti Rangitihi) was the son of Frederick Augustus Bennett, the first Māori bishop in the Anglican church. He was ordained in 1940 and served in a number of places including as a military chaplain to the 28th Maori Battalion during World War II. He was Bishop of Aotearoa from 1968 to 1981: there are current Waiaapu clergy who were

ordained by him. Bishop Manuhuia integrated faith, culture, and justice in both church and national spheres. His service on the Waitangi Tribunal (1986–1997) connected spiritual and historical reconciliation. He was appointed a Member of the Order of New Zealand in 1989.

"Te Tiriti is the promise of two peoples to take the best possible care of each other."

Tikanga is "doing things right, doing things the right way, and doing things for the right reasons."

- ❖ *What does Manuhuia Bennett's journey show about faith as inheritance and calling?*
- ❖ *In what ways does serving both church and tribunal demonstrate holistic ministry within this land?*

This week, think about the legacy of collaboration between Māori and Pākehā within our church: how are you part of this?

THOUGHTS / QUESTIONS

Closing Reflections

In this study we've looked at the values and strategic priorities we have here in the Anglican Diocese of Waiapu. Even if you're not part of our Waiapu whānau, we hope these have resonated with you anyway, as they lead us deeper into what it is to be one of God's people in this land.

God persistently reaches out to us – that's a key part of the “big story” of the Bible – wanting a close and loving relationship with us, wanting us to have good relationships with one another. The constancy of God's love assures us that we are not alone. The abundant life God created us to have is one characterised by love (aroha), peace (rongo) and joy (hari) in the Holy Spirit.

We are not alone – we always have God with us. And we are not alone because the saints – those who have gone before us in the faith – are always with us too. Their lives show us what following Jesus looks like in real, often challenging circumstances. They show us that we too can follow Jesus.

And we are not alone because we are in this together – it really is all about community.

- ❖ *Which one of those strategic priorities resonated most with you?*
- ❖ *Which one would you like to learn more about?*
- ❖ *As this study draws to a close, how has it changed you?*



Photo: Dan Meyers, Unsplash

Closing Worship

You might like to close each session by praying together. Here are some possible prayers.

God of past and present,
yours is the Spirit that fires the life of your Church
and yours is the work we are given to do;
bless our diocese with a courage to pray
for that which seems inconceivable,
a tenacity of hope that sees your kingdom even in the ashes,
and a grace that knows we are all brothers and sisters in your love.
Amen.

Come Holy Spirit, to all baptised in your name,
that we may turn to good
whatever lies ahead
Give us passion, give us fire;
make us transform the world from what it is,
to what you have created it to be.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

E tō mātou Matua i te rangi
Kia tapu tōu Ingoa.
Kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga.
Kia meatia tāu e pai ai
ki runga ki te whenua,
kia rite anō ki tō te rangi.
Hōmai ki a mātou āiane
he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.
Murua ō mātou hara,
Me mātou hoki e muru nei
i ō te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
Āua hoki mātou e kawea kia whakawaia;
Engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino:
Nōu hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha, me te korōria,
Āke ake ake. Āmine.

