

Catholic Parish of the Good Shepherd

Hurunui District, Catholic Diocese of Christchurch



Pentecost Sunday 15 May 2016

the power of words

A couple of hundred years before the Pentecost event, a decree of King Ptolemy V of Egypt was inscribed on a large granite slab. Because the same inscription was etched not just in one but in three ancient languages, the rediscovery of the stone at the close of the 18th century provided the key to deciphering other texts written in ancient tongues. The door to understanding these languages had been locked for many centuries leaving our contemporary world with no way of knowing and learning from the people who lived in the ancient world and who spoke these languages. Now, because of the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, it was finally possible for us to understand the wisdom of our ancestors. Today one of the most popular language learning courses is named "Rosetta Stone".

When most people think of Pentecost they imagine the visible tongues of fire descending on the first disciples, or the "noise like a strong driving wind" that filled the room in which they gathered. But we need to read on in the Acts of the Apostles to learn of the effects of the event. The passage continues by telling us that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim". The remarkable thing was that when they left the room they discovered that when they spoke of Jesus, people of every nation and language could understand what they were saying.

My greatest personal insight into this reality came a few years ago when I was sitting at a table with a group who were passionate in their desire to live in relationship with Christ. The challenge for me was that they were from another country: I spoke not a word of their language and they had no knowledge of English. Surely this was the recipe for zero communication? But no. Instead a remarkable thing happened. While we may not have understood the individual words that were used in our conversation, we truly understood each other at a much deeper level. I remember thinking that this was something of a miracle. Real communication about real things was happening.

We all know too that sometimes when we are with a group of English speakers we may know the meaning of every word they use but we have absolutely no idea what they are talking about.

Words are powerful. Good communication is essential. But it is easy to reduce our expectation of communication to the simple goal of sharing information. Passing on information is an easy task that can be carried out successfully by a well-programmed robot or a household computer. Of course this weekly newsletter is a useful tool, but it is not the kind of communication that the disciples experienced as the result of Pentecost.

At Pentecost, the friends of Jesus were transformed into the community that lived in harmony and spoke with united voice. It was this

unity that was the most visible and audible communicator of the new life they now shared.

It is helpful to remember back to the early Old Testament introduction of disunity into our world. Adam and Eve acted against God's abundant desire for them by grasping at a mirage of freedom. Within a few chapters of their departure from paradise the descendants of Adam and Eve were unwilling and unable to talk with each other. Their languages were confused and there was no longer communication between them. They simply babbled. (ref. The Tower of Babel. Genesis 11:1-9).

Only the presence of the Holy Spirit in a community can bring effective and loving communication. The mark of the presence of the evil spirit is hostility, negativity and gossip.

Last week I asked a parishioner an open question seeking information. The reply I received was hostile and soon a number of other unrelated issues were revealed. Later in reflection I was aware that the evil spirit was clearly at work here, not only in the parishioners bottled negativity, but also in the negative effect that this conversation had on my own awareness of the presence and love of God for me in the hours that followed.

It is significant that Pope Francis speaks regularly about the importance of loving communication. A number of times he has spoken about negativity and gossip as the work of the devil. When we speak negatively about another, however justified we might think our comments are, we are (according to Pope Francis) engaging in war. When we speak against another, and avoid opportunities to be reconciled, the devil is able to take a vacation since we are doing his work. We have ceased to be disciples of Jesus and have become the missionaries of satan.

This does not mean that all the Christians in a community will agree with each other. Our unity is not found in uniformity, but in a diversity that finds its unity only by being centred on Jesus.

It is important to remember that we all fall victim to negativity and gossip at times. But we must help each other to refocus on Jesus and his Word which brings life and unity. The one who silently and politely listens to the gossip has also become an accomplice of the devil.

You may not know this, but the Catholic Church has a Constitution. It was formed during the Second Vatican Council. One of the many great lines in this constitution proclaims that "The Holy Spirit enables the Church to grow young" (par.4)

That's a great thought... 'growing young!' In a parish that might think of itself as ageing today's celebration of Pentecost reminds us that new life and youth is available to us. But this youthfulness is not our own achievement. It is a gift of the Spirit.

Our words have the power to break down and destroy the life that is sought by those who are truly young.

New Weekday Mass Timetable

Last week's shift of the priests of the parish to Amberley enables a regular programme of week-day Mass. It is hoped that given that many parishioners pass through Amberley regularly that a stop-off for a Mass might also be possible for some parishioners. As in most parishes there may be times where a Service of the Word with communion may need to replace a scheduled Mass, but most often Mass will be celebrated. (An email & the Parish Facebook page will give these updates).

Mass at Amberley Church
Tuesday & Thursday at 9.00am

Community of the Beatitudes
Monday & Friday at 12noon

Confessions

Tuesday 8.40am at Amberley

Friday after Mass at Beatitudes

Saturday 10.00am - 10.30 at Amberley
& anytime by arrangement with a priest.

Remember that Mass times and other parish information is available on the parish website at www.catholicchurunui.nz

Our own efforts to create a unified community will exhaust us and will always fail. The depth of unity and communication we yearn for is a gift of God given to those who are open to receiving this gift.

In a society that esteems youth as the eternal goal promoting products and methods to help us to stay young, thanks be to God that we can see that physical agility youthful appearance cannot be the ultimate goal of life. Instead our youth is found in membership of the community of faith.

Let us pray above all else that through our celebration of Pentecost we will remember that the health and happiness we seek is found only in Jesus who is the ultimate communication of God, the Word of God alive among us. **J.O'C**

a prayer shared by a parishioner:

Dear God, so far today I've done alright.

I haven't gossiped. I haven't lost my temper. I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or over indulgent. I am really thankful for that.

But in a few minutes Lord, I am going to get out of bed, and from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot more help. Amen.

Ordination to the Diaconate I am delighted to confirm that Alister Castillo, Graeme Blackburn and Huynh Tran have been accepted for Ordination to the Diaconate. This will be on Friday 23rd September at 2pm at Sacred Heart church in Ponsonby. Keep them in your prayers. Fr Rick Loughnan.

Thinking Diocesan Priesthood? Speak to any priest or contact Vocations Director Fr. John O'Connor vocations.chch@gmail.com

Study Catholic Theology – Applications are invited to study for an 8 paper GradDip in Theology at Good Shepherd College, Auckland, by distance or on-campus. Papers include NZ Church History. Applications close 27 May. Second semester begins 11 July. Email admin@gsc.ac.nz or ph 09 3611053

Rangiora Town Hall for one night only, **"Francisco 'The Man behind the Pope'"** 4pm Sunday, June 5th. Support this World Youth Day fundraiser and purchase a ticket for \$20. Tickets available from Waimakariri parish. 03 313 6285 www.waimakariricatholic.org.nz. Google "Papa Francesco Trailer" to get a taste of the movie.

WYD in Christchurch. On July 29th to August 2nd Catholic Cathedral and Marian Colleges are hosting a Companion event to the World Youth Day in Krakow for the Secondary School Colleges in the South Island. We are anticipating 240 students of Catholic Colleges will attend this event that includes Pilgrimage, Service, Catechesis and Worship. This is a unique opportunity for the Youth (16-18years) of our Catholic communities to come together and share their faith experiences.

Greece and Turkey in St Paul's footsteps Places still available on a 19-day pilgrimage to Greece and Turkey in the Footsteps of St Paul, leaving September 24, 2016 led by Pat McCarthy, former editor NZ Catholic, with Msgr Bernard Kiely of Auckland as chaplain. Highlights will include ancient Athens, Corinth, Philippi, Thessaloniki, Patmos, Ephesus, Izmir, Pergamum, Troas, Troy, Gallipoli (with Mass at Anzac Cove) and Istanbul. A 4-day Rome extension will include a general audience with Pope Francis. For brochure, Pat on patsuzie@slingshot.co.nz or (09) 480-4463.

The Catholic Shop is now in its new location 373 Manchester Street (next to St Mary's). Parking available. Phone 366 2853, email catholicshop@chch.catholic.org.nz Open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday. Gift cards, candles, rosaries, First Communion and Baptism gifts.

Invitation to the blessing and launch of Living in Planet Earth: Faith Communities and Ecology. Edited by Neil Darragh. A resource for heeding Pope Francis' call "to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor." World Bio-Diversity Sunday, 22 May at 6.00-7.30 pm, New Brighton Union Church Hall, Cnr Union and Collingwood Streets, New Brighton. Soup and buns provided.



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& on Facebook & Twitter

with gratitude

This week we are completing one of the most significant projects in the 150 years of the Catholic community of the Hurunui. As of earlier this week there are once again two priests servicing the Hurunui with the arrival of Fr. Jack O'Connor.

In the last week we have received further contributions, with a number of parishioners asking if there is anything they can do to help or contribute, and a generous gift of beautiful furniture for the new presbytery.

A few months ago Pope Francis said of the church that we are no longer living in an era of change. Instead, we are in a change of era. This is true of our parish, and the new presbytery is a significant symbol of our new Good Shepherd parish and the positive energy of parishioners' commitment to being the people of God in the Catholic church in the Hurunui into the future.

Please keep in your prayer those many parishioners who have supported the project by your positive hopes and conversation, your prayers, and your generous financial contributions.

Come Holy Spirit...

...enliven our hearts and minds as we prepare for the great feast of Pentecost when you enliven all apostles and disciples.

Bring the words of Jesus to our minds and help us listen to them, grasp them and live them as children of the Father.

Guide Pope Francis and those who will advise him as he appoints our new Bishop.

In our families, parishes, schools, communities and workplaces make us radiant witnesses of Jesus Christ spreading his love particularly to those most in need.

Give us anew the joy of your indwelling presence. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, pray for us.

HAWARDEN FARM AGM - 22 May at 7pm at Hawarden - note earlier this year as 31/3/16 balance date as required now. M.Bamford 03 314 4262.

PRESBYTERY COMPLETION. The formal opening and blessing of the presbytery will be held in November to coincide with the Amberley church 150 years celebration.

Let us continue to pray

*for the happy repose of the soul of
Bishop Barry Jones.*

*Pray too that all those involved in the process of
appointing his successor will be open to the
guidance of the Holy Spirit.*

LADIES LUNCH All Catholic ladies, their non Catholic lady family members, including their preschool children are warmly invited to the home of Anne Murphy on Thursday, 26th May at 12 noon. Address is 11 Leslie St, Culverden township. Please bring a small plate of food. At our last lunch it was decided to have a sales table this time. Anything saleable, e.g. home produce, baking, good used magazines, handcrafts etc (be grateful for). All proceeds will go to Sister Aroha, Missionaries Of Charity. Any queries Anne 3158489



WORLD YOUTH DAY 2016

Thirty eight young people (aged 18-35) from our diocese of Christchurch will travel on pilgrimage to Europe visiting Rome, Assisi, Lourdes & Paris before joining an estimated two million young people from around the world for the World Youth Days in Krakow Poland with Pope Francis. The pilgrimage is from July 11 until August 4. I am delighted to share with you that two of the pilgrimage group are parishioners of our own Good Shepherd Parish. World Youth Day began 30 years ago and is held every three years, the last being in Rio in 2013. The pilgrimage is an intense experience of the beauty and depth of Catholic faith. Please pray for all young people around the diocese, and the world as they prepare for the event. Regular updates will be posted here and on the parish Facebook page.

a prayer intention

I am always happy to receive the prayer requests and Mass intentions of parishioners. Every morning and evening, and at Mass and as I am driving, I pray for all parishioners, especially those for whom I have received requests. In recent weeks I have prayed for the healing of Kate Davis (daughter of Pat Crean) who is struggling with cancer, and I now invite all parishioners to join me in this prayer.

I spoke with the Carmelite Sisters during the week and they have assured us that they are now also praying for the healing of Kate. They have suggested this prayer and I ask all parishioners to join me in praying this prayer specifically at least once every day, and any other prayers for Kate and her family, perhaps especially a decade of the Rosary each day.

May the Spirit of God

be close to Kate
to renew and uplift her
and to pour gifts of healing upon her,
strengthen her and comfort her,
enfolding Kate in love to protect her.
Lighten Kate's burden of illness
and bestow peace in mind and body,

Bless Kate's loving husband Jim, her children, and all her family, friends and members of the parish with much strength and peace.

We thank you Lord for hearing this prayer we make for Kate's healing through the intercession of Our Lady and all the Saints.
Through Christ Our Lord,
Amen.