

Anniversary's in April

Adriana Koolen (Jean), Jack Hallagen, Murray Durham, Ellen Logan
Vaughan Hallagen, Brian Bird, Charlie Percy, Ivan Ujdur
John McDonald, John Stanely, Lenva Martin, Leo Frings (Geoff)
Malcolm Heaven, Michael Ransfield, Robert Frost (Bob)
Thomas Butler (Tom), Gavin Logan, James Cook
John Muelan, James Harris, Emmett McElhinney, William Field (Bill)

Email Addresses—I have had trouble with the storage on the parish computer and as a consequence I have lost some email addresses. Please email the office at cat.chb@xtra.co.nz so I can update our address book. Many thanks.

Adoration—It is a privilege to have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament regularly in our Parish. As we uplift our parish family in prayer, it's a blessing on all! The first Friday of the month, there will be Adoration from 10am until 3pm, commencing after Friday Mass at 9.15am.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations and Seminarian Appeal 28 April 2024 - On the 5th Sunday of Easter Time, 28 April 2024, we are invited to pray for those called to serve through priestly vocation. The day also marks the beginning of our National Vocations Awareness Week. We are greatly blessed by the generosity and enthusiasm of our men training for priesthood. Currently, we have one seminarian Dung Manh Phan at Holy Cross Seminary in Auckland. After returning from Vietnam, in July 2022 Dung studied papers for his degree. In 2023 he joined the year one cohort for his formation year 1 and this year, he is in year 2, studying fulltime towards his theology degree. Lam van Nguyen, Hung van Nguyen, and Duy Pham, from Vietnam, arrived in New Zealand in 2022 to learn English before hopefully joining the seminary. However, it was with sadness that Duy returned to Vietnam early this year, due to health reasons. For young people, remember that being a priest is always another option for your life. If you are thinking about it, please talk to any of our diocesan priests you may know. Parents, if your children are interested in the vocation of priesthood, please encourage them, and pray for them. Please feel free to contact our Dio-

cese of Palmerston North Director, Fr Trung Nguyen on 022 062 6726 or email vocations@pndiocese.org.nz We ask you to please support our Seminarians with financial support and prayer. Please continue to pray for more candidates. Thank you in advance for your contribution no matter how small

Vatican publishes Declaration affirming human dignity: Dignitas Infinita
The Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith has published a new Declaration on the theme of human dignity, addressing a range of contemporary moral and social issues. You can download a copy here: <https://www.catholic.org.nz/assets/Dignitas-Infinita-Inglese-.pdf> A Vatican News article on the Declaration is here: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2024-04/human-dignity-ddf-document-migration-gender-surrogacy-war-theolo.html>

Pro-Life—A Christian doctor, Dermot Keaney, has been given the Anton Neuwirth Prize, a prestigious award, for his work reversing the lethal effect of abortion pills. Abortion reversal halts the medical abortion process, enabling women who have taken only the first abortion medication to continue their pregnancy and have their babies. For more pro-life information, visit www.voiceforlife.org.nz.

Mass Times

Sunday—9.30am @ St Joseph's

Saturday—Vigil -5.30pm @ St Patrick's

Week Day

Saturday—9.00am @ St Joseph's

Tuesday—9.00am @ St Joseph's

Thursday—9.00am @ St Patrick's

Parish Priest—Fr Paul Kerridge

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The Holy Trinity Parish Rātini Kupu

28 Paenga-whāwhā, 2024
5th Sunday of Easter



False Prophets

Admirers have suggested that the brilliance of Oscar Wilde's plays was only surpassed by that of his conversation. He was a superb raconteur whose conversational offerings were heavily laced with irony. He had a particular penchant for parables, often recounting them in the style of the gospel narrative. Here is one of them. "One day, an unknown man walked down the street. It was the first hour of daylight and people had not yet gathered in the market place. The man sat down by the wayside and, raising his eyes, he began to gaze up to heaven. And it came to pass that another man who was passing that way, seeing the stranger, he too stopped and raised his eyes to heaven. At the second and third hour, others came and did likewise. Soon word of this marvellous happening spread throughout the countryside and many people left their abodes and came to see this stranger. At the ninth hour, when the day was far spent, there was a great multitude assembled. The stranger lowered his eyes from heaven and stood up. Turning towards the multitude, he said in a loud voice: "Amen, amen~ I say unto you. How easy it is to start a religion!" To start a religion, as Wilde observed, may not be that difficult, but to ensure its survival is quite another matter. People are gullible. Futurists predict a growth in religious activity in the 21st century. For them it forms part of the leisure industry which is expected to expand dramatically. Whether one should greet this prediction with joy or apprehension is a matter for debate. A purely statistical increase in church membership is a dubious gain. What counts for Christianity — indeed, what ensures its survival — is not external but internal growth. What is required is not more members of the Catholic Church, but better disciples of Jesus Christ. Mere membership and full discipleship are worlds apart. Christianity has always suffered from a surfeit of members and a shortage of disciples. Humans are social animals and crave to be associated. In a world grown cold and depersonalised the churches offer a comfortable ambiance of friendship and security. Often the gospel is diluted to accommodate the prejudices and lifestyle of the parishioners. Few preached fearlessly enough, like St Paul, to risk their livings, let alone their lives. The radical Christ is made into a benign bishop and the collection plate registers members' approval. Too many withered branches remain un-pruned. St John tries gently to prod us into discipleship. "My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active." You won't meet Christ in your Sunday liturgy, if you haven't rubbed shoulders with him in the office, in the factory or in the kitchen. You won't hear his message from the altar, if you were deaf to his call at your office desk. Jesus put it simply and bluntly: "It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit and then you will be my disciples."

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We live in a fast-paced world where we move from one news item to another with sometimes frightening speed. It is important, therefore, that we remind ourselves that we are still in the Church season of Eastertide. In other words, while we may have moved on in our working and family lives from Easter 2024, we still bask in the wonderful light of the Resurrection and the hope it brings to our world. Our Gospel stories, each Sunday of Eastertide, call us back to the monumental events of Easter, culminating on Easter Sunday morning with the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Last week, we saw how Jesus used the Old Testament imagery of 'sheep and shepherd' to bring us a step closer to the incredible realisation that he was, in fact, God. This week, Jesus again draws on the Old Testament imagery of 'the vine and the vineyard' to give us yet more clues that he is God incarnate. His opening statement that "I am the true vine..." probably means very little to us, but in the light of the Old Testament imagery from which it comes, what he is claiming is earth-shattering. Without the Resurrection, his claim to be the true vine would mean nothing at all. However, once we acknowledge the truth of Easter Sunday, today's Gospel takes on a huge significance and importance. Join me, then, in reflecting on Jesus' claim to be "the true vine...". b.maher@oblates.ie

Today's reading from the Gospel of John is part of Jesus' discourse at the Last Supper. Recall that John tells the story of Jesus' Last Supper differently from the other Evangelists. In John's Gospel, the Last Supper begins with Jesus washing his disciples' feet. Jesus then provides them with a series of instructions. We call this section the Last Supper discourse or Jesus' farewell discourse. In these chapters of John's Gospel, Jesus instructs his disciples about the importance of following his example of love and service, about the gift they will receive when Jesus sends them the Holy Spirit, and about their relationship with Jesus and with the world. The Last

Supper discourse concludes with Jesus' prayer for his disciples. Today's Gospel reading is taken from middle of the Last Supper discourse. Jesus speaks about his relationship to his disciples. In his metaphor of the vine and the branches, Jesus is referencing the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Israel is the vineyard, and Yahweh himself tends the vineyard. One of the primary themes of John's Gospel is to show Jesus to be the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel. In this passage, Jesus teaches his disciples that his relationship with them will not end after his death; he will remain with them always. This unity between Jesus and his disciples is the basis for their ability to continue to do the work that he began. Similarly, Jesus' presence with us through the Gift of the Holy Spirit enables us to continue the work of love and reconciliation that he began. Jesus also teaches his disciples about the importance of the words he has taught to them. Just as Jesus will remain in the disciples, so too will his words. We come to know Jesus through the Scriptures, the living Word of God. Our commitment to be Christ's disciples is sustained through God's Word. This commitment is also strengthened by our life of prayer and nourished by the Eucharist. Through the Eucharist, Jesus dwells in us, remains with us, and transforms us so that we might bear fruit in his name. We observe many people who act in ways that show their commitment to serve their neighbour. Christians and non-Christians feed the hungry, care for the sick, shelter the homeless, and give alms to the poor. These actions become acts of Christian discipleship when they are motivated by our relationship with Jesus. Whatever the immediate results, Jesus promises us that these actions will bear fruit when we undertake them in his name.

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Notices from Titipounamu Study & Joy

—Bible Stories - What do they mean?
Join us in unravelling Bible stories and looking for answers within a group, and with Bible Scholar Kieran Fenn fms.
Sunday, 05 May 2024, 5-6pm (Zoom). Koha <https://www.studyjoy.nz/2024/01/19/bible-stories-what-do-they-mean/>
The Mystery of Miracles
Monday, 29 April 2024, 7-8.30pm
\$25/session, incl. study material.
<https://www.studyjoy.nz/2024/01/11/the-mystery-of-miracles/>
For more information: www.studyjoy.nz
Last year I bought a baby fig tree. It flourished outside during the summer, then stagnated in the fall. Eventually, I brought the tree inside. Within the first few months, the tree lost two of the three figs it had produced. One day, I noticed several leaves were beginning to yellow. I read more about figs, gave the plant plenty of water, and hoped for the best. Things got worse from there. The fig began losing leaves daily. First, they would yellow and crumple, and then they would fall to the floor. Eventually, I realized the tree had gnats; super annoying teeny black flies that thrive in moist potted soil and can damage plant roots. Despite several remedies, within a span of months, my fig had lost every single one of its leaves. I was devastated. Before the doomed leaves finally dropped, I fertilized the tree again in a last-ditch effort to strengthen it against what seemed inevitable. But every leaf was gone. Then, suddenly, one day, a tiny leaf unfurled from a long dormant appearing bud. Within days, the fig tree exploded with new growth. After a week, the fig had regained a full new set of leaves and had grown taller than before. The word "abide" is used exactly ten times within the passage from John. The Greek word which is translated to mean "to abide," "to wait," or "to remain" is **meno**. Cross-referencing passages which also use the Greek word **meno** suggests a theme of faithfulness. The following are a few passages in which the Greek word **meno** is used. In Matthew 11:23, Jesus admonishes those who saw miracles He performed, but did not repent. Jesus instructs His disciples in

Mark 6:10 to stay in one place until they leave. In Mark 14:34, Jesus implores His disciples to stay with Him during his agony in the garden. When confronting a demonic, Luke specifically tells us the man had not lived in a house, but among tombs. Some other passages which use the Greek **meno** include Mary visiting her cousin Elizabeth and remaining with her. When Jesus calls His disciples, He is often asked where He is staying, and He often stays in homes. When the dove descends on Jesus at His Baptism, it "remains on him" (John 1:33). Finally, Jesus uses the Greek **meno** in describing the relationship we have with Him when we consume the Eucharist—He abides in us, and we in Him (John 6:56).



My struggling fig was simply three lifeless twigs before it suddenly burst forth again in foliage. Even though it appeared bare to my eye, life was hidden beneath its bark. How often do I choose something other than God, or something instead of him? How often do I place my time with him on the back burner, like the rice that slowly simmers noiselessly, and burns when I forget about it for too long? To abide with Jesus means that I live within Him and not apart from Him. When He and I are one, no matter how dead anything may appear on the outside, there is always life within. Conversely, if we are not one, no matter how life-giving my life may appear, when the water dries up, or the gnats infest, or nutrients run out, I will dry up and ultimately die. The Father loves Jesus completely and perfectly. They are fully one—in harmony. Jesus' love for you is complete. Perfect. God gives us the opportunity to be fully one with him. Jesus is the most perfect lover, and yet the lie we tend to believe, like Eve, is that God is lacking, hiding something, or there is more that He isn't giving to us. We don't always associate homes with pleasant memories or feelings, yet a good home anchors us, makes us feel secure, and gives us a place to fully rest. Jesus wants to be this home for you. A place to fully rest and be loved securely and absolutely—without want of any kind. *Copyright 2024 Lindsey Mitzel*