

Discover

From the Director's Desk



Tēnā koutou,

My name is Rebecca and it is my privilege to be the new Director of the Catholic Enquiry Centre - Catholic Discovery. I still can't quite believe that I have been blessed with such a spiritual, varied and creative job. Through this role, I'm able to serve God and the Church in a way I couldn't have imagined was possible growing up as a girl.

Taking over from Fr. Neil Vaney SM is a daunting task, as I know he is much-loved and did a wonderful job connecting with enquirers, and educating people about Catholicism. I wish Fr Neil all the very best for his retirement, and I am very much looking forward to reading the book he's writing.

Joe Serci, our CEC Engagement Manager who worked closely with Fr Neil over the last 5 years, has also moved on. Joe was instrumental in creating the new website and expanding CEC activities into the world of social media and podcasts. I pray that Joe's career goes from strength to strength, and deservedly so.

Mely Lau has reduced her hours, but is still with us. Her role is now CEC Donations Coordinator, so she will process donations and send out the tax-deductible receipts. She will be in the CEC office on Fridays to process your donations.

We welcome Anastasia Kijono, who has already made herself indispensable as the new Office Manager at the Catholic Enquiry Centre. She will deal with the day-to-day running of the office, and will often be the first point of contact for those ordering our booklets and other resources.

Joining us as CEC Chaplain is Fr. John O'Connor. He will be giving us a few hours each week as an adviser, and will be on hand should enquirers need to speak specifically to a priest. He will also celebrate a regular Mass for our benefactors. I am particularly delighted to have Fr. John's support. His knowledge of theology and evangelisation will be truly helpful as we forge ahead with our new team.

I'm also currently recruiting a Communications Assistant to help in a general way with our mission of evangelisation.

Part of my focus over the coming year will be to write and commission useful and informative content for our website. I've started chipping away at it, so that Catholic Discovery NZ will become a treasure trove for those seeking knowledge about the Catholic Church, and how to form a relationship with Christ. Our website needs to reflect a modern and inclusive Church, whilst remaining faithful to the Catechism. I have also expanded our reach into social media with new Instagram and TikTok accounts. I very much hope you enjoy this work, and please, **follow, like and share.**



Mely - Donations
Coordinator



Anastasia - Office
Manager

From the Director's Desk Continued...

From the recent synodal discussions, we learnt that many of us are concerned with the poor retention of young people in the Church. This is something that Catholic Discovery can target over the coming years. To this end, I want to support university chaplaincies and youth ministries in reaching out to our youth. We hope to organise and financially support events where young people can actively engage with faith. It is equally important to invite older people to the church as well, of course. I pray that we reach everyone who needs us.

On a personal note, I would like to assure all of our supporters and their families that I attend Mass most days, and I always take you with me in my intentions. We continue to pray for our benefactors, and I often light a candle in memoriam for those who have passed. As mentioned earlier, part of Father John's role is to celebrate a regular Mass for our benefactors, just as Father Neil did during his tenure.

I regularly travel to parishes around the country to meet with communities and spread the word about our work. Please make yourself known to me if I visit your church; I am looking forward to meeting you.

Ngā manaakitanga, Rebecca Taylor-Hunt

Greetings from Palestine



Br. Peter Bray with yours truly



With some of the parishioners of Auckland



Br. Peter with Caritas in Hamilton



BETHLEHEM
UNIVERSITY
جامعة بيت لحم

With my new office on Thorndon Quay still under construction, I began my new role at the Catholic Enquiry Centre by accompanying Brother Peter Bray, the Vice Chancellor of Bethlehem University, on his speaker tour of Aotearoa New Zealand. My job was to introduce him at the beginning of his talk, and thank him at the end. It was a great way to introduce myself to parish communities, connect with the CEC advisory committee members, and meet key team members of each of our Dioceses.

I felt honoured to support Brother Peter, as I am only too aware of the human rights implications of the treatment of the Palestinian people in occupied Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, and the importance of his work. A talk of this nature was not only enjoyed by parishioners, but also by people who would not usually come to a church event. His visit to NZ highlighted the call from the NZ Bishops for us to take action to promote peace in the Holy Land, and Brother Peter outlined all the ways we can do this in his talk.

Brother Peter is a fascinating man. The pride he has in his Palestinian students at Bethlehem University was inspiring, as is the "oasis of peace" that he and his colleagues create for them in an unpredictable and often dangerous environment. The central message of the talk was one of peace and hope. He explained that, contrary to propaganda about Palestinians, there is a culture of quiet defiance amongst the students in Bethlehem. With the escalating violence in Palestine on the news at the moment, we can only pray that this remains the case.

I was able to capture his talk, and you can watch it in full on our Catholic Discovery YouTube Channel. It is also accessible on our website: www.catholicdiscovery.nz. Thank you to everyone who supported the tour. Please continue to pray for peace in the Holy Land.

Exploring Faith...

Alpha

Back in 2022, I participated in my home parish of Te Awakairangi's first Alpha course. I didn't need much persuasion. Since my teenage years, visiting my older sister in London, I've seen banners outside churches advertising Alpha, which means I've been curious about what it involves for most of my adult life.

I'm so grateful that I finally took the plunge. Alpha is a program that has been running for over 40 years all over the world. It is a safe space where Christians can regain or deepen their faith, and where those without belief can encounter Christ and the Holy Spirit. Groups meet over 11 weeks and share kai and conversation about life, faith, and Jesus.

What I gained is the chance to talk about what God means to me and explore my faith in a structured way. I found myself with like-minded people, and I've made many new friendships and deeper connections with members of my parish as a result of taking this spiritual journey with them.

A number of us from that first Alpha group are currently organising the next Alpha program in our parish, and I'm buzzing with excitement that we are able to pass on to others the wonderful experience we shared.

Everyone is on their own path, and everyone is welcome. It is a chance for those searching for answers to find faith, and a chance for seasoned Christians to explore and deepen theirs.

If your parish is running an Alpha course, go along and see for yourself just how interesting it is. For more information, please visit www.alpha.org.nz.

Ngā Parirau – Wings

I attended a fascinating workshop presented by Dianna Fouhy in February. Dianne is part of the Faith Formation Team at the Catholic Diocese of Auckland and the workshop was all about a way of deepening faith called Ngā Parirau - Wings.

This three-year programme, is "designed to build confidence in people to be active in the life and mission of the church by fostering personal and spiritual formation, deepening understanding of Church teaching and scripture, and integrating this with faith and life experience," according to the literature.

The idea is that groups are formed and led by a member of the parish. Activities are a varied mix of reading and reflection, prayer, journalling, and meeting with other members of the group as part of a community exploring and growing in faith. At the end of the programme, all graduates are presented with a certificate.

Johanna Cogle is a recent graduate of Ngā Parirau - Wings. She says of her experience, "Ngā Parirau has changed my life in so many ways. It has given me the confidence to really PRAY and understand the GRACE is ours awaiting us always! It allowed me to build my relationship with God in ways that I did not think was possible – it just happened by a slow 'creep', and suddenly it was there in my life; and important to me, and now 'done' on a daily basis. Now I have the confidence to be open about my faith, and speak of it in comfort and in simple terms to others."

If you are interested in participating, or even leading a group, support can be found through your diocese coordinator. Materials are published and supplied by the National Centre of Religious Studies, and the course is endorsed by the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference.

To find out more, watch this short video on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/ZIsYLLaOohY>. You can contact Dianna Fouhy at diannaf@cda.org.nz if you are in Auckland, or your local diocese pastoral team and ask to speak to their coordinator.

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." John 14:6

Grant the precious gift of faith to all who seek you with a sincere heart, that they may love, serve and worship you as members of your Church; and may they be happy with you forever in Heaven.

We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.



This Sunday

Weekly Reflections

Every week, the Director of the Catholic Enquiry Centre writes a reflection that brings life to the Sunday Mass readings. She applies modern context, personal reflection or an historical explanation to amplify the Gospel.

These reflections are on a section of our website called 'This Sunday'. It can easily be accessed from links on the home-page or you can use this URL:

www.catholicdiscovery.nz/this-sunday

Our Newsletters can also now be found on our website. As a loyal supporter, we will continue to mail a copy to you. If you want to spread our news, you can hold onto your personal copy, and either contact Anastasia for further copies or share this link to your social media accounts: www.catholicdiscovery.nz/newsletters.



Catholic Discovery is our digital way of reaching people interested in our faith. We use channels like Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to spread the good news of Jesus Christ as far and wide as possible. Please visit our website, and follow us on social media to discover and share our stories.

www.catholicdiscovery.nz



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*Please remember
the Catholic Enquiry Centre
in your Will...*

Your bequest costs nothing now, but in the future
it will help guarantee the work of the CEC.

Why not speak to your lawyer about it?

Form of Bequest

I give to the Catholic Enquiry Centre in Wellington
the sum of \$

for its general purposes, and I declare that a receipt by
the current Director of the Catholic Enquiry Centre shall
be a sufficient discharge for this gift.