



From +John...

Ngā Mihi Nui ki a koutou katoa

This is the time of the year when the Clergy of the diocese gather, diocesan clergy and religious order clergy, to celebrate with and honour those who have reached Ordination Jubilees. Yesterday we gathered for Mass and a luncheon to honour Fr Pat McCann SM who celebrated 65 years of ordination, Msgr John Carde, Father Pat Maloney, Fr Earl Crotty SM, (all 60 years), Fr John Craddock SM (50 years) and Bishop Paul Martin SM (25 years). We give thanks to God for those years of priestly service to the People of God in many different ways.

Over 40 priests had also gathered the day before for what we called a Mini Clergy Assembly. We spent the first part of the day reflecting on homilies, how we prepare them, what their content should be and how they should be delivered. Then the afternoon was devoted to looking at the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and particularly the difference between Rite One and Rite Two. We had very helpful and valuable discussions on both topics with information shared from what Pope Francis has written about homilies, and what people of our parishes expect.

I shared with the priests something I had read back in 1980 which has had a huge influence on how I try to prepare and deliver homilies. It said this: **“Most homilies today are “Try Harder” homilies. They simply tell people to do more, to give more, to pray more, to TRY HARDER. Moralising has replaced the Good News and does nothing to help people who are struggling with life....”** Everyone one could see that we are incredibly privileged and that it is a huge responsibility to deliver homilies in such a way that they are relevant to parishioners’ life experiences and give them hope.

When reflecting on the Sacrament of Reconciliation we shared and discussed our own experiences of the Sacrament and how we can make the best possible use of the Rites the Church has given us. Again, all were aware of the great privilege we have, and of how humbling and prayerful it can be for us to be Confessors. During the day I remembered something else I read many years ago and which has helped me, both in my own confession and as a Confessor. This was: *“we are not permitted to nurse a sense of guilt, we must fully and completely accept and embrace his forgiveness and love. Guilt feelings and inferiority feelings before God are expression of selfishness and self- centeredness; we give more importance to our little sinful self than to his immense and never-ending love. We must surrender our guilt and inferiority to him; His goodness is greater than our badness. We must accept his joy and living and forgiving us. It is a healing grace to surrender our sinfulness to His mercy.”*

It is always God’s love and mercy we are proclaiming and celebrating.

Mā te Atua koutou e manaaki, e tiaki

+John

News

- The registration deadline for the National Assembly of Diocesan Priests being held in Christchurch from 10—14 September is Saturday 30 June. Please register through <https://2018-national-assembly-of-diocesan-priests.lilregie.com>. Contact Fr James Lyons j.lyons@wn.catholic.org.nz if you require any further information.
- Congratulations to Priest Jubilarians (listed above) and heartfelt thanks to them for their years of generous priestly service to the Church and the People of God.
- Please remember in your prayers Br Ray Kelleher SM, who died 26 June at Summerset in the Bay (Napier). May he rest in peace.

“Let us not be closed to the newness that God wants to bring into our lives...Mercy is the Lord’s most powerful message.”

Pope Francis