



# Mercy Parish-Whānau Aroha

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**Address:**

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**Parish Priests:**

**22nd March 2020**

## All Masses cancelled until further notice

- Please see the letter from the NZ Bishops on the reverse.
- The church will be open every day for personal prayer
- We will continue to publish the newsletter and make this available either via email or by leaving them in the church foyer.
- Planned giving envelopes can be held over until we return to mass or can be delivered to the parish office. If you prefer to pay your donation by automatic payment please phone the office for details.

### The Mercy Pastoral Team (MPT)

The Mercy Parish Team will be meeting this weekend to discuss how we continue to operate as a faith community during this unprecedented time. We will discuss how we can keep in touch with each other and how we can continue to be a community of prayer while there are no public liturgies.

Please contact the Parish Office 4558933 or Lynlea 021920095 to provide your email address so that we can remain in contact during this time.

*The MPT has oversight of all parish committees, groups and activities. In consultation with the parishioners and guided by prayer we plan our direction and how to make that happen. We want to inspire other parishioners and draw on their talents and gifts to help build a better place for everyone.*

### Stations of the Cross

The stations of the Cross Ceremonies organized for Lent have been cancelled. However, you may wish to pray the Stations of the Cross in your own time sometime during the week. We will endeavor to provide some Stations of the Cross prayers that you may wish to use.

### Meditation during Lent

The church will be open on Wednesday during Lent from 5:30-5:45pm for silent meditation. You are welcome to join us on the way home from work or if you just want to break the routine of your day for quiet community prayer.

Please note we will continue with this time of meditation.

**DUNEDIN PRAYER GROUP** postponed. Further information available from Kathy 473.7115 or Mary 455.6238  
**The Mercy Ladies Group** postponed Enquiries to Erin KereKere 455 5819 or cellphone 027 351 2825.

## Sin ... what is it?

In our Gospel Jesus is subtly challenging ideas around sin. At the time of this event people believed that *because* of sin you had disabilities or illness, even the Pharisees misunderstood sin and accused Jesus of sinning when he healed on the Sabbath!! We too have ingrained understandings of sin that need to be revisited and with Jesus rising at Easter to defeat sin and death, it is worth thinking about what he actually defeated, and how we understand it.

During lent we can get caught up focusing on our own individual sin and our own individual salvation. This is not a bad start, but it feels like there needs to be something more? After all, we are only truly ourselves in relationship so, how can we stop at *ourselves* with understandings of sin? Sin is more than a check list of rules. Sin is *in* the relationship between things. Sin is when we diminish the image of God in others, or hold them back from being able to honour their own image of God. If we look at sin this way it feels communal, and helps to move our thoughts out of self-preservation towards something bigger.

This week when I check how I'm travelling towards Easter, I will be asking myself, 'Am I doing the work of God and restoring *wholeness* in all relationships?' and I'll try to remind myself that it is not about me *being* perfect, it is about me *loving* perfect!

Jo Bell

**We Prayerfully Remember**  
**those who have died recently**  
**and those who have anniversaries at this time**  
Josefina Jacob

## Spiritual Communion

The Magnificat Journal which publishes the daily readings, morning and evening prayer and reflections is making its online resource free during this time.

The link is:

<http://us.magnificat.net/flipbook/UK/113/320/index.php>

**Webpage:** [mercyparish.nz](http://mercyparish.nz) **Facebook:** [@mercyparish.whanauaroha](https://www.facebook.com/mercyparish.whanauaroha)

*We are so happy you could join us today. If you would like to be more involved in parish activities and ministries please call either Jo 021 231 889 or Claire 021 130 7691 or visit us online.*

**20 March 2020**

**Temporary suspension of all Masses due to Covid-19 coronavirus**

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops have been carefully considering the steps they need to take with Mass and other public liturgical gatherings because of the strong Government restrictions on public gatherings to counter the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic.

Effective immediately, all Masses are to cease until further notice. Churches may remain open seven days a week for private prayers and reflection, but parish priests should ensure that numbers of people present remain small and follow Ministry of Health social distancing guidelines to stay at least 2 metres from each other.

Funeral services may continue but they must be brief and only with small numbers of close family and friends allowed. Those attending must also follow Ministry of Health guidelines for social distancing.

Baptisms, weddings and other public liturgical gatherings already planned may proceed but only with very small numbers of close family and friends present; again, those attending must follow Ministry of Health guidelines for social distancing.

Public liturgical gatherings not yet planned must not be approved and should be delayed until further notice. Funeral services will continue but with small numbers; these services will also meet safe practices and must be brief.

Your bishops must emphasise the serious nature of the Government restrictions and announcements of the past 24 hours – New Zealand's borders have been closed to all non-NZ residents; indoor public gatherings of more than 100 people have been banned, as have all outdoor gatherings of more than 500 people. The Government has imposed these and other measures to try to stop the Covid-19 virus from being passed on within the New Zealand community; closing the borders and strictly limiting public gatherings are seen as important ways to achieve this.

Your bishops' announcement today will disappoint many people, but it will also be welcomed by others. It also follows identical moves by Catholic bishops in many other countries. Pope Francis is himself setting the international Church example by not celebrating public Masses.

Your bishops and a number of dioceses are looking at live-streaming of Mass. Online resources for those who wish to pray at home, especially on Sundays, and to follow daily Mass online are offered at [www.nlo.org.nz](http://www.nlo.org.nz) or on your local Diocesan website.

We again emphasise to all parishioners the importance of good practices of hygiene, including regular washing of hands, covering coughs and sneezes with elbows not hands, staying at home if sick, and keeping a reasonable distance from other people when in public.

The official public health response to the Covid-19 pandemic is changing quickly and frequently. The primary concern of your Bishops is the safety of all parishioners, clergy, families, friends, staff and visitors to our many and varied premises.

We will continue to send updates as soon as new developments happen.

NZ Bishops

**Spiritual Communion**

Here are two traditional prayers that can be prayed on occasions when we are unable to receive Holy Communion.

**From St Aphonusus Liguori:**

My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as being already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

**From St Thomas More:**

I wish, my Lord, to receive You with the purity, humility and devotion with which your Most Holy Mother received You, with the spirit and fervour of the saints. Come Lord Jesus.

Give me, good Lord, a longing to be with You ... give me warmth, delight and quickness in thinking upon You. And give me Your grace to long for Your holy sacraments, and specially to rejoice in the presence of Your very blessed Body, Sweet Saviour Christ, in the Holy Sacrament of the altar.

**Sick and Housebound Parishioners:**

If you are unable to come to Mass on a Sunday or know of parishioners who are no longer able to come to Mass please let us know so Holy Communion can be taken to them. **Please contact the Parish Office, Ph. 455 8933 or Adrienne Ryan, Ph. 476 1520**