

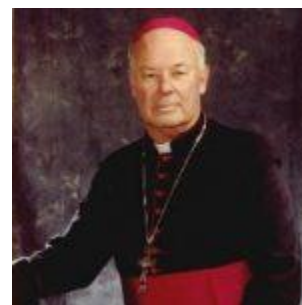


Dear Carmelite family, relatives and friends,

It's hard to believe that another year has gone by, and as we look forward to the beautiful seasons of Advent and Christmas, we look back at the year that has been.

We began 2021 with the news that our Bishop Paul Martin sm had been appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of

Wellington. Though this is good news for them, we will be sad when he finishes his time with us. We were delighted to be asked if we would be willing to accommodate in our cemetery the mortal remains of three of his predecessors. They had been interred in the earthquake-



damaged Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, and will eventually be reinterred in our new Cathedral. There was a lot of work to be done to prepare for them coming, including the establishment of a temporary mausoleum. All was ready on 21st May to welcome them. In a simple ceremony led by Fr Rick Loughnan, and accompanied by Diocesan personnel, three hearses drove through our paddocks to our cemetery, and, in prayer, our bishops were laid to rest once again. Bishop John Grimes, a Marist, was the first Catholic Bishop of Christchurch, and served from 1887 – 1915. (It was touching to read of him mentioned by St Mary MacKillop in one of her letters.) Bishop Edward Joyce was well known to our older Sisters – he served from 1950-1964. Whenever he went overseas he always brought us back something, including a large statue of Our Lady of Fatima which watches over our recreation room and a plaque of Mary and Jesus which hangs in our kitchen. Bishop John Cunneen served from 1995-2007. He was our Chaplain before he became a Bishop, and one of his first episcopal decisions was to reappoint himself in that role, to the delight of all the Sisters. Having the mortal remains of these three men with us means a lot to our community, and on All Souls' Day we were able to pray at their graves as well as those of our deceased Sisters.



A highlight of 2021 was the Solemn Profession of Sr Anne Mary of the Assumption on 15th August, the Solemnity of the Assumption of Our Lady. As the date approached, we were fervently praying that there would be no lockdowns to prevent the occasion. The Lord answered our prayers with not much time to spare. Two days after the ceremony, upon the arrival of the Covid Delta variant, the whole country went into strictest lockdown. Sr Anne's family and friends in Tonga were unable to travel to New Zealand due to border restrictions, but watched the livestream of the beautiful Mass. Fr Rick Loughnan presided over the ceremony, along with many priests.

Hundreds of relatives, friends and well-wishers from all over New Zealand packed our Chapel and spilled out into the marquees erected outside. The Tongan choir, dressed in brand new uniforms, led the vibrant singing. We are so happy to now have Sr Anne as a permanent member of our community.

Mother Dorothea had hip surgery in June and is now able to get about with ease. In July and August most of us caught a bad virus. It almost became the Carmelite Hospital as rosters were drawn up so those still standing could care for those who were not. In due time most of us recovered, but Sr Mary Teresa ended up seriously ill in hospital. Tests revealed a perforated bowel, along with heart failure making it inoperable. She returned home under palliative care. Sr Anne cares for her devotedly in our infirmary, and the Nurse Maude district nurses have been

marvellous, coming regularly to check on her. Our daily Mass is livestreamed via Skype right to Sister's bed. A very special "visitor" to our infirmary was the beautiful painting of Ko Hāta Maria, te Matua Wahine o te Atua (Holy Mary, Mother of God), which reached our Carmel on 24th November. This artwork was commissioned by the Bishops of New Zealand to celebrate the



rededication of our country to Our Lady. Artist Damien Walker carefully explained all the parts of the painting to us. What a joy to have Mary visit Sr Mary Teresa as she prepares for her journey to heaven.



On 14th October we welcomed Lauren Butler as an Extern Postulant. Extern Sisters combine a Teresian contemplative life with attention to the external needs of a Carmelite monastery, allowing us to maintain an entirely contemplative way of life. Sr Lauren brings with her much pastoral experience, and a love for all things Carmelite, along with many artistic skills. Over more than a year as an aspirant, she has come to our rescue many times, accompanying Sisters to hospital and back, sometimes late at night, and shopping for sometimes hard to find items. Only days before she joined us, she had to recover Sr Anne's lost passport from a busy road. We have nicknamed her blue car "The Chariot". Please pray for her during this time of postulancy.

Our cattle, Frankie, Louis and Stevie, left us for richer pastures in April. A few days later, for the first time since we have been here (88 years), we had our paddocks resown. They grew astonishingly and by the time Michael, Gabriel and Raphael arrived in September, the growth was almost over their heads. Unfortunately, these three have not lived up to their angelic names. Upon arrival, our cattle nuns looked on in horror as

Michael took off up the cattle ramp and flew over the end. Within hours he had twice jumped fences and escaped into forbidden pastures. We thought things had improved after that first day, but early November had Michael and Gabriel escaping again, this time into the monastery grounds. Fortunately, they didn't get into the vegetable garden or orchard. We hope they will improve with age.



The Cattle are lowing... planning their next escape...

We ended our year with our community retreat, once again held electronically. We appreciated the inspiring talks on the Holy Spirit, and the importance and beauty of growing in a deeper relationship with him.

We thank all who have helped us live our contemplative life this year. We know that there has been much suffering, and that the uncertain times we live in have brought their challenges. Loved ones have gone before us: Sr Mareta's brother Gabriel, and Sr Marietta's brother Peter and sister-in-law Maleta went home to God. Covid restrictions meant that families could not gather for the sort of farewell that they would normally have had. In the midst of all that saddens us, we know that Our Lord continues to walk with each one. On 1st January 2022 we celebrate 100 years since St Edith Stein was baptised, so it is fitting we finish with a quote from her: "Let us place our hands in the hands of the divine Child, let us speak our 'yes' to his 'follow me'. Thus, we shall be his and the path shall be open for his divine life to pass over upon us." May you and your loved ones experience this divine life this Christmas and New Year, and into the future.

Your loving sisters at the Carmel of Christ the King, Christchurch, New Zealand