



# Archbishop of Wellington

PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

19<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Dear Parishioners of St Francis of Assisi Parish, Ohariu,

Christmas Greetings to you all.

As you know a few months ago Fr Peter Fitzgibbon informed me that he wished to retire after 54 years of priestly service. I am deeply grateful to Fr Peter for the service he has given to the Archdiocese of Wellington and to the Clergy Trust Fund. I wish Fr Peter every blessing in his retirement and a well-earned rest.

Fr Peter's retirement left me with the question of how to provide ongoing sacramental, pastoral and spiritual care for the Ohariu parish and how to provide leadership.

The Archdiocese is not able to appoint a full time Diocesan Priest to the parish any longer. With Father Peter's retirement and Father Doug assigned to the Cathedral Parish I saw a wonderful opportunity for a new and different ways of collaborative leadership. From 2019 this collaborative leadership will involve the Society of Mary, the Archdiocese of Wellington and people of this parish.

Fr Peter Roe SM will be appointed as the Administrator and some priests of the Society of Mary will be available for Masses and sacramental care. I am grateful to the Society of Mary Provincial, Fr David Kennerley and to the priests who will make themselves available. However, none of these priests will be full-time working in the parish. This will be a different and new model.

It will take some time to sort out all the details of working with this new model and it will require patience as various people take up different roles and responsibilities in Ohariu parish. Some may feel that this is something that they do not want. However, there are simply no realistic alternatives. As you stated during your parish merger you desired greater lay leadership and involvement in planning parish life and in providing a wide range of ministries, outreach and services.

I have invited a group of people, John Kleinsman, Paul Alsford, John Lawson, Paul Betham, Sister Judith McGinley OP, Kitty McKinley, Shane Dinnan, Thomas Davis and Paul Whitehouse to work with Fr Peter Roe to develop this new model. Members of this group prepared the implementation plan for the amalgamation of the three parishes into St Francis of Assisi, Ohariu. This is by no means an exclusive group. They will be looking for and inviting others in the parish to join them, and indeed they have already done that. It is essential that the model is inclusive and representatives from other ethnic communities play a vital part of this parish.

This is a new venture; Pope Francis is always challenging us to do new things and to bring new life to our parishes. I see this group, priest(s) and people working together as a group of Stewards who are willing to work together with **ALL** parishioners to continue to build a vital, outward focussed faith community.

With all good wishes in these last days of Advent and every good wish and blessing for Christmas.

Yours sincerely in the Lord

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John A. Cardinal Dew". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John A Cardinal Dew

Archbishop of Wellington