



# The Catholic Parish of Whanganui

St. Anne's, St. Mary's and Holy Family Churches

## Social Justice in our Parish

In this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy we are called to "...significant efforts to enact Pope Francis's vision and witness of reaching out to those on the existential "peripheries" of society, in order to give a direct testimony to the Church's affinity and care for the poor, the suffering, the marginalized, and all those who need a sign of tenderness" (Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization, Vatican State 2015).

Our Parish Leadership decided to consider and review our collective efforts in those endeavours. These activities are augmented by those that parishioners support as individuals with time, goods and service, cash and prayer.

Currently, our Parish provides tangible support, or is closely affiliated (by reason of parishioners' commitment) to a number of organisations and fields of activity in Whanganui. This work is by no means insignificant; it is extensive, effective and often unheralded. At our Leadership meeting on Tuesday evening we were addressed by group of very generous parishioners who spearhead some of these.

Jane leads our own Parish Care and Concern group that provides fellowship and assistance to those within our own Parish community who are sick, grieving or going through hard times. Angela organises and cooks the Friendship Meal each Monday for around 30 often lonely or needy people. Kevin briefed us on the work and operation of St Vincent de Paul in the city. Whanganui is a "prison town" and Mary Anne gave a very moving account of the hardships prisoners and their families face and the work of the Prison Chaplaincy. Sr Litia reported on Marae Time which is in effect Whanganui's version of what Mother Teresa did in Kolkata. David has worked with others as our Hospital Chaplain for many years, visiting the sick in hospital. And our Parish and the Diocese financially support Christian Social Services Wanganui (CSSW) and the Foodbank.

Each spoke of the very real "needs of individuals and families" these groups were working to address. All commented that these organisations suffered from lack of resource, especially people to help and often cash. Nonetheless, their work does make a huge difference for the people they are helping and we can be proud and thankful of their works of mercy in our community.

Our discussions then focused on how we as a community can improve our collective effort in these endeavours. In the next few weeks a small group will address this issue in detail. How do we share what we do; what activities do we sponsor; are there structural and administrative functions that might enable us to do this work more effectively; how do we stimulate others to help; what are our succession plans? We encourage and pray that all parishioners involve themselves in this discussion and the actions which will follow.

After all, this work is at the heart of our endeavours as Christians and Catholics. It is in fact our responsibility.

Thank you.

*Fr Brian, Maree Adams, Norma O'Connor, Hamish Peters, Pam Hopper, Terry Sullivan, Fr Don Don, Jane O'Connell, Kevin Foley, David Scoullar, Gerard Lynch, Cath Daignault, Sr Litia, Mary Ann Elliot, Angela Bould, Paul Watkin, Jo Boulton*