

## Farewell

This is my last article, the final chapter in my appointment in Whanganui. I wish Fr Des, Pa Hancy and Fr Clancy, Fr Costello, and Fr McLaughlan all the best and good health.

All the best to Fr Don Don and Fr Roberts.

Fr Don Don came and is doing very well. Thanks Fr Don Don. I have treasured your work and ministry.

Thanks Fr John for your work in Ministry to the sick and your work at St Johns Ambulance.

Thanks to Pat Rhodes for his tireless and loving care of Fr Des. You are a real trooper. You have never let Fr Des down in weekday liturgies and with health issues. You are always there. Thank you.

We have had many changes in staffing, retirement, sickness, temporary staff, Prison Chaplains and new Leadership and Finance people.

I presume that sometimes I might have upset people, my way of ministering is different, however I discovered here that Brian need to be Brian. I needed to be authentic to who I am. A new Parish Priest will have different ideas of ministry, some will be happy, others will be upset. However, that is the strength of our Church. Catholic's don't normally walk away to find another Church; we accept those liturgical documents, that there is unity within diversity.

My journey here has been difficult, the debt, the maintenance issues, a leaking roof, a new sound system, and new heating system, the internet connection and an upgrade of the phone system. None of these projects were a burden on our debt, they were all paid for from different parishioners who just gave us a cheque anonymously.

Our Leadership Team and a few interested people came for two Leadership training sessions led by Judith Campbell. These proved helpful and some of the ideas have been implemented and some will be implemented next year.

With ministries- there have been many courses and sessions. To try to do common procedures at all Saturday and Sunday Masses. Unfortunately, some chose not to come. If they had come, they would be aware of the changes made.

We still have a few silos people who do not want change, and they fought in a passive way. I hope that they will embrace change in our Ministry, Leadership Teams have suggested.

Personally one of my faults was saying yes too many times, Request to the Bishop and from other Diocese's and Priest Committees, I certainly spread myself far too thinly ...I am a bit of a control freak and like my ducks in a row, I think I have to loosen up slightly.

We had the flood then the closing of St Anne's Parish Church. This was a difficult time for me, I was trying to pacify and also to provide an alternative venue for Sunday mass. The Anglicans were prepared to help and another person offered us a facility for free. However, it was not meant to be.

We have amalgamated Holy Family and that amalgamation took a while. It was originally set for 2001. It has been a very successful amalgamation and I think we have grown well together.

We rebranded using a common logo and a common letterhead, and requested the schools and other ministries to follow suit. Some have made changes, some have too much printed stationery that they need to use first. Hopefully in the future this will happen. This is ok as we don't like waste. A logo does not create ministry but it does reinforce what we are, one united as Catholic with a Capital C.

Many people ask what does the church do for the community? With a common Logo and statement on all letter heads and signage, people might start to realise that we are united and are doing much more than many other churches in our city, united working together.

There are many people who I would like to thank personally, but to name one is a dangerous practice. However, I take a risk in thanking Norma for her work at St Annes and St Marys. The organiser, knowing those who are sick and providing Pastoral Care and Liturgy preparation.

To Gerard Lynch. Thanks for 13 years of Parish Finance and Leadership Team involvement. You have helped battle some of the Parish finances, admin and been supportive in my health. Again your unselfish input and your families input are a credit to your family.

The Secretaries we have. All have had different talents and skills. All positive and the changes have been successful. We needed to use technology to its best and these changes have made it much easier for the Parish and admin.

So thanks to all who have been involved in our Parish Pastoral Area. I and the parishioners are indebted to you for kindness of time, money, assistance, medical and professional advice,

I believe that the parish is in very capable hands. I believe that many people have fronted up and assisted in dynamic change. We have become more aware of each other. We have increased people on our ministries list. We have excellent children's activity with Mainly Music, a strong Children's Liturgy, Mothers Group and Youth Club. We have a few more school children attending mass, but would love to see many more of our tagged personal. We have an excellent outreach to the elderly and we have a strong committed Care and Concern Group. Adoration hours have increased. There are many more Rosary Groups and more people are attending so that is terrific.

Our social outreach is amazing, when I inform people what we do most people are dumbfounded. A Parish can never have too many prayer groups. They are our diamonds, and all those who pray at home or school, you are part of that cluster. Thanks for your spiritual giftedness. Eucharist and Mass attendance is the most precious and rewarding gift we have. We celebrate and pray together and encourage others to participate. This is truly Catholic. It is the core all other ministries and they are diverse, they come from and we draw strength from the body and blood of Christ together at the table sharing.

I do not know my future; I am out of the country for many months. There is a strong spiritual aspect to my journey. Three retreats, 5 months of spiritual direction, a bit of study at Santa Clara University and some weeks at Taize and Fatima.

I will miss this pastoral area, and all people. I will miss the friendship, the laughter, the hospitality, the retreats, those receiving sacraments, friends and acquaintances.

God bless over Christmas, New Year, and the holidays.  
Please remember Christmas Mass and celebrate Jesus's birthday.

*Thank you*

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Love Fr Brian.