

Kia ora tātou

Recently I celebrated Mass in English at the Cathedral in Vientiane, the capital of Laos.

The congregation was particularly international. It is interesting how our circles of familiarity broaden when we travel – spotting a couple of Papua New Guinean families, I felt ‘at home’!

In that context, I was also struck afresh by the words we pray in the third Eucharistic Prayer: Listen graciously to ... this Family you have gathered here before you... whakarongo pai mai rā ki ngā inoi a tēnei whānau kua karangatia atu ki tōu aroaro.

Perhaps we become so familiar with those words, the awe they evoke begins to fade. In Christ, we are one family, one whānau, brothers and sisters in faith. So, anything that divides that unity – prejudice, exaggerated nationalism or tribalism, every form of exploitation or manipulation etc etc – wounds our Christian identity.

The Christ child born in Bethlehem is the universal saviour of the world. God enters human history to make of us one human family. This wondrous truth of Christmas is the foundation of our hope. Jesus reveals the purpose of our being made in the image and likeness of God. Peace and goodwill are possible. They are not so much achievements or goals, but fruits or effects of who we are in Jesus.

God bless you and your whānau this Christmas, including the sick or troubled wherever they may be. May we strengthen our resolve to be peace-makers in our families and communities and world.

And thank you for what you do to make our Diocese a vibrant family of faith, an iwi whakapono.

+ Charles