



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

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**TO ALL THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL
AND TO ALL MEN AND WOMEN OF GOOD WILL
COMMEMORATING THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II
*UT UNUM SINT – THAT THEY MAY BE ONE***

My Dear Brother Priests and Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

On 25 May this year, we marked the 25th anniversary of Pope Saint John Paul II's promulgation of his Encyclical Letter on the commitment to Ecumenism: *Ut Unum Sint – That They May Be One*.

This Encyclical reflects the Pope's deep longing for genuine Christian unity and his desire to continue the great work that the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council promulgated through the document *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism). This Council document expressed deep concerns about the grave scandal of divisions among Christians that greatly compromised the integrity of believers in witnessing to and proclaiming the Gospel as there is only "one flock and one Shepherd". Hence the Council declared that "*the task of bringing about Christian unity is a concern for everyone in the whole Church*".

While much work has been done in the universal Church toward Christian unity over the past six decades, there is still more that needs to be done. I am deeply committed to this great dream and vision for the Church here in New Zealand. Therefore, I am appealing to all of you to join with me generously in working together towards this goal and for continued growth in Ecumenism in this Diocese through a year-long commemoration of *Ut Unum Sint*.

To begin this year-long celebration, I invite you to join with Bishop Michael Gielen in an ecumenical service celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity to be held on **Sunday 21 June at St Columba Presbyterian Church in Botany at 5.00 pm.**

The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity for 2020 is taken from the Acts of the Apostles 28:2: *“They showed us unusual kindness”*. This theme reminds us of our baptismal promises reflecting on the immense kindness that Saint Paul and his companions received from the Maltese community after their shipwreck.

Also throughout 2020, the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission has organised the Ecumenical Talk Series in the form of regular monthly sessions, commencing Sunday 21 June.

Our year-long commemoration will end with an ecumenical service at **Christ The King Church**, Owairaka, on **Tuesday, 25 May 2021**. As the faithful People of God, we are commissioned to go forth, prepare and live the call to Christian Unity - *“that they may all be one”*.

I am encouraging every parish and religious community to play its part and to work together towards the goal of fostering growth in understanding and promoting unity among fellow Christians. Attached to this letter are suggestions that I have for some practical things you can do together.

I thank the Lord that he has led us to make progress along the path of unity and communion between Christians, *“a path difficult but so full of joy.”* I encourage the efforts of all to work for the cause of unity.

To this end, I say to you, the faithful of the Catholic Church in Auckland, and to you, my brothers and sisters of the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, in the words of the Apostle Paul:

“Mend your ways, encourage one another, live in harmony, and the God of love and peace will be with you ... The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

- 2 Cor 13:11,13

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✘ **Patrick Dunn**
Catholic Bishop of Auckland

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