



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

Bishop's Office – Te Taumata o te Pihopa Katorika

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To the People of the Diocese of Auckland

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

Kia tau te rangimarie ki a koutou. *Peace be with you.*

On Saturday we celebrate the birth of the Lord in the simplicity of the manger. It is a moment of wonder and awe as Mary, Joseph and the shepherds gaze on the Babe of Bethlehem, pondering and sharing the words spoken to each of them by an angel. In this way, they help each other enter the mystery of Emmanuel, the name that means God is with us.

God is with us – this is the mystery for each of us to discover in every moment of our lives, for Christ the Saviour has been born for us and he promises us that he will be with us until the end of time. Christmas is a time to ponder anew where Christ has been in our life this last year. It is a time where we are invited to allow him to come to birth to us in new ways.

As I prepare to move to Auckland as your new bishop, it is with profound gratitude for the ministry of Bishop Pat Dunn who has been your bishop for the past 27 years. He is a beautiful pastor who knows the mystery of Christ with him. He has spoken and lived Christ and he has recognised Christ in you, the people of the Diocese of Auckland. Let's pray that as Bishop Pat moves into retirement, the Lord may bring to birth new graces and blessings within him.

Can I also ask you to please pray for me as I promise to pray for you? As we journey together as the people of God of Auckland Diocese, may we ponder and share the mystery of God who is with us so that we might help and encourage each other in faith, in hope and in charity - that divine love - that helps us grow together in holiness so that we may become the people God calls us to be.

May your celebration of Christmas be blessed by the smile of the Christ child and the love for family and friends, and may 2022 bring new graces as we face the challenges of our days.

Yours sincerely in Christ the Good Shepherd

✠ Steve Lowe
Bishop of Auckland