



PRIESTLY FRATERNITY OF ST PETER

DISTRICT OF OCEANIA



Dear Faithful,

Easter 2025

Alleluia! Resurrexit sicut dixit! Alleluia!

On the Easter morning the women and the disciples were *Surprised by Joy* (C.S. Lewis). Their grief gave way to hope and then finally to joy. Pope Francis declared this year a Jubilee Year, with the theme 'Pilgrims of Hope'. It is worthwhile, then, this Easter to spend a little time reflecting on hope, and the signs of hope that we can perceive.

A thought that can help us understand the nature of hope is to contrast it to joy. Joy is the fruit of achievement whereas hope springs from an aspiration: joy comes from possessing a good, hope accompanies its pursuit. Hope is to joy what faith is to sight. Hope is our pilgrim's staff while we walk by faith through this life (2 Cor 5:7), en route to everlasting joy. When our hope is supernatural, having God for its object as well as its author, it is totally reliable, completely solid, strong enough to support us for the whole length of our journey in this world as pilgrims.

There are times, of course, when we need to nurture our hope or, in the words of St Paul, to hope against hope (Rom 4:18). In moments like these we turn our hearts and minds to the Pascal mystery, the heart of our creed and faith: for there we see life emerge from death, victory from defeat; there we recall that the Resurrection follows the Cross.

But our good God does not always leave us to nurture hope by and for ourselves. Just as He bids the fig tree put forth leaves to announce a change of season (Mt 24:32), so, when the time is ripe, He graciously gives us signs of hope, harbingers of progress. The presence and assistance of seminarians from our District in so many of our apostolates this Holy Week has surely been one such providential sign! Their presence among us has been not only a blessing but also a tangible sign of confidence in the future. A perceptible sign of hope for us all.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope then, let us heed the encouraging words of the Prophet: "Strengthen ye the feeble hands, and confirm the weak knees. Say to the fainthearted: Take courage, and fear not" (Is 35:3-4). Let us strive to nurture not only our own hope, but also that of our brethren. Let us support one another as well as your clergy and seminarians, mindful that material support is necessary, but moral and spiritual support much more so.

May the Risen Christ bless you and your families this Eastertide.

**Fr McCaffrey FSSP
District Superior**

Pilgrims walk in the footsteps of Pompallier

New Zealand Apostolate



The Footsteps of Pompallier Pilgrimage was organised by FSSP Auckland and took place from Saturday 26th October until Tuesday 29th inclusive, over Christ the King weekend.

Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pompallier, the Apostolic Delegate for Oceania and the first Catholic Bishop in New Zealand arrived in the Far North harbour of Hokianga on the 10th of January, 1838. His first abode in NZ was at the house of an Irish settler, Thomas Poynton at a site known as Totara Point. A small wooden house was made available for him and it was there that he celebrated the first Mass in the land. He immediately began, along with his confrères to learn the language of the New Zealanders, the Māori.

After some time he realised that the Hokianga harbour, although very large by size, was not a favourable destination for him to use as a base for evangelisation, due to its treacherous bar at its entrance and its heavily tidal nature. He found that 100 kms to the east was the Bay of Islands, with many excellent ports and easy access to the ocean.

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English settlers had already established a harbour at Russell which could accommodate ocean faring ships, and a short time later, he received an invitation from the Captain of a visiting French frigate, which had anchored in the Bay of Islands to visit. He therefore gathered the things



necessary for the celebration of Mass and made the overland journey from the West Coast to the East Coast.

One aim of our Footsteps of Pompallier Pilgrimage is to re-trace, in some way, the journey taken by the Bishop from one coast to the other. Although the Bishop would have used the rivers as far as they could take him by means of canoe, he would then had to have walked across the land before finding another river that lead to the east coast. At that time there were very few paths around the country as water was the main means of transportation, and most people lived close to the sea or rivers.

On the first day of our pilgrimage we met at the small town of Ōhaewai. Mass was celebrated in the local rugby club, and under heavy grey skies we departed for the first days walk. There were a few scattered showers crossing our path and the wind was increasing. As noon approached we arrived at the town of Okaihau. It was at this time that the heavens opened and heavy rain fell on us. We arrived at the local Catholic church where we were welcomed by the parish priest and some parishioners. Their kindness and food was very uplifting given the treacherous conditions. Eventually our route on the sealed road ended and we began on a section of gravel road on private farmland. We eventually found our destination where we were to camp the first night in a farm field. Setting up our tents in the rain was quite challenging and all were very happy when the rain abated and the cooked food arrived.

The Mass of Christ the King was celebrated in an open tent first thing on the Sunday morning, day two. After breakfast and packing our bags the pilgrims set off under blue skies. We were able to see the beautiful vistas of the upper reaches of the Hokianga harbour and its tributary arms as they reached into the interior. Although we had to

walk for a couple of hours on State Highway 1 the traffic was minimal due to its closure not too far north of where we walked. We had lunch at a local rural community centre and the hearty fare was much appreciated. The undulating terrain meant numerous steep climbs and descents, which, combined with the heat, left a number of walkers struggling. Eventually we arrived at the Te Karae Marae (meeting house), the closest Māori settlement to Totara Point. We were formally welcomed by the local leader (Kaumatua), after which a Mass was celebrated in the beautiful chapel of the Marae. The Te Karae Marae is proudly Catholic and we were welcomed as family. Accommodation was either in tents or in the Marae buildings, and everyone was happy to use the hot showers.

An early Mass was celebrated for the volunteers at the Marae on day three, and the pilgrims walked a short distance to Totara Point for a Mass at the site of the first Mass in the country. A small tent was set up for the Mass overlooking the harbour. For the rest of the day, the pilgrims walked along the shores of the Hokianga harbour and eventually arrived at the



Ngai Tupoto Marae which has a beautiful Catholic Church (Our Lady of the Assumption) on a hill overlooking the harbour. Once again they were welcomed there and camped in a most beautiful setting.

On day four, there was a majestic sunrise over the harbour and Mass was celebrated early in the church for the volunteers as the pilgrims had breakfast and packed up their tents. The last day was to be the shortest day of walking but had some large climbs along the way. The pilgrims were in very good spirits and sang heartily along the road as they made their way to their final destination. After a long descent they entered the church grounds at Mōtuti and were greeted by the local Māori sub-tribe who are the custodians of the precious relics of Bishop Pompallier. A traditional welcome ceremony was held and Mass was celebrated on the altar over the body of Bishop Pompallier. After Mass, the relics were brought into public sight and were able to be viewed by all present. It was a most fitting way to end 105kms of hard toil in the presence of the one who was the father of the Faith in New Zealand.

The Fraternity renews its consecration to Our Lady of Lourdes

Homily given at Lourdes by Fr Vincent Ribeton FSSP on the occasion of the consecration renewal

Father Superior General, dear confreres, dear faithful,

Peregrinantes in spem. In this Jubilee Year, we come to Lourdes as "pilgrims of Hope", convinced that "hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5). *Spes non confundit:* Pope Francis has chosen these words of the Apostle Saint Paul as the title of the Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee of the Holy Year 2025. St. Paul proclaims: "Have the joy of hope, stand firm in times of trial, be diligent in prayer." (Rom 12:12). "Storms," says the Pope, "can never prevail because we are anchored in the hope of grace, which is able to make us live in Christ, triumphing over sin, fear and death."

Spes non confundit. Hope does not disappoint. The entire history of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter illustrates this. In 1988, in fidelity to the promises of Our Lord Jesus Christ to his Church, our founders threw themselves confidently at the feet of the Successor of Peter. They acted under the guidance of the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. Rejecting the inevitability of breaking with the Holy See, they cast a supernatural eye over the painful events of the day, which inspired their conduct. Providence then allowed the Fraternity of St. Peter to be erected by the Holy See as a society of apostolic life of pontifical right, with the right to use the liturgical books in force in 1962 in the Latin Church. In addition to the patronage of St. Peter the Apostle, the founders wished to place the nascent Fraternity "under the aegis of Mary, Mother of the priest par excellence and therefore Mother of all priests in whom she forms her Son". This protection of the Virgin Mary was particularly evident in the founding of St. Peter's Seminary in the Marian shrine of Wigratzbad, Bavaria, where the Blessed Virgin is invoked as follows: Immaculate Conception, Mother of Victory, pray for us.

Following the Motu proprio *Traditionis custodes*, the Fraternity of St. Peter turned to the Successor of Peter with the same confidence as in 1988. The Superior General decided to consecrate the Fraternity of St. Peter to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in a solemn act on February 11, 2022. Eight days later, on February 19, 2022, the Fraternity of St. Peter received a letter from Rome: it contained the original Decree of Pope Francis, signed by his own hand, granting all members of the Fraternity of St. Peter the right to use the liturgical books in force in 1962, thus confirming the arrangements made by the Holy See in 1988.



It should be noted that the Papal Decree concludes as follows:

"Given in Rome, near St. Peter's, on February 11, on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, in the year 2022, the ninth year of my pontificate. Francis."

The coincidence of date between the act of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the signing of the Decree given by the Pope is striking. The Pope had not been informed of the forthcoming consecration, and here his Decree is given on the very day this act of trust in the Blessed Virgin is accomplished, on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11, 2022.

This is a providential sign, confirming our hope, inviting us to give thanks, and leading us today to come here to Lourdes on pilgrimage, to give thanks to the Blessed Virgin, and to solemnly renew the act of consecration accomplished three years ago.

On closer examination, there is a clear link between Lourdes and the Successor of Peter. The Virgin Mary certainly wants to strengthen our loyalty to the Vicar of her Son on earth. In



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fact, in Lourdes in 1858, at the time of Our Lady's apparitions to Saint Bernadette, this fourteen-year-old child heard the beautiful Lady reveal her name to her, in the local dialect: *Que soy era Immaculata Councepciou*.

Bernadette ran to the Curé of Lourdes, repeating the Virgin's words: "I am the Immaculate Conception".

What better confirmation of papal authority than this word of the Blessed Virgin four years after Blessed Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception? What the Pope had defined was ratified by the Virgin herself. What more eloquent way to reinforce the authority of the Successor of Peter? What better way to prepare the Church to welcome the dogma of "papal infallibility" at the First Vatican Council on July 18, 1870?

With the decree granted on her feast day, February 11, 2022, Our Lady of Lourdes has rewarded but also strengthened our love of the Church, our confidence in the divinely instituted Catholic hierarchy, and our loyalty to the Successor of Peter, who has so providentially confirmed all that had been granted to our founders.

On this feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Virgin Mary once again renews our love for the Church. Today, the Fraternity of St. Peter and all the faithful who are, in any way, attached to its apostolate, repeat this prayer to Our Lady: "Obtain for us, through your prayers, the graces we need as members of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, in order to be instructed and enlightened by its magisterium, to be zealous for the sacraments, and to be unfailingly loyal in unity with the Vicar of your Son."

The memory of the graces received on February 11, 2022 is forever inscribed in our souls, and we want to live deeply our bond of consecration with the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We want to imitate the dispositions of the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a heart that surrenders itself with trust, in the

humility and purity of spiritual childhood.

With the Blessed Virgin Mary, our souls turn this evening to her divine Son: we want to repeat to Our Lord with all the strength of our souls this FIAT that the first Mary pronounced: in this FIAT is contained all our faith and all our hope.

Mary's FIAT - *Fiat mihi secundum Verbum tuum*, Let it be done to me according to your word - brought about the Incarnation of the Word and salvation: Mary uttered this word - FIAT - and immediately He who is the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity, became incarnate. *Et Verbum caro factum est. Et habitavit in nobis*.

The act of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary renewed this evening anchors the Fraternity of St. Peter and each of our souls in Mary, Mother of Holy Hope, and is entirely directed towards her Son, our Redeemer, in fidelity to the Church, led by the Successor of Peter.

May Our Lady keep us faithful to her divine Son, and deign to grant the Holy Father the graces he needs to steer Peter's boat through the turbulent waves of this century.

2025 Retreats

Location: Hartzler Park, NSW
Contact: Fr Adrian Wee FSSP,
theoudoulos@gmail.com

MEN 19 – 23 May

The Seven Vices & Seven Virtues

WOMEN 7 – 11 November

Journey with St Bernard to
Union with God.

2025 European Pilgrimages

3 – 15 May - Rome

Contact Fr Wallace
fssp.pilgrimage@gmail.com

**7 – 9 June - France,
Chartres pilgrimage**

Contact Fr Sumich at
office@fssp.nz



For more information about the Fraternity of St Peter please visit our website fssp.net or contact us via email at enquiries@fssp.net or phone (02) 96884287