



ARCHBISHOP OF WELLINGTON

25th MArch 2025

To all Parish Priests and Parish Administrators

Dear Fathers,

I hope your preparations for Easter are going well.

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference has today released a statement urging Catholics across the country to redouble their support for the 2025 Bishops' Lent Appeal for Caritas.

The statement highlights the vital role that this appeal plays in sustaining Caritas' work and emphasises the need for generosity, particularly in light of declining donations in recent years.

"The money raised during this time is essential to the mission of Caritas. It provides much of the funding necessary for them to continue their life-changing work in Aotearoa, the Pacific and beyond," the statement says.

We ask you to draw attention to this statement within your parish, emphasise the need for generosity and share it as widely as you can. As a Church, we are called to put our faith into action, and this appeal is a tangible way for parishioners to uphold human dignity and show solidarity with those most in need.

Parishes have already demonstrated extraordinary generosity in previous years. We are deeply grateful for this kind of commitment and hope to see similar generosity across the country again this year.

You can read the full Bishops' statement below. A copy of the Statement will be forwarded to your Parish Offices for distribution among parishioners. Thank you for your ongoing leadership and support in bringing this appeal to life within your parish community.

Yours in Christ

+ P. B. Martin SM

✠ Paul Martin SM
Archbishop of Wellington

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Statement from Catholic Bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand

Every year in this sacred time, the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference asks Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand to run a six-week fundraising campaign on their behalf called **the Bishops' Lent Appeal**.

The money raised during this time is essential to the mission of Caritas. It provides much of the funding necessary for them to continue their life-changing work in Aotearoa, the Pacific and beyond.

This year's appeal is even more urgent than usual. The US government recently stopped almost all foreign aid. France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany and the UK have also cut their overseas development aid budgets. These decisions will cause significant suffering for those facing poverty, conflict, disasters and the effects of climate change. Your support is needed so Caritas can step in across the Pacific as donor governments withdraw.

Every year, individuals and parishes across New Zealand demonstrate great generosity by donating to this appeal. We hope that this will continue for this Lenten season.

The theme for the Lent appeal in 2025 is **Restoring hope: Your compassion in action / Kia puawai te Tūmanako**. Caritas' mission, as the Catholic agency for justice, peace and development, is of vital importance to us all. The **Bishops' Lent Appeal** is the best way to directly fund Caritas' work – supporting vulnerable communities around the world.

For the Catholic community, Caritas is how we help our brothers and sisters in need, upholding their human dignity through local partnerships grounded in Catholic social teaching.

Over the last few years there has been a drop in giving to Caritas, putting pressure on their ability to fund the programmes that serve those most in need. We ask that during this time of preparation, prayer and almsgiving, you make a special donation to the **Bishops' Lent Appeal 2025** at caritas.org.nz/lent or by using the envelopes provided at Mass.

This act of almsgiving is an act of generosity. It will mean so much to the people Caritas serves across our region.

In Christ,

- ✠ Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Auckland
- ✠ Richard Laurenson, Bishop of Hamilton
- ✠ John Adams, Bishop of Palmerston North
- ✠ Paul Martin SM, Archbishop of Wellington
- ✠ Michael Gielen, Bishop of Christchurch
- ✠ Michael Dooley, Bishop of Dunedin