



Hibiscus Coast Parish

Kia ora

November 09 2021

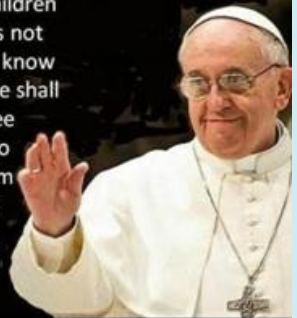
We hope you have enjoyed a Happy Diwali - 'The Festival of Lights' celebrated in Indian communities throughout the world. Diwali signifies the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil and the renewal of life.

The month of November celebrates **All Saints and All Souls**, and is a time when we fondly remember with great love those departed from us. In fact the entire month is home to celebrating numerous Saints. It seems appropriate to be pondering that **sainthood is not just for the privileged few. It could be a vocation for us all to aspire to!**

To be **SAINTS** is not a
PRIVILEGE for the **FEW**
But a **VOCATION** for
EVERYONE.

"Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure."
- 1 John 3:3

Happy All Saints Day!



Getting out of your comfort zone!

Reaching out, touching hearts and extending Community



In this issue, we share stories of parishioners who, in addition to working in our community ministries, also extend their reach and kindnesses to include many less fortunate and in great need, in other countries.

For one reason or another, these givers have been moved by a seemingly hopeless situation, or the outstanding work being achieved, and they wanted to be part of this. Often these charities would not exist but for the donations and support of kiwis around the world

If you would like to help on a one off or an ongoing basis, we encourage you to approach the charity directly and seek more information or contact the person noted.

Doctors without Borders

Written by Chris Wilson - PPC Chair

I have been aware of this organisation for some years and more recently read a book called "War Doctor" which I would recommend as an eye opener to the conditions that people live under in the world's hotspots.

This organisation goes into the worst of the war zones in the world and where there are natural disasters and health problems. They initially set up field hospitals and then support the community in mental health, covid response and food supply as well.

MSF is not a religious organisation as it chooses to be essentially apolitical and to treat every human who needs their help in the areas that they become involved in. This may mean, for example, that they would treat a wounded soldier who may have just committed an atrocity against another of their patients!

There are numerous New Zealanders working in all the different conflict zones around the world. There are stories about them and others in their magazines and on their website:

<https://msf.org.nz/> OR <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/>
0508 633 324



A Cow for Uganda

Written by Helen and Bernard Reinen

Life turns out rather different from what we expect sometimes, certainly for us!

Some years back, when we were much younger with much more energy, we received a phone call on an ordinary Monday morning, with the invitation to go to Uganda as part of a small team, to speak at conferences, and workshops. Our job would be to speak on marriage and relationships, at events that were organised by the Catholic church. We were rather overwhelmed by this invite but after much prayer and thinking, we figured that if God wanted us to go, He would certainly come with us. And **what can go wrong with God as your travel companion?**

As we travelled through Uganda and later Kenya, we saw poverty and hardship everywhere. In Soroti, a small town, we got talking to Fr Fabian who was trying to raise funds to feed 180 boys in the Seminary. We ended promising him a cow, to start a farm to feed the boys.

Back home we talked to friends and with their help raised the money, and the project "a cow for Uganda" had started. We spread our wings and because of many very generous people all through NZ we raised more money and the farm grew and grew. But the needs were everywhere. We helped a single lady with a sewing machine and she started a small shop and made a living for herself and another woman. We helped with an orange orchard, also an



income was created.

For the total sum of US \$500.00 a very poor person named Emanuel could build himself and his children a simple small home. The day he moved in, he said that he felt he was moving into heaven.

In Masaka we met a couple, Fred and Pauline who had big dreams for their community but no funds to make it reality. Again through the generosity of many Parishioners and people all over NZ we were able to help them with a block of land that they developed for growing vegetables, fruit, trees and raising goats. When we visited Masaka on a following trip, there were 20 people employed who were able to earn a living for their families.

Money goes a long way in Uganda and it was humbling to see how grateful the people were and how hard they worked to improve their circumstances.

We met many beautiful people whose faith was incredible, strong and joyful in spite of their difficult circumstances. Bernard and I went to Uganda four times and once to Kenya and we would not have missed it for the world. Staying in their huts, eating with them and listening to their stories, we came to love them. We are still in touch with some of them-one of them is our godchild Paul, born during a visit. At present we are helping two young women to become nurses. Once you lose your heart in Africa, part of you will always stay there!



EAST MERU COMMUNITY SCHOOL
“where every child deserves the chance to learn”

Written by Catherine Birt

This is a project the Birt family and friends have undertaken since 2008 when Catherine spent a year teaching at a school in Tanzania.



A teacher I worked with in Africa in 2008, Ian Horne, married one of the office staff, Mary, who came from a little village located up in the hills, between Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt Meru in Tanzania. Ian and Mary moved back to Mary's village where there was no school, no employment and children did not receive any formal education. Ian sold his house in England so together they could build a school. It has grown slowly year by year as they have been able

to raise more money.



The village, known as **Maruvango**, is located in the large Arusha region, approximately 2 hours drive from the nearest cities of Arusha to the west and Moshi to the east and is very difficult to access without a four wheel drive. The local economy is based entirely on what the land can produce.

I have recruited a small group of 5 family members and friends who each sponsor a child.

We try to raise a bit of extra money each year to help them with special projects such as building a village library, providing water systems and buying a vehicle. If you are interested, you can visit their website and find out more.

<https://www.eastmerucommunityschool.org/>

If you wish to contribute contact Catherine Birt crbirt@gmail.com



FATHER PETER GRAY (Retired)

100 CAMBODIAN REFUGEES ON THE COAST

The original article below was written by Judith Williams
(parishioner Puhoi/Warkworth) in 2016.

Father Peter is well known to most of us, as he has offered weekly Mass at St Francis for many years. He may even have visited you in your home. We wish to thank Father Peter for his years of kindness and care and prayers for us all. We especially love this story about his earlier work in the parish. We wish Father Peter good health and many blessings as he continues to enjoy retirement in Manly.

Father Peter Gray-quiet and almost shy, was the pastor of the new Hibiscus Coast parish of St John in north Auckland during the brief period when my home of Puhoi was part of that parish.

Father Peter, who arrived on the coast in 1979 and spent eight years there, is still

remembered for a personal initiative which at its height saw around 100 Cambodians, refugees from Phol Pot's regime and the infamous Killing Fields, assisted to make new lives in our area.

The NZ Government had agreed to take some of the refugees and of his own initiative – there was no consultation with the bishop, he recalls - this quietly modest man went to the Mangere refugee centre and arranged to bring Sonny and Lon Chen and their extended family to his parish. "We have this flat," he thought. "Could we put them up?" The flat referred to was at the rear of the new presbytery at Orewa. Later to become known as Peter's Place and a parish meeting centre, Sonny and Lon Chen's family was housed there. A bigger house, also at Orewa, accommodated other members of their extended family.

The Cambodians needed health assistance, language lessons and instructions in how to use electricity and modern household appliances. Parishioners, notably the late Val and Mick Bennett and my aunt, Alma Schischka, cared for the newcomers, helping them with shopping and doctors' appointments, while an arrangement was made with Orewa College's community education classes for them to have English lessons. Then they needed jobs, which Val and Fr Peter helped them find. The industrial suburb of Silverdale had an aluminium factory and sewing work was sourced for the women.

Father Peter's involvement lasted three or four years and then he left for Australia to do a counselling course. On his return the diocese had shifted him to Mangere Bridge parish. In his ministry as a priest Fr Peter Gray has notched up a record for service, in 17 parishes, and is now back living on the Hibiscus Coast, in retirement. His ideals and his interest in helping the homeless are still alive. He lives with others in a big house he owns, offering accommodation at a low rental. He enjoys visiting parishioners and encouraging them on their spiritual journey.

"It would be good if people can help the needy in some way and strive to do so," he says

When the Khmer Rouge started gathering up people from different cities and provinces and the killing had commenced, Sonny and Lon, who were ethnic Chinese, realising the danger, managed to get some gold together and made their escape, ending up in a United Nations camp in Thailand. From there they wrote to France, Germany, Australia and NZ, seeking sponsors. The Catholic and Methodist churches of the Hibiscus Coast responded and the United Nations paid part of their airfare.

The refugees were given NZ residency and six weeks' coaching at Auckland's Mangere refugee reception centre in basic English. When Fr Peter visited the centre he was impressed by what he saw and told his parishioners about the help needed.

Sonny settled into his new life quickly – becoming independent was his first goal. After eight years he moved to the North Shore, later, prompted by Fr Peter, buying a takeaway business at Massey, and since then becoming a property-owner, landlord and real estate agent. These Auckland Cambodian Chinese migrants are all very well integrated and the families have produced six doctors, four lawyers, and other members have impressive academic qualifications.

In NZ they found a caring country. The treatment by the western world of differing peoples was a great example. "Don't underestimate the influence of the good work you have done at that time," Sonny says.



From left: the late Val Bennett, Alma Schischka, Sonny Chen, Fr Peter Gray, Lon Chen

Hibiscus Coast Liturgy

If you would like to participate in a shared community liturgy at 9 am on Sunday mornings, email Ann McConachy amcconachy@outlook.com or Catherine Birt crbirt@gmail.com and they will send you a link to this zoom liturgy.

Hibiscus Coast Parish Zoom Mass

Fr Raphael invites all to join in our zoom Parish Mass every day.
Monday to Saturday 9:30 am and Sundays at 11 am:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88652662763>
[pwd=VnZEYngxb2VyRWUxbHdkRGpBcXNmQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88652662763?pwd=VnZEYngxb2VyRWUxbHdkRGpBcXNmQT09)
Meeting ID: 886 5266 2763 Passcode: Mass

Wednesday Meditation Group with Vincent Maire



Join the online Zoom Meditation Group – Wednesdays 5.30 pm:

<https://zoom.us/j/6444797955>
Meeting ID: 644 479 7955 Password: 302506

Click on the pictures below and check out our Parish Facebook pages!!!!



**Hibiscus Coast
Catholic Parish**
&
**Hibiscus Coast
Parish Youth**



Canathon 5000

Yippee! 4224 cans delivered and we're counting down to the 5000, with only 774 left to donate.

Want to help? Just call or text Louis 027 2748600 or donate directly to the Parish bank account 02-0100-0120966-017 with the Reference Canathon.

GET INVOLVED IN THE SYNOD!



Right now our greatest need as a parish, is that parishioners understand the importance of the Synodal process and how we as a parish community can contribute our submissions on what we want the Church to look like and how it should operate in the future. This link to the 'Synod Information Booklet' has the background to the synod, the different phases of the synod and ways in which we can respond:

<https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SynodInformationBooklet.pdf.pdf>

We have some parishioners willing to lead a small group and some who want to participate. Please call Theresa or email her and get involved: 09 426 5599 or email hbcparish@xtra.co.nz

Thoughts from Father Raphael

FIRE AT HIBISCUS COAST PARISH

A man who regularly attended family and group meetings suddenly, without any notice, stopped participating.

After a few weeks, one very cold night the leader of that group decided to visit him. He found the man at home, alone, sitting in front of a fireplace where a bright fire burned. The man welcomed the leader. There was great calm and silence.

The two men only watched the dancing flames around the logs that crackled in the fireplace. After a few minutes the leader, without saying a word, examined the logs that formed the fire

and selected one of them, glowing most brightly of all, and removed it to the side with a pair of tongs. Then he sat down again.

The host was paying attention to everything, fascinated. Before long, the lone log's flame subsided, until there was only a momentary glow and the fire soon went out.

In a short time what was previously bright light and heat, had become nothing more than a black dead piece of wood. Very few words had been spoken since the greeting.



Before preparing to leave, the leader picked up the useless piece of wood with the tongs and placed it again in the middle of the fire. Immediately, the piece of wood was rekindled, fuelled by the light and heat of the burning logs around it.

When the leader was about to leave and had reached the door, the host said: 'Thank you for your visit and for your beautiful lesson. I'll return to the group soon.'

Why is a group important in our lives?

Very simple:

*Because each member that withdraws takes fire and heat from the rest.

*It's worth reminding group members that they are a part of the flame.

*It's also good to remind us that we are all responsible for keeping each other's flame burning.

*And we must promote the union among us so that the fire is really strong, effective and lasting.

Keep the fire burning.

THE GROUP IS ALSO A FAMILY

It doesn't matter if sometimes we are bothered by so many messages, quarrels and misunderstandings.

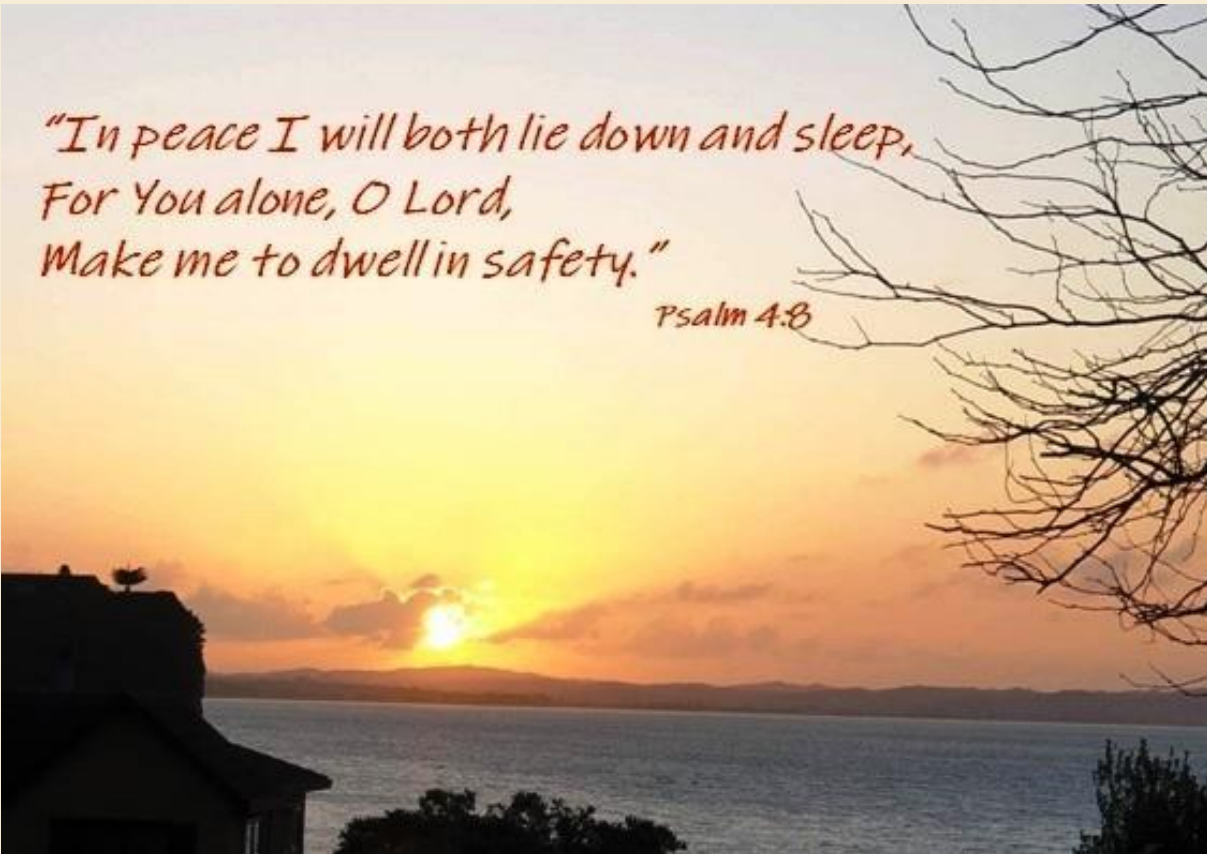
What matters, is to be connected. We are here to meet, message, learn, exchange ideas or simply to know that we are not alone.

Let's keep the flame alive. KEEP IT BURNING

Life is beautiful with friends and family.

Stay blessed, Stay together.

Together we are Strong.



*"In peace I will both lie down and sleep,
For You alone, O Lord,
Make me to dwell in safety."*

Psalm 4:8

Photo Credit: Maria Sousa

Thank you for your kindnesses, your understanding, and for your prayers and good deeds, until we see you next.

Father Raphael Lobo, your PPC team, and supporters.

To correct or update your email details and any changed phone number and address please email us your new details to hbcparishcomms@gmail.com
