



30 August 2018

Issue No: 183



From +John...

Dear Friends

It is Sunday evening in Dublin (26th August).

Pope Francis left here just a couple of hours ago after what seemed to be a very hectic two days for him. The people gathered for the World Meeting of Families loved his presence in the city, and especially at the Festival of Families in Croke Park last night - 82,000 of them; with much song and dance, family testimonies and wonderful practical words of wisdom from the Holy Father. About half a million gathered at Phoenix Park today for Mass. It was wet and cold, but that did not stop people giving the Pope a very warm welcome. Overall I have found the week of the World Meeting of Families to be a very positive experience, and despite the difficulties and challenges the Church is facing, people are resilient and full of hope.

At the conclusion of Mass this afternoon, Pope Francis met with the Irish Bishops. He said to them, quoting St John of the Cross, ***"It is in the dark night that the light of faith shines purest in our hearts. And that light will show the way to the renewal of Christian life in Ireland in the years ahead."*** Remember, this was a day when the Pope himself had been accused of cover up and his resignation was called for. He too knows what "dark nights" are. I had met him just a few moments before this, he looked very tired and his words were, as they always are "pray for me." I assured him that the people of New Zealand do pray for him, so please do that; not just when his name is mentioned at Mass but in other ways too.

Pope Francis went on to encourage the Bishops of Ireland. His words are worth reflecting on, because he really appreciates all that any of us do. He said, ***"So my word to you this evening is one of encouragement in these challenging times, so, persevere in your ministry as heralds of the Gospel and shepherds of Christ's flock. In a particular way, I am grateful for the concern you continue to show to the poor, the excluded and those in need of a helping hand...."*** The Pope thanks and encourages you too.

By the time you receive this newsletter I will have gone from Dublin to present talks in two dioceses. Please pray for me too.

I conclude with the first of the Prayers of the Faithful that was prayed at the Papal Mass today. ***"We pray for our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and all shepherds of souls. May they help us to look upon our loved ones as God does, and recognise in them the image of Christ our brother."***

With every blessing

+John

***Interesting fact - In the 36 hours Pope Francis was in Ireland he gave seven major speeches and three homilies.
He certainly needs our prayers.***

- **National Assembly of Diocesan priests**—10 - 14 September, Christchurch. Contact James van Schie 04 496 1747 or jvanschie@nzcbc.org.nz.
- **Ministry Formation Day** – ***"Rejoice and be Glad"*** - Tuesday, 18 September in St Bernadette's School Hall, 190 Naenae Road, Naenae. 10am start. This day is open to all Clergy, Lay Pastoral Leaders, Principals and DRs. For catering purposes please RSVP to Ann Williams by Tuesday, 11 September on a.williams@wn.catholic.org.nz or 04 496 5182.
- **Social Justice Week** - Enabling Communities, 9 - 15 September. Packs and information have been sent to all Parishes. For more information please contact Caritas—04 496 1742.
- **SEEK** (discernment event) 2nd September, 2pm-6pm. Includes Young Church Mass (Miha Maori) at 5pm, Home of Compassion, Island Bay.

"It is in the dark of night that the light of faith shines purest in our hearts." (St John of the Cross).

And that light will show the way to the renewal of the Christian life in the years ahead."

Pope Francis