

The UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE
Catholic Chaplaincy Annual Report 2023

As it should be expected, and to quote an American Cardinal, “The Mass is what Catholics do”... I am glad to see that in fact the Sunday Mass remains the centre of our activity on campus. There is a sizeable number of regular attendants, both from the University and some other visitors who choose to join us here. Also some students attend frequently the weekday Masses that I celebrate at the Clyde Street Chapel from Monday to Friday at 6:45am.

The first Sunday Mass this year was quite special, with a large participation and dinner to follow. Many of those who attended were newly arrived students who had learned about the chaplaincy through WaiCath at Clubs Day.

The second activity in importance is our Wednesday talk during cultural hour. This year, we have started a series on Moral Theology, which will take us through the right exercise of freedom and exploring the implications of each of the 10 Commandments. So far, the attendance has been of around 5 or 6 students to each session.

The flow of visitors who come seeking advise, encouragement or simply to share significant moments of their spiritual journey, continues.

We also tried to make some contribution to the recent event organised by the Auckland based think tank called “Thinking Matters” in collaboration with TSCF. The presenter was Physicist Dr Luke A. Barnes, from Western Sydney University who illustrated how science can offer indicators that point towards a Superior Mind that has made possible the impossible chances of a World like ours. Some of the WaiCath members attended along with a few classmates.

Looking back into 2023, I would highlight the Photo Exhibition about the “Camino de Santiago”, with the works of the Chilean photographer Maribel Pottsock and our own Andrew McKean. The week long event included a presentation by the artists and by myself explaining the historical and spiritual meaning of pilgrimages in general, and the one to Compostella in particular. The initiative was a great success.

On occasion of the festivity of Corpus Christi, in May, we organised the traditional overnight vigil in the Chapel. People came to spend time in prayer, starting on a Friday evening until 7am, when we finished with the Mass.

I would close by noting that through 2023 several non catholic students of different nationalities were coming to see me regularly: some of them were experiencing for the first time the freedom that characterises a society founded on Christian roots.

Fr Juan Pedro Maldonado
Catholic Chaplain
1st April 2023