



# **Te Huinga o ngā Pīhopa Katorika o Aotearoa**

*New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference*

**PASTORAL STATEMENT | May 22, 2025**

## **Fighting Hopelessness in the Jubilee Year of Hope**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In this Jubilee Year focused on Christian Hope, it is a source of great anguish that many parts of our world are at war. Rather than hope, we see in the eyes of women and men, and most distressingly in the eyes of children, a sense of great hopelessness.

Pope Leo XIV has immediately taken up the task of Popes throughout history who speak up for the cause of peace, and for the cause of justice.

In his first Sunday address in St Peter's Square, Pope Leo spoke about ongoing death and violence in Israel and Gaza, in Ukraine and the recent conflict in India and Pakistan. We see, too, warfare in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Sudan and in Myanmar, among other parts of the world.

Among those conflicts, there is a unique pain in seeing the place of Our Lord's birth, life, death and Resurrection torn apart by war, by famine and by destruction.

Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, pronounced and upheld the dignity of every human person. We watch in horror as people's dignity and their basic human rights are demeaned or destroyed in the places where Our Lord walked and preached.

War and violence, especially in the context of civilian casualties and insecurity, cannot be wiped away as a problem "over there", one far from our shores.

We are appalled by the suffering caused by military and political leaders who seem indifferent when sacrificing the lives of innocent people. We urge all world leaders to work for a true peace in ending these conflicts.

Where dignity and rights are trampled upon, we all have a duty to react with hearts of compassion and closeness to our brothers and sisters. Where peace and stability are elusive or seemingly unattainable, our prayers are all the more urgent and necessary.

We implore the Catholic faithful through Aotearoa New Zealand to join us in praying this section from Pope Francis' prayer for peace:

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation. In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words 'division', 'hatred' and 'war' be banished from the heart of every man and woman. Lord, defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands.

May the glimmers of hope – a ceasefire, a commitment to talks – that we see be transformed into beams of peaceful light, carried by the prayers and actions of men and women of goodwill, seeking the peace that Christ sought to bring into our world.

In Christ, the Prince of Peace.

+Stephen Lowe  
Bishop of Auckland

+Michael Dooley  
Bishop of Dunedin

+Paul Martin SM  
Archbishop of Wellington

+Michael Gielen  
Bishop of Christchurch

+John Adams  
Bishop of Palmerston North

+Richard Laurenson  
Bishop of Hamilton