



# Mercy Parish - Whanau Aroha



## Ngā mihi o te Kirihimete me te Tau Hou

### It is not all about Covid!

I read in the Dominion Newspaper last week a suggestion that 2021 was probably the worst year since 1945. I think we have all struggled in one way or another. The constant presence of the Covid-19 pandemic has made it such a challenging year. As the year comes to an end, it seems to me to be important that we remember that there was a great deal more happening than Covid-19. This isn't just about putting on rose-tinted glasses, but rather upholding a spirit of hope and centring ourselves on the divine love revealed to us in the birth of Jesus.

When we experience disappointment, as we all have this year, it is possible that we become cynical, no longer expecting or noticing goodness. Hope, on the other hand, detects the presence of a larger life within, and this life is moving forward and nothing is able to stop it. This life is the life of Jesus and we each carry his life within. As such, the mission of Jesus has continued in all sorts of ways and there have been blessings and grace moments throughout the year, moments that may have receded into the background with everything else going on. I know this list won't be exhaustive, but here are some of the things that I have been thinking about and giving thanks for these past weeks.

The community Christmas meal held tonight.

The St Francis of Assisi Trust and all the volunteers who prepare meals, cut firewood, build community and work to stand alongside those struggling with poverty with practical responses to hardship.

Our Monday lunch community and volunteers

Our livestream Masses, funerals and weddings and the ability to prayerfully connect with those far away.

Our Community Garden and all those who tend our gardens so faithfully.

The environment we have created at St Patrick's – the Community Centre, playground, green space and a basilica that is striking and inviting. Thank you to all who keep our place looking so good: A special thanks to Butch Delaney who has for many years tended the lawns and to Marion Simons and Margaret O'Sullivan who spend hours in the Church most Saturdays preparing floral arrangements and banners.



The wonderful witness of our elderly and sick parishioners and the prayerful, loving ministry of our Ministers of Holy Communion.

The care that surrounds those who grieve and the inspiration of the lives of those we have commended to God's eternal embrace this year.

Our Schools and their creativity, compassion and dedication during an incredibly disruptive year.

Our children and their witness.

Celebrating Confirmation which was cancelled, then on again, off again and then back on again.

The Synod and the hopes and aspirations for our Church as we journey together and the promise of becoming a Church that listens more attentively to the Holy Spirit whose voice can be heard in the lived faith of every baptised person.

Finally, I love living in Dunedin South and being a part of the wider community. I enjoy the camaraderie and support of the other Church ministers, I value being part of community networks and I love the everyday expressions of goodness in the everyday lives of this community of Dunedin South.

Wishing you all a very blessed Christmas

Fr Gerard

"Let justice descend, O heavens like dew from above, like gentle rain let the skies drop it down. Let the earth open and salvation bud forth; let justice also spring up!" –  
Isaiah 45:8



Our Monday lunch volunteers

"Dear brother, dear sister, if your hands seem empty, if you think your heart is poor in love, this night is for you. The grace of God has appeared, to shine forth in your life. Accept it and the light of Christmas will shine forth in you."

Pope Francis