

12 September 2018

CATHOLIC PRIESTS GATHER FOR “RENOVATION”

Nearly 200 Catholic priests with a combined 4,842 years’ experience from throughout New Zealand are in Christchurch this week.

Together with their bishops, they meet to renew their commitment to priesthood in an informal gathering as they explore what it means to be a priest in an unprecedented time of change.

Assisting discussion will be Canadian priest, James Mallon, whose writings and presentations are helping to re-ignite parish life internationally.

Fr Mallon will draw from his own pastoral experience, leading the four-day assembly with a focus on what he calls “Divine Renovation”.

Dramatic social change, even since the dawn of the present century, is demanding new models of ministry and new ways of engaging with an increasingly secular society.

“It is the Lord’s desire to breathe new life into his people, the Church,” says Fr Mallon.

This week’s programme provides priests serving the Church in Aotearoa-New Zealand, with a forum to openly reflect on and discuss their own experiences in ministry and how pastoral life might be “renovated”.

The priests appreciate that they meet in the shadow of the sexual abuse scandal that has resurfaced around the world. While sharing the shame and horror of this, they see their time together as an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to protect the vulnerable and to live their priesthood with integrity, compassion and joy.

The choice of Christchurch for this assembly – which is held every five years – was to support the local priests and people, still recovering from the 2011 destructive earthquake.

ENDS

Media enquiries: Amanda Gregan Tel. 021 9399 575