

LETTER FROM A PARISHIONER

Please find below an anonymous letter received from a parishioner during the week.

Rev Monsignor Trevor Murray,

I am a little bit mystified as to what you are trying to achieve with the Maori Mass. Comprehensive communication is essential in navigating our way through life, and this includes our religious devotions. Inserting incomprehensible extracts, into the liturgy of the Mass, limits the ability of the majority of the congregation, to follow the ceremony.

Sometime, in the middle of last century, the church, gave permission to replace the latin Mass with the language of the congregation in order to achieve full comprehension. This was a welcome alteration, and enabled the congregation to fully participate.

God once used the, Splitting of Tongues, as a punishment. What has the St Patrick's congregation done to deserve the Mass to be said in Maori.

God Bless.

Response

Despite the disappointment of receiving the letter above (especially in the light of the work of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) to create a welcoming, inclusive church environment), the Council makes the following points:

1. The author of this letter has the right to voice his or her grievances, however, stand behind what you've written – don't hide behind anonymity.
2. The word "Catholic" means "universal" – the Catholic Church embraces all peoples: white, black, brown – all peoples.
3. In 2017, when the PPC decided to promote the Māori Mass on the fifth Sunday of the month (there are only four during the year) it published the reasons for doing so in the **Parish Plan 2018** which was distributed to all parishioners and uploaded to both the parish website and parish app. The Council recommends that the author take the time to read the **Parish Plan 2018**.
4. While the first Maori Mass in Taupō was celebrated on 29 April 2018, it has been celebrated monthly in Turangi for at least 25 years.
5. If the author of the letter would like to look around at the Sunday congregation in Taupō, he or she will see that for the majority of the parishioners present at Mass, English is NOT their first language; more often than not it is their second, third or sometimes fourth language.

6. For Catholics who travel the world and attend Mass in different countries and in different languages they will often say, “No matter where you are in the world, even if you do not speak the language – the Mass is the Mass; it’s familiar to us. We feel at home”.
7. The genius of the Mass is that its structure and its rituals are the same in Taupō as in Timbuktu, even if the language is unknown to the hearer. Catholics know when the *Liturgy of the Word* is being celebrated; they know when the *Liturgy of the Eucharist* is being celebrated; the solemn consecration of the bread and wine into the *Body and Blood of Christ* is immediately recognisable, even if they do not understand the words spoken by the priest.
8. The Maori Mass is but one of a number of initiatives the PPC has introduced in our parish. Another is the deliberate inclusion of our school children in the ministries at Mass. Why? So that they might know that they are welcome at the Table of the Lord and that they have a place there.
9. It is a fact that the children and grandchildren of many of our senior parishioners no longer practise their faith. This is a constant heartache for all concerned. The PPC has seen this as an opportunity to be proactive and to find ways to reach out to those who are Catholic but no longer attending Mass. The Church calls this activity **Evangelisation – being a Missionary Church.**
10. Pope Paul VI, Pope St John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have all stressed the absolute importance of Evangelisation – this is the Mission of the Church – this is our truest identity.
11. Here in this parish, we are simply trying to do what Pope Francis and his immediate predecessors ask of us – to be a **Missionary Church.**

Monsignor Trevor P. Murray
Parish Priest