



Archbishop of Wellington

PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

14 November 2019

Dear priests and lay pastoral leaders

Thank you for all the proposals which I have received in response to the memo I sent to you in February about parish property assets, and specifically churches and presbyteries.

I am very aware that the process of preparing your proposals has not been easy, and that in some parishes it has been profoundly unsettling. You have had to deal with parishioners upset by the possibility of change, and I know this has taken a personal toll. You and the people have responded in your very different circumstances to Pope Francis' call in *Evangelii Gaudium* (n 25): "I hope that all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are...Throughout the world, let us be permanently in a state of mission."

Between now and early February I will study and reflect upon the proposals. I may seek clarification or additional information from you during this time. My approach will be pastoral, looking at the possible effects on people of the changes being proposed. I will also look carefully at how one parish's proposals might interact with those of neighbouring parishes, and the implications the proposals have together for the whole Archdiocese.

In February and March I will consult with my advisory bodies about the proposals. These bodies are the Council of Priests, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Te Kahu o te Rangi, and the Board of Administration. After Easter, which is in mid-April, I hope to be in a position to advise parishes of my response to the proposals, or to ask that further steps be taken, for example, discussion at regional levels in the Archdiocese.

When I consider the proposals I will not be making a decision to "approve" them. My response to a proposal will be expressed as "no objection", "further work needed" or "opposed". It is the parish's decision to actually proceed with a proposal if I have no objection. Once the parish decides to proceed, its decisions are subject to the Archdiocesan norms and approval processes.

While the proposals were being worked on in parishes there has been a hold on property proposals being presented to or decided by the Board of Administration. This hold continues until I have made a response to all parishes and have notified you that the hold has been lifted. This hold includes property decisions which may already be in the early stages of the Board of Administration's processes.

We have not yet come through this difficult and unsettling process, but I would like everyone to now put aside differences and concerns and focus together on the great liturgical seasons and feasts of the next few months - Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. In doing this we have the opportunity to encounter Jesus and one another more deeply and be refreshed in our commitment to both community and mission.

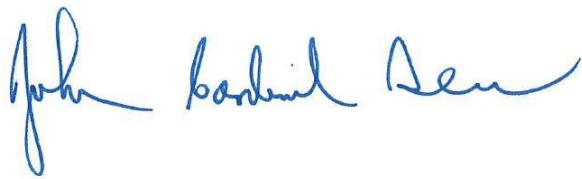
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Please share this letter with the groups in your parishes which have been working on the property reviews, and with all parishioners if you wish. There will be a similar article in the December Welcom.

With prayers and thanks for your work

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Cardinal Dew". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long horizontal stroke.

✠ John A Cardinal Dew
Archbishop of Wellington