

21 July 2025

Dear members of School Boards, Principals, and all associated with Catholic schools in Aotearoa New Zealand,

We are writing to offer some guidance on the important question of charitable giving to support worthy causes. We are aware that a vast number of organisations carrying out excellent work come to our schools each year seeking assistance. We hear from you regularly about the challenge of determining which of these causes you should encourage students to support.

The Catholic Church has two major organisations that carry out important charitable work in various ways.

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is part of the second-largest humanitarian network in the world. It works with communities, including parishes and schools, to overcome poverty, protect lives and relieve suffering. It also receives donations to support communities affected by disasters around the world. It is an official agency of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference.

MissioNZ and MissioAotearoa are part of the global organisation Pontifical Mission Societies, which is the Pope's own charity. The Pontifical Mission Societies is a network of four distinct societies, each with its own focus, but all united in one common mission to support the Pope in reaching out to communities and young churches through a network of charity.

We ask that your charitable efforts each year include significant support for Caritas and MissioNZ and that these charities take precedence over others. Caritas coordinates the annual Bishops' Lenten Appeal, which has traditionally been well supported. MissioNZ has a special focus during Mission Month in October each year.

Promotion of these initiatives can be done in creative ways, including through partnerships between students and teachers, supported by the resources Caritas and MissioNZ provide. Appropriate engagement with these campaigns will help embed Catholic Social Teaching in the life of your school.

We are also mindful of local collaborations with the Society of St Vincent de Paul and "Little Vinnies". The Society is embedded in the life of the Church across the world, and carries out great work within local communities.

If other organisations' campaigns can also be managed within your plans, that is the school's decision. However, we note that those organisations have wider community support, and we would not want to see the prominence of Caritas and MissioNZ diminished.

We are thankful for your cooperation with this request. We are confident that Caritas and MissioNZ will happily work with you to support their efforts throughout the Church in New Zealand, including our school communities.

In Christ,

- ✠ 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