



17 December 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

Kia tau te rangimarie kia koutou

At midnight tonight, Pope Francis will announce that he has accepted Bishop Pat Dunn's resignation due to the deteriorating condition of his eyesight and that he has appointed me as his successor as the Bishop of Auckland.

It is with real sadness that I announce this to you as I have come to love the people of this Diocese and the Diocese itself. I had previously expressed to the Nuncio that I was happy in Hamilton. I will be leaving Hamilton with a heavy heart but with a heart full of memories of people I have met and have come to know and love.

On the 1st of December the psalm of the Mass was "The Lord is my Shepherd," a psalm that, as you know, has a lot of significance for me. Around noon on that day the Nuncio phoned me and told me the Holy Father wished to appoint me as Bishop of Auckland.

Some 25 years ago, before I was ordained as a priest, I met with my then bishop, Bishop John Cunneen of Christchurch. I reminded him that I would promise respect and obedience to him at the ordination. "For me, respect means I will always tell you what I think and obedience means I will always do whatever you ask and I hope you will always feel free to ask me to do anything." I repeated the same conversation with his successor, Bishop Barry Jones. Now, once again, I have been asked to respond to the needs of the Church and trust again that the Lord shepherds us in and through his Church. And so I humbly accepted the Holy Father's invitation to this new service he has entrusted me for the people of God.

Almost seven years ago, at the dinner that the priests gave me before I was ordained as the Bishop of Hamilton, I said to the priests, "I don't think I have the talents I need to be your bishop, but then I don't need to because all us together have the talents for us to be people of God that God calls us to be."

It has been a true privilege to be your bishop. I have learnt so much from so many of you and I thank you for the support, encouragement and challenge you have given to me to help me live my vocation in response to the Lord's call to me.

I hope in some small way that I have helped you in your vocation as part of the holy people of God, as Christ himself shepherds us. I would like to think that we have strived to join together as the one people of God, that we have been on the journey together, that we have grown in our capacity of living no longer for ourselves but for Christ.

For those of you who I have hurt in any way, please accept my sincere apologies. This is never my intention.

Finally, can I ask, that we continue to pray for each other on our journeys. Also, let's pray that the Holy Spirit will guide the process that will lead to the appointment of a new shepherd for the Diocese of Hamilton.

Yours sincerely in Christ the Good Shepherd

+ *Steve Lowe*

✠ Steve Lowe
BISHOP OF HAMILTON



**TOGETHER
ON THE JOURNEY**
LIVING NO LONGER FOR OURSELVES BUT FOR CHRIST