

## Holy Family and Our Lady of the Bays Parish

Dear Parishioners,

It is with great joy, excitement, and gratitude that we celebrate an important milestone in our amalgamation journey. After a prayerful process of reflection, consultation, and discernment - following the decision of Archbishop Paul - our new parish across the Nelson-Tasman region will be known as:

### St John Paul II Parish

In his letter to Fr Andrew confirming the name, Archbishop Paul wrote to commend the process that was followed, acknowledging that “these are not easy things to do well” and affirming that a very good result was achieved through the discernment process. He further expressed appreciation for the consultation undertaken with the parish communities and for the leadership shown throughout.

Archbishop Paul reflected that when choosing a parish name, it is helpful to have a saint “who people are able to identify with, and whose life and example can provide a foundation for reflecting the mission of the Church in our time.” For this reason, he determined that Saint John Paul II would be a very appropriate name for our new parish. He also highlighted St John Paul II’s courage, witness, teachings, and leadership during times of great change in the world and in the Church, whilst also acknowledging the special connection we have through the altar at St Peter Chanel Church in Motueka, which adds a meaningful dimension to our new parish name. We are deeply grateful for Archbishops encouragement and for the affirmation of the journey we have travelled together so far.

This past Sunday’s Gospel about the Transfiguration – when Peter, James and John see Christ revealed in his radiant glory – is a fitting example for our amalgamation process. Jesus was the same Lord they had always known, yet on the mountain they were given a deeper glimpse of who He truly was and the path that lay ahead. In a similar way, our communities remain the same communities of faith, with the same love for Christ and commitment to His mission, yet in becoming St John Paul II Parish, something new is being revealed and formed among us. We are being gathered together with renewed purpose and identity, and like the disciples, we may not see the whole journey ahead, but we trust that the Lord who has led us this far will continue to guide us as we move forward together.

As we celebrate achieving the milestone of naming our new parish, we now look ahead to the next steps along the amalgamation pathway – the Amalgamation Mass and the continued progress towards building a new church.



### **Amalgamation Date and Celebration Mass**

Our official date of amalgamation will be **Wednesday 1 April 2026**, coinciding with the start of the new financial year. From that date, we will formally become **St John Paul II Parish**, and several practical updates will take place, including changes to our newsletter, website, community email addresses, and planned giving envelopes.

We will then gather to celebrate at a special Amalgamation Mass on **Sunday 19 April 2026 at Garin College**. This will be a historic and joyful occasion for our entire Nelson-Tasman Catholic community, as parishioners from across all seven churches in our region come together as one parish family for the first time under our new name. Further details will be shared via the weekly newsletter, but for now, please mark this date in your calendar and plan to join us for this significant moment in our shared journey.

### **New Church Progress**

Work also continues on planning for the proposed new church in the Richmond-Stoke area.

The first phase of this journey focused on identifying and securing a suitable site. This began with the formation of the New Church Exploratory Group in May 2024, and involved evaluating several potential options, including discussions and negotiations with Saxton Field and Garin College. In September 2025, agreement was reached with the Garin College Board to secure the building site – a process that took approximately 16 months.

We are now in the next stage – exploring all possible avenues of funding and obtaining the Archbishops formal approval to continue with the project. Once approval has been granted, a comprehensive due diligence process will follow. This will include consultation with parishioners, Garin College, and the Archdiocese; investigation into the physical and legal characteristics of the site; confirmation of a design brief; concept design work and its development through to detailed design; council consenting; tendering; and finally, construction.

As you can appreciate, there are many stages involved in this process, and the potential number of unknown factors could either extend or shorten the timeline. Noting that securing the site required 16 months, it is reasonable to expect that the full planning and development process will also take some considerable time, however we remain committed to careful stewardship and thorough consultation so that the new church that is eventually built will faithfully serve our parish for generations to come.

### **Continuing the Journey**

The announcement of our new name, the securing of the new church building site, and the upcoming Amalgamation Mass all mark significant milestones in our journey. While each of these milestones are important, we recognise that this process is not merely administrative, but more importantly, spiritual. Considering this, we encourage you to continue praying our Amalgamation Prayer at Mass and at home. May the Holy Spirit continue to unite us, strengthen us, and guide us as one parish family.



## The Amalgamation Prayer

Loving God,  
You call us to be one family in Christ.  
We thank You for the blessings You have poured out  
on Our Lady of the Bays Parish and Holy Family Parish.

As we prepare to journey together in faith,  
fill our hearts with openness, patience, and hope.  
Help us to listen to one another with respect,  
to honour the gifts of each community,  
and to embrace the new future You are creating among us.

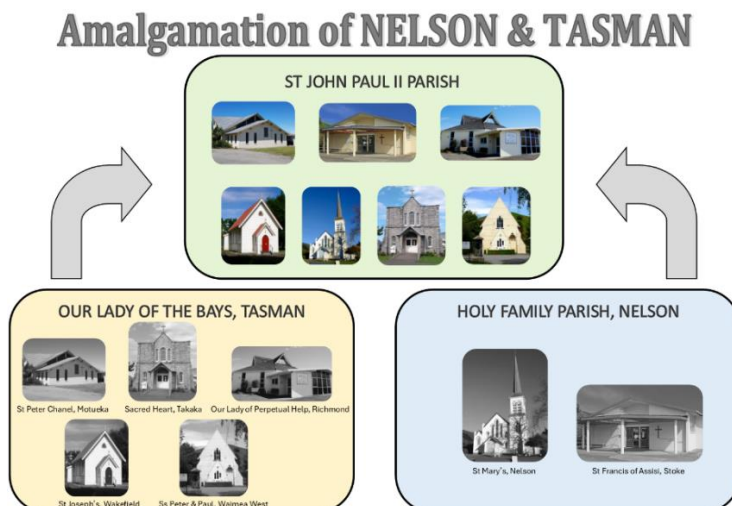
Send us Your Spirit of unity and peace,  
so that together we may grow stronger in faith,  
more generous in service,  
and more joyful in our mission.

Mary, Mother of the Church,  
and Saint Joseph, protector of families,  
pray for us as we walk this path together.  
Saints Peter and Paul, pray for us.  
Saint Francis of Assisi, pray for us.  
Saint Peter Chanel, pray for us.  
Saint John Paul II, pray for us.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

With gratitude and blessings,  
**The Parish Amalgamation Committee**

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*For the foreseeable future, Mass times and venues will remain as they currently are*

