



TE PĪHOPATANGA O AOTEAROA

Mō te Oranga Ake o te iwi, o te ao

*Ngā inoi me ngā whaiwhakaaro kua whakaritea
hei inoitanga hei whakaarotanga
mō Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke katoa
atu i tēnei wā tae atu ki te wā e tū ai te Rūnanga Tohu
ki te whiriwhiri i te Pīhopa hou.*

20 July 2026

HE KARANGA KI NGA MEMA ME NGA WHAKAMINENGA A TE HUI AMORANGI KI TE MANAWA O TE WHEKE

For the next three weeks, from the 20th of July to the 9th of August 2026, members and congregations in Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke are humbly called to enter in to a time of prayerful consideration and reflection in the lead up to formal nominations being submitted for confirmation before the upcoming Electoral College to be held in October.

Karakia and reflections based on the appointed Gospel readings for each Sunday during this time are provided here as a resources to support congregations in their collective prayerful consideration.

We invite congregations to share these karakia and reflections as part of their Sunday Service.

Kia tau nga manaakitanga a te Atua aroha ki a koutou, ki a tatou katoa hoki.



The Most Reverend Dr Donald Steven Tamihere
Te Pihopa o Aotearoa
Commissary for the Electoral College

HE INOI MO TE MAHI TAPU A TE RUNANGA TOHU O TE HUI AMORANGI KI TE MANAWA O TE WHEKE

E te Ariki, nau nei te ki ko koe hei hoa mo tau iwi whakapono i nga ra katoa, a, ki te mutunga ra ano o te ao:

Titoro atawhai mai inaianei ki tenei wahi o tahau Hahi. Tohutohungia hoki te Runanga Tohu o tenei Hui Amorangi i te mea e anga ana ki te whiriwhiri i tetahi pononga pai hei hepara mo tenei wahi o tahau maara waina, kia whiriwhiria ai ko tahau e pai ai, he hepara pono e kakama tonu ana ki te kauwhau i te Rongopai, ki te tautoko i te mea ngoikore, ki te whakamarie i te ngakau iro, ki te rapu i te mea ngaro, ki te whangai i au tangata ki te kai i te wa e tika ai.

Whakarongo ki a matou, e te Ariki, e Ihu, e ora na e kingi tahi na me te Matua, me te Wairua Tapu, a, ake ake,

Amine.

TE WATAKA ME TE TUKANGA A TE RUNANGA TOHU
TIMELINE FOR THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE PROCESS IN
TE HUI AMORANGI KI TE MANAWA O TE WHEKE

2026

Te Manawa o Te Wheke

1 Jul

Formal Notice of Vacancy
Confirmation of Commissary
Full timeline released

20 Jul – 9 Aug

Call to Prayer
Time of prayer & reflection
3 weeks including Sundays 26 Jul, 2 & 9 Aug
Reminder that nominations will be open from
9am Mon 10 Aug to 5pm 19 Aug

27 Jul

Nomination & screening forms available (allows 2 weeks prep)

As approved by Te Runanganui:

Nominations must be made collectively (local or regional groupings such as pariha, rohe, etc) and endorsed (Safe to Receive) by current licensing Bishop.

Nominations must be sent to the Commissary within the time-frame and must include all of the information that has been requested” (EC Process p7)

Nominations will include the cost of screening (med & psych checks, plus vetting). These will be mandatory and the costs will be borne by the candidates and nominating parties

9am 10 Aug

Formal Call for Nominations

5pm 19 Aug

Nominations Close

20 Aug-10 Sep

Vetting Process Screening and results

11 Sep

Candidates announced
 Electoral College membership confirmed
 3 weeks until Electoral College

2-3 Oct

Electoral College

Ordination Dates TBC

TE HUI AMORANGI KI TE MANAWA O TE WHEKE

Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke is one of five episcopal units that comprise Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa, the Maori Anglican Church in Aotearoa-New Zealand. It serves the region extending south from the Bombay Hills, near Auckland, through to Taumarunui (The King Country); from the Coromandel Peninsula to Tauranga and on to Kauaetangohia (East Cape); including Ruatoki, Rotorua, Taupo, Turangi, Hamilton, Matamata and Paeroa.

Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke has arranged itself across 6 rohe: Te Kaha, Mataatua, Tauranga – Te Puke, Waiariki, Waikato, and Te Puaha o Waikato – Hauraki. These are the rohe from which formal nomination of candidates for the Electoral College will be accepted:

GUIDELINES FOR NOMINATIONS

Under newly adopted guidelines, nominations must be made collectively. They must come from recognised rohe within the Hui Amorangi, and not just from two nominators as has been the practice in the past. This will help ensure that candidates are proposed by and have the support of their wider church community, informed by careful prayer and reflection, whakapapa and strong relationship ties.

Nominees will need to:

- Provide written acknowledgement that they have read and understood *He Aratohunga Pīhopa* (the Handbook for Pīhopa);
- Complete formal nomination forms as provided;
- Provide a CV including an overview of their ministry with a particular focus on the last 5 years;
- Provide a “Safe to Receive” and/or endorsement from the current licensing Pihopa;
- Undergo formal vetting and screening, including Police, VCA, medical, psychological and/or psychometric, and forensic reporting of online activity. The cost of professional fees for these services must be met by the nominee and/or their nominating group.

Formal nomination forms and supporting documents will be made available on 27 July 2026 via the Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa website.

Formal nomination submissions will be accepted from 9am 10 August to 5pm 19 August 2026. No further nominations will be accepted after this time. Pending satisfactory completion of vetting and screening, candidates will be publicly announced on 11 September 2026

ETAHI INOI TUKU MO TE WA NEI

Mo tetahi tangata ngakai pai hei Pihopa hou

E te Atua aroha, Ora tonu,
Whakarongo atawhai mai ra ki nga inoi o enei pononga āu;

Tukua mai ki a matou he tangata ngakau pai hei Pihopa hou mo matou:
he pononga ia e ritea ana ki tāu e pai ai,
he kaimahitūturu e taea ai ki nga ahua katoa a tou aroha nui:

he manawanui,
he atawhai,
e kore e hae,
e kore e whakahīhī kino,
e kore e whakapehapeha,
kaore ona tikanga whanokē,
e kore e whai ki āna ake,
e kore e riri wawe,
e kore e whakairi kino,
e kore e hari ki te hē,
engari ka hari tahi ia me te pono;

Meatia ia hei hepara pai e whakapau ai tona ngakau, tona wairua, me tona hinengaroa
ki te aroha ki a koe, ki te aroha hoki ki tāu iwi whakapono,

Ko Ihu Karaiti hoki to matou Ariki,
Amine.

Mo nga whakaminenga me te Runanga Tohu o Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke

E te Atua Kaha rawa,
e kāwana nei i ngā mea katoa o te rangi me te whenua,

Titiro atawhai mai ra ki a matou e tuku inoi atu nei ki a koe;

Tukua mai ki a matou nga whakaminenga o Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke
he ngakau hou e taea ai matou ki nga mahi kua ritea nei e koe mo matou i tenei wa;

Tukua hoki ki nga mema katoa o te Runanga Tohu o
Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke
he ngakau mahara ki a koe,
kia tupato ai to ratou whiriwhiri i te Pihopa hou
mo tenei wahi o tāu Hahi puta noa;
kia araia atu i a ratou te hae, te riri, me te whakaaro hē
e wareware ai ratou ki tāu e pai ai,
engari kia piri ai ratou ki te tapu o tou Wairua me te tika o tou whakaoranga;

Ko Ihu Karaiti hoki to matou Ariki,
Amine.

ETAHI WHAI WHAKAAROTANGA MO TE WA NEI

Reflections based on the appointed Gospel readings for Sundays 26 July, 2 and 9 August, to be shared by congregations as part of the Sunday Service.

SUNDAY 26 JULY 2026

The Gospel Reading – Matthew 13:30-33

31 Tenei ake ano tetahi kupu whakarite i maka e ia ki a ratou, i mea ia, He rite te rangatiratanga o te rangi ki te pua nani, i kawea e te tangata, i ruia ki tana mara: 32 He iti rawa ia i nga purapura katoa: a ka tupu, ko ia te nui rawa o nga otaota, a whakarakau ana, no ka rere mai nga manu o te rangi, ka noho ki ona manga. 33 Tenei ake ano tetahi kupu whakarite i korerotia e ia ki a ratou, He rite te rangatiratanga o te rangi ki te rewena i tangohia e tetahi wahine, a whaongia ana ki roto ki nga mehua paraoa e toru, no ka rewenatia katoatia. 44 He rite ano te rangatiratanga o te rangi ki te taonga i huna ki te mara; no te kitenga a tetahi tangata, na ka huna e ia, a haere ana, he koa hoki nona, na hokona ana ana mea katoa, a hokona ana mai taua mara mana. 45 He rite ano te rangatiratanga o te rangi ki te kaihekohoko, e rapu ana i nga peara papai: 46 A, no tona kitenga i tetahi peara utu nui, haere ana, hokona ana ana mea katoa, a hokona ana mai taua peara mana. 47 He rite ano te rangatiratanga o te rangi ki te kupenga i tukua ki te moana, a haoa ana he ika o ia ahua, o ia ahua: 48 A, ka ki, ka kumea ki uta, a noho ana, kohikohia ana nga ika papai ki nga kete, ko nga mea kikino ia i akiritia ki waho. 49 Ka pera ano a te mutunga o te ao: ka haere nga anahera, ka wehewehe i te hunga kino i roto i te hunga tika, 50 A ka maka i a ratou ki roto ki te oumu ahi: ko te wahi tera o te tangi, o te tetea o nga niho. 51 Ka mea a Ihu ki a ratou, Kua matau ranei koutou ki enei mea katoa? Ka mea ratou ki a ia, Ae, e te Ariki. 52 Na ka mea ia ki a ratou, Koia te karaipi, i akona ki te rangatiratanga o te rangi, i rite ai ki tetahi rangatira whare e whakaputa mai ana i nga mea hou, i nga mea tawhito, i roto i tana toa.	31 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.” 33 He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.” 44 ‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 ‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; 46 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. 47 ‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; 48 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 51 ‘Have you understood all this?’ They answered, ‘Yes.’ 52 And he said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.’
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Gospel Reflection

Let's start with the kaupapa that our Hui Amorangi is preparing for – our collective discernment and election of a candidate to become our new Bishop, and Te Pīhopa o Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke:

“He pono te kōrero: “Ki te hiahia tētahi ki te mahi pīhopa, e hiahia ana ia ki te mahi pai.””

These are the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to a young, aspiring leader called Timothy: “This saying is true – If you aspire to the work of a bishop” he said, “you aspire to a good thing.”

Some translations of this verse might give us the idea that merely wanting to *be* a bishop, or to *hold* the office of a bishop, is a good thing. But that's not what Paul meant.

As Paul said in another letter: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others as more significant than yourselves.”

It's not the *title* or the *office* of a bishop that is worthy of aspiration. Instead, Paul said it's the *mahi*. It's the mahi, and nothing else.

But what is the mahi of a bishop?

The ordinal says that they are to lead by example, to be Christ's shepherd, seeking out and caring for those in need. They are to heal and reconcile, uphold justice, and strive for peace.

They are to exercise godly leadership, to maintain wise discipline, and promote peace and unity among all God's people.

They are to encourage obedience to God's word, to keep the Church true to its faith, and to teach this faith and proclaim it. They are to ordain, send forth and care for the Church's pastors, and to preside over its worshipping life.

The mahi of a Bishop is a high calling.

Further, we know that the mahi of a modern Bishop includes being faithful and fruitful in the stewardship of ministries and church resources, operating with competence in high-level governance and management, fulfilling canonical, legal, and fiduciary obligations,

The mahi of a Bishop is to be a safe person, who in turn can keep the Church safe as well.

Add to that the mahi that comes with being a modern Māori Bishop – using Te Paipera Tapu and the Tikanga Karakia of Te Hāhi Mihinare to bring hope and healing to whānau, hapū, and iwi, upholding the best of our reo and tikanga, our mātauranga, and our Mihinaretanga with care and compassion. All while maintaining their call as a Gospel servant to seek and serve the last, the lost, and the least, and empowering and supporting our minita and whakaminenga to be and do the same.

The mahi of a Bishop is a life-time commitment to teaching through servanthood.

Our Gospel reading today speaks of *Te Rangatiratanga o Te Rangi* by way of four short parables. We might understand *rangatiratanga* as leadership, or authority, or sovereignty, or self-determination. But what did Jesus think of this idea.

Firstly, Jesus speaks not of earthly authority, or the kind that human leaders might possess. Instead, Jesus speaks of heavenly authority, *Te Rangatiratanga o Te Rangi*, and teaches us how to understand this.

In the first parable, Jesus speaks of the mustard seed. Jesus speaks of a heavenly *rangatiratanga* that is not afraid to be a small seed and grow slowly. That seed in time becomes a tree in which others may shelter. This *rangatiratanga* is patient, takes its time, follows a healthy process, and grows not for itself but for others.

Then Jesus speaks a women who works a little bit of leaven throughout the dough. This kind of *rangatiratanga* works behind the scenes, is patient, even gentle, and does the gentle work required to turn leaven into manaakitanga.

Next Jesus speaks of *rangatiratanga* being like someone who finds treasure in a field, or one who finds a pearl of great value, and commits everything they have to secure those things because they know where real value lies.

And then Jesus speaks of *rangatiratanga* being like a net that is cast out and capture all kinds of fish. This kind of *rangatiratanga* is focused on doing the work of gathering, and gathering again and again.

“Kua matau ranei koutou ki enei mea katoa?” Jesus asked his disciples, “Have you understood all this?”

If so, Jesus continued, every one who has been trained for *Te Rangatiratanga o Te Rangi* will be like the leader of a whanau household, able to weave together taonga both old and new.

The mahi of a Bishop is a high calling. The person who is called to do this mahi has an immense work in front of them. They will face challenges and pressures that are many magnitudes greater than most of us will ever have to deal with on our own. But their task will be to carry all these burdens and more with humility and compassion, and to help lead and teach us by their example to be and do the same.

The kind of rangatira we seek as a Bishop, and the kind of rangatiratanga we seek for them to practice, is different to that we see expressed in the world. We are not seek a leader who wants to rule in authority, or express their own personal mana. We seek someone who will put *Te Rangatiratanga o Te Rangi* first, and be like small seed growing, or like a humble servant leavening the dough. They must be someone who knows where the true taonga of our whakapono can be found, and commit everything to securing those taonga. They must be like a *kupenga*, casting out to gather, and gather, and gather again.

That is, they must be prepared to give everything in service of Te Karaiti, Te Hāhi, me te Iwi, without ever making it about themselves alone.

Over the next three weeks Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke will enter into a time of prayerful consideration. Our task will be to pray earnestly, honestly, and without ceasing, so that we might see God's will be done and not simply our own.

Let us pray for the leading and guidance of the Te Wairua Tapu. Let us pray for those whom God may call to become candidates, for their whānau, and for those who may nominate them. May they approach this time in sacred humility and give deep, prayerful consideration to the call of God.

Let us pray for Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Manawa o Te Wheke, and for those among us who will become members of the Electoral College, tasked with discerning whomever it is that God is calling to take up the mahi of being a Bishop.

Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te Atua aroha ki a tātou. Āmine.

SUNDAY 2 AUGUST 2026

The Gospel Reading – Matthew 14:13-21

13 Na, i te rongonga o Ihu, ka haere atu ia i reira ra te kaupuke ki te koraha, ki te wahi motu ke: a, no ka rongongo te mano, ka aru i a ia ra uta i roto i nga pa. 14 A ka puta atu a Ihu, ka kite i te huihuinga nui, ka aroha ia ki a ratou, a whakaorangia ana e ia o ratou turoro. 15 A, no ka ahiahi, ka haere atu ana akonga ki a ia, ka mea, He wahi koraha tenei, kua heke noa atu te ra; tonoa atu te mano, kia haere ai ratou ki nga kainga ki te hoko kai ma ratou. 16 Ano ra ko Ihu ki a ratou, Kahore he mea e haere ai ratou; ma koutou e hoatu he kai ma ratou. 17 Ka mea ratou ki a ia, Heoi ano a matou i konei, e rima nga taro, e rua hoki nga ika. 18 Na ka mea ia, Mauria mai ki konei ki ahau. 19 Na ka mea ia ki te mano kia noho ki runga i te tarutaru, ka mau i nga taro e rima, i nga ika hoki e rua, ka titiro ki runga ki te rangi, ka whakapai, ka whawhati, a hoatu ana e ia nga taro ki nga akonga, a na nga akonga ki te mano. 20 A kai katoa ana ratou, a ka makona: a kotahi tekau ma rua nga kete i kohia ake e ratou, ki tonu i nga whatiwhatinga i toe. 21 Ko te hunga i kai ra me te mea e rima mano nga tane, haunga nga wahine me nga tamariki.	13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.’ 16 Jesus said to them, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’ 17 They replied, ‘We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.’ 18 And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’ 19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.
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Gospel Reflection

The late Rev. Canon John Tamahori, who in his time was a significant Mihinare priest, served throughout Aotearoa, was for a time the Principal of St Andrew’s High School in Tonga, was also an experienced trainer and discerner of ordinands. He once said in a sermon, “In order to be a good farmer, one must of a genuine love for working with sheep and cows, and for working with the land.”

John would know. He grew up in the Waiapu valley, in a place called Kākāriki, the whenua of Te Whānau a Rākaihoea, and a place flourishing with croplands and farms.

“In the same way” he said, “in order to be a good minister, one must have a genuine love for God, a genuine love for the Church, and equally one must have a genuine love for the people.”

In our Gospel reading today, we see Jesus trying to find space for himself, away from the crowds that he had been teaching. But they followed him and found him. And when Jesus saw this, the reading says that he had compassion on them and went about the working of healing their needs. And when evening came, and despite the wishes of his disciples to send the crowds away to feed themselves, Jesus directed the disciples instead to give even what little they had so that the people might be fed.

As we continue as a Hui Amorangi with our time of prayerful consideration, we may reflect on the task that lies ahead for whomever God calls to be our new Pihopa.

Following the late Rev. Canon John's wisdom, our new Pihopa will need have a genuine love for God – evidence in their prayer life, their faithful commitment to ministry and service, and their commitment to living justly, generous in mercy, and genuine in mercy.

Our new Pihopa will need to have a genuine love of the Church – its history, its systems and structures, its liturgy and ministry, its strengths and weaknesses, and all of its prophetic potential. A Pihopa cannot love what they do not know, so our new Pihopa will need to genuinely be a servant of the Church.

Last but not least, our new Pihopa will need to have a genuine love for the people. There will be times when our new Pihopa wants to be alone, but can't because the people need ministry. Our new Pihopa will have to be a person of great compassion, always willing to respond to human need with loving service, and able and committed to gather whatever little is present to bless and feed the people.

We hope and pray that our new Pihopa will be someone who knows what it is to love and serve God, genuinely. We hope and pray that our new Pihopa will be someone who knows what it is to love and lead the Church, faithfully and with compassion. We hope that our new Pihopa will be someone who knows what it is to love and serve the people, able to teach, and able to lead us in manaakitanga, feeding the people both spiritually and physically.

We know that when the members of our Electoral College gather in April, they will have the sacred task of discerning through Te Wairua Tapu whom this new Pihopa will be. We must pray for them, and for whomever the candidates might be.

This is our wānanga. May we take the time to weave our whakapapa and whakapono together like Jesus did, so that we can look beyond the performative and get to the heart of the matter.

May we also find with God's blessing a Pihopa who can be a rangatira among us as Bishop Manu Bennett, the third Pihopa o Aotearoa, once described:

*Ko te kai a te rangatira, he korero
Ko te tohu o te rangatira he manaaki
Te mahi o te rangatira he whakatira i te iwi*

Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te Atua aroha ki a tātou katoa. Āmine.

SUNDAY 9 AUGUST 2026

The Gospel Reading – Matthew 4:1-11

22 Na akiaki tonu a Ihu i ana akonga kia eke ki te kaupuke, kia whakawhiti i mua i a ia ki tawahi, i a ia e tuku ana i nga mano kia haere. 23 A, ka oti te mano te tuku, ka kake ia ki runga ki te maunga ki te wahi motu ke ki te inoi: na kua ahiahi, a ko ia anake i reira. 24 Na, tera te kaupuke te akina ra e te ngaru i waenga moana: i he hoki te hau. 25 A i te wha o nga mataaratanga o te po ka haere a Ihu ki a ratou, i haere maori i runga i te moana. 26 A, i te kitenga o nga akonga i a ia e haere ana i runga i te moana, ka ihiihi, ka mea, He wairua; ka aue i te wehi. 27 Na kua hohoro te korero a Ihu ki a ratou, te mea, Kia manawanui, ko ahau tenei; aua e wehi. 28 Na ka whakahoki a Pita ki a ia, ka mea, E te Ariki, ki te mea ko koe tena, kiia mai ahau kia haere atu ki a koe i runga i te wai. 29 Na ka mea ia, Haere mai. A ka marere atu a Pita i te kaupuke, ka haere i runga i te wai, kia tae ai ki a Ihu. 30 Otira ka kite ia i te hau e kaha ana, ka wehi; a ka timata te totohu, ka karanga ake, ka mea, Ahau, e te Ariki, whakaorangia. 31 Hohoro tonu te totoro o te ringa o Ihu, ka hopu i a ia, ka mea ki a ia, E te tangata whakapono iti, he aha koe i ngakau rua ai? 32 Ano ka eke raua ki te kaupuke, mutu pu te hau. 33 Na ka haere mai te hunga i runga i te kaupuke, ka koropiko ki a ia, ka mea, He pono ko te Tama koe a te Atua.	22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. 25 And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.' 28 Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' 29 He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. 30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' 32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'
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Gospel Reflection

Sometimes we expect a lot from our ministry leaders. We want them to be smart, and wise, and capable, and decisive. We want them to be just, and unafraid of making hard decisions. We also want them to be compassionate, and forgiving, and reconciling, no matter what the issues are. We want them to handle every storm, and sometimes do miracles on our behalf. Perhaps even sometimes *walk on water*.

But we know that, in the end, our ministry leaders are human, they are fallible, and they need help and support just like anyone else. Just like the disciple Peter.

Peter is a great metaphor for being human. He's emotional, sometimes he says and does dumb things. He's excitable and gets energised serving the Lord, and then suddenly can become downcast, and full of doubt.

It was Peter whom Jesus singled out to say "You are *petras* (the little rock), and upon this rock I will build my Church."

It was the same Peter who, when confronted with the brutal reality of the cross, denied three times that he ever knew Jesus. He did this out of fear for his own life, and wept in grief and trauma when he realised what he had done.

It was the same Peter, when Jesus met him and the disciples after the resurrection, whom Jesus challenged with the task to "... feed my sheep."

It was that same Peter, who we meet in the Gospel reading today, and who for the briefest of moments, *walks on water*.

Peter is a metaphor for us. Like him, we are human. We have highs and lows. We can at one time be the foundation of the Church, and at another time be full of denial and doubt.

Peter is also a metaphor for whomever our next Pihopa will be. We will want to build the Church around them. We will want them to be energised in service of the Lord, of the Church, and of the people. But they will be human, and will have their fears and their doubts.

Whomever we discern to be our next Pihopa must be discerned wisely and with a deep compassion for the mahi that lies ahead of them. Their commitment, their judgement, and their character will be questioned and sorely tested at some point.

And if we have discerned wisely, our new Pihopa will respond to every test by saying "*Lord, if it is really you, call me and I will come ...*"

And like Peter, Jesus will say "Haramai rā. Come and walk on water with me."

"Haramai rā. Come and feed my sheep."

Let us not waver, but instead remain steadfast in prayer for our Hui Amorangi, for the upcoming Electoral College, and for all those who will become candidates to be discerned.

Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te Atua aroha ki a tātou. Āmine.