



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

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Tēnā koutou katoa,

I am sorry that I am unable to be with you today in support of your hikoi from the Women's Suffrage Memorial to the Cathedral today.

Friday's Gospel talked about the women who joined Jesus and the Twelve, and who provided for the group out of their own resources, as he made his way through towns and villages preaching and proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God. Among them was Mary of Magdala who, though not named as one of the Twelve, was to become the Apostle to the Apostles. According to Mark's Gospel, when she announced to the Twelve that Christ had risen, they didn't believe her. Perhaps this is a poignant reminder that Twelve and their successors can get it very wrong.

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since the women of the suffrage movement worked towards women gaining the vote in 1893. Our current Prime Minister is our third woman Prime Minister. But there is much more to achieve in our country and certainly in the Church. While there have been and continue to be a litany of amazing women throughout the history of the Church your presence and voice today is a reminder that you are the Church and the Church's need to change so your voice and presence may be more clearly heard and seen.

So, thank you for your prophetic hikoi to the Cathedral today which is ultimately a call to respect the dignity that flows from our being created male and female in the image and likeness of our God. Your voice today echoes the voice of women throughout the world, who as part of the current synodal process, are calling on the Church to reflect the inherent dignity of women in the leadership of the Church. As we journey together may the Holy Spirit, the activating person of the Holy Trinity, guide us to what that might look like. May we have the courage not to get stuck in structures that are not necessarily of God.

When Fiona and Christina visited me a couple of months ago, they presented me with Kate's pink shoes. They remain in my office and are certainly a talking point. They also remind me that I too need to be the change. Together may we be docile to the movement of the Holy Spirit who is active in all the people of God as She invites the Church ever more forth on the way to the Kingdom of God.

Yours sincerely in Christ the Good Shepherd

✠ Steve Lowe
Bishop of Auckland