**Religious Communities of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia**

**Report for the General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui 2018**

The annual meeting of the leaders of the Religious Communities of our Province chose to move the scheduled date of 11 November in 2017 as the IDCCG of Tikanga Pakeha picked that date for an IDC preliminary review of the draft report asked for by Motion 29. The meeting of the leaders of the Religious Communities will now be held in late February which unfortunately is after the date the reports for the May 2018 General Synod Te Hinota Whanui are due. It is regrettable that the religious communities will not have an opportunity to make their report after their meeting but we do understand the need for deadlines. One concern shared by some of the Religious Communities that was mentioned at the meeting of IDC about Motion 29 in Wellington was the description of Christian Communities including reference to the consecrated life, christian communities and Religious Communities in this context. The Final Report that has now been sent out still uses the terms and ‘christian communities’ and ‘consecrated life’ although the reference to Religious Communities has been withdrawn. Historically the term religious societies would be a more apt description for what the final report on Motion 29 proposes as christian communities

The Community of the Sacred Name was very pleased to have their Visitor receive the simple vows of Sister Veronika at the CSN Retreat House chapel in 2017. Mother Alena has significantly grown into her calling as Mother Superior and the CSN Sisters continue their life of prayer and outreach in Christchurch, Ashburton, Fiji and Tonga. It has been determined that the Tongan house will host the novitiate in the future. The Ashburton House has the older sisters, Sister Judith CSN, Sister Annette CSN and Sister Bridgit CSN in residence, cared for by Sister Anne CSN.

It was a great sadness that St Christopher’s Home in Fiji is no longer under the management of CSN sisters.

Sister Anne SLG continues her ministry of prayer and presence at the St Isaac Retreat House. While no longer warden, her presence and wisdom are greatly appreciated.

The Order Of St Stephen has taken a step back to allow for reflection on their future.

The First Order Franciscans no longer has a ministry presence in this Province but there is a close and active relationship with the Brothers in Australia. Brother Donald who resides in Brisbane has been appointed as the link with Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

The Third Order Franciscans continue to grow in number across the Province.

Urban Vision continues to offer inspiration and encouragement for young adults and those of all ages who chose to live together in intentional Christian community under temporary vows. Their example of embracing simplicity and their commitment to and heart for the least, the lost and the last is exemplary. Urban Vision is now international.

It is the intention of the members of the various religious orders and the associates to be a praying presence in New Plymouth for the 63rd General Synod Te Hinota Whanui.

**Bishop Victoria Matthews**

Bishop of Christchurch and Liaison Bishop for the Religious Communities