CATHEDRAL CONVERSATIONS /
TOUR INSIGHTS.
Dear friends,

Over the past two years the Anglican Cathedral in the Square in Christchurch has suffered a huge amount of damage from a number of earthquakes and aftershocks. As we prayed about what to do and asked ourselves the best way to respond to this tragedy, we found ourselves engaged in conversation with many different people. In June 2012 a small study group consisting of Bill Gregory, Blair Johnston, Marcus Read, the Venerable Lynda Patterson and myself visited a number of Cathedrals and churches in California and European countries to ask what creates a truly beautiful and inspiring place of worship. Many of the places we visited were recent creations, and some were built after earthquakes or another disaster. One Cathedral was still under construction while others have been worshipped in for centuries. Each had a special relationship with its environment but some were supported by the surroundings and others were challenged by their setting. We asked why it was that we felt deeply drawn to pray to and reverence God in some sacred spaces and less so in others. For many of the visits we had a guide, and we recognized how much we were influenced by his/her own relationship with the faith.

Throughout the Study Tour many photographs were taken and sent home to a web page of the Diocese of Christchurch entitled “How do you build a Cathedral?” Every member of the Diocese, including each student at our Anglican primary and secondary schools, was encouraged to participate by following our Cathedral visits and engaging with the questions and pictures. Now we want to invite you to also take part by reading and considering what inspires a sacred place to truly give glory to God and lift our heart toward heaven. We invite you to be part of Cathedral Conversations by responding to what you find in this book and to our questions and comments either onto our website blog: http://blogs.anglicanlife.org.nz/cathedral/ or by sending an email to this address cathedralconversations@wam.co.nz.

“The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.” John 4.23

In Christ,

The Rt Rev Victoria Matthews
Bishop of Christchurch
The scale of buildings visited on the tour varied greatly - from the intimacy of Kolumba chapel to the heroic scale and endeavour of Cologne Cathedral and La Sagrada Familia.

The intention was to look past the size of a project in isolation - as regardless of scale, each project adopts a specific attitude towards a series of recurring questions - mission, orientation, procession, proportion, light, invitation, threshold. The objective was to seek insights in projects of great scale and ambition and lessons in projects of more humble intent.
GUIDING LIGHT.

The varying approach to light was a key observation in each of the spaces we visited - from the darkness and discovery of Neviges to the brightness & uniformity of Oakland. The way light was used fundamentally informed both the interior experience and the external expression of each building.

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“The sense of darkness above represented the true cloud of unknowing – God is always present, but we strive to see God even in part.”

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One of the key realisations is that the interior experience is guided not just by the quantity of light admitted into the space but also the uniformity of the light. Spaces which combined relative darkness with areas of bright illumination allowed a sense of journey and for the possibilities of discovery. Other spaces which provided more uniform levels of light promoted a sense of awareness and connection with both the outside world and the rhythms of the day and season.

Q1. How could the use of light define ChristChurch Cathedral?

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“There was a strong sense of the vertical and an awareness of the sky. As the sun moved across the sky a series of dramatic shadows and shafts of light were created.”
In almost all of the places we visited the nature & quality of the sacred space directly determined the external form of the building - it was clear that the buildings were conceived from the ‘inside-out’ and that the sacred spaces were the primary focus. 

The group often experienced contrasting impressions of the success of the interior experience and the external appearance of individual buildings. The creation of sacred spaces which are by their nature ‘internalised’ & contemplative - a sanctuary in the full sense of the word - by and large led to external form that was closed and ‘passive’ (and potentially ‘excluding’), setting up a strong threshold which must be intentionally crossed.

The only two projects that presented an alternative approach were Trinity Church (Rome) & Herz Jesu (Munich) - both of these buildings employ different architectural strategies (screening/layering) to achieve a high degree of transparency and visual connection while still creating a sense of ‘sanctuary’. The Munich example in particular gave some insights into how a desired internal experience could be created in the sacred space, while still allowing other parts of the building to be highly visually connected to their surroundings.

Q2. In designing the Cathedral, should we pay more attention to the external form or the internal function? Why?
ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY.

Assumptions about the question of engaging with the community were tested during the tour. Few of the buildings visited showed signs of being designed with ‘welcome’ or ‘accessibility’ in mind - most apparently being conceived as an object or a statement.

However, to engage with the community is to engage with the minds of people - it is noted this can be approached in a variety of ways and that ‘architecture’ is but one component part of ‘engagement’.

Q3. What role could the Cathedral play at the heart of the new city? What implications does this have for the design of the building?
Q4. How do you think the Cathedral should relate to its surroundings in the Square? What sort of statement should it make?

The majority of the spaces we visited aligned with a traditional view of church design in which the sacred space forms the external expression of the building - the threshold between the sacred and secular realms is defined and 'hard'. This potentially allows for a dramatic (and positive) experiential contrast between the sanctuary and the outside world, but also often results in a lack of connection between these two environments and a consequent lack of invitation.

A few spaces we visited provided a ‘buffer’ between the sacred and secular realms in the form of an additional enclosed space or an external covered space. There is some potential to consider further the design implications of a ‘layered’ approach to engagement - allowing higher degrees of transparency and connection while still maintaining a sense of ‘sanctuary’.

Q5. Ideally, how would you imagine interacting with the Cathedral? How can it be welcoming without compromising its sacred space?
All of the most visually powerful spaces we visited had a strong sense of vertical scale to the primary worship spaces - often accentuated by slender vertical columns (Sagrada, Coventry, Cologne, Grace, Pilgrimage Church).

The power of a man-made structure ascending toward the heavens is a fundamental characteristic of gothic church architecture - was our reaction to these spaces merely a recognition of the familiar or of the spatial composition itself?

Other buildings on our tour that presented large high spaces but no distinct emphasis of the vertical proportion (Christ the Light, Evry, Pius Church perhaps seemed to give a greater sense of the presence of ‘community’ rather than the presence of the divine.

A number of buildings we visited clearly prioritised the spatial effect of columns over their effect on sightlines (Coventry, Sagrada Familia, Cologne).

“If a single human being, created in the image and likeness of God, is capable of creating something so complex and incredible as that cathedral, then what we have glimpsed so far of the divine is but a whisper of the totality of the creator.”
Extreme care is required to enable a clear and simple spatial & metaphoric composition. Some of the more satisfying buildings had a clear rationale and supporting art and sculpture programmes. Others despite a clear rationale were rather sterile.

The linkage to the naming of the Cathedral or dedication of its parts is important in this regard.

The more entirely abstract compositions such as the Jubilee Church in Rome, and Pius Church in Meggen rely on the reinforcement of liturgical ideas and themes by Clergy and are thus perhaps more flexible, but perhaps also shallower.

Q6. What would you like the Cathedral to say about God and the mission of the church?

The spaces visited presented a wide range of attitudes towards materiality - from the tradition, weight, and permanence of stone; to the sculptural possibilities of concrete; the warmth & lightness of timber, and the transparency & fragility of glass.

Our reaction to these spaces provides an insight into the other messages transmitted and received through the selection of materials - ideas about tradition and permanence, past & future, impressions of weight and lightness.

Q7. Modern life changes rapidly. Should the new cathedral be designed for permanence?

There is extensive use of timber which is traditionally more temporary than stone.
We observed a number of different responses to the incorporation of elements of ‘the past’ - from the reverential preservation of ruins & composition of old and new at Coventry; the incorporation of ruins in the new building ‘fabric’ (Kolumba), through to the presentation of recovered icons and artwork (Christ the Light).

**Q8.** What sort of memory of the past should be incorporated into the new Cathedral?

“I wonder what it would be like to worship in a church with visible ruins. What might the connection to our past say about our future?”

We observed a number of contrasting approaches to the question of ‘landmark’ or place marking - communicating the presence (and values?) of the building over a distance and within a wider context.

A number of churches we visited had stand alone towers (Pius Church, Munich Riems, Herz Jezu) while others relied on the sculptural form of the buildings themselves (Ronchamp, Trinity, Pilgrimage Church, St Mary’s, Christ the Light) and others presented spires in the gothic tradition (Coventry, Grace, Sagrada Familia).

**Q9.** How important is a tower? Should it be integrated or separate?

“The location of the complex was clearly signalled from a distance by a very simple white tower with a cross at the top which was reflected in the windows of the surrounding buildings.”
SOCIAL & ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY.

Spaces for functions, community gatherings and music seemed to be highly valued in each of the buildings we visited. The spatial arrangement of these functions was often under rather than alongside the sacred space - incurring additional cost but allowing the primary spiritual function to remain the primary external expression.

“I wonder if the hundreds of people who associate St Martin in the Fields with excellence in music and social events held in the cafe understand the depth of commitment to the Gospel of the parish? Are there still more ways that the mission of the parish could be expressed?”

CULTURAL RESONANCE.

It was apparent that many of the spaces we visited were ‘tuned’ to the specifics of their environment and community - the restrained formality of the Munich Riems Church Centre, the dark and contemplative Pilgrimage Church, the defiant spirit of Coventry, the colour and fantasy of La Sagrada Familia, and the light and optimism of Oakland; each building was a mirror held to the community - reflecting their values and sense of self.

Q10. Which unique values should be embodied in the Cathedral?

Q11. What features of a new Cathedral would encourage you to worship there?

“It did not surprise us that Christ the Light was found in California and Pilgrimage Church of Mary in post World War Two Germany, both reflecting their culture and outlook.”
NOTES & SKETCHES.

"St Mary's Gates - old but familiar, now butundry except for steps; but the steps are the problem. A TEDdy boy! The building seems to be fine, very basic.

Cathedral Conversations
Tour Insights

Warren and Mahoney
The Cathedral Project Group, including representatives of the Diocese of Christchurch, Church Property Trustees, Cathedral Chapter, Standing Committee, Diocesan staff and consultants, confirm the following vision for the future ChristChurch Cathedral, along with guiding principles:

Christ centred mission stands at the heart of the Diocese of Christchurch and ChristChurch Cathedral. This means our buildings are built to the greater glory of God and as an aid to humanity’s worship of Almighty God. In the past many years the Cathedral in the Square has welcomed people from all over the world to attend her worship services and to enjoy the wonderful choral music offered at the many services. The preaching of the Cathedral has proclaimed both the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, and encouraged people to know God’s love for them and their neighbour. While the Cathedral has hosted numerous civic functions and community events, she is above all the house of God, a place where the Scriptures are read, the sacraments celebrated and prayers offered in many different languages and by people of different faith traditions. This offering to God in the centre of the city of Christchurch has made manifest the vision of the Canterbury Association and Archbishop Sumner, and realized Bishop Harper’s vision of a ChristChurch Cathedral. This magnificent Cathedral served citizens and visitors alike and we are heart broken that she is now, due to extensive damage caused by prolonged seismic events, undergoing deconstruction and demolition. However we do not lose hope because we know that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is both true and eternal. The good news is far greater than can be contained by any temple or tabernacle. We also recognize that this faith in the Trune God is carried in the hearts and lives of the Christian population and cries out to be shared. It is with these convictions that we share the following quotation from Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, 4.7-11

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.

The mission of a Cathedral is to reflect, through its beauty, the mystery of the presence of God. While the building will not remain the same, the constancy of its witness is uninterrupted. We intend to build a beautiful Cathedral which will be a centre of Anglican worship that respects the past and looks to the future. It will be a welcoming place for visitors, citizens, worshippers and pilgrims: a safe sanctuary, a refuge; a space for contemplation and the worship of God. It will offer comfort and challenge in its ministry to the wider community, its impact resonating through the City, Diocese and beyond. The experience of its form and spaces will be rich with reference to the continuing tradition of its central role in the Diocese and future goals of the Anglican Church community.

As a Cathedral Project Group we affirm our commitment:

- To work towards an inspiring new Cathedral in the Square that speaks of the past, but looks to the future, encompassing in the design elements of the existing Cathedral, retrieved taonga and heritage items.
- To be mindful that the Cathedral is not just a building, but is a place for the worship of God.
- To put first the safety of people working on and around the Cathedral.
- To remain open and honest in communicating all non-commercially sensitive information to the wider community throughout this process.
- To address the CERA Section 38 Notice by deconstructing the remaining Cathedral fabric to a safe level, with care and respect, in order to store salvaged materials and retrieve taonga and precious heritage artefacts; allowing for future reuse. Throughout this process we will continue to review and learn about the structure, stability and safety of the various buildings elements, and will seek the advice of an independent peer review engineer on difficult technical and safety matters.
- To work with Warren and Mahoney, the appointed architect for the Diocese and Cathedral, to deliver a design that meets our vision statement, and reflects the Design Guidelines that have been developed through consultation with the wider Diocese and unanimously adopted at the recent meeting of Synod.

- To commence the concept design phase for the future Cathedral in June so that an inspiring design can be provided by the end of this year, allowing a process of public feedback and dialogue on the foundational design principles for the Cathedral.

- To provide a robust concept design process by learning from and incorporating knowledge from previous experience by others, by undertaking an international study tour of Cathedral buildings and other relevant structures.

- That all major decisions continue to be made with the support and involvement of the Church Property Trustees, Standing Committee and ChristChurch Cathedral Chapter.

- While this work on a new ChristChurch Cathedral proceeds, the Anglican Church is committed to the build of a Transitional Cathedral to meet the needs of church and community for up to ten years. The Transitional Cathedral will be built on the site of the former St John’s Church, Latimer Square, and will become St John’s parish church once the new Cathedral is completed.
How do you build a Cathedral?
The scale of buildings visited on the tour varied greatly - from the intimacy of Kolumba chapel to the heroic scale and endeavour of Cologne Cathedral and La Sagrada Familia.

The intention was to look past the size of a project in isolation - as regardless of scale, each project adopts a specific attitude towards a series of recurring questions - mission, orientation, procession, proportion, light, invitation, threshold. The objective was to seek insights in projects of great scale and ambition and lessons in projects of more humble intent.
Grace Cathedral is an Anglican cathedral in San Francisco which has experienced several earthquakes, and was destroyed in a fire after the 1906 earthquake. One interesting aspect of the cathedral complex is that it has been built over time since the 1890s through to the present day in a neo-gothic style (similar to ChristChurch Cathedral.) Its unifying material is raw reinforced concrete. Unlike ChristChurch Cathedral, the ceiling is made of the same concrete material, not wood. The congregation sit in the shape of a cross, with the altar and pulpit at the head of a long aisle.

We noticed that this church seemed to say that God is found in a place set apart, in the altar and the pulpit, and in prayer. The murals on the walls illustrate the fact that God is found in many diverse communities, and illustrate how important the history of that place is to the people of God who gather there.

The space we liked best was a courtyard between the church building and some classrooms which had a wonderful fountain, great plants and easy access from the street. We thought it would be fun to have a baptism there, and wondered if people who were hesitant to go into the church might be more comfortable gathering in the courtyard.

Other things we noticed:
- Excellent visibility from within the city
- There were lots of barriers but they were directing people coming in not stopping them.
- Once you’re in the door, there was a direct entry into the sacred space – no real threshold space.
- Once you walk in the doors, there was a strong urge to look upward, and see the strong vertical lines in columns reaching towards the roof.
- The sequence once you walk into the cathedral was first the font, then labyrinth and then congregational seating.
- Low levels of lighting and mostly blue stained glass tended to make it seem mysterious side.
- A large, rather primitive wooden statue of Francis of Assisi reminded us that he was the patron of the city.

Curriculum Questions:
1. Grace Cathedral has a beautiful courtyard. The travelers thought that it might be a place for outside services. Could a cathedral in Christchurch have a central courtyard space? How could you incorporate that into your design? How big could it be?
2. Modern churches often have abstract windows, inspired by important Christian ideas. Older churches and cathedrals often have picture windows that show part of a Bible story, or something that Jesus did. Could you put a story window in a modern building? Design one!
3. Is height and space important in a cathedral? How does it enhance or diminish the sacred space?
4. The photo of the altar table has many accessories; table cloth, candles, stained glass windows and flags. Are accessories helpful to worship and/or a community’s identity?

Acting Dean Lynda wonders:
“[I wonder what the labyrinth on the floor is for?]”

Bishop Victoria reflects:
“Going up long flights of steps into a building which has a lot of stained glass suggests that we find God away from the busyness of the world. Is that where we find God?”
This cathedral is also known as St. Mary’s Cathedral. It is the Cathedral of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Francisco. The Archbishop asked the architects to build a church without pillars, that would accentuate light and would withstand earthquakes. (San Francisco’s last major earthquake was 1989.)

It feels the architects successfully addressed the brief. The building seats three thousand in a fan shaped configuration focusing on the altar. There is a suspended artwork like a canopy drawing attention to the altar, which looks like rain falling from heaven. The building has a lively acoustic, better for the spoken word than music.

The cathedral sits on a podium containing conference facilities, a girls’ school, the archbishop’s residence and car parking facilities. The large plaza, as you approach it, seems quite barren. The cathedral is situated on an exposed ridge between two radically different socio-economic communities.

The vaulted concrete roof structure sits on four immense pylons and is divided centrally by a stained glass skylight in the form of a cross. Different parts of San Francisco are visible through the panes of clear glass. The distinctive form of the roof on the ridge forms a landmark. It was designed by Pier Luigi Nervi Pietro Belluschi about 40 years ago.

It is used for large-scale public funerals and events, school and college graduations. They offer the church free of charge as their service to the city. We felt that the interior space was highly successful but there was limited visual connection between outside and inside.

We found this powerful sacred space and realized it was easier for us to encounter the presence of God because we has not lived through the controversy of its design and construction. At the time 17$ Million US was seen as an offensive amount of money, but now it seems remarkable that so much of such high quality was achieved for so little. The build continued at the time because Dorothy Day of the Christian Worker movement supported it. She said that the poor need cathedrals because how else would they ever encounter the beauty of God?

The column free congregational format makes for a very successful worship space for larger groups because of its singularity but there is no space for smaller groups.

Curriculum Questions:

1. This Cathedral seems very grey … where could you add some more colour? Or does it not need colour? It is a very large space. Where could you go to sit quietly in a space of your own in this cathedral?

2. Christianity has many important symbols; the most important one is the cross. Do you like the crosses in this cathedral? Why? If not, why not?

3. Locate the key objects for worship in this Cathedral: the altar, pulpit, lectern, font, nave, side chapel, choir stalls, organ. … where is there space for hospitality after a service?

4. Artefacts are handcrafted aids to worship. They can help us to reflect and meditate. The fish symbol was one of the earliest Christian artefacts. This Cathedral is almost as much an artefact as a building. Could a cathedral be another Christian symbolic shape?

Acting Dean Lynda wonders:

“I wonder what would make you feel welcome in this building?”

Bishop Victoria reflects:

“Although a very large space, there was clearly an invitation to prayer and a desire to pause before the presence of God.”

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“Although a very large space, there was clearly an invitation to prayer and a desire to pause before the presence of God.”
This Cathedral is in Oakland, California. Christ the Light, is the Cathedral of the Catholic Diocese of Oakland.

The original cathedral of St Francis de Sales was severely damaged in an earthquake in 1989. The community chose not to rebuild but to move the building. It was originally a traditional masonry design with a white spire. There was a grand pilgrimage route towards doors that looked deceptively small given the sheer height of the building. The building is very contemporary in appearance and clad in glass which allows a great deal of light into the interior and allows it to be illuminated at night. The cathedral extends into the sky with steel rods. The axis of the building was angled, but not on the axis of the road grid, suggesting this was a church not a business or a corporate entity - its focus and approach is different.

It was raised up at a level much higher than street level which allowed it to connect seamlessly with the surrounding office buildings. Entering the building we reached the font almost immediately with its quietly bubbling water. Off to the side were the confessionals, which were warm and inviting because of the way they used wood to let light filter through.

The building appeared light and airy when first in the nave, but seemed to get more closed in as time went on. The character of the space changes according to the time of day. It has strong geometry which would tend to lend itself to a feeling of enclosure.

There were a number of vesica pisces themes – the building was shaped like a fish, and there are fish shaped windows to the east, west and above.

There is extensive use of timber which is traditionally more temporary than stone. The seating capacity is about 1350, therefore not far off ChristChurch Cathedral.

A significant number of skylights allow natural light to come through over the altar in the side chapels and elsewhere.

There is the juxtaposition of the altar area immediately over the mausoleum, and a circle around the altar of translucent glass. This glass allowed the same light to filter around the altar and into the mausoleum. It picks up the baptismal theme by having a water feature/waterfall on either side of a dark stone vestibule as you enter the mausoleum, reminding us of the washing away of sin in baptism and that Christ the Light is with us on through into eternity. It was very focused on Christ. The lamps were named for the apostles. There was no representations of the Spirit or the Father. The Biblical theme is “I am the light of the world.” Conference facilities, a free medical clinic, legal aid and seating allows people to enjoy the grass and space around the church.

Our observation is that they seem more connected with the weekday occupants of nearby buildings, than passersby on the sidewalk.

Acting Dean Lynda wonders:

“I wonder if you are going through a very difficult time in your life would the emphasis on light genuinely pierce your darkness?”

Bishop Victoria reflects:

“The ceiling resembled the hull of an overturned boat. What is safe about an overturned boat?”

Curriculum Questions:

1. This cathedral has many lines that draw your eye. Straight lines, curved lines, up and down and diagonal lines. In your opinion, is the architecture pleasing and does it promote the cathedral as a place of worship?

2. Note the Bible verse engraved on the floor. Would this be appropriate in the future ChristChurch Cathedral? Where else could words be engraved? What words or bible verses would Christchurch choose?

3. Hospitality is important for Christians. Find Matthew 25:34-46 and read what Jesus says about hospitality. How does this cathedral allow worshippers to be hosted after worship? (Note: the beautiful mosaics that have been damaged in the quakes that used to be above the main entrance to the cathedral under the rose window. Illustrated these verses.)
This church is located in a working class/lower middle class neighbourhood of high rise apartments and flats, and was a new build to celebrate the Millennium. The church called for a design competition, and a selection of architects’ designs were shortlisted. Eventually Richard Meier was chosen. Before the church was built, the community had been meeting in houses. Jubilee Church is a Roman Catholic parish church which seats 300-400. The church was situated in a large spare plaza surrounded by a low wall.

On approach the building is distinctive and sculptural, with three shells discreetly implying the Holy Trinity. The building seemed open and welcoming and filled with light. The church has large entrance doors which are opened for special occasions, revealing the axis from the public street directly to the altar.

While most of the interior is in shades of white, contributing to the light and airy nature of the church, the furniture, wall panelling and other objects in the church are in timber, lending it warmth and texture. The altar and part of the floor in the sanctuary are made of marble.

First impression of the space was peaceful, quiet and contemplative with the eye being drawn to a very small window high up in the wall, offset by a large crucifix. The font is off to the side and had a couple of steps down. It was a large, almost bath-like natural stone basin which intentionally overflowed into what could be described as a wading pool, allowing for the possibility of full immersion. To the left was a Chapel with reserved sacrament which had a long slit window suggestive of the narrow gate. In the back of the same chapels were the confessionals – which also suggest the relevance of the narrow gate.

Space was largely very simple and unadorned with artwork, accentuating the presence of the crucifix. We were informed that occasionally icons pertinent to the season would be introduced and explained. If this was all we knew about God, we would say that God is indescribable and largely beyond our knowing, yet intimately present.

There was a strong sense of the vertical and an awareness of the sky. As the sun moved across the sky a series of dramatic shadows and shafts of light were created. The asymmetry of the aisle and the curved shells created varying acoustic qualities. The ambitions at play within the commissioning of this project – celebration the Millennium – are not necessarily the key focus of the community now. Continuity of practice is provided not by the building but the liturgy and history of the community – each month mass is celebrated in houses around the parish, as before the construction of the building. The priest was very grateful that in Pope Benedict’s latest encyclical, the church had been described as the window on the world, which allowed the parish to understand the focus on the small window above the altar in a distinctively Catholic way.

Curriculum Questions:
1. Notice how the light enters the cathedral. I wonder how the shadows change during the day. What effect might the weather have on the atmosphere or ‘feeling’ created inside the building?
2. Should the ChristChurch Cathedral have statues and/or works of art? If yes, would they be historic or modern? What would they portray?
3. Describe the seating. What kind of seating should our cathedral have?
4. This cathedral’s design is built on the idea of a ship ploughing the seas of the third millennium. What concept/s should be incorporated into the ChristChurch Cathedral design? What would be unique to Christchurch?

Bishop Victoria reflects:
“The surrounding neighbourhood is a very busy one, with people who have lots of demands on their time and energy. Jubilee Church offers a very different experience of deep peace. The sound of children laughing and playing, far from being intrusive, added to that sense of peace and wellbeing in church. We were reminded of 1 Kings 19 “after the earthquake, the sound of sheer silence.”

Acting Dean Lynda wonders: “I wonder if you lived in the community what a church that looked a bit like a sailing ship would teach you about God?”
La Sagrada Familia is in Barcelona, in Spain. The layout is traditional, cruciform in shape, gothic in origin. Hundreds and hundreds of people were visiting and yet there was little talking. There was a real sense of encountering extraordinary human creativity in the service of something so much greater than itself. One human being, Antoni Gaudi, designed all of this and it was slowly in the process of being realized.

When the main tower is completed, it will be 170 metres tall, the same height as Mont Juic, a mountain outside Barcelona. The choir seating – designed for 900 – was raised up high above the congregation in lofts. The space itself seated perhaps eight to nine thousand people in total. The Cathedral was a study in symbols, from the different type of stones on the nave columns representing; the evangelists (marble), the saints (basalt), and bishops of the church (simple granite), to the symbols for Jesus and the writing of words like ‘Sanctus, sanctus sanctus’ on the towers.

If this building was all you knew about God, you might conclude that the power of God working in humanity can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. The cathedral had something of the strangeness of the book of Revelation, and in all the details and crafting reminded us of the incarnation as well – that God in Christ is found among us in the simple and concrete details of our everyday lives.

La Sagrada Familia is not an over-scripted building for all the symbolism, hidden and revealed, seen and unseen. It is an expression not an explanation, and an invitation for you to enter into the mystery. The sheer exuberant joy in creation reminded us of Psalm 84 – “How wonderful are your dwelling places, O Lord of hosts.”

The cathedral’s main axis is not aligned east – west, as is usual in the Christian tradition. It was a remarkably intimate building given its scale, which called to mind Psalm 8 “What are human beings that you are mindful of them? You have made us a little lower of the angels.” This building allows just a momentary intimacy with someone who had truly embraced their full creativity. It made us realize the poverty of living without using the full gifts that God has given us. This was not a remote creativity but immediate, exciting and engaging. The Bishop said, “I would compare it to the excitement I felt in viewing the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in its entirety.”

Curriculum Questions:
1. Do you think this cathedral is eye-catching from the outside? What catches your eye inside the building and why?
2. This cathedral is a sound attraction and has many visitors through its doors. Is this an important aspect of a cathedral?
3. What visual elements of the building make the most impact on you? Which one do you notice first?
4. If a single human being, created in the image and likeness of God, is capable of creating something so complex and incredible as that cathedral, then what have we glimpsed so far of the divine is but a whisper of the totality of the creator God.

Bishop Victoria reflects:
“If a single human being, created in the image and likeness of God, is capable of creating something so complex and incredible as that cathedral, then what have we glimpsed so far of the divine is but a whisper of the totality of the creator God.”

Acting Dean Lynda wonders:
“I wonder what this church says to you about God? What strikes you as you look at the pictures?”
The Pilgrimage Church of St Mary is emphatically not a cathedral yet is called a “Dom” or ‘cathedral’ repeatedly by those local to it and those from far away - perhaps because of the magnitude of the themes it introduces to the pilgrim. It is in Germany, Neviges, North Rhine-Westphalia. This church conveyed a string theme of pilgrimage. Christians are a pilgrim people who frequently do not know who they are until they have reached a pilgrimage destination and have discovered that the journey has just begun.

The first impression of the church divided the group – the imposing mass concrete exterior was a strong contrast with the local houses which seemed to be quite detailed and heroic. The exterior represents tent and tabernacle and the notion of people on a journey though the wilderness.

Entering the church there was a small door and a moment of pause and compression before arriving into the main space. Our guide, the Franciscan friar, Br Bernardin, likened the experience to entering into a tent. The first impression was of great darkness broken by extraordinary colour in a few partly glimpsed stained glass windows. There was a sense of soaring faceted tent-like ceiling. The sense of darkness above represented true cloud of unknowing – God is always present, but we strive to see God even in part. There is a repeating pattern of pilgrim shells on the floor – best known for their association with the apostle James and the Camino de Santiago de Compostella in northern Spain, but universally recognized as a symbol of the pilgrim. There is a conscious departure from the norms of an interior church experience. It is more akin to an external streetscape where the roof represents the night sky. The sanctuary is a gathering in the lightest part of the building.

Bishop Victoria reflects: “If this was all you knew about God, you would know that there is more joy and love and invitation than your life could possibly bear, even in the darkest, most barren moments when you can barely see a thing. God allows us sometimes to just peek around a corner or to listen in because we can’t bear to make ourselves fully present. This was as Trinitarian as any of the buildings we have seen. We are created by God but Mary carries God within her womb - the wonder of God is that God reciprocates. The building was the strongest possible reminder that “You are not your own” (1 Corinthians 16:19).”

Acting Dean Lynda wonders: “I wonder what a church that celebrates darkness as well as light might reveal about God and our journey?”

There was the symbol of a recurring eight sided column and in the windows and the altar the symbol of a net. The eight represents the days of the new creation. The net calls to mind the story of the call of Peter, Andrew, James and John, “I will make you fish for people”. The pattern of the net was also picked out in the pattern on the floor, intended perhaps to envelop us and to break out of any restriction. We are called to be the new creation if we would only allow ourselves to be caught up in the net of God’s love.
The Cathedral dominates both the skyline of Cologne and the immediate plaza - the scale is simply overwhelming. The plaza in front is a busy marketplace with children playing, buskers (including a wizard), photo shops, souvenir stalls and a collage of young people sitting on the steps leading to the Cathedral. It was totally inviting and didn’t look as if anyone was not welcome. It was how we remember that the square used to be.

This is one of the great Cathedrals of Europe, known as the “Schwarze Dom” (‘Black cathedral’) due to the impact of smog during the Industrial Revolution. It is Gothic in style, cruciform in layout with distinctive twin towers at the west end and a finely ornate facade. It was difficult to find a sense of one’s place in the immensity of the statuary and monumental nature. We did not notice anyone obviously praying. The building was bustling with tourists but it was not particularly loud or distracting.

The building conveyed the majesty and power of God and exactly presented the theology of the time. The scale was similar to Sagrada Familia, but the sense of colour and light was wholly different. There was a sense of pervasive darkness inside as well as out. There was a great seriousness in this building, and considerably more playfulness in Sagrada Familia. On entry there was an overwhelming impression of vertical scale accentuated by fineness of the ribs and extreme thinness of window mullions. It is very refined in comparison to Gaudi’s exuberant design for Sagrada Familia.

The sanctuary arrangement has been modernized – with a high altar at the east end and a smaller more central altar in the middle of the two transepts. The impression is that the altar and pulpit were diminuitive in the overall scale of the building. The unpolished wood of the pulpit seemed out of place, temporary and incidental in comparison to the permanence of the marble and stone of the building.

If this cathedral was all you knew about God, you would imagine God could be reached through a series of prominent men. We couldn’t see a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and there seemed out of place, temporary and incidental in comparison to the permanence of the marble and stone of the building. If so, the Cathedral said that God was a very acknowledged presence in the city of Cologne.

Bishop Victoria reflects:

“The statues seem to emphasize the sanctity of very important people and I wanted acknowledged space for the confused or lost pilgrim as well as the princes of the church.”

Acting Dean Lynda wonders:

“I wonder what the layers of soot and pollution on this cathedral say to the pilgrim about God?”

Curriculum Questions:

1. Observe the detail within the stone work inside and outside this cathedral. It is detailed and intricate showing master craftsmanship. Do you think it would be easy or hard to create such a structure today? Why or why not?
2. What is the purpose of the massive pillars within this cathedral? Do all cathedrals need pillars?
3. What are the main characteristics of a Gothic Cathedral? What gothic features could be used in a modern cathedral?
4. Look up an explanation of “gargoyle” and draw a modern one that might be suitable for placement on a modern cathedral.
St Kolumba is the art museum of the Archbishopric of Cologne. The architecture combines the ruins of the church of St Kolumba, a unique archeological site, and the chapel of Madonna in the ruins (1950). The church was destroyed in allied bombing in World War II.

This building is a unique assemblage of old and new, where the new is grafted directly on to the old, with a deliberate intent to contrast and complement, and to respect the integrity of what was there originally. Part of the old ruins encloses a small garden and has been left as a place for contemplation. The narrow white brickwork forming most of the solid walls is made into an uneven lattice to allow light into the archeological site. The dappled light in the archeological site seemed almost organic and reminiscent of shafts of light on a spring day in a forest. The outside of the building did not prepare us for the contemplative, inviting atmosphere on the inside of this part of the building.

The chapel of St Mary in the ruins was intimate in scale and sense, particularly after the experience of the grandeur of Cologne Cathedral. The small chapel was erected as a collage of remnants within the ruins of the larger church. The tabernacle, housing the reserved Sacrament, had a pattern of twelve precious stones that may have been modelled on the High Priest’s breastplate in Exodus 28:12 which he wore when approaching God in the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem temple.

Curriculum Questions:
1. The city of Cologne was almost completely destroyed during the Second World War. The photos show how ruins have been incorporated into the modern architecture of a new building. A mixture of old and new. Do you think it works?
2. In your opinion, would it be appropriate to design something similar for the future ChristChurch Cathedral? Why or why not?
3. The Christchurch earthquakes have significantly impacted the city and people of Christchurch. Could the ChristChurch Cathedral be a place or have a space for reflective remembrance of this event? What might a reflective space look like?
4. If we build a cathedral rising up out of the ruins, will it always trap us in the sadness of the earthquakes? How do we avoid having a sad building? Is the purpose of the cathedral to be a memorial?

St Kolumba was reminiscent of the Pilgrimage Church of Mary because we were surprised by the profound sense of presence of God. We were reminded of Ezekiel 36: 26 “I will give you a new heart and put a new Spirit within you.”

We were also reminded of Augustine’s prayer “Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new. Late have I loved you.” The Christ whom we worship is ever ancient, and ever new. There is something about this building which takes us into an appreciation of the past which is not just nostalgia. It gave us enormous hope.

Bishop Victoria reflects:
“I found it immensely powerful to be invited into adoration of God in the midst of the reminder of destruction and violence caused by humanity. What was most powerful was that there was nothing triumphalistic there, but a strong sense of the incarnation in the midst of humanity’s inhumanity.”
This church was located almost at the end of the underground line on the outskirts of Munich. It is a campus consisting of a Catholic and a Lutheran Church, a kindergarten and community spaces.

Housed in a uniform white exterior, it sits apart from the adjacent shopping centre and residential buildings in both colour and design detail. The location of the complex was clearly signalled from a distance by a very simple white tower with a cross at the top which was reflected in the windows of the surrounding shops. The exterior of the complex is a unified white shell with little indication of the interior purpose of its dedication.

The interior of the complex is a series of courtyards with a variety of different building uses – kindergarten, offices, marketplaces and worship spaces. The courtyard paces presented a strong contrast to the exterior though planting, timber and warm brick. These spaces were obviously well used by the community - the market was being set up when we visited and the kindergarten was busy. The courtyard spaces were very enclosed with almost no view out apart from the sky. The sacred spaces were located adjacent to these courtyards, but their presence was not announced. It took some time to find the entrance to the worship spaces. We attempted to look through a window and found it interior covered by a dark oily film.

St Florian’s Catholic Church presented a very simple double height space with suspended light fittings and a backlit artwork above the altar with an off centre cross as the focus. The artwork had sporadic holes and rods protruding out. Facing it were the range of windows we had tried to look through earlier. What had obscured our view was a continuous artwork of stations of the cross applied to the glass. It consisted of a striking, somewhat ominous feature dominated by large black crosses. It was clear that this glass wall could be opened entirely, allowing the courtyard and church to be seamlessly linked.

The interior quality of the space was simple to be point of austerity with a dark floor, simple benches and colour only introduced in artworks. The space was rigidly symmetrical, only broken by the off set cross above the altar. The stations of the cross faced the cross artwork, and the other two walls each had small side chapels.

Members of the group had radically different responses to this space. These ranged from a strong sense of alienation and isolation to an appreciation of the simplicity of the space. For others, there was a sense that the major artworks – the resurrection and the stations of the cross – were intended to look like LED projections - like a 3D television or a light box. There was nothing in the space that permitted complacency or easy comfort. Although this is Catholic worship we thought of the theology of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer – there was no cheap grace here.

Curriculum Questions:
1. Think about how the congregation looks at the altar in these churches….looking upwards to a higher sanctuary? Looking downwards as in a theatre? Looking in from each side? Surrounding it on all sides? What do you think works best? Why?
2. What is the purpose of the different pieces of art?
3. Some amazing artwork! Does it attract your attention and if so why?
4. Imagine all the different kinds of seating you can have in a cathedral. In these photos we see some are fixed pews and some are individual movable seating. How versatile should seating be in a cathedral? What are the benefits to each of these types of seating?

Bishop Victoria reflects:
“There was the presence of pain and struggle and no hint of cheap grace in the spaces we encountered. There was the sense of deep wounds which have only begun to heal. Scriptural reflection Philippians 3:15, “Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you”
The church is singular and modern in form with an intentional desire to create a strong contrast with the surroundings. Its presence is announced in the neighbourhood with a tall steel tower with a cross on the street frontage. The church sits on a small, open square and visible through the clear glass facade is a warm intimate timber interior. The clear design concept is that of a display case with a precious object within. While not apparent on our visit, the entire front of the church opens up to the square with two huge doors. We would imagine this would present a clear sense of invitation on special occasions. In contrast to the rest of the building which is clad in clear glass, the doors have a translucent blue background ‘skin’ with a fine pattern of nails.

On entering though the door within the door, we were in a brightly lit space between the timber church and the glass enclosure. Walking towards the altar there is a pronounced moment of compression in height, as you walk under the organ. The font was also situated here. While the church was empty, the organ was playing throughout the time we were present. Our engagement with the space was greatly enhanced by the playing of the organ.

We then entered into a dramatic high space lit by light passing through a wall of louvres in warm wood. The louvres were progressive rotated so that the sanctuary space was the brightest part of the timber box. It was a simple but welcoming space, with a subtle slope on the floor drawing you forwards towards the altar. The aisle spaces were quite interesting in that the movement within the service would have been visible from the street through the louvres. This visibility could be controlled by opening and closing the louvres.

The simple nature of the sacred space was contrasted with the dark heavy presence of the organ. Interestingly, the organ pipes were arranged to graphic effect, with extraordinary symmetry and shading. If this was all I knew about God, I would think of a God of order and design.

The church is visually confronting yet its design speaks of a desire for greater connection between the church and the surrounding community.

**Curriculum Questions:**

1. Make a list of all the things that make a church building special and different from other buildings.
2. Think about the space outside a cathedral. Suggest how the area could be designed so that it complements the sacred space and could even be used for special events or a worship overflow.
3. What is interesting or unusual about the crosses in these photos?
4. Where is the organ situated? Where is the organ in the current ChristChurch Cathedral situated? Does it matter where an organ is situated? How would you decide where to place an organ in the new ChristChurch Cathedral?

**Acting Dean Lynda wonders:**

“I wonder how the community responds to the large doors being open to them?”

**Bishop Victoria reflects:**

“I found all the right angles, disconcerting but I did like the fact that certain symbols were framed in fragile wire netting, while other symbols spoke of permanence and eternity. That reminded me of the church as a bridge in life between the transitory and the eternal. I was able to pray in this space because of the beautiful music. I don’t think it would have been easy otherwise.”
The complex consists of a multi-function community hall, the pastor’s residence, offices and an underground chapel. The site did not indicate where the entrance to the church was. Overall, the church presents a cubic white form divided by dark steel mullions, uncompromising and undorned. It was almost a wilful denial of the beauty of the surroundings. However, once inside, the reason for this uniform external appearance is revealed in the complete enclosure of translucent marble lit from the outside. This is the essential design feature of the building, and contains all the buildings positive and negative features.

The symmetry of the veins in the marble in the way they had been arranged was astonishing. The viewer is presented with a landscape of light beyond the vertical mullions holding the marble in place and variegated patterns suggest weather, sky, environment, and God as creator. One of us thought it represented life in all its sheer complexities. Similar to the Herz Jesu Church in Munich, the approach to the worship space is through a smaller scale threshold beneath the organ. The church presents challenges in terms of acoustics, heating and maintenance.

We were surprised to find such difference in our response to the lower chapel. This chapel was about 1/5th the size of the main church. In contrast to the luminous patterned quality of the main church the underground chapel was largely opaque, quite rough in texture, and lit entirely from one source over the altar. The seating was curved with the altar as a focus raised on a simple stone plinth. Behind the altar the concrete wall was punctuated with two blue alcoves containing a credence table and an aumbry with a square design which was mirrored in the design of the edge of the altar step. This reminded us of John 1: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among is and we beheld his glory, full of grace and truth". One of our party commented that we were more comfortable praying in the intimate space of the chapel than in the larger space of the church.

Behind the congregation a long dark horizontal oil painting depicting the stations of the cross enfolded the viewer at eye level. The two spaces together presented an interesting balance of creation, redemption and inspiration. While being radically different they are actually complimentary.

Curriculum Questions:

1. Should a cathedral look different to other buildings? Should we know it is a cathedral when we stand outside? If you were walking down the street how might you know that this building is a cathedral?
2. On this journey of cathedral blogs, we have seen photos of some spectacular ceilings. The ceiling in this cathedral is quite different. How would you describe it? What is your opinion about it?
3. Streaming down onto the altar table is a circle of light. How is this symbolic? What story could it tell us about God?

Bishop Victoria reflects:

"Switzerland and especially the area around Meggen is exceptionally beautiful. I found it intriguing that neither of the two worship spaces offered a glimpse of creation. Each in their own distinct way allowed one to appreciate the gift of life but worship in these spaces clearly suggests that worship means going apart from the created world."

Acting Dean Lynda wonders:

"I wonder which of the two spaces in this church, I would prefer to worship in, and how I would feel in each?"
Le Corbusier’s 1950 Chapel sits on the crest of a hill above the village of Ronchamp. It has strong buttressed white walls with three small chapels and a large nave space, while a massive vessel shaped roof hovers overhead. The nave walls are penetrated by deep set windows with hand painted inscriptions. The interior sanctuary is mirrored by an external altar facing the open landscape beyond. The building avoids almost all rhythmic and standard construction forms in favour of a sculptural expression of concrete and light.

We walked up from the rail station which took approximately half an hour through beautiful trees along a quiet road leading to the rather isolated Chapel on the crest. Walking in this way created a sense of pilgrimage and heightened expectation. Upon arriving we were required to purchase tickets and pass through the bookshop to reach the path leading to the chapel. The bookshop carried a small selection of rosaries and bookmarks and a significant number of books on architectural design and the chapel we were about to see. It seems from this that the church is of as much interest for its architectural importance as to visit. We think more people visit this church out of architectural interest than to worship here.

One enters the chapel to find oneself in the nave immediately; one side of which has pews and the other a wide open space. The windows do open up somewhat into the chapel, allowing for the diffusion of light and colour. There were three concrete confessionals and three side chapels. There was a prominent pulpit, unusually high up it projected into the nave from a recess – it was perpendicular to the way the congregation face. There was not a great sense of intimacy in the larger chapel. The two smaller chapels- one of which had some seating- seemed better placed for adoration and private prayer. The roof is physically disconnected from the walls allowing the heavy concrete weight to float. The overall intention of the space seems to be to encourage a compression of the congregation within a much larger dark volume while focusing on the altar.

On the other side of the wall from the main altar, an outdoor chapel shares the same window featuring the Madonna and Child statue. The outdoor space is also shared by a war memorial in the form of a stepped pyramid which sits on the edge of an expansive view of the countryside. Recent additions including the visitors’ entrance and accommodation for the convent are concealed from sight of the Chapel by landscaping. Overall, the chapel did not meet the sense of expectation and anticipation which had grown on the walk up. While there was a sense of peace and the presence of God, overall the experience was somewhat aloof and distant.

Curriculum Questions:
1. What key Christian idea do you think this building conveys?
2. This cathedral has a spaciousness inside and outside. It has increased the usable space with a covered outdoor sacred space. What do you find interesting or peculiar about this?
3. When could an outdoor chapel be used? What could it be used for? What are some problems that could occur?
4. I wonder ... is for the candles in this cathedral? Can you think of different reasons and occasions for having candles in church?

Acting Dean Lynda wonders:
“I wonder why I experienced one place as deeply prayerful and another place as a monument?”

Bishop Victoria reflects:
“Sadly, I experienced this chapel more as an architectural gem than as a place of prayer. I hope I misjudged it.”
Evry Cathedral (Cathédrale de la Résurrection d’Évry) is a Roman Catholic cathedral in a new ‘arrondissement’ of Paris. The Cathedral sits on a significant plaza at the heart of this new community and is a distinctively cylindrical form with a ‘sliced’ top crowned by 24 lime trees – symbolic of ‘life’.

On arriving at the train station we were greeted by the sound of church bells which led us directly to the Cathedral and a large, open plaza space. From the plaza we were able to see the bells themselves – creating a unique visual accompaniment to a familiar sound.

The Cathedral is part of a complex of buildings which house associated community functions - these buildings are arranged around the Cathedral to create a series of external courtyards and gardens which vary in scale and function – creating an almost ‘cloistered’ experience. The ‘front door’ of the cathedral is accessed from a smaller courtyard and not directly from the large plaza space itself - the intimately scaled landscaped courtyard was a comfortable space to gather and meet before entering the Cathedral itself. The Cathedral and associated community buildings are clad predominantly in brick, which is used throughout the wider town centre and provides a unifying material palette in a newly constructed community.

The entrance to the cathedral was via a generous single height space opening directly into the dramatic circular worship space. The natural light in this space was provided by a series of skylights allowing strong sunlight and shadow to accentuate the curved walls. Interestingly the first point of engagement with this space is in an elevated position directly in front of the Altar before descending by a large curved walkway to the congregation seating – this allowed a clear overview of the entire space upon arrival.

The building was active and busy with a first communion service. It was clearly valued and appreciated by its community. Evry Cathedral presented as a place of happening. From the exposed bells to the excited youngsters, to the assembled families, this Cathedral on this Saturday morning was a place of encounter. That sense extended beyond the doors to the streets and surrounding courtyards. It was therefore surprising that the Cathedral was experienced by us more as a hall than a place of worship, more of a gathering place than a sacred space. The only reason we could give to this impression was that the sanctuary seemed more of a stage than the place for the celebration of sacraments and the proclamation of the word.

Bishop Victoria reflects:

“In terms of Scripture I thought of the contrasting images of Christ chastising those who did not respect the temple as a house of prayer and the incarnate Lord who went and talked and healed all manner of people. I think I would enjoy worshipping in Evry Cathedral but I also suspect I would want a quiet place to go apart to pray.”

Acting Dean Lynda wonders:

“I wonder what someone who knew very little of the Christian tradition would learn about God in this open spacious space?”

Curriculum Questions:

1. Consider what a cathedral needs to include to be welcoming for the blind, the deaf, little babies and mothers, people in wheelchairs, very old people and little children.
2. Some people come to a church or cathedral because they are lonely or sad. Does this building look as though it would be a comforting place to be? Is there anywhere in the building they could go?
3. Where could a notice board be placed in this cathedral? Would it fit in with the décor, or be an intrusion?
4. This cathedral in Paris has twenty-four lime trees on its circular roof top – they are symbolic of life. What trees would Christchurch, New Zealand choose to be part of our cathedral complex? In what way could they be symbolic? What story would they tell?
St Martin in the Fields is a Palladian church on Trafalgar square constructed in 1726 and designed by the Scottish Architect James Gibbs. It has recently undergone a major refurbishment – restoring the heritage ‘fabric’ while introducing significant supporting tourism, music, and events spaces.

This parish is of particular interest because of its broad range of community functions operating successfully alongside its core worship needs – the community and public functions providing a valuable contribution to the operation of the complex and supporting a significant associated homeless charity.

A major component of the public ‘life’ of the church is a distinctive cafe located in the crypt below the worship space - this is a large, award winning cafe which is run directly by the church itself.

The recently completed new ‘building’ within the complex has been located almost completely underground – allowing the original heritage structure to retain its visual prominence on Trafalgar Square while still enabling the provision of high quality, modern supporting spaces. The only visual ‘cues’ to the presence of the new building are two glass ‘drums’ – providing entrance and light respectively to the below ground spaces.

A key feature of the original building was the provision of an open portico and steps addressing Trafalgar Square – providing a covered ‘transition zone’ at the entrance to the church itself. Interestingly this type of space was not something that we had observed at any of the other buildings on our tour, (possibly with the exception of the steps at Cologne Cathedral), yet its success as a public space was unquestionable on a sunny day in London. The steps overlooking Trafalgar Square were full of people sitting and relaxing in the sun and the space was busy and vibrant. It was noted that the Church uses the portico space for a variety of functions – from candlelight vigils to the display of artworks.

Bishop Victoria reflects:

“My lasting impression is of a parish that is very clear about its priorities and that has an excellent mission action plan. We did not spend a lot of time in the actual church but the space was clearly invitational for worship and quiet prayer. I think it is an effective sanctuary in the middle of a very busy and loud city and I can imagine slipping in for a few moments reflection in the midst of a very busy and demanding day. The Scripture passage that came to mind for this church in Trafalgar Square was “Be still and know that I am God.”

Acting Dean Lynda wonders:

“I wonder if the hundreds of people who associate St Martin in the Fields with excellence in music and social events held in the cafe understand the depth of commitment to the Gospel of the parish? Are there still more ways that the mission of the parish could be expressed?”

Curriculum Questions:

1. This church is a great example of a church fulfilling a role similar to the church in the Middle Ages: it is the social centre for a community - concert venue, worship space, market, public speaking hall, place for hiring, sheltered seating for people who just want somewhere to chat. Is this what we want for our Square in the middle of Christchurch?
2. If a church is to be used by the whole community of the city, not just the worshipping congregations, then how do we keep a spiritual feel to the building?
3. Hanging in the glass cylinder entrance there are many nation’s flags. What does this tell you about this cathedral?
COVENTRY CATHEDRAL.

Coventry Cathedral is comprised of the retained ruins of the cathedral bombed during the second world war together with the new St Michaels Cathedral designed by celebrated Scottish architect Basil Spence (designer of Wellington’s ‘Beehive’ parliament building) and completed in the late 1950s.

“The decision to rebuild the cathedral was taken the morning after its destruction. Rebuilding would not be an act of defiance, but rather a sign of faith, trust and hope for the future of the world. It was the vision of the Provost at the time, Dick Howard, which led the people of Coventry away from feelings of bitterness and hatred. This has led to the cathedral’s Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation, which has provided spiritual and practical support, in areas of conflict throughout the world.”

Curriculum Questions:
1. Is that an angel at the entrance? Why do you think it is there? What does it say about the building?
2. Coventry Cathedral is another cathedral that has arisen from ruins. In what ways has the old been incorporated with the new complex? In what way is this special?
3. Cathedrals usually have a tower or a spire, or both. Sometimes clocks are set into them, sometimes bells or carillon are inside them. Why do you think towers and spires are part of the building? Do you think you could have a cathedral without them? Why, or why not?
4. Imagine you have been asked to design a modern stained glass window for people to see as soon as they enter our new cathedral ... draw it, and explain your design. If you can scan it and send it, please do.

While the new building is ‘modern’ in appearance and materials it draws cues from the vertical grain of the original gothic cathedral and the overall composition of old and new sits comfortably within its surroundings – in the 1990’s, a national poll saw Coventry Cathedral elected as the nation’s favourite 20th Century building.

Acting Dean Lynda wonders:
“How would the ruins of an old Cathedral surrounding the new make you feel about coming to church?”

Bishop Victoria reflects:
“I appreciated the conversations with an array of clergy and their understanding of the importance of the relationship with the city over the fifty years since the opening. I could pray in that space and in the various chapels. I think that their commitment to reconciliation through Christ in a broken and hurting world would leave a lasting impression on visitors as well as the worshipping congregation. My questions are what does it say about the Gospel and Christ centred Mission having two cathedrals on one site? What does it say about faithful stewardship because we were told they have to fund raise for both Cathedrals’ upkeep. The Cathedral is a place of worship and proclamation as well as hospitality. “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.”
We invite you to take part by reading and considering what inspires a sacred place to truly give glory to God and lift our heart toward heaven. We invite you to be part of Cathedral Conversations by responding to what you find in this book and to our questions and comments either:

onto our website blog: http://blogs.anglicanlife.org.nz/cathedral/

or by sending an email to: cathedralconversations@wam.co.nz

Q1. How could the use of light define ChristChurch Cathedral?

Q2. In designing the Cathedral, should we pay more attention to the external form or the internal function? Why?

Q3. What role could the Cathedral play at the heart of the new city? What implications does this have for the design of the building?

Q4. How do you think the Cathedral should relate to its surroundings in the Square? What sort of statement should it make?

Q5. Ideally, how would you imagine interacting with the Cathedral? How can it be welcoming without compromising its sacred space?

Q6. What would you like the Cathedral to say about God and the mission of the church?

Q7. Modern life changes rapidly. Should the new cathedral be designed for permanence?

Q8. What sort of memory of the past should be incorporated into the new Cathedral?

Q9. How important is a tower? Should it be integrated or separate?

Q10. Which unique values should be embodied in the Cathedral?

Q11. What features of a new Cathedral would encourage you to worship there?