



Fr. David John

North Island Pastoral Area

(North Island Catholic Parish)

Covering the North of Vancouver Island

With churches in Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Port Alice and Alert Bay

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North Island Pastoral Area Marks the Death of Pope Francis

After a very busy Easter weekend, which included a wonderful wedding, I got in late on Easter Sunday night which meant I heard of the death of the Pope just as I was going to bed in the small hours of Monday morning. When I awoke later on that Easter Monday I was already thinking about what we could do to mark the Pope's passing. Obviously we will be including the Pope in our prayers at our Masses, along with the Cardinals as they take up the task of discerning the will of the Holy Spirit as they start their process of choosing a new Pope.

But there was a sense that we wanted to do something more, so as two of our churches up here in the north have functioning bells in their bell towers, we decided to ring these bells eighty-eight times – *once for each year of Pope Francis' life*. Thus in Port McNeill on that Monday their bell was rung at 12noon. Then at 3pm in Port Alice a little group managed to gather to ring their two bells. *(See photo.)*

In this group at Port Alice were some youngsters, and we were discussing if they would be old enough to remember this day in years to come. We thought that Nick, who is five (*and will be six later this year, so really is five-and-a-half!*) might well be able to remember the day. If he does, then when Nick himself is 88 years old – seven years into the 22nd century – Nick will be able to say, "I remember when Pope Francis died and we went to church and rang the bells." And everyone around him will think, 'Wow, he must be old, he can remember the death of a Pope who lead the Church right back in the early part of the last century!'

I really do hope that Nick does remember this day, and perhaps a few of the other special things we do in church.

Fr. David