

WHĀNAU MERCY MINISTRIES

# HUI WHĀNAU 2025

**DAY 2 - 14 October 2025**

**Te Wāhanga Atawhai Mercy Conference Centre  
Thorndon, Wellington**





# Archbishop Gábor Pintér

## Keynote Speaker

### Apostolic Nuncio to New Zealand

Before taking up his appointment as Apostolic Nuncio (representative of the Holy See) here in Aotearoa, Archbishop Pintér was the Apostolic Nuncio to Honduras.

Born in Hungary and ordained as a Catholic priest in June 1988, he has a PhD in Theology and a PhD in Canon Law, and speaks Hungarian, Italian, English, German, French, Spanish, Russian, Swedish, and Haitian Creole.

*“Church and Finance: Towards an Economy that Serves the Human Person”*

Distinguished Trustees, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends ...

It is a privilege to be with you today — to speak before those who, through your service in the Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust, bear a very particular and noble responsibility: the stewardship of resources, institutions, and hopes that express the Mercy of God in tangible form.

The theme *“Church and Finance”* is not an easy one. It unites two worlds that often seem distant, even opposed — one speaking the language of transcendence, the other the language of numbers. Yet both are profoundly human activities. Both arise from our attempt to give order to life, to make sense of what we value, to allocate what we hold in common.

1. Understanding, Not Condemning

The Church cannot and must not remain on the margins of financial life, commenting only from afar. To evangelize the world we inhabit, we must first *understand* it. We need to study financial systems — not simply to criticize them, but to comprehend their logic, their mechanisms, and even their seductions.

This understanding is not complicity; it is the beginning of discernment. If we wish finance to serve humanity, then we must know how finance functions. Only then can the Church speak credibly and propose ways of healing what is wounded, redirecting what has lost its moral compass.

2. Efficiency and Ethical Sustainability

You, dear members of the Trust, know the complexity of managing assets, budgets, and institutions. You know the pressure to be efficient — and indeed, efficiency is not a sin. It is an expression of responsibility, of respect for the resources entrusted to us. But efficiency must always walk hand in hand with *ethical sustainability*. In our decisions, we are called to measure not only what is profitable, but what is just; not only what is effective, but what is humane.

Catholic social teaching offers a compass here. It reminds us that economy and ethics are not parallel lines that never meet. They converge in the human person — the true measure of value.

### 3. From Exhortation to Transformation

For Catholic social teaching to be more than beautiful words, we must, as Pope Francis has said, go beyond exhortations. We must learn to *look at the workings of finance*, to *expose its weaknesses*, and to *imagine concrete corrections*. This is not about moralizing markets. It is about infusing them with meaning — ensuring that every transaction, every investment, every budget line, contributes, in some way, to the common good. ... Holistic sustainability, inclusivity, and ethics are not accessories to financial effectiveness. They are its deepest foundation. Without them, even the most efficient system becomes fragile, unjust, and ultimately self-destructive.

### 4. The Dialogue That Is Difficult — and Necessary

An economist once told me something curious: “A dialogue between economics and philosophy, or between economics and religion, is possible. But a dialogue between *finance*, *theology*, and *humanism* — that is very difficult.” Indeed, it is. Finance operates in immediacy, theology in eternity; finance calculates, theology contemplates. And yet, this dialogue — difficult as it may be — is the one the world needs most. Because finance shapes our societies more deeply than ideology; and theology, if it is true to its calling, shapes our consciences more deeply than policy.

To bring these into conversation is to humanize what is technical, and to sanctify what is practical.

### 5. Responsibility of Those Who Know

You, members of this Trust, stand precisely at this crossroads. You *know* financial procedures; you understand how institutions function. This knowledge is your great *asset* — but it is also your great *responsibility*. For in your decisions, the Gospel takes on an administrative form. In your stewardship, the mercy of God is translated into structures of care.

## Conclusion

Let us, therefore, not be afraid of finance — but neither let us be seduced by it. Let us use it, as every instrument should be used: with intelligence, transparency, and love. Let us make of our financial work a continuation of mercy — a way by which the Church’s compassion becomes concrete, disciplined, and fruitful. The challenge before us is not only to manage resources, but to manifest values. If we succeed, then perhaps one day, someone will say that in the Mercy Trust, finance has learned to speak the language of faith — and faith, the language of finance.

### *“Lay Governance and Leadership in the Church”*

Dear Friends! Your Trust stands as a living testimony that the Church’s vitality does not depend solely on ordained ministry, but also on the faith, competence, and discernment of the baptized who serve with responsibility and love.

#### 1. A New Chapter in the Story of Mission

In every age of the Church, the Holy Spirit raises new forms of service. For centuries, religious communities — like the Sisters of Mercy — carried forward works of education, healthcare, and compassion that became visible signs of Christ’s tenderness.

Today, as consecrated numbers decline and social realities evolve, the Holy Spirit writes a new chapter: that of *lay governance and shared responsibility*. The Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust represents this chapter in a luminous way — ensuring that the charism of Mercy continues to inspire, not as a relic of the past, but as a living tradition, interpreted and led by women and men of faith who share its spirit. This is not a “replacement” for religious life; it is its *continuation* in another form.

#### 2. Leadership as a Form of Discipleship

Lay governance in the Church is not mere management. It is a form of discipleship. To govern in a Christian sense is to serve — to hold authority not as domination, but as responsibility.

True leadership in the Church is never exercised from above, but from within. It is the art of translating vision into reality while remaining rooted in humility, communion, and prayer.

You are leaders, yes — but above all, you are *stewards of a charism*. You hold in your hands not just property or policy, but a spiritual heritage that has touched countless lives. ... The Lord has entrusted it to you so that His mercy may continue to have human hands and wise hearts in our time.

### 3. The Theology of Co-responsibility

The Second Vatican Council already foresaw this transformation when it spoke of the *People of God* and the *universal call to holiness*. It taught us that every baptized person shares in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission. Lay governance is not an administrative convenience; it is a theological necessity. It expresses the maturity of a Church where the baptized act not as passive recipients, but as active co-workers in God's plan.

As Pope Francis has often said, "*The laity are not second-class members of the Church; they are the vast majority of the People of God.*" Your participation in governance gives flesh to this conviction.

### 4. Competence, Integrity, and Communion

In assuming leadership, the laity are called to bring not only faith but also professional competence. The credibility of lay governance depends on both — the integrity of moral witness and the excellence of practical skill.

Competence without spirituality becomes sterile; spirituality without competence becomes naïve. When both unite, they generate that distinctive *Catholic professionalism* which is both efficient and compassionate, strategic and humble.

Yet leadership is never solitary. It must be exercised in *communion* — with the Church's pastors, with the religious congregations whose heritage you continue, and with one another. Only in communion can governance remain ministry, and not simply management.

## 5. Guardians of a Charism

You, members of the Mercy Trust, are not merely trustees of assets; you are guardians of a *charism*. The charism of Mercy is not an idea or a brand — it is a living fire kindled in Catherine McAuley’s heart, now entrusted to yours. ... To guard a charism means to keep it dynamic, to interpret it anew in changing times, to apply it to emerging needs. This requires discernment, prayer, and above all, *spiritual friendship* among those who lead. ... Governance, in this light, becomes a form of communion — a way of listening together to what the Spirit says to the Church today.

## 6. Leadership that Evangelizes

Lay leadership has an evangelical power. When people see competent, transparent, faith-driven laypersons leading Catholic institutions with integrity, they glimpse a Church that is credible, adult, and engaged with the world.

You bear witness that holiness is not confined to the sanctuary; it can be found in board meetings, budgets, and strategic plans — when these are guided by love and justice. ... In your daily work, the Gospel acquires managerial form; mercy becomes policy; compassion becomes governance. ... This is how the Church evangelizes through her institutions: by making holiness operational.

## Conclusion

Dear friends, lay governance and leadership are not just a response to necessity; they are a sign of hope. They show that the Holy Spirit continues to renew the Church by awakening the gifts of all her members.

May your service always unite competence with contemplation, prudence with passion, and management with mercy. And may the Trust you represent remain a shining example of how the Church, through her laity, can lead with faith, govern with love, and serve with joy.

**Thank you!**

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**Te Ngākau Atawhai – Heart of Mercy:** In Aotearoa, the Mercy Cross, central to Catherine McAuley’s spirituality, is supported by a pair of koru. The koru represent the unfolding of new life and link our Mercy story to the spirituality of Māori and the ancient lore of this land

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