



ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF POLYNESIA  
OF THE  
ANGLICAN CHURCH IN AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND AND POLYNESIA  
*Serving the islands of Aotearoa, Fiji, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga*



## PRESS RELEASE

SUBJECT: **Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia Blesses the Uto ni Yalo and her crew for the Wansolwara Voyage to the Pacific Islands Forum**

Press Release

For Immediate Release

22 August 2025

Suva, Fiji – 22 August 2025 – The Diocese of Polynesia joins the wider Pacific family in blessing the voyaging canoe *Uto ni Yalo* as it departs Suva on the Wansolwara Voyage to the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands. His Grace Archbishop Sione Uluilakepa, Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, led the blessing ceremony, invoking God's protection and guidance upon the vaka and crew.

This year's crew includes a young Anglican from Tonga and Fiji, representing the next generation of Pacific leaders and guardians of the ocean. Her presence together with other young sailors affirms the Diocese's commitment to raising young voices in advocacy for climate justice, peace, and the protection of creation.

Archbishop Sione drew from Psalm 107:23–25, 31–38, a passage that speaks of those who “go down to the sea in ships” and witness the mighty works of God in the deep. He reminded the crew and all gathered that the voyage is not only a physical journey but also a spiritual mission:

- A journey of faith and trust – as the winds and waves respond to the voice of the Creator, so too are we called to place our trust in God’s guiding hand.
- A witness to God’s creation – the vast ocean is both gift and responsibility, reminding us to care for it faithfully as stewards.
- A call to thanksgiving – for God’s steadfast love and wondrous works that sustain life, nourish communities, and renew the earth.
- A blessing of abundance – as the Psalm promises, God turns deserts into pools of water and dry land into springs, so may this voyage bring renewal, life, and hope to the Pacific.

In his message, Archbishop Sione said: “This vaka carries with it not only the hopes of its crew but also the prayers of our Pacific peoples. We are reminded by the psalmist that those who sail the seas witness the wonders of God’s creation, and they are called to give thanks for His steadfast love. May this voyage be a testimony of faith, of unity across our ocean, and of our shared responsibility to safeguard creation.”

The *Uto ni Yalo* will sail in solidarity with the *Taumako Te Puke* canoe upon reaching Temotu, honouring Solomon Islands’ navigation heritage and supporting the Motalava Treaty. The voyage carries key Pacific messages for Forum Leaders: the call for a fossil fuel free Pacific, the recognition of the Pacific as an Ocean of Peace, and the affirmation of Indigenous guardianship and traditional knowledge in addressing today’s environmental challenges.

The Diocese of Polynesia is a proud partner of the Pasifiki Voyaging Alliance and joins with communities across Oceania in prayer for the safe passage of the crew, the strength of their testimony, and the success of the Wansolwara Voyage.

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For more information: Fe’iloakitau Kaho Tevi, Co- Vicar General || Mobile: + 6768700590 | +64212501269

Photos Annex



