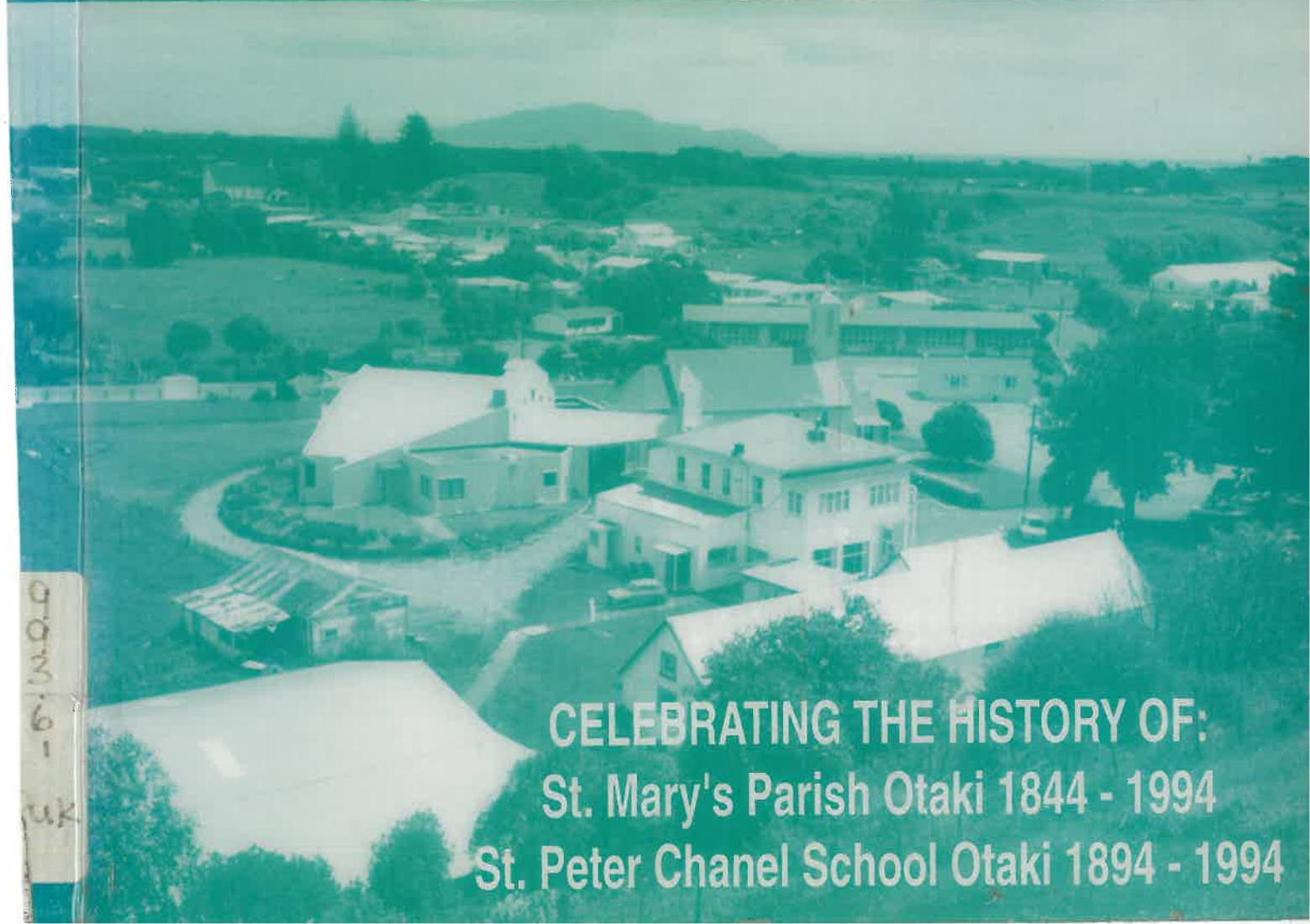


# PUKEKARAKA



CELEBRATING THE HISTORY OF:  
St. Mary's Parish Otaki 1844 - 1994  
St. Peter Chanel School Otaki 1894 - 1994

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## PUKEKARAKA DECEMBER 1994

- Written to commemorate the 150th Jubilee of St. Mary's Church Otaki, and the 100th Jubilee of St. Peter Chanel School Otaki.
- Authors Fr. Paddy Kinsella S.M., Mrs Irene Mackle, Mr. Brendan Molloy.
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- Front Cover Top: Pukekaraka Complex from hill C. 1910.  
Bottom: Pukekaraka Complex from hill C. 1994.
- This book Commemorates all who have laboured long and hard during the last 150years, for the good of the families of this parish, and the School community.

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### St. Peter Chanel School Staff 1994



Back Row: Linda McEwan, Sally Woolhouse, Kay Crump, Jane Lumsden, Shirley Macleod.  
Front Row: Uru Cooper, Helen Clifford, Margaret Beck, Brendan Molloy, Tony Birch, Marie Jamison.  
Absent: Lee Bain.



## PARISH PRIESTS MESSAGE.

Cardinal Delargy once said "People come and go, but the Church goes on, proclaiming God's Word, distributing his grace, gathering people together for loving service and ministry to each other and to the world." How true those words are in this Parish. The Spirit of loving service and ministry to others is alive and well.

Our Lady is unique in the Pukekaraka story. Her gentle hand is clearly here forming us in the image of her Son leading us to compassion and sacrifice.

Fr. Comte sowed this seed. It flowered well up to 1900 when it burst into tremendous life.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth gave us nearly a hundred years of their love and talents. Their journeys and sacrifices rivalled even those of St. Joseph himself. We are deeply grateful, and greatly enriched.

Fathers Melu and Delach were great inspirers. We read modern books about collaboration and promotion of lay people in the renewed church. The history of this Parish and huge Mission District is a hundred years ahead of its time. Co-operation between Priests, European people and Maori people was, and is unique.

We begin the new chapter of our story with a new church. I am indeed in humble awe of your sacrifices. May I thank all those who organised our 1994 Jubilee. A special commendation is due to Brendan Molloy and Irene Mackle who spent hundreds of hours with me in compiling this book.

Devotedly in Jesus and Mary

Arohanui,

Fr. Paddy Kinsella SM



**Pukekaraka before 1905 showing School original position prior to being shifted back to the stream.**

## PRINCIPALS MESSAGE

It is with pride that I write this forward to the Jubilee book. The pride emanates from the example set during the 96 years of control by the Sisters of St. Joseph and the priests that have always complemented the work done in the school.

There are 3 factors that make St. Peter Chanel (Hato Petera Kaniera) so special. One is the relative smallness of the school, with 140 children we can still do whole school trips, waiata, curriculum themes etc., with all the caring and sharing that goes with this. The second factor is the religious character of the school and the benefits that accrue from Christian Living lessons, Masses, liturgies etc. The third factor is the Maori dimension, - so complementary to the religious and small school aspects of the school.

Right from the early days Fathers Melu and Delach had a vision for Pukekaraka and the school was an integral part of this vision. We are proud to carry on this vision, with recent provision of 2 classrooms and an Administration Block, at a cost of \$63,000 much of it locally raised.

We look forward to the start of the next century with hope and expectation.

Brendan Molloy  
Principal

# THE CATHOLIC MISSION OF PUKEKARARA: THE FIRST TEN YEARS:

In 1844 Father Jean Baptiste Comte, SM, first came to Pukekaraka. He was a French Marist, aged 32, who had arrived in New Zealand in December 1839. After three years in the Bay of Plenty and Akaroa, Bishop Pompallier appointed him to the Mission of Port Nicholson in 1843. His territory stretched from Akaroa nearly to Wanganui, and included the Wairarapa.

In mid 1844 Father Comte made Waikawa and then Pukekaraka his headquarters. The church was built near his house and garden on top of the hill. The Maori styled house called 'Ohaki' ('Keepsake') on the hill marks the site of the house, and the fenced graveyard was the church site.

Over the next ten years he developed a thriving Catholic community. This had its own water mill and gardens and its own schooner, the Elizabeth, to transport produce for sale in Wellington. He procured four oxen and two ploughs. A rope making venture, a timber mill and a shop were started.

By 1853 the timber for the new church was on site. Father Comte also travelled widely, to Manawatu, Wanganui, to the Wairarapa, Wellington and to Akaroa. When home at Otaki, he taught an elementary school of about forty - more girls than boys. Some girls boarded at Bishop Viard's school in Wellington, for example, Te Raiti, Tonihī's daughter and Hopia Enoka. Comte had no school teacher.

When Bishop Viard made his first visit to the Otaki Mission in 1850, he found about 200 Catholics. He himself baptised and confirmed quite a few, including Hakaria Rangikura.

After Comte left, the market for flax collapsed and that for grain fluctuated; the ropewalk, mill and shop



**Ko Hoani  
Kometa te  
Pirihituatahi  
nana i  
Whakahaere  
te Hahi  
Katorika ki  
Pukekaraka  
i te tau  
1844.**

**Father Jean  
B. Comte  
S.M.**

went out of business. The ship ran aground on the Otaki bar and was not repaired. Typhus and other diseases devastated the Maori people. As for their spiritual life, the Otaki Catholics, like others in small settlements, saw priests only at intervals when they were able to itinerate from the larger towns.

Fr. Comte died in France 14 January 1899.

## MISSION POLICY:

Bishop Pompallier and Bishop Viard were very clear in their mission policy.

Before returning to the Bay of Islands in early 1841, Pompallier rested a little longer at Akaroa. He wrote in French a sort of Missionaries' handbook. It can be read as a statement of policy. For its time it shows a remarkable empathy with Maori ideas and tribal custom. It did not condemn these as anti-Christian just because they were not European, and offered examples of how some of their religious beliefs could be made a starting point for Christian instruction. Occasionally he used Maori terms to illustrate his point. He emphasised that there should be as little disturbance as possible to traditional Maori leadership and custom, as long as that custom was compatible with Catholic belief and practice.

The routine a missionary developed was to make a base in a Maori community that would accept him, and from there travel a regular round of visits to a circuit of villages, staying several days in each. In each a prayer group would be established to gather for common Catholic prayers morning and evening with instruction taken a step further on each visit. Full participation in the Eucharist was the long-term aim of evangelisation and instruction, but the introduction to it was a gradual process. In moral teaching, too, Maori were encouraged to move little by little from giving up what was seriously wrong to adopting what was positively good. Whenever possible the Bishop would visit and complete the programme by conferring the Sacrament of Confirmation. The whole process could take up to two years.

Being confronted by evangelical Protestantism in New Zealand was a new experience for the Missionaries. The second half of Pompallier's Instruction concentrated on how best to deal with the errors and calumnies preached by Protestant Missionaries about Catholic Faith; it was not to be done by causing their opponents to lose face with the Maori; truth was what mattered, not personalities.

## THE TRAVELLING MISSIONARY:

For nearly every Missionary, their mission station was little more than a base for constant journeying, with their mission on their back.

Elsdon Best described Fr. Jean Pezant, whom he



met on Papamoa beach returning to Tauranga:

"I never remember seeing a more miserable figure travel worn, unshaven and unwashed, he wore the tri-cornered hat of his order, his long coat and a kind of black petticoat were tucked up with the skirts under his waistband and a pair of old Wellington boots were drawn over his trousers. From his neck hung a large crucifix and on his back was a kind of sack containing in every probability all he possessed in the world. He was returning to Tauranga [sic] which place he had left three weeks before..."

No doubt the French priests looked incongruous, but less so than today. In those days a European would never have dreamed of travelling like a present-day tramp. His cassock was the only outer garment a missionary had and, like a soldier, he wore it as a uniform. Fr. Antoine Garin wrote home about the way Pompallier regarded the missionaries' cassock as a Catholic flag and wanted it displayed as far and wide as possible. Garin also described his travelling kit for a short trip: a wooden box containing his breviary, the Imitation of Christ, ritual, Maori prayer book, medical kit, sewing materials, writing materials, tinder box, matches, pocket knife, wallet, blanket, raincoat, a warm cloak and a taiaha that he used as a travelling staff.

It is significant that Garin's list does not include the bulky requisites for celebrating the Eucharist. Little chapels were in many places and set up for Mass to be said, thus saving much cartage. Most of these requisites must have come from France.

## THE CATECHISTS:

These people were in charge of the Church in various villages when the priest was not there. They learnt to lead the prayers, do christenings and burials.

One such catechist, Hakaria Rangikura, appears at Otaki from 1850 to 1916 when he died about 100 years old. He was the bell ringer and we now call the bell by his name 'Te Pere o Rangikura'.

## THE GIFT OF LAND FOR FR. COMTE'S MISSION:

In 1851 a deed had been signed setting aside lands for the support of the Catholic missionary and again, in 1854, for the support of a school. About 300-400 acres were involved but since by law Maori land could not be alienated except to the Crown these donations were invalid. The documents were not produced at the Court sitting in 1881 and witnesses were somewhat confused as to what lands had been gifted but were agreed that Tonihi, and the hapu, had intended Pukekaraka 5 to belong to the mission. He, however, had died in 1872.

At the court hearing the witnesses told the story of all the tribe assembling, and giving permission for the erection of the Church.

It was Tonihi's suggestion that the Church be built where it is. From Rangikura's map it is fairly certain that it was built on the site of Tonihi's own house.

Tonihi's gift was a free one and no one objected. One chief said, "The owners of Pukekaraka No 5, are the dead and the Church."

In September 1881, the court ruled that the land be Inalienable (can't be sold), and Tonihi's daughter, Ateraiti, the registered owner.

In 1891 Hakaria Rangikura of Ngati Kapumanawawhiti and Bishop Francis Redwood were made proprietors on the land title of 'Pukekaraka No 5' with the following restriction:

"Inalienable and to be held in trust for the Roman Catholic Church in New Zealand as a burial ground and Church site in perpetuity." The land block is 19 acres, stretching in the south from the Mangapouri stream to the hill Pukekaraka, and including the urupa next to the Tainui marae.

The Trustee was to be appointed by the Catholic Maori people of St. Mary's Church.

## VISIT OF THE NEW BISHOP. PHILIPPE VIARD, SM IN 1850

Very soon after arriving in Wellington to take charge of the new Diocese, Bishop Viard came to Otaki. The first Register shows that on 20 October 1850, he baptised twenty five people, including Hakaria Rangikura at Waikawa. Many were adults. He baptised other groups at Poroutawhao and Otaki. Some were from Waikato. A Rotorua name appears too.

## THE FIRST BAPTISMAL REGISTER

On Hakaria Rangikura's map there is a note about Fr. Comte: "His good chief Te Ra being dead." We can assume that Te Ra was his special patron and friend. The very first Baptism recorded is Te Ra's son.

"On 23 May 1844, I baptised Hoani, aged one year, Son of Te Ra and Rangirukea." (original in French) [No godparents mentioned - probably no Catholics around].

On 24 April 1845 Matiu te Rangitoto (Waikato) is the first Godparent mentioned. His godchild was Riperata, born the same day, daughter of Ripu and Tohi, at te Ngaue (haurini) [sic]. Also mentioned is Penehamina at a Baptism at Moekau, Wairarapa [near Otaki?].

Of the seventeen Baptisms in 1844, 9 were at Otaki and 8 were at Ohau. All were children under six years.

In 1845 many adults became Catholics, some being 30, 25, 18, and 15. On 20 July 1845, 13 adults and 14 children were baptised. Hoani Ngakai of 'Whakatane'

Comte de Grey GL NZ

@ 29 A.

Otaki, ce 19 Juillet 1852.

Monsieur le Gouverneur,

J'ai reçu les livres Maori que votre Excellence a bien voulu me faire envoyer par Monsieur Kemp. Je suis extrêmement obligé à votre Excellence qui à moi humble jésuite, ne pouvait faire un meilleur choix de livres, pour l'instruction des Natures. Les Maoris font des progrès en civilisation et à mesure que leurs idées se développent, votre Excellence vient toujours à propos pour les pousser plus loin.

Quelle différence pour tous les rapports depuis votre arrivée à la Nouvelle Zélande ! Il n'y a que ceux qui font toujours en contact avec les Maori

Les Maori qui puissent bien en juger. Qui aurait pu dire alors que la pain serait bientôt faite, qu'on allait voir les Maori à la charue, à la tête des moulins, faisant moudre eux-mêmes, figurant eux-mêmes leurs moutons, tenant parfaitement bien leurs livres de compte, commençant à s'élancer dans le commerce et les petites spéculations, etc. Tout cela a pris sa source sous un sage gouvernement qui n'a rien précipité, rien retardé, rien négligé, et qui a toujours su se trouver là où il le fallait.

La Nouvelle Zélande sera une colonie unique dans l'histoire des colonies.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec le plus profond respect,

J. B. Comte [sic].

Letter from Father Comte to Gov. Grey, thanking him for sending some Maori language religious books, for the use of Otaki parishioners. He discussed the problems facing the early missionaries, and wished the Governor well in his duties.

was the Godfather for many of them.

There were 84 Baptisms that whole year, including sixteen people in the South Island, 13 White and 3 Maori. People baptised early in the year had Merania, Pirihima, Matarena, Makarita, and Penehamina for Godparents.

Christmas was celebrated at Akaroa.

## THE HISTORIC WOODEN CHURCH

The earliest reference to the building of a weatherboard church occurs in a report on the diocese which Bishop Viard addressed to the authorities in Rome on 2 February 1853.

"We are hoping to finish the Otaki church this year but the means are lacking. So the timber to build a fine church and a school, most of which has already been sawn, will have to wait until next year."

A strong tradition holds that the timber was provided by the Maori converts from their own forests. Certainly it seems to have been under their control as witness the evidence of Hakaria Rangikura, the Catechist .

"Hori, he Rangatira (Mihinare) of Ngati-kapu had given a site for a township and a Catholic church. Consequently the timber was brought on the ground, but afterwards Hori and Heremia (Rangatira Catholic) had a quarrel. Then Tonihi offered his land as a site. The

timber was fetched back from the intended township near the Waitohu bridge and the church was erected on the actual site. The builder was the same who had erected the Maori College. His name was in Maori, Te One Kamura."

If Tonihi was responsible for the church being at Pukekaraka) Bishop Viard seems to have decided where to put it there. Later Bishop Viard came to Otaki after Fr. Comte's departure and had the church built where it is now, that is to say, nearer the township of Otaki, for the convenience of Europeans. Hakaria Rangikura indicates that the church was built on the actual site of Tonihi's house. The Church at Otaki begun by Fr. Seon was finished by Fr. Moreau in 1859. It was of mortice and tenon construction. No nails were used in the frame, only in fixing weather boards. On the above evidence we can date the erection of Otaki's Catholic church as 1858. It is the oldest surviving Catholic church in New Zealand and is still very much in use. Though no reference to an architect has been found it was a very pleasant little building - "une jolie chappelle".

Internally the church was very spartan. For 30 years it remained unlined and originally its only furniture seems to have been an altar which as late as 1873 was described as "temporary". There were no seats or benches. However from Palm Sunday 1863 it did have a way of the cross installed and blessed by Father Seon



Catholic Church on right, between 1889 & 1893.



and in the late 1870s, if not earlier, it was quite well supplied with the vestments and vessels required for Mass and other services. No further improvements of any consequence seem to have been made until after the arrival of Father Melu.

The initiative for completing the church, came from the Maori part of the congregation who informed him one Sunday in May 1886 that they wanted to finish the church and would do the work themselves which, as Melu commented, solved the financial difficulty. A carpenter, they said, would provide seats for 1 pound supplying the wood himself. By the weekend of 23/24 April 1887 all was ready for the blessing and grand reopening by Bishop Francis Redwood and a congregation variously estimated at 300-400 or 700 people. The choir came from Jerusalem, Wanganui River.

The church had been lined, it had been repainted, and had acquired a new altar, altar rails and seats. It was at this time also that it acquired a name. It is called St. Mary's, Our Lady of Victories.

In the following year at Christmas time a Father Braxemeir, who was a teacher at St. Patrick's College in Wellington, came to Otaki to decorate the altar and sanctuary. He painted a 'carpet' on the floor and a vine on the walls. The crucifix was erected 19 February 1888 and the creation of a new sanctuary was accomplished in 1901.

The two statues of Our Lady and St. Joseph came from France and were the gift of Father Melu's sisters, whose names were Magdeleine, Josephine and Melle Melu. The statues reached Otaki on 5 April 1888 and were solemnly blessed on Whit Sunday, May 20. A statue of the Sacred Heart has also been in the church from the 1890s or earlier.

The roof, originally shingled, is replaced by corrugated iron, in July 1889 and cost £39-4-7. A flat-roofed squarish room appears behind the vestry on the north side, connecting it with a verandah that runs the length of the eastern wall of the church, partially enclosed with weatherboards and glass at either end. The verandah and adjoining room were demolished in the course of the alterations made in 1901.

By 1901 the congregation which by this time, and perhaps well before, was predominantly Pakeha, was too big for the church and plans were made to extend it. First, however, the building had to be slewed round to make it face in a slightly different direction. The church was realigned to fit in with its neighbours, the convent and presbytery. The extra space needed by the congregation was gained by taking down the back wall of the original building and building on a new sanctuary. The sacristries were then moved back to line them up with this new section.

At Mass on Sunday 28 July 1901 Father Melu spoke of the changes:-

"Today you notice the difference in the size of the gallery and in the stairs, also the porch has been enlarged

by exactly one third, and the confessional far more decent and more comfortable to the priest, and to the penitent."

The Baptismal font at its proper place, the two little side altars which remain a feature of the church were erected in July/August 1902. The statue of St. Peter Chanel had been introduced by May 1904. Chanel was a Marist priest who was martyred at Futuna Island in the central Pacific in 1841 and is the patron of the Otaki convent school. One of the stained glass windows added to the sanctuary in 1904 depicts him, the school children having contributed to its purchase. The second window, as one might expect in a church called St. Mary's, represents the mother of Jesus and was donated by the Maori people.

Some time in the 1920s a porch was placed at the front door. The bell tower was demolished because of the Murchison earthquake of 1929. The bell was placed in a detached belfry. In 1862, Bishop Viard wrote to the Marist headquarters in Lyons.

"The Catholic natives of Otaki wish to have a fine bell for their Church, kindly have one sent as soon as possible; you can expend 12 to 15 Pounds Sterling, the sum which they have deposited with me."

The bell is inscribed

AVE MARIA, GRATIA PLENA

IHS

G MEARS ET CO

LONDINI,

FECERUNT 1862

## LATER DEVELOPMENTS

In 1942 the stained glass windows were put in, and new stations erected.

In Fr. Beban's time the church got a good paint, an enterprise remembered mainly because Father Jim fell off the roof. Father Heagney started doing up the Church, and the porch. Improvements made in 1974 by Fr. O'Reilly were a new tabernacle in the shape of a Pataka, carved by John Gardiner of Wehi Wehi, who also carved the Sanctuary lamp holder. The painting on the sanctuary wall was by A. Keller.

Fr. McCormack made modifications to fit in with Vatican II Liturgy, and extended the porch. Seats and kneelers were donated by the Good Shepherd Sisters.

## RESTORATION

At the same time as the new church was being built in 1992 plans were made to preserve the old church for posterity. It has the highest Historic Places classification. The Parish had saved up \$25,000 over the years for this work, Historic Places gave \$7,000, and Lotto came to light with \$24,500.

The building was thoroughly examined by engineers and architects, and plans drawn for the restoration.

Stage One was completed in 1993, under the impetus of Mr. Peter Watson and the Management Committee.

The building was properly anchored to the ground by large concrete blocks and steel rods. The west wall was braced and fixed with steel. The tower - as near a replica as possible - was rebuilt and put in place, 23 October 1992.

Stage Two is to properly strengthen the sanctuary end, re roof, do necessary repairs and repaint.

The old church is still beautifully cared for and decorated with flowers. It is our Blessed Sacrament Chapel, and weekday Masses are normally celebrated there.

## The Messy Period. 1856 - 85

Father Compte resigned and returned to France in 1854. There would be no permanent replacement for him till 1890. Periodic visits from Wellington were not enough to maintain its fervour and Catholicism there went into decline.

The church was burned down in 1856; its replacement was begun in 1858, but not completely finished for nearly thirty years.

After making several longish visits to Otaki from Wellington, Moreau was appointed there in 1861, but he was asked by Viard first to visit Otago briefly, a trip he had made twice before. He reached Dunedin in March 1861 was caught by the sudden influx of gold seekers and had to stay there for 10 years.

## The Land Troubles.

Otaki had advance warning of troubles to come. In mid-1860 an Otaki Catechist wrote asking Viard about the wisdom of flying the Kingite flag. Viard advised against it, and then had Moreau on one of his visits there read and explain the Bishop's reply more fully. To no avail. Within a year a group of Catholic Maori gathered at Otaki to declare their allegiance to the Maori king, Potatau. A Kingite flag had been brought from the Waikato by two Otaki chiefs who were both Catholic and, as catechists, religious leaders of their people. They hoisted this flag along with a French tricolour which Comte in years past had flown on feast days as a sign of special prayers.

The event was followed by a rash of criticism in local papers which Viard answered calmly, disassociating the Catholic Church from any anti-government feeling. He probably missed the deeper and wider significance of the incident. The raising of the flags side by side was a deliberate act, considered at least a year beforehand, and repeated the following year. An over simplified statement of the Maori view would be that Protestants owed allegiance to the Queen, even to the point of praying in their services that she might overcome all her enemies - including the Maori. Catholics declared their allegiance to the Church, without stating any opposition to Maori nationality and the King; the Church was French, and France symbolised antagonism to

England.

On this basis there was a conscious effort to unify the Kingite movement around Catholicism. A Kingite meeting in Taupo in 1862 concluded that Catholicism was the better religion for Maori.

This attempt at creating Maori unity failed because sectarian rivalry was already too entrenched. But the movement showed the French impact on the Maori rebounding in a way the missionaries never expected. The Pai Marire movement then became the catalyst, and the end result was the destruction of a lot of mission work and the drifting away of many Maori Catholics.

## Periodic Visits.

The travelling priests spent quite a lot of time at Pukekaraka. Father J.B.Petitjean from 1854-1867, Fr. Seon, Fr. Maillard (1865) and Fr. Pertois appear in the Registers. From 1871-78 Fr. Delphine Moreau was the Missionary (Bishop Viard visited too). On coming back from Otago he wrote:

"When I returned to Otaki in September 1871, to make it my headquarters, I found that not only the children but also the young men and women did not know a word of the 'Prayer' or of the Catechism and had very little wish to be taught them."

Moreau's district extended up to the Rangitikei River and when the Pakeha population built up following the founding of towns in the Manawatu he apparently found Otaki less suitable as a headquarters.

From 1876 he lived at Feilding. He was freed of much of the work in Manawatu when in 1875 the Parish of Palmerston North was established. It is clear that he cared for all the Europeans as well as Maoris.

The Otaki Mission was far from defunct. In 1858/59 the church got built. In 1860, a group of local people went to Wellington to celebrate Christmas, and stayed with Bishop Viard. In 1863 the "fine bell" was procured from London. The catechist Hakaria Rangikura attended to burials etc. and did what he could in between the visits of the priests. Part of his brief was to have daily prayers for all the people to attend. Tradition says he rang the bell daily for over 50 years.

The church was well supplied with vestments, chalices and all things necessary for Mass and the Sacraments.

In 1868 or 9 Fr. Pertois built a rough cottage behind the church.

In 1871 Bishop Viard died. His successor was Bishop Francis Redwood. He arrived at a time of a huge influx of migrants. The face of the nation changed.

## RECORDS.

Book 1 had Baptisms only. Book 2 - records weddings and funerals as well. It starts in 1859, in Fr. Moreau's writing. It finishes in 1878.

Fr. Petitjean shows that the new Christian names,

put into Maori, rolled off the tongue and were very popular. Hohepina (Josephine) Rapaera (Raphael), Waretini (Valentine) Arakatera (Alexander) Ponawahio (Boniface) Wehipeihana (Vespasian) Temetera (Demetrius) Pipiana (Bibiana) Raureti (Lawrence). Ateraiti (Adelaide) and Meropa (Melle) were common - they were the names of Fr. Comte's two sisters.

As Fr. Moreau lived in Feilding for some time European and Maori names from all over Manawatu, Rangitikei and Horowhenua appear.

We find the children of Hector McDonald and Agnes Carmont, of John Anthony Knoes (sic) and Catherine Knoes, the Collins, Casimir, Nicholson, Morris, O'Mara, Purcell, Cavanagh, Rush, McDonnell, Carmont, Death, Jenkins, and Jillett families.

During these years marriages lawfully entered into were blessed. Graves of people buried since the last visit were also blessed. Many of the Baptisms and Burials done by catechists were not recorded.

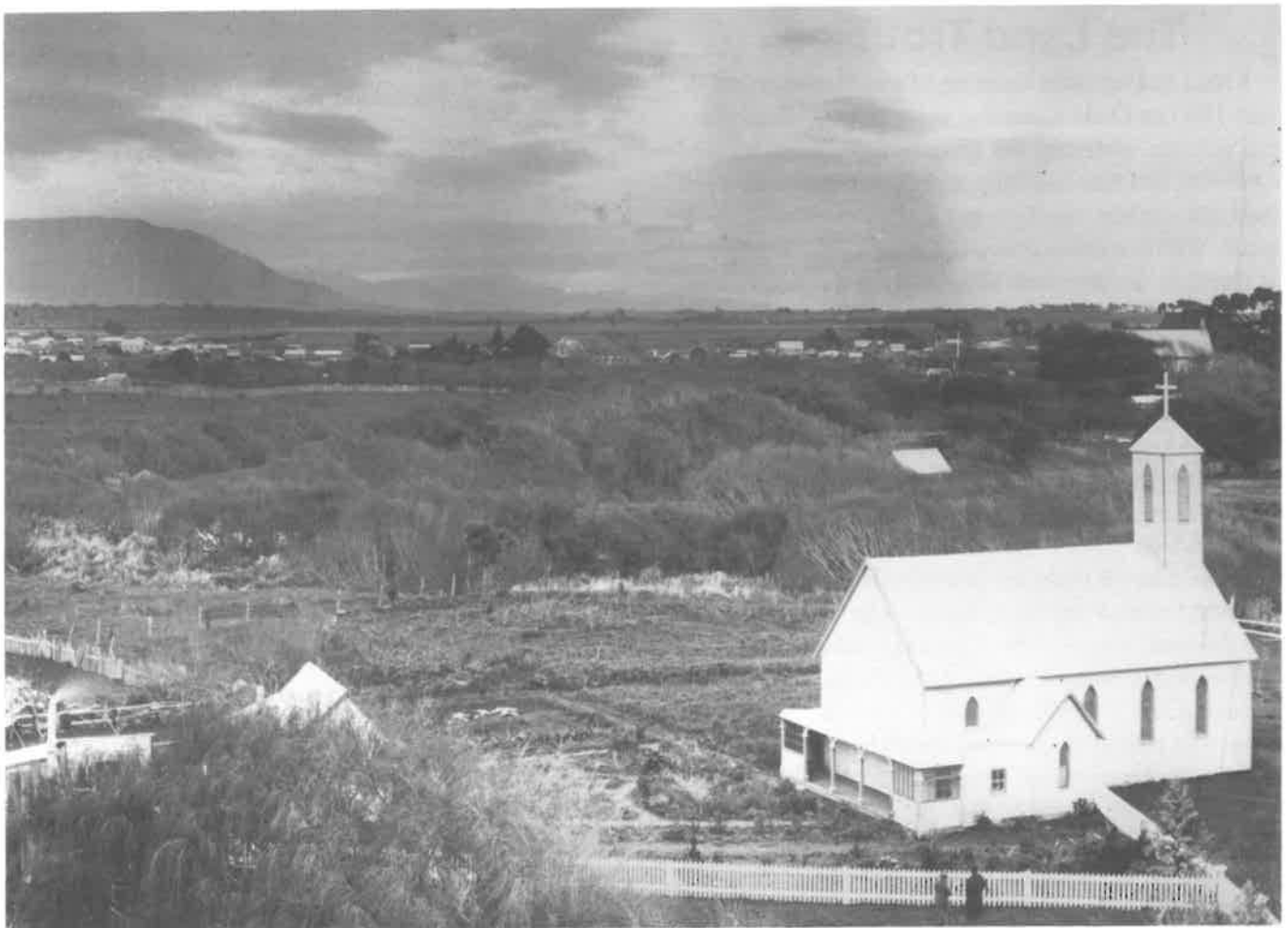
## THE GREAT REVIVAL - 1885

This era began when Fr. Melu went to Turakina in 1885. From there he was to look after the whole West Coast. He started in October and by January 1886 he was baptising in Otaki.

Early in 1886 he had the temporary companionship of Cognet to undertake a thorough visitation of the area



**Father Melu S.M. (Werahiko) as a young man, 1885 - 1935, (buried at Pukekarakara).**



**This Church was moved, somewhat, - to present site - 1901. Sanctuary & side altars - 1902 (Note: Sanctuary moved to back from where it was).**





**Father Claude Cognet S.M. (Koneta)**  
1886, 1892-94, 1908-1912,  
(buried at Pukekaraka).

on horseback: Matahiwi (near Bulls), Awahuri near Feilding), Puketotara (near Oroua Downs), Poroutawhao (Foxton), Muhunoa (near Ohau), every family in Ohau itself, Waikawa, Otaki. In mid-year Melu, again helped by Cognet, visited equally thoroughly the eastern Rangitikei. Melu followed up this intensive canvass with regular methodical visiting; it resulted in over 500 Maori gathering at Otaki in April 1887 when Redwood blessed the refurbished church and administered the sacrament of Confirmation. A large group from Jerusalem led the liturgical singing. This set the pattern for years to come, and Melu made his residence in Otaki from 1890 onwards till his retirement in 1935.

The pattern intensified in 1893 with the appointment of a second priest, Delachienne. His name was usually abbreviated to "Delach" and he gave 20 full years to Otaki. He had a gift for organisation and the hui developed year by year.

In 1914 his New Zealand superiors removed Delach from Otaki, and Maori mounted a petition for his return. The Maori text with an accompanying French translation was sent to higher superiors in Europe and gives a rare glimpse of what all the French Marists strove for. "The reasons for Fr. Delach's success among us, the Maori people, were because by means of his knowledge, he



**Father John Vibaud (Wiripo)**  
1904 - 1906, 1913 - 1929.

assimilated the depths of Maori customs, the Maori ways of acting and the Maori language - that is the quintessence of Maoritanga. That is the reason why, when he carried out his projects among us, he always acted in ways which were in accord with our thinking, and also because of the goodness, and the nobility and the kindness of his manner of acting and his advice to us. Thus Fr. Delach was greatly supported by us, the people. We can say unreservedly: there has never before been a priest who was so zealous in carrying out and bringing to completion the teachings of the faith among us, the Maori people..."

## **BISHOP REDWOOD.**

Bishop Redwood attended most of the Maori church openings over the 30 or so years of the revival, as well as many of the inter-tribal hui, taking a prominent role in them all. He enjoyed them and the Maori enjoyed him, encouraged by his interest in them. His experience in his younger years of France and the French left a broader vision than many who could not see beyond Ireland as a model for the Church. Redwood seemed to have empathy for that Maori sensitivity that made them feel ill at ease worshipping with a European congregation; so he did not force the issue of integration and encouraged these specifically Maori church celebrations.



**Fr. Melu - A Marian procession, before the Wall of 1910 but after grotto.**

1888). First successful visit to Little River and Kaiapoi. May 6th opening of Hata Hana Kauangaroa (Whangaehu River) where he has a fall in the church. Lucky escape. Christmas Day - First Missa Contata at Otaki. 1890. Fr. Broussard comes to Otaki. An old cottage is rented for a Presbytery. Fall from horse at Kereru. Very narrow escape of being killed.(Sic). May - St. Francis Church Kaikoura is opened. 1893. Fr. Delach is appointed.

The new era begins in earnest.

## DIARY NOTES.

In his diary of work (in 1880's) Fr. Melu records: 1886 Oct. - First visit to Awahuri. Dec. - first visit to Kaikoura. Baptisms 82. Marriages 12. 2,500 miles - half on horseback.

1887. Opening of Otaki Church. St. Michaels, Pouroutawhao is built by Poni & Co. (opened Jan.3,

## GOLDEN TO DIAMOND 1894-1904

The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Marist mission at Otaki was celebrated with a hui in December 1894. Redwood presided at solemn high Mass at Pukekaraka on 30 December, during which thirty-three people were confirmed. After Mass the congregation



About 1904



**Marian Celebration 1901.**

Creating a striking impression, the flag was the product of Delach's artistic imagination. A little further away, on the summit of the hill, a huge totara cross had been erected in the midst of the graves of the first catechists. After a solemn procession from the whare whakairo to the summit, the cross was blessed by Redwood who spoke on the 'sufferings and works' of Comte and the early missionaries. The cross looked over the burial ground. It was a symbol of the living, remembering and praying for the dead.

The Blessing was typical of Pukekaraka events. Early in the morning High Mass was sung by Pa Hohepa. Our Lady was dressed in wedding garments, the altar decorated with flowers and coloured lights. Seven children assisted the priest. The organ and melodies were sweet to the ear. Fr. Cognet was the preacher. At 3pm the bell rang for vespers. The people then assembled around the cross, singing the hymn composed for the occasion. "To those no longer among us we the living say 'rest in peace'". Holy water and incense were used in the blessing. The loved ones lay in peace under the cross.

After benediction in the evening, Delach organised a spectacular fireworks' display on Pukekaraka hill. Among the people feted at this golden jubilee hui were Hakaria Rangikura who had assisted Comte at the foundation of the mission. Hakaria was closely involved in the original donation of land to the Marist mission.

For decades he had been one of the Marists' principal co-workers, accompanying them on visitation in the Otaki district, and involved in a wide range of mission activities, including the operation of

assembled on the hill of Pukekaraka for the dedication of a small whare whakairo (carved house) named Ohaki, built on the spot where Comte had pitched his tent in 1844. A photo of Comte, which had been placed at the entrance of Ohaki, attracted a lot of attention. Each Maori passing before it did not forget to carry out the most respectful "tangi". On another part of the hilltop where the first Catholic church had once stood, a large flag was shown.





After erection of Convent 1895. School still where "Hine" Marae now is. Photo taken between 1901 when extensions added to Church and 1904 when Roma built.



the mission vegetable garden and orchard, but best remembered locally as the chief bell-ringer for over fifty years.

The old photos show us the grounds decorated with flags, arches, and lights.

## FR. MELU'S DIARY NOTES

1895 - Blessing & opening of new church, St. Peter & St. Paul at Awahuri - Archbishop Redwood.

1896 - Opening of St. Patricks' Church Paraparamu V. Rev. F. Devoy V.G. Mission by the Archbishop.

1897 - Archbishop Redwood blesses the new presbytery June 27.

1898 - Accident on going to Ohau - broken leg (28 Aug.)

4 Sept. Archbishop Redwood opens and blesses the new church of St. Andrew at Levin.

1899 - Tangi for Fr. Comte who died in France.

1904 - 10 April - opening of new Foxton church.

Fr. Melu supervised the building of many Churches. Each building involved the local community. The Catechists and local chiefs built their own churches, and there was often a small cottage the priest could use. The town churches involved Europeans, mostly because that's where they lived.

Each church has it's own beautiful story. Melu and Delach had a most happy knack of involving both races on an equal footing. For example a Catholic Maori

church in the Rangitikei district was constructed at Kai Iwi pa, Awahuri, near Feilding in 1894-5. The church of St. Peter and St. Paul was built by Te Raika, son of the chief, Kerehama, assisted by the catechist, Paora Mohi Winiata, and the people of Ngati Kauwhata, using the plans supplied by Melu from St. Stephen's church, Kuku. The whariki for the interior of the Awahuri church were woven by Meraina Kereama, and the stations of the cross were donated by a French family, resident in the district the Pascals. Redwood opened the church on 20 October 1895, and also confirmed fifteen Ngati Kauwhata as part of a week-long hui which accompanied the church blessing.

## THE MAORI MISSION PRIESTS OF THE DAY

Priests gave unrecognised years of hidden service to Maori people. They helped keep the language alive, and preserve a pride in Maoritanga. Maori prayer books and catechism were used. Latin was still the official language of Catholic public worship, but in various ways the French missionaries bent liturgical rules adapting to the practical needs of a Maori setting, in a way that the Irish clergy would not approve of. For example, while the priest celebrated Mass reading the Latin Missal prayers softly, a catechist would chant a Maori paraphrase to the congregation. With this leadership, at

least 18 churches were built at Maori request and mostly by Maori community effort; the opening of these at various times between 1880 and 1916 provided opportunities of Maori unity and self-esteem. The custom arose of gathering for religious hui, especially at Christmas and Easter; these became occasions of intensive catechising for adults and children alike. A small quarterly magazine in Maori, Whare Kura, with news of interest to

Catholic Maori was published from Otaki between 1909 and 1917 and revived from 1923 to 1928.



**January 1906, big working bee for 2 weeks decreasing slope of hill and planting turf, "Hine" erected 1905.**

## THE GREAT HUIS OR GATHERINGS BEFORE 1914

Pukekarakā became a great gathering centre. In 1887, when the church was completed and re-dedicated by Archbishop Redwood, 500-700 people gathered.

They were here for some days. The choir came from Jerusalem.

1894 was a Jubilee Year; 50 years since Fr. Comte arrived and established the Mission; 40 years since the Immaculate Conception was declared an article of



**Catholic Church & Presbytery, Otaki. 1906 - after Marae Hine was built in 1905. Photograph courtesy Alexander Turnbull Library.**

Catholic Faith. Maori and European gathered from all over Horowhenua and all over the country. The whole mission had been a scene of great activity with a multitude of Fund Raising events to build the New School, The Convent, Ohaki, to put up the Huge Cross and the flagpole. There were numerous reports in the local papers.

The 1904 Hui was the next

Jubilee, and a report was printed in Maori. The whole Wellington Province was involved. "Roma" was built and opened. Fr. Cognet preached on the name given to the Marae - "Hine - Nui - O - Te - Ao - Katoa". "Never, ever, shall evil or any badness be allowed to walk on to this place; it is dedicated to truth and goodness", he proclaimed. Then, Muaupoko people entered Roma.

Thus was celebrated a near miraculous reconciliation of people through Our Lady's prayers and spirit.

The local people, were joined by Hawkes Bay, Wanganui, Taupo, North Auckland and Wairarapa. They gave warm support for the new spirit emanating from



**Shows how path went up hill - left of Grotto, Probably before Mauapoko Wall 1910.**

Pukekaraka.

The jubilee windows in our old church, Our Lady looking out onto the marae (paid for by the Maori people) and Blessed Peter Chanel (paid for by the school children) were blessed and dedicated. A collection was started to obtain a statue of St. Peter.

Archdeacon Devoy and Fr. Shepherd represented the Archbishop. Pokaitara expressed great thanks to Fr. Shepherd for crafting the first ever illuminated address

to the Pope from the Maori people, which was written at Whangaehu.

Archdeacon Devoy told the people that at that very time Archbishop Redwood was presenting their loyal address to the Pope.

On the 8th December, the Feast Day, Masses were celebrated at 6, 7, 8am and Solemn High Mass at 10am. The church was



**A Hui after opening of Hine, after 1905.**

packed with both European and Maori people.

It took five sessions to serve dinner to all. Great praise was heaped on Ngati Raukawa for their hospitality. At 3pm, the congregation went up to the top of Pukekaraka. The school girls were dressed in white. The hill was covered with all the people of the district, Maori and Pakeha, at the place of Fr. Comte's first church. A beautiful procession to the church, carrying banners, led to the celebration of Benediction, with twelve priests assisting Archdeacon Devoy. In the evening lanterns of blue, green and white were lit up. Te Moana led the night prayers and Koneta preached about the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. After night prayers a bonfire was lit on top of Pukekaraka, with singing and entertainment. The next morning, Fr. Delach explained that 3 pounds had been collected at Mass the previous day from Europeans. The people agreed to use the money to help pay for Our Lady's window. It was also agreed to have a training programme for Catechists. There was much discussion

about a statue of St. Peter, and it was agreed that people should take 12 months to raise the money and bring it back in December next year 1905 (St. Peter unveiled 1907). Greetings to the Hui were sent from several Chiefs who were unable to attend. Report was written by Manahi Pateriki Pokaitara Te Hiakai and printed by Frank Penn, at the Otaki Mail Office, Mill Rd. Otaki.

About 500 people attended the Hui in 1905. The new grotto - Te Ana o Rouaiti, and the new 100ft long house, Hine Nui o te Ao Katoa were dedicated on December 8th by Archbishop Redwood. The Archbishop also distributed a variety of gifts to the chiefs: medallions, rosary beads, large photographs, all of which had been sent by Pope Pius X in recognition of the carved address of greetings sent by the Maori people. Redwood read a long address from the Pope which was translated by Hone Heke.

The 1906 Hui was held at Hamua near Pahiatua, by the Ngati Rangitane people. The great chief Nireaha Tamaki built a Catholic Church as well as a large meeting house and dining hall. Bishop Redwood excelled

himself. The next year Nireaha became a Catholic.

The special topic was "Maori people of different Churches should not have the Bigotry found among Pakeha people."

St. Peter's Statue was the focus of the 1907 Hui. It was huge. About 1000 Maori and 500 Europeans were present for the unveiling on 10th February 1907. The Archbishop spoke emphatically of the foundation of the Catholic Church, Jesus Christ and St. Peter. The fine translation for His Grace was done by Mr. J. R. McDonald of Heatherlea, Levin, who was a great help to Delach in these Hui.

Young Maori Women were the focus of the 1908 Hui.



#### After 1905.

With their families, 28 young women spent a week's retreat of prayer and catechesis. The catechists were Te Pokaitara Te Hiakai, Taiaroa, Tutohe and a visitor from Nga Puhī, Te Rikihana.

The 1909 Hui was very large, people coming from all over Wellington Diocese, the Bay of Plenty and Taupo.

There were 300 visitors from afar, including very influential people such as Te Heuheu Tukino of Tuwharetoa; Erena Te Ara-o-Rehua of Kawhata; Matene Kahuariki of Kaikoura; Te Pura of Ngati Kahungunu, and Wikitoria Taitoko of Wanganui. Fr. Delach got the Muaupoko people to run this Hui right in the heart of Raukawa. The next year they put up the wall of reconciliation.

The whole thing was a miracle. The Hui focused on the doctrinal training of young Maori men, especially as catechists.





Fr. Delach on left, Fr. Melu on right with 2 parishioners.

## THE HUI OF 1909 6-14 June

Archbishop Redwood was present throughout. There were 11 Baptisms, 107 Confirmations and 283 people received the Sacraments. The marriages of several people coming into the Church, were solemnly blessed. Notable were Te Ara O Rehua, Nga Huia and others.

Medals were presented to the men who were inducted into the Sodality of the Sacred Heart. Several girls received the Sacred Veil in the Sodality of Our Lady. Kui Taruru and Te Ara were the guardians of the girls who received their tapu from Mary's Marae.

The Hui was the occasion for explaining the new

marriage laws of the Church.

A notable incident was the death of Atarea Te Pukenui, from Hastings. Although not well, he wouldn't stay away from the Hui. He collapsed as it were at the feet of St. Peter, and in the presence of Our Lady.

At the end of the Hui he was brought to the Church, Mass was celebrated for him, he was farewelled by the Archbishop and buried in the Pukekaraka cemetery. A beautiful Procession of the Blessed Sacrament was a major feature of the Hui.

Te Rerehau came from Waihi for the erection of St.

Peter's statue. She called the people to come to Waihi for Easter. Pukekaraka accepted the invitation and went. And now at this hui Pukekaraka gave the Papal colours/flag back to Rerehau as a further sign of their unity in the Faith, under our Holy Father the Pope. It was handed over to Te Heuheu and Piwa to take back to Rerehau. Pukekaraka had been greatly impressed by demonstration of Faith by the Taupo people.

Fr. Vibaud and Taitoko of Wanganui called for the mana of the hui for the following Christmas. A Children of Mary cloak was handed over as a sign of that pledge.

In the evening - all the lights were lit - strung up to the grotto and right up around St. Peter. Pa Werahiko did this (and his young people.) The lights were all different and fascinating.

Muaupoko  
parepare or  
wall of  
Reconciliation  
at opening  
1910.





**This is Mere Te Iwa Te Rerehau Te Heu Heu Waihi, Tokaanu. Died 1911.**

translations was not solved.

The last Great 'Delach' Hui was held in 1913. Delach and Melu joined with 54 Maori elders in preparing for a week's Christmas Hui at Pukekaraka. It was attended by about 500 people, and was described by the N.Z. Tablet as

"A great Maori meeting, one of the most successful in the history of the Mission."

The newspaper also noted that a

"large number of conversions to the Catholic Faith have already been the result of such gatherings, and equal, if not greater fruits, are hoped for in the future."

At this hui, a Papal Flag, donated by Pope Pius X was presented to the people.

The new pedestal under St. Peter's Statue was blessed. It was donated by Erena Te Ara o Rehua, of Ngati Kauwhata. The original pedestal now supports Our Lady's Statue in the Grotto.

The September 1911 hui was largely a memorial service for dead chiefs. Fr. Delach records, "I came home from Hawera last week, tired and weary. Nireaha is the seventh pillar of the Church I have buried in my district this year." Mere Te Iwa Te Rerehau Te Heuheu also died that year.

## THE EARLY 1900's

The Mission was carried into the 1920's by Fathers Melu and Delach, assisted by Fathers Cognet, Maillard, Vibaud, some others for short periods, and Brothers Anthony Kennedy, Martin Mader and Stanislaus McMullan. It was a steady round of work. The "Parish" extended from Paekakariki to Foxton and Shannon, and took in Levin.

The "Mission" still attended to Maori people from Whangaehu to Kaikoura and the Wairarapa.

In 1908 Foxton/Shannon became a Parish, and in 1920 Levin followed. Paraparaumu had to wait until 1951. Blessed Peter Chanel's School served the whole district for many years.

The priests made enormous efforts to give life and hope to the Maori people. Many of the small Maori churches were built at this time. The great Huis were held. In general money was very short, and most income was swallowed up by travelling expenses. Trains were generally adequate but fares were expensive enough. For years the Propagation of the Faith money from Europe, especially France, had propped up the Mission. Now it was reduced to a trickle.

Father Melu's diary records the opening of the Foxton church in 1904, on 10th April. In 1909 there were important Maori gatherings at Taupo - April 11-18 (Easter), at Pukekaraka June 6-14, and at Jerusalem for Christmas. Archbishop Redwood was at Otaki for

Then with all gathered on the Marae night prayers were held. Fr. Cognet preached beautifully and with enlightened words. Everyone was urged to come back - no longer as visitors but as tangata whenua. Praise was given to Muaupoko for doing the major part of the work. The Archbishop and a group of priests stayed right through. Visitors had come from Tauranga, Taupo and everywhere south of that, as well as from South Island.

Reporter Manahi Pateriki Pokaitara Te Hiakai. Chairman Kani Hori. Secretary Te Heuheu Tukino. Motions were put forward.

1. The whole Catholic Bible should be translated into Maori.

2. Prayer books and hymn sheets to be reprinted - in pocket book size.

3. Two Maori speaking priests from Auckland and two from Wellington to do this.

4. The Marae at Pukekaraka is established for the whole Catholic Church.

5. A calendar for the year (Church one) be sent to every catechist in every district.

The people agreed Pukekaraka had been made a permanent Marae for the whole Catholic Church. The Christmas Hui, 1909 was held at Jerusalem, Wanganui River. The Archbishop and the Provincial Superior of the Marists attended - The big talking point was Maori Prayer Books. The problem of a variety of books and



Probably  
Fr. Cognet's  
funeral  
1912.

Easter, and in June. He and the Marist Provincial were at Jerusalem for Christmas where the 'hot topic' was the standardisation and reprinting of Maori prayer books. The Mission's aim was to have people saying daily morning and night prayers, often in common. The people also chanted the Mass prayers and were devoted to the Rosary. Where Mass was celebrated monthly or less, the Faith was kept alive by prayer. These prayers are still chanted (off by heart mostly) in quite a few places. Different places (e.g. Jerusalem, the Hokianga) had their own "tunes", and often differing versions of the prayers. Uniformity was never achieved.

July 2, 1911, saw the opening of the Te Horo church, though Masses were celebrated there long before that. The statue of St. Joseph from Te Horo is inside the front door of the presbytery. The building was later taken to Waikanae and was

the basis of the church there.

On Christmas Eve 1912 Fr. Cognet died. He was the first priest to be buried on Pukekaraka Hill, on the site of the original church. He was deeply mourned.

On July 4, 1913, St. Peter was placed on his pedestal, and the blessing was held at Christmas 1913. On 17th August Fr. Delach went to the Consecration of Bishop Thomas O'Shea.

In 1914, Fr. Maillard SM comes to be Superior. He was here previously 1898-1904. Fr. Delach left at this



In front of  
Mauapoko  
wall 1910.

time and in 1917 returned to France.

Fr.'s. Delach and Melu had built up a strong Catholic chain of Maori Catechists, churches and villages. The style was distinctively Maori, with lots of singing and chanting, and participation.

Practically all Maori people spoke their own language so everything was in Maori. There were also many churches e.g. Foxton, Shannon, Levin and Otaki where there was a mixture of people and languages. The Irish and New Zealand clergy were not comfortable with this style of prayer and worship, Maori people could not follow the English and Latin of Parish churches, and not to have lots of singing made things appear quite foreign and dull.

The government and powers of the day were convinced that unless Maori people had a pakeha education, and became competent in English, they had no future.

Bishop O'Shea espoused this philosophy and insisted on unifying the Parish system and the Maori Mission. Fr. Delach fought this with all his strength. Soon after, he left the Mission and after 1917 spent the remainder of his life in France, a man in exile.

Professor John Dunmore, was born in France and Fr. Delach was a close family friend. He told them that New Zealand was a wonderful country. There are Europeans there but the main people are Maori. The main place for Maoris in New Zealand is Otaki.

Fr. Henry was here during the war, and in 1918 Father Vibaud replaced him. In November 1918 Fr. Melu was sick with the "Flou". The visits of the Missionaries to Maori Villages continued throughout these years and Masses were said on a regular basis. References are made

to the Parish Missions held in all the churches e.g. Levin and Paraparaumu in September 1917. In 1921 Fr. Soulas (retired) says Mass at Otaki at 7am on Sundays.

In 1924 Fr. Le Pretre was here for a time. He spent most of his life in Wairoa and died there. From Nov.16-23 Fr. McGrath preached a Mission. Fr. Melu also reports that on April 25th, Anzac Day Fr. Vibaud said 7am Mass and he said 9am "After breakfast. Fit... Aue !!!". A year later, 25th April 1925, Anzac Day, the Calvary on Pukekaraka was blessed and dedicated, our war memorial.

This particular diary ends 1926.

## THE GREAT WAR 1914-18.

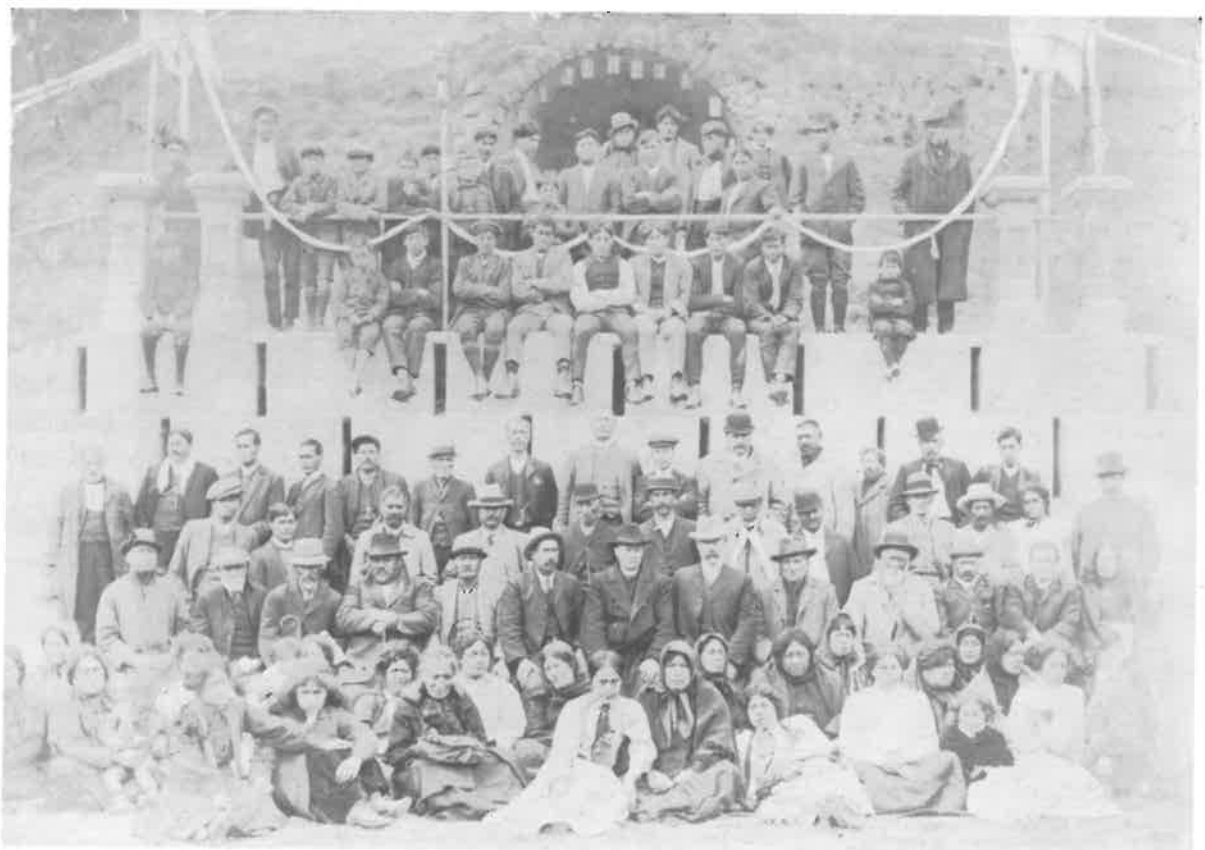
Wars are always dreadful devastating events. Our Calvary on Pukekaraka records our Otaki people who gave their lives. These were often adventurous innovative people. Our town and our Church, and our Maori Hapu lost a lot of leadership.

## THE GREAT FLU 1918

Many parts of New Zealand were devastated by this epidemic. Maori people with their custom of "Tangi" were especially hard hit. Many Maori Mass centres were nearly wiped out. Our records have lists of names, often with few details, of those who died.

## THE RATANA MOVEMENT.

After the Great War times were very hard. Maori people felt it keenly. There were yearnings for the old Maori ways, and the Spirit of Aroha and cooperation.



Fr. Delach after 1910 when wall was built.



## THE END OF THE FRENCH ERA.

All the early Marists were French. As English speaking Marists arrived, they were snapped up to work with the increasing number of European immigrants. Four Irish priests started St. Pat's College Wellington in 1885, for example. Fr. Ginaty SM - an Irishman - got the Good Shepherd enterprise in Christchurch going. He preached a Mission at Otaki at one time. They did marvellous work. Many would have hardly met a Maori, let alone have a deep knowledge of the language and cultures. The Maori Mission was left to Frenchman. (Some said - who could live with a Frenchman anyway). As the French missionaries went more and more to the Islands, fewer were there to assist Maori people. The Mission began to run down. It was not until the 1917 that the first Kiwi became a Maori Missionary. He was Fr. Gus Venning (Otaki 1936-51). The next man was Fr. Jim Riordan SM (Otaki 1929-36).

In 1925 Fr. James More - O'Ferrall became P.P. of Otaki, the first non Frenchman.

In 1930 Fr. Devoy was the P.P. Fr. J. Riordan, Fr. John McSherry, and old Fr. Melu were the Missionaries. At this stage Fr. Le Pretre looked after Wairoa, there were priests in Jerusalem, and the only other station, Otaki, now included most of Hawkes Bay in its territory.

## THE SLUMP 1930-35.

If anything bit into the soul of New Zealanders this was it. There was terrible suffering and poverty. There are many people still alive who can speak of the marvellous work in Otaki and District of the priests and the nuns as they rallied the Catholic Community.

## THE MAGAZINE "WHARE KURA"

This began in December 1909. It is written totally in Maori. The editor was Fr. Delach.

The name means House of Learning, and because the Catechists were instructed, in 'Roma' about God, the 'Learning' means Divine Wisdom.



### Mangapouri Stream

Wiremu Ratana began a movement that paid great respect to Maori values. It also gave people hope. People flocked to it and the Catholic Mission lost many followers. The French priests were getting old, and gaps were left in the customary care of the people. Some say the separation should not have happened. There are strong moves towards greater understanding. There are other powerful political Maori Movements as well.



May 1914



The front cover for many years showed St. Peter's Basilica, Rome with its marvellous courtyard, the church of the Pope. Underneath is written, "This is the Newspaper of the Catholic Church for Maori people of Aotearoa and the South Island".

The purpose of the magazine was to tell people about the Church and its teachings, report on Maori gatherings relating to the Church, to answer questions and publish letters.

The first issue starts with Mihi from Fr. Koneta (Cognet) and Fr. Arapata (Mill Hill Priest). Then follows an explanation of the meaning of the word 'Christ-mas'; Scholarships at Hato Hohepa and St. Patrick's College are explained: Readers are told of the aims of 'Whare Kura', which is run by a committee and is to cost one shilling a year for four issues. An article about Saint Eugenia, Virgin and Martyr, follows. A report on the Hui of June 1909 is given. News follows from Waimarama, Moteo (Hastings) Manakau. Finally, some news from overseas. This became the normal format.

Letters soon start appearing from Mangamaunu (Kaikoura); Motukaraka (Hokianga); Aria (Taumarunui area); Whangape (Hokianga) Whangarei; Mokau (Taupo), Kawhia, Mangatainoka, Jerusalem, Otaki.

In 1910, a formal address to the Governor General on the death of King Edward VII, from the Catholic leaders. The new King, George V is also welcomed with expressions of loyalty. It was supported by Sir James Carroll (Timi Kara) Minister of Maori Affairs (Hawkes Bay), Hare Hongi (East Coast), Te Heuheu (Taupo) Wiki Taitoko and Raihania, (Wanganui) Te Ano Wi Tako (Wellington) Rore, Pukekohatu (South Island) Ratima Kaiwerewere and Tuta Nihoniho. These names give an indication of the central place that Pukekaraka and Whare Kura had in the whole of New Zealand Maori

Catholic life. The publication seems to have ceased in 1917, and been revived in 1923 by Fr. Vibaud, or Pa Wiripo SM. He wrote elegant Maori. Cost was now six shillings a year. Many of the articles were concerned with the rise of Wir-

emu Ratana and the Ratana movement. Pa Wiripo had a profound knowledge of Maori theology and wrote some scholarly articles. Various Maori people wrote articles e.g. John Tuhi, Mehina Kiwa-Nuku, Te One Brett, Mihi-Atea, 'Hau' Heremia te Wake (Hokianga) and some of the Mill Hill priests.

The magazine seems to have stopped in 1928. In Fr. Vibaud's time the cover usually had a carved house design on it.

April, 2 1924 edition shows the carved frame surrounding the message of the Maori people to His Holiness, Pope Pius X. Father Delach was sued for defamation over one of his articles. He was fined and afterwards his superiors were not pleased and they became convinced he should lower his profile.

## **Pukekaraka, July 1915. Fr. Melu writes; Ka mate a Hakaria Rangikura THE DEATH OF HAKARIA RANGIKURA**

This is an affectionate and heartfelt farewell to this old old man. Of all the old people who have embraced the Catholic Faith at Pukekaraka, he is the last to go. He goes back to the time of Fr. Comte in 1844, shortly after Bishop Pompallier offered the first Sacrifice of the Mass for our Redemption in 1838 at Hokianga.

We look back to all that has happened since then. This kaumatua has clung tenaciously to his Faith since that time at Pukekaraka here. (He was Baptised by Bishop Viard in 1850, at Waikawa, on 20th October. About 34 years of age.)

When he died he lay in state on the porch of Roma on the Marae of Hine Nui o te Ao Katoa. All the people of Ngati Raukawa came to pay their respects, as well as Ngati Huia.

He lay at the feet of Our Lady and St. Peter. When people came to pay respects their hearts went back to the glorious days of Pa Hohepa Delach, and the great celebrations. They recalled the loving kindness that nurtured them into our Mother the Church. And so my friends I greet you in the Lord. The day that Pa Werahiko buried him was one of great grief. Mereana and Taruru sang laments for him at the grave side, where almost every Catholic has assembled. Fitting for him are the words of Jesus "To him who keeps my word until the end, I will give the victory." Now he has returned to the place he so earnestly desired when in this world. Another of Our Lord's sayings that apply to him, is, "Whoever confesses me before men, I will confess before my Father in heaven"

When this old man was alive, he constantly urged his family and people to follow his example of a holy and prayerful life, and faithfulness to the Church as a place of peace for both spirit and body.

He might have yearned for heaven, but when he died he must have been 100 years old or more.

There is not much written about this man. He was the most loyal catechist. He was part of the great Huis where so many learnt their prayers and their faith. When there was no priest around he buried many people. With his frock coat and top hat he appears in many old photos. He is said to have rung the church bell nearly every day from 1863 when it went up until he could do it no longer. He travelled all around with the priest, and took the prayers in his absence. That is why he lay on Roma. He was specially honoured by Archbishop Redwood at the

Hui in 1894. He doesn't seem to have had any children. He may have been a brother-in-law of Tonihi, and he certainly had a big part in giving the land to the Church.

There are references to suggest that he was buried right next to the old church on top of Pukekaraka.

At the opening of the new church, the bell was re-dedicated and given the name - : "Te Pere o Rangikura" (Rangikura's bell).

## THE MAORI WELCOME TO THE APOSTOLIC DELEGATE

From the book of the Congress 1940 by Rev. N. H. Gascoigne (Summary of Article in 1974 Booklet.)

Described with all the picturesque imagery of the Maori mind and language as "the heron of one flight." as "the Captain of the canoe of St. Peter." His Excellency, the Papal Legate was welcomed by the Maori people on the historic marae at Otaki., on Monday 5th February 1940, following Congress week. This was one of the most colourful and spectacular events associated with the Eucharistic Congress. One inscription, especially noticeable, was that above the meeting-house - the title HINE NUI O TE AO KATOA - the name of her who is the great chieftainess of the human race, Mary the Mother of God. No more appropriate setting could have been selected for this welcome of the Maori race to the representative of his Holiness. The Legate was accompanied by His Grace, Archbishop O'Shea, His Grace, Archbishop Mannix, Bishop Fox of Wilcannia-Forbes, and the Rt. Rev. Mgr. King a member of his suite.

On arrival at Otaki, where the streets were gaily



**Catholic priests and settlers - Otaki, Fr. J. Ainsworth on left horse. Fr. J. Holley S.M. on right horse, Fr. W. Goggin S.M. standing by horse**



**Welcome to Legate, Otaki 1940.**

decorated with bunting the Legate was received by the Mayor Mr. C. F. Atmore, who, on behalf of the town accorded the visiting prelate a civic reception. On the platform in addition were the visiting prelates, the Mayoress, Mr. G. A. Monk (Chairman of the Horowhenua County Council), and the Rev. Paora Temuera, Anglican Minister at Otaki. Arriving at the entrance to the pa, the official party was greeted at the decorated entrance by Rangi Hikaka, a chieftain from Taranaki. At the entrance to the marae itself, the traditional ritual of the Maori in challenging a visitor was enacted. His Excellency advanced and picked up the twig. His action was the signal for the raising of hundreds of Maori voices chanting the traditional cry of welcome: "Haere mai' Haere mai' " The addresses of welcome followed both in Maori and in English.

The first speech was delivered by a representative of the Ngapuhi tribe of North Auckland and was interpreted by Mr. W. R. Jones of Hawera. The representative of the Ngati Tuwharetoa tribe referred to "the people of the seven canoes assembled here today". The speaker on behalf of the Hawke's Bay natives carried the simile of the canoes a step further, in referring to His Excellency as "the Captain of St. Peter's canoe". Speeches of welcome were also made on behalf of tribes from the Upper Wanganui, Taranaki, Otaki and Wellington districts. Every speech was accompanied by sacred chants rendered by the Maori people only in the presence of the most distinguished visitors. In a short speech, Mr. Atmore, the Mayor of Otaki, reiterated the sentiments he had expressed at the civic reception and proceeded to pay a special tribute to His Holiness for his outstanding work in furthering international peace.

Very Rev. Dean Alink, Superior of the Mill Hill Fathers in New Zealand, who labour among the Maoris in the Auckland Province, addressed a speech of welcome to His Excellency in Maori. Father Venning SM, on behalf of the Otaki Maori Mission, welcomed His Excellency to this sacred spot, the scene of many ceremonies in the past, but the scene of the greatest in its long history that day. Ninety-six years ago, said Fr. Venning, a Marist Missioner, Fr. Comte, had made his home on that very marae. Since then it had been a veritable seed bed of the faith, the faith of the West Coast of Te Ika a Maui, bedewed often by tears, and fertilised by prayer.

Many were gathered there that day visible for the eye to see, continued Fr. Venning, but there was an innumerable host also present but unseen. There were the spirits of those who had gone before, who had first received the precious pearl that was the faith. Nor were the spirits of the great missionaries who had borne that faith, "Whose memory will never die," absent. Fr. Venning concluded his address by paying tribute to the great work rendered by the Sisters of Compassion, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, and of the Institute of Our Lady of the Missions. His Excellency in rising to reply was greeted by a tumult of applause from Maori and pakeha alike. "As your chief," said His Excellency with a smile, I have great joy in being among you once more. You will be pleased to know that the altar upon which the first Mass in New Zealand was celebrated is to be one of the principal exhibits at the forthcoming International Exhibition at Rome in 1942, and that the Maori Madonna from your Exhibition in Wellington will also be a feature of that great display."

As proof of the affection of the Pope for the Maori



people, His Excellency quoted the words of the Sovereign Pontiff spoken by the Holy Father in his broadcast on Men's Night:

"If there be any among the New Zealand people who are dearer to the Common Father, they are in a special way Our sons and daughters of the Maori people. Upon all the Maori people we call down the blessing of God. May they increase in number, may they enjoy wellbeing, and may they attain to a full knowledge of the true faith, and with the true Faith have happiness, love and true peace in their hearts and homes.

At the conclusion of the formal welcome His Excellency ascended the Hill overlooking the mission, historic Pukekaraka, and unveiled a memorial cross erected over the last resting-place of Father Francis Melu, valiant missionary of the Maori people for a span of fifty years. The visitors were entertained to luncheon served in native fashion at the conclusion of which Maori entertainment followed, exhibitions of hakas, waiatas, Maori games and the graceful poi dance being much appreciated.

A day memorable in the history of the Maori people was brought to a triumphant close by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.



Fr. Cognet

## THE FRENCH PRIESTS.

Pukekaraka was served by the Sons of France for nearly 100 years. Mrs. Mary Goulter (Mother of Fr. John) wrote about many of them. Let this summary of her story give us a glimpse of these wonderful, lovable men.

CLAUDE COGNET, S.M. 1858-1912

### THE TIMID HERO

This Frenchman came across the world for the sake of the Maori race. By persevering efforts, and the application of his unusually good brain to the task, he became an accomplished Maori scholar.

He never lost his hold of the Maori Mission and its problems, and in death he chose to lay his worn-out body among the race he loved.

Claude Cognet was born in France, of good Catholic parents, on 3rd December, 1858. On the eve of the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, in his 27th year, he was made a priest. He received his call to the Missions, and sailed for New Zealand. He was a scholar, and his memory was phenomenal.

Father Cognet's spirit of zeal and self-abnegation was well expressed in these words, written before he left France: 'I want to go to Oceania to give myself completely to the Master's service, nothing would be more welcome to me than death on these foreign shores. I rejoice already in the thought of this willing sacrifice,

I shall soon have the joy of offering to the Queen of the Apostles.

After eight most strenuous years he was sent on a month's cruise in the Pacific, to recuperate his shattered health, and afterwards back to France. He was then a man of 36 years of age; any illusions he brought to New Zealand must have vanished. Now would have been the time to withdraw with honour. But he came back, took up the burden again, and carried it cheerfully till his death some eighteen years later. And it is on record that 'no-one ever heard Father Cognet complain'.

Here is a pen picture of the young priest of 26, as he waited for the native canoe which was to take him to his destination at Jerusalem. He was well under average height, thickset, short legged, and stout. He was almost always smiling, his lightly smoked glasses barely concealing the eyes which sparkled with intelligence and imagination. He possessed an air of decision, an almost frightening politeness, and natural amiability. His transport to Jerusalem was by frail canoe and they arrived on the evening of the second day. The population hastened to the water front, and cries of welcome were soon resounding from one shore to the other. The standard of natural

eloquence may be imagined.

Father Cognet was not to be outdone in eloquence. Although he could not speak Maori, courtesy demanded a reply, and he sprang to his feet. Father Soulas, who was present, endeavoured to give a running interpretation of his burning words, but he soon found that nobody was listening to him. They all preferred to hang on the mysterious words which poured from the lips of this stranger, though his audience could not understand a word he said, they were hypnotised by his expression, and his gestures. They recognised the true orator, and still more the man who had given himself altogether to his task.

With the young priest's facility for languages, and prodigious memory, it was not long till he mastered the Maori tongue.

When he was a fair Maori scholar, Father Melu arrived and together they visited the whole of Father Melu's district from Wanganui to Otaki on horseback.

Here we come to the chink in his armour. He was holy, zealous, and intellectual; but apart from that, he had not a single one of the qualities which would appear essential for a lonely missionary. His unfitness for the practical side of life was superlative, I doubt if you could have found anyone more incapable of providing for the common necessities of existence. For instance, he never

learned how to saddle and bridle a horse correctly. Another difficulty of Father Cognet's was an apparently incurable timidity about animals.

He made many close friends during his years at Otaki. One in particular was the gifted leader, Helena Te Ara o Rehua. He received her into the Church, in her little church at Kauwhata Marae, on 31st Jan. 1909, when she was about 60 years of age. Her godparents were Fr. Delach and Ruta Etekia. It would be hard to find five more influential and gifted people in the history of the Maori Missions, when you include Fr. Melu.

He was a born preacher; and though emotion of any kind almost always had with him the disagreeable and humiliating result of bringing on an attack of his old trouble, it never affected him when he had to mount a pulpit, or speak to a large audience.

The story is told of him, that at this period of his life, he once received a reply-paid wire from Archbishop Redwood, asking 'Can you come tomorrow to preach a triduum at the cathedral?' He sent the brief reply, 'Arriving tomorrow morning'. He preached five of six sermons which made a great impression on the Catholics of Wellington.

It was in November, 1912, when he was 54 years of age, that his constitution showed signs of breaking up. One of his curates returned to Otaki late one night, and went to bed, before seeing his Superior. Early next morning, his Superior visited him, still in night attire, after a few words of greeting, he said brusquely: 'When you die, where do you want to be buried?' The young priest replied 'What does it matter? When I'm dead I'll be very dead indeed, and it won't worry me where I am buried.' Then he asked Fr. Cognet politely 'And what about you, Father? Where would you like to be buried?' The reply came with lightning quickness, 'I?' 'Up there on the Hill.'

Another channel taken by timidity which was a part of his being was an exaggerated sense of personal modesty, which made his frequent lodging in Maori pas a difficulty to him. For most of his life he suffered from a form of laryngitis which attacked him several times a day, and caused him acute discomfort and humiliation. Often I am prevented from saying Mass, because of this ailment", he said sorrowfully.

He was a born writer, and no physical hardships or exhaustion could dry his pen for long. His articles in various missionary magazines, Annals, etc., were very numerous. He composed a History of the Church in Maori, a work running to more than 500 pages. He appeared never to know discouragement; and would laugh as heartily as any of his confreres, at the extraordinary situations which every day seemed to bring to him. The living witnesses to him all agree in laying stress on his love for the Liturgy, and the unusual splendour of Church ceremonies under his regime. Another account says, 'At a funeral there would not be a dry eye, he had such a powerful and moving voice, and

the bell would be tolling for every year lived by the deceased'.

After eleven years, Father Cognet was named Superior at Otaki, which had already been a centre of Catholic activity for over sixty years. There are few places in New Zealand where the Catholic Church has put down stronger roots, and where Maori Catholicity is more loyally and proudly conscious of its past and its future. Father Cognet was able to render great services to this mission, without the inconveniences he had suffered at Hiruharama and Okato. The station was a centre for frequent Maori reunions; and since 1904 there have been a number of Catholic Congresses at which as many as twelve hundred natives would gather. Father Cognet found in these gatherings great opportunity to exercise his gifts as an orator; indeed he was the chief preacher on these occasions. There was also a largely attended school in Otaki, which afforded him opportunity for his love of teaching catechism.

It was found necessary to take him down to Wellington for better medical care, and there an attack of pleurisy carried him off in a few days. His throat intervened to make even his deathbed more painful. Father Regnault, brought the Blessed Sacrament to him, but he was unable to receive the Sacred Host.

Otaki received his lifeless body with the honours due to a great Maori chief; and a concourse of Maoris and Europeans, led by thirty priests, conducted him where he had longed to lie, on the summit of the Pukekaraka Hill, where he had so often preached the Word of God to his flock.

God gave to this Frenchman an exceptional intellect, and an elevation of thought and speech which made him a living torch, to carry the Faith to his fellow men and to be a burning and shining light in the Maori race. By his daily contact with a poetic and imaginative people, Father Cognet could in flowing and poetic language, bring home to their minds the glories of the Catholic faith.

From Pukekaraka, where his body lies waiting for the Resurrection, it is only in spirit that one can see the Wanganui River, the scene of Claude Cognet's first missionary labours. But on a clear day the snowy peak of Egmont floats on the far horizon, taking the mind back to his years in Taranaki, a loved and respected figure to pakeha and Maori alike.

It was here, on this hill, beside his open grave, that another Frenchman, Dean Regnault, preached his panegyric taking as his text the words: 'Beloved of God and men, his memory is in benediction'. His penetrating brain, his large heart, his soul with its priestly anointing, his inborn cowardice and the daily heroism which conquered it; all these were offered for the salvation of the Maori race. And his grave is a reminder to us who yet live, that the great task he set before him is still unfinished and that the cause for which Claude Cognet and so many others lived and died still hangs in

the balance, because the soldiers under this banner today are too few to win a decisive battle.

## THE BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY AT OTAKI

Little is recorded about the early Brothers of the Society of Mary who lived and worked at Pukekaraka. For a start, let's list those we know and their years at Otaki:

- Br. ELIE-REGIS Marin PFM 1850-1851
- Br. EULOGIE Chabany PFM 1851
- Br. MALACHY Keenan SM 1905-1906
- Br. ANTHONY Kennedy SM 1906
- Br. MARTIN Mader SM 1910-1912
- Br. STANISLAUS McMullen 1911-1924+

The first two are Marist Brothers of the Schools trained in France in the Congregation led by a Marist Priest, Fr. Marcellin Champagnat. The others are Brothers within the Priests and Brothers of the Society of Mary.

Br. ELIE-REGIS, was born in Lyons, France in 1809. He arrived with the second group of Marist Missionaries at Kororareka in June 1839. Br Elias, as he was sometimes called, was a great builder and was involved in constructing a flour mill at Otaki (1850-1851). He

died in the Taranaki in 1872 and is buried at Koru Monastery which he helped build for veteran soldiers, several kilometres west of New Plymouth.

Br. EULOGIE, or Antoine Chabany, arrived in Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1841. He served in Matamata, Tauranga, Rotorua, Opotiki and then Nelson and Akaroa before coming to Otaki. He was at Otaki in 1851. He was given the Maori name 'Wairere' [literally 'flowing waters'].

He died in 1864, a casualty himself while attending the wounded at the Battle of Moutoa Island, near Ranana, when the invading 'Hau Haus' were defeated by other Maoris. We can recognise him as one of our early Marist martyrs, who gave their lives in the cause of peace and to sow the seeds of the Gospel in Aotearoa.

Br. MALACHY (referred to in the 1974 Jubilee book p.64, as PATRICK, his Christian name), was born a Keenan in Armagh in Ireland in 1856. He joined the Society of Mary Aotearoa/New Zealand shortly after he arrived. His Irish building experience covered everything from boats and coffins to houses and wheelwrighting. He was a first class carpenter and he helped build 'Hine' Meeting House in 1905. Malachy seems to have had a pet dog which was the only fatality in the Presbytery fire of 1904.

Br. ANTHONY was born into the Kennedy Family at Cashel in Ireland in 1851, made his way to Aotearoa/New Zealand and joined the Society of Mary in 1894.



**Back Row: Eugene O'Sullivan, Thomas O'Connor, Malachy Keenan, Patrick O'Sullivan, Anthony Kennedy, James Armstrong.**  
**Front Row: Joachim Gatta, Cyprian Huchet, Basil Montchalin, Martin Mader, Athanasius Broyer.**



1900,  
Convent  
School,  
Otaki.

Records show him at Otaki in 1906 which was before his Final Profession in 1909. He is referred to in the 1974 Jubilee booklet (p.31) as 'Andrew'.

The reference talks of the roles of the Brothers as 'assistants at the Presbytery', driving the school transport, caring for the vegetable garden and being general assistant handymen around school, grounds and Convent. Anthony was regarded as 'one of the saints of the place'. He had a broad Irish smile. Anthony was noted for the saying 'It's the will of God', which he had constantly on his lips whether the day was cold or hot!

Br. MARTIN (Mader) was born at Metz in Alsace in 1854 and died in 1933. He left Marseilles in 1883 (on the 'Salazie') and joined the Marists at Meeanee aged 28. He was at Otaki from 1910-1912. Fr. Cecil Knight SM recalls him as a 'wonderful character'. Martin remembered living through the German invasions of 1870, hiding with the cattle in the woods. 'With typical French resilience he went into town on Armistice Day waving a Tricolour and Union Jack!' 'He did wonderful work here for years as a ploughman'.

Br. STANISLAUS (McMullen) hails from Armagh in Ireland where he was born in 1849. He entered the Marists in Ireland in 1885. The Superior General, Fr. Martin SM, sent him to Aotearoa/New Zealand, at his request. "You will make a good catechist of him, without counting all the other services more in relation to his profession." (Letter to Fr. Soulas 7/9/88).

Stanislaus served at Jerusalem on the Wanganui for sixteen years (1889-1905) and after a period at Meeanee, he spent the remaining fourteen years of his

life at Otaki, from 1911.

'Tanirau' must have caused a bit of fun to school pupils for his concern to keep the calves away from the Convent flowers and Presbytery garden, as he used their skipping ropes for a fence! Adults, too were caught up in his straight forward outlook. When Fr. Delach rather sadly left for France in 1914,

Br. Stan's comment was "We'll be seeing him again on the day of judgement!"

He seems to have been a hard-working Religious. The 1974 Jubilee booklet records his battling through the 1918 fatal 'flu epidemic by disinfecting his pipe with Jeyes Fluid.

Fr. Knight recalls camping at Otaki and meeting Stan in his latter days. 'The poor beggar; his mind had gone a bit, and he was a terrific victim of scruples...but he was a very saintly religious.'

Br. Stanislaus died in 1924, aged 75, and is buried on Pukekaraka hill, so his spirit still cares for us.

#### CONCLUSION:

The Brothers who came to Otaki over the years are part of our Marist heritage. They give witness, not so much to work done, but rather to a dedicated prayer life and team approach which Fr. Colin, Marist Founder, had in mind in his family style of Mission.

We can ask their intercession today, both for other men and women to follow them in the call of Mary, and for all of us to live to the full Mary's Work of practicing the Good News.



## ST. PETER CHANEL SCHOOL HISTORY

Officially the school history started in 1894 as Blessed Peter Chanel, when the Sisters of St. Joseph arrived and commenced teaching, albeit without a school - but formal education at Pukekaraka started in 1844 with Father Comte. Although he was very busy developing his flour mill, rope walk and timber mill, as well as travelling extensively throughout Manawatu, Wanganui, Wairarapa and Wellington, Father Comte had time to teach an elementary school of about 40 children (more boys than girls), in very spartan conditions.

To further improve their education several girls, including Te Raiti, Tonihi's daughter went to board at Bishop Viard's school in Wellington.

In 1851 Tonihi had a meeting of about 30 Rangatira, and they decided to endow the mission and school with 300 - 400 acres of land - but the law would not allow it and the mission ended up with Pukekaraka 5, of 19 acres for the church, school and burial ground. However, once Father Comte left, disillusioned that many of his bold plans had been dashed through market collapses & fluctuations, misfortunes and epidemics, there was only spasmodic contact for the next 17 years, and formal education lapsed. Despite the building of a new church, in 1859, a new bell, purchased in 1862, the Stations of the Cross, erected in 1863 and vestments chalices etc., bought in the 1870's - little was done to resurrect interest in the school idea.

Nothing was to change until the arrival, in 1885, of Father Francis Melu - a man of vision, a very hard worker and the architect of what we now know of the Pukekaraka

complex. His first task, in May 1886, was to finish the church, and this was done and reopened in April 1887 - but soon after the appointment of Father Delachienne in 1894, the question arose about providing a new school to accommodate the ever-growing number of school-age children in the area.

Father Melu was the driving force behind the school, as he had been for the development of the church and other improvements to Pukekaraka. The school opened on April 16, 1894, without a building. Children were taught in the church and other outlying buildings. At the meeting held on August 15, 1895. Father Melu, in his speech notes said: "You already know the important object of our meeting - Father Delach has told you that, as the school must be erected at Christmas, immediate and final steps must be taken. The crucial difficulty - which has caused the delay so far is the site, as it is connected with extra expenses - the whole debt - on the Convent being paid we have a balance of about 50 pounds towards the building of the school. The sale of works by the ladies will some day, I hope, expect to give 20 or 30 pounds. The contract of the school was 140 pounds but it could be reduced considerably and the debt on the building would not be very great. At the meeting in January I told those present that not a penny of the bazaar money would go towards buying a new site because it was not intended for that purpose, secondly because if that money was spent buying land there would be no money left for the building and the school would never be built. At the January meeting everyone decided in favour of getting a suitable site - being confident that the money could be easily got -- but seven months have elapsed since, and I have not



Boarders at Convent in aprons to keep clothes clean after School.



**Pukekaraka,  
April 16th 1894.  
Opening of  
Convent School**

*Pukekaraka. April 16<sup>th</sup> 1894. Opening of the O. Convent School*

heard of any land or money 'got'. . Since the January meeting the Sister told me that if the school was built at any distance from the convent they would require two extra rooms for themselves -- an extra 20 to 30 pounds to be added. Knowing what we have and knowing the cost of the school building -- I ask your own and definitive options -- no idle words please, be practical because, I repeat, the school must be up by Christmas." Mr. Nees of Manakau drew up some plans for a two room school - one 26 x 17 or 18 feet and a smaller room 12 x 16 feet for the infants. The school was duly constructed in 1895. And the opening was celebrated with a Mass of the Holy Ghost held on April 16 by his Grace Archbishop Redwood.

On February 21 and 22, 1895 the school had a big celebration and a Christmas tree (a young karaka) was erected out in the middle of the school. Decorated with flags and loaded with presents, as prizes given out to the infant children at the school. The weather was windy but very fine as the flag was hoisted over the playground at 1 o'clock and sprints took place at 2 o'clock, on the first hill and hollow. The officers on the day included Dr. Power (starter and handicapper) Mr. Wilson (judge). The priests gave out the prizes 28 shillings, 1 shilling or 1/6d, or picture boxes and baskets (Father Melu noted that, with the exception of the boys and not with all, the cash was not preferred). The school building, when achieved in 1895, was described by the West Coast Mail as 'a very nice little structure, reflecting great credit on the contractor Mr. Chas Nees'. There were two rooms capable of seating about 100 pupils, the infants room being partitioned off by folding doors. It stood at the foot of Pukekaraka until 1905, when it was moved nearer the convent. When the school was opened under the hill of memories, there were soon 40 pupils, most of them driven to school on a wagonette, probably driven by one

of the brothers who assisted the priests. Before the convent was built, some of the boys were boarded at the Presbytery - among them Viv Kerrigan (Waikanae), Les and Lawrence McDonald (Heatherlea) and the Drake brothers (Waikawa). The first teachers at the school (which was called Blessed Peter Chanel) were Sisters Mary Catherine, Monica, Brigid and Magdalen. Some of the early benefactors to the school included Mrs. Quill, Messrs. Ryder, McBeth, Brandon (Mayor) and Mrs Moynihan (Shannon). By 1897 the roll had risen to 62 pupils -- some of whom are listed as follows: - Std 5 Beatrice Smith, Maud McLeod, Alice Carmont, Elsie Wallace, John Quill, Hohepa Hetekia, Hoani Hetekia, Terawaraki Arekatera. Std 4 Eva Hurley, Irma Wallace, Lavinia Smith, Edith Sharp and Helen Stavely. Std 3 Nellie Wilson, Daisy Wright, Mabel Stavely, Ella Wallace, Maggie Bevan, Sarah Bevan, Edward Quill, Willie Quill, Stuart Smith, Charles Bell, Herbert Carniot and Henry Wilder. In 1899 a top story was added to the convent building, which housed teachers, and the first boarders were taken in.

On January 21 1900 an agreement was drawn up, with His Grace Archbishop Redwood presiding, and Archdeacon Devoy, Dean Kirk and Father Delach present. It was resolved thus:

1. That the rectors of the various parishes in which the Sisters of St. Joseph are, shall bear full and complete control of the administration of their schools and the discipline therein.

2. That the sister in charge shall not be changed without the Rector being consulted and should the Rev. Mother and the respective rectors differ on the point, the matter shall be referred to the archbishop.

3. That the matters of administration and discipline in general, whenever any difference arises between the sisters and the rectors, the matter shall be settled by the Archbishop.



## The Convent Otaki 5 May 1901

"My Dear Ma and Pa, Just a few lines hoping you are all quite well at home? Dear Mother, will you please send me five shillings. I want it for something very particular, will you also send my doll and skipping ropes. We are expecting a 'new boarder on Monday - Dora Carroll. Now I must tell you about Sister Catherine's feast day. It was on Tuesday.

We had a concert in the school. When Sister came into the school, we all clapped. Rev. Father sent Sister such a nice letter and Sister read it to us. It was saying, we could have a holiday. We had a little concert in the

exnino and we invited some of the day pupils. Dear Ma and Pa -- as I have not got any more to say, I remain, your loving little Flora. xxxx"

This poignant letter was written by Flora McDonald, daughter of John Roderick and Flora McDonald of Heatherlea. The McDonalds were prominent early settlers and Mr. McD-

onald played a major hand in the evolution of Pukekaraka and spoke at the opening of the school, marae, wall of reconciliation and other features of the complex. The little girl who wrote the letter, Flora, later married Charles Bryant and their daughter Joan wrote a similar letter to her parents, on December 13, 1925, while also a boarder. Through staunch loyalty and determination, the Sisters of the school helped it progress and grow. Financially it was quite a struggle -- they took in boarders, partly as a financial boost, but largely for practical reasons as the children came from Shannon,



1906  
Pukekaraka



At least after 1905 when School was moved over from flat near hill. Creek flowed at back and new School erected nearer town much later.

Levin, Paekakariki and places further afield. The Nuns & Sisters Catherine, Monica, Brigid and Magdalen -- also survived by teaching music, with private tuition and with fund-raising. They were also required to teach religion in outlying areas like Shannon, Levin, Waikanae and Paraparaumu, so like the priests they travelled greatly, no doubt appreciative of the Wellington-Manawatu railway for transport to these towns. They were heroic, hardworking women, who set a very high standard, but did not expect anything of their pupils that they did not aspire to themselves.

Present Parish Priest, Father Paddy Kinsella S.M., believes that if Marae o Hine has a "special womanly character it was the Sisters who endowed it with a

Christian gentility".

The contribution of the nuns was immeasurable as they were in the school for 96 years before Sr. Marie Roche finished as principal. Six of the sisters who taught at the schools -- Sisters De Pazzi, Ignatius, Cecelia, Margaret Mary, Augustine and Borgia -- are buried on top of Pukekaraka. Feast days of the nuns and priests were very important and the children celebrated with great pride and reverence. One such occasion for the priests in 1897 included a Festal Song: "Welcome, welcome, Fathers dear, We your children gather here, You most lovingly to greet on this festival so dear.

We have knelt at Mary's shrine, And most fervently did pray, She would bless our holy priests, on their

Otaki Convent boarders 1912.



cherished Festal Day." As with many of their festivals music played a vital part -- like a Festal Ode by the pupils, a pianoforte duet, by Misses Wallace and Hurley, Osborne Quadrilles by Misses Sharp, McDermot and Master Smith, and an instrumental solo of Adeste Fideles by Miss Wallace. A festal bouquet was followed by two hymns. Music was extremely strong in the school, with many pupils excelling in Trinity College exams and other feats. On October 7, 1903 Professor Edwards of Trinity College visited and the following pupils were presented and passed with honours": Senior division Dora Carroll 87 marks; junior division Ida Buck 97, Kathleen Quill 94, Eva McLeavy 93, Flora McDonald 89. The newspaper article noting this feat congratulated - the Convent teachers on the "excellent result of their labours". The following year a theoretical examination was passed by N. Champion (98 marks), I. Buck (94), J. Bevan (60) and the practical examination by Ida Buck (79), Eva McLeavey (73), Reana Bartholomew (69), Ruby Stansell (75), Nora Campion (69), Eileen Tompsitt

(65), Lily Williams (65). Preparatory passes were achieved by A. Hannan (75), M. Bevan (68), W. Hall (63) and D. Milne (61). Other outstanding efforts were achieved by Flora McDonald (92), Kathleen Quill (90) and J. Bevan (85). One pupil, Kathleen described by the West Coast Mail as a piano forte player of exceptional ability. "This young lady, who at

the present time is only a girl of her teens, received her tuition at the local convent and has been prominently before the public, and for years past, in fact ever since she was seven years of age, has successfully passed all her examinations," the paper said. "Recently she went to Dunedin to further pursue her studies, and so highly successful has she been that her tutors consider her a marvel at piano playing. Miss Quill had the proud distinction of winning an exhibition of pianoforte playing, and has secured two very handsome medals, and what is more, she beat the young lady who won the coveted Plunket medal by one point Next year Miss Quill intends to compete for the ATCL, when we hope she may gain high honours. We take this opportunity of not only congratulating her teachers of the past few years, but Mrs Quill, who has been most assiduous and painstaking in her efforts to see that her daughter

received every attention, and the best of tuition." The religious aspects of their education were never forgotten and the West Coast Mail records as early as 27 November 1894 that, during a mission held by Rev. Father Lynch, in the church between 30 and 40 children received the blessed Eucharist for the first time. "The church was crowded and the sight a beautiful one -- the sacred building had been nicely decorated with flowers and bannerettes and the young communicants -- the little girls dressed in wreath and veil and the boys in white sashes - presented a very picture of devotional innocence." The missionary present that day earnestly exhorted "those who had so well attended the mission to persevere in the paths of virtue", and, in conclusion, commended the Catholic congregation of the district for the building and maintaining of a convent in their midst. He said they would be amply rewarded for any little privation they may have suffered thereby, and instanced the improvement already worked in the children by the Sisters.



**Taken at jubilee function, 25/4/55, Bonnie Hakaria, Sr M. Borgia, Mrs P. McGilligan.**

The school soon established a niche in the education field and had great success in many fields -- one of which was music. In 1905 Miss M. Barry joined the staff as music teacher and is well remembered not only by her pupils but all residents in Otaki. School concerts of an extremely high standard were held in the town hall and were crowded with residents from Otaki and surrounding towns. Miss

Barry lived in the Convent and she was known to all families. A past pupil Gabrielle Rikihana describes her as "a gentle woman, whose leather boots and calipers squeaked as she dragged her way to her honoured seat in church - the aisle side of the senior boarders" row in front of the sisters". She drove everywhere in her three wheeled car, at a decent speed.

Scholastically the children did well -- with Norman Bennett successful in St. Patricks College Scholarship and Harold Jones in 1908 topping the list of applicants to St. Patricks with 238 marks out of 300 (the next highest was 209 marks) and great credit was lauded on the teachers at the school by the Otaki Mail on January 8, 1908. The Sisters at the Convent were outwardly a staunch, serious and, devout band of women, but their stern dispositions hid a compassionate and caring countenance.



Gabrielle Rikihana describes the sisters of the 1930s as "fulfilling their vow of poverty to the extreme -- they taught school, they cared for the boarders, taught music, short hand typing, art and embroidery and anything else requested of them. A rare sister could be enormously stern, but equally thorough -- sister Martina gave me an assurance in spelling and mental, arithmetic - she was petite but a martinet in the classroom. The width and assurance of their teaching is unrivalled because they gave their lives to us. We were all poverty stricken."

Many of the nuns came from Otaki and were educated at Peter Chanel School, often returning to teach at the school in later years.

Some of the local vocations included Sisters Agatha (Hurley), Augustine (Hurley), Rita (Rohan), Peggy (D'Ath), Anne (O'Rourke), Helen Doyle, Valerian (Vaughan), Vianney (Ryder), Loyola (Ahern), Monica (McLeod), Lawrence (McLeod), Bertha (Hunby), Margaret Mary (Jillett), Barbara (Ferrie), Ita (Crompton) and de Lourdes (Patten).

During hard times the tremendous faith of the sisters ensured that they managed to "make ends meet". The teaching music and secondary commercial pupils, out of ordinary school hours, was looked upon as the norm by the early sisters and their loyalty and patience is remembered by Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

One of the local nuns Sr. Margaret Jillett was professed in 1900 and died in 1959 and is buried on Pukekaraka.

She is described by Pat van der Velden (a past pupil) as being "only pint-sized, but with a quick brain, a soft heart and a great devotion to St Joseph".

During the lean years of the 1930s Pat can remember her placing a block of wood and some times a potato in

front of St. Joseph's statue and sure enough out of the blue a horse and cart arrived loaded with wood and from some where else a bag of potatoes arrived.

Pat describes the day when a practical joker of the class crept up behind her just as she was about to be seated and whisked the chair away. Instead of punishing the culprit she made the class kneel down and thank God for sparing her from injury -- a lesson in charity and forgiveness that humbled youthful high spiritedness.

These pioneering nuns left a legacy impossible to replace -- one of uncomplaining service to God, to their pupils and parents and of great devotion, charity, humility and concern for others, a concern carried on for 96 years at St. Peter Chanel.

One of the nuns remembered by so many ex-pupils was Sister Borgia, who arrived in 1904, to take cooking classes at the school, and she seemed to stay 'forever and ever'. She was remembered as being strict (picking up rubbish was a favourite task given to errant students), but fair.

Borgia was still associated with the school up until her death in 1974 - and she recalled her early days at Otaki - including the old presbytery fire of 1904, when Brother Patrick's dog was the only casualty, along with Father Melu's prize possessions from France (some belonging to his mother). She also recalled the shop-days, organised by Mesdames McGill, MacLeod and Perkins, with Mrs McGill going out with 2 nuns to do all the collecting for these fund-raising ventures.

At the time of the last Jubilee, Mrs Rewa D'ath (nee Fisher) recalled some of her teachers including Sister Patrick (always hitching up her glasses), Sisters Paul, Lucy and Margaret, and the lively, jolly Sister Borgia - unforgettable teachers & wonderful people. She often

dreamed of the dear old Convent, with it's tiny chapel & refectory with Miss Barry at the head of the table and piles of hot bread waiting when they came in from early Mass, and night prayers and duty changes, and then upstairs to bed in the dormitory



**Convent  
pupils 1913.**

with it's rows of jugs and basins.

During the early part of this century there was always something new happening at Pukekaraka, the building of the grotto, in it's different locations, Roma in 1904, Hine in 1905, the Statue of St Peter in 1907, on top of the Jubilee celebrations of 1904, the big Huis of 1908, with the instruction of girls as Children of Mary, and a later one celebrating the 50th Jubilee of the apparition of Lourdes and 1909 - and at each opening there was plenty of pomp & ceremony with the children involved in singing and taking part in numerous processions, holding banners, candles and other regalia. In 1905 the school was shifted nearer to the Convent and enlarged to accommodate the influx of children.

Mr Bruce Knox recalled, at the time of the 1974 Jubilee, the shifting, done by Billy Roach, George Gordon and Fred Wilson, while school was held in one of the meeting houses. Mr Knox recalls that the hill of Pukekaraka used to extend down to the drive and was levelled in Father Delach's time - prior to the erection of Hine and the wall of reconciliation. The work was done by the Broughtons and others of the Muaupoko - the sand being carted away by bush tram to fill the swamp where Hine was built.

As the years went by the school progressed in body and soul, due to the dedication of the nuns and the selfless sacrifice by parents and clergy.

## 1904 - 1914:

Mrs Nora Bourke (nee Kilsby), a well-known personality & music teacher for over 40 years, who was a pupil from 1906 to 1914, recalled at the last Jubilee that she started school in a "ramshackle hut" that was sited between the convent and the school. At the time there were not many pupils, and her first teacher was Miss Eva McLeavey.

At the time she remembers the extreme cold during winter and she used to feel sorry for the nuns trying to light the fire with wet wood it seemed so different to the wood that they used to burn at home.

Mrs Bourke remembered Sisters Lucy, Baptist, Martina and Margaret ("a sweet little soul"), and she was taught music by Miss Minnie Barry. The singing teacher was Sister Paul, who was gifted with a beautiful voice, and she used to train the whole school for the annual concert in the Town Hall. The pupils used to march from school to the Hall for practices and on the big night, Sister Paul, concealed discreetly in the background, would join in the singing. Mrs Bourke remembered the Parish Bazaars, held in the Town Hall, and recalled winning a brand new violin, brought from France by Father Melu - she had it decorated by Mrs Marion D'Ath. Father Melu was "a very kind, humble little man", who would walk all over Otaki (dressed in his long soutane) to visit his parishioners. Father Melu planted a fernery between the presbytery and the water-wheel - it was a most beautiful spot, and the pupils felt

delighted to get Father's permission to walk through it.

Mr Bruce Knox went to Blessed Peter Chanel School from 1905 to 1912 and recalled Sisters Ignatious, Patrick, Lucy, Paul and Margaret. At the time of the 1974 Jubilee, Mr Knox recalled that Sister Paul (who was an Australian) was a great disciplinarian and "many's the time I had my hand bruised by her cane." She never feared the face of any boy, but at the same time she was very fair. Mr Knox recalled that Sister Margaret was so gently and kind, and some of the older boys ended their schooling at the state school "under the heel of a man." Mr Knox remembered the "large symbol of the Chalice, surrounded by rays, that used to be where St Peter's statue now is on Pukekaraka (it was shifted there in 1913). He also recalls seeing Father Cognet's body laid out in the church in 1912. "Father Cognet ran the very successful bazaars - he was a real showman." Of Father Melu, Mr Knox described him as "the humblest of men" - "He was gentle and he loved gentle things - he was a bird fancier and at one time he had an aviary of white doves, parakeets and love birds."

## 1914-1924:

This period of time is not so well documented, as records are very sparse and Father Melu had ceased to compile his extensive scrapbook after 1915. Father Vibaud succeeded Father Delach as the editor of Whare Kura, and Father Maillard was here from 1914 to 1919 - and Father Melu, carried on in his own resolute manner.

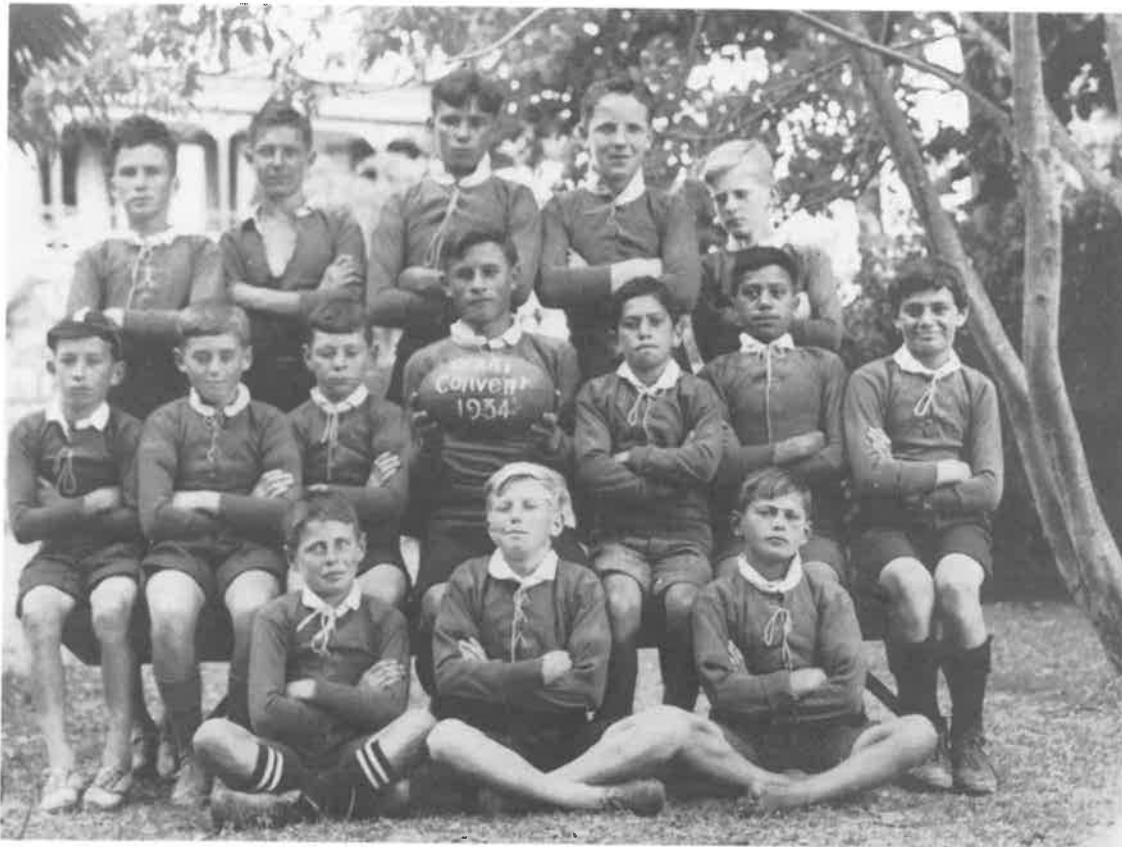
The Anzac memorial cross of 1925 commemorates those who died during the first world war - including John Joseph Ahern, Joseph Bennett, Francis Lima, Ernest Mason, Raymond & Reginald Murray, William Patterson, Patrick Padden, Edward Quill, Richard Simon and Albert Winterburn.

For a small town, and a small school, this loss of young men, who had so much to offer New Zealand was tragic. One prominent family, the Ahern's had already lost Bob, at the age of 11 through meningitis, and then were to lose John at Gallipoli in 1915 and Joe at Passchendale just 3 years later. This decade also saw the advent of the terrible influenza epidemic of 1918, brought back, it is thought, by returning troops on the ship "Niagara." Otaki suffered like all New Zealand towns and many older residents recall the constant nailing and sawing of coffins and so numerous were the funerals of people of all ages. Norah Bourke recalled local people "dying like flies" - but not so pipe-smoking Brother Stanaslaus, as he disinfected his pipe with Jeyes Fluid before filling it up.

The school continued to consolidate, but only with great sacrifices on the part of the sisters, priests & children.

## 1924-1934:

Again records of the school are sparse - but during



**Otaki Convent School Football Team 1934.**  
**Back Row:** M. Chaney, M. M. Jones, D. Hakaraia\*, B. Riordan. L. Palliser. **Middle Row:** V. Bevan (All Black), O. D'Ath, W. Isherwood\*, A. Hakaraia, T. Gray, J. Ransfield, L. Bevan. **Front Row:** - Elliot, - Carmont, - Webster. (\* = Killed in Action 2nd World War.)

this decade we see the end of the great contribution of Father Melu to the complex of Pukekaraka. The era started with the blessing of the Calvary by Archbishop Redwood on 25 April, 1925. Gabrielle Rikihana, who was at the school during the latter part of this decade describes Father Melu, as "a small-statured man, with a gentle face and wispy silver hair, whenever the pupils "Good Morning Father'd him", he raised his hand and blessed us with the sign of the cross." "He reminded me of the statue of St. Peter Chanel." He was suffering, in his later years, and was prone to wander off and sleep on the verandahs of parishioners he visited in his early days at Pukekaraka. Father Melu ended his 50 years at Pukekaraka in 1935, and he died in Wellington in 1938. Gabrielle remembers that he was awarded a special medal for his years of service to the people of Pukekaraka. Father Jim Durning was also remembered as "our beloved guide throughout his life, his gentleness and unrelenting support for Catholic philosophy rather than regulations, has been an on-going gift."

Other Priests described by Gabrielle include Fathers Riordan, Venning, Hannah and McSherry. "These men carried Catholicism as their shield and ministered to us as they believed God wished." "Father Riordan, the colonial Irishman, with his hell-fire sermons, his love for Rugby, his enormous generosity and great sense of humour - conjured up support for all of us, as our families moved through these words - depression and sustenance." As the clouds of the depression darkened, there was no such thing as "Op Shops", Foodbanks or Home Support - but families managed, with the help of generous citizens.

The nuns and priests collected heaps of clothes and

gave them out to needy families. Mrs Etekia (Taruru) who was Father Delach's "right hand" was the Whaea who protected the "bridge between the time of the French priests and the Irish/New Zealand trained priests at Pukekaraka". She had a presence in the original Church which will always remain with Gabrielle Rikihana and others.

Other people of note included Mrs Fisher, a talented musician who "played as her father Ken Cimino would have loved - expressive", Eileen Ransfield, who gave the music the richness of Maoridom and the Hakaraia voices which "carry a tonal quality that is always recognisable - today's singers remind me of their relatives" states Gabrielle. Gabrielle also said that playtime at Blessed Peter Chanel was important - "we had games like Bar the Door, Hopscotch, in its many forms and guessing games with the initials of film stars. (D.P. Dick Powell, D.D. Deanna Durbin) if you guessed right you had to beat the caller to the other side of the shed". Sometimes they crept into the Church, not for a visit, but to re-enact some Church tradition. "Quite often after school we met the "state school kids" outside Rangiatea to determine who were victors of Otaki - there were a lot of verbal chants and abuse but precious little physical battle".

## 1934 - 1944

During this era Father Melu's long tenure of 50 years came to an end. The resolute Sister Borgia recalls his obsession for processions "carrying banners, we started from the Church out into the yard, onto the road and back, then around the fountain in front of the Presbytery and back to the Church - Father used to put lighted



**Back Row: Roy Jury, Frank Hanley, Peter D'Ath, Lindsay Richards. 3rd Row: Helen Grahame, Annie Winterburn, Adelaide Gray, Marjorie Miller, Pat Cook, Judith McLean, Delia Hanley. 2nd Row: Ina Baker, Ginger te Aomarere, Makuini Ransfield, Philomena Mortiboy, Zelda Bailey, Hazel Tewe. Front Row: Lawton Hakaraia, Henry Phillips, Ronald Putu, Francis Putu, David Phillips, Lionel Enoka.**

candles around the fountain in coloured glasses and it was a lovely sight".

During Father Melu's last illness in 1938, Sister Borgia and Sister Charles visited him at the Home of Compassion, Silverstream. The meeting was a poignant one. In Sister Borgia's own words "He recognised us by the blue monogram on our habits - Sister Charles sang "Ave Maria" for him and the tears rolled down his cheeks".

Father Melu died on 27 October 1938 aged 83 years, and his funeral was one of the biggest attended at Pukekaraka.

The depression gradually faded, but the dark war clouds were again looming and the people of Otaki were again to pay a terrible price. Those past pupils who died in the war included Rakaherea Hakaraia, Tristram Harper, William Isherwood, Leslie McDonald, John Sievers and Ronald Winterburn.

Well remembered by past pupils are the processions to the

Grotto. To be chosen as a flower girl or alter boy on such occasions was the "nearest thing to Heaven".

Mrs Leah Faith, later a teacher of the school for 15 years, stated that a "high standard of education was maintained though for most part all the equipment supplied was a blackboard on a collapsable easel and a piece of chalk". To improve conditions the Sisters depended on the good will of the fathers of the children and they must have had a way with the men judging by the results.

"So many alterations and additions were made by these volunteer workers that when the old school was finally demolished in 1957 it was remarked that it was only the Grace of God that held the school together - windows which could not be opened as there was no room to put weights to allow them to slide up and down, but floors with a polish the envy of the most fastidious housewife".





One of the major events of this decade was the centenary of New Zealand in 1940 - coupled with the arrival of the Apostolic Delegate, the Most Rev. John Panico. The Apostolic Delegate was hosted by the people of Pukekaraka and the children performed songs for him.

## 1944 - 1954

The post-war years were still difficult financially but it saw the resurgence of a lot of parental assistance - namely in the form of the Home and School Association, mooted and in 1950 and inaugurated in February 1951, with Mr.J.Stuart as Chairman and Miss M.Lawrie as Secretary. With its aim of "A Catholic Education for every Catholic Child in the Parish" it set about to provide school transport to get children to school. The then curate, Father J.Beban had plenty of drive and personality and, with the co-operation of Mr.J.Ballinger the bus service was put into operation in the beginning of 1951.



history of the school and parish.

There was still more to be done - in 1952 power points were installed in the school rooms and radios provided. Mr Ballinger placed a bus at the disposal of the parish to collect children from Manakau and Father Beban took over the Manakau run, with Mr Ballinger extending his run to Te Horo.

However in 1954 the Transport Department





pronounced that the bus loaned by Mr Ballinger was not "road-worthy". Again Mr Ballinger re-organised his service to take in Manakau and Te Horo (at a cost of 2 pounds 10 shillings per day).

Progress was made in 1954 with the installation of the school baths - a very long school pool, with much of

the work being done by voluntary labour under the supervision of Mr H.Moffatt.



**1948 Senior School**

## 1954 - 1964

The Home & School committee with the co-operation of the Catholic Women's League (for stocking and manning the stalls) continued to finance the bus service and works with bazaars mid-year and barbeques in December and by 1957 the decision to build a new 5 roomed school was made.

The plan just forged ahead and Messrs McDowell & Dixon with Mr Neil Larsen as Foreman of Works commenced building. Again calls for voluntary labour were made and on 8 September 1957, Archbishop McKeefry opened the modern up-to-date school - a pride and joy to priests, teachers, pupils and parishioners.

Work was not yet finished - there still remained the culverting of the stream, the relaying of the school grounds and removal of the old building, which all called for more finance. Bazaars and barbeques, Fancy Dress Balls and "Social Evenings" were arranged and proved to be a great financial assistance.

The culverting of the Mangapouri stream was finalised in 1958, at a cost of nearly 1000 pounds, school furnishing cost nearly 700 pounds and the grounds 550 pounds.

The organising Committee during those busy years had as presidents - Mr J.Stuart, Mr N.Larsen, Mr E.Cook and Mr A.Fletcher, with great assistance from organising Secretary Miss M.Lawrie and Mrs A.Faith and much success and due to their leadership. As the years went by other improvements included jungle gym bars and the pool filtration plant.

In 1958 Mrs Leah Faith joined the Sisters of the Staff and taught there for 15 years.

## 1964-1974:

In 1971 the interior of the school was painted and a cyclone fence was erected above the stone wall. Also in 1971 the Form 1 & 2 students went to Otaki College - but at the request of the parents involved, the Committee pressed for their return, and this was done in 1974. Part of the school ground was asphalted in 1973.

The year 1974 was a big one for St. Peter Chanel - with the combined Jubilee celebrating the 80th anniversary of the school and the 130th anniversary of the church - and large numbers of ex-pupils came back to Otaki to talk about old times and to meet friends they hadn't seen for many years. The Caretaker/Cleaner at this time was Jack Gimblett, and he did so much for the school - much in his own time - cleaning and painting the pool, organising the filtration plant and doing so many handyman jobs around the school.

Soon after the Jubilee the double-storied convent building, that had served the nuns and boarders so well, was demolished, and for the next 16 years the sisters lived in the house next to the school, and this was added onto to accomodate them. The School Principal at the time of the Jubilee was Sister Helen Doyle, an ex-Otaki girl.

## 1974 - 1984:

This era saw the introduction of lay Principals into the school - firstly Mr Don Large (1976-78), followed by Mr Mike Higgins (1979), Mrs Bobbie Smith (1980-81) - but Sisters still made up the bulk of the staff with teachers like Sister Maria Goretti (Principal from 1981-

# PUKEKARAKA JUBILEE - 21 to 23 OCTOBER 1994 COMMEMORATING THE 150th JUBILEE OF ST MARY'S PARISH OTAKI AND THE CENTENARY OF ST PETER CHANEL SCHOOL. OTAKI

Preparations for the jubilee began in early 1993 with the following Committee working to make the event a

gained from Brother Gerard, Chief Archivist of the Marist Order, with photographs, newspaper clippings and anecdotes - and Sister Genevieve, Archivist of the Sisters of Nazareth. Most of the book was in the hands of the printer 5 weeks before the Jubilee, and, after much proofreading, was ready for people to view at the Jubilee.



**Pukekaraka as it looked for the Jubilee.**

success - Paul MacLeod (Chairman), Anne & Greg Murphy, Arthur MacDonald, Mary & John Molloy, Mary Rasmussen, Margaret Beck, Makuini Johnson, Irene & Ray Mackle, Mike McAsey, Pat Barry, Father Paddy Kinsella S.M., and Brendan Molloy.

There was a lot to plan for with publicity, catering, sound equipment, band, refreshments, masses, entertainment, powhiri etc. - so monthly meetings soon gave way to fortnightly meetings, and for the last 6 weeks the committee met every week.

To start off with registrations were very slow, with only 120 having registered 6 weeks before the Jubilee (with only 50 people coming to the Saturday night dinner) - but in the event about 400 registrations were received, with 190 coming to the Saturday night Dinner & Dance.

To heighten interest and gain publicity for the Jubilee, a series of eight articles were placed in "The News", a free weekly paper, over the four months preceding the Jubilee, by the School Principal - Brendan Molloy. These articles were later photocopied and sold at the Jubilee.

The big job of planning for the Jubilee book was done by Father Paddy Kinsella, Irene Mackle and Brendan Molloy - with assistance from Father Phil Cody, Father John Goulter and Pat Barry. Invaluable assistance was

Preparations were made for a bonfire, modelled on those burned at the early Huis - this being organised by Father Phil Cody, for the Friday evening of the Jubilee. Mrs. Pat Fahey, a parishioner, made an embroidered flag, modelled on a similar one made by Father Delach in the early days of this century. Many of the ladies of the Parish, under the tuition of Teresa Rikihana, spent many hours on decorating bicycle wheels for Te Reo, as decoration for the Saturday Night's function.

The week before the Jubilee the school had a visit



**Our Lady's Grotto adorned with the cloak of Kui Taruru and the papal flag.**



**Brother Gerard S.M. (archivist for Marists) standing beside grave of Brother Stanislaus, looking at the flag made by Pat Fahey.**

from Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hamlin and their son Brian, to recognise the sizeable bequest made by Peter's mother Norma Hamlin (nee Barrow) an early pupil at Blessed Peter Chanel School. This bequest has enabled the school to purchase the Administration Block, comprising offices for the Secretary, Resource Teacher of Maori and Principal, as well as rooms for Reading Recovery, Special Needs and group teaching - at a cost of \$16,000



**Mrs Anne Murphy and helpers prepare the decorations for Te Reo used for the Dinner & Dance on Saturday night.**

(supplemented by \$7000 of locally raised funds) to bring the building up to code. The bequest interest and capital has also enabled the school to buy a relocatable (for \$35,000) to accommodate our 6th class.

Mr. Hamlin spoke to the children on what the school meant to his mother and how thrilled he was that the school had used the money wisely. Plaques recognising the gift had just been put up, and Father Kinsella blessed the relocatable.

The Registration Secretary, Rosemary Flynn, and the Treasurer, John Molloy, were "run off their feet" during the 2 weeks leading up to the Jubilee as the registrations came flooding in. The job of catering for this upsurge of registrations was extremely time-consuming and thanks are due to Rosemary & John, together with Mary Molloy and Anne & Greg Murphy, who spent the whole weekend in the Registration tent - looking after the Jubilee participants.

Another last-minute job before the Jubilee was laying out hundreds of photos that had been borrowed



**Visit to School of Mr & Mrs Peter Hamlin & their son Brian to commemorate the bequest of Mrs Norma Hamlin (nee Barrow).**

from the Marist Archives and other past pupils and parishioners. The school photos were displayed, with models and charts done by the children, in the hallway at school - the Church photos were displayed, by Irene Mackle, in Hine.

Both Churches were cleaned thoroughly and a working bee held up on Pukekaraka to lay concrete for the unveiling of headstones for Fathers Caulfield and Atkins - with good work done by Tom Halsall, Colin Wallace, Ray Mackle, Arthur MacDonald, Terry Wilson and other willing helpers.

All was now in place - we only needed good weather and fine spirits to make the Jubilee a real success - and we certainly had both of these.

## Friday 21 October:

Powhiri to Cardinal Williams. The day dawned beautifully fine, with promise of more good weather - our prayers to Mary had been answered.

At 12 noon Cardinal Tom Williams arrived at the Presbytery for lunch and was then led to the Marae by Father Phil Cody, Tui Brown and Claire Rikihana for the powhiri. On the paepae for the Tangata whenua was Taipari Rikihana and Father Paddy Kinsella, who gave the whaikorero and Principal Brendan Molloy.

Father Paddy welcomed the Cardinal, saying that the Marae was dedicated to the Catholic Church - so it was the Cardinal's Marae. The Cardinal began in Maori paying his respects to the dead, the Marae and the people of Pukekaraka and then spoke in English talking about the holy places in the world - like Calvary, Mary's place at Lourdes and Futuna, where St. Peter Chanel had died.

Pukekaraka linked all of these places, Cardinal Tom said - with the Cross of Calvary, the Stations of the Cross, the grotto of Mary and St. Peter Chanel School. He said how special Pukekaraka was and how it existed as the oldest Catholic Church in the Diocese, which began after Pukekaraka was established.

The welcome concluded with the Hongi.

Among the others welcomed that afternoon were several Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth and Mr. Pat Ahern (one of the oldest ex-pupils) and Mrs. Gretchen Ahern (a past teacher).

## Historical Pageant:

This was held in the new church, before a large audience - with nearly all children acting a part. The

**Blessing of new classroom by Father Paddy Kinsella S.M. The classroom was purchased through a bequest from past pupil Norma Barrow.**



**The Committee members who spent the weekend in the Registration tent. From left Greg & Anne Murphy, John Molloy, Rosemary Flynn, Mary Molloy.**

pageant started with Te Uhi being given ownership of their land around Pukekaraka by Te Rauparaha and then skipped to the arrival of Father Comte, his meeting with Chief Tonihi and his ventures to set up a flour mill, rope walk, sawmill and schooner run (the children acted out the working parts). The pageant continued during the lean years after Father Comte left, the upholding of the faith by Hakaria Rangikura, who rang the Angelis bell for 50 years, and the building of the Church in 1858/59. Other events re-enacted included the building of the



**Room 5, with teacher Mrs Jane Lamsden, show off their models & charts of the School and Church.**

**Giggle & Gossip:**

About 160 past pupils and parishioners gathered in the school during the evening and enjoyed a convivial few hours - meeting friends not seen for up to 50 years, viewing photographs and swapping memories and memorabilia.

The catering, done by the school parents, was superb - with plenty of food and drink for everyone.

During the evening a large bonfire was lit up on Pukekaraka - a project devised and organised by Father Phil Cody S.M., to re-enact an aspect of the great hui of the early years of this century. Despite a slight hitch when someone called the Fire Brigade (who had granted permission for the fire, but had to respond to the call) the bonfire was a great feature of the evening.

**Saturday 22  
October:**

**Parade:**

This was organised by Margaret Beck and Mary Molloy and was adjudged an unqualified success with over 200 people marching or riding through town and down to the school. Features included school



**Cardinal Thomas Williams talking to Margaret Beck (Deputy Principal at the School and parishioners) after Fridays powhiri.**

school, the contributions made by Fathers Melu and Delach, and the Guardians of Pukekaraka (Ruta Etekia and Erena Te Ara o Rehua) and finally the building of Hine nui o te Ao Katoa and the Wall of Reconciliation.

The pageant, directed by Tony Birch (a teacher at St. Peter Chanel) was a credit to the children and teachers, and was very well received.

After the pageant finished, afternoon tea was put on and many people arrived to register at the tent. The magnificent day ended with splendid sunshine and just enough wind to fly Father Delach's flag on Pukekaraka proudly calling all to come to the celebrations.

**Cardinal Tom Williams talking to the children at Fridays powhiri.**







The pupils of Hato Petera Kaniera re-enacting the arrival of Father Comte at Fridays pageant.



The School children re-enacting the construction of St. Mary's Church at Fridays pageant.



Past pupils swapping photos at Friday nights "giggle & gossip".

and church floats, the Levin & Districts brass band, Horowhenua Highland Pipe band, marching ladies, vintage cars, decorated bikes and a large number of walkers, some dressed in colonial costumes. A great number of Jubilee participants walked all the way in the parade.

**Powhiri:**

At 11.00 a.m., still in glorious weather, an impressive powhiri was held at the Marae to welcome Archbishop Thomas White, the Papal Delegate and other dignitaries.

Archbishop White said how pleased he was to be in this special part of the world - and he presented a new Papal flag and Papal blessings for the School and the Church. These were received with due humility and dignity. The flag was then hoisted onto the flagpole, next to Hine.

**Remembrance Mass:**

This special Mass was held in the new Church, following the powhiri - with His Excellency, the Most Reverend Thomas White D.D. presiding and with the Provincial of the Marist Order in New Zealand, the Very Reverend S.O'Connell S.M. as the celebrant. Readers were Rosie Rikihana and Irene Mackle and the organist was Fay Te Kira.

The Mass was a most moving sacrament, with a host of guitarists accompanying the organist - and the names of the dead sung out, replacing the prayers of the faithful.

The homily was delivered by Father J.Beban S.M. and he spoke of our attempt, during this long weekend to express our gratitude for those that have preceded us over the last 150 years, to give thanks for inspiring Bishop Pompallier and those early Marist Priests and Brothers, and the Sisters of St. Joseph to give their lives and in many ways to give up their country to lay their foundations of the Faith here in this far side of the world. "The early missionaries left their great cultured nation and sailed in tiny ships across almost uncharted seas to our country, then troubled and racked with tribal warfare and



Some of the 1950's ex-pupils at the "giggle & gossip" on Friday night.



The school float about to depart during the parade on Saturday morning.



The St. Mary's Church float arriving at Pukekaraka.

despoiled by greedy land grabbers - here for the most part they died exiled and alone, having endured hardships beyond human enduring as they literally walked the length and breadth of our land". "To them we owe the priceless heritage of our Christian Faith - the Faith which is summed up in the real presence of Christ in the Mass we are about to offer in this magnificent setting of Pukekaraka, surrounded with the monuments of Calvary on the hill, Peter the rock, holding high the keys which Christ gave him, the miraculous healing shrine of Mary, Queen of Peace, presiding over the historic Wall of Reconciliation and the Marae of Our Lady Queen of all the World - Te Hine o te Ao Katoa, where no tribal or racial animosities may enter.

Father Beban concluded that this Jubilee was not merely a social event but a celebration of faith - "The faith which these men and women, who have preceded us, demonstrated in their lives - the faith the monuments of Pukekaraka proudly proclaim to all the world from the Marae of the Queen of the World - faith in the Eucharist, the tombstone by which our faith in God is tested and by which it is nourished". "Faith in the Real Presence of the Risen Lord - faith in the reality, not only of his resurrection, but also in that of those whom we are celebrating today - and as we express our gratitude to those Priests, Brothers and Sisters and Laity - they will reproach us if their work and their prophetic blending of our country's two cultures are not gratefully acknowledged and strengthened by us continuing to make our two peoples one faith filled nation of Ao-tea-roa"

May God and his Blessed Mother Hine te ao Katoa help us to do exactly that".

#### **Saturday afternoon:**

After an excellent lunch box, again provided for by the school parents - Jubilee participants, which by now numbered over 300 people,

assembled outside the school to hear speeches from invited dignitaries. This session was chaired by Chairman of the Jubilee Committee, Paul MacLeod.

The first speaker was Kapiti Coast District Council Mayor Brett Ambler who quoted from an Otaki Historical Journal an extract from an earlier Anglican Minister - about the extensive building going on at Pukekaraka. He rejoiced in our celebrations, in the knowledge that few schools in the Kapiti Coast had celebrated their centenary and virtually no Churches their 150th. Mr. Ambler was congratulated for the work his council had done leading up to the Jubilee - including the reconstruction of Convent Road and the new footpaths put in, plus the sealing and marking of the carpark.

Next speaker was Mrs. Judy Keall M.P., for Horowhenua - who spoke very well of the school, with its rich history and teachers that had made a contribution. She expressed concern at political financial cutbacks and wished the school well during the next 100 years.

The third speaker was a past pupil Sister John Bosco who spoke of some of her memories at the school including the primitive conditions they were asked to work under, in the days before integration.

She spoke of having to take 2 classes one day, when a teacher was sick (there were no relievers in those days) - but at playtime one teacher went down with a migraine and at lunchtime another teacher started vomiting. With the reality of taking over 100 children by herself - Sister hit on the brainwave of getting them to clean the school. Some children were on the roof, clearing out the guttering and she yelled up to them "If any of you fall off, I'll bury you on the spot".

The final speaker was Father Jim Beban who had made such an impression at Pukekaraka in the early 1950's. During Fathers time here a lot of money was raised and many improvements were made



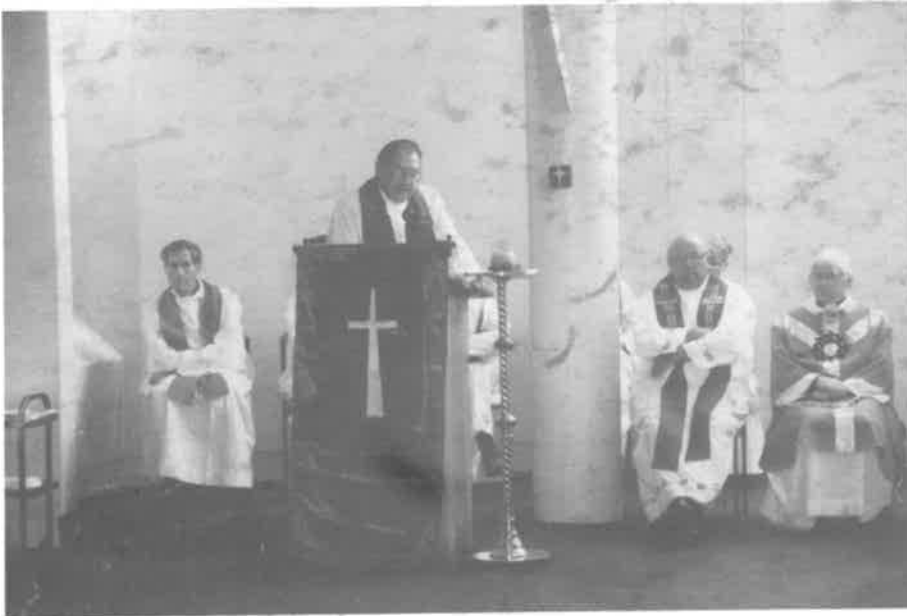
**School Children in Saturday's parade.**



**Archbishop Thomas White, the papal Delegate, and Father Phil Cody S.M. blessing the new papal flags & papal blessings at Saturdays powhiri.**



**Tangata whenua at Saturday morning's powhiri.**



**Father Jim Beban, past curate at St. Mary's, giving the homily at Saturday mornings requiem mass.**

including the building of the block walls, the swimming pool and Te Reo.

Father Beban said they were happy times and one time he was laughing so much that he fell off the Church roof. In his own humorous style, Father's speech was well received by the large audience.

At the conclusion of the speeches the cake (made by Maureen Gimblett) was cut by one of the older pupils Mrs. Henrietta Murphy and the newest new entrant James Wilson. The afternoon concluded with a roll call of the decades, afternoon tea, and more reminiscing about the "good old days".

## Saturday Evening -

### Dinner & Dance in Te Reo:

Over 190 people attended this important function in the recently painted, and beautifully decorated Te Reo. After pre-dinner drinks, the Whanau called on everyone to stand, as the official party was called into the hall and the official part of evening started.

### Toasts:

Master of Ceremonies, **Mike McAsey**, called upon **Kuia Makuini Johnson**, a past pupil and prominent parishioner with generations of integral involvement with Pukekaraka to give a toast to Absent Friends. In proposing the toast, Makuini asked that we bring friends who cannot be here, into our midst with love. In paying tribute to those that could not be present, Makuini then asked the Whanau to sing, to bring everyone together to reinforce this aroha with song.

### Catholic Church:

The toast to the Catholic Church was made by past pupil and parishioner, **Dennis Garrett**, who recalled the famous people who had visited Pukekaraka - like Bishop

Viard and Archbishop Redwood. He recalled his days as an Altar Boy, with Sister Veronica looking after the housekeeping needs of the Sanctuary.

These memories remind us of the changes that have taken place in the Church over the last 2 decades - changes that have been for the better, like removing the altar rails, celebrating Mass in English, more participation by the laity, especially women, the updated "Our Father" and confirmation at an earlier age.

"The Catholic Church has served St. Mary's Parish well for 150 years." Dennis concluded by observing that "the Catholic Church is strong, and, despite the shortage of priests and religious, it is looking

to the future - the parish facilities here and throughout New Zealand are ample evidence of this." Dennis then asked everyone to rise and charge their glasses to a toast to the Catholic Church.

The reply to the toast was given by **His Excellency Archbishop Thomas White D.D.** - who agreed that the Church here was well and truly alive. He could feel that, not just because of his travels around the Pacific. Today he had experienced English and Maori - with one



**Sr. John Bosco, past Principal at the School speaking at Saturday afternoon function**



**Cutting of School cake by Mrs Henrietta Murphy (one of the oldest ex-pupils) and James Wilson (newest pupil at School) during the Saturday afternoon ceremony.**

in fact many things have happened at St. Mary's in recent years - like the building of the new Church, burying Fathers Caulfield and Atkins, helping to organise jubilees, huis etc. etc."

Father Paddy saw himself with 3 roles - a Parish Priest, a Maori Missioner and a guardian of the Spirit of the Society of Mary in this place.

"This is indeed a special place - the spirit of Father Comte - Father Cognet, he was a great speaker in French - when he arrived and was welcomed up the Wanganui River the Maoris did not want a translation, they were so struck by his manner".

"Wherever I have been I have been blessed by 'Mothers' - when I came here, Eileen Ransfield was my mother, she taught me how to be a priest - Father Durning and Kui Tararu and their emphasis on Pukekaraka as the place of Our Lady, the earth in which we plant seeds, a feminine place, Mary Queen of New Life."

"The French come here - buses come and it is hard to get the people back on board - here is a quiet shrine for the family of Faith for the whole country - a special spirit for the Society of Mary - a place of connections, the connection with France, the plaque near the Statue of Mary in the new Church outlines the visit of Makuini Johnson to Fourviere in France".

"You are in my prayers - I am privileged to be part of it - the whole Jubilee is a sign of the spirit."

"So we plant new seeds - to make Pukekaraka even more attractive to the old and especially the young."

## **Toast to St Peter Chanel School: By Sister Kathleen Crompton**

Sister Kathleen, who did not teach at the school - but as a member of the Sisters of St Joseph, she has had a lot to do with the area and her father Jim Crompton was the first pakeha altar boy in the 1880's (he is in the Jubilee book photo with Father Melu in the old Church, before it was done up).

"My dictionary tells me that a school is a place where students are educated by teachers, a group - a kind of community."

"In the old days the teacher had the upper hand,

never stepping on the other - "it was like a rhythm."  
"The Church is not external, but it is in you."

"We revere every Marist, every Sister of the past - but the Church is us." "I relate to that from my experience in China, Rwanda, Ethiopia.....the outreach that is the Church that has travelled here from afar." Archbishop White also thanked the New Zealand Bishops who were totally devoted to the Church.

Archbishop White was warmly applauded for his speech.

## **The Toast to St. Mary's Church**

was given by **Peter Hakaria**, a member of the well known and respected **Hakaria** family.

Peter outlined some of the significant people and events over the last 150 years - 1844 with the arrival of Fr Comte, befriended by the Ngati-Kapu, a holy and practical man ..... the golden age of Fathers Melu and Delach - the McDonalds who spoke on the Marae.

Peter carried on, with a sequence of events and people - "1894 the Sisters come - the school and the bazaars for funds - the convent, the presbytery and large huis - the Sisters caring for Paraparaumu to Foxton - the 1930's and New Zealand born priests - 1938 and Father Melu dies - then World War 11 and after the Hui Arangas."

"The 'tornado' of Father Jim Beban and his barbeques and square dancing - the 1950's I was there - my grandfather helped to build Te Reo - the new Church, people come to our parish from all over the world."

"We are in Mary's hands. She points us to Jesus. We are a model of bi-culture. As long as we keep Jesus Christ to the forefront".

## **Reply - Father Paddy Kinsella S.M.**

Father Paddy started by saying that "some people think that it would be nice to be in a 'quiet little parish' -





**Sr Kathleen Crompton proposing the toast to St. Peter Chanel School at Saturday nights dinner.**

probably with the help of a cane - today the pupils seem to have the upper hand with more lethal weapons."

"St. Peter Chanel has changed in physical shape and size - also with the incorporation of Te Reo Maori and in the involvement of parents - once run primarily by the Sisters of St. Joseph, now totally lay and in good hands."

"A couple of stories - Sister Fabian (in charge of sacristy linen) was approached by one pupil, who said 'Sister shall I wash the curates now.' "And then the two little boys who turned up with pockets bulging with apples - when asked, they admitted getting them from the orchard - 'Well, it said, Sister. pick your own'."

Sister said that it was plain that everyone was ready to celebrate 100 years, so she invited all present to toast St. Peter Chanel School.



**Brendan Molloy, principal of St. Peter Chanel School replying to the toast.**

## **Reply to the school toast - Brendan Molloy present Principal**

"He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata - you ask what is the most important resource in the world - it is people, it is people, it is people".

"These words coined by a Te Aupouri chieftainess - sum up the tradition set by the great people who preceded us".

Brendan stated that he was proud to accept this mantle of tradition and

uphold it along with the other teachers of the day - the nuns of old had a lot to put up with, years of deprivation, they taught in the Church in the beginning, because they had no classrooms - and it was said that when the buildings were demolished in 1957 that it was only the borer holding hands that kept the building up.

"We have this tradition - we uphold it proudly - witness the pageant on Friday - the children know it is a special place".

"The bicultural nature of the school we also proudly accept - Cardinal Williams once stated that the monocultural, mono-lingual young New Zealander who cannot benefit from the rich cultural environment around him is also deprived. The development of an education system appropriate for a multicultural society is an urgent priority in New Zealand, and it goes without saying that it is a priority in the Catholic Education system".

"Our school started bilingual classes in the early 1980's under Sister Maria Goretti and it blossomed into life during the time of Sister Marie Roche. This year we started our first immersion class and next year we will have 2 classes covering the whole school".

"I would like to pay tribute to my staff, Deputy Principal Margaret Beck, Assistant Principal Teresa Mason, D.R.S. Helen Clifford and the others that make this great school".

"In closing - to every time a purpose - just as Fathers Comte, Melu, Delach, Beban and others were the right people for their times - just as Father Matthew Cosgriff was the right person to start the new Church building project and Father Paddy Kinsella the right person to oversee the construction - the teachers with Sister Catherine to start, Sisters Borgia, Phillip,



**Saturday evening revelry.**

Martina and co to carry on - every teacher has a purpose and has done the school proud".

"In conclusion it is people who make Jubilees, it is people who make parishes, it is people who make schools".

Thanks are given to Father Phil Cody S.M. for his notetaking of speeches.

So concluded the formal part of the evening - and everyone enjoyed dancing and talking until the small hours of Sunday morning. A memorable dinner and dance to end a most memorable day.

## **Sunday 23 October**

An amazing turnout of over 260 people gathered for Mass on Sunday - on the third brilliantly sunny day. The celebrant was Cardinal Thomas Williams, readers Teresa Rikihana and Margaret Beck and the organist Mary Molloy.

Cardinal Williams spoke on the theme of oneness - referring to the Gospel Reading "May they all be one, Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me".

"The story of the past century and a half is the ageless Catholic story of struggle and frustration of success and failure, of life and death - but you who are parishioners of St. Mary's and those now dead, who worshipped here in past decades have achieved so much you can be rightly proud".

"There are few places in New Zealand where the Catholic Church has put down stronger roots, and where Maori Catholicity is more loyally and proudly conscious of its past and its future - today Pukekaraka yields to no historic European Shrine in Catholicity, with it's Lourdes grotto, its life size statue of St Peter, its Stations of the Cross winding up the hill".

"St Mary's Church is the oldest of the Archdioceses 49 parishes and



**Cardinal Thomas Williams Celebrating mass on Sunday.**



**Church Choir gathered after Sunday mass.**



**Mrs Kit Fox & Mr Timothy Faith, parishioners, cutting the Jubilee cake of St. Mary's Church after Sunday mass.**

**Part of the large gathering of almost 300 people on Sunday morning.**

St Peter Chanel School is the first of the Archdioceses 42 schools to undertake bilingual education - over the weekend stories will be told and retold by those whose lives have been shaped by the Parish - but like almost every parish in the Archdiocese St Mary's reflects the Church universal".

"What of tomorrow? - your Church is a powerful symbol of continuity and achievement - it links the missionary Church of the 2nd half of the 19th century with the developed Church now preparing for the third millennium - but more importantly it stands for unity = the unity with the diocese, the unity of the diocese with the world-wide Church and the unity of Catholics with all God's children, and with the men and women who do not share our faith".

"For your impressive 150 years past, I join you in giving thanks to God - on your present, so rich in promise, I commend you - for the future God holds in store for you I pray that your unity will be vigorous, loving and serving.

After this glorious Mass, so abundant in joy, celebration, thanksgiving, song and prayer - everyone filed out for the cutting of the cake, by Parishioners Kit Fox and Timothy Faith and the singing of Ave Maria in French, Maori and English. The morning concluded with a lovely barbeque lunch.

And so ended a most successful 3 days - a time of catching up on lost friends, of hearing stories from by gone ages and a time of renewing contact with this special place.















**Back Row: Francis Bogs, Barry Hapeta, Dennis Garrett, Dennis Gray, Bing Henry, James Nicholls, Barry Gray, John McCloud, David Blanch. Front Row: Peggy Hapeta, Fay Bartosh, Alice Morehu, Dania, Winterburn, S. Henry, S. Owens, M. Broughton.**

up to the integration code. This period ended with Sister Maria Goretti as Principal.

The programme, under the guidance of Mrs Makuini Johnson was a real success and gained funding for Kaiarahi Reo - one of the first 75 schools in the country to do so.

In 1983 the school was integrated - to come under the umbrella of the state system - but much work and fundraising was required to bring the school

## 1984 - 1994 :

In 1984 Sister Marie Roche started as Principal and she served the school for 6 years and was a real inspiration to all. She was most supportive of the bilingual programme and saw this aspect go from strength to strength. Rangiwehea Rikihana was Kaiarahi Reo during these years and the Deputy Principal was Mr Rod Graham, another local identity who furthered the area of outdoor education.

In 1986 an Adventure Playground was added alongside the school building and extensive planting out was done on the North side of the bank of the Mangapouri. A playhouse going over the stream was

83) and Sisters Camillus, Felicitis, Isadore and Stephanie.

Prior to this period of time the Otaki Convent pre-school, run by voluntary helpers and organised by Mrs Makuini Johnson and Mrs Pat Bennett, was an example to many other areas in the county. Prior to the introduction of Kohanga Reo - it filled a gap so sorely needed in the community.

In 1981 moves were under-way to start Bilingual Education in the school, and much time and money was spent by local people, by New Zealand Council for Educational Research and the Evangelisation, Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church (who spent \$25,000 over a period of years) on consultation and planning for this to take place.

**Back Row: Ann Wilkinson, Claudia Pavan, Louise Mallia, Kathleen Lockyer, Joanne Gimblett, Mrs Mary Housiaux. Front Row: Elizabeth Barone, Rosemary Martin, Colleen Taratoa, Joeleen Blanche - Bennett. 1968.**



added in 1987, thanks to assistance from the Lanham family.

In 1990 the Sisters of St. Joseph pulled out of the school, after 96 years of dedication and hard work and the new Principal was Brendan Molloy.

This period co-incided with a resurgence in the provision of amenities and a rise in roll and staffing. In 1990 a new relocatable came from St Michaels in Taita to house Form 1 & 2 and in 1992 a renovated Administration Block was brought onto the site at a cost of \$23,000 - all paid for by locally raised funds. With the advent of the new Church the school was involved in helping to make a Tukutuku panel and the school enjoyed using this marvellous amenity.

In August 1993 there was a disastrous fire, which gutted 2 of the classrooms in the main block and resulted in an expenditure of almost \$200,000 to restore the building and contents. As a result, one of the relocatables brought on site was purchased by the Board of Trustees at a cost of \$35,000 and this is proving to be a real boon for the school.

The roll is currently 145, having risen 50% in the last 6 years - and the school has a grading roll of 9 teachers - including a Kaiarahi Reo (Maori Language Assistant) Mrs Uru Cooper and a Resource Teacher of Maori, appointed in September 1993, Mrs Jo Winiata. The Deputy Principal, currently is Mrs Margaret Beck and the Assistant Principal, Mrs Teresa Mason

The school looks forward to a bright and confident future, having overcome many of the trials and tribulations in their development years. We wish the school well in it's future development.

## THE NEW VITALITY 1935-85

The 1930's were great years for vocations to the priesthood. There was a new interest in the Maori Mission and Pukekaraka was a natural centre. Fr. John McSherry, John Cullinane, James Durning were newcomers here. In 1935 Fr. Riordan and Fr. Cullinane re-founded the Mission in Meeanee. Fr. Fuohy and Fr. Wall began at this time too, and Taranaki was re-established in 1939 at Okato. Fr. Joe Cahill was in this era too, and Fr. John Dynan, an Aussie Marist, who started a new centre for Rangitikei, based on the Highden Novitiate. There was new enthusiasm, ~constant visitation. Training in the prayers, instructions, catechism camps, were all held at Otaki, and the other stations. The nation was just coming out of the Slump.

## FR. JAMES DURNING SM

was probably the most significant figure at this time. He realised how important the Maori language was for his work, so threw himself into mastering it. He soon became a really outstanding speaker. He learnt a lot about Marae speech making from Tira Putu, a notable local elder. His main teacher was Mrs Ruta Etekia, known as

Kui Taruru. Fr. James admired her linguistic skills in both English and Maori. She was a highly intelligent gifted leader.

She was Fr. Delach and Fr. Melu's great helper. She could make things happen. She gave Fr. Durning the insights about Hine Nui O te Ao Katoa that are so profoundly Christian and profoundly Maori.

In recent years Fr. James has passed on much of his wisdom to our local people, and it is embodied in our New Church. It is capturing a great deal of attention because it is a brilliant demonstration of the bi-cultural Church, a legacy from the 1890's onwards.

## THE 1940 EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS IN WELLINGTON, AND THE CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION.

These events generated tremendous excitement. The school children made a papier mache model of Pukekaraka for the Catholic Pavillion. Sister Mary Lawrence, a Sister of Mercy, painted a Maori Madonna using Emma Poutama from Kuku as her model. A copy of the painting is in Hine, together with the "Pukekaraka". For this occasion Pukekaraka was the centre for the Maori people of the land. The invitation spoke of four things. 1. To celebrate in a spirit of thanksgiving the centennial of New Zealand. 2. To welcome the Papal Legate (Archbishop Panico) 3. To dedicate a memorial to Father Werahiko Melu. 4. To participate in the Eucharistic Congress in Wellington. The people had booked special carriages on the trains and arrived at Pukekaraka on Wed. 31st January 1940. They came from all mission districts. About 850 'camped' at Pukekaraka. Because there were so many visitors to house and feed, most of the local people never got to Wellington for the Congress. The people who went never forgot the wonderful Masses and ceremonies held on the front field of St. Pat's College, Wellington. The Exhibition at Evans Bay was such an experience for country kids. Who will ever forget the Crazy House.

## THE VISIT OF THE PAPAL LEGATE - ARCHBISHOP PANICO

For the local people this was the high point of 1940. This happened on Monday 5th February (Report)

### HUI PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 31st January, 1940

Arrival of visitors at Otaki.

Thursday, 1st February, 1940

Opening Mass on Marae.

Welcomes on Marae.

Sectional meetings, singing classes, etc.  
 Friday, 2nd February, 1940  
 Visit to Exhibition of Main Body.  
 Children attend Children's Mass in Wellington.  
 Concert Party gives Concert in Town Hall.  
 Return to Otaki of Main Body.  
 Saturday, 3rd February, 1940.  
 Delegation of Women visit Wellington,  
 Women's Day.  
 Demonstration Concert in afternoon  
 Pageantry and Plays by Children in evening.  
 Sunday, 4th February, 1940.  
 All go to Wellington to attend Solemn High  
 Mass, etc.  
 Return to Otaki in evening.  
 Monday, 5th February, 1940.  
 Reception to Legate, etc., at Otaki.  
 Blessing of Fr. Melu's Memorial.  
 Dinner.  
 Poroporoaki.  
 Tuesday, 6th February, 1940.  
 Return home of visitors, or visit to Exhibition.

In the early 1940's, during the war, another group of young keen priests joined the Mission, Father Mel Caulfield, Pat Cleary, Gordon Kerins and our first Maori priest, Fr. Bill Te Awhitu. Fr. Te Awhitu was at Otaki 1945-46. A good part of this time he was in the local "San". Fr. Caulfield was here 1951-56 and 1984-90 so is well known to most parishioners.

Parish Priests after 1930 were attentive to the people within the confines of the Otaki Parish. The Maori Missioner ranged much more widely. It was unfortunate that their roles began to become separated. Fathers John Seymour, Mark Devoy, 'Gus' Venning, James Hendren, Bill Buckley were fine Marist priests. Father Kevin McGrath became P.P. in 1948. He was a strong man of the old school, and reigned for eleven years, very firmly grounded in the practice of the Sacraments, Catholic Devotions, and Prayer, especially the Rosary. He was the man who founded the Marist Messenger, and he continued as Editor during his fourteen years at Otaki. Fr. Peter Hannah, Joe Cahill, John Egan and Darcy Reader were notable curates during the 30's and 40's.

## THE 1950 EXPLOSION.

Fr. Jim Beban arrived. Fr. McGrath was shocked out of his tree. This giant of a man brought new life and energy to Otaki. He had big ideas, a big heart, and boundless generosity. He was wonderfully complemented by Fr. Caulfield. They were revealers of talent and soon teams of people were doing great things. It was a time of prosperity for the country and this team caught the wave. Typical was the running of the Annual Barbecue. It was a massive undertaking, requiring a staff of around 200. People came from Wellington and Feilding to help with the entertainment. Half of Otaki,

Catholic or not, was pressed into helping. The N.Z. Square Dance competitions were held. Very substantial sums of money were raised. In consequence the new school was built, a bus brought pupils from Manakau and the whole place upgraded.

After Fr. Beban left, Fr. Caulfield and Fr. Cahill, P.P. were very active in keeping the teams together.

There were some significant factors in the post war period. Most of the young people started to go to Wellington to find work. Planned Giving was introduced to assure Parish Finances. Many young people were able to go to Catholic Boarding Schools including the newly opened Hato Paora College in Feilding. Nursing attracted quite a number of our young ladies not the least being Rosie Hakaraia and her sister Borgia and niece Janet. Government Departments started to take on Maori Staff and many made very successful careers. Unfortunately our "talent" had to leave Otaki.

## MAORI MISSION

After the war Fr. Riordan started a centre in Wellington and took on the South Island. Fr. Wall followed him there. Fr. Mel Caulfield followed Father Venning at Otaki in 1952 and left in 1957. Fr. Dan Fouhy took over from 1957 - mid 1965.

Fr. Ihaka Gupwell came in Mid 65 and was here until 1974. He and Fr. Cheesman were great gatherers of seafood. Fr. Wall ran the Mission from 1975 until 1983 when he died. He died in harness and his Tangi here was a tremendous occasion. The second half of the Tangi was at Ketemarae, Taranaki and he was buried in Hawera. Fr. Caulfield came back to replace him. In 1990 his health had failed, and he was at the Home of Compassion Wanganui. He came back for various celebrations, including his 78th birthday and the opening of the new Church. On August 17nd, 1993, he died. His beautiful Tangi was celebrated in Hine, and he was buried with Fr. Melu and Cognet and Brother Stanislaus on top of Pukekaraka. In 1991 Fr. Kinsella arrived.

## PARISH

Fr. Heagney was P.P. from 1961-1966. He was a 'steady as it goes' Parish man and left here to be P.P. of Hastings. He started renovations of the Church. He coached a very good St. Peter Channel Rugby team. Fr. Jock Aitken, who had had a year as a curate in 1954, was P.P. from 67-73. He was the Old Soldier, a man's man, and loved singing.

Fr. George Cheeseman was curate from 1965-74. He was a great visitor and had a great charisma for food. Fr. Michael Goldfinch R.I.P., Fr. Brian Condon (now Maori Mission Sydney) and Fr. Beban had brief spells here.

In 1991 Fr. Kinsella came as the leader of the combined operation, Parish and Mission.

Fr. Johnny Goulter came in 1991, and Fr. Phil Cody, largely to study Maori, came in 1994.



**Back Row:**  
**Fr. Wall**  
**Fr. Fouhy**  
**Fr. Joe Cahill**  
**Fr. Cullinane**  
**Fr. J. Durning**  
**Front Row:**  
**Fr. Riordan**  
**Fr. Venning**  
**Fr. Ryan.**



## RENEW

This three year programme/process 1985 -1987 was the beginning of a new era in the Parish.

It was a very good education in talking to each other, in praying with each other, and of inspiring each other with enthusiasm for the Church. We learnt the art of "sharing" and found new ways of communicating with each other.

## THE INFLUENCE OF VATICAN II.

The most obvious changes were in the Liturgy. Masses were in English and Maori. The priest faced the people. The altar rails disappeared in Otaki when the double funeral of Polly Enoka and John Taratoa required more room. The dress of priests and nuns was modified. People began to take a more active part in Liturgy and Pastoral Councils. Lay teachers became more common in our school. More decisions were taken by lay people until the building of the new church which was planned and executed almost completely by lay people. However, Otaki was more than ready for most things because of the great team efforts of the 1950's and 60's.

Our Parish has always been blessed by outstanding women leaders. As the clericalism of pre-Vatican II rapidly disappears, women's roles will be restored to their rightful place, and their fullness. Being the 'Body of Christ', and witnesses to God's love will occur a great deal outside the church gates.

Our major effort now is to give confidence to many

lay people and to train them as leaders in our Church.

The "Waka Aroha" movement in the Maori Mission, has trained dozens of new leaders who are bringing new vitality to their home areas. In Otaki, we have the best bi-cultural Parish in the country where people just take for granted they will work with each other.

## FATHER DANIEL FOUHY - PA RANIERA

Father Daniel Fouhy (Pa Raniera) came to Otaki as the Maori Missioner in 1957. During his work among the people he presented a rather gruff exterior, but possessed a very warm and generous heart; a port in a storm.

Father was an outstanding historian - Maori history being a speciality. Through his historical knowledge it was found that the little whare on Pukekaraka had no name. In consultation with the whanau of Kapumanawhiti the name 'Te Oha Ki (Precious gift) was duly decided on.

The whare 'Te Ohaki' stands out atop Pukekaraka hill and serves as a constant reminder to us all to appreciate the 'Precious Gift of Faith' which we have received. These sentiments we shared with Father and remain for all who come to Pukekaraka.

Haere e Pa, Kahore matou e wareware i a koe - haere, haere.

Pukekaraka Whanau.

## **FATHER I. GUPWELL - PA IHAKA**

After spending some 20 odd years successfully establishing Hato Paora Maori Boys College, Feilding, we were fortunate to have Father Gupwell (Pa Ihaka) come to Otaki in 1965.

Apart from his usual duties, Father was invaluable as a teacher of Maori language for adults, of teachers and students in classes run by the Education Department and Otaki College.

Father's love of literature attracted him to Maori waiata which he taught to us with a deep appreciation of the knowledge contained therein. This was an exciting time for us, a time of discovery and enrichment.

Kia ora e Pa

Pukekaraka Whanau.

## **The Reverend Father Regis O'Reilly S.M.**

was appointed Parish Priest of Otaki in 1973. We are so fortunate to still have the Society of Mary to carry on the traditions of the French Missionaries and the special devotion to Our Lady and Pukekaraka. Father O'Reilly did much to enhance this - he helped to organise the 1974 Jubilee celebrations which were a great success.

Father O'Reilly was a very special preacher - he it was who introduced us to the beautiful prayer of St. Ignatius Loyola for a happy death which I say to this day.

He also convened regular meetings of members of the Third Order of Mary.

## **Reverend Father Phil McCormack SM**

was appointed as Parish Priest to Otaki in 1979

He too showed us a deep, sincere Faith, always kind and understanding. It was during his time here that 'Marycrest' became part of the Parish and Mass was celebrated there every Sunday in the beautiful chapel. The Te Horo parishioners were privileged to provide breakfast for Father after the 8 o'clock Mass. He, like many Marists, was a keen golfer and enjoyed his free Mondays relaxing on the golf links.

## **Reverend Father Laffey SM.**

arrived in 1985. Again we were privileged to have a Parish Priest of the Society of Mary in Otaki, and one who preached beautiful homilies. It was at that time that there were several interchanges with other local churches.

Father Laffey gave a very impressive homily from the pulpit of the All Saints Anglican Church in Otaki.

## **Reverend Father Matthew Cosgriff SM.**

came to us in 1988 from Wanganui where a beautiful new church had been completed in a different location. He it was who launched the planning of a new St. Mary's in Otaki. We all loved our historic old St. Mary's, but from a slow start, Father Matthew succeeded in 'starting the ball rolling'. He must feel satisfaction, great satisfaction when he visits Otaki now and sees the beautiful new roomy St. Mary's here.

Thoughts from Dola Derham.

## **FATHER FRANCIS WALL**

Over the past eleven years Pukekaraka has seen three large tangi of Marist Priests, two of them Maori Missioners.

In 1983, Father Frank Wall died at the wheel of his car, which was no surprise to anyone. He had been at the home of Hodie & Rangi White for the night, and though not well, had insisted on driving away to continue his mission. He died a few minutes later still in Manakau, on the feast of St. Teresa the Little Flower, and Patron of the Missions.

Immediately the parish moved into action. There had not been a tangi at Pukekaraka itself for many years, tangi were always held at various neighbouring marae, but obviously Father would lie in Hine Nui o te Ao Katoa. Hine was considered too long and difficult to heat, so a row of 44g1. drums were lined up 2/3 of the way from the front door, and covered with blue satin drapes from a previous concert, and Father was carried back into the bosom of Our Lady, and surrounded by photos of his Maori Mission predecessors, the picture of the Maori Madonna, rosaries and was covered with Kakahu. We were all in shock, we had thought Father Wall would go on forever, and here he lay in our midst, and immediately the manuhiri started visiting Father.

Father Phil McCormack was our Parish Priest and he too, was shocked at the sudden death of his confrere. Father Atkins carried us all along with many Rosaries and prayers, and he sat on the paepae when needed, and did the dishes when allowed.

Some of the first manuhiri were Taranaki - from Hoani Papita from Normanby. Father had founded Hoani Papita in his earlier years in Taranaki. So his people came to pay their respects and to ask for his body for burial. 'Free and frank' discussions went on for hours. Father Atkins offered his view that we should follow the example of St. Augustine when his mother St. Monica, died. St. Augustine and his brother had been discussing with St. Monica her burial. They were far from home and she had become seriously ill. The brother wished to take her body home for burial. St. Monica said "Lay this body wherever I may be ..... But remember me at the Table of the Lord.

This slowed the discussion for some time, but then Hoani Papita 'big guns' arrived in haste, they had been up in Northland for the Pei te Hurunui competitions and left immediately they heard of Father's death. The discussion went on till about 8.00a.m. next morning, right through the night. They told us he had always been with them in spirit, and his heart was in Taranaki. We remembered how he had spoken of being buried on Pukekaraka and his main fear that local cows would lie on his grave and worse! Their clinching argument was that we already had several saintly priests lying on the hill beside us, and we had a Presbytery with three live Priests in our midst, and they had none, dead or alive, because assimilation was the buzz word in their diocese. All this with grave courtesy and deference, often speaking to Father Wall himself for verification, mostly in Maori, sometimes in Pakeha.

So in the morning it was agreed, with tears, that Father would lie in Hine, but be buried in Taranaki. This was the most charitable action to take. Father had always been on the go in life, busy travelling, visiting, chiding, baptising, blessing and exhorting, he and his car were never home. In death he was still 'on the go'. As each Otaki Parish Mass was said in church, we knew he would not like to miss Mass so he was lifted and taken over to attend Mass and then back into Hine. It eased the sorrow to take him with us and we laughed gently with him as he travelled back and forth across the marae, we all had our stories of driving with him, some funny, some hair raising. One morning the ladies from the kitchen carried him to Mass and back, because it was felt that throughout his years in Otaki the women were his support, and so why should things be different in death! The men stood by expecting catastrophe, but he made himself

exceptionally light for us - just a featherweight.

The manuhiri came literally in thousands over the four days, and the cooks and kaikaranga got between 2 & 3 hours sleep per night. In the early hours of one morning, about 2.30a.m. a uniformed police officer appeared in the doorway of Hine. We were apprehensive, thinking it was another mate, but he had come to pay his respects to Father Wall. This was his first free time since Father's death. He spent time speaking to Father, and then to us, we offered him a quick cup of tea and he had to hurry off again. On our last night with Father, Father Mac woke us about 4.30am to say he'd just had a phonecall that a large ope of South Island people were on the overnight ferry and would arrive about 6.00am, cold and hungry. Could we deal with them? We got up again, and started hot porridge, meat and potatoes for them. They came onto the marae, a whole packed bus load of Ngai Tahu. The people of Invercargill had packed and set out as soon as they heard of Father's death, collecting more people on the way and travelling for several days. After formalities, we left them for a time with Father because the South Island had been part of Father's district. They stayed for Otaki's Requiem for Father and farewell of him as he set out for Taranaki, then went straight to their bus as they were booked on the afternoon ferry, and couldn't even wait for the hakari. These are just two of the many experiences of the tangi, and there are many more.

The school children from St. Peter Chanel came over several times to kneel with Father and join in the Rosaries and prayers for him, and there was a special Requiem for the children, where the older boys carried the coffin into church and back. Father's special ministry had been to children. Boys up and down the country remembered his teaching them to box - his entree into the world of the young.

### Fr. Wall's Funeral.



Father's final Mass at Pukekaraka was our Requiem for him and this was held in Te Reo. What a rush - breakfast was served there early - we then converted Te Reo into a church and afterwards back into a dining room for the hakari. Mass was standing room only.

A long, Maori, beautiful, sung, elevating Mass.

At the Offertory among the gifts take up were Father's boxing gloves to be placed on his coffin. Crowds for communion, too many priests present to be fitted into one photo of the Funeral procession, several poroporoaki during Mass. Then the last sad farewell as Father was placed in the hearse and driven out over the cattlestop for the long trip north, with stops at St. Stephen's Kuku, and St. Mary's Wanganui, a guard of honour of Ohau school children on the main highway at Ohau, a traffic officer escort, and on to Hoani Papita at Ketamarae where his other family waited for him. There is still mention of that decision to let him go to Taranaki, whenever there is a hui at Pukekaraka and of the fact that Father Wall lies in a public cemetery, and not on the marae. My feeling is our courtesy and generosity to the people of Taranaki has been doubly rewarded, because before too long we were to bury two more saints on our Pukekaraka.

energies to one area. One day he came home extra tired and said he had travelled from Otaki to Palmerston North and had performed fourteen Baptisms throughout the day. These were not impromptu, but the result of weeks of teaching and careful preparation of the families.

After many requests from his friends, and finally, a direction from a traffic officer, Father was obliged to give up his driving licence. He then started a vegetable garden to keep the Presbytery in greens, and to keep himself fit. Janet Marino once found him on his hands and knees in the garden, he had been there a long time, unable to stand up again without help. With the aid of his friends who drove him, he still went out around his rohe, anointing the dying, saying house Masses, visiting, and unveiling gravestones. His voice had been very weak since his return, and more and more often it disappeared altogether.

While he was performing the ritual appropriate, his chauffeur of the day would say the words of blessing, or anointing or even the Mass. This may not have been in accordance with Canon Law, but Father said the Lord understood.

After a severe illness, Father needed constant help, and as it was his expressed wish to retire at Pukekaraka, and to be buried on top of the hill, a roster of fourteen parishioners cared for Father. One would arrive each morning, get him up, showered, and cook a protein breakfast for him, do his room and settle him in the lounge, where Esme

Lockyer, the Presbytery housekeeper would care for him along with her other duties. In the late afternoon another would arrive, cook him a protein-rich evening meal, chat, watch T.V. with him, then undress him and settle him for the night. Right up to the time he died, he expressed his gratitude to these people who enable him to stay on at Pukekaraka. Frequently we'd be waiting to settle him for the night, and starting to yawn, ourselves, but Father Mel wanted to stay up and wait for 'Bernie' (Father Atkins). Bernie would be out at a tangi, but they always said their night prayers together. Though we'd offer to fill in, it wasn't the same. We'd be tramping up and down, trying to stay awake ourselves, much like parents with a teenager out late. Bernie would come home, full of marae kai, and all would be well with the world, night prayers could be said and Father settled for the night. We cared for him for about six months, and then the Sisters of Compassion at Aubert Home in Wanganui asked to care for Father. He went there, unwillingly at first, but grew to love the home, with all the happy and generous Sisters,



**Father Mel Caulfield left with Father Jock Aitken and some admirers at Hui 1950's.**

## **FATHER MEL CAULFIELD, SM. MAORI MISSIONER**

Father Mel Caulfield SM had returned to Pukekaraka early in 1984, to replace Father Wall, who had died a few months previously. During his first stay in the 1950's, Father Mel had been a powerhouse of energy and ideas. The frail, little man who was supported across the marae to his powhiri by his people of Whangarei, looked as though he would not last out three months. He told us he was suffering from Parkinson's Disease. For the next six years he worked as hard as he ever had done. Certainly, his body no longer responded as vigorously, but his mind was even more alert to his duties as Maori Missioner. He inherited Father Wall's little red car along with his mission station. He planned each day carefully to get the maximum done by directing his

who treated him like a king. He found a new ministry among the residents. He said a Mass every morning, which suited those in wheelchairs who could not be ready early. He organised a Rosary circle in the afternoons. On our visits to him, we found about 28 people present at his Masses more than in many parishes. One of his biggest treats there, was for his friends to bring a big box of Kentucky Fried Chicken, and all sit around his room on the bed, and eat with our fingers every scrap in the box. He said several times that he had never heard an unkind or angry word at Aubert Home in his three years there. All his friends are eternally grateful to the Sisters of Compassion for the courteous, loving, sensitive care they gave to Father Mel. After a couple of 'false starts', when we rushed up to Aubert Home, Father died with the Sisters and Father Hemi Durning SM saying the Rosary with him. The Wanganui people brought him down to us, and we were better prepared this time. This was a different type of Tangi - quiet, reflective and again very prayerful. Because of Father's retiring to Wanganui, many people had thought him already dead, when they did not see him getting around the district. Father's family were able to attend the tangi each evening, and join in the stories and this was lovely as we all gained insights into Father's life and thoughts. His family learned more of his travels and hard work as a Maori Missioner, and we learned of his life as a loving, caring family member. He had a great sense of humour and loved practical jokes. We already knew he was a great mimic, but the Presbytery of the '80s was not often the place for Father's wit. Father's sister, Irene Connolly and his brother-in-law, Trevor Campbell arrived on the final day. Father's sister and Trevor's wife, Yvonne had died just a couple of weeks previously. Irene and Trevor were able to spend time with Father before the casket

was closed. He looked extremely peaceful.

Cardinal Tom Williams and a great many priests attended Father Mel's requiem, where he was carried into the church by his family. A lovely, tranquil Maori Requiem was said and Father's favourite parts of Scripture were the readings. These dealt with a body's frailties and weaknesses proving to be a person's strengths. Then Father was taken out to his last journey up Pukekaraka to lie on top of the hill with other Marists. At each turn of the zigzag, all the way up, there were groups of people waiting for the honour of carrying him.

This whole tangi was a reflection of himself - quiet, dignified and very prayerful.

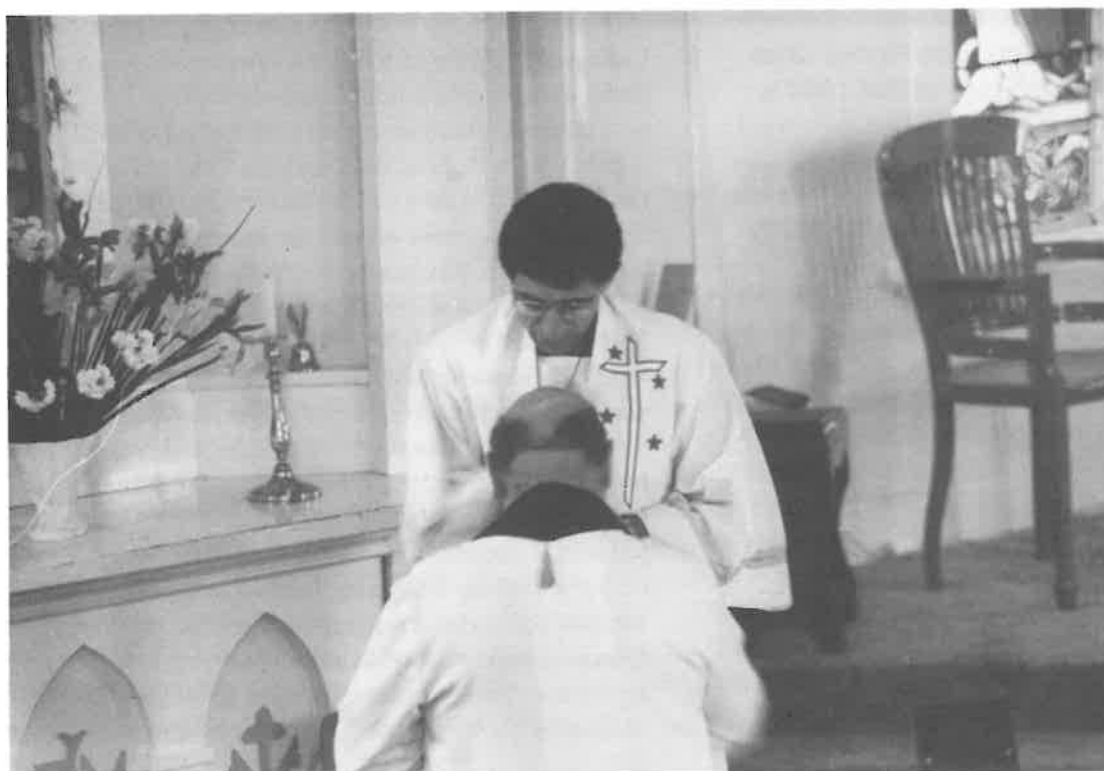
## FATHER BERNARD ATKINS SM

"MARY, GROUND OF ALL BEING, GREETINGS!  
GREETINGS TO YOU, LOVELY AND LOVING  
MOTHER! YOU BIRTHED TO EARTH YOUR  
SON. YOU BIRTHED THE SON OF GOD FROM  
HEAVEN BY BREATHING THE SPIRIT OF GOD."

From St. Hildegard of Bingen.

Father Atkins SM came to Otaki 1982. Those parishioners who had had dealings with Hato Paora knew Father, but to the rest of us he was largely unknown. Not for long!

He was brought to a powhiri at Pukekaraka by the girls from Hato Hohepa of Hawkes Bay. This big, tall, strong man cannot have known of us either, for he wept openly when the girls left for home after our meal together. Certainly, we have heard comments from others over the years that we're pretty much a backwater and behind the times, liturgically. We sat with Father in the afternoon to ease his loneliness, but he settled in



**Father Bernie Atkins being blessed by his old pupil and new Bishop - Takuira Mariu on his first visit to Pukekaraka as Bishop of the Maori people.**



quickly.

What struck everyone who met Father was his great love of Our Lady and his wish to speak of her and proclaim her powers. He also had a great love of people. In each of Father's sermons on any given subject, we listened with interest to see how he was going to introduce the subject of Mary. In 12 years he never failed to bring her name into his sermons and to refer to her help. As we came to know Father Atkins well, he would relate to each of us the details of his fall from the second floor of his presbytery in Hawkes Bay and of his multiple injuries and broken bones; of his expected death within a couple of days; of the Nun who came and sprinkled Lourdes water on him; of how the feeling returned immediately to his paralysed body. He had always had a strong love for Our Lady - she had got him through his final examination in the seminary. He gave the rest of his life to promoting her story, her love, her part in the Redemption. Although he came into a 'backwater' he came to live on Our Lady's marae. He went frequently into Hine Nui o te Ao Katoa. Father was about 66 years old when he came to Otaki, had been at death's door, and in the lay world would have been retired.

Well, he never stopped. He visited people within and without the faith, of other religions and of no religion, shut-ins, sick, lonely, people who cooked (his favourites), sports people, gardeners (more favourites), writers, artists, truck drivers, farmers, the dying, families with children (favourites again). He was a frequent visitor to the home of Brigetta and Richard Bryan, where he just sat each evening for a time, watching and listening and taking part in family life. He loved visiting the school, where he spoke of God's love, which he exemplified, and of Our Lady. He had only to appear outside the Presbytery door and kids flocked to hang on to his hands or even his coat, to tell him their news, show him their latest toy or a picture they had drawn for him. He knew all their names and they begged to be allowed to wash his car. At lunch time in the Presbytery the door bell would ring and some child would want to speak with Father Atkins. He never refused. His love of people was returned, always. Throughout the years, at any time of the day, people from Northland to Bluff would visit the Presbytery to see Father, especially Old Boys he had taught at St. Patrick's or Hato Paora. They would call to say 'Hi', bringing a jar of freshly made jam, a cake made for him, sweets or fruit, all tokens of their aroha for Father. We all met members of his family when they came to visit or to stay with him. When Father did stay at home, mostly in the latter years, he would be found in church for hours at a time, in the front pew, before Our Lady's statue. He couldn't kneel well, just sat there. He was there so frequently that he kept his spiritual reading and a pair of Rosary beads in the pew, ready for instant action. This also stopped him losing them. Because Father lost everything not nailed down. Rosary beads, brevaire, spectacles, walking stick, tablets,

car keys, hats, coats, books, if you visited the Presbytery you would be very likely be met with "Honey, could you look for my.....I don't seem to have it?" It would be somewhere near and he would be so grateful "Oh Baby, thank you."

It made the searching more difficult, when he could remember the name of the lost article'

He'd be saying "you know, a mea"(thing) or telling you about someone whose name he had forgotten "You know A Mea", this happened so often that he was frequently known as Father A. Mea. Father would rest in the big rocking chair that had been Fr. Beban's. His fingers had grown stiffer and he was unable to play the violin or piano any more, but he still loved music and had a great range of records and tapes to enjoy and the Presbytery was often full of music. Fr. Johnnie Goulter has taken this over now, and we still enjoy the music from the lounge. Father A Mea was to be transferred to Greenmeadows early in February 1994. We were all heartbroken and he wasn't overjoyed, he said he was going to prepare for his death. A farewell was prepared with much gloom. Our Lady knew better. Father became ill the weekend before the shift and died next day with his family and a number of Kuia from Pukekaraka around him, praying the Rosary and singing hymns in Maori, Latin and English and so another Tangi in Hine.

Fr. Bernie Atkins SM lay inside Our Lady - Hine Nui O Te Ao Katoa for his last days with us. We decided to give him the farewell we had planned for his departure for Greenmeadows. We had prepared a Rosary based on his life at Pukekaraka, accompanied by appropriate Marian Hymns and we knew the farewell sending him to Greenmeadows would be very sad. Now we were more cheerful, because we were keeping him at Otaki for good and so the Rosary became a tribute to his work in Otaki. Hine was crowded to the doors on the Monday night for his Rosary. The responses were answered with great sincerity and all the hymns were sung with power and feeling.

Father's family came to stay with him in Hine, they may have been apprehensive at first about sleeping on the floor with the Tupapaku and kissing all and sundry, but they quickly relaxed and actually enjoyed our ways. There were visitors from early morning till after midnight during the tangi, and stories and jokes were told about Father. We had really only known him as an older man, but other manuhiri who came to see him told of his days at Hato Paora, his practical jokes, his great wit, love of music, his inability to punish the pupils, his love of sports especially tennis, swimming and fishing. Father had seemed a simple man, but his simplicity was based on a great broad mind, which had pared away all the non-essential matters and all the dross, and dealt with Our Lady, Love, and people.

It was a very busy tangi, not sad, full of laughter, lots of Rosaries, prayers and a beautiful evening Mass in Hine said by Fr Paddy Kinsella SM who had been

busy dealing with enquiries from newspapers from many parts of the country who all wanted to write articles about Father, and enquiries about the Requiem - the phone never stopped ringing.

There was a feeling at the tangi that an era was passing. During the tangi we popped into church and to our delight, there was Fr. Phil Cody SM, a young man who had arrived as a resident priest at the start of the tangi. He was kneeling in Father Atkin's pew, praying to Our Lady, he didn't know it was Father's pew, he just went to it naturally. We realised the old order changeth, but some things stay the same! (Father Phil is also great at doing the dishes - he did them all the time at the tangi - another trait of Father Atkins.) The Requiem for Father was prepared by his family and his brother-in-law, Father Noel Delaney SM preached. Cardinal Tom Williams and over 70 priests prayed the Requiem. Father's large family took part as Readers, bearers of Gifts, and pall-bearers. Both churches were filled with many standing outside. Father was carried up the hill by large numbers of people who wished to share the burden. He was laid on top of Pukekaraka at the feet of his old friend Father Mel Caulfield. The small children of his family sang a farewell to him and later after the hakari, his whole family entertained all the parishioners with songs and hymns.

'Rest in Peace' is hardly appropriate for Fathers Mel and A Mea as people frequently climb up Pukekaraka to say the Rosary with them and to ask their help in times of trouble - they are very good at answering our calls for help - they are not getting much rest.

## MARISTS WHO SERVED OTAKI OVER THE PAST 150 YEARS

Thanks to Brother Gerard of the Marist Archives, we have this list, a few dates are approximate. The status of 'Parish' was only conferred about 100 years ago, so the various titles of Maori Missioner, Parish Priest and Superior or assistant are flexible too, as some priests would be M.M., P.P. or Superior all at the same time, then possibly during their time here another arrival would take over one or more of their duties. All these men served God and our parish to the best of their abilities and so titles seem irrelevant when we acknowledge their talents and the sacrifices they made to bring the image and spirit of God to all the people of Otaki.

Father Jean Baptiste Comte 1844-54 Kometa

No resident priest for a time, but the following stayed a short time, baptising and servicing Otaki every few months, as the registers show until 1871.

Bishop Viard 1850 Wiari

Father Delphin Moreau 1859, 1871-5

Father Jean Pezant	1850-51	Te Wano
Father Claude Baty	1850	
Father Jean Baptiste Petitjean	1850,1867	
Brother Eli Regis Marin	1850	he built the flour mill
Father Jean Bernard	1851	
Brother Euloge Chabany	1851	
Father Jean Anthony Seon	1851,1854,1865	Hohepa
Father Jean Bertrand	1851	
Father Maxime Petit	1851-2	
Father Eugene Pertois	1867, 1868-70	
Father Claude Cognet	1886, 1892-94	Koneta
Father Peter Broussard	1890-95	
Father Francis Marie Melu	1885-1935	Werahiko
Father Francis Delachienne (Delach)	1893-1914	Hohepa
Father Julian Maillard	1898-1904,1914-20	Huriano
Father Jean Marie Vibaud	1904-06,1913-29	Wiripo
Brother Anthony Kennedy	1906	
Father William Schaefer	1906-8	
Brother Malachy Keenan	1904-?	
Father John Barra	1906	
Father S. Mahony	1908	
Brother Martin Mader	1910-12	
Father Claude Cognet	1908-12	Koneta
Brother Stanislaus McMullen	1914-24	
Father Henri Le Bouteiller	1914	Fr. Henri
Father Christopher Soulas	1921	Hoani Papita
Father James More-O'Ferrall	1925	
Father Louis Menard	1928	
Father John Joseph Seymour	1928	
Father John Joseph Fraher	1929	
Father P.F. Shaughnessy	1929	
Father James Riordan	1930-34	Riatana/Hemi
Father E.E.Kimbell	1930-34	
Father John McSherry	1930-34	
Father Mark Devoy	1930-31	
Father Patrick William Tymons	1931-33	(Paekakariki)
Father John Cullinane	1935-36	
Father D.J. Campbell	1935-36	
Father James Durning	1935-40	Hemi
Father P. Hannah	1935-40	
Father Augustine Venning	1936-51	Aukutina
Father P.M. Scanlon	????	
Father William Bernard Buckley	1938-45	
Father G.T. McHardy	1940	
Father J.A. Cahill	1940	
Father J.G. Egan	1940-42	
Father P.D. Scanlon	1945	
Father James Oughton Hendren	1942-47	
Father Wiremu Te Awhitu	1945-46	
Father D.A. Reader	1946-48	Wiremu

Father F. Rasmussen	1948	
Father D.J. Minett	1949	
Father James Beban	1950-53 & 1979-80	
Father T. Cleary	1951	
Father William Melville Caulfield (Mel)	Kawerio 1951-56, 1984-93	
Father Kevin McGrath	1948-62	
Father P.P. Cahill	1955-59	
Father Francis Wall	1958-83	Werahiko
(Resident in Island Bay part-time in early stage)		
Father John Robert Aitken	1954, 1967-72	
Father Daniel Fouhy	1957-65	Raniera
Father P. Heagney	1961-66	
Father T. Minehan	1964	
Father J.N. Joyce	1962-63	
Father Isaac Gupwell	1965-74	Kapuera/Ihaka
Father G.S. Cheesman	1965-73	
Father Regis Aloysius O'Reilly	1973-78	
Father Thomas P. O'Connor	1974-75	Toc
Father Michael W. Goldfinch	1976-77	
Father Brian G. Condon	1978	
Father Philip Dewsbury McCormack	1979-84	
Father Kevin B. Maloney	1982	
Father Bernard J. Atkins	1982-94	A'mea
Father Thomas Michael Laffey	1985-87	
Father Matthew John Cosgriff	1988-90	
Father Patrick John Kinsella	1991 -	
Father John Goulter	1991 -	
Father Philip Cody	1994 -	

A Father James Tresallet served sometime in the early days but there are no dates for him, and a Father Nicolas Binsfield also served at Otaki sometime.  
E. & O.E.

## HUI ARANGA - EASTER GATHERINGS - CELEBRATING THE RESURRECTION.

The first Hui Aranga was held at Pukekaraka in 1946. It was something of a Retreat or intensive religious instruction for 3 or 4 days. People were invited from the various Missions. In those days Easter Ceremonies and Lent, finished by noon on Easter Saturday, so there was a lot of free time on the Saturday. Sunday was the day for the beautiful Easter Mass and a suitably magnificent banquet. Between one and two hundred people took part. It was easy to keep everyone occupied, the programme was flexible, and the facilities were adequate. Hine, tents and the old dining room, together with the church and the school housed the activities.

Pukekaraka and Kaiwhaiki were quite large groups who provided the bulk of the entertainment. The latter club was led by the exceptionally gifted Don Whanarere. Other clubs, many just beginning, and with a handful of supporters, came from Waitara, Normanby, Dannevirke, Wairoa, Raupunga, Kahungunu, Hawera, Ranana, and Wanganui.

Some of the great Maori Catholics, with powerful gifts of leadership, brought their people here. From Hawkes Bay came Wiki Christie, Joe Nikora, Tane Nikora, Toki Carroll and John Hape. Wanganui gave us Tenga Takarangi and John Simon, Bob Tapa, Peter Haami, and Aggie Nahona. Taranaki leaders were the Waldens, Polly Ngatai, Erueti and others.

After the first Hui, clubs multiplied rapidly and were a great help to the Mission. In 1947 Ohakune came and transformed everyone with their skills.

The first part of the Hui started on Holy Thursday night. Fr. James Riordan SM conducted a Retreat. He was assisted by Fr.'s Venning, Durning, Wall and Kerins. On Saturday morning the Retreat concluded and was followed by a sports day with Ping Pong, Tennis and Basketball. Mr C. Enoka was the convenor.

Saturday evening saw the prepared speeches delivered in Hine. Miss Kake of Normanby and Mr T. Nikora of Dannevirke were the winners. Fr. Riordan put up two gold medals for next year's competition in memory of Neri Metera (Wanganui) and Taruru Etekoa (Pukekaraka).

Three Masses were offered on Sunday, morning the final one being a "Missa Cantata" (full singing). After the midday banquet there was an excursion to the beach. Solemn Benediction was celebrated in the evening, with an Act of Consecration of the Maori People to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The whole parish was involved in the ceremonies, especially the local church choir. The greatest treat of the whole meeting was the Hymn contest on Sunday evening. Five choirs sang the two hymns set down. Fine singing was enhanced by the truly devotional rendering of the spirit of the prayers, John Simon, a crippled man, had his Kaiwhaiki choir trained beautifully. They were so good they tied for first with Pukekaraka.

Two hundred and fifty people were present for that evening. Hine was packed. The Hui was also the occasion for discussions. In 1946 the necessity of a college for Maori boys, a new prayer book, Maori land, catechetical instruction, the Maori language and other matters were thoroughly discussed.

On Easter Monday reps from all the Mission districts had long discussions on the future of this Hui. In the evening 150 couples danced in Hine before doing the Action Songs. Special gratitude was expressed to Pukekaraka, the organisers, Fr. Venning, Mr. Brown local president and all the workers were praised, as was Fr. Riordan the Retreat Preacher, competition judge, speech

maker etc.

It was decided to have another Hui at Pukekaraka the next year. It's primary purpose was to grow in knowledge of the Faith and in personal sanctification. The secondary purpose was to foster healthy recreation and the arts of Maori people. The clubs in the Mission Districts would be the grass roots of the movement.

After Mass on Tuesday morning all the visitors returned to their homes, and the whole of Ngati Raukawa could clean up and rest. Pukekaraka was intended to be the permanent site for the Hui.

Fr. Caulfield, Kehu Hakaraia and the team built Te Reo as the dining room. Gradually the Hui took over racecourses, showgrounds and secondary schools as places to hold thousands of people.

People also enjoyed travelling to new places - the South Island, Tokoroa, Tauranga, and even North Auckland, as well as our own Mission Districts.

The Hui is now a highly organised intensively active action packed week-end. It's character has changed a lot. The Catholic people give to very many who are not of the faith, a real insight into the meaning of Easter. There are ceremonies, prayers, and the subject matter of the songs and speeches relate to the Death and Resurrection of Our Lord. There is a religious knowledge quiz, and hymns to be sung by the choir.

We of Pukekaraka look forward to 1996 when the 50th Hui will be celebrated in Otaki.

## PRESBYTERY HOUSEKEEPERS

One of the most important people in a parish is the Presbytery Housekeeper and Otaki Parish has had several such treasures. Over the years they have tended to stay for a long time, and we have been fortunate to have had ladies of much graciousness and skill.

Though a Presbytery Housekeeper could really be called an executive, one could never become a millionaire on the salary.

Our present housekeeper, Esme Lockyer, has been a parishioner for many years, her family were brought up in Otaki. She quietly and unobtrusively holds the parish together. She knows what is going on, who needs help, who is ill, who is in strife. She is the soul of discretion. She sees to the priests' food and meals, their warmth, clean clothes, keeps a comfortable home for them, a

spare bite in the fridge for unexpected guests, sees to the shopping, larder, and even puts an odd minute into the garden. Then there is the telephone that never stops ringing.

Janet Marino was her predecessor. She was helping to bring up twin granddaughters at the same time, so the Presbytery seemed like a big busy home, the children were often there, and when they started school at St. Peter Chanel, they still came over in their lunch hour to have a bite with 'Grams'. There are not many Presbyteries that are elegant, old houses with a real family feel. Janet managed to give this ambience to ours. She was extremely efficient without appearing to be so, but to get all that work done, with three men in



**Merimaiha Taratoa, Johny Huff, Henrietta Gray, Hopia Hammond, (some Hui workers).**

the house, needed efficiency. Until you have lived in a 100 year old house, you have no idea of all the very hard work that has to be done, just to keep the place looking presentable.

Lolo Nikora was housekeeper before Janet, for about a year. She also looked after her growing family. She is a whanaunga of Ngati Kapumanawhiti and did a lot to open up the Presbytery to parishioners and she helped to make it the open friendly home it is today, where parishioners feel that they can pop in to say hello, or to use the telephone.

In Father Regis O'Reilly's day Kath Keegan was the Presbytery Housekeeper, and she was a legend in her own lifetime.

Many other parishioners have helped over the years, filling in, in times of sickness or emergency, assisting with baking, ironing, preserving, and all these have made it easier for the priests to devote more time to parish work.

Te wahine a mea he aumiti tangata. The generosity and hospitality of our housekeepers of Otaki is legendary.

## THE SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY.

A visit by Halley's Comet in the eastern sky had caused wonderment. Robert Falcon Scott was preparing to sail out of Lyttelton, hopefully to be recognised as the first to reach the South Pole. A motor car was being prepared to be acknowledged as the first to travel from Wellington to Auckland. The year 1910.

In this year on the 19th July a meeting was called and attended by a handful of Otaki Parishioners the purpose of the meeting under the spiritual guidance of Father Delachienne saw a need to approach the National Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, to establish a conference at St. Mary's Otaki. In due course, mail arrived, no doubt simply addressed "Pukekaraka Otaki" as the mission station was known nationwide. Among the mail received was notification that St. Mary's, Otaki, from the 19th September had been aggregated as a conference to the society of St. Vincent de Paul.

During the decades that followed, to a greater or lesser degree, involvement by St. Mary's Vincentians in the Otaki community and parish life ebbed and flowed in accordance with social and economic times and needs. These following decades included two world wars and two major country-wide flu epidemics. Since the Society was founded in Paris, during 1833, by Frederic Ozanam, generations of Vincentians have, without fuss or fanfare performed the corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry; to give drink to the thirsty; to clothe the naked; to shelter the homeless; to visit the sick; to visit prisoners; to bury the dead.

These are part of the Vincentians' special Christian charisms. They have done this through personal encounter grounded in the Incarnation, that mystery of Faith which is central to Vincentian spirituality.

At this time of growth there are nine Vincentians in the Otaki Conference, who report to the Kapi/Mana district council. These Vincentians are backed up by their husbands and wives and families, under the spiritual guidance of Father John Goulter SM. On behalf of the Parish, to them all I say 'Thank You'.

So if during this Jubilee, you recognise a fellow school mate or parish friend, by all means embrace, hongi, and reminisce. On reflection of a pleasant weekend, spare a prayerful thought and a practical action of a dollar or two towards St. Vincent de Paul Conference in your locality.

We can assure visitors this

weekend that our little conference here at Pukekaraka is an important contribution to the fabric of the community service provision in the Kapiti Coast/Horowhenua district. May you all have a Joyous, Safe and Memorable Jubilee. Arthur MacDonald, President Otaki Conference.

## OTAKI CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The earliest records of a meeting of the Otaki Catholic Women's League is dated October 17th 1950. The idea that a branch be formed in Otaki originated one afternoon when some women of the parish went to visit Mrs. Hudson, a new parishoner. During conversation a mention was made of the concern felt by many, of the shabbiness of the Presbytery furnishings. It was suggested that a women's organisation be formed in Otaki to raise money and help with the needs of the Parish. Mrs. Hudson spoke of the League - already inaugurated in Wellington - and it was decided to call a meeting of women parishioners with a view to joining. This was done and supported with enthusiasm. Rev. Fr. Beban S.M. was appointed chaplain and Mrs. McGilligan the first President. The meetings were held every month in Hine until 1956 when the old Plunket Rooms in Hadfield St. were purchased. With few alterations it served as an ideal meeting place for the next thirty years. In 1986 the rooms were sold and once more the meetings were held in Hine. The money received from the sale of the rooms was donated to the building funds for the new church and the meetings are now held in the meeting room of that church.

Regrettably the number of members has always been too few for a parish of this size, but those women who have joined have accomplished a great deal. In those

**Catholic Womens' League Jan. 94. Farewell presentation to Father M. Atkins. Past and present workers.**





first few months in 1950 - 51 new floor coverings, curtains, repapering of rooms, bed linen, an electric cake mixer and even a new teapot were provided for the Presbytery. The sisters were not forgotten either and several little extras were purchased for the convent.

In the early days of the League some young members with children found it difficult to attend meetings in the afternoon so a homemakers branch was formed to meet in the evenings. Unfortunately in 1970 the Dominion Conference voted that all members should be under one president and committee and work together. This meant a substantial loss of younger members.

In the beginning Parish Bazaars held in the Mayfield ballroom and the Memorial Hall were organised and staffed by League members and numerous functions for the school were undertaken -- fancy dress dances, flower shows, cooking competitions and picnics, and an annual Pantry Tea for the sisters. When the Sanatorium was open, patients were visited and outings and entertainments were arranged for them. Visiting priests were also catered for with morning and afternoon teas and lunches. League members have always been available to help at all parish functions and funerals.

A succession of activities has continued over the years. The Fiji Mission allocated to the Otaki Branch has enjoyed practical and financial assistance over the years as has our own Otaki Maori Mission. During the early years several parcels of linen were sent to the Home of Compassion. Donations for needy causes within New Zealand as well as overseas have been readily given, as well as practical help, when needed. Donations were given towards 10 Pacific Scholarships in the Fiji area, and a statue of Our Lady was donated to the parish to be used in the homes where the Rosary is prayed.

Meetings are well attended and members enjoy a variety of guest speakers, visits to and from other branches and day trips to places of interest. During Suffrage Year the League joined with other women's organisations in Otaki and planted their 'Kate Sheppard' camelia bush at Haruatai Park.

The League motto of "Faith and Service" is very much alive, with members being active in all aspects of service within the parish as well as in the local community. The Rosary and League prayers are prayed at the start of each meeting. Mass is arranged for W.U.C.W.O. Day each year, and masses are offered for sick and deceased members of the parish, and their families.

Life members are: Mesdames Fox, Derham and McBride, and the late Mesdames Perkins, Faith, Hurdle and Cook.

The Presidents since 1950 to the present day are: Mesdames J. McGilligan, E. Jensen, E. Cook, A. Faith, J. Quinn, R. Fox, W. Wade, R. Hurdle, E. Randle, S. Gallaway, A. Garrett, B. Burke, R. Marino.

League Chaplains over the years have been Fathers Beban, Aitken, Cahill, Heagney, O'Reilly, McCormick,

Atkins, and new Chaplain Father John Goulter. We have been most fortunate in having the spiritual help and guidance of our priests over the years.

Rosemary Marino

## MARYCREST

Marycrest was for twenty seven years a strong and spiritual Catholic presence in our district. The first Sisters and girls set up home in January, 1953, and until 1980 they worked in our area, sharing their gifts and charism with the girls who needed their care.

The Congregation of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd originated in Angers, France, and this is another link our parish has with the great French Catholic traditions. The Congregation was originally founded by St. John Eudes and later redefined by Sister Mary Euphrasie who had been Rose Virginie Pelletier the two dormitory units at Marycrest were named "Rose Virginie" and "Pelletier".

The Good Shepherd gift is to believe in the infinite worth of each person, to see Christ in that person, and to offer each person an experience of a Shepherd God who cares and is full of compassion, in a world of conflict and destructive relationships.

The girls who came into the care of the Sisters often had problems that could not be resolved in their normal environment. They needed the loving care of the Sisters and their helpers to restore their sense of self-worth.

Those of us privileged to help Marycrest would watch the yearly transformation of the girls. At each term's end, they would progressively look and act with more assurance and elan having participated in fantastic concerts they produced for the neighbourhood each year. The girls would be charming, well-spoken and well-dressed (often showing their own sewing skills) young ladies. The holidays were not always a rest for the Sisters, as sometimes the stationmaster would ring up to say one or more of the girls had returned to Otaki and were waiting for transport to Marycrest which they found more home-like than their own homes.

Former residents would sometimes ask to be married from the Chapel, and weekends often saw young women visiting there with their husbands and children

The number of younger Sisters entering the Congregation dropped off and new methods of counselling were making institutional care unnecessary, so Marycrest closed, to the great disappointment of the local people of Te Horo. A moving farewell was held at Pukekaraka and gifts were handed over to the parish - their papal flag to replace our lost one, and the korowai kiwi (cloak) which the Cardinal now wears as our gift to him later. And then, a few years later, the Otaki Church was given all the pews from the Marycrest chapel, as well as the two great brass stands which now adorn the back of our sanctuary.

The Good Shepherd Sisters still work with girls and women in the Hutt Valley and Auckland - in Court, in

emergency housing, in 'time out' accommodation for stressed women, in industrial and ethnic chaplaincies, in refugee work, in prison ministry, in pastoral work and in adult spiritual formation.

Those of us who knew the Sisters of the Good Shepherd will always count them as friends, and hope we can reflect a little of their love of God and humanity.

## **CHOIR AND LITURGY**

Somehow these two go together. We are a group who get together every Thursday at 5.00pm. to practise the Hymns for the Sunday Masses. To do the liturgy for that, we take turns in pairs, to prepare the Sunday Hymns etc. We actually accomplish many things in the Church. We help people in the good times and the bad times to prepare Hymns and Reconciliation, and we also prepare the liturgies and Readings for Funerals and Weddings if asked.

Some of us have been singing together for thirty to forty years - a long time. It brings us all closer together. We learn a lot of new Hymns, but try to have a balance to suit everybody. This isn't always easy to do.

New choir members are always welcome.

From Maureen Gimblett.

## **PASSIONIST FAMILY MOVEMENT**

This was introduced to the parish by Harry and Theresa Keating, who spoke to the parish at all Masses. It was launched in October, 1991 by Father Paul Traynor.

There are now 4 groups in our parish, and the whole parish has been much involved in regional training days at Bridge Lodge. Many in the parish belong to a family group, and this has repercussions for family life, as many non-catholics take part with their catholic partners, and enjoy the social contacts.

## **ST. STEPHENS CHURCH KUKU**

Part of St. Mary's Parish, but with a special character all of its own, is St. Stephen's Church at Kuku. Built over one hundred years ago at the request of Ngati Tukorehe and Ngati Wehi Wehi the people of the Kuku, - Manakau - Waikawa area - it is first and foremost a Maori Church.

The land was donated by Ngati Tukorehe, but since this was flood prone it was exchanged for a half acre on the ridge above owned by Jeremiah Hurley. A letter from Bishop Redwood to Father Melu SM of November 18, 1890, gave assurance that "there is not the slightest danger that the Church at Ohau will ever be regarded as a Pakeha Church.....my successors will be bound to take the same line as myself.....keep this letter carefully in the Maori archives".

But the Church that Father Melu erected from a design by the Wellington architect, James O'Dea, was a traditional European building. St. Stephen's was the first church of any denomination to be built on the Wellington to Manawatu railway line. It was Maori money which paid for the Church, local pakeha Catholics contributing only fifteen of the two hundred and ten pounds required.

The opening day, Sunday February 15th 1891 was a great success, with traditional feasting and speechmaking along with Mass and Benediction.

It was a church which local Maori delighted in, and from which they derived much mana. What an oasis it must have been to Maori and settlers alike. Many of the original families names are still connected with St. Stephens in one way or another: Mrs Thomas Bevan - the mother of Miss Marjery Bevan and Mrs Joan Sellors of Levin,. Charles and Daniel Nees who built the Church. William Bryant, J.D'Ath, W.Wallace, Mrs Cottle, Horo Karauti, Arapata Te Hiwi - the mentor of several young Marist Missionaries, Roha Wehipeihana, Tangi Poutama, Tauehe and Wiremu Perenara, Ruka Perawhiti. Many of today's parishioners have attended St. Stephens for upwards of thirty years and some like Bridie Bryant for twice that time. The Leen family has a long association and the large McArley family are well into their third generation. Names that occur in accounts of fund raising ventures and on rosters for cleaning and flowers and doing the readings over many years are Dorset, Gardiner, Karauti, Lewis, Miratana, Moretto, Mackle, Lawton, Keeling, James, Weaver - New families continue to arrive Summers, Cranshaws, Dellabarcas, Spillers.

The Church grounds have their own history. It was Alec Butler who organised the plantings of camellias, rhododendrons, acacias and maples which make the place so attractive today. Father Gupwell had the stone fence built after some of the grounds were taken for the realignment of the main road. Bernard and Ola Doyle see to the grounds today and particularly to the summer display of dahlia along the front. St. Stephens has always had its 'minders' starting with the Hurleys next door, and continuing with Arapata Te Hiwi, Tira Putu, John Bryant and Alec Butler and now the Doyles.

Parishioners have always seen to major repairs, maintenance and alterations, ranging from the flying buttresses put in place after the big 1936 storm through to the construction of a new vestibule in 1977.

Important events in the life of St. Stephens have been the Diamond Jubilee in 1951, attended by Cardinal McKeefry and the recent Centenary in 1990, when Cardinal Williams presided.

There has been a succession of Marist priests over the years, many of them great characters, who have put their stamp on St. Stephens.

First there were the Frenchmen, Fathers Melu, Delach and Maillard. Then there were the giants of the Maori Mission - Fathers Riordan, Durning, Venning, Te

Awhitu, Fouhy, Gupwell, Wall and Caulfield. They are all remembered with laughter and with love.

So all of us who regard St. Stephens as our own share in all the history - and the legends - of a many faceted past and are the richer for it.

## MARGARET LAWRIE

Margaret Lawrie came to Otaki Parish in her teens and lived with her parents in Te Horo. Her parents recognised her talents in the arts, and she received tuition to a high level in these arts. She used and returned these talents a hundredfold in the service of our parish for more than 50 years.

She cared for her parents in their old age and at the same time she formed a parish choir which was famous throughout the Wellington region. She shared organist duties with Mrs. Eileen Ransfield - Makuini's mother. The lead singer in the choir was Mrs. Katie Elliott - soprano, with Marsh Hakaraia - tenor, Mrs. Rewa D'Ath contralto, and Dick Mortiboy - bass. Singers of earlier days were Winnie Quill whose brother, Dennis Quill composed the Nikau Waltz, and Olive Kilsby - soprano.

Rosie Rikihana says she sat at the front at Mass and listened week after week till she was old enough to join the choir and she had listened so well that she knew the choir repertoire by the time she was permitted to join. The choir was famous for several Masses, the Mass of St. John the Baptist, the Mass of St. Cecelia and the Mass of St. Phillip Neri.

Margaret taught all the children of the choir to read music and she transposed music to suit Maori voices, she composed extra parts for choirs, and she conducted as well. She had an excellent ear for music and could hear one person singing off key and could tell who it was.

When the musical Trapp Family Singers visited New Zealand, they were most impressed with Margaret's ability and gave one of their compositions to Otaki as

a tribute to Margaret's musicianship. This is the carol "Child Jesus so Dear".

Margaret often took the choir's children to Wellington on the train to sing at 2YA radio station for the children's hour and then brought them all back safely again on the train in the evening. Rosie recalled that the supervisors at the 2YA were aghast at these noisy country kids full of energy and curiosity in the studio's confined spaces, so they were shut in the soundproof music-room, with all it's musical instruments. The choir had a ball touching and trying out everything.

Margaret also took the choir to sing at St. Mary of the Angels in Wellington whenever Mass was being broadcast. on the radio. They also visited the Home of Compassion in Island Bay taking down loads of fruit and vegetables from Otaki. They would give two concerts a day, to the sisters and patients, and would also help to give handicapped patients their meals. These trips were also a frequent occurrence.

We have examples of Margaret's painting and embroidery skills, the Nativity scene hanging in the porch of the old church, and in the vestments and church linen she made for special liturgical occasions.

Some of her pottery is owned by parishioners who describe it as most attractive. She made jewellery, and taught painting and embroidery for many years. In 1988 Margaret was honoured by the Church with the Papal Medal 'Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice' and a framed Papal scroll. This was presented at a Sunday morning Mass on her birthday, by Father Matthew Cosgriff SM. This was followed by a parish morning tea.

She mentioned that she had once had the distinction of being examined by Sr. Edward Elgar. Margaret retired soon after the presentation, but a shocking fire one night, destroyed her home. However she was rescued by a brave neighbour, and after time spent in hospital, she went to live in Hastings with the Little Sisters of the Poor. Each member of her choir, and those who remember the choir, always use the same word when

speaking of Margaret Lawrie. "Brilliant- "Brilliant Musician" 'Absolulely Brilliant'.

Enjoy your well earned rest, Margaret and Thank You.



**Margaret Lawrie**

## REMINISCING WITH PAUL FAITH

Paul's first reaction was to start chuckling about the 'characters' of the post war years, and their antics. When the B.B.Q.'s were on, they seemed to see an awful lot of Fr.Beban and very little of their mother. She roped in half the town, Catholic or not.

Neil Larsen really made his volunteers do things properly. Neil later spent many years with the Good Shepherds. Kere Webster and brothers ran certain games out the back. Bill Martin was always a great help. Neil Uren would do anything for the Sisters or the school. Most work done was a cash job in those days. Vic Potter was another who did lots for the nuns. Dola Derham and Maggie Oak were in the thick of things. Maggie's crockery was here so much that people thought it belonged to the Parish. "Where's our crockery?" Colleen & Clem Bowry were goers too on fundraising.

Bill Fox did the Parish books for years and with Jim Stuart set up proper business practices in the Parish. Farmers seem always to have something worth borrowing so Tom O'Rourke and Eric Cook often chimed in, meat from Galloways, veges from Barones. Jock McLeod and Neil Larsen lived dangerously close to the church and school. Alan Fletcher once revealed he was a very handy and willing carpenter, as Noel Harnett is now. The Aherns and their tuckshop were always around too. Fr.Caulfield leaned heavily on Jim Stuart, as did many P.P.'s. Fr.O'Reilly was greatly helped by Housie money and did a lot in the presbytery. Fr.Heagney keen to get the church looking better. Building up to the B.B.Q.'s seemed to last most of the year. Mary Karauti was always there and Marsh Hakaraia was a real leader, followed by Bob. Des Britten was on 2ZB, a great friend of Fr.Beban. He's the chef and now Anglican Minister.

Dinny Butler grew acres of spuds for Fr.Beban. Beban still to pay. Housie went for 7 years - Town Hall, Golden Towers, Rahui club-rooms every Monday night - Paul Faith and gang. A wise person advised - If you want help - ask new young people in the Parish.

There's a new young couple in Domain Rd. Peter & Jill are still at it. Despite the times everyone admired the way the Nuns ran such a good ship.

The Gospel better be true - Great will be your reward in heaven.

## REMINISCENCES FROM GABRIELLE RIKIHANA

This collection of ideas reflects personal memories from around 1932-42, as a pupil and a parishioner of our Church and it's Convent School. Some readers May feel they are less than accurate, but I hope my contemporaries will correct them and add their own remembrances. The friendships made in those days still

remain today even though our meetings may be far apart, the warmth is always there.

Our beloved Grandmother was an Irishwoman born in Arrowtown so at this time we were the only family branch who were Catholic. The rest of our family were serious Anglican so we remained equally at home in Rangiatea and Pukekaraka, even though both groups demonstrated some weird ideas about God's special grace to them alone. How happy we were as our family grew and some relatives were fortunate to marry Catholic women.

Catholicism, in those days, derived from the Latin Mass which we followed from a missal. These prayer books were called 'The Proper of the Mass,' or 'The Key of Heaven' and others. One page was Latin and the opposite page was in English and we filled the books with endless holy pictures to provide for the lack of illustrations in the text.

If you were clumsy enough to drop your missal it was a major task to retrieve the etceteras. Our priests' vestments coloured to the strict seasonal change and other devotions such as Stations of the Cross, benediction with that magical whiff of incense, Confessions and Communion, giving-up for Lent, pennies for Black Babies (Did we save Idi Amin?) were a serious part of our lives. At the conclusion of every Mass we prayed 'Hail Holy Queen' for the conversion of Russia. 'Going to Confession' was a requisite for being in a state of grace. To receive Communion it was mandatory to be in a state of grace and to be fasting from midnight - no food or drink.

Quite often it was a great excuse if you couldn't go forward to kneel at the altar rails. Our grandmother looked as if to say, "What's going on?" The answer was "I've broken my fast" - never I've been telling lies, fighting or just disobedient. We received the Host on our tongues and walked back eyes downcast, hoping to arrive at the right seat. My sister and I walked from Mill Road to Church with our Grandmother

We were often late because we messed about and then we had to kneel on the "Penitents form" just outside the confessionals - the seats and kneelers were wide apart.

Our Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth were garbed in the 'Habit', they seldom left the Pukekaraka area and lived in a two storied wooden Convent next to the Church.

If they did visit people dealing with the plight of life, they travelled in pairs. They fulfilled their vow of poverty to the extreme, they taught school, cared for the boarders, taught music, shorthand/typing, art and embroidery, and anything else requested of them. A rare Sister could be enormously stern but equally thorough - Sister Martina gave me an assurance in spelling and mental arithmetic which is just leaving me now. She was petite but a martinet in the classroom.

Sisters Margaret Mary, Philomena, and Patrick were

the darlings of two generations of our family. My sister and I added many others to the list including Sister Tarcissius. The width and assurance of their teaching is unrivalled because they gave their lives to us. We were all poverty-stricken. Miss Barry lived at the Convent and taught music. She was a gentle woman who knew all of our families. Her leather boots and calipers squeaked as she dragged her way to her honoured seat - the aisle side of the senior boarders' row in front of the Sisters. The boys, of course, sat on the opposite side, in front of Our Lady's altar. Miss Barry drove everywhere in her three wheeled car at a decent speed.

Father Melu was still alive when I was at School. He was awarded a special medal for his years of service to us. He was a small statured man with a gentle face and wispy silver hair, whenever the pupils 'Good Morning Father'd' him, he raised his hand and blessed us with the Sign of the Cross. He reminded me of the statue of Blessed Peter Chanel.

In those later years he wandered away from Pukaraka and slept on the verandahs of the Maori homes he had visited in his early days.

Our family spoke warmly about Father Vibaud, Father (Count) Delach and their confreres but they were all in Heaven in our day.

Father Durning has been our beloved guide throughout life, his gentleness and unrelenting support for Catholic philosophy rather the regulations has been an ongoing gift. Our priests at this time included Fathers Riordan, Venning, Hannah and McSherry. These men carried Catholicism as their shields and ministered to us as they believed God wished. Father Riordan, the colonial Irishman, with, with his hellfire sermons, love of rugby, enormous generosity and great sense of humour conjured up support for all of us as our families moved through those words - Depression and Sustenance. Father didn't know anything about Op Shops, but somehow collected heaps of everything we needed to see us through those days. Father Durning is a fine violinist and all priests sang the Gregorian chants in a way which would put them first on the pop charts today.

Throughout this time the Church was endowed with some colourful characters, some were vibrant, others presented a stern formal face to the world but all were united in their Catholicism.

Mrs. Etekia (Taruru) was our Whaea who protected the bridge between the time of the French priests and the Irish/New Zealand trained priests at Pukekaraka. She had a presence which always remains for me in the original church. Even today, the music of our Church has a special quality. We had a rosary of musicians, organists, and singers. Those Hakaraia voices carry a tonal quality that is always recognisable - today's singers remind me of their relatives.

Our organists have given the church particular sound and tempo qualities. Mrs. Fisher played as her father, Ken Cimino would have loved - expressive. Eileen

Ransfield gave the music the richness of Maoridom. The choirs and responses from the altar were always a reflection of God's message to the people.

The Priests' Presbytery was kept polished and welcoming by Kath O'Hagan - the housekeeper for so many years. As children we went to deliver messages happily, because Kath was always smiling and amused by our presence.

The Collins's Thos and Bedelia, were special friends of my Grandmother, they lived close by Kapumanawahiti and Mr. Collins took up the collection - an important task in the Church of that time.

Playtime at school was important. We had games like Bar the Door, Hopscotch in it's many forms, and guessing games with initials of film stars, (D.P., D.D., Dick Powell, Deanna Durbin .....) if you guessed right you had to beat the caller to the other side of the shed. Sometimes we crept into Church - not for a Visit, but to re-enact some Church tradition. This was without the knowledge or approval of our teachers. Quite often after school we met the 'State School Kids' outside Rangiataea to determine who were the victors of Otaki. There was lots of verbal chants and abuse but precious little physical battle - perhaps we were better runners at that time. I don't care to record that most of the enemy were our best friends during the holidays.

So my record ends - I hope it is a small memory to the reader of God's blessings to us at Pukekaraka.

## PUKEKARAKA BEFORE AND AFTER 1844

Pukekaraka has always been a hallowed place. Long before Father Comte and the French Marists arrived, it had been 'Tuaahu' a holy place of devotion where tohunga would stand on the highest spot to intone their sacred chants.

1844 Early in the year Bishop Pompallier visited Kapiti in a hired schooner. J.R. Cole.

Later in the same year, Father Jean Baptiste Comte SM was entrusted by Bishop Pompallier with the care of the Maori in the Wellington district. He settled at Pukekaraka on land given by Chief Tonihī of Ngati Kapumanawhiti.

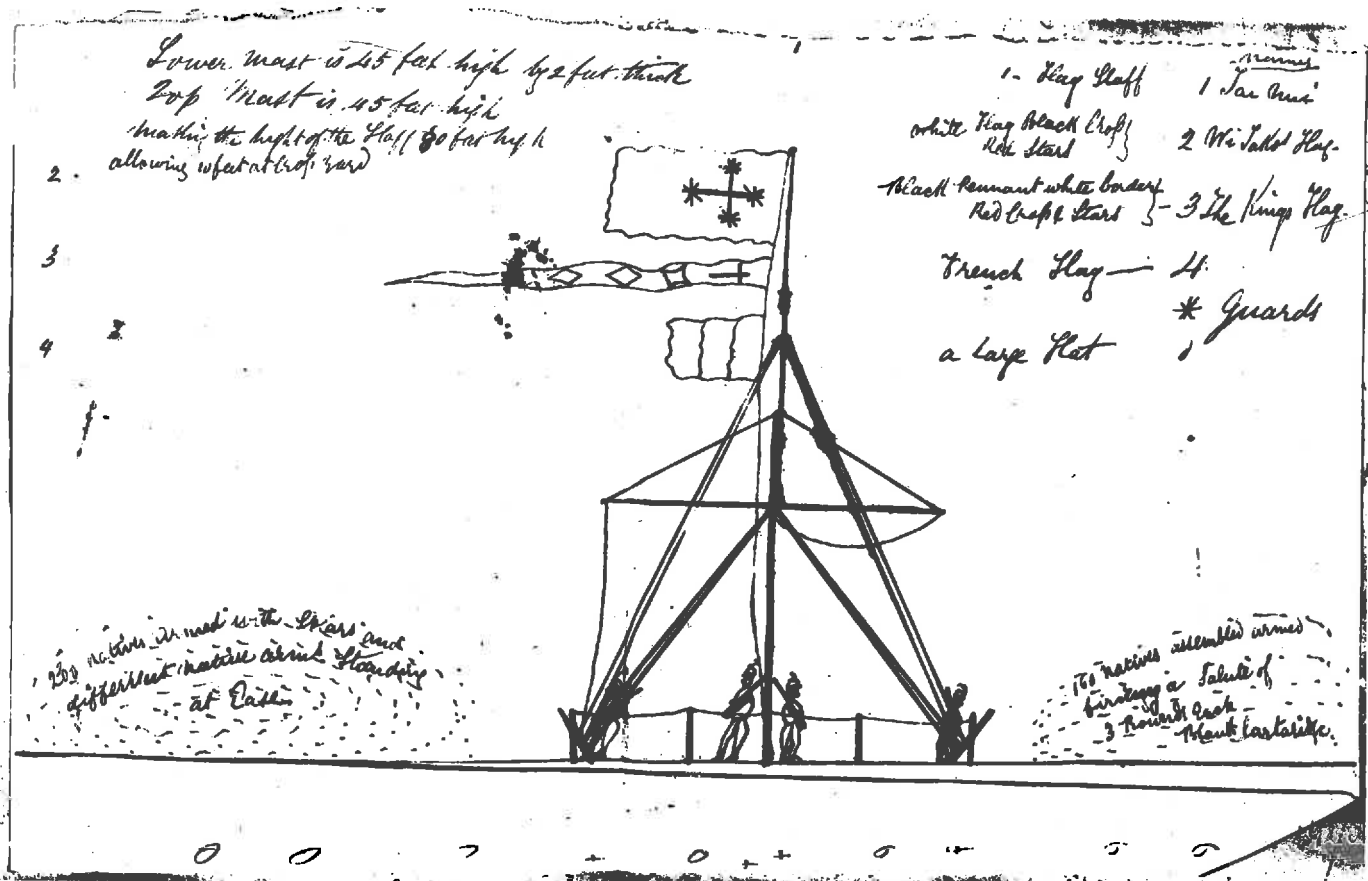
1845 By October he had built a church on top of Pukekaraka 'A Popish chapel on the high ground at the back of the pa, on the most conspicuous site that could be settled. This is new! 'Rev. Richard Taylor. 'Father Comte took a party of Otaki Catholics to Bay of Plenty via Wanganui and returned ned by way of Hawkes Bay.' Taylor

1849 Influenza epidemic carried off many.

1850 According to statistics Father Comte had 147 Catholics in his care and he and Father Pezant had opened a school on Pukekaraka, initially in the church and later behind the present Grotto.

Brother Eli Marin planted grapes on Pukekaraka for





**Kings flag raised at predominantly catholic community of Pukekaraka, Otaki, 1861.**

communion wine. (David McGill)

Brother Eli helped complete the flour mill about one mile behind Pukekaraka on the Waitohu Stream.

'Pukekaraka had crops everywhere, (Paekakariki to Manawatu) peaches, apples, watermelon, wheat for flour, a dam 100 yards above the mill, Maringa-a-wai (slop water) which then joined the Otaki River. The miller Hakaria Rangikura was a very powerful man who could carry two bags of wheat under each arm.' He was one of Father Comte's first converts.

Potatoes, oats, barley, maize, kumara, rope walk, drays, a schooner 'Eliza' which took produce to towns, and timber was milled to build further churches, and two pair of oxen completed the scene in the early 1850's, and at least 1 shop where Maori could buy goods at reasonable prices.

1850 Father Comte established a flour mill on the Waitarere stream at Poroutawhao.

1850 16th November 'I rose before 5. Immediately our bells rang for prayers that of the Roman Catholics began also. It seemed as though the contest between the two churches extended even to the ringing of bells.' Rich Taylor.

1851 July, Rangitikei, 'I learned the French Priest had also lately been baptising in the neighbourhood.'

July. 'The Papist natives have made a good bridge to the place - Pukekaraka - and a road in Otaki'

September 'I found from the hospital book that the Romish Priest had the day before paid the place a visit.'

September, Father Jean Bernard visited Otaki till

December while Father Comte was away working in other districts.

1851 Christmas saw a Catechism Hui at Pukekaraka. A group of 25 boys, with a Mr. Hurley stayed here.

1853 and 1854 A great typhoid epidemic killed many in Otaki.

1854 Measles decimated the population. These diseases were really severe, as the Maori people had no natural immunity to them and so large numbers died during these early years.

1854 March 26th is the last recorded baptism by Father Comte. He felt that his being treasurer of the community funds was incompatible with his vow of poverty as a Marist, and so under pressure from his family in France, he gained a dispensation from Bishop Viard from his vows as a Marist, and he left on the brig "Mountain Maid" for France with the young Francis Redwood who was to train for the priesthood.

1855 The great 'Wellington' earthquake diverted the Waitohu, so there was no water for the mill.

1856 Measles struck Otaki again, carrying off many more victims. After Father Comte's departure, the Mission Station was visited by Marists for short periods, when many baptisms were recorded in the register:

1854 May and December, 1856 January and February; 1857 January and November, 1859 Sept 1860 May, 1865 June and November, 1867 June, 1868, 1869, 1870, by Fathers Petitjean, Seon, Pertois, and Moreau who then lived in Otaki from 1871 to 1878 and afterwards visited from Feilding where he then lived,

until 1883.

1858 Father Poupinel SM from Sydney records "The sawn timber for a wooden church is still piled up on site. Probably the Maori had put a tapu on it, so it was not used.

A letter from Bishop Viard telling Mr. Seymour, builder of Otaki that he would not charge him for his daughter at the Wellington Convent boarding school if he would complete the chapel by September 1859.

1858 Early in the year Fr. Seon a journey between Wellington and Wanganui, collected subscriptions for a new church at Otaki, The original one had burned down.

1860 A radical group was centred at Pukekaraka led by Heremia and Wi Hapi. This was the venue for large gatherings to hear news of land wars and to discuss what should be done.

1862 'A great drought this year. Even mature indigenous trees have died. The people call it a taukaka.'

March. 'All marae are empty from Wanganui south as great gathering at Tainui, Otaki to discuss the King Movement.'

Governor Grey visited on the outskirts of Pukekaraka, meeting the King leaders, and it was decided that those who felt that it was their duty to be at the fighting front would make a personal decision.

12th October 1862, Bishop Viard wrote to Fr. Yardin in Lyons for a bell for Otaki Church the Maori had collected £12 for it.

1863 Palm Sunday, Father Seon authorised Stations of the Cross in church.

1865 Another epidemic of influenza.

1865 A meeting of visitors from Wanganui with most of the Maori population from Foxton to Plimmerton. Visitors led by Te Ua, founder of the new sect known as Pai Marire or Hauhau. This was held at Pukekaraka. Long debate heard by Hector McDonald, with the outcome: "The Hauhau wish to kill all the pakehas, but we (local Maori) have here at Otaki some pakehas we do not desire to have killed. Therefore, we will not embrace Hauhauism. We will not oppose it, any young man who wishes to join the movement is free to do so, but no fighting must take place in the Manawatu. Let the Manawatu be a play ground for the women and children,"

1871 Father Delphin Moreau SM returned to live in Otaki, but went to live in Feilding in 1876. 1878 Tuberculosis and 'low fever' were endemic and infant mortality had reached an alarming figure so that Maori children were so few, many thought they would die out. Figures for Ngati Kapumanawawhiti were 5 boys, 9 girls under 15 years of age, with 20 men and 22 women. All the epidemics had had a terrible effect on the population.

1878 The Hon. John Sheehan speaking in Parliament: "The French priests of the Order of Mary. No better ever entered the service of what may be called the army of Christ' They were men who spent their whole lives in

the service of God, all of whom died without a shilling, or an acre of land.

1885 Father Francis Melu SM visited Otaki in August and returned two months later to start work in the old Pukekaraka district - the coast from Wanganui to Wellington. From the beginning there was a great revival and fervour, and he immediately had the church at Otaki lined, painted and provided with an altar, rails, seats, statues and a gold altar cloth sent out from France.

1886 17th April Fathers Melu and Cognet went on a long journey, stopped at Poroutawhao, exchanging greetings with Ngati Huia, later on the same day, went west of Ohau to the village of Muhunua, where all the Maori were Protestants, but were pleasantly surprised to be invited to stay for the evening and to pray with the people and to discuss religious matters with Ngati Kikopiri. On the following day they visited every home of Ohau, inviting them to the forthcoming Easter Liturgies at Pukekaraka. They visited the local prophet Ihaka of Waikawa.

1887 24th April Archbishop Redwood reopened Otaki church and named it Our Lady of Victories Church. The Bishop was accompanied by Fathers Soulas, Melu, Sauzeau, Lampila, and Patterson P.P. of Palmerston North.

1888 3rd January Father Melu had the church of St. Michael opened at Poroutawhao.

1889 Father Melu down in Kaiapoi baptising, preparing people for Confirmation, and finding two people who had been baptised by Bishop Pompallier - the first baptisms in the South Island. During all this time he opened churches at Kauangaroa, 1888, St. Anne's Maungamanu at Kaikoura 1890, Oaro Kaikoura 1906, St. Stephen's Ohau 1890, SS. Feter & Paul 1895, St. Joseph's Shannon, 1900, Wangaehou 1904, and more churches in Levin, Te Horo, and Rata.

Father Melu was small and gentle, but he sure got things done.

1889 25th June, Mrs. Hopia Enoka, wife of the young chief Enoka died. Her husband was Catechist. She had been baptised by Father Comte and kept the faith all the years and had had her children baptised by a Priest. Hers was the first funeral in the redecorated church.

1891 Archbishop Redwood gave permission for the Stations of the Cross to be erected in at. Stephen's. At the opening of the church he said "the nicest native Church I have seen." Vespers included 5 confirmations.

1893 29th May. Archbishop Redwood took Pukekaraka from the parish of Palmerston North and made it independent with additional resources for missionary work. The missionary appointed to Pukekaraka should have the care of all the faithful - Maori and Pakeha, in the whole district of Horowhenua with the exception of Shannon. They still cared for Maori people from Wanganui to Wellington.

1893 November. First Mission, with a Father Ginaty S.M. of Christchurch, took place, Otaki-Sunday to



**Fr. Melu and group at Otaki, 1890.**

Wednesday, Levin-Thursday and Friday, and Ohau-Saturday and Sunday. Father Ginaty S.M. during his stay started the Altar Society for the ladies and he blessed the start of the Convent and school.

1894 15th April, Archbishop Redwood opened the Convent and the school with Sister Catherine as Superior. 1894

1894 November, another Mission with Father Lynch a Vincentian. First Communion at the concluding Mass of the mission with 30-40 children. A collection taken up for Father Lynch raised £8.

1894 30th December. Archbishop Redwood attended the jubilee of the founding of the Otaki Parish. 7.00am Mass said by His Grace. At 10.30am Solemn Eigh Mass was celebrated by Father Melu, with His Grace present, and many priests in attendance. The choir, with visitors from Wanganui and Christchurch sang Webbe's Mass in G. Archbishop Redwood administered confirmation to 50 people. At 7.00pm His Grace blessed, the totara cross which had been erected on the hill to celebrate the Jubilee. Near the cross was also erected a flagstaff on which was hoisted an elaborately worked flag with the word 'Pukekaraka' and the dates 1844-1944. In the centre of the flag was a karaka tree with a red cross among the branches. Near the flagstaff a small carved house had been built on the site where Father Comte had his whare

in 1844. A large photograph of Father Comte hung at the entrance, it had been given to Father Cognet the previous month on the eve of his departure from France. For the first time in the parish, a crib was set up in the church.

1895 A Bazaar was organised in the Town Hall for fundraising for the Catholic School. The article in 'West Coast Mail' is high in praise of this event, which was opened by the Archbishop. Many old names are mentioned as taking part in this bazaar: D'Ath, Hurley, Ryder, Lynch, Bennett, Brown, Smith, O'Rourke, Quill, O'Neil, Leydon, Lafferty, Robinson, Moa Etekia, Hammond, Sampson, Bevan, Knocks, Carmont, Wallace, O'Loughlin, Wright, Wilson, Winterburn, Urutakai, Young, Jillett, Wilder, O'Connell, Flynn, Power, Blake, Pepper, Street, Hema te Ao, Kuka Patitiona, McBeath, Harper. £150 was raised

1895 Otaki Parish asked to take on Shannon/Foxton, & parts of P/N due to shortage of priests. 1896 18th September Grand Catholic Concert in the Town Hall - packed to the doors, and a profit of over £15 handed over towards the erection of New Presbytery. These Catholic Concerts, Catholic Bazaars, and Catholic School productions, took place every year according to the local paper, they were grand affairs, took weeks to prepare, all the community, not just Catholics, assisted, and they were replicated in Levin and Shannon/Foxton

as well. One can only imagine to hours of planning and hard work that was needed, to produce all these yearly productions. 1896 St. Patrick's Church, Paraparaumu, opened.

1897 June 27th. Archbishop Redwood opened new Presbytery at Otaki.

1898 21st May. Father Melu broke his leg on way home from Mass at Kuku and was out of commission till 11th September.

1899 Mass notices for Lenten fasting and abstinence: "Wednesdays - no lard or dripping or fats to be eaten, Friday including Good Friday: no meat, or lard or dripping or butter or milk, cheese or eggs to be eaten."

1899 Mass notices: "Octave of Patronage of St. Joseph. this evening will begin the Devotions of the month of May, Rosary, Readings for the month of May and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 7.00pm. On Thursday the children's Mass at 9.0'clock. Next Sunday is the 1st Sunday of the month, Mass here at 8.00am, 2nd Mass at Levin at 11.00am and Vespers here at 7.00pm. Confessions will be heard on Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening. The devotions of the month of May will be on school days at 3.30pm and on Saturdays at 7.00pm (Exhorting ALL) and the following Saturday the vigil of Pentecost will be a day of fast and abstinence. You are requested to give candles for altar and also for devotions for the month of May. And now I give you communications of a letter sent to me by His Grace the Archbishop. He communicates to me the death of the good old Father Comte, founder of this mission more than fifty years ago.

He died on Jan. 14th at the age of 87. He remained strong and healthy to the last, rising at 5. He said Mass two days before he died. A solemn Mass of Requiem will be celebrated tomorrow morning at 9.30. (Exhort to assist what he has done.....what we owe him.....) At the conclusion of the requiem the Maori people held a proper tangi for Father Comte and resolved to perpetuate the memory of him by erecting a tablet in the church after it had been renovated and enlarged. (Where is it now?)

1899 Sister Borgia came to Otaki - she was the first vocation from Hastings. June 1899 the new stables were erected for £105.12s.4d. (the present garage is the lower storey of these stables.)

1899 September St. Andrew's Church Levin opened.

1900 September, more acrimonious correspondence in the local papers. This had been going on since the convent school opened, with various people objecting to Catholic children receiving free tickets on the train, and so supposedly bankrupting the Education Board.

1900 September. Notices at Sunday Mass: Next Sunday, "1st Mass at Levin at 9.00, then Mass at Ohau at 11 o'clock, and Vespers and Devotions and congregational prayers here at 7.00. If the weather is not too bad ALL those who have traps and horses should consider it an obligation to go to Ohau for the 11 o'clock

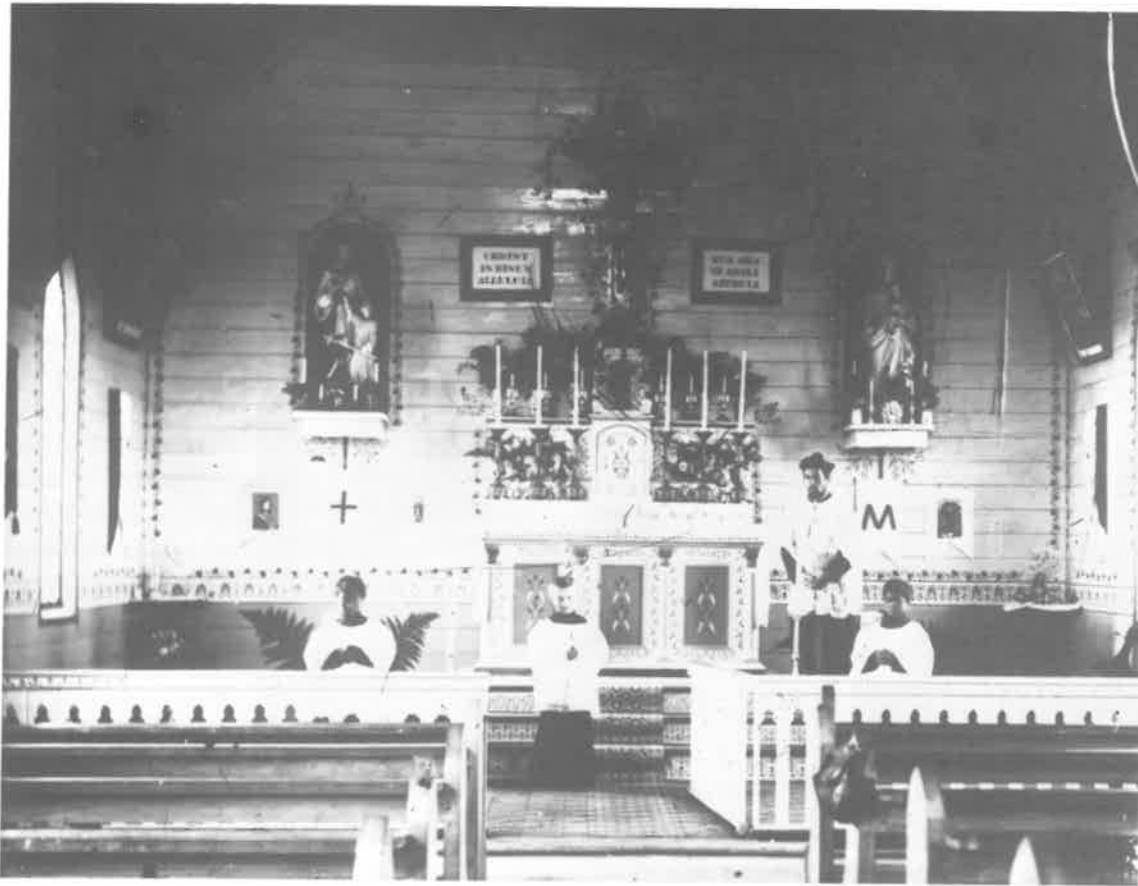
Mass as there is no Mass here next Sunday." and later in the same notices, "I have to remind subscribers to the messenger of the S.H. that the yearly subscription is due now and should be paid at once. I am quite ready to take the trouble attached to the distribution of the magazine, but it is not fair that I should pay-every year 10/- or £1 for subscribers who put off paying of their subscription. Surely you would not have me to pay the subscription for you,' (nothing has changed in 94 years since - see our current accounts of the parish!) 1901 27th January, Mass notices: "Parents are requested to send their children the very first day and to be very strict with their attendance during the year. The success of the school depends upon it " and a notice from the Archbishop re the death of Queen Victoria, "Drape the church in mourning except the altar, make reference to the death of the Queen next Sunday at Mass and play the Dead March on the Organ "

1901 25th February, W. G. Emeny of Wellington tendered £65 for wages and material for shifting Fr. Melu's church around.

1901 31st March Mass reminder to all Catholics with reward to their civic duty of every householder to fill in the census form properly, and Father reminded them to ensure that they put down their denomination, it is important that you should write Roman Catholic, otherwise if you only put Catholic it would be a loss to our Church... and tonight at Vespers I intend to explain the rather important and interesting question of our being called Catholic or Roman Catholic.'

1901 21st March: Mass notices.. "I feel very pleased to say Mass for the first time in the new site of the old and same church. Since the lonely church of many years ago has been surrounded by beautiful and up to date buildings, Convent 1896, and Presbytery 1897 it had become out of shape and out of date. Repairs were a matter of necessity as well as decency, but on account of the irregular position of the church (being on an angle)

1901 Notices.. "Next Sunday there will be no Mass or Benediction, but Rosary and singing by the Choir in gallery just enlarged. You are invited to make use of the new Confessional. And today you notice some changes in the porch and in the gallery. No doubt you will at once appreciate the improvement and recognise that they were greatly needed. Ask the members of the choir and they will tell you their feeling with reward to the difference in the size of the gallery and in the stairs which are now easy and safe.....A momentary disadvantage of these improvements is that the seating accommodation in the body of the Church is reduced a little. But as a sanctuary will soon be added to the church the inconvenience will be only for a time. Moreover, most of the children could be accommodated in the gallery. It is evident that these improvements will show properly only when they will have been painted or varnished and this will be started as soon as the exterior of the sanctuary and sacristies will be up, that is, I hope, in



**The Church before the sanctuary and side altars added.**

about a month. The painting of the church itself is a more urgent work, but of course you will be called upon to subscribe generously as you have done for the Convent and the Presbytery before. Not only the gallery but also the porch has been enlarged by exactly one third, and this no doubt will be well received by all.

A confessional more decent and more comfortable to the priest and to the penitent has replaced the rudimentary and shabby one which had been in use for years, surely everyone, like myself, must be pleased with the work. The Baptismal fonts are another improvement ..... The only ones who will be displeased with the changes are

our young men. I must say that it has been really pleasing to see a very fair number of them coming to all the services, but they seemed to like the very much the stair corner, entering from the side door. Now they will have to make an effort and enter by the main door, and to find a place in front of the fountains or in front of the confessional, without leaning upon and touching them. Of course it is clearly understood that one is to remain during the services (especially at night) in the porch or on the stairs (Father Melu had previously mentioned young men who hung about outside during services, and he supposed that they might be Protestants)"

1901 24th February. Notices..... Next Tuesday the

**Early 1901, while sanctuary being added to Church - Masses said in Convent.**







**Interior of St. Mary's Church Otaki after 1902. Photo published in N.Z. Mail 25 May 1904. Photo showing the creation of the new sanctuary in 1901, and the changes made in July/August 1902, namely the creation of 2 little side altars and statue of Blessed Peter Chanel (later St. Peter Chanel).**

annual school picnic will be held (weather permitting) in the grounds of Mr. Wright near the Otaki Bridge. You are all expected to contribute something suitable or cash towards the children's treat and to be present."

1901 5th October Letter received from Archbishop Redwood who was in Kaikoura, offering sympathy on hearing of the death of Winiata Moki of Awahuri and asking Father to carry his sympathy to hwhahuri.

1901 1st December, Enoka te Wano's Requiem was the first Mass in the new Sanctuary.

1902 March, letter from Father Melu to Archbishop saying that as the choir are unable to sing the Missa Cantata he can only say 'Low Masses' and asking permission to do so and wishing the Arch. compliments of Easter.

1902 27th April) Notices....."I must remind you that Maggie O'Rourke has been appointed to collect for a side altar to the Blessed Virgin, those who have not yet given their name, should not let this month pass without showing their devotion to Mary. I am expecting any day the gold heart in which the names of the subscribers will be religiously kept at the altar...." This must be the gold heart which hangs high over the alter of the Sacred Heart still. More from the notices...."Try to do your best to come tonight to honour Our Blessed Lord and also

his Holy Mother - some parents should come for another reason - to make sure that their boys are really coming to Church and not keeping company with fine young Christians who hold open service of larrikanism in the playground', and there follows a list of parishioners who have paid their dues, with the amounts beside the names.

1902 28th May, letter to Father Delach from Archbishop giving permission to put

up a lean-to at the convent and sending best wishes for the work. This year also saw the start of a school bus from the station to be driven by Bill Bevan.

1902 7th December, First Communion at Paraparaumu with the children prepared by the Sisters from Otaki, Father Melu said Mass with 5 girls and 3 boys making First Communion.

1903 Article from Otaki Mail reports that the church is now fully painted, outside greyish slate with no difference in the colouring for the facings, and the interior in a blending of colours with beautiful work on the two side altars, which have been painted complete. On the bottom of these are some panels of blue, With lovely sprays of white lillies, the work of Mr. E. Lanchester of Otaki.

1903 16th June letter from Archbishop Redwood telling of Orphanage and industrial school of Stoke, Nelson, completely destroyed by fire on 27th April, sad blow to the whole Catholic Church. He hoped to erect a new brick building for at least £8000, so was calling on clergy and laity to set an example and give subscriptions, donations and legacies, asking that in all churches of the archdiocese, at all services, special collections be taken up with all possible force and earnestness; with a note on the bottom that the letter be given to all principal Catholic families in the parish.

1903 July, Pontifical Solemn Requiem Mass celebrated for deceased Pope. Father Melu said Mass and the choir sang 'Waiting Souls' and 'Dead March into Saul' was played on the organ.

1904 Sister Borgia established cookery classes at the Convent.

1904 8th December, The 'Christening of the marae of Hine Nui o te Ao Katoa ara o Hata Maria - the Court of the great Virgin of the world, the Blessed Virgin Mary' are Father Melu's own words.

1905 The school is removed from the foot of the hill to nearer the Convent.

1905 the new meeting house, 100 feet by 30 feet was lit with acetylene gas. A large reservoir had been erected on Pukekaraka to provide water for all, for the week-long Hui.

1906 8th January, a financial statement was sent out to Maori listing the costs of the Hui the previous month, total cost for 500 people for a week was £36.18s.

1906 January, For about 2 weeks a gang of 20 men have been working away at Pukekaraka taking away a portion of the hill, to make a gradual slope and padding with turf.

1905 29th June, a large gathering of people celebrated Father Melu's 25th Jubilee of ministry in New Zealand. The children presented him with a chalice (we still use it today) and it will be a taonga during the 150th celebrations.

1905 26th August, Father Melu, driving a trap, collided with a motor-bike and a trailer, just a few chains from where he had broken his leg in 1898, at the sharp turning near Mr. Thompson's Manakau.

1906 September, Death of Wi Parata Famous parliamentarian, his body lay for a day on Pukekaraka marae.

#### Interior before 1979.

1906 19th October, death at Ohau of Karauti Romana, notable Catholic, huge tangi.

1906 8th December, First Communion for 27 children. Mass sung for the first time by a choir of children trained by Father Schaeffer.

Catholic Bazaar was held with a musical programme for three nights, but on the third night was disrupted early by a fire in the Central Hotel which was totally destroyed.

1907 10th February, another large hui to mark the erection of the statue of Saint Peter on Pukekaraka overlooking the whole of Otaki

1907 April, Father Delach organised a formal dance in the Town Hall for all who took part in the February Hui. Visitors from Paraparaumu and the Rangitikei attended the dance, which was designed to bring various hapu closer, and there were items from Messrs Moa, Mahina, Henare Rawiri, King, Wesley, Carter, and the Misses Hakaraia and Raika, Enoka with extra music from Mr. Enoka, Kearsley, Rawiri and Mrs. Fisher.

The following week Father Delach, with a party from Otaki, Manakau and Ohau, left for the opening of a Maori church at Rotoiti.

1907 27th November, Theological Conference was held at Otaki for 21 priests with Dean McKenna presiding. On all Saints' Day the women patients were very kindly taken out for a whole day picnic at Te Horo, by Father Delach. Father Cognet arrived this year to be Superior.

1908 5-15th June, great hui for the instruction of girls





**The crowd on the hill - the site of the first mission house showing flag-staff and "whare-tapu" - Ohaki.**

as Children of Mary, at the hui 283 confessions, 257 communions, 3 marriages, 16 baptisms, 107 confirmations, with people from Taupo to Kaikoura present. Muaupoko people did all the catering with marked ability. On the final day a tangi was held for a young man who had died during the hui and he was buried in the urupa.

1908 15th August, Large gathering for first communion and the Grotto was illuminated for the 50th jubilee of the Apparitions of Lourdes, many visitors - Father Regnault SM the Provincial of the Marists, and Te Rikihana a visitor from Ngapuhi, from one of the first hapu to be baptised Catholics.

1908 11th September, Harold Jones of the convent school won one of the first scholarships to St. Patrick's College, Wellington.

1909 Whare Kura founded by Father Delach.

1909 October 1, A Father Kelly took over Foxton and found a new Presbytery, a church enlarged and furnished, and a new church at Shannon which had been opened on 22nd April 1900 by Archbishop Redwood.

1910 10th July large amount of money taken from

Convent during Mass, a person later arrested and part of the money reclaimed. Talk of the town for several weeks.

1910 14th September, 25th Jubilee of Father Cognet's ordination. High Mass and then luncheon, with many toasts and speeches, the children received four days' holiday. Illuminations and fireworks in the evening. Gold chalice, purse of sovereigns, set of handsomely-bound books, a richly hand-painted stole, a new Missal and seven volumes of the Catholic Encyclopaedia were presented from various sections of the parish. After all the speeches, the visitors took themselves to the fern garden designed by Father Melu.

1910 October, another annual Bazaar

1910 The Great Wall or Parepare at Pukekaraka was built by Muaupoko, and contains a number of their taonga, a plaque commemorating this event is set into the wall.

1911 September, big tangi at Hamua for Nireaha Tamaki of Hamua, who had been a most influential person in the Missions.

1912 Father Delach became involved in a libel case as a result of an article in the Whare Kura and Father had to ask Dean O'Shea for the costs of the Court case. 1912 Christmas time. Father Claude Cognet SM Parish Priest of Otaki died. He had been ill for some time. A



**Fr. F. Melu - 1903 in front of original Lourdes Grotto.**

very large funeral with the order of the Funeral Procession - Children of Mary, Sisters of the Convent, Hibernian Society in regalia, between 30 and 40 clergy, and the coffin. The choir under Dr. Kennedy chanted

the Gregorian! The celebrant was Dean Regnault, the Provincial. Father Cognet is buried on Pukekaraka.

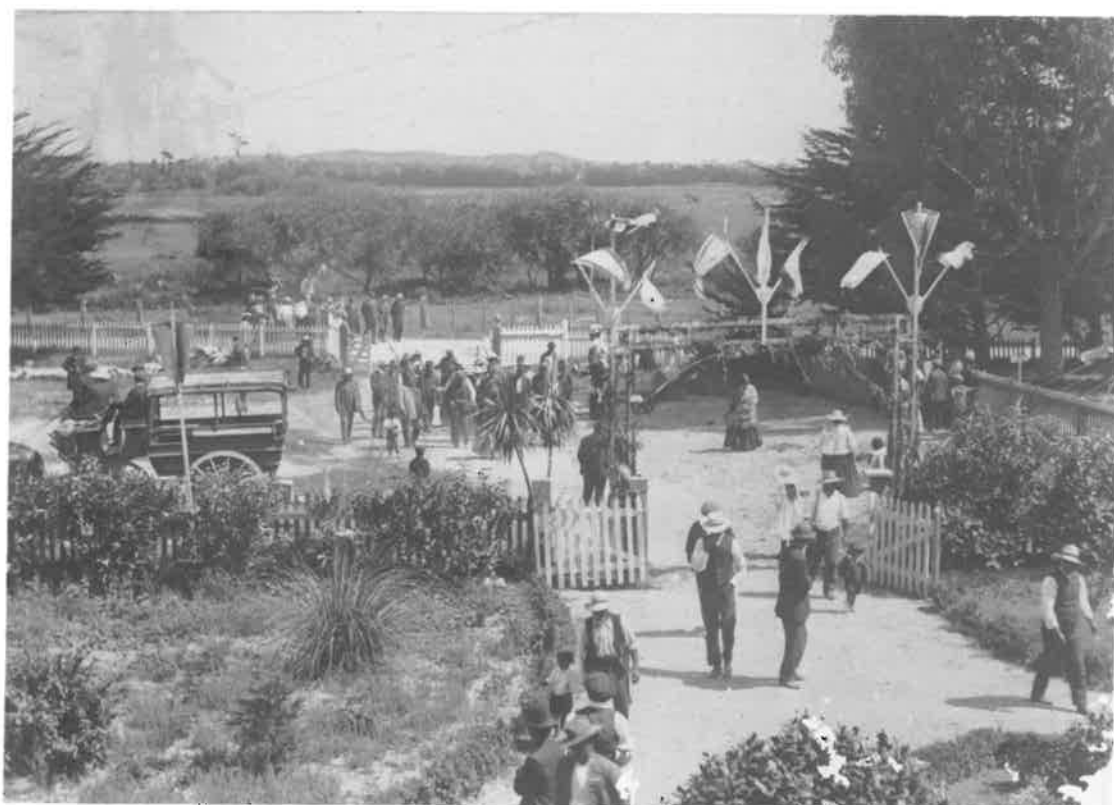
1913 the Marble Cross was erected on the site of the first Church. Erena te Aro o Rehua presented the massive pedestal that the statue of St. Peter stands on, as a memorial to her becoming a Catholic. She was the Kuia Rangatira of Ngati Kauwhata in the Manawatu. When she decided to become a Catholic she announced she had 'crossed the Mangapouri' - the creek that now runs under the school playground, and used to separate Rangiatea from Pukekaraka. She gave great support to all things Catholic from the time of her conversion.

1914 Father Delach left Otaki supposedly for a holiday, but forbidden to return. A distraught appeal from Father Melu asking for the decision to be overturned. There appears to have been some complaints that Father Delach was giving too much time to Maori members of the parish, and so just when Pukekaraka was becoming a most effective Mission in every sense of the word, Father Delach is sent away, and Father Melu was demoted. After this there was a long period of stagnation in the parish among Maori parishioners. A promise made on behalf of the Church had been broken and even the historic records are sparse from then on.

1914 Archbishop Redwood presents a Papal Flag sent as a gift from the Pope.

1915 Father Maillard's 25th Jubilee, parents sent money, part of it for a chalice costing £25.

1916 Father Vibaud succeeds Father Delach as editor of Whare Kura.



1918 The end of the First World War, and the arrival home of some parishioners, those who did not return are remembered with their names inscribed at the base of the big Cross on Pukekaraka, and they are John Ahern, Joseph Ahern, Joseph Bennett, Francis Lima, Ernest Mason, Raymond Murray, Reginald Murray, William Patterson,

**Early 1900's**



**Pukekaraka about time of unveiling St. Peter's Statue 1907, after School was relocated.**

1925 The 'corpus' or Christ is fixed to the big totara cross on the hill.

1926 The stations were erected all the way up the zigzag to the top of Pukekaraka by Father Melu. Father Caulfield told me the story that the stations were ordered from Europe with the statement that they were going to be placed up a winding track, but when they

arrived they were designed for a track that would climb to the left rather than the the right, so that Christ appeared to be walking up the hill backwards' Father Melu managed to sell them to someone else, and then had to order another set from Europe with more precise

Patrick Padden, Edward Quill, Richard Simon, Albert Winterburn. The brass stand, thurible and incense boat were given in memory of Hugh Carrigan M.C. killed in action, 2.11.17., and are still used today.

1918 By now the influenza epidemic had struck Otaki as badly as anywhere in New Zealand. Dola Derham (Harper) and Margaret Bennett who were children at the time and living right in town remember this epidemic mostly of sounds, the constant karanga and cries of grief from Rangiataea that went on night and day, and from the other side, the sawing and hammering of wood as coffins were made at the undertakers, also 24 hours a day for some weeks.

1920 Father Maillard left for Europe with Archbishop Redwood, he had been Superior of all the Maori Missions.

1921 Father Soulas retired to Otaki, he had driven a horse and gig all the way from Okato, aged 75 years.

1922 £13 raised for a new organ.

1924 £100 was the annual cheque paid for the sale of milk from Pukekaraka. Pat Ahern was a lad who went each day to the cowshed, over past the Convent, and milked the cows then Brother Stanislaus took care of the dairy and delivery.

1924 October, Water was connected to the Presbytery and presumably the Convent for £9.10s. 11d.

1924 October) Brother Stanislaus became ill and the costs for his illness and funeral expenses are recorded as £18.5s.6d. He too is buried on Pukekaraka.



**Before 1929**

instructions. Father mentioned the sum of £400, but for which set, I don't know. There is a long list still in existence of all those Maori from various hapu who contributed to the cost of these Stations.

1935 Father Melu transferred to Home of Compassion.

1938 October Father Melu dies and is returned to Otaki for huge Tangi, and then is buried on Pukekaraka.

1938 Powhiri sent to all at Pukekaraka to attend the 100 year celebration of the first Mass in New Zealand, at Te Totara, Hokianga. A big crowd went up to this Jubilee, a number of whom are still living in the Parish.

1939 Archbishop O'Shea approved the proposal to





**Cemetery top of Pukekaraka, marble top erected 1913.**

set up a Catholic School at Kuku for pupils between Otaki and Levin, from Manakau, Ohau and Muhunua, but had difficulty in procuring teaching staff and war intervened. There was a preference for Sisters of Compassion who could act as missionaries as well, but advantage of getting Sisters of St. Joseph was that no



**1913, placing St. Peter on his pedestal.**

convent would be needed as they could stay in Otaki or Levin in existing convent. It was proposed that the school take up to Std. 4. The proposal came to nothing.

1939 Big plans were under way for the Eucharistic Congress in Wellington. Screeds of letters and pleas for tents, cutlery, money, palliasses, as hundreds of people were expected in Wellington, but were to be billeted in Otaki, and so the amounts of food and equipment needed were enormous. A plea from the altar for butter, eggs, cream, and poultry of all descriptions, for the Bishop's table!

1940 Over 600 people who attended the Congress stayed at Otaki. Many concerts had been held previously to raise funds

for such a huge gathering, and all the trains had special passenger cars ordered for this congress, with special trains to and from Wellington each day.

1940 18th February another big hui

to celebrate the Centenary of the Otaki Mission Station. Many delegations from all over New Zealand came to visit and again many fine speeches and congratulatory whaikorero were made. Solemn High Mass said in an overflowing church while another full congregation assisted at Mass in the meeting house, Eine.

1941 Te Maramatanga Club started in Wellington, with Father Venning from Otaki always in attendance, where games, quizzes, action songs, and religious discussions took place. The meetings and dances were held monthly, and a newsletter was produced, listing the names the recently dead. This was seen as essential because of the numbers of young Maori people having to go Wellington because of the labour shortage due to the war. The newsletter also recorded the names of those young men going overseas to fight, and the names of those who died over there.

1944 June, An insurance bill for the Maori Mission for Catholic churches and their contents, 7 churches total premium of £6.15s. 1d.

1946 First of modern Easter Hui held. Started in Otaki and then known as Hui Tau, now, Hui Aranga. We have a photograph of the first participants, and hui continued to grow in size and



**Fr. John Vibaud S.M.**

every year since. The 50th Anniversary is due to be held in Otaki in 1996 and plans are already being made. This hui for 400 people, all over Easter, cost £150. Father Riordan suggested to delegates at this hui that all their peoples be asked to guarantee each wage earner would contribute threepence each week to a proposed college for Maori boys because £30,000 was needed.

Monday 22nd April, at the end of the first hui, a meeting was held to make this Easter hui an annual occasion, and setting rules, establishing competitions, and levies, prizes, and naming a committee.

1947 Father Riordan's Silver Jubilee to the priesthood celebrated, due to the polio epidemic, the affair was held in the open.

1947 Another Hui was held at Pukekaraka, with speech and sports and hymn singing competitions, and the full celebration of the all the Easter liturgies. Senior speech competition for 1947 hui was 'how can I best help the Priest.' The senior ladies prize was the Ruta Etekia Memorial gold medal, in honour of this Pukekaraka Kui.

1948 Father McGrath arrives as Parish Priest.

1949 News of the death in France of Father Delach. Sorrowful tangi held.

1950 All the records to hand deal with the organising of the 1951 Hui Aranga, the great amount of planning, the many committees, letters to the army, railways, hiring



firms, and the plans for the efficient running the hui.

1951 Letter from New Zealand Army H/Q for £104.13s.9d. for the hire of 25 marquees, and a bill from the insurance for Fire only, they could not cover for Storms.

1951 April, Letter from Father Venning to J.J. Maher M.P. asking him to request of the Minister of Defence, a rebate on the hire fee of £104 for marquees. He pointed out that the Federated Maori Clubs provided a high standard of leadership and management training, with crowd control, promotion of traditional culture, and providing youth with a example of citizenship. He noted that there had been over 1000 people under canvas for Easter with no trouble whatsoever.

1951 Paraparaumu set up as separate parish.

1951 Father Venning farewelled after 15 years in Otaki.

1952 Great deal of physical work being done, church and school spouting and downpipes fitted, parish bulletin printed for first time, first BBQ of many started as fundraisers, school, church and presbytery painted, church re-piled, concrete steps in entrances widened, school bus services to Manakau and Te Horo started with Father Beban as driver of one.

1953 The totara Cross fell, and was replaced with a steel one.

1953, more work, school enlarged with roll of 160. One BBQ had 2500 people entertained, with proceeds for



**Father Beban with Marist Sisters who ran Catechism camps each summer holidays for country children.**



**Sisters Theresa, Marcella, Euphrasie, Benigna, Baptista, Dorothy.**

rebuilding of school.

1954 Another Hui Aranga.

1955 Convent School's Diamond Jubilee, with over 400 attending the official dinner.

1956 Archbishop McKeefry blessed the newly-completed hall Te Reo Irirangi o te Hahi, 'The Supernatural Sounds of the Church' or 'Proclamation of the Church'. Father Caulfield said he had started the building with a long piece of fishing line, and four sticks.

He kept great records,

photographic and accounts, total cost £1862.9s.3d., certainly a lot of voluntary labour, but designed to seat 700 at a meal.

1957. Farewell to Maori Missioner Father Caulfield.

1957 New school opened by Archbishop McKeefry.

1958 Hui Aranga comes again to Pukekaraka.

1959 30th August, Father O'Riordan dies, one of the great Maori Missioners.

1962 Father Daniel Fouhy appointed as Maori Missioner. A big gruff voice, fund of entertaining stories from his years' up the river', always had cigarette ash down his soutane, loved ancient books, and art work. During Father Fouhy's time, he consulted kaumatua and the Small whare on the site of Father Comte's first home was named 'Te Ohaki' O Ha Ki - the dying speech or legacy, symbolising the legacy of faith left to us by the early Marists.

1964, Hui Aranga again held at Pukekaraka.

1965 Father Cheeseman comes as curate.

1965 Hui Aranga to have been held at Ruapehu but group transfered to Otaki. This coincided with the Vice Regal visit to Raukawa of Governor-General Ferguson with his wife and son. So it was proper that the hui groups attend the powhiri at Raukawa. They were present for the formal adoption of young Geordie Ferguson as a member of Ngati Raukawa.

1966 Father Isaac Gupwell is appointed as Maori Missioner. A man of infinite knowledge of Maoritanga, who taught night classes in several venues, and was always generous with this gift. He had come straight from many years at Hato Paora and it took a while for the parishioners at Kuku to break him in. His sermons were very long, and he tended to speak to the congregation as if they were pupils. We found



**Cardinal Tom Williams wearing Korowai gift from Pukekaraka and carrying crozier gift of Muaupoko. These gifts presented to him when Archbishop in previous year.**



**Top pupils 1981 Shane Hardman, Rodney Nikora, Angelo Irwin.**

that he could not compete with babies. So a few babies would be prodded awake or nudged to cry and the sermon would come to an abrupt halt.

1966 Another Hui Aranga at Pukekaraka.

1967 Father Jock Aitken arrives as Parish Priest.

1973 Father Regis O'Reilly arrives as parish priest, presbytery is repiled, with repair work carried out, and church porch repaired and redecorated.

1974 Church painted, and presbytery redecorated.

1979 7th October, Papal Ambassador, Monsignor Pierre welcomed to Pukekaraka, wet weather, so Mass in Te Reo, followed by hakari and entertainment from boys of Hato Paora and Hato Petera.

1980 Visit by Archbishop Williams, 500 visitors, great ceremony, to mark the Archbishop's first official visit. He was presented with a korowai by Bob Hakaraia symbolising justice, integrity

**1985, blessing the wheel - in memory of French Marist Priests - Begun by Fr. Comte 1844.**



and honour due to a rangatira, and from Thompson Tukupua, a carved crozier symbolising shepherdhood. The gift to Pukekaraka was a Papal Paschal Candle.

1983 Father Frank Wall dies suddenly and after several days is taken to Taranaki.

1983 The church is painted.

1985 The original millwheel and part of the millstone were returned to Pukekaraka. They

had been found on Ray Taylor's farm when ploughing, where they had fallen after 80 many of years of disuse. He offered them back to us, and they were installed on the edge of the marae after special blessings from Fathers Caulfield and Durning. The Official party included members of the French Embassy to re-inforce the ties with Father Comte.

1987 April, Otaki Lions generously give time to repaint meeting house, Hine, in a big working-bee.

1987 May. Big hui for large number of Marist Priests and the Provincialite as observers. They looked at a number of issues, were they true to the Founder's vision,



**Irene Mackle, Makuini Johnson, Kiripuai te Aomarere, Teresa Rikihana, Betty Raureti, Janet Marino, Borgia Hakaraia.**

was this vision relevant to today's world, were they observing their vow of poverty strictly enough? Were they a true witness to Christ? Many of them who had not been familiar with Pukekaraka and its history and were delighted to know they belonged here.

1987 October 3-4th October, group of 36 people from Archdiocese spent time at Pukekaraka, discussing Bi-culturalism, after many meetings in their home parishes, discussing this subject. All appreciated the chance to experience Maori culture and liturgy.

1988 6-7th August, Hui to celebrate the end of the Marian Year. Also the occasion of Bishop Takuira Mariu visiting for the first time as Bishop. Some lovely liturgies.

1988 November, Kaumatua of Ngati Kapumanawawhiti, and Trustee of Pukekaraka, Bob Hakaraia died suddenly. 1000 people gathered to mourn Bob's death, large Requiem in Te Reo.

1988 3rd December, our organist Margaret Lawrie is presented with Papal medal, Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, and celebrates her birthday in style and surprise.

1988. 4-6th December, Hui for development, formation and continuing growth of Lay Ministry of Maori Catholics. This was an excellent hui, very spiritual, hard-working, and great fun, and the group later took the name Waka Aroha.

1989 14th October, discussing aspects of the Treaty of Waitangi, and moving into workshops with Michael Belgrave, from Waitangi Tribunal, Manuka Henare, Bernie Kernot, Marilyn Pryor and Tom Bennion. The hui members represented one third of all parishes in Archdiocese.

1990. The Sisters of Saint Joseph of Nazareth left the parish after 96 years of working, teaching and helping in all areas of parish life. A farewell Mass was held in

which Sister Marie Roche gave the homily and afterwards there was an evening of farewell speeches, and exchange of gifts, and a commemorative tree was planted in front of Hine.

1993 19th August, Father Mel Caulfield dies at Home of Compassion, Wanganui, and is brought back next day by Wanganui people to lie in Hine and after a Requiem be buried on top of Pukekaraka.

1993 24th August, Fire damages two classrooms of St. Peter Chanel School.

1994. 23rd January, Father Bernie Atkins dies after a few hours in hospital and is returned to Pukekaraka for his tangi, and burial at the feet of his friend Father Mel. May They Rest in Peace.

Father Phil Cody arrives during the tangi to join Fathers Paddy Kinsella and Johnie Goulter. Father Phil is to study at Te Wananga o Raukawa.

## THE MAJOR EVENT OF THE 1990's. THE NEW CHURCH.

HOW THE MOMENTUM FOR THE BUILDING OF THE NEW CHURCH CAME ABOUT.

PETER WATSON CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE COMMENTS.

As long ago as 1960 there was a proposal to build a new church and a site was purchased in Waerenga Road. This was subsequently sold and a new site was bought in Mill Road, to provide what was thought would be a suitable central location. In 1985 Alan Morse engaged an architect to investigate some expansion proposals to St. Mary's. These alterations and all other alteration plans were subsequently deemed not to be appropriate. Also the issue of whether to move to Mill Road had not been determined and it was decided to let the matter rest.

The real drive for a new Church started again with the arrival of Father Matthew Cosgriff as Parish Priest in 1988. A lengthy series of consultative meetings led to a firm decision to consolidate all future building plans at Pukekaraka. In 1989 the Mill Road site was sold and a Steering Committee was formed to see how best the parish needs could be met. This resulted in the proposal to build a new Church facility behind, but attached to the old Church and the engagement of Craig Roberts of Stapleton Architects to develop the proposal.

A highly successful fund raising programme in 1990 finally guaranteed that the proposal would proceed. A Project Committee was set up to work with Craig and to finalise the design details.

In 1991 Father Paddy Kinsella was appointed Parish



Priest and he was to oversee the actual building of it.

Tenders were called in July 1991 and Sim and Taylor commenced construction in November of the same year.

I have been involved throughout the process and for me there have been three key events which have had significant influence on the final outcome.

1) Father Matthew Cosgriff. He was the energy and the catalyst around which this idea to build came to fruition.

2) The inaugural meeting of the Steering Committee in April 1989. It was at this meeting that consensus for the first time was reached. It was potentially such a divisive meeting yet proved to be, within an hour of meeting, a very harmonious one. It is one of the most amazing meetings I have ever been to, and proved to me that the idea to build was one whose time had truly come.

3) The fund raising programme. It was a difficult decision to engage a professional fundraiser, at not inconsiderable expense. We aimed for \$300,000 - the minimum necessary for the project to proceed. By the end of the eight weeks a total of \$340,000 had been pledged or given. A truly amazing result which demonstrated both generosity and support for the project to proceed.

I feel honoured to have had the opportunity of being involved with this project for so long. I see it as this generation's gift to the history of Pukekaraka and feel confident that it will mark a significant step in the growth of the parish.

## THE ARCHITECTS INSPIRATION

Makuini Johnson was able to tell us how Craig Roberts came to Pukekaraka with the French "Ivi" people. Coming from Europe they had a profound anxiety about the pollution and destruction of our planet. They are working hard to preserve Our Mother the Earth especially through Our Lady and her Rosary.

They were amazed to find this great inspiration already here at Pukekaraka.

## HINE NUI O TE AO KATOA

In 1887 our old church was completed and re-dedicated by Archbishop Redwood. It was the 50th anniversary of the re-dedication of a famous shrine to Our Lady in Paris, called Our Lady of Victories. So, our Otaki church was given that name. The Immaculate Heart of Mary (Sinless, unpolluted, full of light, Mother of life) was the inspiration. In 25 years from 1837 - 1862 twenty million people throughout the world had joined the Archfraternity in Mary's honour, based on the original church.

It is no wonder that our French Marist priests were enthusiastic about Our Lady of Victories. Our Statue

in the old church is this Lady of Victories furthermore, Our Lady had appeared to St. Bernadette just 29 years previously, in 1858 at Lourdes. Father Melu and Delach taught the people that Pukekaraka was a very special place for Our Lady. Here, she decided what was going to happen. Here she was to Mother her Son in our hearts. This understanding of Our Lady really captured the hearts of Maori people, who read it in a Maori way, that could have only come from Our Lady.

They saw Pukekaraka as a Marae, a place where the life force of Mother earth is concentrated, where you stand in the belly of the earth, and experience the Communion of Saints, the presence of the living and the dead.

They saw this marae as a kind of reincarnation of the Marae o Hine, the woman's marae near Otorohanga, belonging to their ancestress, Rongorito. That was a unique place of Peace, Love, Joy and Reconciliation. They saw this Marae as that of the new Hine, unpolluted, full of life and hope, receiving a new seed, Christ the Saviour. Through this Son, the earth and all its life would be renewed, receive a new Tapu and a new Mana. Mary would always be present here and now forming her children in the image of Christ, the pattern of human life in its fullness. Passing through Hine Nui te Po you came to Hine Nui te Ao.

This inspiration gave great fruit. The Lourdes grotto was built in 1901. In 1904 the Marae was formally dedicated as Hine Nui o te Ao Katoa, a place where the unspoiled, unpolluted Virgin Mother of Christ would concentrate her power to bring people the life of Christ. She is new Mother earth, and people who had nursed grievances in memory and song for centuries, were healed by the Mother of Peace, and Mua Upoko were given Mana and a place to stand.

The two houses, Roma and Hine were built. The emblem on the front of Hine sums up the whole meaning of the Marae, the new seed nestling in the new Mother. Mary is always present, actively enlivening us, so we have no carvings to root us in the past.

Great Huis were held, times of prayer and devotion. People flocked here with enthusiasm, and enthusiasm that gripped both European and Maori people, and brought about a great bi cultural bond. One Ngakuru Pene Haare came from Hokianga, in 1904. The doctors in Auckland had given him up. He stood at the grotto and used the petals of flowers for his Rosary beads. He experienced a healing, and was present at Fr. Te Awhitu's first Mass at Paki Paki in 1944, where he received his blessing.

In 1908 a week's retreat of prayer and teaching was held. Maori families brought their young women and twenty eight of them were dedicated to be the new creation in Mary, with all her unspoiled, unpolluted graciousness. These families took home with them daughters who embodied Our Lady's Marae. The caretakers and guardian angels of this spirit were Kui

Taruru and Eronora Te Ara o Rehua. The girls were to Mother a new breed, a faith people, because they had received the Tapu and Mana of Mary.

In 1909 it was the men's turn, where for a week they received spiritual and doctrinal training, especially as catechists. Over 80 were installed in the League of the Sacred Heart, true Sons of Mary, to take this new life back to their families. It was this insight into Catholic Faith that was picked up by the architect, Craig Roberts.

## THE ARCHITECTS PLAN

Craig Roberts had spent hundreds of hours with our Pukekaraka people of Faith. He brought with him a great devotion to Our Lady. He spent many many hours with our whole Parish Committees. He was well instructed in the Liturgical requirements. He found Jenni Bennett, the artist who worked in glass. He knew that Maori artists would blend their Tukutuki, Kowhaiwhai and carving into the total concept. Finally, he was supported and inspired by a crusade of prayer.

The Church grew out of the hearts of the whole community of Faith. It is the way it should happen. We feel only Our Lady could have made it work in such a way here. It is the unique bi cultural church in Aotearoa - New Zealand.

## THE ARCHITECT REPORTS.

Craig Roberts says that his first consideration was the question "What is sacred space?" Roberts describes the chief characteristic as a series of gates, whether physical or symbolic, through which the congregation must pass to reach an inner sanctum.

"The marae itself is very much one of those gates. At the first gate you prepare yourself by asking if it's all right to move to a special place. Maori ask their ancestors; we ask ourselves. Each gate, and there are. I think, seven of them altogether, takes you from one area to another towards the altar itself. As you move from the outer courtyard inwards, there is an increasing sense of losing the outer, material world until one is in the inner sanctum. And there we wanted everything to disappear - to become very ethereal - only the weaving casts shadows on the ceiling. At this point all differences dissolve - Maori, Pakeha, just as all differences dissolve when we meet each other with our hearts."

## FEMININE ASPECT.

A central concern of the committee and congregation was that the extension should emphasise the feminine. There was not only the obvious need for the association of Mary with the feminine to be expressed, but two other historic elements had to be taken into account. One was the essentially Maori concept of Mary as mother of the earth - Hine Nui o te Ao Katoa - the other was the

feminine theme of reconciliation with Christ through spiritual rebirth. "So as you enter the church you pass beneath a statue of Mary, which will be on the plinth to be added to the exterior wall. The wall itself represents the Earth. Entering the church is entering the body of Christ and represents the traditional Maori way - similar to the way we enter the body of the ancestor in the meeting house," says Roberts. St.Mary's Church itself is to the south of the meeting houses, but the alignments of all the buildings, combined with a new curved entrance facade wall, give the complex an obvious physical unity. The facade will eventually hold a statue of Mary, welcoming all to Pukekaraka. It is to be left unpainted and will be covered in green foliage, representing a living screen through which one must pass before entering the sacred space of the church. In addition to an emphasis on the feminine, it is equally important to depict in the design of the church extensions the Christian belief in the Trinity: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Roberts believed strongly that the body of Christ should be symbolised by the prominent placement of three totara poles, pou tahu, pou tokomanawa and pou tuaronga. These were found and brought to Pukekaraka. At first the totara trunks were found to be unhappy at having been displaced from their origins. A healing and harmonising ceremony reconciled the totara to their new environment and, supporting the large ridge pole - tahuhu - they now contribute to the beauty and elegance of the church extension.

## COMMUNITY EFFORT

The church is a result of a great collaborative community effort. After much prayer and talk, Mrs Keiha Hammond, born and bred in Pukekaraka, brought the insights of the congregation together into three designs for the interior. Led by Mrs Makuini Johnson, various members of the church gathered the materials from the swamp, the bush and the seashore. "Lots of the children helped too." You'd see various children from the school coming along and perhaps putting their own stitch or two in the tukutuku panels. It really is a creation of the community. Even visitors from overseas took part.

"The foyer welcomes us into God's house, opening the door to the mystery of our own being." The entrance foyer and porte cochere are constructed in traditional Maori forms. The subtleties of the Christian symbolism and Maori cosmology are displayed in the weaving of the tukutuku panels. Above the doors we find the pattern called ao nui. We look up the many stairways to many heavens. The stairs are black. The heavens are the multitude of stars, galaxies and heavenly beings. The gold is the light of God, wisdom and love which transfuses all creation and comes to its fullness in the life of Christ.

One can talk about symbolism too much. It is better

to just stand back and let it all sink in. "Stop and just look at these panels and they will start talking to you."

A cloistered courtyard acts as the umbilical connection between the original mother church and the extension. A large glazed opening onto the courtyard allows the original church to be visible from the new nave. The architect considered that the siting of the extension behind the original church would allow that building to retain its prominence and mana among the others. Inside, the oval nave represents the womb and a place of contemplation. Roberts says that the space encourages participation by church members during services. Strong natural lighting through the roof-lights and side windows washes over a curved sanctuary wall, which provides a focus to this area.

Two dominant roof trusses, constructed to represent Maori weaving patterns, span the nave and are supported on columns representing the four corners of the earth. In the window above the altar, the lone blue star, symbolic of Mary herself, is set in southern skies and presides over an artist's representation of the Tararua Ranges. A small font with a little pool of water completes the four primary elements, with the sanctuary flame as the fire of creation; the monolithic plastered walls painted in ochre tones which symbolise the church's connectedness with earth; and the space encapsulating air that is the breath of spirit.

All has been assimilated and expressed by the architect through his creative arrangement of elements, the use of plain and simple materials, the careful placement of the few colours, the play of light and shadow, the proportions of height and breadth, and the simplicity of composition, all of which induce a sense of calm and serenity.

The church nurtures the view held by many of its congregation, that humanity participates in a universe with its own energies and rhythms.

## SITE PLAN

In 1550, Maniapoto, a great chief of the Tainui tribes, built a marae for his sister, who guided her people in peace. Her spirit was brought to Pukekaraka in the 1800's and became the spiritual centre around which Hine Marae was created. Pukekaraka is bordered by a hill to the north that contains a path and "Way of the Cross" with a cemetery at the top, and by two whare, Hine Nui o te Ao Katoa and Roma, to the east. A forecourt extending from the marae encompasses the church and presbytery. The superb blend of old and new structures won Stapleton Architects an NZIA-Resene Wellington Branch award in 1993. It was also nominated for a national award.

For the record: Client Otaki Parish of St. Mary's Church Architect Stapleton Architects (project architect Craig Roberts) Structural engineer C.M. Strachan & Associates. Service engineer Stephenson and Turner. Builder Sim & Taylor. Contractors Date of Commission

June 1989. Date of completion October 1992.

## THE OPENING SATURDAY OCTOBER 3rd 1992

Our Parish notices record the week leading up to the opening as "A Week of Miracles." It goes on to say: Last Sunday the surrounds of the church were formed and sown in grass. Tom Halsall's "Tonka Toy" made all the difference. Noel Harnett led another youthful charge on the courtyard and a big team got it ready for sealing - a big bonus. David Beck, Irene Mackle and Mike McAsey collected typed and printed the booklet, a real beaut. Berny Chainey's seats went into the church as soon as the carpet was laid. The altar and baptismal font got suddenly made by Henry Perenara and Hone Heke. The final glass work went in. The great toilers completed their five month journey in Hine, weaving the Tukutuku, which Trevor Hammond, and Bill Doyle's team were able to erect in the foyer. Foundation stones and 12 blessing stones arrived from I.C.Marks, a lovely donation.

Tom Halsall solved the problems of installation. The sound system went in. A multitude of hands prepared so many bits and pieces and cleaned up. The school children chimed in too.

The old church had more boards to repair than anticipated so we had to wait a bit longer to have the tower restored - a disappointment. However, our motto is "If Our Lady wants it, it will happen". A great big thank you to Our Lady for her big day. It does not talk much about the major effort put in by the Liturgy group or the mighty deeds being achieved out in Reo to prepare the banquet.

## THE OPENING DAY

DAWN IN HINE:- A good crowd gathered and our spiritual leader was Bishop Max Takuira Mariu SM. Rowdy welcomed us, supported by Fr. Paddy and we sang the hymn specially composed for the Marae in 1904, Sancta Maria. We then processed to the old church where we stopped to pray and cherish memories. Young girls led us into the foyer of the new church, where the carvings and tukutuku were annointed by Bishop Takuira. Our Holy Water contained some water from Fa'aroa, in Tahiti the river from which the canoes began their migration. It is next to Rai'atea.

After saying some of the Rosary, Keiha Hammond and Makuini Johnson said a brief word about the meaning of the tukutuku. We then returned to the Marae in front of the wall of reconciliation. We dug a hole. Rowdy August, and the team who went to Mohoanui, Otorohanga, to the original Marae O Hine - Rosie, Janet, Makuini, Borgia, Kiripuui, Fr.Paddy, Maramena, the twins, all put some soil in that hole. Some pebbles from Vatican Hill in Rome and some more from

Fourviere, (France, where the Marists came from) we also placed in the hole by Bishop Mariu.

Thompson Tukupua spoke briefly about Hine being the Marae for all people, where all people and Churches are welcome. He also spoke of the significance of the Maori Bishop. Rowdy August spoke movingly about what the whole project had meant to him. Martin Wehipeihana called to mind the Tupuna, who established this marae and who still call to us. We then had a cup of tea.



## THE AFTERNOON CEREMONY

Cardinal Thomas Williams D.D. The clergy had vested in the old church and processed on to the Marae. Karanga and Whakatau, a few words of recognition were given and we sang. The rite of reconciliation completed, the Cardinal moved to the steps in front of our big tree - Te Matua. The Architect and Management Committee handed over symbols of the work. Blessings began. The bell was named after the great Catechist Hakaria Rangikura, "TE PERE O RANGIKURA" He rang it for about 50 years.

We blessed the foundation stones and then processed into the church. About 500 people jammed in, a good crowd of clergy behind the altar. The Cardinal blessed the people, the walls and the altar. The Word of God was enthroned. Fr. James Durning gave the homily after the Gospel.

The prayer of dedication and anointings came after the beautiful Litany of the Saints by Borgia. The building and the altar were anointed and incensed. Candles were lit, lights went on, lovely flowers appeared. Dola Derham and Mary Dorset took up the offerings. The Mass celebration then continued as normal.

The official speeches were held at the end of the Mass, and after some speeches on the Marae, we headed



into Reo for a great banquet. These are such brief words for such a wonderful day. Fr. Caulfield was just well enough to come for the day. Distinguished guests included local Mayors Iver Trask, Bob Whetren, Alain Dubuy (French Consul) Nick Bevan (Architect) Rev. George Spargo (Ministers Fraternal): Sisters of St. Joseph, Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

## WONDERFUL EVENTS.

On Friday 9th October we celebrated the first joyous school Mass in the new church. Baptisms and Exposition were celebrated on the 11th, the day we had a wonderful liturgy to celebrate the first birthday of the Passionist Family Groups. Our Friday 23rd the tower was replaced on the old church, a replica of the original. On 24th Matt Wilson and Shelley Creswell celebrated their marriage. Fr. John Rea arrived to begin our mission. On 22nd November we celebrated First Holy Communion at 9am Mass.





The unstinting generosity and love of the people involved reflected their love of Our Lady and the unshakable certainty that she was in charge and making everything happen.

Goodness always has to give itself away. Hundreds upon hundreds came and 'made a cross' leaving each time a little of themselves and their personal love to enrich the Board. Visitors from overseas even took part. There was for all a unique sense of touching natural materials and being close to Creation. It was a reconciliation process, that deepened our awareness of God's presence and the beautiful gifts he

## FR. PADDY KINSELLA SM. PARISH PRIEST COMMENTS.

I first came to visit Pukekaraka in 1953 in the Barbeque Days and have stayed on many occasions ever since. I'd heard talk of a new Church but honestly believed it would never happen. How wrong I was! I was told when I arrived, "Our Lady wants this Church and she'll give it to us." How right that has proved. I believe the design is exceptional picking up the spiritual meaning of the holy hill, Pukekaraka. Also exceptional has been the involvement of so many people, including every person in the school.

I pay tribute to Fr Matthew, to the inspirers of the new Church, to the incredible generous givers, to the very skilled management team and to the team of artists for their months of unrelenting effort.

Kia kaha. Ma te Matua o te Atua tatou e manaaki.

## THE STORY BEHIND THE TUKUTUKU PANELS 1992.

The foyer of a Church is meant to welcome us into God's House, opening the door to the mystery of our own being, our own uniqueness. In the face of God's love. This world is brought down to earth and mothered for us by Our Lady.

After lots of prayer and talk Mrs Keiha Hammond, born and bred in Pukekaraka, brought these insights together in three designs. Mrs Makuini Johnson led the family of Pukekaraka on the journey. A great collaborative effort was required to gather and process the materials from the bush, the swamp and the seashore.

Last April the actual weaving began in Hine and has only just been completed, five months later. What an extraordinary peaceful, harmonious, loving time. The people without fail enthused about the warmth in Hine.

bestows on each of his people.

The more we were there the deeper our hearts were touched by the meaning of what we were doing, the vision of God's love and the tranquility of peace.

A special thank you to the core group who were utterly devoted to the cause right through the whole time.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR ON THE TUKUTUKU PANELS.

**THE SIDE PANELS:** The design is called POUTAMA or THE STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN.

It is symbolic of our journey in Faith. Look at the black wood as the past, your history and heredity. The white material is KIEKIE (not flax) and represents the future and life's possibilities. The gold material is PINGAO (a beach reed). Gold is for enlightenment, golden light, human experience transformed by Christ, and profound spiritual richness.

AO NUI is the pattern above the doors.

We look up to the many stairways to the many heavens. The stairs are black. The heavens are the multitude of stars and galaxies and heavenly beings, thrones, powers, dominations, angels and archangels. The gold is the light of God, the wisdom of God, the love of God, transfusing all creation and coming to its fullness in the life of Christ. His Mother, crowned with 12 stars, is the perfect reflection of God's love.

**THE SMALL CENTRE PANEL:** the design is called KAOKAO. It depicts womanly strength, the Holy Spirit who is God mothering us. This is the powerhouse of prayer and praise. See the Mothers in the gold and the children in the white, waiting to fulfill their potential.

Stop and just look at these panels and they will start talking to you.

**THE CARVINGS** - Have just begun, Chris Gerretzen, one of the Parata family is our carver.



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Fr. Mick O'Meehan SM. - the French and the Maori.

Patricia Adams - 1. 'For the Salvations of the Maoris':  
The Catholic Mission of Pukekaraka.  
2. St. Mary's Church, Otaki m/s.

Garth Carpenter - Architecture NZ.

Hemi Durning SM.

Mission Meetings etc.

The Marist Messenger.

Turnbull Library - Richard Taylor.

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Fr I.J. Gupwell SM. - Translations, Waiata etc.

Oral History - local Otaki people.

Michael Hancock

- a Private Study on the Marae O Hine of Pukekaraka.

Otaki Parish Records.

Lillian Keyes.

Note books of Fr. Melu SM.

Letters of early Marists associated with Otaki.

Parish records of births, deaths and marriages.

P. Kinsella SM. - short Parish History

- opening of new church.

- Personal memories.

- Oral History.

- Wananga O Hine.

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