



Stories of HOPE

December 2017

News from Our Lady of Hope Catholic Parish in Titahi Bay and Tawa



Fr Paul O'Connor and Fr John van der Kaa

*The last two of the Assumptionist priests who have served
in this parish so faithfully over the last 26 years,
retire from parish duties in January 2018*

Notice to contributors

Deadline date for contributions for our next issue of ***Stories of Hope*** will be advertised in the weekly newsletter. We always like to hear about your group or parish organization. We generally prefer content relating to specific events and persons - as a guideline, 500 words will fill one page of this magazine. Short newsy articles, anecdotes, reflections, poems, family events and page fillers are also welcome. E-copy is preferred but hard copy can be submitted. Photos enhance all content - high resolution please.

Send copy to the editor or leave for collection at the parish office.

Jane Langham

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Disclaimer

Any views or opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the author, and do not necessarily represent those of the Editorial Committee or the administrators of Our Lady of Hope parish. The editor exercises sole discretion as to the acceptance of items for publication, insofar as they reflect Catholic life in the parish and do not tend to give offence. All items submitted may be subject to editorial amendment, revision or rejection and all items published are without prejudice.

Stories of Hope - Mission Statement

Our mission - To promote a sense of community in the Catholic parish of Our Lady of Hope, Tawa & Titahi Bay, by publishing the full variety of Catholic life in our parish.

Principal source of written contributions is the people in our parish.

Our objective: Every edition to every Catholic home in the parish.

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[Cover photo](#) by Bernie Griffin - taken outside the Assumptionist Community House, home of Fr John and Fr Paul

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Bernie Griffin, Fr John van der Kaa, Jane Langham

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From the Editor

by *Jane Langham*

Who is my ‘family’? Perhaps that’s a bit like asking “who is my neighbour?” We know that our first concern will usually be for our natural family - marking the happy and sad times together. We are also part of our parish family, our larger Church family, and ultimately we are all part of God’s family. It is often said that Christmas time is about ‘family’ and as we begin Advent and our preparations for Christmas 2017 we can remember these several ‘families’ we are an integral part of.



In this edition we have many contributions that feature the role and importance of one of those levels of ‘family’: the regular feature of births, deaths and marriages, along with special celebrations (P.30); our school families that are an important part of the parish (P.26 & P.28); parish groups to foster community (P.12 & P25) events for the diocese (P.14) and our connection to the whole family of God with our mother Mary (p.16)

We especially welcome getting to know our soon-to-be parish priest, Fr Rico de la Torre (P.6). This also means that we will soon farewell our Assumptionist priests, who have ministered so lovingly, prayerfully and faithfully in our parish for the last 26 years, and have been involved here in many ways for over 50 years. There will be much more about them in the next edition of Stories of Hope.

Wishing all our readers (our parish family) a fruitful Advent, a blessed Christmas season and a refreshing summer break.

**A healthy family life
requires frequent use of three phrases:
“*May I? Thank you, and I’m sorry*”
and
“*never, never, never end the day
without making peace.*”**

Pope Francis



Archdiocesan Synod - October 2017

You will have seen reports of the Synod and its outcomes in Wel-Com. Most of the representatives attending from Our Lady of Hope parish are in this photo.

From left: Telesia Alaimoana, Sue Smith, Henry Smith, Christine McDonald (principal, St Pius X school) Jane Langham, Fr John van der Kaa, Dan Siave, Anna Rayner, Paul McCardle, Ron Perez.

It is relevant to us all to know about how the Synod conclusions and recommendations were reached. Following the input that was invited from everyone in the archdiocese, these are the thoughts of Paul McCardle on the discussions and process:

Most importantly, the prayerful discernment involved when contemplating the topics and providing feedback - whilst we all came with things we wanted to suggest and get out of the day, this process centred on listening to the Holy Spirit and working together as a group, building on each other's feedback to come to a joint conclusion.

Secondly, meeting new people from around the archdiocese and the comradery between everyone (even though many did not know each other). There was a real sense of shared purpose and an energy/passion for Jesus & the Church.

An Interview with Fr Rico de la Torre

by Jane Langham

Fr Rico arrived in Wellington in July this year. He will be parish priest of Our Lady of Hope parish from 1st February 2018 and will be assisted by another Filipino priest, yet to arrive.



Can you please tell us about yourself? Where are you from, your vocation story, how long you have been a priest?

My full name is Rico Angelo Murillo de la Torre. My three sisters and one brother went to a Seventh-Day Adventist school for most of our primary years, but we were raised in a typical Filipino Catholic household and grew up in a neighbourhood of different faiths and varied economic circumstances. I remember how we used to play and swim in a river close by our house, how other fisher folks taught me and my brother how to catch fish and crabs, paddle a dugout canoe (*bangka*), and many other memorable summer adventures. I am the youngest in the family but my parents made sure that all of us did our part in the family: from doing the laundry and dishes to cleaning the yard and feeding pets. Yeah, nothing extraordinary.

Priesthood came to my mind after two seminarians were sent to our village one summer as part of their formation programme. They stayed in our house so I got to know a little bit more about their way of life and the priesthood.

Right after I finished my secondary school, I entered the diocesan preparatory seminary in June 1994, together with 41 other young boys (13 were eventually ordained priests). We learned about liturgy, basic Christian doctrine, prayers, Church history, played sports, hiked, etc., before we were formally integrated into a larger seminary community. That preparation was a big help, because coming from a public secondary school, I didn't have a deep knowledge and appreciation of the richness and the beauty of our Catholic faith. I obtained my bachelor's degree in Philosophy in 1999 and my Theology in March 2004. I was ordained a deacon in June 2004, and to the presbyterate in June 2005. So, I've been a priest of the Archdiocese of Caceres for 12 years now - four of those years as a parish priest.

Allow me to say something about my diocese. Caceres is an ecclesiastical territory with a land area of 3,207 sq. km., a little bit smaller than Auckland region. Its cathedral, or bishop's seat, is located in the city of Naga, which is about 350kms south of Manila, Philippines. Created a diocese on 14 August 1595, it is one of the four oldest dioceses in the country (with Cebu, Nueva Segovia, and Manila). According to the latest *Catholic Directory of the Philippines* (2015-2016 ed.),

Caceres has more than 1.5 million people, of which 92% of them are Catholics. It has 242 diocesan priests: 159 are working in 91 parishes, two seminaries, a number of chaplaincies and offices of the Archdiocese; 40 are in other dioceses or offices around the country and the world; and the rest are retired, on sick leave, or on study leave. There are 29 priests from other religious orders who are mostly working in schools.

A large number of women (193) from a number of religious orders also have a very significant presence in Caceres where they work in archdiocesan offices and ministries and in various capacities in education, health, social, and charitable institutions. Their work is very much felt and appreciated. Based on my observation, I think the median age bracket of priests in my diocese is 35-45 years old.

How did you come to be in New Zealand?

The sending (of priests) signifies our sharing of the gift of faith as an expression of support to the universal mission of the Church.

Caceres has been sending its priests to work in different parts of the world for more than two decades through our Caceres Mission Aid Program (CMAP). When Caceres celebrated its 400th year as a diocese, one of the fruits of the celebration is the commitment to continue sending priests to other dioceses in the Philippines and the world. Thus, on 26 May 1997 CMAP was formally created and approved. The sending signifies our sharing of the gift of faith as an expression of support to the universal mission of the Church. This ‘priests-on-loan’ programme is also part of our on-going formation for the clergy.

When my superiors asked for volunteers to replace some of our priests whose two-year pastoral contract was about to end in the Caribbean islands of St Vincent and The Grenadines, I and another classmate immediately signed up. Although we have priests already working in the diocese of Christchurch, I had no idea that the Archdiocese of Wellington (through John Cardinal Dew) had asked my bishop for two priests who can work here for a period of time. When the final list came about, I found out that I was chosen to go to Wellington instead.

According to Cardinal John, his plan is that one of us will work as a parish priest and one will be assigned in the Filipino Chaplaincy. We are expecting the other priest to arrive in December. He will arrive later than I did because he had some requirements to work on before he'll be granted a visa.

What are your hopes for your time here?

I hope to grow deeper in knowledge and wisdom about my self, the Universal Church I serve, and in my relationship with God.

A quote attributed to St Augustine says, “*It is the Divine Page that you must listen to; it is the book of the universe that you must observe. The pages of Scripture can only be read by those who know how to read and write, while everyone, even the illiterate, can read the book of the universe.*” Being here in an entirely different place and culture provides me great opportunities for understanding and gaining insights about how other people express and live out their faith; to learn how I, with all my imperfections and shortcomings, can be more of service to the Universal Church while I am here in Wellington; and how I can apply those insights I gained to get closer to God and his people. I still have a lot to learn here.

As we make our journey together as God’s people, let us not forget to support one another and pray for one another.

In what ways do you especially want the parishioners to support you?

It is a dream of every priest and every bishop to build a strong faith-community. We can support our priests, first of all, through prayers.

Secondly, nothing inspires us clergy and parish workers more than a parish whose members are sharing and living out their faith within the family, in places of work and study, and actively participating in Church activities, programmes, and projects. It’s true that there is no perfect parish or diocese inasmuch as there is no perfect priest or Christian. But that is what the Church is—a hospital for the weak and sinners who are always in need of God’s healing mercy and goodness.

We are endowed with different charisms and gifts needed to build up the Body of Christ, according to St Paul (cf Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:1ff). I think it would do us well if, after a prayerful discernment, we find ways to put into use our God-given gifts to address the different needs of the Universal and the local Church of Wellington. Just recently, we had our Archdiocesan Synod. The theme was “Go, you are sent”. This missionary mandate still rings true as it was 2,000 years ago.

How do you know about which gifts you have? Continue your journey with us sinners and saints, with the parish, with the Church, and you will discover. Yes, you will experience persecution perhaps, or risk being misunderstood because of your faith. After all, long and hard is the journey towards the Kingdom—where the gate is small and the streets narrow (cf Mt 7:14)—but the reward is, well...out of this world!

Is there anything else you would like to add?

There has never been a time or a place where the Church has no shortage of priests and religious. Please encourage and support our young people, especially your sons, brothers, friends, colleagues, classmates to answer the Call. We know that many of them are more intelligent, more gifted, and more eloquent

than I am. They are the ones the Church needs, the world needs. Please remember to pray for more vocations, especially priestly vocations. *"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field"* (Mt 9:37-38).

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A Note from the Parish Pastoral Council *by Marie Prescott*



A number of the members of the Parish Pastoral Council stood down at the end of March 2017 when it was time for the biennial elections. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their contribution to the Parish.

The current Council is much smaller with a total of eight parishioners. The council members are Marie Prescott (Chair); Telesia Alaimoana; Jane Bolton; Dorothy Jansen (St Pius X rep); John Lafaele; Ray Lindsay (St Francis Xavier rep); Rupi Mapusua; and Andrew Oliver.

Cardinal John has now released the outcomes of Synod 2017. (Full details of this are in the centre lift-out of the November Wel-Com and can also be found on the Archdiocesan web site) The Parish Pastoral Council is now reviewing the outcomes and will use them to redevelop the Pastoral Plan for the Parish. Consultation with parishioners will take place in 2018, prior to finalising the document.

At the end of January 2018 Father John van der Kaa and Father Paul O'Connor will be retiring from the Parish. Father Rico De La Torre and a fellow priest from the Philippines will be our new priests.

A function will be held in early 2018 to acknowledge the contribution of the Assumptionist Fathers in our parish over the past 26 years. Full details will be advertised in the newsletter and on the website closer to the time.

Marie Prescott, Chair, Parish Pastoral Council

While shepherds watched ... by Bernie Griffin

The greatest news event of all time was played out before a group of simple shepherds on a hillside near Bethlehem two thousand years ago.

As it happened, it was Christmas Day. Still night, in fact. The first Christmas. And it was freezing. Snow-laden clouds hung about the hilltops and sheep massed together to keep warm.

It seems the shepherds were more shocked over how the news of the birth of Jesus



was conveyed than by the news itself. It is not every day you get confronted by a heavenly host – angels in every direction, blinding light and trumpets blasting.

The shepherds shook and trembled and fell to the ground. Then came the news, the majestic announcement.

Luke writes: *And the angel said to them 'Be not afraid for behold I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.'*

Awe-struck as they were, the shepherds possibly felt more at ease in seeking Jesus in a stable than perhaps in a wealthy, residential establishment. They were perhaps more comfortable in such an environment. It was more in keeping with their station in life. A bit different from the old days when shepherding was higher up the social ladder. Some great people had tended sheep – Jacob, David and Amos to mention just some.

But here they were among the animals gazing at a small bundle snuggled into a manger. Was this indeed the Messiah? The Saviour?

They were a group of simple, uneducated people from the hills. But for some reason they had been chosen to be among the first given the news about the birth of Jesus and to see him in the flesh. Did they realise their part in the nativity?

Did they realise that shepherding would take on a new meaning from that day on? That they were before the greatest carer of all – the shepherd of the world?



CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY PAGE

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For you to colour in. You could cut out this page and photocopy onto A4 paper or card to make your own Christmas cards. (Cut off this top part first!)



The Passionist Family Group Movement

by Carmen Conijn

The Logo Explained:

The heart is God's love

The cross is the greatest sign of God's love

The cross is inside the heart because it is in loving relationships that people carry each other's crosses

The people inside represent all the different cultures that make up a parish



Back in the early 1990's, when we were first married, we lived in Mosgiel. Going to our local church we noticed as we left that no one really talked to us, there were tight little circles of people talking who seemed to know each other well and then there were the ones, like us, who just carried on walking out to our cars and drove home. This may have gone on for some time, then one Sunday someone came to talk to us about this new Passionist Family Group Movement and I just loved the idea and signed up. Almost immediately, I noticed that people weren't in such a hurry to go home and we suddenly had a group of people we knew and could talk to after Mass - usually about the latest PFG function. We finally felt we belonged to this community. We were four years in our first family group before moving to Wellington and I must admit I was quite sad to say goodbye as during that time our friendships had deepened and they really were a fun bunch of people to hang out with!

... we suddenly had a group of people we knew and could talk to after Mass - usually about the latest PFG function.

We finally felt we belonged to this community

This year, the Passionist Family Group Movement will be celebrating 19 years in our parish and it is still going strong. Presently we have seven family groups with each group organising monthly outings such as film evenings, musical soirees, mid-winter meals, outdoor walks and picnics and much more, with the purpose of developing friendships and support networks within the parish. The functions are an opportunity to spend quality time together and create the feeling of belonging to a large extended family. I have included photos from a 'mid-winter Christmas' dinner party, organised by one of the groups and held in the church foyer in Tawa, to give you some idea of what belonging to a family group is all about.

My husband Graeme and I have been parish co-ordinators of the Passionist Family Groups movement since 2005. We love being a part of the PFG movement and

have appreciated the continued support of the family group leaders and members over the years. Through the PFG movement we have met a lot of people and have enjoyed organising several combined PFG/parish functions which have been a lot of fun and a great way to bring the whole parish together.



A member writes: *I am a member of a PFM group in our parish. It is a place where we support and are supported by one another. We get to know people more deeply through sharing some of our life's experiences, listening, laughing and affirming one another. Bonds of friendship develop and one experiences a sense of belonging. I am very grateful to the people in my group for their love and support through the years.*

We always welcome new members and would love to hear from you if you are interested in joining. If you feel you would like a taster, please contact us and we can bring you along to a function to see if it would be something you would like join.

If you would like more information please phone Carmen or Graeme on 232 2115 (in the evenings), or email us: carmen@sightandsound.co.nz or visit the PFG website: www.passionistfamily.org.nz for more information.

Joining a family group means you will get to know people from the parish and have a lot of fun at the same time.



North Island Fatima Family Pilgrimage

by Patricia Sison

From September 30 - October 1, a contingent of families took part in a pilgrimage visiting sacred sites in the North Island associated with the titles of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Family Pilgrimage was organised by the Centre for Marriage and Family (CMF) to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of the Blessed Mother to three shepherd children Lucia do Santos, Francisco and Jacinta Marto at Fatima, Portugal during the height of World War I. In these apparitions, the Blessed Mother revealed herself as the Lady of the Rosary and gave them a message of hope to pray the Rosary and to offer sacrifices for peace in the world.

The Family pilgrimage began at **Our Lady of Fatima Church, Tawa** where Fr. John van der Kaa (PP) gave a blessing to the pilgrims for a safe journey. From Tawa, the pilgrims visited the statue of **Our Lady of Lourdes in Kāpiti** and then travelled to **Our Lady of Fatima Church, Waikanae**. At each of the sacred sites, the pilgrims heard a reading about each of the Fatima apparitions and prayed a decade of the Joyful mysteries of the Rosary. It was fitting to end the day with a tour by Fr. Phil Cody SM at **St. Mary's Church**, the oldest continuously used Catholic Church in New Zealand and **Hine Nui o te Ao Katoa**, the marae whose literal translation is *Maiden of the World* at Pukekaraka, Otaki.



Pilgrim Families at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima

The pilgrims concluded their Family pilgrimage by attending 9:30 am Sunday mass at the **National Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Meadowbank, Auckland**.

The organisers felt deeply grateful, since the mass celebrated by Fr. Sam Pulanco (PP) was a Family Mass, which they took as a sign of pleasure from our Blessed Mother for the pilgrims' act of faith and devotion to her.

The National Shrine of our Lady of Fatima was the first shrine in New Zealand. It was blessed and dedicated to our Lady of Fatima by Auckland Bishop James Liston on March 12, 1950. The statue of Our Lady of Fatima which was formally enthroned after the blessing of the Church and the inauguration of the shrine, came from Fatima where it was blessed in the presence of 100,000 pilgrims on October 13, 1948. The image was created by Portuguese sculptor of sacred art Guilherme Ferreira Thedim in 1948, the same artist who created the image that is in the Chapel of Apparitions in Fatima, Portugal.

As one pilgrim said, *"Thank you Lord for this awesome weekend at having completed a weekend pilgrimage to our Lady of Fatima ... celebrating 100 Years of the Apparitions".*

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Christmas Fun Morning

Thursday 21 Dec 10am-12.30 pm
At Our Lady of Fatima Church, Tawa

Leave your 4 year-olds upwards with us while you catch up on some last minute shopping!

We will be practising for the Family Mass from 12 noon.

(Christmas Family Mass - 7pm 24 December)

For more information contact Marie: 021 476 153.



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How do you relate to Our Lady?

by Patricia Hocquart

This is an edited & abridged version of a presentation made many years ago at the National Catholic Women's League Conference. Representatives from Tawa read this to the conference, including Pat Hilliard, who found her copy and offered it to Stories of Hope.



When I was young, I saw Mary as a very romantic figure. My favourite image was of a beautiful young girl with a serene white face, blue eyes uplifted to Heaven, long curling light brown hair, smooth hands folded serenely on her breast, wearing a robe of purest white embroidered in gold and covered in a pale blue cloak – a lovely girl crowned with a circlet of stars. But I never identified with her, she was remote and far away from me.

Now that I am much older, I do not think of her in that way at all. At times in my life when God seems remote and very far away, I think of the humanness of Mary and I am comforted by the knowledge that this woman, who experienced things in her life that women today experience, is with the Lord and that she will intercede for me. Mary was a woman of great virtue and holiness I know, but today I speak of her humanness.

The Angel delivered the message of the In-

***Mary was a woman of great virtue and holiness I know,
but today I speak of her humanness.***

carnation to a fourteen-year-old Jewish girl. He told her that she was to bear a child who was the Son of God. The girl, Mary, accepted the will of the Lord.

She was a girl of a good Jewish family, well educated in the sheltered and privileged environment of the Temple. She lived at home and was engaged to Joseph. She seemed to be doing all the right things, then she suddenly announced to her parents and fiancé that she was pregnant! Many parents of teenage girls are familiar with that situation. Anna and Joachim would not have been pleased! What a treasure Joseph was to believe the strange explanation of her pregnancy and marry the girl; who else would have believed her? She lived in a close-knit community. She must have suffered from the inevitable gossip and censure of such a community. How brave she would have had to be! They tell us she remembered the things the Angel said and pondered them in her heart.

We can sympathise so well with the story of the Visitation. Mary travelled to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was also pregnant. How relieved she must have been to escape the immediate family and confide in a sympathetic older woman. What sympathy Mary must have for unmarried mothers and their parents.

After her marriage and late in her pregnancy, Mary travelled with her husband to Bethlehem for the census. You know how it feels to make a long car trip when you are very pregnant and you cannot sit comfortably. They say Mary's journey was by donkey; what an ordeal for the girl. She must pay special attention to the prayers of pregnant women.

***What sympathy Mary must have for unmarried mothers and their parents.
... She must pay special attention to the prayers of pregnant women.***

Then came the birth of the child Jesus at Bethlehem. There was no-one familiar with her except for Joseph. I think she must have wept for her mother and father and the comfort and company of her friends. She would have longed to share with them the pride and joy in delivering the child, but she was far from home. Many of us have had that experience. I think Mary cares about lonely young mothers.

Next, the poor young girl, blessed by the Lord certainly, but still humanly frail, had to bundle up her baby and flee with Joseph to Egypt – she became a refugee. Those who have come from countries far away and felt the inestimable loneliness of being aliens, Mary knows how you feel. I know that Mary trusted God and accepted His will, but perhaps she did not always understand, especially in those difficult early days. Perhaps she may have had to pray constantly that her faith would not waver.

Things seemed to settle down for Mary and Joseph for a while. They settled in Nazareth where Joseph was in business as a carpenter. The workshop would have been close to the house, so Mary would not have been lonely. Customers would have been in and out and she had the child to look after, she had to cook and clean, spin and weave, there would have been chatting with the other women at the well and the market and the normal life of a small-town wife. God gave her breathing space. We've all known those busy happy days when the children are little. I think Mary smiles on busy wives and mothers.

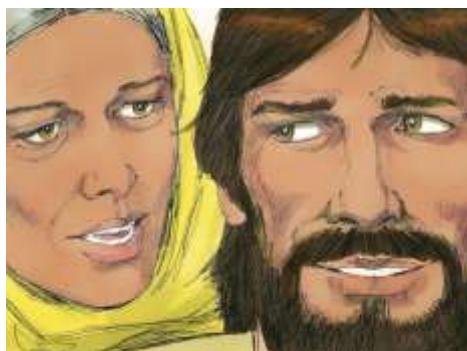
But during those years Mary would surely have worried about what lay ahead, she must have lain awake some nights thinking about the prophecy – “*a sword shall pierce your heart*”.

The uneventful years would have passed quickly. You know the story of the family's visit to Jerusalem. They would have travelled in a large group of extended family

and thought Jesus was with them. This story of their lost child evokes memories for most of us. Surely Mary would have wept and prayed as they rushed back looking for him. Imagine her relief when they found him in the Temple. But when Jesus told them “Don’t you know I must be about my Father’s business?” how did she feel? I think she and Joseph could almost have forgotten what lay ahead of the child entrusted to their care. He had been their baby, seemingly dependant on them for love and nourishment and now he was growing up and reminding them he was born for other things. When parents feel hurt or rejected by their children or tell you they have their own life to lead, Mary knows how you feel.

By this time Mary’s parents would have been elderly. The responsibility of caring for them would have been hers. All who care for their elderly, you have a friend in Mary.

Sometime during Jesus’ youth, Joseph died. Mary knew the grief of widowhood and the loneliness of being a solo mother. Joseph was possibly the only person who understood who Jesus was and Mary then had to carry that knowledge alone. She must pray for those whose spouse dies or whose marriage breaks up and all who bring up their children on their own.



I suppose after Joseph’s death people thought that Jesus would follow in his footsteps and take over the carpenter’s shop. Maybe he did work for a while as a carpenter for they would have needed money, but we know his life changed and that he was a very unconventional young man. He began to travel around preaching to people and he had some very unusual friends. People would have said “Your son is

not working”. Many women know the feeling of being frowned on because their child has chosen an unconventional lifestyle. Family or friends will say you have been “too soft” or that this would not have happened “if his father had been there”. Mary’s loyalty never wavered. Parents of non-conforming children, parents of protesters, parents of unemployed, parents of prisoners can pray to her; she knows all about that.

Did Mary’s awareness of her son’s divinity and her knowledge of the prophecies make it any easier to bear the pain of his suffering and death? I think not. She saw him arrested, tried, imprisoned and sentenced to death as a criminal. She walked near him as he carried the cross to the place of execution. When his friends and

followers became so afraid of the authorities that they deserted him, his now-aging mother did not forsake him. Mary stayed with her child throughout the agonising hours of his dying and then took his lifeless body in her arms. Mary must be with all who suffer this, the heaviest of burdens, the death of their child, and she must ask God to relieve their pain.

Mary was about fifty when Jesus died and people aged earlier in those days. In her old age, she continued to play a vital role in the establishment of the Church. She reassured and supported the apostles in their struggle to propagate the teachings of her son. Then she died and was assumed into Heaven to be rewarded for her holiness, her virtue, her great suffering and her great courage.

Now that I am past middle-age, the image of Mary I cherish is of a good courageous woman. An aged Jewish woman, her dark hair streaked with grey, her olive-skinned face lined, her brown eyes reflecting her wisdom and experience of life and its' suffering, her hands roughened from physi-

cal work, her feet calloused from walking sandaled along dusty roads, her clothes coarse, homespun and dark like those of Bedouin women. I see a woman who has been a pregnant girl, a loving wife, a lonely and frightened young mother, a refugee, a devoted daughter, a neighbour, a friend, a widow, a solo mother, a lay worker in the church.



I recognise all these in her
and I am comfortable with her. I honour her.

You might like to spend some time reflecting:
What image of Mary, Mother of God, do you most relate to?
Do you know why?

Emmet leaving home for life at L'Arche

by Ann Dale



Our son Emmet has Down syndrome. You may remember him as an altar boy at Our Lady of Fatima in the 1990s - he is now 38 years old. He lived at home until he was 23 and has, for the past fifteen years, been a core member of the L'Arche community at Paraparamu, on the Kāpiti Coast.

I suppose Emmet would have stayed home longer if our circumstances hadn't changed. Warren, my husband, was seconded for a year to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Syria and Israel. He was not able to come home in that time, but as I would be allowed to visit, I was looking for a short-term placement for Emmet while I was away. Emmet stayed temporarily at the L'Arche community, which was then very new, and just finding its way in New Zealand, and so I went off to Europe.

Some years prior to this, when Emmet was still a young boy, I read in the *Tablet* about a Marist priest, Fr Rod Milne, who was in the process of introducing the L'Arche community to New Zealand following a visit by the founder of L'Arche, Jean Vanier from Canada.

This was in 1993 and it was the first time I had heard of the concept of the able and the disabled living together in the wider community.

Jean Vanier is a Canadian Catholic philosopher, theologian and humanitarian. In 1964 he founded L'Ar-



Emmet with members of L'Arche Community

che, an International Federation of communities now spread over 37 countries for people with developmental disabilities and those who assist them. He continues to live as a member of the original L'Arche community in France.

In 1971, he also co-founded Faith and Light with Marie-Helene Mathieu, which also works with people with developmental difficulties in over 80 countries. He has written many books on religion, disability, normality, success, tolerance and received international honours for his work, the most recent being the Templeton

Prize in 2015.

Coming back to L'Arche Kāpiti, Fr Rod, dearly loved founder of L'Arche in New Zealand, has been instrumental in achieving so much. Kind, patient, persistent, and always confidant that the right thing would happen at the right time, and somehow, it always did. He is the rock on which L'Arche in New Zealand was launched. He is still a strong part of L'Arche, and although now retired, or is it perhaps more semi-retired? he continues to take an active interest and participates fully in L'Arche activities.

I would like to say that Emmet missed me while I was away as much as I missed him, but alas, it wasn't so! From the very beginning, Emmet loved it at L'Arche! He fitted in at once, and loved being in the company of people his own age. Going out to work, the pub, barbecues on the beach, frequent celebrations of birthdays, in fact celebrations of many things; and the comings and goings of the assistants who came from all over the world.

From the very beginning, Emmet loved it at L'Arche!

Emmet loved the assistants. Girls from France, Germany, Canada, Japan; and guys from Ireland, the Philippines and England. When Warren returned, we realised it was time for Emmet to leave home and that L'Arche could give to Emmet so much that we now could not. Also, as a faith community, we had no concerns about the continuing practice of his faith, which means so much to him, and to us. In fact, living at L'Arche enhanced his life, sharing and living the Beatitudes every day.

Emmet has a job at a small niche bakery in Paraparamu, which he enjoys. He has been working there now for nearly ten years and has proven reliable and well liked by the manager, Robert, and his staff. He manages his work/life balance well and participates, with some success, in Special Olympic sports and, more recently, learning to play golf. His artwork, mainly water colour, which he loves, has been a strong part of his life since college. It began with Marcel at the Art School at the Home of Compassion and continues at L'Arche with Joan O'Dea, a well known art teacher on the Kāpiti Coast.

... living at L'Arche enhanced his life, sharing and living the Beatitudes every day

One could never attend a L'Arche function without being aware of the love and commitment of both the assistants and the core members, firstly to one another and then to everyone else - parents, visitors, volunteers, everyone - inclusion is truly

the name of the game with L'Arche. There are eight core members within the community. The number of assistants and the time they stay varies with their life plans at home regarding study and work.

As an observer of the assistants over the years, I have found that, whatever country they are from, they all have the same wonderful spirit of helpfulness and warmth and love for the core members and the colleagues they work alongside. Each of them brings something positive and good from their own country and leaves it behind when they go. They are all remembered in the prayers of the community, and often keep up to date via the Internet, and are fondly remembered when past celebrations and outings are recalled.



The Mayor of Kāpiti, Emmet and Emmet's African painting which now hangs in the Mayoral Chambers

The L'Arche Mission

To make known the gifts of people with learning disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships.

To engage in our diverse cultures working together towards a more human society.

To foster an environment in our community that is inspired by the core values in our founding story and responds to the changing needs of our members.

The L'Arche Identity

We are people, with and without learning disabilities, sharing life in communities of faith.

Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our life together.

We seek to build a world that recognizes the unique value of every person and our need of one another.

Recently, a number of events saw the completion of two beautifully purpose-built houses on land at Paraparamu. These wonderful new homes have firmly established L'Arche Kāpiti's star, and have set it on a path for continued growth. In recent months, after due process, it has been confirmed, there is to be a L'Arche community established in Auckland. This will be a cause for much joy and celebration on the Kāpiti Coast and among all the supporters and volunteers of L'Arche, throughout the country.

If you would like to know more, visit the L'Arche website and look for photos of Emmet and also Julie O'Hara, both of whom grew up in this parish:

larche.co.nz

Final Report for Tawa CWL

by Sally Horan



The Tawa branch of the Catholic Women's League was set up more than 60 years ago. At that time, the parish was full of young families, mostly with the mothers at home, so CWL was a great way for the women to be active, creative and outgoing with their faith.

This is no longer the society we live in and League membership has gradually aged and declined. The committee has decided that the time has come to close the official branch, though several individuals will maintain their associate membership.

Tawa Branch Report for 2017

This is the final report for Tawa Catholic Women's League.

We have not been able to hold meetings in the church for most of the year and our committee meetings have been held at the home of Julie Smith. We are very grateful to Julie for this.

We hosted the Margaret Clitherow Mass for the Wellington diocese, a successful gathering. We held a raffle and gave the proceeds to **Prison Fellowship New Zealand** who had spoken to us about their work.

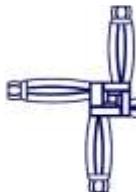
We have continued to help with the tea and coffee after funerals. Members of the parish also help with this. Because of the money raised from the funerals we have been able to give donations to various local charities including paying the activity fees for two families at St Francis Xavier school, Riding for the Disabled, Mary Potter Hospice, Pregnancy Help and buying a vacuum cleaner for Sisters Francine and Margaret. Altogether we donated almost \$2,000.

When the church foyer became usable again we held a general meeting in the church foyer. Despite emails and notices in Happenings there were only three members in attendance and they were all committee members. This confirmed what we had been thinking for some time, that it was time to close the branch.

We are sad to have to do this, the League has done some wonderful work and some amazing people have been involved. I would particularly like to make mention of the various committees we have had and thank them for their support. We remember in our prayers those who have died .

We plan to continue to organise help for the funeral teas and to give the money to charities, as we have done in the past. Your committee October 2017

St Francis Xavier School - by Joan Woods (Principal)



Term 3 & 4 News

Term 3 finished on a very high note with our **school production** *Off the Shelf*. It was a huge success, with performances held over two nights.



St Francis Xavier School
Strength and Gentleness

Tu Maia, Tu Aroha

The children looked wonderful in their costumes and acted out their class 'stories' amazingly well. Among all the production preparation, the teachers continued to deliver an exciting learning programme including: **swimming and squash lessons**, Year 5 and 6 taking part in our **inter-school Scripture Reading Competition**, (see photo below, with participants and award winners) our **5 Next Term Party** and a **Tawa Tackle Rugby** tournament. It was a very busy and exciting term for all of us.

We are very excited about the changes made to our school hall. A new sound system and data projector and screen have been installed, autex wall covering has been added to the walls and new heat pumps have been installed. These changes to our hall have made the space more welcoming to work in and the sound system has made a great improvement to the ability of children to present at assemblies and school gatherings. Thanks to Parents and Friends, our fundraising group, who have made some of this possible through fund-raising.



We joined with the Parish in August for a school/parish Mass celebrating the Transfiguration of Jesus. Also in August, a Mass was held at school to celebrate the feast of the Assumption.

Some of our students were confirmed at the Confirmation Mass celebrated with Cardinal John Dew. **First Holy Communion** for these students will be at the end of November. A school Mass was also held on All Saints Day.

The school has been visited by the Catholic Character Review team who carried out a review of our school's Catholic Character.

"Catholic Character continues to be at the centre of St Francis Xavier School and students are given a genuine and ongoing encounter with Christ. This is visible in personal interactions, the religious education programme, the physical environment and the strong sense of community that is evident. There is a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where everyone collaborates to meet the needs of the students".

Pasifika Language week was held celebrating the various cultures from our pacific region.

During **Māori Language Week** children were encouraged to use 5 Māori words in conversation each day. **Chinese Language Week** was also celebrated. Our Mandarin student, Yutong, teaches children about Chinese art and culture.



Some of our students represented St Francis Xavier School at the **Tawa Zone athletics** meet at Newtown Park. New **football goal posts** have been added to our field as a result of a proposal by one of our students. Thanks to our Parents and Friends group and the Board of Trustees who made it happen.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of our staff, to thank Father John, Father Paul and Father Rico for their ongoing support throughout the year with school Masses and class liturgies.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas with your families over the festive season.

We look forward to another busy, successful school year in 2018.



St Pius X School - by Christine MacDonald (Principal)

'WHANAU-ATUA-KURA-AROHA Together we Shine'



Term Three and Four - Happenings

It has been wonderful to experience the spring weather and warm, sunny days in terms three and four.

Catholic Special Character

Over the past two terms our Catholic Special Character continues to be established at St Pius X School through the many things we teach and do through our Religious Education programme as well as our daily class prayers and weekly school prayers which reinforce and embed Jesus' Gospel values.

There have been many celebrations over the term including:

- Grandparents Day & Mass on Friday 4 August,
- Saint Pius X Feast Day Mass on 21 August,
- Scripture competition, 30 August;
- Confirmation with Tawa Parish on 27 August,
- All Saints Mass on 1 November
- We sadly farewelled Fr. Des Moosman at his Requiem Mass on 15 September.
- We raised funds for the Wellington Free Ambulance association through our Onesie Day, and brought in Cans for Vinnies in September and for the Salvation Army in October.

Other Events

Two of our year 6 students, Kimora-Lee Umaga-Marshall and Nayland Murray-Leaupepe, received a special **Rotary Leadership Award** in Porirua on 4 September.

In Term three our Kapa Haka leaders changed and we now have two new people Shereen (Whaea Goldie) and Te Pora tutoring and guiding our school in Kapa Haka. Thank you to Rae Stewart and Rochelle Gibbs for their guidance and leadership in Kapa Haka earlier this year – we really appreciated it!

MoveMprove

Once a week for most of term three, our hall became a gymnasium. The MoveMprove tutors taught our students basic gymnastics skills, which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Swimming for our Senior Classes

Our senior classes have started swimming lessons at Cannon's Creek Pool this term. The junior classes had their lessons in term one.

Year 5 and 6 Camp at El Rancho, Waikanae

In the last week of term three our senior class went to camp at El Rancho. I was fortunate enough to be there too. It was a great camp with many activities which involved thinking skills as well as practical skills. Activities included kayaking, rock wall climbing and even horse riding! Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. I am very grateful to our parent helpers who were superb in everything they did from managing the kitchen through to first aid. I am also grateful to our Weka class teacher, Lisa Dei Gratia, who did a great job managing the students on camp. We were very fortunate to have fund raising activities as well as community grants to help fund our camp.

Powhiri

Near the end of term three, we welcomed our new entrants' students Elijah Smyth-Ruru and Aletise Peteli, as well as Lisa Dei Gratia, our relieving Year 5 and 6 teacher with a powhiri and morning tea. It's lovely to see new students and their families joining our school community. Welcome!

New Enrolments

If you know anyone who is interested in having their child attend a Catholic School, we are always happy to talk to them. Please ask them to contact our school office on 236 7006 or office@saintpius.school.nz for more information about enrolment.

Upcoming Events at St Pius X School

Helpers' Morning Tea – Wednesday 6 December 11am

Year 6 Graduation – Wednesday 13 December from 6-7:30pm

Whole School Picnic – Aotea Lagoon – Friday 15 December

School finishes at 12:30pm on Monday 18 December.

We continue to be blessed by God in our school. We have wonderful caring students, families and whānau as well as teaching and support staff who make our school the great kura of learning that it is.

Ka kite ano, ngā mihi nui kia kotou.

God bless and kind regards,

Christine McDonald, Principal

From the *Archdiocesan Synod Report* of John, Cardinal Dew

“...I ask Pastoral Councils to begin with a focus on these topics.
Go, you are sent ...

to the peripheries of society
to develop a spirituality of service
to find leaders
to build community ...”

These are what we will be working on in our parish.
For the full synod promulgation, and practical ideas,
see the centre lift-out in November WelCom

TIME TOGETHER - PLAYING SIT-DOWN GAMES

There is a small group that plays sit-down games each Thursday afternoon in the meeting room off the foyer of our Church in Tawa. (Though, while the Church was under repair, we were hosted by both Della O'Shaughnessy and Colleen Inwood. Thank you to you both for letting us use your homes to continue our playing.)



The idea was first mooted in July 2006 by the late Father Chris Penders - so doing your maths, that means we are in our 12th year. We are not a large group but all of us who attend thoroughly enjoy our Thursday afternoons. We usually meet from February to November. Play commences at 1:15pm and finishes about 3pm. There is no charge - we just have fun.



We usually play Mah-jong, along with other games such as Scrabble, various card games, also Tri Dominos and others. If you have a favourite game, bring it along.

To learn more, phone Colleen 232 5235

or Anne 232 1915 or just turn up.

Apostolic Blessing for Diamond Wedding Anniversary *by Pat McCarthy*

Celebrating Sixty Years Married



Brian McCarthy and Pat Blackman were married at a Nuptial Mass on 25th January 1956, at St. Francis' Church in Devonport, Auckland.

Our 60th Anniversary was celebrated in January 2016, but it was only late this year that we had the great surprise of receiving an Apostolic Blessing to mark that occasion.

Long-time

friend, Peter O'Brien, requested this Blessing from Pope Francis for us.

The certificate was presented by Father John at Mass here in Tawa. Thank you Peter! We were amazed – and delighted! It was a complete surprise and delight, shared by our family – children and grandchildren - who were able to be present.

We have 6 children, 16 grandchildren and (almost) 6 great-grandchildren.



Advent Service - Friday 15 December at 10 am

Our Lady of Fatima church foyer, Tawa

Tawa Women of Faith group invites all women of the parish to join us for an informal, prayerful, joyful Advent service prepared by Marist Laity.

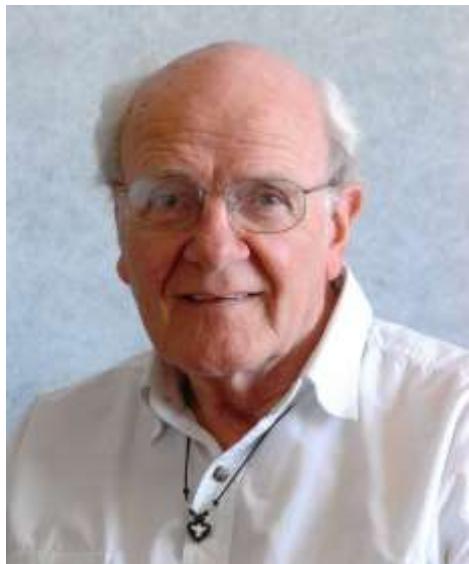
Morning tea to follow.

You are invited to bring with you a contribution for the Saint Vincent de Paul Christmas food parcels

[Back to timetable](#)

Remembering Fr John Heijnen AA

by Fr John van der Kaa



John Heijnen was born on 11th November 1928 in Eindhoven, Netherlands.

From 1941 to 1947 John attended the Junior Seminary of the Mill Hill Fathers, but then he joined the Assumptionist Fathers in Boxtel for the final year of the Junior Seminary. He made his novitiate in Halsteren (1948-1949) and professed his first vows 7 October 1949. He proceeded from there to Bergeyk where he was ordained a priest 21 December 1955.

On 22 August 1956 he went to St Michael's College in Hitchin (UK) with the intention to gain a good understanding and fluency in the English language in preparation for his appointment to New Zealand.

Fr John was given the challenging task of supervising the boarders at the College. Then on 22 December 1957 he became the first of the Dutch Assumptionists to journey to NZ by plane (not by sea).

Fr John and his colleague, Fr Luke van der Pal, taught at St Joseph's Primary School, Upper Hutt. A year later he began his studies at Victoria University, Wellington. After four years of full time study he had obtained 6 out of the required 8 units for his BSc (Bachelor of Science). Together with Fr Luke van der Pal he returned to the Netherlands by boat for his first family visit. They came back to NZ in September 1964. Fr John went back to university and obtained Mathematics II. For the next two years he taught Mathematics at St Patrick's College, Wellington, run by the Marist Fathers.

In the meantime Viard Boys and Viard Girls Colleges opened early February 1968. Fr John completed his degree, then in 1971 he was appointed Principal of Viard Boys College, but after three years he passed the job on to Fr Chris Penders and resumed teaching Mathematics. Ten years later, while still teaching, he became involved with the Charismatic movement and started the *Antioch* youth groups in Tawa and Plimmerton. When our Provincial, Fr John van der Meer, visited us and encouraged the community to do more about vocations, the *Galilee Community* was formed,

run by Fr Luke and Fr John. The idea was to invite young people to come and experience community life. The experiment did not result in any stable vocations, although those who took part found it enriching for their lives.

When Fr Heijnen retired from teaching, he offered his talents to the Wellington Archdiocese and became the parish priest of the Elsdon-Porirua Parish of Our Lady. When he retired from this ministry, he offered to celebrate Mass in two local rest homes, Harbour View and Glenbrook. At age 83 he himself went into Summerset retirement village in Aotea. Every Tuesday morning he would go to *The Attic* to paint. He offered his very many canvases to parishioners, asking just a koha for the Hospice.

Two years ago, we celebrated his 60th anniversary of ordination with family and friends at Summerset (*see March 2016 edition of Stories of Hope on the parish web site, for a report on that celebration*). In recent weeks his health slowly deteriorated and he died peacefully in his sleep on 31 October 2017. **May he rest in peace.**

100th Birthday Celebration

by Helen Carter

Cath Creed (nee McKenna) was born in Wishaw, Scotland and when she was 16 moved to London with her mother and brother.

There she met and married Bruce Creed, a New Zealander, who was serving in World War II. Cath then came to New Zealand as a war bride in 1946 and the first of their five daughters was born soon after.

They lived in Palmerston North, and in 2007, 10 years after the death of her husband, Cath moved to Tawa to live with her daughter Helen.

She enjoys the support of this lovely community and loves to share a cuppa and a chat. Her birthday was celebrated in style at the *Roundabout*, surrounded by family and friends and complete with a special performance from the Tawa *Red Hackle* pipe band, to honour Cath's Scottish roots.



*Cath on her 100th Birthday
30th October 2017*

Advent and Christmas Timetable

Sunday 3 December - 7pm

Combined Advent Service with Tawa Anglican at Our Lady of Fatima, Tawa

Sunday 10 December - 7pm Advent Reconciliation at Our Lady of Fatima, Tawa

Friday 15 December - 10 am Advent Service, Our Lady of Fatima - [see page 29](#)

Thursday 21 December - 10am-12:30pm Christmas Fun Morning

for children aged 4+ at Our Lady of Fatima, Tawa - [see page 15](#)

Saturday 23 Dec. 5:30pm (Titahi Bay) and Sunday 8:30 & 10:30 (Tawa) Mass as usual

Sunday 24 December

- 7pm Family Mass at Our Lady of Fatima, Tawa

- 11:30 pm Carols, followed by Midnight Mass at Our Lady of Fatima

Monday 25 December

- 9.30am Christmas Day Mass at St Pius X Church, Titahi Bay

- 10.30am Christmas Day Mass at Our Lady of Fatima, Tawa

- 9:30 am Combined Churches of Tawa Community Service, Tawa College

This is a very family-friendly service, and an especially good way for inter-denominational families to worship together. It has run for over 50 years!



Parish Notices - Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths

Baptisms

Name of child	Parents	Date
Atlas Edward - son of Anthony & Makerita Upton		23 July 2017
Zoe Harriet - daughter of Tandi McCarthy		30 July 2017
Zia Louise - daughter of Rafael & Lindsay Doronila		19 August 2017

Marriages

Tera Ngaia & Philip Tuariki	23 August 2017
Noemi Almo & Philip Blackwood	3 September 2017

Deaths

Apolonia Logo Talamaivao	21 August 2017
Rev Fr Desmond John Moosman	10 September 2017
Telesia Theresa Nui	15 September 2017
Robert (Bob) Cater	24 September 2017
Dorothy Mary Ross	6 October 2017
Rev Fr John Anthony Heijnen AA	31 October 2017

There is an appointed time for everything.
And there is a time for every event under heaven
Ecclesiastes 3:1

New Parishioners

If you are new to the parish, Welcome!

Please introduce yourself to the celebrant, another parishioner,
or call the parish office 9am-12noon weekdays . 04 232 5611

Current Parish Pastoral Council Members

Fr John van der Kaa - parish priest, Marie Prescott - chair,
Telesia Alaimoana, Jane Bolton, Dorothy Jansen, John Lafaele, Ray Lindsay,
Rupi Mapusua and Andrew Oliver

Regular events

Ecumenical Men's Group, study, prayer, reflection in Tawa church meeting room.
4th Tuesday each month 7:30 –9 pm. Phone Warren Holdaway 232 2339

Dove Catholic Fellowship for Women, Third Sat. 1:30 pm, at Connolly Hall,
Next to Cathedral, Wellington.

Joshua Catholic Fellowship for Men, Third Thurs. 7:30 pm, at Connolly Hall

Monthly Luncheons in Tawa church foyer, First Tuesday of each month 12 noon.

Time Together, weekly games, Tawa church meeting room, Thursdays 1:30 pm,

Marian Mothers - 2nd Monday am each month - see weekly newsletter

Women of Faith - 2nd Tuesday each month - see weekly newsletter

Youth Group, College Years 9 to 13, Fridays, 8:00 - 9:30pm

Leo Connor Hall, during school term;

Other events: check website calendar: www.tawacatholic.org.nz

We hope you enjoyed reading this issue of *Stories of Hope* .

When you've finished reading it, why not pass it on to a friend?

We need your input. Keep those contributions coming!!

**This edition of *Stories of Hope* is sponsored by
Ninness Funeral Home**

17 Kenepuru Drive, Porirua ph: 04 237 4174 fax: 04 237 4172
email: info@ninness.co.nz

Cremation in the Catholic Church

By Wade Hall, NFH Funeral Director

"The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burial be retained; but it does not forbid cremation, unless this is chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching." – *The Code of Canon Law, 1985, #1176.3*

It is generally acknowledged that burial is the common practice for Catholics. This follows the custom of burying the dead, as Jesus Christ was buried in a tomb.

Nevertheless, the attitude of the Church has changed in recent years. It does not prohibit the process of cremation unless it is chosen to deny the Christian teaching on Resurrection and reverence of the human body.

The Holy See has now directed that the cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes (e.g. a suitable urn), the way they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition. The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium.

So, what are the options for Catholics in the Parish of Our Lady of Hope?

Firstly, if cremation is desired, there are two local crematoriums (Whenua Tapu and Karori). Secondly, Ninness Funeral Home has a wide range of urns and ash vessels available. These can range from ceramic and wooden items to plastic or marble. All types vary in taste and fashion. Thirdly, despite no mausoleums being available in the Wellington Region the following cemeteries have other options which would adhere to church requirements:

Karori Cemetery - Seaforth Memorial Gardens plots, Granite or Bronze niches.

Makara Cemetery - Memorial Headstone or Plaque Lawn areas. Granite or Bronze Plaques in the Ash Circle section.

Whenua Tapu Cemetery - Monumental Headstone or Plaque Lawn areas. Memorial Garden plots.

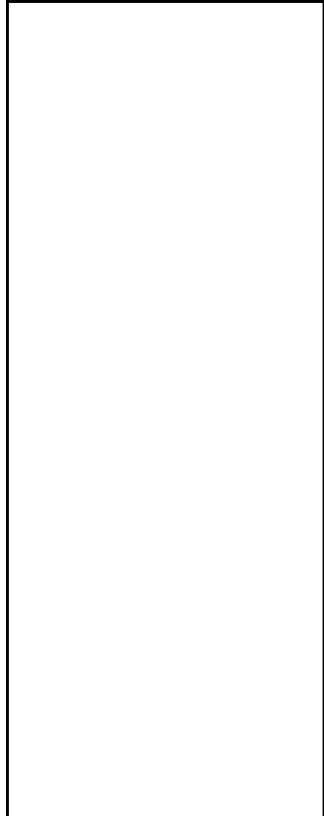
For further clarification please contact your Parish Priest or alternatively one of the team at Ninness Funeral Home.

For other helpful information, have a look at the Ninness Funeral Home website: www.ninness.co.nz. Go to 'Community Traditions' and then 'Catholic community'.





If undelivered return to: P.O. BOX 51-029, TAWA, 5249



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