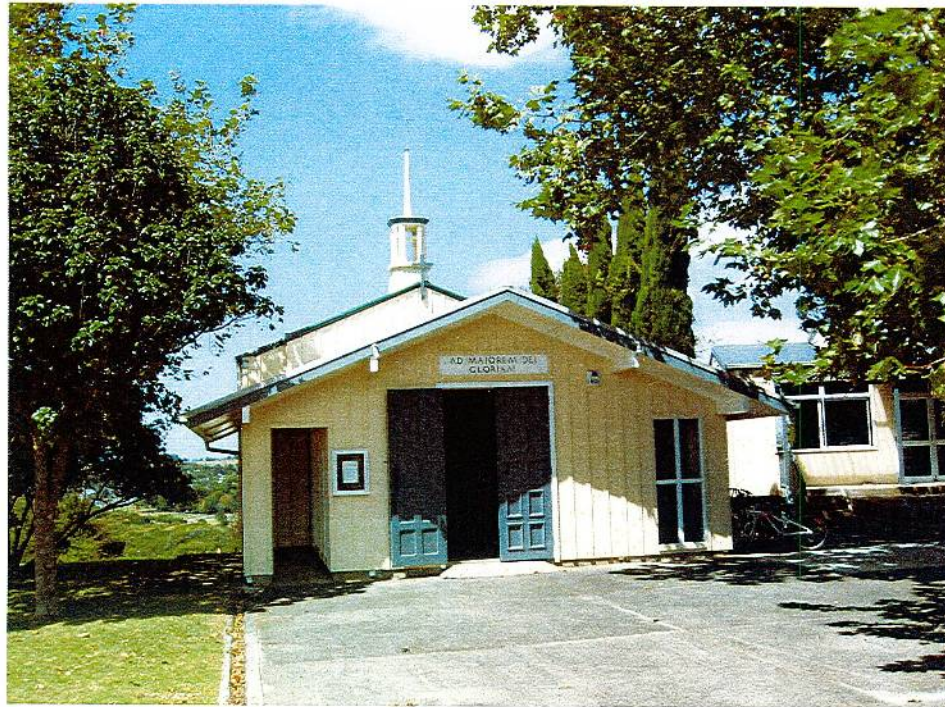


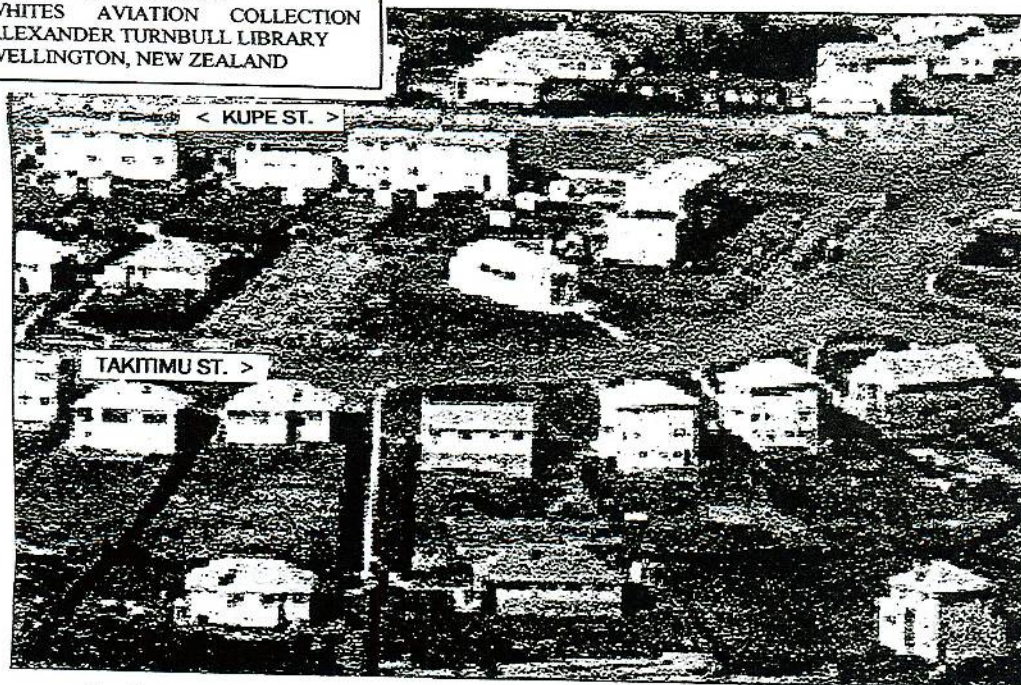
# The Catholic Parish of St. Joseph Orakei, Auckland, NZ.



*A Parish History from the early 1900's  
to the new Millenium*

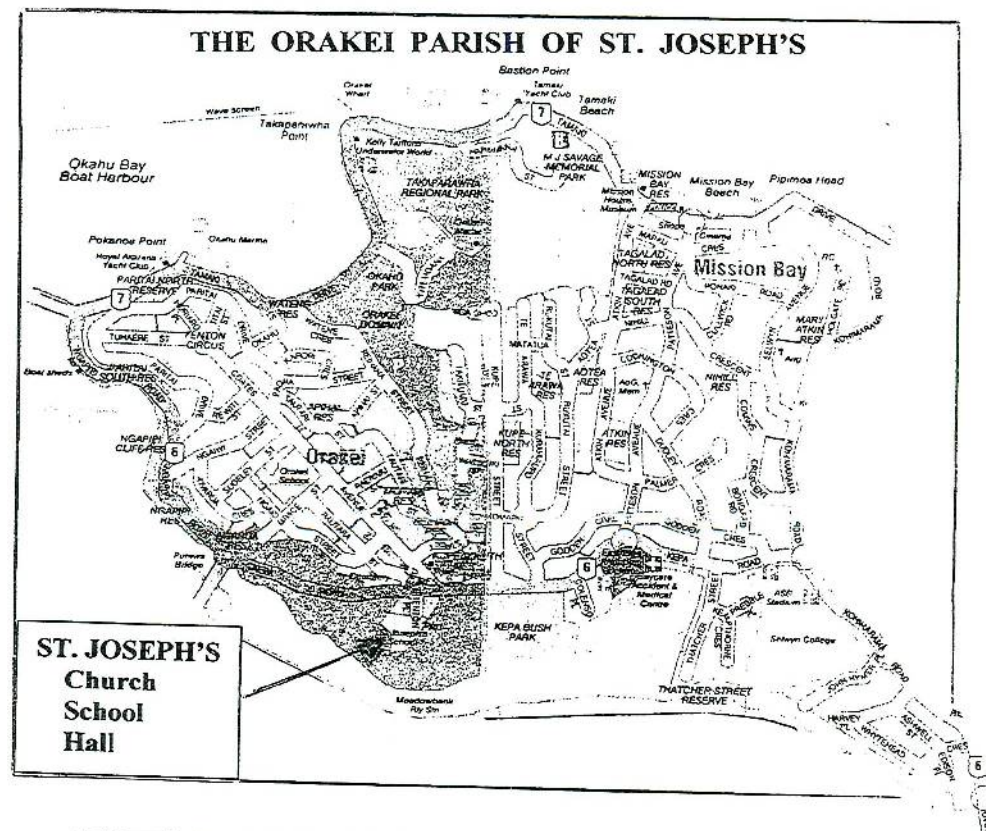


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A view of St. Joseph's Church in Takitimu St. in 1947 when it was still part of St. Ignatius parish of St. Heliers. The section on the left of the church is vacant but it became the site of the presbytery which was later transferred from St Heliers in two halves after St. Joseph's became a separate parish in 1952. In 1964 the church was shifted next to the school in Brenton Pl.

*Over many years, many parishioners have in their time made major contributions to the life of St. Joseph's Parish in Orakei. Some have worked anonymously and some were well known for what they did. Sadly the names of many contributors have been forgotten.*



I wish to thank Narelle Scollay and Trish Ball of the Auckland Catholic Archives and all those Orakei parishioners who gave me information, photos and write-ups for this history. Their help has been invaluable.

*Pat Hickey, 5/24 Auckland Rd., St. Heliers Bay*

*To give due recognition to all parishioners who deserve it, is now impossible as many names have never been recorded. Rather than include the names of only some, this history has excluded almost all contributors' names. St. Joseph's parish is most grateful to them all.*

## *...as it was in the beginning ...*

Because of Maori landownership, there were few settlers in Orakei in the mid and late 1800s. Any Catholics in the area west of the Tamaki Estuary would have been in the care of the Panmure Parish. Father Garin SM, parish priest, was appointed chaplain by Governor Grey to the 71 Catholic families among the 75 Fencibles settlers who arrived in Panmure in 1848. The Fencibles, retired British army soldiers, were to be available to fight the Maoris and had to attend Church parade in full uniform on Sundays.

Occasional visits were made by Panmure priests on horseback to the wooded sparsely populated area west of the Tamaki Estuary. Another Catholic activity close to Orakei was the giving of religious instruction by a local farmer, George Cutts, and Father Fynes from Panmure to Catholic boys in the government merchant navy training school. It was in the former beachfront church buildings at Mission Bay, 1874-1882 and from 1882 until its demise in 1893 it was an industrial school and Father McDonald from Panmure administered to the Catholic inmates.

**In 1911, Orakei, along with the area from Meadowbank to the Tamaki estuary became part of the newly formed Remuera parish. It was a long way to Mass.**

In 1977, Orakei Maoris' resentment at loss of their land to the Crown, erupted into active but peaceful defiance at the government plan to subdivide 700 acres for high cost housing at Bastion Point. Hundreds of protestors occupied the site in shanty buildings for 17 months and it all finally ended in forceful eviction by the police and the army and 225 arrests. Closure was finally brought in 1984 by the first ever Waitangi Tribunal ruling which returned the 700 acres to the Maoris and paid them compensation.

*In 1913 the Cabinet approved the start of negotiations to buy all of the Orakei ridge for residential purposes. It was to be a model suburb accessed by the deviation rail line to be built through Panmure to Westfield – begun in 1925. In 1924 a competition was held for the best design for the new Orakei Garden City. It was to include a university. The first sections near the waterfront were auctioned in 1928.*

Christianity was brought to Orakei by Anglican Missionaries based in the church buildings at Mission Bay. In 1846 they built a chapel for the natives near the entrance to Brenton Place in Kepa Rd. Later a school for Maori girls was added and land was set aside for a cemetery. The settlement burned down in 1866 and was not rebuilt. The girls' school was restarted in Parnell as the Queen Victoria School for Maori Girls. The cemetery, last used in the 1930s, remains there today.



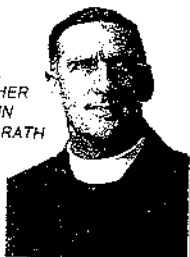
In 1920 Mass became closer to Orakei when Catholics over in St. Heliers invited priests from Remuera to say Sunday Mass in private homes. When numbers became too large a shed on the beach was used. Then 12 Catholic families decided to form a church building committee and Remuera parish began fund raising. Bishop Liston chose a site overlooking the sea and by clever planning and with much volunteer help, the new church of St. Ignatius was built in a day – November 26, 1921. After the official opening in March 1922, Remuera priests visited each week to say Mass and it became the closest Mass Centre for Orakei.

Sisters of St. Joseph from Remuera began visits to St. Ignatius to prepare children in the area for First Communion early in 1921 and when it was decided to build a school in St. Heliers in 1927 the Sisters travelled daily to teach there for next three years. The two classroom school was built for 50 pupils and cost 600 pounds.

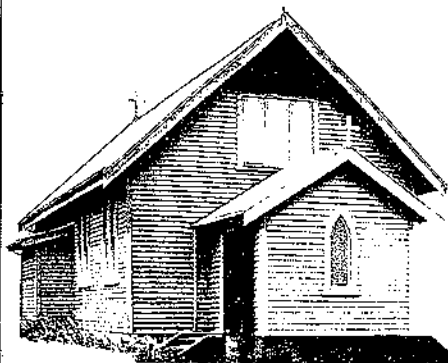
*Early in 1929 Bishop Cleary decided to make Orakei and St. Heliers into a separate parish. He invited the Marist Order to open a Mission Station there, contrary to the wishes of his coadjutor Bishop Liston. Father McGrath SM became the first parish priest and the first Mass was said March 10, 1929.*



REV.  
FATHER  
KEVIN  
McGRATH



Fr. Kevin McGrath, SM, first parish priest at St. Ignatius, was Dunedin born. He said the first parish Mass in the new parish, March 10, 1929. He founded the Marist Messenger in St. Heliers, took it with him, and continued to edit it for the next 34 years.



In 1929 St. Ignatius became the parish church for the new Orakei/St. Heliers parish which ran from Meadowbank Rd., along St. Johns Rd., to the college, where (now called ) Aparima Ave. to Pt. England Rd. separated Howick Parish. Both sides of St. Heliers Bay Rd., were in the new parish.

Fr. Ryan - second parish priest at St. Ignatius - 1930 to 1963 - was born in Tipperary. Extremely hard working, he began saying Mass in the Orakei public school in 1938 as the Orakei population boomed and he started fundraising for a church in the area.



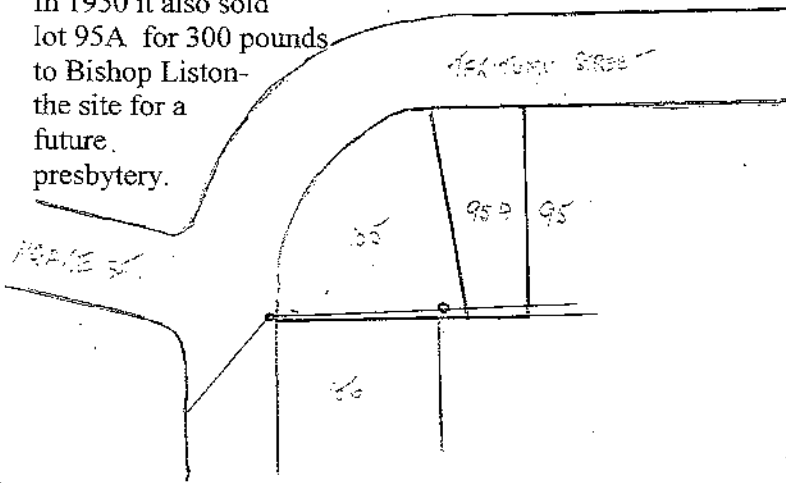
***Bishop Cleary died December 1929 and after a stay of less than a year Bishop Liston had the Marists moved to Mt. Albert in March 1930. He named Father Roderick Ryan the first diocesan parish Priest of St. Ignatius.***

In 1935 the Labour Government, gave the building of state houses top political priority. Orakei was ready for development. By March 1938 Fletchers had built 287 houses in Orakei. The population in Orakei was 219 in 1936 and 3839 in the 1945 census. This population increase placed huge demands on Church resources.

By using relief workers ,the Tamaki Drive waterfront road was completed in 1932, giving direct road access to Orakei and making possible the huge housing developments that took place in the Eastern suburbs in later years.

The thirties were depression times with wide spread hardship and unemployment. Many went to school without shoes. Nine out of ten left school at standard six. Jobs were difficult to get and poorly paid for school leavers. Shortage of money meant life was a struggle for nuns and priests as well as parishioners.

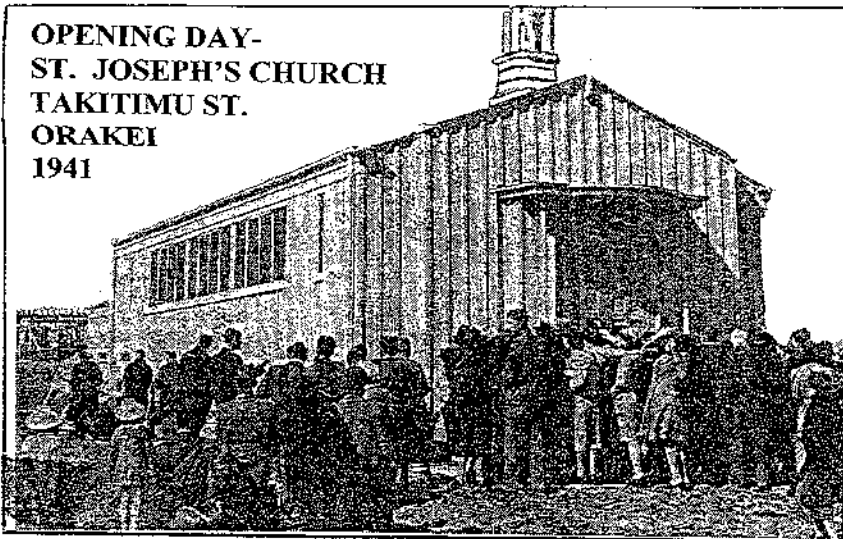
The new suburb of Orakei allowed for churches and other amenities. After negotiations, the government sold lot 105 for a church site, to Bishop Liston in 1941 for 500 pounds. In 1950 it also sold lot 95A for 300 pounds to Bishop Liston- the site for a future presbytery.



War impacted on daily life in Orakei as men left their homes to join the armed forces. All labour was government directed into jobs. Huge numbers of women went out to work, many for the first time. Unemployment disappeared. Homes had to be blacked out at night and rationing of petrol, eggs, meat, butter, sugar, tea and clothing had to be coped with. War casualties exacted their toll on families and the names of war dead were announced from the pulpit.

***In spite of difficulties caused by the war, Fr. Ryan pushed ahead to build a church in Takitimu St. The simple design was hailed as a new fashion in church architecture. The new church, named after St. Joseph, was 60ft. x 22ft. seated 125 and cost about 2000 pound. Opening day was All Saints Day 1941 and 320 attended. The new church was in the care of Fr. Ryan and his curates, Fathers Bartlett, O'Sullivan and Burke.***

**OPENING DAY-  
ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH  
TAKITIMU ST.  
ORAKEI  
1941**



**ORAKEI IS MADE THE SEPARATE PARISH OF ST. JOSEPH'S, 1952**



**FATHER BOWLING**

As the building of state houses extended over St. Heliers into Glendowie and Glen Innes, it became increasingly difficult for St. Ignatius Parish to cope with the spiritual needs of the rapidly increasing population. In 1952 Bishop Liston, who had planned for developments in the area for years, made Orakei the separate parish of St. Josephs with Father Bowling the first parish priest.



**BISHOP LISTON**

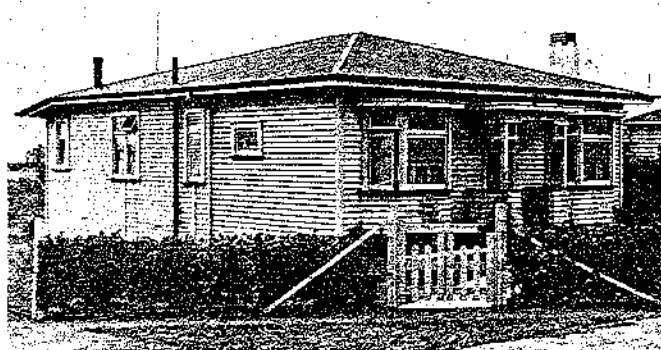
Realising that one day there would be need for a Catholic school in Orakei, Bishop Liston applied early in 1948 to the Lands Department for land in Brenton Place. A hold was placed on 2.9 acres at a price of £900. In June after a survey, the area was increased to 3.17 acres for £1060 plus £2. The title to the property was finally obtained by the Bishop in 1953.

Our first parish priest, Father William John Bowling, was born in Otago in 1910. After going to Holy Cross Seminary he completed his studies in Rome and was ordained in 1932. He served in many Auckland parishes before coming to Orakei.

Many from Orakei joined the huge crowd at Western Springs to take part in the Rosary Crusade led by Father Peyton – Dec. 1953

*Late in 1950 Bishop Liston received an account from the Crown for £500 plus 4% interest per year for the site occupied by the church in Takitimu St. since 1941. He refused to pay the interest because it was not in the original agreement. The interest charge was then withdrawn. In April 1951, Father Ryan paid £800 which included lot 95A and the titles were passed to the Bishop.*

The first need of Father Bowling was a place to live. Bishop Liston solved the problem by having the St. Ignatius presbytery moved from St. Heliers to Takitimu St. Many of St. Heliers parishioners were deeply resentful as money they had raised for a hall had to be spent to buy an adjacent house for a replacement presbytery. It was 40 years before St Heliers Parish built a hall.



The presbytery here in St. Heliers was taken on the Bishop's instructions and moved next to St. Joseph's church in Takitimu St. The Bishop then approved spending £1000 to renovate the presbytery and to build a garage for the priest.

Orakei children and those from the Eastern suburbs all went to Saint Ignatius School in St. Heliers. This placed an almost impossible teaching burden on the Sisters The roll peaked at 290 in 1956. More schools were an absolute necessity and so new schools were planned for Orakei as well as for other Eastern suburbs.

## FEATURES OF THE PARISH

### THE TONGANS

In the late 1980's several Tongan families were allocated state houses and flats in Orakei and a number became parishioners. They brought with them from their homeland the custom of celebrating Sundays with attending Mass and running a Sunday school. Once a month, Tongans from outside the parish would also join in for the Mass and their singing would be something special. A monthly Friday Mass for the Tongans became a permanent feature of parish life. As some flats had very little land, our Tongan community was given permission to grow a vegetable garden on the St. Joseph's grounds and parishioners donated tools and gardening gear. A Tongan sewing group was also set up and again parishioners donated sewing items. The Tongans also joined the monthly roster for church cleaning. The Tongan children had a big impact on the school roll. The number of Tongans in the parish decreased over time due, no doubt, to the introduction of market rents and as families have grown up some have and moved on.

### THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The Orakei Catholic Women's League flourished from the time of Father Bowling and became the branch for the Eastern Suburbs. Meetings were held in members' homes for over 30 years until the hall, built in 1985, became the venue. For many years a nucleus of ladies of Dalmatian descent

strengthened the continuity of the branch. A feature of the League was the annual concert it put on, until the late 1970's, in the local Presbyterian Hall. The concerts were highly popular with the public. The League is linked nationwide and provides an opportunity to attend conferences, discuss issues of interest to Catholic women and to attend spiritual exercises. It also provides friendship and social support for members. Each year the National office nominates a charitable project for the branch to support financially. The branch helps finance a mission station in Samoa, pays fees for two pupils at St. Joseph's and contributes to local and overseas charities. For four years it sponsored a scheme which sent thousands of second-hand books to schools in Samoa. Funds are raised at the monthly lunches and also at an annual garage sale held in the hall. The parish priest has always been chaplain to the league and says the monthly Mass. Mons. Shannahan always attended the lunches – many believed it was because he always got a "doggie bag" and the League ladies were good cooks. *STEPHANIE SHEPPARD*



The Christian Care Network Trust was set up in 1992 by four churches in the Orakei area with the aim of helping people in the community. The minister of the Presbyterian church at the time, Gladys Stiles, initiated the project and designed the logo. (As a registered schoolteacher, she had often done relieving teacher at St. Joseph's School.)

The signatories of the trust were the pastors of Orakei Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian churches. The Presbyterian Church is no longer an active member of the group. Some members of the Orakei Baptist church support the trust by helping with deliveries of food parcels.

The CCN is registered with the Charities Commission and gives tax receipts for monetary donations.

Over the years the original concept of offering wider support such as gardening, transport, etc. Has been limited by the low numbers of willing helpers available and the CCN is now mainly a foodbank service. The food is collected by contributions brought into each church plus monetary donations, and this is supplemented by generous supplies from the Auckland City Mission to which warehouses send goods.

The CCN is now well known among the community through flyers and by word of mouth and people in need of help can phone the answering phone 521-5712 to put in their request or ask someone to call them.

To date, Auckland City Council Community Board have provided grants to cover phone and running costs.

Since 2001, St. Joseph's Church along with CCN members has extended their community outreach by providing a monthly meal for Glen Innes people at the GI Community Centre. This worthwhile and satisfying project is well attended by locals who appreciate the company as well as the food.

As a result of the links forged by the different church members particularly in the CCN, we have now established the foundations for good inter-church relationships.

*JOHN AND EILA O'GORMAN*



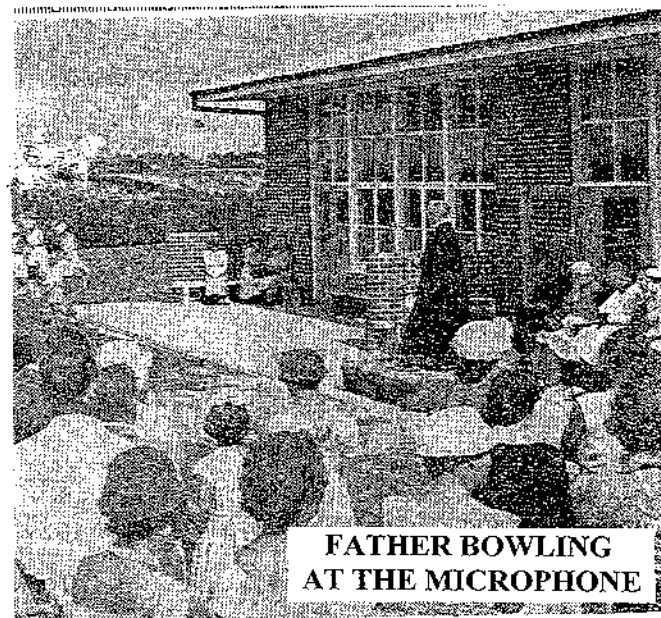
### THE BRIGIDINE SISTERS

The Sisters of St. Brigid had come to Auckland in 1952 to staff Mt. Carmel primary school at Meadowbank. They lived in a convent in Bassett Rd. Remuera and travelled daily to Meadowbank – involving a long walk a bus ride and another long walk, there and back. Their planned Convent at Meadowbank was not built until late 1959. Three Brigidine Sisters – Tarcisius, Damian and Veronica came to teach at Orakei, first travelling from Remuera and then from Meadowbank. Orakei parent volunteers helped with the daily transport.

In the 1950s very few owned cars, so Bishop Liston aimed to have churches in walking distance in new suburbs.

### THE OPENING AND BLESSING OF ST. JOSEPHS ORAKEI PRIMARY SCHOOL, MARCH 9, 1958

A large number of Church dignitaries and parishioners attended the blessing of the new St. Josephs school by Bishop Liston, who spoke about the financial burden placed on Catholic parents who paid taxes but got no state help with the cost of building and running their own schools. Father Bowling said he had asked the Brigidine Sisters in 1954 to staff the new school, hopefully in 1956. It had taken him longer to get the school but thankfully he had still got the Brigidines.



FATHER BOWLING  
AT THE MICROPHONE



FOUNDATION  
TEACHERS AND  
PUPILS AT  
ST. JOSEPHS  
SCHOOL  
ORAKEI



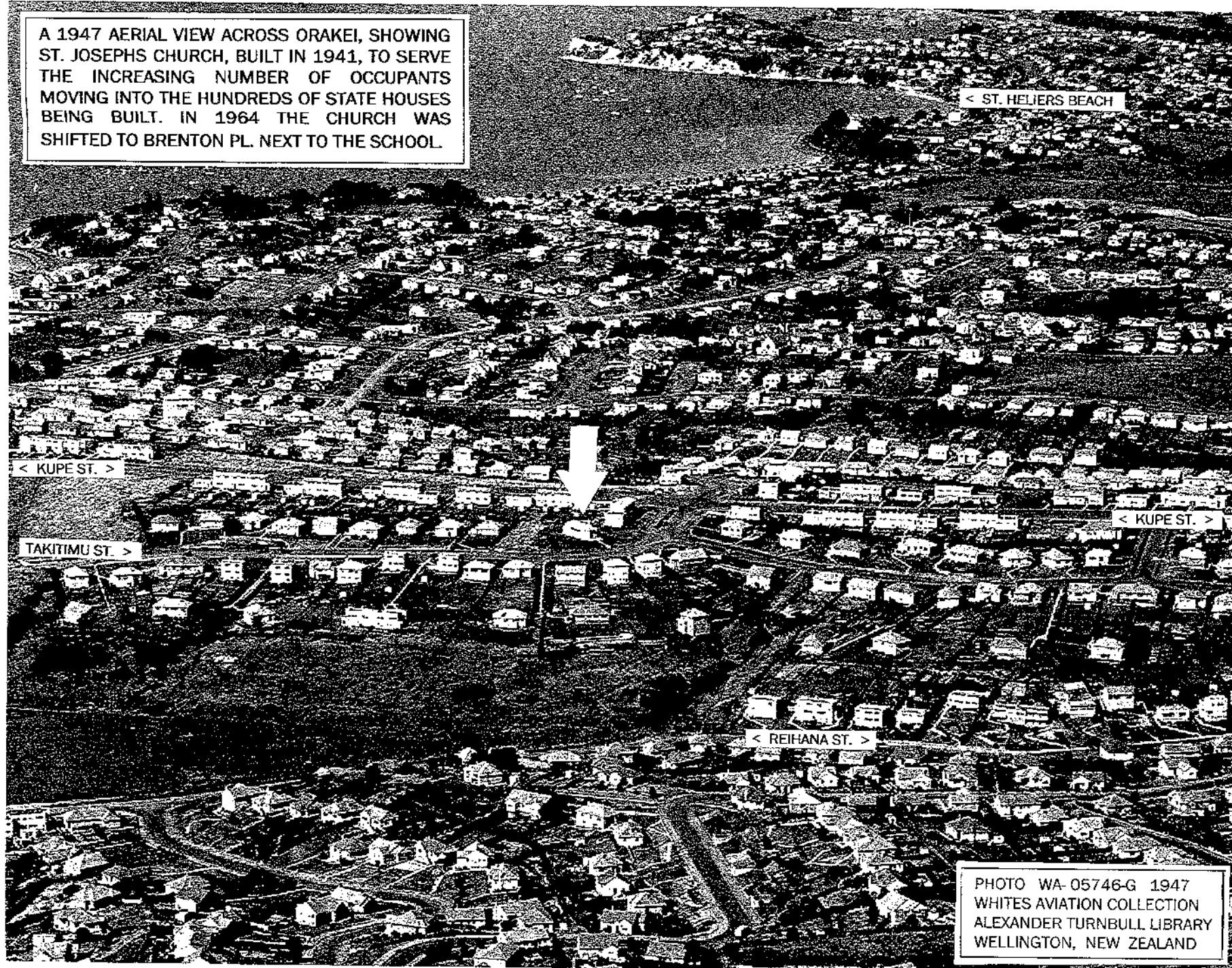
### ST. JOSEPHS PRIMARY SCHOOL, ORAKEI

The new school cost 11,000 pounds to build. Father Bowling and volunteer parishioners spent many weeks doing the electrical work and the interior painting to save costs. Preparing the grounds for school use required the assistance of many parishioners over many weekends. The new school had three classrooms, a room for the teachers, a kitchenette and a toilet block.

There was a strong obligation on Catholics to send their children to a Catholic school – a considerable financial burden on generations of parents. Many Orakei parishioners signed a Holy Name Society nationwide petition for state aid for private schools and felt very bitter disappointment when it was rejected by parliament. 1956

In February 1962 Bishop Liston wrote to Fr. Bowling and instructed him to help the Brigidine Sisters financially.

A 1947 AERIAL VIEW ACROSS ORAKEI, SHOWING ST. JOSEPHS CHURCH, BUILT IN 1941, TO SERVE THE INCREASING NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS MOVING INTO THE HUNDREDS OF STATE HOUSES BEING BUILT. IN 1964 THE CHURCH WAS SHIFTED TO BRENTON PL. NEXT TO THE SCHOOL.





After the school opened, a group of our parents successfully lobbied the bus company to have the bus route extended so it would cover more homes, making bus travel to school easier for the convent pupils.

*Sister Veronica put her musical talents to immediate use and she entered groups for the 1959 Auckland competitions. In spite of it being a new school a third prize was won. The next year the senior choir came first and the junior choir got first equal. It was a great triumph for the Sisters.*

*November 1959 the Brigidine Nuns left Remuera and moved into their new convent in Meadowbank. They could now take in fee-paying pupils for elocution and music lessons – a much needed source of extra income. It was easier daily travelling for our teaching Sisters*

Our Convent school had no hard surface for a basketball court so a court was marked out on the grass for practice and the Sisters entered teams in the competitions and our children had lots of fun if not victories.

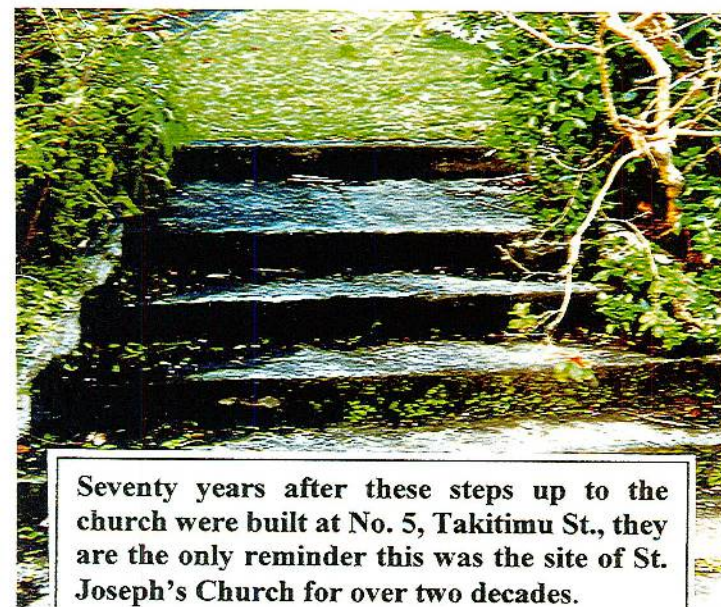
**In the early 1960's the Church faced increasing financial difficulties caused by opening new parishes and costs of running our schools. Bishop Liston decided to introduce the Wells system of pledge giving (already being operated by the Anglicans) to the diocese. Soon 83 parishes had taken part – Orakei included. Many parishioners were at first horrified at the thought but parishes got behind the scheme and church collections rose dramatically. This enabled our schools to survive and made possible many future Church developments.**

With the focus of the parish divided between the church and the school almost a mile apart, Father Bowling's objective was to have the church moved to the spacious grounds at Brendon Place. In November 1961 he had an architect draw up a plan which sited the church in the grounds to the right of the entrance at Brendon Place but it did not receive episcopal approval.

**In 1962  
Pope John 23  
called all Bishops to Rome  
for a General Council – only the  
second in the Church's history. Its  
purpose was to review all aspects of  
Church in the modern world. It was  
to change the way we thought about  
and practised our Faith and  
the way we worshipped.**

In May 1963 a new plan to site the church beyond the school at Brendon Place was produced. In August, Father Bowling had a plan for a presbytery there, drawn up, but the Bishop required it to be reduced in size. On December 23, 1963 the Bishop approved a new plan and gave the go ahead to build the presbytery for 6750 pounds.

The death of Pope JOHN 23 on June 23, 1963 shocked the Catholic world because he was the driving force behind the Vatican 2 Council.



**Seventy years after these steps up to the church were built at No. 5, Takitimu St., they are the only reminder this was the site of St. Joseph's Church for over two decades.**

By the end of January 1964 the decision to move the church to Brendon Place was actioned and various council permits were applied for. In March, the old presbytery in Takitimu St. was sold for 4,500 pound. In April the foundations and basement for the church on its new site were approved by council. The cutting of the church in half and shifting it in two pieces to Brendon Place followed. By June 30, 1964 the porch to be built across the front of the shifted church had been approved and the empty section in Takitimu St. sold by tender for 5,700 pounds. A carport to go on the end of the presbytery received council approval in October, and when it was built, the shifting saga was ended.

The Zealandia urged all Catholics to claim the 50 pound tax exemption now available to those paying school fees as another reminder to the Government of the ever increasing burden carried by Catholics in financing their schools.



There were widespread celebrations throughout the city and diocese in 1964 to honour the Diamond Jubilee of Bishop Liston's ordination.

Celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of Loreta Hall, the Catholic Training College in 1964 was of special interest because trainees from the Hall became observers at our St. Josephs School when it opened – an experience the Brigidine Sisters found strange because they had never encountered it previously.

Throughout the year we heard of changes coming in Church regulations as a result of Vatican 2. The decision to have the Mass said in English was hard to believe – we were so schooled in the Latin tradition. Finally on Sunday August 16, 1964, parts of the Mass were said in English for the first time. A small percentage of parishioners still preferred the Latin, but the vast majority were excited and were eager for more English. The changes were brought in over six years and then Mass books were handed out until we learned the liturgy in English by heart. There were many ritual changes. The introductory prayers at the foot of the altar, the “Last Gospel” and prayers for Russia at end of Mass disappeared. Mass was now a public celebration. Previously it had been a time for private and personal prayer.

The Friday abstinence fast from meat was abolished as further changes brought in by Vatican 2 were put into place. In future the fast was to apply only to Good Friday and Ash Wednesday. The “No Meat On Fridays “ had been a defining feature of being a Catholic in the public mind. Its end further reduced evidence of religion playing a part in the daily lives of the community.

After many preliminary meetings in private homes, Father Bowling invited the ladies in the parish on November 1964 to a foundation meeting of the Catholic Women's League.

Pope Paul VI, implementing Vatican 2 recommendations, changed the regulations, and weddings to non Catholics were allowed to be celebrated in front of the altar. Previously they had to be held in the sacristy out of the sight of the congregation – a cause of a life time of embarrassment for many.

*The wearing of hats or head coverings by women in church ceased to be compulsory and the custom soon disappeared.*

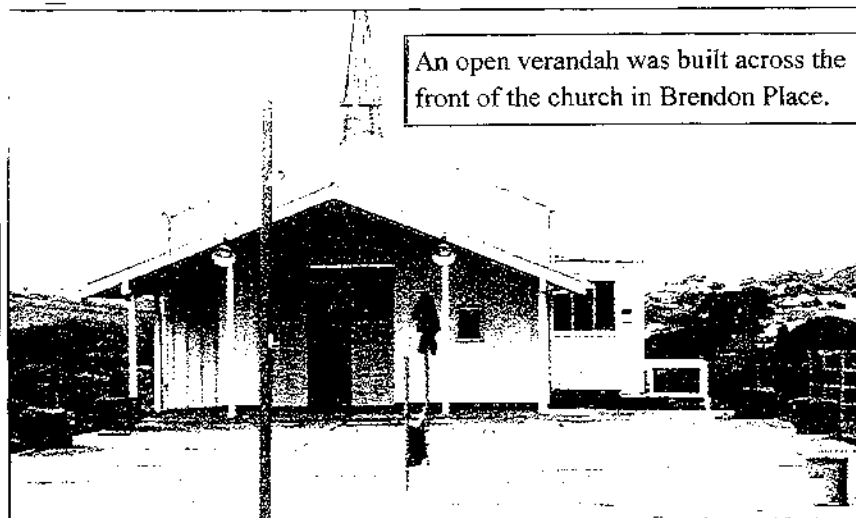
In June 1967 our Bishops instructed parish priests to say Mass facing the people. Until then only the Pope said Mass facing the congregation –always a shock to Catholics visiting Rome.

The First Communion Children in front of the church in Takitimu St.1962



In 1968 we learned with regret Father Bowling was to be transferred to Matamata. In the 16 years as our founding parish priest he had established a new school and developed the grounds, moved the church to Brendon Place and built a new presbytery. On the spiritual side he had begun introducing the changes of Vatican 2 and he had served St. Josephs parish in Orakei faithfully and well and he left it in good heart.

An open verandah was built across the front of the church in Brendon Place.



## OUR SECOND PARISH PRIEST- FATHER JAMES O'CONNOR

Father O'Connor belonged to the tradition of Irish priests who made such a major contribution to the Faith in Auckland. He was born in Clonmel in 1908 and ordained in Waterford in 1933, coming to Auckland the same year. He had been parish priest in several parishes including nearby Panmure 1941 – 50 before coming to Orakei in 1968. Like priests of his time, he was faced with continuing the changes brought in by Vatican 2.



In 1968 Sister Damian was moved to Porirua after 10 years teaching at our school. She was fondly remembered for firmly establishing the strong musical tradition at St. Joseph's and for the wonderful concerts she put on at the local hall.

Bishop Liston was advised in 1968, for the first time, that the Brigidines wished to withdraw from Auckland due to financial problems, the need for staff consolidation, changes in the educational scene and the results of Vatican 2.

In 1968 New Zealand made the change to decimal currency and the second collection at St. Joseph's for the year totalled \$6975.

**In 1971 parishes were recommended to set up parish councils in line with the spirit of Vatican 2 for greater participation of the laity in Church affairs. The following year parish councils were made mandatory and the roles of the parish priest, the elected council of parishioners and the finance committee were defined in writing.**

The Sign of Peace was introduced as a recognition of Christ in one's neighbour. Many felt self-conscious initially, but it soon became extremely popular.

Reading out wedding banns at Mass, very popular socially, ceased to be compulsory and fell into disuse. One result was a loss of profile for marriage in Catholic life.

## AFTER 14 YEARS THE BRIGIDINE SISTERS LEAVE ST. JOSEPH'S PARISH

The departure of the Brigidines who founded and taught at St. Joseph's for 14 years, was a major event in the parish. As the school was in close proximity to the Josephite Provincial House at Mission Bay, a request was made for the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart to take over responsibility for running our school. Without benefit of a handover procedure, Sister Marie McGreevy had to prepare for the 1972 school opening. The decline of vocations meant she was the only religious on the staff, but she had two lay teachers. Daily Sister drove over from Mission Bay.

*After several modernising changes of the nuns' habits since Vatican 2, the small head veil worn by Sister Marie was all in her dress that distinguished her as a nun.*



1973 saw the introduction of what seemed one of the most momentous changes of Vatican 2 – receiving Communion in the hand and under two kinds. The altar rails were removed and Communicants were asked to approach in single file to receive Communion. Most Catholics had gone their whole lives without ever receiving the consecrated wine at Communion. It brought new intensity to receiving the Eucharist.

After much debate and controversy, politically and also within the Church, the Education Act was passed in 1975 to enable private schools to be integrated into the state system seven years later. Financially it would mean a lifeline for our school.

Bishop Liston retired in 1970 and died in 1976. Orakei parish was one of his personal projects.

Fr. O'Connor was a regular visitor to parishioner's homes. As times changed women working during the day and TV at home at night ruled out such visits.



## MEMORIES FROM THE PARISH

### PRISON CHAPLAIN

"In 1965 a botched escape attempt set off a riot in Mt. Eden Prison. The prisoners seized hostages and took over most of the buildings which were trashed and burned. There appeared to be no end to the crisis after 33 hours, so solicitor Kevin Ryan, armed only with a bottle of whisky, volunteered to enter the prison to negotiate a surrender. Because there was a danger of Kevin dying at the hands of the rioters, Father Downey, prison chaplain and future parish priest of St. Joseph's, Orakei, gave him the Last Sacraments. Fortunately, Kevin was successful and the crisis came to an end."

**GERALD RYAN**

### THE PRESBYTERY FIRE

"It seems that most of the house was irreparably damaged by the fire – the remainder will have to be renewed because of the damage caused by smoke and water. I don't expect to have a house this year. The continuing saga is quite stressful for me. Many of my possessions were destroyed in the conflagration. Someone broke into the house and stole what they wanted. When we had taken the remaining things out of the house and stored them in a container, someone broke into the container and stole what they didn't get the first time. Most of the Parish records and financial records were lost. Trying now to recall the details is a difficult task. It has been and still is a trying time but I do appreciate the help and concern that so many of you good people have shown me"

**MONSIGNOR SHANNAHAN**

### ST. JOSEPH'S AND THE PRINCESS



"In March 1983 the Auckland schools welcomed Prince Charles and Princess Diana on their first visit to New Zealand at a mass gathering of schools at Eden Park. Each school had been asked to perform an activity during the Royal walkabout. Amid the noise and vigour of hakas, sports demonstrations etc. the pupils from St. Joseph's quietly played marbles, knuckle bones and other simple games. The Royal couple stopped and talked to the St. Joseph's children, probably to enjoy a peaceful conversation among all the tumultuous activities around them. Next day it was a photo of the Princess talking to St. Joseph's pupil, David Fisher that appeared on the front page of the N.Z. Herald – much to the delight of those connected to the school."

**SHEILA FISHER** Teacher at St. Joseph's

### GREAT TEACHERS

"The Brigidine Nuns were wonderful teachers. One year ten girls from St. Joseph's went on to Baradene. At the end of their first year at the new college, the ten girls took the top ten places in their class." **ANNE KEISENBERG**

### FATHER O'CONNOR

"The big guy in the First Communion photo was Father O'Connor, Irish to the toe caps of his boots, freckled, nearly bald. With a faint aroma of whisky and tobacco around him. A kind gentle man who loved to laugh. He rolled his own cigarettes, skinny Park Drives and always one left in the sacristy ready for an instant light up after Mass with no time being wasted getting out there to discuss yesterdays winners at Ellerslie." **MICHAEL TATTERSALL** Panmure Parish Jubilee Book

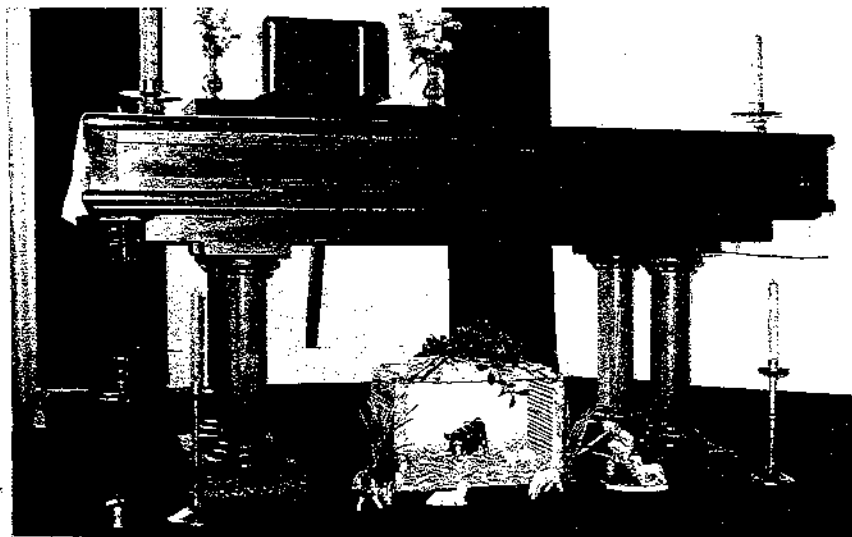
### WONDERFUL SINGING

"I will never forget the wonderful singing of Mina Foley at St. Joseph's, especially at Midnight Mass, when she was living nearby in a government flat." **NATALIE VENDETTI**

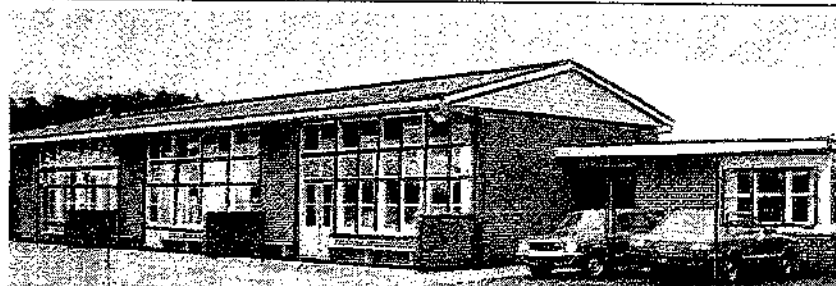
### FATHER McGIVERN

"Desmond was only two years younger than me and we were very close when we were growing up. He was an altar boy at St. Ben's and we both decided at an early age to follow a religious vocation." **SISTER MONICA McGIVERN at 94**

"Father McGivern loved nothing more than sitting on the motor and mowing the lawns. He would travel all over the church grounds finding every little bit of lawn he could cut." **COLIN NOLA**



When Father O'Connor had to say Mass facing the people, the table of the altar was detached from the tabernacle and moved forward so Father could stand behind it. In 1975, architect Alan Howe, was commissioned to design a free standing altar. The result was an altar that is much admired.



**ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL WHEN THE JOSIPHITES CAME**

At the beginning of 1973 the school staff was reduced to Sister Marie and Mrs. R. Marshall. In 1976 Sister Marie was replaced by Sister Paula Mary Cronin who remained Principal until May 1977 when Sister Elizabeth Harden took up the position. In 1978 the school was handed over to lay Principal, Miss Denise Phelan, the roll then being 47.

The musical tradition established by the Brigidines at St. Joseph's was carried on by the Josephites and later teachers as shown by this musical production by the school in the Anglican Hall in 1979.



#### DEATH OF A PRIEST

*"The housekeeper ran over from the presbytery to the school. She said Father O'Connor, who we knew was seriously ill, had collapsed and was lying on the bedroom floor. I phoned for a priest and an ambulance and dashed back to the presbytery. We found Father unconscious on the floor and he was too heavy for us to lift. Then Father Purcell arrived and administered the Last Sacraments. The ambulance also came but, unfortunately, Father O'Connor died without regaining consciousness"*  
Margaret Graham – Principal

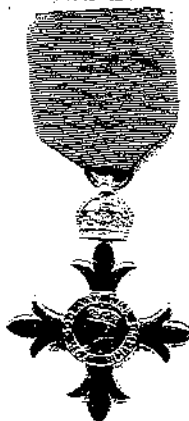
The death of Father O'Connor in the parish in October 1981 was a shock and it brought to an end a 13 year term as our parish priest. Because of Vatican 2 it had been a time of tremendous changes in the Church – changes in the way we worshipped, our liturgy and management of the parish. These had to be introduced by Father O'Connor – a difficult task for an elderly, traditional, Irish priest. He was much loved and had a great way with children. He had a great sense of humour and enjoyed telling a story against himself. He loved gardening and one of his contributions to the parish, which long outlived him, was the large number of trees he planted on the church grounds at Brenton Place



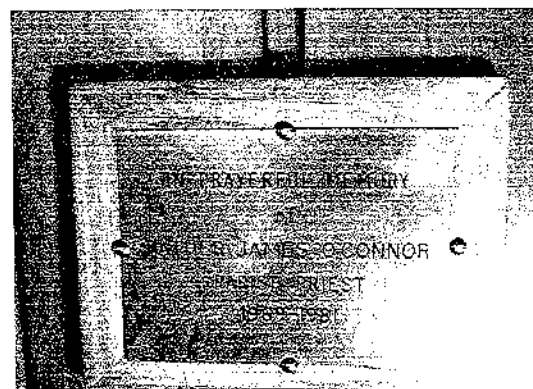
FATHER LEO DOWNEY had had an outstanding career but he was in failing health when he became our parish priest early in 1982 – succeeding Fr. O'Connor. He was born in Rotorua in 1915 and was sent to Rome to study for the priesthood. He was ordained there in 1940. During the war he worked secretly with the underground aiding escaped prisoners of war, before returning to New Zealand in 1943. In 1951 he was appointed chaplain at Mt. Eden prison at a time when prison chaplains were scarcely tolerated by the prison service. His role included attending hangings which were then part of our justice system. He later became chief prison chaplain and was awarded the M.B.E. for his work in the prisons. He was for a time Director of Catholic Social Services and for eleven years he was chaplain at a boys' orphanage run by nuns in what has now become Pah House. Sadly, Father Downey died before the end of the year.

St. Joseph's school was integrated with the state education system on September 29, 1982. The parish still owned the land but together with the buildings it became integrated property managed by the school. If the school ever became non integrated ownership would revert to the parish. Integration relieved parents of the crushing financial burden of having to pay wages for our teachers – caused by the decline in numbers in the teaching religious orders. The school was now run by the Board of Trustees. Our parish priest was a member who represented the Bishop and saw to the protection of the special (Catholic) character of the school.

Father Leo Downey  
M.B.E.



FATHER DES MCGIVERN, the parish priest appointed after Father Downey, was born in 1915 and ordained in 1939. He had served in Onehunga and Tauranga and in 1977 he was moved to Glen Innes. He came to Orakei in early 1983. As our parish priest he served our spiritual needs well and his initiative resulted in us getting a much needed parish hall.



It was Father O'Connor's practice to always sit in the front seat on the left hand side of the church and pray for 15 minutes before he said Mass. That is why the left hand wall next to the front seat was chosen as the place on which to place a plaque to his memory.

In 1977 Maori protesters occupied Bastion Point as a challenge to the plans of the government to sell it for development. A child died in the fire which broke out in the shanty town built by the protesters in their 17 month stay before being forcibly evicted. The Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal restored 700 acres to the Maoris and awarded them financial compensation.

Our school qualified for a third teacher in 1979.





**From Left – Sisters Paula Cronin, Elizabeth Harden and Marie McGreevy, the Josephite nuns who had been principals at St. Joseph's, taken at the school's Silver Jubilee in 1983. The main function of the Jubilee was a dinner held in Parnell and some Brigidine Sisters were also present and shared in the very entertaining and successful celebrations..**

The 1981 South African Tour of NZ divided the nation and parishioners, and passions flared. Those against the tour regarded it as public support of apartheid. Tour supporters saw it as a sports issue separate from politics. Our bishops issued a statement expressing bitter disappointment the NZ Rugby Union had lost an opportunity to show solidarity with oppressed peoples by failing to boycott the tour. They urged respect for the rights of others and rejection of violence. There was little meeting of minds and 20 years later the tour remained a contentious issue.

**A MARIST SISTERS COMMUNITY COMES TO BRENTON PL.** Having got permission to bring a house from their property in Mt. Roskill, the Sisters arrived in 1984 at Brenton Place. The house was placed near the school and church. During 1993/94 the original house was extended for use as the administration centre for the Sisters of New Zealand and finally it has become the administration headquarters for the Marist Sisters for the Pacific Region.

The Parish held a combined service in 1982 with the local Anglicans as part of a worldwide show of unity initiated by the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury. There was a great feeling of euphoria and hope that this would be the first of many times we would pray together.

The school roll was 67 in 1985 and there was an outstanding debt of \$28,858 - a huge burden to be faced by the Trustees and the Friends of St. Joseph's.

1986 saw our parishioners join the great crowd at the Auckland Domain to extend an enthusiastic welcome to Pope John Paul on his visit to New Zealand.

Bad health took its toll on Father McGivern. He had to resign in 1987. He became priest for the Carmelites and died in Liston Village in 1999.



Since the beginning of St. Joseph's parish there had been a desperate need for a parish hall. Father McGivern became a driving force behind the idea. As a curate in Tauranga, he had built a church and a presbytery in Mt. Maunganui and had experience in building matters. When the parish council decided in 1984 to build a hall, fund raising began and about \$2000 had been collected when parishioners, Mike and Maureen Henry, generously offered to pay the balance of the \$20,000 needed. There was, however, controversy over where the hall was to be sited some believing it would provide greater convenience if it was built next to the church. The hall was officially opened in June 1985 and was an immediate success and much used for parishioners' and school functions. It was decided the hall would not be rented out for non parish use, except for Alcoholics Anonymous who have used it once a week ever since.

In the years following their arrival the Marist Community consisted of three to five Sisters. They were involved in ministry work at the Catholic Office, hospital chaplaincy and pastoral work. They remained involved in St. Joseph's outreach activities and provided an additional neighbour watch on the St. Joseph's ground and buildings. In 1987 Sister Margaret Vaney joined the Orakei Community and taught at our school. She was the last member of a religious order to teach at St. Joseph's. The school had the benefit of her services for 10 years.

## **FEATURES OF THE PARISH**

### **PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

At a special meeting extended to all the parishioners at Otahuhu in 1998, Bishop Dunn launched a process involving all parishes to plan for a future with a declining number of priests. There appeared to be an extreme urgency and a feeling of near panic. Our parish council received volumes of printed material based on planning already underway in Queensland. Orakei was grouped with St. Heliers, Glendowie and Glen Innes and committees from each parish began a continuing relationship working towards common structures and future arrangements. Over the years pastoral planning continued with leadership from the diocese but the urgency seemed to ease as priests from overseas joined the diocese and seminary numbers increased. Because Orakei was a small parish, it was feared on several occasions our parish priest would not be replaced but this has not happened. At one time it was planned for Orakei to rejoin St. Heliers if a priest was lost from the area. At a later stage a priest team approach was planned for the four parishes. Still later we were to be linked with Remuera and Meadowbank.

### **ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL**

St. Joseph's Catholic School, Orakei is a place where Christ is at the centre of community and where all are welcomed, respected and valued in a warm and secure environment.

Located in a beautiful setting with a semi rural outlook, St. Joseph's is an integrated community

with home, school, parish, suburban and city influences. It includes the community of the diocese of Auckland, the parish of St. Joseph's Orakei, the presbytery of Father Tony Dunn and the Marist Sisters whose Provincial House is sited on the property.

The school has a rich cultural mix that contributes to the uniqueness of the school. Students' respect for all cultures is encouraged through activities, such as the bi-annual cultural day and marae visits. St. Joseph's demographic reflects that of the greater Auckland city which helps develop a cultural understanding and tolerance that is of immense benefit as our children start interacting in the broader community.

As a Special Character school we do not call on only one geographic school zone. Our students come from Orakei, Mission Bay, St. Heliers, Glen Innes, St. Johns, Meadowbank, Remuera, Mt. Wellington and Panmure. However, no matter, where our families live all our parents have high expectations of their children's spiritual, social and academic development.

St. Joseph's offers classes for years 1 to 6. The school comprises – Five classrooms – Library/information technology room, Reading recovery room, Junior and senior playgrounds, A field for wide games and sport, administration office and resource area.

### **ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL STATISTICS 2011-**

SCHOOL Decile 5,            80 Families,		
52 Girls, 53 Boys.		
105 pupils (roll approved maximum 125)		
63 % New Zealand		
15% Maori	13% Pasifika	9% Other

**KATHRYN HIRA - Principal**

### **FRIENDS OF ST. JOSEPH'S**

As in many small schools money was always a problem and thanks are due to the loyal and willing parents who constantly struggled to help St. Joseph's financially. In 1989 the arrival of "Tomorrows Schools" required greater parent participation in school affairs. This caused a group of parents and other to set up "Friends of St. Joseph's" to give support and take an interest in the school. Over the years the 'Friends' organised countless fund raisers and raised thousands of dollars. Many of the new amenities and developments at the school have been due to the ingenuity, enthusiasm and hard work of the "Friends". For example, it was pointed out at the parish AGM 2005 that in the previous three or four years the "Friends" had contributed - \$16,000 for the Playground, Admin Block \$20,000, Sports Uniforms \$6000 and Library \$8000. Their generous support continues.

### **ST. JOSEPH'S PARISH COUNCIL**

Since Father O'Connor set up the first parish council 40 years ago, council meeting have been held monthly. All problems and issues in parish affairs have finished up on the council table. That is where hands on management of the parish takes place. The council organises financial matters, property maintenance and developments, religious, spiritual and adult education courses, church ministries and liturgical arrangements, church rosters and cleaning, fundraising and liaising with representatives from the diocese and other parishes. Over the years as parishioners have retired from the council others have taken their place and the work is faithfully continued. In this way dozens of Orakei parishioners have made their unsung contribution to the life of the parish and have moved on.

Monsignor Frank Wright became our parish priest after Fr. McGivern. He had been parish priest in Huntly, Hamilton and St. Heliers. Before becoming a priest he had qualified and worked as an accountant. He was made the Chancellor in charge of the diocese's financial and property affairs by Bishop Delargy who replaced the personal control of the Liston era with an administration structure. Due to Mons. Wright's dedication our diocesan schools were able to survive until integration. He performed a herculean task.



When Monsignor Terry Leslie became our parish priest in 1989 he already had a full time job as Vicar General for the Diocese. He found the life of our parish revolved around the school and he was most impressed by the number of parishioners committed to helping to run the affairs of the parish. It meant the support of the parish enabled him to be able to carry out both of his clerical functions. Monsignor was born in Inglewood in 1927 and was ordained in 1955, having first spent five years as a chemist before entering the seminary.



The shift to Orakei was difficult for Mons. Wright, who had been in St. Heliers for 15 years and where he had a private residence. A shy and conservative man, his career had included going to Ireland to study adult Education and then introducing it to the diocese. In 1975 he was made a Prelate of Honour. He is best remembered in Orakei for the starting of the Childrens' Liturgy on Sundays. After his two years time with us he retired to St Heliers for several years and died in 2001 in the Home of the Little Sisters.

After decades of two collections it was decided to abolish the second collection. For a time church takings dropped but after several months they recovered.

The church was painted in 1991 costing \$5300 and later in the year \$7000 was spent on maintenance a necessity before the church could be extended.

The Tongan parishioners were given permission to use the hall for their Sunday school.

Several groups of parishioners took part in a Faith Strengthening campaign called "Go Now" in 1991 and 1992.

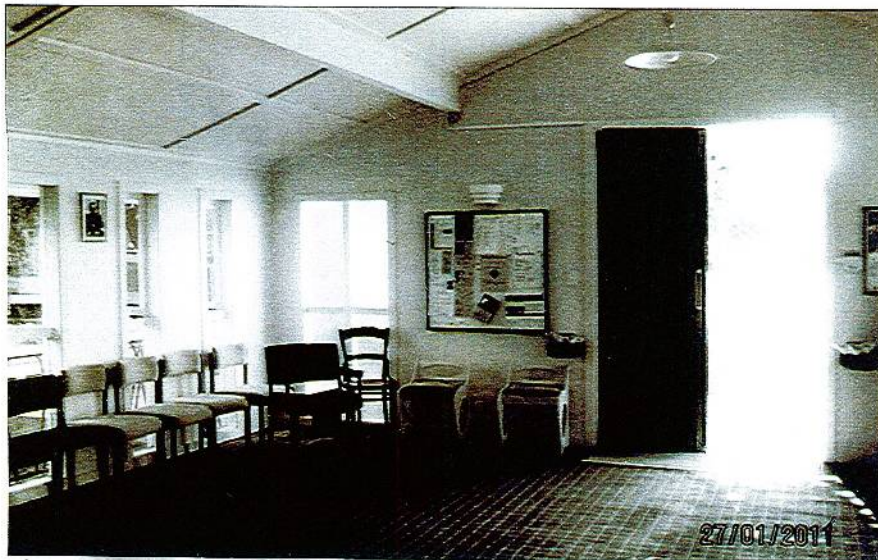
Stepping out of the church under the cover of an open shelter was never satisfactory. The parish council decided late in 1991 to extend the front of the church by adding an entrance foyer, to give protection from the weather and an area for other church uses. The cost was estimated at \$15,000, with \$5000 in hand. A parishioner loaned \$10,000 so the work could proceed immediately. Carpeting was to cost a further \$4000. The extension was completed early in 1992 and it was a real boon for the parish.

A three day visit to the parish was made by Bishop Browne in 1990. He took the opportunity to dine with the parish council and meet and talk to individual parishioners.

The Tongan community collected among themselves and then donated \$1500 towards the extension to the church porch.

Sponsored by the local Anglican church, there was a dinner to celebrate the 1990 Feast of Pentecost and to promote church unity. Together with St. Joseph's parishioners over 80 attended.





*The foyer extension to the church created an area for socialising, sheltering on a wet day and for additional church uses. The Childrens Liturgy on Sundays began using it immediately. The doorway into the church from the foyer was doubled in width and sliding doors were added so the nave and foyer could be made one when required for special occasions.*

## WITH THANKS TO THE BAPTISTS

In 1994 the roll dropped to 44 and there was talk that we might lose a teacher. To build the roll the Baptist School was approached and parents attending their one year courses were offered places at St. Joseph's for their children. Several Baptist children enrolled and with the increase numbers there was no loss of a teacher. Later in the 1990's the roll increased—

1996=73, 1997=84, 1998=97.

In an ecumenical gesture with a lovely touch of irony, the local Presbyterian Church invited parishioners from St. Joseph's to come and celebrate St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1990. Several of our parishioners were delighted to attend.

The Parish celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Monsignor Leslie's ordination in 1995.

The "Friends" organised a dinner in October 1996 as a fund raiser for the school at the Ellerslie Racecourse. It was well attended by parishioners parents and supporters of St. Joseph's.

### In The Words Our Saviour Gave Us.....

The new wording of the "Our Father" was introduced and became standard at most services, but many, especially among the elderly found the change upsetting.



Sister Margaret Vaney from our Marist Sisters was given a farewell in March 1977 after teaching at St. Joseph's school for 10 years – at times she was acting principal. Sister's departure ended an era as she was the last Religious to teach there.

A progressive meal was shared with parishioners from other Orakei churches – an enjoyable way to experience unity with other Christians 1992

As an act of charity, the parish financed a continental refugee to the extent of \$1200 so that he could join his family already in New Zealand. 1994

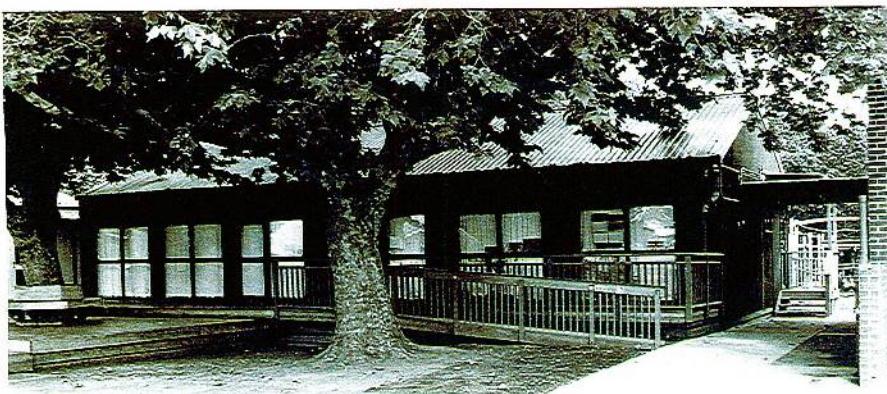
The Christian Care Trust was signed with four other churches, committing St Joseph's Parish to what was to become our main outreach activity in the Orakei community. 1992

Beginning late 1993 the Marist Sisters' house was extended as it became the administration centre for the Marist Sisters of New Zealand but the nuns continued to be part of the outreach function of the parish.

Through the generosity of a group of 15 parents who shared the cost a garage room for sports gear was built in 1995 – a much appreciated amenity. It has also become a resource room and was used for reading recovery classes each day.

A collection box for St. Vincent De Paul was put at the back of the church porch in 1994 and the following year it was robbed by vandals.





### A MIRACLE IN FIVE AND HALF WEEKS

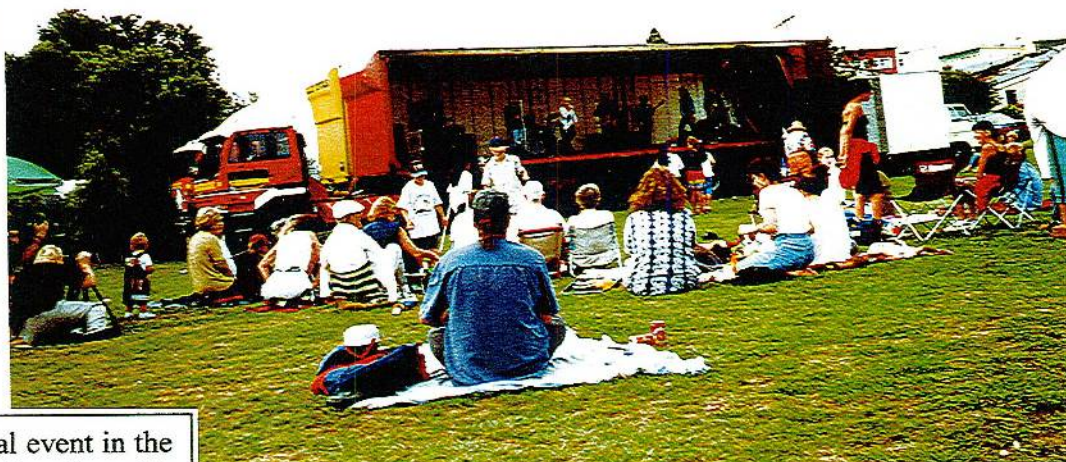
The increasing school roll by 1996 meant more classrooms were essential. A decision was made to build two classrooms with volunteer labour under the direction of a parent. Businessman Allan Hawkins, who had a daughter at the school, organised the project and obtained materials at mates rates from his contacts. Steel framing was a challenge for amateurs. It took only five and a half weeks to complete the building with volunteers well supported by mothers and fathers of school pupils. A loan of \$40,000 was obtained from the diocese. Much additional work was done by a group of men who would arrive on Saturdays – P.D. workers. These people were a wonderful help in finalising and cleaning up the outside work.

In 1998 the Dominicans and Redemptorists looked after the parish for six weeks while Monsignor Leslie went on a pilgrimage to Rome and the Holy Land.

We mourned the death of Mother Teresa in 1997 and prayed her Sisters would continue her inspiring work

### MONS. LESLIE LEAVES ST. JOSEPH'S

In January 1998 Mons. Leslie left after nine years as our parish priest and he was given an official farewell in March. Father Jack Agnew moved in to the presbytery on February 7, but ill health forced his return to Australia in March. Father Peter Dunn then said Sunday Mass here for three months. Mons. Hunt then became our parish priest for five months. Father Neville Brown also lived in our presbytery in 1998 while his presbytery was being built in Meadowbank and he said Mass here on Wednesdays.



The Friends of St. Joseph's organised a dinner in October 1996 as a fund raiser for the school at the Ellerslie Racecourse. It was well attended by parishioners parents and supporters of St. Joseph's.

Bishop Dunn launched the diocesan "Planning for the Future" process and our representative began discussions with St. Heliers, Glen Innes and Glendowie on how we could work together to best handle a possible shortage of priests. 1998

An unusual event in the life of St. Joseph's School was the arrival of a lady teacher from Japan who came to observe for a year. She was not a Catholic so her stay with us must have been a great learning experience.

Two of the most spectacular fund raisers undertaken by the Friends of St. Joseph's were concerts organised by Larry Morris, a parent of a pupil. A Stenbridge truck carrying a container set up as a stage was moved on to the school grounds and the celebrity concert was widely publicised. The performers included Larry Morris, Suzanne and Judy Lynch – originally known as the "Chicks" - Ray Columbus, Guy Cato, Shane and others who kindly and freely gave their time. 1999



## **FEATURES OF THE PARISH**

### **THE BENE MERENTE MEDAL**

St. Joseph's did not have a St. Vincent de Paul branch, but for several decades it had parishioner Athol Lockwood Cantwell who did all the work of a branch. Athol was dedicated to collecting and distributing goods to needy families. He liaised with the Society, helped with staffing the Glen Innes shop and wherever there was a need he provided help. Athol's outstanding service to the community and the parish was recognised in 1996 when he was awarded the Bene Merente Medal by the Pope. After his death the Christian Care Group took over Athol's work.

### **RELIEVING PRIESTS**

Orakei has been well served by priests who have relieved, sometimes for a long time, between appointments of a parish priest or at times of holidays or sickness. A strong attachment was formed with many of these priests and names that are long remembered include – Fathers Houlihan, McAlpine, Nolan, Peter Dunn, Allardice, Steve Berecz and Monsignor Hunt.

### **J and J**

A remarkable feature of St. Joseph's School is the long term service of Jan Castle, school secretary, and Justine Agnew, a teacher, who joined the staff two decades ago. They have given continuity to the running of the school and have preserved the institutional memory while working with nine different principals.



### **THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

Our Stations at St. Joseph's were replaced in the mid nineteen nineties by Stations portrayed in coloured enameled tiles, the work of well known Auckland artist, Ruth Coyle. She was in her 80s when she completed them.

### **THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

St. Josephs School Orakei has an elected Board to govern the school in conjunction with the Proprietor, who is Bishop Dunn. The Board has an elected chairperson and four elected members one of whom represents the Orakei Marae. There are two further members appointed by the Bishop. The school is represented by the principal and a teacher

elected by the staff. The parish priest is also a member and Father Shannahan always attended our meetings and had something to say, wise and helpful. The job of the board is to administer the day to day running of the school and the maintenance of the buildings. It will make decisions on curriculum, numeracy, literacy etc. It also authorises the purchase of any equipment required and expenditure on major activities like an annual camp. It also appoints the teaching staff. Each member has a specific job – property maintenance, finance, health and safety etc. In the case of St. Joseph's, acquiring the library was achieved by the chairman, Eric Mahoney, who made it his job to drive our request to the Catholic Education Office and they in turn supplied the new building. The Catholic Education Office also helps finance some school maintenance. The Board also applies for grants from different organisations and is sometimes successful. At this point of time the school roll is steadily rising and in the near future a new classroom will be needed. **COLIN NOLA**

### **SCHOOL FEES**

After integration, St. Joseph's, like all our schools, was charged attendance fees by the Catholic Schools Board. In cases of special hardship these fees were waived but the parish had to make up any short fall in parents' payments out of church collections. This placed an extra burden on the parish. Any dip in the economy impacted particularly on state house residents who had children at our school. Monsignor Wright decided to move the responsibility for the short fall on to the school. This became a challenge for the Board of Trustees and the Friends of St. Josephs.



**In February 1999, Father Jim Shannahan became our parish priest. He was 75 and had been ordained in 1949 and a parish priest in Auckland parishes since 1964.**

*He had an extraordinary empathy for people. His special quality was his understanding of the needs and problems of people he met and he retained their love for all their lives. He loved children and he was very popular at the school.*

He came with a reputation for being a "character", old school, unconventional and independent. He hated meetings, producing receipts and conforming to all the formalities of running a parish.

*He was a rebel and also a traditionalist. He would not endorse "Tui Motu" because it had too many new ideas and approaches for him.*

He had an "agin the government" attitude to authority. He would sort his mail by opening hand written letters and throwing any typed letters from the diocese, unopened, into the rubbish bin.

*He used to perform amazing numbers of Baptisms – 61 infants and 23 adults, eg. in 2002. People who knew him in other parishes brought their children to him.*

It was said he had married more couples than any other priest in Auckland.

*For many years he was involved with Catholic Services and he had also been a prison chaplain. Occasionally he would be visited in Orakei by some of his old ex-con friends.*



**Father Jim Shannahan decades before he became our parish priest in 1999.**

Father Jim did not like spending parish money. He would rather it went to worthy causes. He believed parish jobs should be done by volunteers. He did not like paying for jobs, so he tried to clean-out the presbytery guttering himself.

*He was an unofficial chaplain for the Croatian community because of close contact with them when he was in Henderson and Te Atutu. He attended many of their weddings and socials.*

He would not have any women come in to interfere with his life style or tidy up his presbytery. Sometimes it needed it.

*In his lifetime he was honoured by both the Pope and the Queen for his work.*

He had great gift for remembering people's names and as he gave out Communion he was always able to say the name of each person.

*In every newsletter he always provided a wonderfully simple story on the front page. It carried a powerful, interesting, easy-to-read message – long after his sermons had lost their edge.*

He loved the Latin Mass and on second Sundays he would say Mass in Latin at 11am at St. Joseph's and once a month at the St. Mary's Old Chapel in Ponsonby.

***As Monsignor Shannahan was lying on his death bed he said to a priest who dropped in to see him, "They will be making up the parish rosters for next year. Tell that Bishop, Orakei is mine!"***

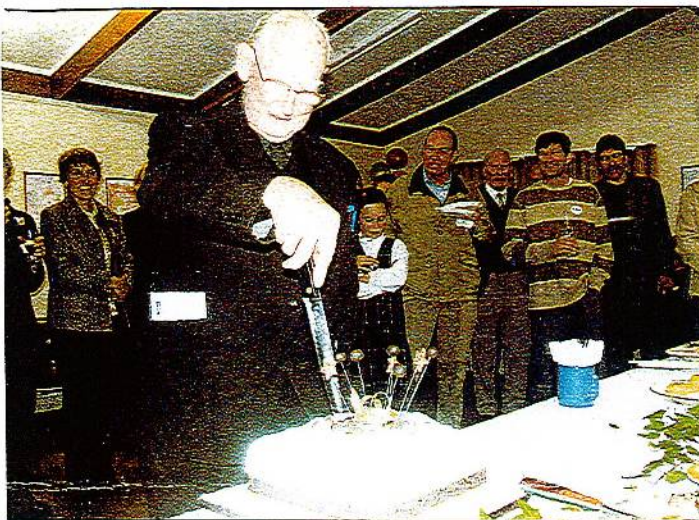
St. Joseph's church was closed for three days late in 1999 while it was treated for borer - 48 years after its original construction.

Sister Sarju of the Marist Order moved into the Brenton Place Convent and made it her base for several years as she served as Chaplain to Auckland's Indian community.

Father Shannahan's Golden Jubilee of his ordination was celebrated over three days in July 1999. There was an assembly of the school children in the church when they presented their own special tributes. Next day, Saturday, many friends from his former parishes unexpectedly turned up to share and sing at the Mass he was concelebrating with his brother, Father Frank. On Sunday, in the church and in the hall, the celebrations continued.

In 2000 our school children began collecting money to finance Worknesk Mulugela, an Ethiopian student, through the Christian Children's Fund. The enthusiasm and the funds ran out after two years.





**Monsignor Jim Shannahan cuts the cake at a parish party to celebrate his elevation to Monsignor. After Mass on February 23, 2003 the hall was filled with a large gathering of friends and parishioners for the occasion. The author of this history is third from the right.**

In 2002 Monsignor Shannahan was honoured by the Pope John Paul who conferred on him the title of Prelate of Honour.

Parish Statistics 2002  
 Parish income \$25,147  
 Baptisms, 61 infants 23  
 Confirmations 16  
 Marriages 4  
 Unpaid School Fees  
 \$6200

Wednesday, April 23, 2003 was a sad day for St. Joseph's parish. The presbytery caught fire and was gutted. No one was injured but records were lost. The cause was probably an electric fault. Monsignor Shannahan moved into a residence in Mission Bay while the renovations costing \$187,000 took place.

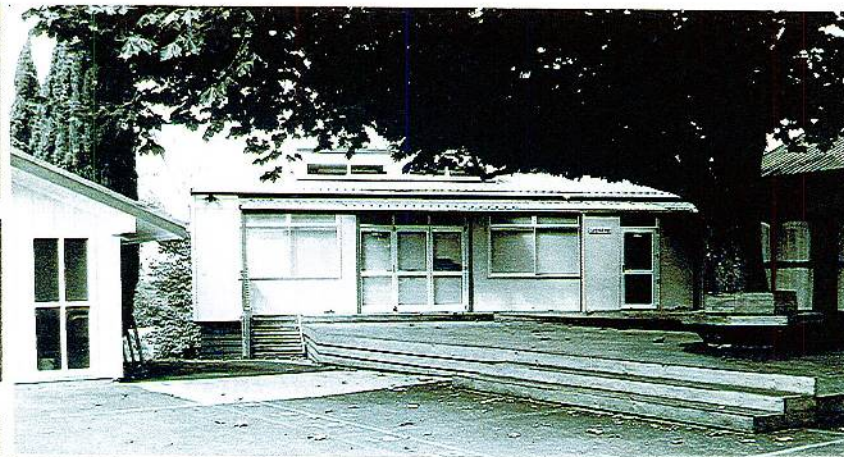
At a parish council meeting it was suggested a bell be put in our church belfry. The idea was well received but no action was taken. 2001

St. Joseph's school in 2004 had three full time teachers, three part time and three part time teacher's aides

In late 2005 the Friends of St. Joseph's ran a garage sale and also a sausage sizzle outside The Warehouse and they raised \$3300.

The Maori claim to own the beaches and foreshore bitterly divided the Country as it became a legislative issue in 2004. The Church strongly promoted biculturalism, rejected by the majority of Kiwis and some parishioners who maintained we had become a multi-culture nation.

Parishioners joined in the world wide outburst of admiration and respect for Pope John Paul when he died in 2005. His long papacy and his final years of suffering impacted on the lives of us all.



**As the school roll increased there was great pressure on space and there was a much needed requirement for a school library. In 2007, a library block was built between the church and the double classrooms and it was paid for by the diocese.**

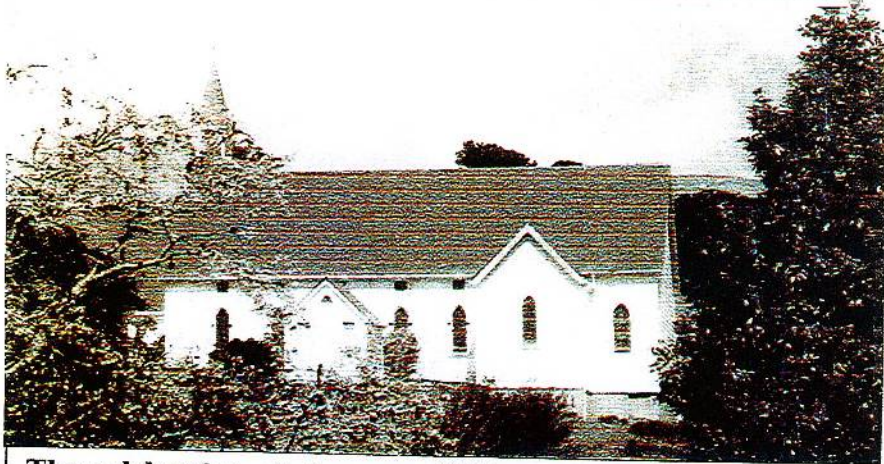
The St. Joseph's school celebrated its Golden Jubilee October 18 and 19, 2008. A dinner in a marquee on the church grounds was planned on the Saturday evening with a family picnic after Mass next day. When the marquee arrived on the Friday it was found to be far too small. A replacement was not available. Parents rallied. Scaffolding was borrowed and volunteers erected it on the deck outside the classroom. Two huge tarpaulins were used for cover and all was completed in time. The dinner went well in spite of a downpour. A power point presentation showing classes, teachers and school events of former years was much appreciated.

In the Birthday Honours, 2007, Monsignor Shannahan was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to the community. It was a proud occasion for the Church in Auckland and the parish.

The Sierra Club is an international organisation dedicated to the fostering of vocations in the Church. In 2008 it presented Monsignor Shannahan with an award for his work in encouraging vocations in New Zealand.



## THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL, PUHOI



The celebration of the year 2000 was planned around the world. Fears many computers had not been programmed to cope with the numerical switch from the 1900s to 2000 threatened air travel and the banking system. Our Bishops call to celebrate the Christian importance of the occasion got little response from a nation occupied with the computer bug and New Year parties. Father Jim wanted the parish to make a pilgrimage to the Priests' Cemetery at Panmure as a fitting way to acknowledge the contributions of the priests of the past. However, many were not happy at the thought of children clambering over tombstones. Finally it was decided to celebrate the Jubilee 2000 by making a pilgrimage to Puhoi and attending Mass in the historic church of St. Peter and Paul. Over 80 parishioners took part and also shared a lunch in the community hall, followed by an entertaining gathering.

By 2002 the build up of cars delivering and collecting pupils caused traffic chaos, road block and dangerous conditions in the school grounds and in Brenton Place. The diocese spent \$40,000 on a one way road system inside the grounds to improve safety and traffic flow but nothing could be done to reduce the number of cars.

\$30,000 were raised for the school from a dinner held by the Friends at the Ellerslie Racecourse in November 2000.

Father Shannahan gave very little recognition to his passing years. In 2000, he fell off a ladder while cleaning the leaves out of the presbytery spouting.. With his arm in a sling he had to reduce his activities for some weeks.

2000 The old macracapa trees in the school grounds had become a hazard. Permission was obtained to cut them down. The wood was sold for \$20 a trailer, for school funds

The area plan for "Planning For the Future" was finalised with our local parishes and sent to the diocese. It was given approval. 2001

The return of the remains of Bishop Pompallier was of great historic and religious importance to the Church in New Zealand. The relics were taken to and honoured in various parts of the Country and on January 14, 2002 they were received at the Orakei marae for a special hui organised by the Ngati Whatua.

Some parishioners began practising to take a paraliturgy as part of a parish undertaking to prepare in case a priest was not available to say a Sunday Mass. 2002



*The St. Joseph's window was designed by Margaret Harding and was donated anonymously to the parish. It was installed in the sanctuary in 2001 and caused an upset with the parish council which considered it should have been consulted about the matter.*

Father Emile Frische, M.H.M. a New Zealand priest, stationed in New York and present at the Twin Tower site for several days, wrote to say "Thank You" for the prayers for victims of the unforgettable tragedy of 9/11. 2001





Orakei Parish, like most inner city Auckland parishes, has experienced many changes in the ethnic mix of its congregation. The school and Church now see a mix of European New Zealanders, Maori, Tongan, Samoan and Croatian along with more recent arrivals from China, Korea and the Philippines. Among St. Joseph's parishioners are people who started life in Poland, South Africa, Ireland, England, Australia and the United States of America to name just a few. Earlier congregations, we understand, were made up of a Maori/European NZ group and this seems to be an indication of how Auckland in general has changed. **TERRY MIKKELSEN**

