

News from St Michael's Community

March 2004
Volume 19

Services Timetable

Sunday Eucharist

8am & 10am

Saturday Vigil 5pm

Monday 7.15am Cluny Convent

Tuesday 7am

Wednesday 9am

Thursday 7am

Friday 12.05pm

Saturday 8am

Adoration of Blessed Sacrament

Friday 11am

Benediction

Friday 12 noon

Reconciliation

Friday 11.30am

Saturday 9.30am

Revelations

is produced for the friends
and parishioners of
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Revelations

Rejoice, heavenly powers!



First Mass of Easter



Robert Tingey Photography

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From our Parish Priest....

Although Lent is almost over, the final week offers an excellent opportunity to reflect on and deepen our appreciation of the Easter journey. We may be inspired to go the extra mile. The following is the text of a sermon Monsignor Arahill gave at the combined Catholic-Anglican service on Ash Wednesday at St Mark's Church.

We are setting out on a journey – a journey from ashes to Easter.

Easter is sometimes a problem for us Christians. We think that Jesus rising from the dead is very good proof that Jesus is who he said he was – Son of God, Son of Man, an inexplicable mixture of the divine and human, found in one person. We probably find it easier to call him Jesus of Nazareth, than Jesus, Son of the living God! And yet that is what Easter proclaims.

Another reason we find Easter a bit of a problem is that we are not really convinced that we are only gathered here in this place because of the Easter Christ. This church building of St Mark's would not be here if Christ had not risen from the dead. If Christ has not risen from the dead then let's forget about trying to preserve St Marks, St Michael's, Holy Trinity Cathedral, St Patrick's Cathedral. Let's pull them down. What does St Paul say: "If Christ has not risen from the dead then our faith is useless."

We do not gather or build churches to remember a hero, a man who died in defence of his principles. We believe in someone who came to give life and give it to the full. We are here because we believe that death is not final. It is the opening out to life in all its fullness. We are Christian because we believe that we have been christened, united with Christ. We have become other Christs. The waters of Baptism are thicker than the blood that unites us with the members of our human family.

So we prepare for Easter, prepare for the time when once again we stand for Christ. We renew our commitment to grow in Christ. Easter is proclaiming that Christ is alive and at the same time saying with Paul: "I am alive. Or rather, not I. It is Christ who lives in me." And that is what Lent is all about. (You thought I was never going to get to the subject!). Lent is the journey to Easter.

We all know it is not easy driving around Auckland these days. Quite often I have to make the journey to Pompallier Centre, in Ponsonby, and then back again, to Remuera. It is often a slow, tiresome journey, stopping and starting and, Oh, it takes so long! There seem to be so many obstacles in the way. Why are there so many cars on the road when I want to get somewhere in a hurry?

But the real question is: why are there so many obstacles in my life that prevent me from being more alive in Christ? Well, you have to work at removing obstacles, despite the

Light of Christ!

Rejoice, heavenly powers!
Sing, choirs of angels!
Exult, all creation around God's throne!
Jesus Christ, our King is risen!
Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,
radiant in the brightness of your King!
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes forever!

Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!
The risen Saviour shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

How boundless your merciful love!
To ransom a slave
you gave away your Son.

O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam,
which gained for us so great a Redeemer!
Most blessed of all nights, chosen by God
to see Christ rising from the dead!

Of this night scripture says:
"The night will be as clear as day;
it will become my light, my joy."
The power of this holy night
dispels all evil, washes guilt away,
restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy;

May the morning Star which never sets
find this flame still burning:
Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead,
and shed his peaceful light on us all,
your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Easter Proclamation (Exultet),

cost. You have to find new ways. And lent is about removing some obstacles, finding new ways. We call it penance, self denial, giving up dependence on those things that we fool ourselves into thinking we need for comfort, even for our health.

Perhaps we will make an opportunity to spend a short time in silence each day pondering the scriptures. We might give up something and the money we save give to some Lenten appeal.

And then when we come to renew our commitment to Christ at Easter, we will be able to say: Lent with its call to change of heart has made a difference. I am a little more alive in Christ. With greater enthusiasm and sincerity we will be able to shout: We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song!

Holy Week at St Michael's Parish, Remuera

Palm Sunday	4 April	Blessing of Palms at all Masses Saturday 5pm Sunday 8 & 10am Reconciliation Sunday 7pm
Monday	5 April	Chrism Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral <i>The Blessing of Holy Oils</i> 7.30pm
Tuesday	6 April	Mass 7am
Wednesday	7 April	Mass 9am
Holy Thursday	8 April	Mass of the Lord's Supper 7.30pm Watching at the Garden Altar to Night Prayer 10.30pm
Good Friday	9 April	Families walk with the Cross 10am Liturgy of the Cross 3pm <i>Confessions after both services</i> Prayer around the Cross 7pm <i>With other Churches</i>
Holy Saturday	10 April	Reconciliation <i>Confessions</i> 9.30am No 5pm Mass
Easter Sunday	11 April	First Mass of Easter 5.30am Easter Mass & Baptism of Children 10am <i>ALLELUIA. ALLELUIA</i>

New St Michael's School Teachers

We asked the two new teachers to supply a little information about themselves, to give readers an appreciation of their achievements.

My name is **Nicola Gray**. Room Five at St Michael's is my very first class! Last year I completed my Graduate Diploma in Primary Teaching at Auckland College of Education. I also hold a Bachelor of Arts in History and Ethics from Auckland University.



I was raised in South Auckland but later moved to Blockhouse Bay to be closer to University and the city. I still live there. It is a bit of a drive but definitely worth it.

I am really enjoying St Michael's School. I have found the parents and staff especially supportive and welcoming. I realise this year will be a challenging one but I am very much looking forward to it.

My name is **Phoebe Cunningham Tyler**. This year I am teaching the Year 6 class located in Room 10. I am a secondary school trained teacher with a Bachelor of Arts in English from Auckland University. I completed a Diploma in Teaching at Auckland College of Education in 1998. My career started at St Mary's in Avondale where I developed my skills as a primary teacher at year 7 and 8. After 3 years at St Mary's I travelled with my husband to England. There I taught in a variety of schools throughout England and in the London area for a year. This year I returned to New Zealand to further my teaching career at St Michael's. I am enjoying it greatly.



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PARISHIONER PROFILE

Well-known parishioners Jack and Valerie Farrell were married in St Michael's church in 1948, and have lived in Remuera since 1990.

Jack and Valerie Farrell live their life largely influenced by being Catholic. Their daughter Margaret-Mary Farrell, a fellow parishioner, says that the Farrell home and values reflect the couple's faith in many aspects. As parents they led by example: the Mass, a belief in the power of prayer, and parish life as a focus of every day life. They have worked together and individually for many years to serve their parish and diocese.

Valerie spent her early years in Grey Lynn in a family of 4 girls and 2 boys. Her parents ran a grocery and the family lived behind the store. During World War II Valerie worked for a government agency called the Internal Marketing Division, which exported fruit and vegetables. Staff were expected to help the war effort with unpaid night work in the store. Valerie particularly remembers her evenings culling cabbages.

Jack was brought up in Onehunga and attended Sacred Heart College. He joined the Inland Revenue Department, at that time based in Wellington. It was a great opening for a young man during the years of the Depression. World War II saw Jack serving in the Middle East as a communications specialist. It was his job to decode and encode signals traffic to and from Wellington for General Freyberg's intelligence unit in Cairo.

The Farrells met at a Catholic dance at the Pitt Street hall. They married in 1948 at St Michael's, which had become Valerie's parish church. They built a house in Mt Roskill before moving to Papakura where Jack set up his own accounting practice. South Auckland remained their base for nearly 40 years.

Despite a busy professional life, Jack became a local councillor and then mayor of Papakura. He was one of the early members of the Auckland Diocesan Pastoral Council, in the days of Bishop Delargey, and was Chairman of the Council in the mid-1970s. This was a big task because the diocese was very large, stretching from Kaitaia to Gisborne and Taupo. This was before the Hamilton diocese was created in 1980.

Valerie was also busy in community affairs, with the Catholic Women's League in the Papakura parish and also with social services in Papakura, with Friendship House in Manukau City and with the South Auckland Hospice, where Jack was a board member. This was in a period before government funding of the hospice movement. It required unceasing efforts by volunteers to raise money and also to spend many hours as drivers and care givers.

In 1990 Jack and Valerie moved to Remuera to be closer to their five children – John, Estelle, Bernadette, Margaret-Mary and Simon. Both have been volunteers at the Mercy



Jack and Valerie Farrell

Hospice. Valerie has served as President of the Remuera branch of the Catholic Women's League, and Jack is one of a growing number of men who occasionally attend the CWL lunches. Both are long time members of the Manukau Golf Club. Valerie was ladies' president at the club; she jokes that it was the only office she ever held which did not involve fundraising.

Both Jack and Valerie are well known in the Remuera parish for their hospitality and have hosted many social functions in their own home or at the parish centre. This follows a practice they started in Papakura. Both are disappointed that today's Catholics do not seem to be interested in socialising with fellow parishioners. They instance the lack of follow-up after the successful initial Alpha course three years ago. Valerie feels that there is a need for organised social interaction, and hopes the parish can persevere and find a formula that works. She sees a particular problem for house-bound young mothers, who can easily feel isolated.

Another area of concern is the Church's attitude on divorce. While supporting the need to respect and protect marriage, Jack and Valerie consider the alternative of resorting to annulments is a farce. They think something must be done to stem the loss to the Church of so many divorced Catholics who are denied access to the sacraments and unable to regularise their matrimonial status in the eyes of the Church. Jack and Valerie particularly regret the apparently uneven application of the Church's rules in this area, and consider that divorced Catholics should not be forced to shop around to find an understanding priest who will help them.

Finally, the Farrells hope that the Church will make room in the ministry for married men and those who do not feel the call to the celibate life. They regret the continuing loss of many committed Catholic men who are prepared to offer their services to the Church.

What will the Church be like for our children?

Sean Gollin grew up in St Dominic's parish, Blockhouse Bay. He attended St Dominic's School and Marcellin College. Sean is a litigation partner in the law firm Minter Ellison Rudd Watts. He is married to fellow lawyer, Wendy.

Wendy and I have been part of the parish for about 10 years. We have two boys, Christopher and Thomas, aged 7 and 3 respectively. Both were baptised at St Michaels. Christopher attends St Michael's school, and we hope Thomas will too.

As a product of the Catholic education system, it pleases me to think that our two boys will emerge into the world having had their characters shaped by the Christian values instilled by the St Michael's school and parish communities.

I sometimes wonder what the Church will be like when Christopher and Thomas are my age, raising families of their own. With a dwindling number of priests emerging from seminaries and talk about parishes amalgamating or sharing priests, they may find themselves part of a Church community largely serviced by lay people, and only periodically visited by a "parish" priest who resides elsewhere. This raises several issues.

One issue is the need for increased "democratisation" within the Church, at parish level. My impression is that some parishes are run by an executive which is hand-picked by the parish priest, with the only body elected by the parish community – the parish council – being relatively impotent. In circumstances where there is no longer a priest on site and parishioners play a greater role in leading the community's worship, such top down governance structures need to be challenged. Instead, a more empowered parish council might be justified, elected by and from the community, and governing through an executive selected by the parish council itself.

Another issue is the decline in the number of priests. Perhaps this may be eased by renewed appeals to young men to accept a vocation, although I suspect this will not be a complete answer. It may be that young priests will need to be brought from countries previously the recipients of our own missionary efforts, but this can only be a short term expedient. Longer term, I wonder whether support will grow for the admission of married or women priests, and how the Church might address this issue over time. I for one confess to having never understood the argument, logically or doctrinally, for the prohibition on married and women priests. Although by inclination a conservative in my outlook, removal of this prohibition is a change that I would welcome.

These matters aside, I believe the most significant challenge for the Church of the future is that raised by advances in genetics. Medical science is already such that the entire human gene has been mapped. Clones have



been created of sheep and other animal species, and the ability to clone humans is only around the corner. Less dramatic is the ability to manipulate gene strands at the embryonic stage of development to eliminate the occurrence of genetic disorders.

The choice presented to any parent to genetically engineer against the possibility of such disorders in their unborn child presents a temptation greater than anything Adam ever faced. Yet, despite the apparent short term benefits, no degree of experimentation can ever improve on nature, and no one can really predict the consequences several generations down the track.

The challenge for the Church will be to decide where one should draw the line. How should the opportunities permitted by medical advances be managed? How will the Church respond to parents in the scenario posited above? How will the Church encourage its people to veer away from the temptation to play God, and instead to trust in God?

I wonder how the Church of the future will grapple with these issues. Through the ages, the Church has been characterised by its resilience and ability to adapt, although sometimes slowly. I am confident that the Church in which my children raise their children will rise to these challenges, not least through the faith of its people and the Christian values the Church reposes in its young.

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Kiwi Priest in Holland

Fr Marcel Smits will be well known to most parishioners from his time on pastoral placement at St Michael's. Marcel was recently in New Zealand on holiday from Utrecht where he works as a parish priest. He shares some thoughts about his experience of church in the Netherlands.



For the last three years I have been working in the archdiocese of Utrecht in the Netherlands. My appointment there is as parish priest of five small village parishes along the German border, very near the birth place of my ancestors. In that diocese, the shortage of priests and generally all who do paid pastoral work is great. Consequently, all ministry is on a pastoral area basis, with an average of five parishes per pastoral team. I form a team of two with a pastoral worker, and together we are responsible for those five parishes (7,500 Catholics, just over half the total population). However it is likely that before year's end we will be fifteen parishes, with a team of five (two priests and three pastoral workers), serving 29,000 Catholics. The big question in everyone's mind at this time is "What does that mean? What sort of ministry will that be?" So there are long discussions as to how that can happen, while still remaining meaningful for parishioner and pastor alike. Big questions, with, as yet, no clear answers.

In the meantime, I try on a daily basis to keep in touch with five parishes. That is a challenge. Theoretically, I celebrate in three parishes one weekend and in the other two the following weekend, but in practice this often is not the case: individual parishes have specific requests, sometimes to the exclusion of others. Somehow that is understandable: these parishes have functioned independently, in some cases for centuries, having no contact with the neighbouring one, and they are only just beginning the process of working together. That doesn't change overnight.

There are several features of church life that are quite different from in New Zealand. Generally, the parish situation is more formal than here. There is more distance kept between priest and people. I am surprised when many remark that this is improving in a refreshing way over the years, because it is still much more formal than in New Zealand!

Another challenging element in Dutch church life is that it is very segmented. People operate individually or in specific groups, and it's almost as if never shall the twain meet. On the large scale this is called polarisation, and it's very tangible. Individual parishes have often gone their own way, pastorally and liturgically. That is particularly

difficult at this time when it is so necessary that they communicate and cooperate with each other, at least to some degree, and that they have some sense of being part of something bigger, a larger Church, the Catholic Church.

Before you think it's all bad, there are very positive aspects to life and work in Dutch parishes. Lay involvement in the life and running of things is much more developed, recognised and accepted than in New Zealand. Lay people are filling all sorts of functions at parish, deanery and diocesan level. Parish workers have an appointment by the Bishop for the work they do. The diocese and deanery have excellent training and formation programmes available and open to all parishioners. People in parishes are given the opportunity to utilise talents for the good of the community, tasks formerly often left to, though not restricted to, the ordained minister. The whole community, and not least the individuals themselves benefit greatly from this. And as pastor I can have more time for attending to parishioners' needs than worrying about whether we have enough money to keep the church building standing. If I am kept busy with something in one parish, I know, for example, that the sick are being cared for in the other four.

In Holland, things move slowly. It takes a very long time for answers or decisions to be made and for things to happen, partly because of the amount of consultation that is needed, which in itself is not a bad thing. While that can stretch even the patience of a saint, it does free us of the stop-gap decisions, the "look or you'll miss it" things that life in New Zealand sometimes seems so full of.

When I become burdened by the politics and other "overheads" (or because I am not a saint and my patience has run out!) I go off and do some pastoral work, however inefficient that might be in the greater scheme of things. When it comes down to it, parishioners want pastoral care, and that personal aspect of the work remains worthwhile and fulfilling, and ultimately what it's all about. Sharing with people what God is doing in their lives. It is the people of God who remind me why I am there.



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Finance Council Report

The Parish Finance Council met monthly during the year and is pleased to report that there were no financial surprises during 2003. The parish was fortunate during the year to receive a bequest of \$58,000 from the estate of the late Patrick Cooper which has been invested with the Diocese for a good part of the year. The retained Bequests Account balance now stands at \$278,000 and produced interest of nearly \$14,000 during the year.

The total operating income received amounted to \$164,163 (budget \$160,939). Giving was steady during the year, with pledges of \$214,823 received (budget \$214,900 – \$213,472 in 2002) and loose cash \$38,107 (budget \$40,030 - \$40,295 in 2002). From this pool of funds, 25% was transferred to the House Trust account (in lieu of a first collection) for the support of the parish priest, housekeeping for the parish house, an allocation for the support of the bishop's household and the balance contributed for the support and care of retired priests.

During the year, total special collections received and forwarded amounted to close to \$10,000 – almost half (\$4500) represented the Caritas Lenten Appeal. In addition, \$200 a month was donated to a nearby needy parish and donations of around \$2,500 were shared among Christian Broadcasting, Starship Children's Hospital Chapel Fund, the Catholic Enquiry Centre, Monte Cecilia, Family Life International and Pregnancy Help.

Rental income received from 1, 4 (MacKillop House) and 8 Beatrice Road amounted to \$84,656 (budget \$75,800 – \$80,944 in 2002) and was achieved by having the flats fully tenanted during the year at market rentals. These properties are a valuable strategic asset for the parish, and produce a significant income which enables the parish to allocate significant funds to pastoral ministry.

Care and management of the parish plant involves a considerable amount of expertise and funding. We are particularly fortunate to have the services of parishioner Bob Coombe who is an exceptional plant manager – Bob oversees all significant maintenance of our properties, timetables the maintenance programme and his keen eye alerts us to potential problems before they become expensive disasters.

In 2004 we have allocated over \$70,000 for plant maintenance – the biggest single item being replacement of the roof of the parish house at a cost of around \$40,000.

In 2003 Dave Pearson Architects Ltd was commissioned to produce a conservation plan for the future management of the church building. The draft document has been received and once it has been reviewed, edited and reprinted, it will be available to parishioners for comment. The completed conservation plan will be used as

the base document for decision making regarding the care and enhancement of the church. The document has identified a number of maintenance issues that need to be addressed and these will be incorporated into a maintenance plan covering the next 5 years.

Parish Account expenditure (net of GST) amounted to \$165,923 in 2003 against a budget of \$198,630 (and \$150,501 in 2002). We were again successful in obtaining a rates abatement for the MacKillop House property (\$6000). We also successfully applied for a Lotteries Board grant of \$6000 to assist with the costs of the conservation plan. This will be received during 2004.

The overall cash position of the parish improved significantly during the year ending 31 December 2003 resulting in \$115,306 as against \$63,118 in 2002. The loan to the diocese for the MacKillop House building was reduced by \$22,000 from \$289,000 to \$267,000. We continue to reduce this loan by \$2,000 per month as well as meet the interest of 5% pa on the principal outstanding.

Much consultation regarding a possibility of providing a sheltered space in front of the church took place during the year. A design team co-ordinated by parishioner Ron Seeto was formed and there have been many meetings with the Auckland City Council Heritage Agency and the New Zealand Historic Places Society. The process is continuing and we are hopeful of having something more definite to report in the next few weeks.

A full set of the parish accounts, prepared by Hargrave Accounting Limited is available to any parishioner on request through the parish office.

The Finance Council (Monsignor Brian Arahill, Carey Pearce, Kevin Pickworth, Phillip Bell, Bob Coombe and Pat de Zoete) meet every 4th Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in the Parish House. It welcomes feedback, questions about finances or any good ideas people have for the better use of our resources. The Council acknowledges the contribution of Mike Going who resigned from the Council during 2003 and of all those who assisted in its work in any way during the year.

Pat de Zoete



Lock, Stock and Barrel

Parishoners Joe and Christabelle Matthews talk about their lives in their two homes, India and New Zealand.

Christianity took birth in India in AD 52 with the arrival of St Thomas, the Apostle from Syria. He reached the Cranganore Port in the state of Kerala in southern India. The same is documented in the writings of the emissary of the Holy See of Antioch in Syria. The followers of St Thomas were thereafter labelled Syrian Christians. Today they hub around the southern state of Kerala. St Thomas on his demise was buried in Madras (Chennai of today).

In May 1498 Vasco-da-Gama the Portugese explorer came to Kerala introducing Catholicism into the Indian subcontinent. In 1542 St Francis Xavier, the Spanish born Portugese missionary arrived in Goa on the Arabian Sea coast and established the Church of Rome in India. On his death, he was embalmed and buried in Goa; the tomb of St Francis Xavier in the sate capital at Panaji (or Panjim) is a place for pilgrimage for the Christian community in India and around the world. In 1622 St Francis Xavier was canonised.

The East India Company and the British entered India in early 1700's leading the way for the Anglican Church. By the turn of the late 19th century the Indian subcontinent was home to a multitude of Christian faiths. Of the 25 million Christians in India, the majority is concentrated in the southern India states of Kerala and Goa.

I, Joe, come from the state of Kerala which is at the southern tip of India facing the Arabian Sea. 'Kerala' in the local Malayalam language (Keralam) means 'Coconuts' – and the State lives up to its name – with an abundance of coconut plantations. The state has a tropical environment with lush green flora and fauna – a major destination for tourism, especially with its unique backwater landscape. In tourism circles, the state is described as 'God's own', a major attraction being the backwater cruises in thatched, luxurious five star river boats, ayurvedic herbal treatments, ancient temples and wild life.

A predominantly matriarchal system is synonymous with the family structure in Kerala. Mothers tend to be deeply religious and instil values focussing on family and worship. Devotion to prayer and faith strongly permeate the community.

The earliest memories of childhood recall a strong relationship with Jesus and the Church. Family prayers under the supervision and guidance of the elders, is a daily ritual. The day starts at sunrise when the whole family congregates in the living room and prays for half hour or so. Each school going child has to read aloud a chapter from the Bible. The same procedure is repeated at night before retiring to bed.

On graduation from the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, I was commissioned into the Indian Army – one fine



morning a pair of Lieutenant's stars was bestowed on my shoulders. Having entered the national mainstream from now on, one was exposed to other faiths, largely Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. The Indian Army, like the Indian nation is a highly secular organisation and is built on a tradition of 'service before self'. Nevertheless, religious sentiments are respected and encouraged in the Army, as the soldiers who are largely from rural India are very religious. There is also a strong belief in faith and God when going into battle. The system was introduced during the British India era when all Indian Army regiments and battalions had Pundits or religious preachers recruited to the units. This practice is still followed today. Any significant occasion, be it a sporting event, a conflict situation, a festival, an operational/administrative move etc, calls for customary prayers by the whole unit before and after the event. The 250 year old traditions and customs of the Indian Army are well preserved. It is a well known fact that the Indian Army of today is more British than the British Army (let me not start with the Officers' Mess Rules!).

The high point of my Army career was graduating from the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington, India, with a Masters in Defence & Strategic studies, and subsequently the command of an Infantry Battalion in an operational environment.

Marriage to Christabelle from Goa, was an intermingling of cultures. Christabelle is from idyllic Goa, which accounts for her propensity to favour wines, music and lazy afternoon siestas. Goa, even today displays its rich Portugese heritage – very Catholic and very God fearing. The Sunday mass stands out for its near Latin services, black veils and rosary beads in abundance. Most homes have an altar at the entrance to the house with the Sacred Heart and Mother Mary along with a patron Saint. In the months of December and January it could be any other town in Portugal where the tourists from Europe overwhelm the Goan landscape. Christmas and New Year (contineud P9)

festivities reach a feverish pitch culminating with the Carnival in February.

The decision to move to New Zealand was made in order to settle down to a steady family life and provide our daughter Rhea with an ideal environment in which to grow and develop. To this end our travels worldwide revealed that New Zealand is a safe and naturally beautiful country. More importantly we appreciate the sense of justice, community and respect for human values prevalent in New Zealand society.

The first few months were unnerving for fear of the unknown and uncertainties of the future. But these fears were largely obliterated through the fellowship of the Church, particularly St Patrick's Cathedral in the early days and St Michael's parish subsequently, and also through the support and encouragement of new found friends.

Association with St Michael's had the hand of God in it – by a strange coincidence Rhea got admission to St Michael's School. Thereafter the goodness of Monsignor Brian Arahill brought us a home in the warmth of the Coombe household in Remuera. The Coombe family, particularly the large heartedness and support of Vivienne and Bob Coombe, enabled us to settle into our new country effortlessly. We spent two and half glorious years with the Coombes – they helped lay a stable foundation for our future in New Zealand.

The Army fraternity in New Zealand integrated me into their social fold – thanks to the universal Army brotherhood culture. Tom and Judy Aldridge, and Bill Meldrum, and other retired officers of the New Zealand Army ensured that I maintained my association with my Alma Mater.

With the Christian influence at St Michael's school, and under the guidance and understanding of the then Principal Craig McCarthy, the teachers and staff, Monsignor, and most importantly the support and friendship of her fellow students, Rhea has blossomed into what we expected of her.

I work for the Government, and Christabelle assists people plan their overseas holidays as a Travel Consultant with Air New Zealand.

Today we can say that we have finally arrived in New Zealand. A new chapter in our lives has begun – in the land of the long white cloud - our Aotearoa.

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Children's Liturgy

We have had a Children's Liturgy at St. Michael's for about 15 years. It was started by parents who saw a need for it. There is usually a Children's Liturgy at the 10am Mass most Sundays during the school term, other than at the monthly Family Mass and when a 5th Sunday occurs in the month. On a 5th Sunday there is a School Mass. Many of us may have little idea about what goes on when the children are gathered at the beginning of Mass and despatched below by Monsignor, in the care of a group of leaders, to reappear at the Preparation of the Gifts, when it is customary for children from the group to take up the gifts. A Children's Liturgy is not simply a convenient way of occupying the younger children during the readings and homily. It is essentially an opportunity for the children to participate in the Liturgy of the Word and related activities, at a level that is appropriate for them.

To do this well requires considerable preparation by the leaders. They are responsible for setting up the room. This usually includes a simple table with candles and a special place for reading the Word of God. They also prepare in advance any activity material that may be needed. The aim is to create a welcoming environment and an informal atmosphere, so that the children will feel that they are involved in something special.

The leaders have the benefit of a well-tryed, creatively put-together guide, *The Complete Children's Liturgy Book*. In addition to providing a wide range of activities, prayers and background information for use throughout the Church's 3-year cycle, it also provides considerable flexibility and an opportunity for leaders to use their own initiative to meet different needs and circumstances. An additional value of a separate Children's Liturgy lies in the benefit the children derive from the discipline of their own Liturgy which mirrors the Liturgy taking place upstairs.

How can parents of the children involved help to reinforce and ensure the success of the Children's Liturgy? The Children's Liturgy depends for its effectiveness on the services of dedicated volunteers, usually, but not always, parents of some of the children involved. However, all parents can help by taking suitable opportunities to discuss with their children what is done and talked about each Sunday. This is a valuable way of re-enforcing the message. We are short of leaders. Our present group of dedicated experienced leaders would welcome the assistance of more parents and/or others to help with this important ministry. At present we have a team of 15 in all, rostered in groups of 3 each Sunday. As is customary with most voluntary organisations, the Children's Liturgy is based on peer-sharing. The more experienced leaders help the less-experienced until they feel comfortable leading a Liturgy themselves.

(If you are interested in helping please call **Birgita Muller** (524-9029 or email birgita@ihug.co.nz)

(continued on Page 15)

Hunting for Wildlife in St Michael's (Part 2)

Sylvia Keenan continues to explore the rich and varied depictions of animals and other creatures in the decoration of our church.



The picture over the interior stairs has God the Father as an old man deleted. The title of the picture is "The Holy Family". We usually think of the Holy Family as Our Lady, St Joseph and the Infant Jesus. This is a different concept, which should show God the Father at the top, with underneath the dove for the Holy Spirit and Our Lady holding Jesus when he was about four years old. St Elizabeth and St John the Baptist are looking on. There is a sheep beside St John.

At the window of the Presentation in the Temple we have the two pigeons, which poor people offered for sacrifice on the presentation to God of their first-born male child. In what was once the old baptistery, but which now holds the very popular Book of Remembrance, we have the small window of the Baptism of Christ with the dove over his head.



We come to the window of Pentecost and see another dove. The window of St Columba opposite Our Lady's statue also features a dove - above the saint's head.

The East-South Rose window: the top and bottom windows feature the alpha and omega symbolizing God who is the beginning and the end of all things. The quarter to and quarter past windows, if it was a clock, feature the Greek letters for Jesus Saviour of Men. The six remaining windows of the lower half relate to Our Lady: Queen of Heaven, Mary our Hope (the M superimposed on the anchor), Tower of Ivory, House of Gold, Morning Star, Refuge of Sinners, Queen of Apostles and Martyrs. These are all titles of Our Lady.



The top half of the window features six of the seven sacraments with the Blessed Sacrament, the host and chalice, forming the centre-piece of the window. Here we have several doves - for Baptism, for Confirmation, for Extreme Unction (anointing of the sick) which also has a sheep: how this relates to the sacrament of Extreme Unction is unclear.

Under the rose window in the stained glass window of the coronation of Our Lady Queen of Heaven, we have another dove.



Our Lady's marble statue has a snake under her foot. This refers to Genesis where God says to the snake, "You will lie in wait for her heel."

There is a stained glass window of Our Lady above her marble statue. It looks rather like the Assumption because she has the moon under her feet, but it could just as easily refer to the woman in the Apocalypse who has the stars for her crown and the moon under her feet, which we always think of as referring to Our Lady. Under her feet is a green snake. Under the snake is a rose, Mystical Rose being another of Our Lady's titles.



On the top of the pillar by the organ we have two bulls for St Luke facing two different directions. On top of the pillar by Our Lady's statue we have eagles facing in two different directions for St John the evangelist above the sanctuary.

I searched without success inside St Michael's for a fish symbol which you see in most Catholic churches. The fish symbol was much used by early Christians in time of persecution to identify other Christians. It comes from the Greek letters for fish which, when shortened, stand for Christ.

For those readers who lost count, or would like to compare tallies with Sylvia, the article records no less than 33 separate examples of creatures in the internal decoration of St Michael's. We would be pleased to hear from anyone who can point out any that have been overlooked.

“Fulfilling your potential...”

Twenty six young people ranging in age from 12 - 22 spent Waitangi weekend at the Peter Blake Marine Education and Recreation Centre in Long Bay Regional Park. The camp offers participants a chance to work as teams trying out a range of activities led by qualified instructors. The morning and evening slots are filled with a mix of prayer times and social activities led by the parish youth leaders, and a mass celebrated by Monsignor Arahill. Canoeing, climbing, abseiling, kayaking, and a regatta competition to finish with left us all happily exhausted. A personal highlight is seeing the faces of young people come alive as they achieve a personal goal in overcoming an area of anxiety - be it heights, depths or general craziness! Heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to a successful camp - from adult helpers at camp to supportive parents, Monsignor, and all the parishioners who generously supported our fundraising ventures. And finally, thanks to the youth leaders who consistently give to the ministry of youth in and beyond our parish.

Tim Gasson



MILESTONES

Marriages: blessings on...

Hilary Anastasia **Drummond**
and Peter Andrew **Stitchbury**
Fiona Elizabeth **Green** and Mark Bernard **Twomey**
Johanna Rachel **Finlayson** and Wayne John **Denby**
Nadeen Ellen **Pharo** and Adrian James **Parton**
Fiona Lee **Norris** and Stephen Francis **McHardy**
Rowena Eleanor **Merwyn** and David John **Garland**
Melissa Sue **Gamboa** and Mark Altair **Montealegre**
Anya Jane **Williams** and Geoffrey Graeme **Wicks**
Claudia **Shan** and Nelson **Wu**
Nicola Marie **McLaughlin** and Michael John **Baynes**
Teresa Anne **Butler** and Robert Graeme **Leith**
Yunging **Zhu** and Zhiping **Sheng**
Karen Joy **Whitney** and Daniel John **Chorley**
Kelly Sila **Schwelger**
and Gerhard Benjamin **McDonald-Sundborn**
Vanessa **Leonard** and Jarrod Miles **Paltridge**
Anjana Sonali **De Rosario**
and Victor Ruchira Anthony **De Almeida**
Susan Jennifer **Laing** and John William **Corboy**
Bronwyn Ann **Jenkins** and Richard Dean **Sullivan**

Deaths: we pray for...

Joan Elizabeth **Scanlon**
Hung To (Francis) **Lai**
Alan John **Baker**
Theodora Margaretha Johanna **Andreassen**
Joan Mary **Schmitt**
Michael Paul **Reed**
Margaret Theresa Horsman **Gane**

Baptisms; the parish welcomes...

Mackenzie Kimberley **Wills**, daughter of Luke & Johanna
Renee Vicky **Leonard**, daughter of Vanessa and Jarrod
Josephine Flora **Hernon**, daughter of Fiona and John
Sophia Ruth **Brown**, daughter of Kevin and Jan
Emelia Madison **Grace Poulson**,
daughter of Brent and Christine
James Christopher **Van Meeuwen**,
son of Margaret and John
Jack Grant **Doyle**, son of Peter and Wendy
Louis Campbell **Croker**, son of Tom and Ana
Jessica Iona **Simpson**, daughter of Andrew and Edit
Georgia Mae **Hibbert**, daughter of Gary and Natalie
Tom **Yalda**, son of Laith and Aseel
Ana Cristina **Geraldo**, daughter of Nicholas and Juliana
Xavier James Mataira **Coman**, son of Peter and Leanne
Alessandra Grace **Perillo**, daughter of Antony and Sarah
Eva-Rae Tehani **Harris**, daughter of Richard and Leah
Noah Will **Harris**, son of Richard and Leah
Lola Shapera Jean **Robinson-Braddich**,
daughter of David and Kelly
Blake Leyland Molson **Manley**, son of Ross and Janet
Malyba **Muchewa**, child of Dell and Chipso
Emma Rose **Whitlock**, daughter of Jeremy and Antonia
Sean Francis Freer **Hollier**, son of Mark and Fiona
Rachel Alexandra **Hansen**, daughter of Todd and Anna
Charlotte Vanessa Belinda Mary **Simpson**,
daughter of Chris and Vanessa
Lucille Anna **Heather**, daughter of Patsy and James
Adam John **Clayton**, son of David and Susan
Sachia **Porazinski**, daughter of Robert and Louise
Rachel **Kang**
Lydia **Kim**
Christina **Kim**
Bianca Malachi **Adams**

Changing Faces

The new year has seen changes in Remuera parish ministries. **Viki Cullen** has retired after five years as Family ministry coordinator. **Tim Gasson** is now concentrating on the Youth programme. The leadership positions in the Family and Religious Education ministries are being filled by **Sister Francis Kelly**.



Vicky Cullen

Baptism programme a high point

Viki Cullen has enjoyed her term as Family ministry coordinator, and feels privileged to have been given the responsibility and the chance to make a contribution to Catholic family life in the parish.

The high point of Viki's work has been Baptism preparation. She feels fortunate to have inherited an excellent programme, but is pleased she was able to add some touches of her own. These made young families feel welcome in the parish community. One of Viki's innovations was to hold coffee mornings for the mothers in each preparation class. "This was a good way to help them make friends and to get and give encouragement and support", says Viki.

Another of Viki's goals has been a baby sitting service or crèche for young couples wishing to attend the preparation classes. "Here is a wonderful chance for someone in the parish to support the next generation of Catholics." Viki says all parishioners can help by making young parents and families feel very welcome.

Two other strong memories for Viki have been the liturgy for young children presented each Christmas Eve and her close involvement with the Alpha course that was trialled in the parish in 2000. The vigil mass is a great occasion for young members of the parish. "It's a lovely example of the Church in action, a precious moment in the parish year".

For Viki, one interesting aspect of St Michael's experiment with Alpha has been the links made with the Anglican church, within which Alpha developed. The contact began with the Alpha opening dinner in 2000, which was a joint effort of the Alpha teams from St Mark's Anglican community and St Michael's. The contact has continued with Viki and husband Brian being asked to billet a person attending an Alpha conference at the Anglican cathedral last year. Their guest turned out to be a young Catholic English woman from Oxford, "a delightful new friend brought to us by Alpha."

Viki plans to help Brian in his architect practice and also spend more time with their grandchildren. Monsignor Arahill says that the St Michael's community owes a debt to Viki for her dedicated work and thanks her for the warm and caring way she helped our young families.

Well qualified to meet challenge

Sister Francis Kelly views her new role at St Michael's as a something of a challenge. It brings together the parish's three sacramental preparation programmes – Baptism, "Becoming Church" (Reconciliation, Confirmation, First Communion) and "Becoming Catholic" (for adults wishing to join the church). However, she is aware of Remuera's reputation as a supportive Catholic community and she looks forward to continuing the good work done by the people she takes over from - Viki Cullen in the Family ministry and Tim Gasson in the Religious Education area.

The St Michael's role is one that Sister Francis is very well qualified to perform. She has long experience as a teacher in Catholic schools and as the director of formation for her own congregation of St Joseph of Cluny. For six years in the 1980s she was Religious Education Adviser to Catholic secondary schools for the Auckland diocese. More recently she completed a course in Australia on spiritual direction.

Born in Taihape and brought up in the Waikato town of Te Kauwhata (Huntly parish), Francis Kelly had her first taste of RE when she prepared children there for their first Confession and Holy Communion. She qualified as a pharmacist and moved to Auckland, working at Auckland Hospital. It was while she was a resident of the Cluny hostel in Victoria Avenue that she became fully aware of her vocation, and she decided to enter the Cluny novitiate. Before this, however, she lived for a time in Meadowbank where her parents had retired. An MA from Auckland University was followed by a teaching career, much of which was in Suva, Fiji. She recently completed a ten year (continued P13)



Sister Francis Kelly

term as provincial leader of the Cluny congregation in New Zealand and the Pacific.

Although Sister Francis wants to feel her way into the role she has clear ideas about what she wants to achieve. She says, "Through the sacramental programmes I hope to be able to support parents in the religious education of their children. I also want participants to know God's love for them, to deepen their relationship with God, and to strengthen their desire to live a committed Christian live."

The help and encouragement for which St Michael's parishioners are well known are factors which Sister Francis will be relying on to make a success of her work in the parish. "I'm really happy to be part of the St Michael's parish team," she says. "I've been truly encouraged by the co-operation I've received so far, from both parish and school, and I know that this will continue."

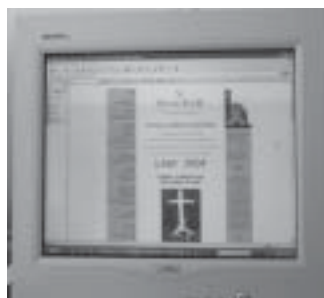
Monsignor Arahill said that the parish was very fortunate to have someone as experienced as Sister Francis in the ministry team. He noted the contribution that the Cluny congregation has made to religious education in the parish through the Cluny kindergarten in Victoria Avenue, and said that the new role for Sister Francis could be seen as an extension of that work.



Tim Gasson

www.catholicremuera.org.nz

The parish website (3rd version) has had its first birthday. From fairly tentative beginnings several years ago, and much trial and error, we now have a site which is working well. During the past 12 months there have been over 7000 hits on the site, and these come from all round the world. One of the interesting enquiries we received recently was from a St Michael's school in Ireland asking for information about our parish – how big the



parish is, did the parish have a school, questions about how we celebrate liturgy. A few weeks later there came an email of thanks for the pack we sent, which included the jubilee magazine produced to celebrate the 60th anniversary

of the parish, Sunday bulletins and parish brochures and leaflets. Ex-pat kiwis from time to time contact us through the website to make preliminary enquiries about the possibility of celebrating their marriages or the baptisms of their children in the church during planned holidays home.

The most popular page on our site is the homepage, where the Sunday scripture readings are listed with a brief reflection on (usually) the gospel and commentary and graphics relating to significant current Catholic events: featured at present are the beatification of Mother Teresa and an explanation of the Rosary). The parish priest's home page has many of Monsignor Arahill's Sunday homilies and extracts from some books he has been reading. The Youth page is a good drawcard and includes the latest calendar of youth events. *Revelations* is also on line and can be downloaded using Adobe Acrobat.

If you haven't visited the site before (or not for a while) check it out. We acknowledge the contribution of parishioner Jane Hulst who was very involved in the design of the Parish website has provided ongoing mentoring assistance.

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Parish Pastoral Council Update

In the last issue of *Revelations*, parishioners were introduced to the new members of the Parish Pastoral Council. It is now just over six months since our first meeting and it seems timely to share some of the aims and objectives of the council, and to report on some of the matters dealt with at our monthly meetings.

Parish Pastoral Councils were set up in the diocese of Auckland in 1971. Since 1975 ongoing interpretation and development have led to a flexible combination of sharing responsibility for planning and oversight of a pastoral policy to build a vital Christian community who will work to bring about the mission of the church.

So what is the task of this Parish Council?

- .. To be the voice of the parish
- .. To be representative of the community
- .. To look after and care for the Parish
- .. To listen to the community
- .. To share gifts and resources
- .. To encourage others to share their gifts and resources
- .. To set a vision

We see our overall role as having care for the whole parish community and encouraging each person to live the Gospel in their everyday lives, to bring about the mission, the kingdom of God in the world. The council operates under five headings: Care, Celebrate, Learn, Evangelise and Collaborate.



Given that most members of the council are new to the role, we have spent time gaining a better understanding of how the parish functions. We have had visits from Frances McLean, to present findings from the Church Life Survey 2001, Tim Gasson, to outline his work in Youth Ministry, and Pat de Zoete, to update us on the Piazza project and shelter for the front of the church. Particular areas of focus include:

Promoting Active Involvement

Many of us attend mass on a regular basis but have little involvement other than turning up. We hope that during Lent, through the initiatives of the Parish Council, some parishioners are encouraged to take on a new challenge by accepting a new ministry. It is easy to rely on the “regulars” but taking part in a Church ministry may enrich the churchgoing experience.



Piazza Project

Records presented show that as far back as 1997, and I suspect, probably before, parishioners identified that there was a need for a gathering space in front of the church, a meet and greet area providing shelter from inclement weather, a people space. While many looked favourably on the piazza design presented in October 2002, it did not address the need for a shelter. The Parish Council is part of this planning process along with the Finance Council and the design team commissioned in 2003.

Promoting the Parish

Three members of the council, myself included, have children attending St Michael’s School. It is important to maintain a close relationship between parish and school. We hope to strengthen the relationship by having more combined events. The recent blessing of the new classrooms and the visit by the bishop was a good example.

In December members of the Parish Council distributed to houses in Remuera leaflets giving Mass times for Christmas and inviting families to join us. It was a small initiative that we hope helped raise awareness of the parish. Fortuitously, Monsignor appeared on the cover of the local paper at about the same time. Monsignor’s prayer cards, with Grace to say before Christmas dinner, were handed out after the Christmas Masses.

Catholics Returning Home

Several parishioners attended a seminar about this programme, which was subsequently taken up by the parish. The programme is designed to bring Catholics back to the Church after a period of inactivity. Although there was little response when the programme was run before Christmas, the Parish Council believes the programme has merit and hopes to offer it again in the near future.

Gatherings don’t have to be formal. We hope that a shelter in front of the church will encourage people to linger a little longer after Mass and share some time together. Although the location of the Parish Centre is not ideal, the Parish Council envisages more regular opportunities for families to gather there after Mass on Sunday. In conjunction with the school community, whenever there is a 5th Sunday in the month, there will be an opportunity for school and parish to meet after Mass for morning tea.

We are still learning and finding our way, but are keen to promote St Michael’s as a vibrant community. We welcome feedback from the parish and are always prepared to listen to new ideas or concerns. Communication is vital to our ministry.

Neil Little, Chairman

How Much Time Will It Take?

“What’s involved?”

“I’m not sure that I am the kind of person for that.”

These are the comments parishioners give when they are asked to be a lay minister such as Reader of the Word or Minister of Holy Communion.

Julie Donati writes in “Music and Liturgy” February 2004 about Lay Ministry. In fact she talks about the “changing face of lay ministry” and says that ministry “stems from a call and becomes a vocation”. The Liturgy Committee discussed the article at its March meeting. All true calling involves zeal and enthusiasm and really resonates in the heart of the person. Yes, lay ministry is public and accountable. But it is different from service which is often a private undertaking.

There is more and more need for lay people to invite God into the process of making a decision whether they should be involved in a particular ministry. Both the community and the individual need to seek an answer to the question: “Has this person/have I a true call to this ministry?”

Michael Hines, proposes three signs that indicate a genuine call to ministry:

- * That the ministry brings joy to one’s life
- * That the ministry gives an opportunity for growth and the person is willing to undergo training.
- * That the calling is an expression of *agape* (self giving love).

During the Easter season the Parish Council and the Liturgy Committee will be asking parishioners to consider who they could recommend for a particular ministry. Those already involved in ministry would be asked to revisit their ministry.

We all need to consider prayerfully why we should accept a call to ministry:

- * Are we prepared to touch the lives of other people?
- * Have we a love of the Eucharist and sense the sacred enabling us to see each individual unique in the eyes of God?
- * Are we able to take joy in meeting people we would normally never meet?
- * Are we able to minister in a caring way?
- * Are we willing to develop our skills so that our ministry brings nourishment to others?
- * Have we or are we willing to develop a knowledge of Scripture and proclaim them so that people can “hear Good News”?

These are tough but necessary questions, but the rewards are great. The Liturgy Committee at its meeting shared experiences of being a lay minister. There was certainly joy. They had answered a call from a fellow parishioner and that call had become a vocation. Watch for “the call becoming vocation” season after Easter!

Ruth Miller

Children’s Liturgy at St. Michael’s (continued from Page 9)



Two of our leaders share their experience with Children’s Liturgy. “The rewards in sharing the liturgy with the children are very worthwhile - the older children participate in the discussions on the stories of the Gospel, and the younger ones benefit from the simple messages shared. They are always responsive and

interested and the 25 minutes spent together is very rewarding and we have great fun.”

“I got involved in the Children’s Liturgy as a way of giving something back to the programme after my son had benefited from several years of other people’s work. It is a rewarding part of the Church to see young children expressing their understanding of their faith and the stories of the Bible in a frank and often enlightening way”.

Accountant

Anthony Martin

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Official opening of the new classrooms at St Michael's School



Bishop Patrick blesses the water.



The new classroom wall icons



The pupils



Jo Augustine (Principal)



Bishop Patrick visits the new classrooms

Robert Tingey Photography

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Sister Francis Kelly

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Kathryn Schollum

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Music Rosters:

Tony Vela

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Pat de Zoete

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Telephone: 520 1226

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Finance Council:

Monsignor Arahill, Phillip Bell, Kevin Pickworth, Bob Coombe Carey Pearce, Mike Going and Pat de Zoete

Liturgy Committee:

Monsignor Arahill, Margaret Garrett, Louise Campbell, Patricia Kessler, Jennifer Spencer, Kathryn Schollum, Catherine Everitt, Viki Cullen, Libby Ellis, Ruth Miller, and Peter Ravlich

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