

News from
St Michael's
Community

July 2003
Volume 17

Services Timetable

Sunday Eucharist
8am & 10am
Saturday 8am & 5pm
Monday at Cluny
Convent 7.15am
Tuesday 8am
Wednesday 9am
Thursday 8am
Friday 12.05pm

**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

Featuring Families at St Michael's Church



The largest family with the same birth parents at St Michael's, faithful parishioners Bob & Viv Coombe are to be congratulated in having such a great family unit, not only in quantity, but also in quality.

This photograph taken on Mother's Day 7 May 2003 in the Auckland Domain is ample evidence. A family gathering to celebrate the youngest Greg, turning 21, brought nearly the whole family together of **fourteen** children. The one missing in NZ has been added with digital help of the photographer.

Living in Ridings Road, Viv and Bob hold records at St Michael's School and St Peters College for the longest serving parents of some 30 years. Now they have 18.5 grandchildren! As many will know only some of their children, here they are pictured in age order starting at the right: Richard, Trish, Michael, Christopher, Tony, Joe, Peter & Matthew (twins), Bernard, Nicholas, Elizabeth & Andrew (twins), and seated are Carmel and Greg.

It is rare to have them together at one time now, and our best wishes go to Nicholas who is convalescing from a badly broken back while snow boarding in Austria. Yes, you detected rightly that Matthew was inserted, being in London, but Andrew missed the Domain photograph session and is a digital add-in as well!

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St Michael's Parish Pastoral Council Chosen

The members of the new St Michael's Parish Pastoral Council were announced in late June. They are: Suzy Bell, Anne Duffey, Mark Jeffaries, Neil Little, Christobel Matthews, Alicia Murray, Giles Potter, Jessica Spencer and Peter Zink.

Their appointment came at the end of an extensive recommendation and selection process during which parishioners were asked to recommend candidates. Those recommended attended a gathering at which the role of a parish council was explained. They were then asked to write a personal profile if they wished their name to go forward to the selection committee. This was a separate group that had been invited by Monsignor not only to prepare for the gathering of those recommended but also assist in selecting a council that would take into account age, gender and experience. This group were: Betty Fitzgerald, Michael Pender, Craig McCarthy, Frances McLean, Giles Potter, Tracey Bell, Peter Hay-Mackenzie, Gay Barton and Anna Schuler.

Announcing the names, Monsignor Arahill said "I am very happy with this process and the variety and quality of people that are now the Parish Pastoral Council. There were over 60 people recommended by fellow parishioners. That means people had to think about the kind of person they knew and thought would contribute to the pastoral vision St Michael's. The Council meets on the first Tuesday of the month. Parishioners can contact councillors with any concern or constructive idea. (Contact details can be obtained from the Parish Office.) The first meeting in August will be an orientation meeting facilitated by Mrs Pat Lythe from the Diocesan Office for Pastoral Councils.

Photos and profiles of those chosen will be in the next issue of *Revelations*

Theology of a Parish Council

The following article is taken from a talk given by Peter Hay-MacKenzie to a parish meeting held as part of the selection process for the new St Michael's Parish Council. It is a timely reflection on the role of a parish council.

A parish pastoral council develops a life of its own. It cannot be defined or described beforehand by what someone can say is essential to the life of a parish council.

Legally, it is an advisory group to the parish priest. This, to a great extent, defines a parish pastoral council in terms of what it cannot do; it cannot do something that is not consented to by the parish priest; this approach tries to define a parish council in terms of the power that it has.

The power of the pastoral council is about the power of the church and the gospel; it is about consensus, loving

the lack of a clear answer, being patient when projects seem to fail; it is about embracing the power of the cross. Pentecost is about empowering the church to do the work of Christ. That is, to bring hope, faith and love to situations where conflict, hate, despair, and injustice want to dominate.

It is not about making up rosters, or providing cups of tea, although these tasks will sometimes fall to the pastoral council. It is about enabling the parish to respond more effectively to the call to be holy, and to our call given at baptism to make the kingdom of God more evident in the community. It is about enabling this community of Catholics who belong to St. Michael's to be more the people of God who know who they are (are confident about their identity), and then, because of their relationship with each other ('love one another as I have loved you'), and with God (change comes from God, and God is found primarily, in our tradition

Emotionally, it will involve hurt, misunderstanding, failure, disappointment, as well as joy, peace and fun. There will be frustration, and satisfaction. As a body, the pastoral council will probably do some silly things, as well as some very wise things. You will get criticised for the former, and little thanks for the latter. But we are not to get too worried about that.

A story to illustrate what is good about parish life. This is the sort of thing that will happen because of our faith, and membership of the church. A pastoral council tries to see if such things can happen more frequently. We can't make the kingdom of God come, but we can open our world more to the values of the kingdom; we are to be signs and instruments of the kingdom.

Jamie McLay was a parishioner of Holy Cross parish, Papatoetoe; he died some years ago. He worked for the Justice department in Auckland. When he retired he was interviewed by the Auckland Star. In the interview he said how one of his chief influences was his father, who was a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Scotland. As a youngster in Scotland, Jamie recalled his father coming home one night from his regular visit to the local prison (one of his St. Vincent de Paul society works), and saying how one of the prisoners he had been visiting had asked if he could be executed in one of his suits. The impression I had was that this good man (Jamie's dad) had so influenced this man on death row that he wanted to go to his Maker clothed in Jamie's dad's clothes. Perhaps I was reading too much into the story, perhaps not. Pastoral council life is like that; it is difficult to measure outcomes, although we have to have strategic plans, goals, and objectives.

Pastoral councils are about trying to work collaboratively in the church. They help to prevent enthusiasts imposing their wacky inspirations on the whole community. At times membership will be like 'shovelling fog', at other times there will be obvious successful outcomes the convert, a new scripture programme, a job for someone unemployed, support for a grieving family.

Stocktaking Time

In 2008 we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of our Parish Church. St Michael's was opened on 1 October 1933.

Our Jubilee is a stocktaking time. It will need to be a time of renewal – renewal of us as parishioners and renewal of our church buildings.

The church building itself is beginning to show its age. We must do all that is necessary to preserve this unique building.

Following the example of St Benedict's and St Patrick's Cathedral, our Finance Council has asked Dave Pearson Architects Ltd to prepare a Conservation Plan

Given the heritage status of the building, the framework of a Conservation Plan will give us a clear idea of what needs to be done to preserve the building.

Such a plan will also assist initiatives and applications for grants that may be available.

We have been told an initial draft will take around two months to complete. The final plan should be available around October 2003.

The plan will of course take note of the work that has been done on the Piazza Project, which includes a sheltered gathering space in front of the church – an idea that was strongly supported at a meeting of parishioners in October 2002.

Design options for the sheltered space are being considered now and are likely to be available for parishioner comment in September 2003.

P T A Golf Day

Thursday 3 April was a picture-perfect day with glorious sunshine and not a cloud in the sky. St. Michael's parents, friends and grandparents were well represented, as were some ex-parents who we love to see and thank for their ongoing support.

This year we had a lovely team of ladies from St. Michael's parish: Dale Hern, Pam Little, Sandra Bagley and Pamela Holdaway. Dale has been a St. Michael's parishioner for over 30 years, as was her late husband, Devon, who actually served here as an altar boy. Dale's little granddaughter, Lucy Fuller, is due to start at St. Michael's this year. Pam Little already has two grandsons at the school; Cameron and Nicolas Little.

Dale and her energetic team were very smartly dressed in complementary black and white, and called themselves

Pope Honours Parishioner

Tom Kiely, a St Michael's parishioner, has received the papal honour "Pro Ecclesia et Pro Pontifice" in recognition of his "outstanding services" to the diocese of Auckland. The citation made special mention of Tom's contributions to parishes and to the clients of the G.I.F.T centre for the intellectually disabled. Tom Kiely is shown at a ceremony at Pompallier Centre on 31 March 2003 with his wife Nonie and Monsignor Arahill.



In Residence

Currently in residence at the Parish House, Father Fawzi Koro is an Iraqi priest of the Caldean Catholic Church in union with Rome. They have their own way of celebrating the Eucharist. As there are about 800 Iraqi families in Auckland who follow this rite, Fr. Fawzi finds St Michael's a central base from which to serve the two groups of Iraqi Catholics at Manurewa and Glenfield.

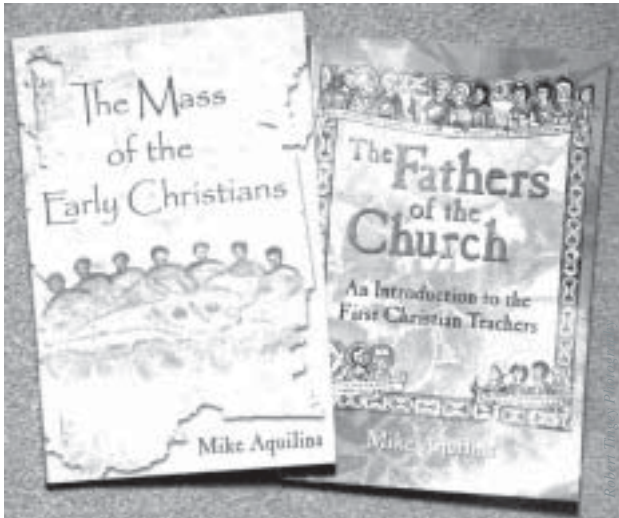


Robert Tingey Photography

'The Black and White Minstrels'. It must have been a good combination as they won the ladies team prize. Dale said they had a wonderful day and we certainly hope to see them again next year to defend their title! Well done to them.



Faith of the Fathers



The Fathers of the Church - an introduction to the first Christian teachers, and *The Mass of the Early Christians* by Mike Aquilina: Reviewed by Mark Mullins

Mr Aquilina is not a professional theologian, but is a writer for the Our Sunday Visitor Inc Press. His style and language are easy to follow, and are written from the view of a contemporary Catholic. The Catechism of the Catholic Church may say more on these topics, but not as engagingly or practically as Aquilina.

In *Fathers of the Church* the discussion of the various heresies of the first 300 to 400 years of the Church's history got me a bit bogged down, but the point of them is well explained. Each "aberration" of faith caused the Church - under the Bishop of Rome, who was the recognised authority from the very earliest times - to more closely and precisely define the "formulae" of the faith, using more scientific language taken from the contemporary schools of philosophy.

Set alongside this, *Mass of the Early Christians* shows that while it was some centuries before the language and philosophical concepts such as "real presence" and "substance and accident" were available to explain *how* the Eucharistic elements were in fact the body and blood of Christ, there is no doubt that this was the faith of the Church from the very earliest times. The author uses this as an example of what we mean and understand by the Church's tradition - not dead pomp and ritual, but what is handed on (from the Latin *tradere*)

The books are pretty much companion pieces, with the tradition of the Fathers being the conduit through which we have a record of the earliest liturgical practices of the Church in the late Apostolic era (up to 120 AD). The liturgy itself was the encapsulation and transmission of that tradition, preceding as it did the establishment of a canon of the scriptures. For about the first 150 to 200 years of the Church, there was no New Testament as such; the memoirs of the Apostles, along with the writings of the

Fathers, were read at the liturgical celebrations, and these with the homily and the action of the Eucharist were the Church's teaching, in word and action and sacrament.

The main point of these books to me is, to me, that every time we gather for Eucharist, we do so with our hands joined across the centuries with the faithful of every place and time since the first century AD, and that, despite many ups and downs, institutional and personal, the faith we share is "catholic" thanks to the Fathers of the Church.

Mark Mullins is a parishioner of St Michael's.

MILESTONES

Baptisms: the parish welcomes.....

Stephen James **White** son of Darren and Suzanne
Isaac Simon **Guinness** son of Simon and Noy
Hunter Thomas Kuizinas **Casey** son of Mark and Ruth
Grace Elizabeth **Hand** daughter of Sara
Emily Louise **Davidson** daughter of Jeremy and Diane
Jiang Yuan Joseph **Deng** son of Yong Ning and Yeun
Yee Teresa Lai
Tyler Mackenzie **Buyers** son of Tanya Buyers
Benjamin James Brian **Elton** son of Alex and Maureen
Holly Isabella **Tombleson** daughter of John and Anna

Marriages: blessings on

Amy Chi Ying **Lau** and Anthony Kai Lung **Ho**
Lara Jane **Handisides** and Ian William Hugh **Gordon**
Jodi Kim Maria **Clouston** and Denzil John **Travers**
Kelly Maree **Irwin** and Glen **Sandall**
Catherine Anne **Peterson** and Brendan James **Wickham**
Elizabeth Jane **Tucker** and Jonathan Michael **Barry**
Emma Redgate **Payne** and Brian Richard **Johnson**
Mabel Kwai Ying **Hui** and Michael Sean **Mullarkey**
Natasa **Lozica** and John Matthew **Vujnovich**
Teresa Vaisaulu **Frost** and Ashby Junior **Cordtz**
Xueqin **Zhou** and Fei **Huang**
Rebecca Marie **Posa** and Peter Joseph **Sain**

Deaths: we pray for....

Geoffrey Joseph **Schmitt**
Dermont Paul **Sullivan**
William Robert **Hamilton**
Basil Edward **Connell-McDowell**
Molly Joan **Bridgman**
Patrick Maurice **Brown**
William Lloyd Mandeno **Paterson**

Baptizing Babies

*Like many aspects of liturgy, baptism has undergone changes with Vatican II. In this article **Maureen Hammond**, Diocesan Director of Religious Education, talks about the new rite of infant baptism and **Viki Cullen** explains what happens at St Michael's.*

Baptism is the celebration of God's love, which is always saving and loving us into existence: a love that is not absent until some magic moment. Infant baptism celebrates the loving presence of God in the child, seen especially in the love of parents.

Today, infant baptism is seen as the whole community witnessing a celebration of the presence of Jesus continuing in the world. The community commits itself to walk in faith with the child (and its parents) and renews its own relationship with the Risen Lord.

Since Vatican II

Much has changed in church teaching and practice since the Second Vatican Council. The church now provides two different rites for baptism, one for the baptism of adults (including the new rite for children of catechetical age) and a second for the baptism of infants and younger children. The Rite of Baptism for children, promulgated in 1969, is truly a liturgy about children, looking ahead to their futures with hope, turning to their parents to remind them of their responsibilities and to promise them the support of the faith community in carrying them out.

The symbols (*water, oil, light, white garment*), words (*prayers*), and ritual (*actions*) used in the sacrament of baptism, speak powerfully to us of how God is with us in this event, and how we are with God.

Look for the symbols and listen to the accompanying prayers at the next baptism you attend. Look also for the shape of the liturgy. At the *door* of the church the child is welcomed. At the *Lectern* is heard the Word of God, at the *Font* the child is baptised and from the *Sanctuary* those gathered are blessed and sent forth to bear the Christ light in the world.

Preparation Programmes

Most parishes now have preparation programmes. The preparation is for the benefit of those requesting baptism. Such programmes seek to lead parents to a deeper understanding and appreciation, first, of their own baptism and, secondly, of the responsibilities which they are taking upon themselves in asking to have their child baptised. Because the symbols words and actions of the liturgy are explored for meaning, it is hoped that the preparation will result in greater joy in the hearts of all, the joy which is born of knowing. This preparation is not only done *in* the community and *by* the community. The preparation and initiation of new Catholics and their families is *for* the community reminding it constantly of its meaning and identity. While a sacrament is an intimate and personal encounter for the one receiving it, it is never a private action.



Jiang Yuan Joseph Deng was baptized on Easter Day 2003

At St Michael's

Baptism preparation is a big operation in the Remuera parish. We average between 60 and 70 baptisms a year. These generally take place on Sunday, sometimes at mass, especially on Easter Sunday. Remuera is now working closely with Meadowbank and Ellerslie parishes to share resources for baptism preparation. There are four programmes at St Michael's each year. Each programme involves a group of 7 to 9 couples. Each group meets on three occasions at the parish house on a Sunday morning after the 10am mass. The next two programmes start in August and November.

More Babies on the Way!

Seen by our editor, who felt it worth reporting that St Michael's mothers are ensuring the school rolls will be still be busy in years to come. We wish-(top right) : Patsy Heather & Leah Robinson (bottom left) : Jackie Knight & Vanessa Simpson -safe confinement and successful outcomes.



Robert Tingey Photography

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Principles of Principals

In St Michael's Parish are three school principals responsible for the wellbeing of more than a thousand young Christians.

Sister Bernadette is a Sister of St Joseph of Cluny, and has been at Cluny Kindergarten in Remuera for the past eight years. Irish by birth, Sister Bernadette has been in New Zealand for more than forty years and is one of the few teaching sisters left in our community.

Advice from Sister Bernadette to parents of young children to help develop their faith:

- ☐ Catholic education is very important in helping children accept others, share, socialise in our multi cultural society and being aware of the needy and deprived.
- ☐ Parents should give example and guidance in the formation of good habits. Children are mirrors of their parents. They should be taught to pray from a very young age and to realise their value – that they are special and loved in God's family.
- ☐ Young Catholics should be involved in ministries and activities in the life of the church, using the different talents with which God has gifted them.
- ☐ Children should be encouraged to develop, learning gradually and without undue pressure or emulation of others, and affirming in them what they are capable of doing.

Cluny Kindergarten is in Victoria Avenue and has a roll of thirty children from age three to five.



Jo Augustine is the Principal of St Michaels School. Educated at Catholic schools in Christchurch – Christ the King and Villa Maria College and in Auckland – Carmel College, she is married to Kerry and has two children, Tom aged 11 and Grace aged 8.

Advice from Jo as a teacher and principal with several years of Catholic education experience:

- ☐ Catholic Schools work in partnership with families to develop religious knowledge and provide experiences to develop faith. Each has a key role to play. I see religious education as providing for young Catholics information about their religious identity.
- ☐ Schools can assist families in with their children's religion, but families also need to take responsibility for their faith and religious development. Schools are increasingly becoming more diverse. This is echoed in Catholic schools and allows us to celebrate the different expressions of who we are as Catholics.
- ☐ The best thing that parents can do is not be afraid to share their faith with their children. Tell the stories of their faith and religious experiences. What it was like celebrating mass when you were young. Include in those stories the faith dimension. What it meant for you. Involve them in parish and diocesan celebrations. When parents (and the extended family) model their faith the student sees greater authenticity in what is being preached. The extended family also have a role to play. When the moment presents itself have the grandparent, or the uncle or the family friend share their stories. One of the rich

traditions of our community is the concept of everyone having a role to play.

□ Vatican II saw the Church make a call on the need to take cultural factors into consideration in celebrating liturgy and communal prayer. One of those cultural groups is youth. I think we have to ensure that our masses are orientated to the needs of the group they are targeted at. School Masses should be different from the Parish Mass. What we as a community need to ensure, is that the Body of Christ (we the people) offer our youth valid opportunities to be part of church-otherwise why be involved. Children can be involved in many ways – the liturgy, in youth groups with friends with similar values, and participate in children’s masses.

□ And for the youth I would like the Year 6’s to look back at St Michael’s and say that that life has been good. But there is a time to move on when you out grow primary school. When you go to a new school take advantage of all that the school offers you. New experiences provide opportunities for growth and stimulation. Your new school can only do so much, you’ve got to show initiative and accept the opportunities that are presented to you. What you can achieve is only limited by your imagination.

Patricia Radich is the Principal of Baradene College of the Sacred Heart. Of Catholic Irish descent, she is married to Kevin, and they have four children ranging from eight years of age to a twenty two year old daughter currently teaching in France. Patricia recently took up the position at Baradene after teaching in the Waikato for many years.

A Catholic education should give young people a sense of purpose and energy. It is through prayer and reflection that forgiveness and the very soul of our creation that we have higher expectations and value of life.

It is a chance for our youth to celebrate the world we live in with joy and vitality. And I believe Baradene girls have that individual spirit and warmth that makes them self assured and ready to engage in whatever life presents them.

Advice from Patricia as a Catholic, mother and teacher:

□ Make Christianity a family experience. Be a part of the Catholic community. Be a role model with your faith by giving a humane view of life. Let mass be a family event and fully participate in its celebration. Encourage the youth to contribute to the occasion

through singing, readings, prayers and communion.


□ Let young people explore their spirituality through the words and deeds of good role models. Don’t suddenly force things on them, but start from a young age and build and develop their Catholic faith.

□ Creating a journey in your children’s faith gives more meaning and emphasis of the role it has in every day lives. Be open and inclusive, don’t alienate young opinions, but look for opportunities and possibilities for developing their faith and continuing on their journey. Young people are very astute and see through hypocrisy very quickly.

□ And when things don’t go according to plan teach your children to pray and accept that the Lord has a plan for them. Personal growth comes in all forms, and accepting that God’s heart and mind teachings, will lead to an atmosphere of wise freedom. Teach young people to acknowledge and share their gifts with humility and that every one has a purpose in life waiting to be discovered and used to its full potential.




Patricia Radich and Prime Minister Helen Clark, who recently visited Baradene



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Youth Involvement in Parish Ministry

It has been an issue sometimes raised: what do the youth of St Michael's do in the parish? While the parish has many times affirmed our youth, there is often but a vague idea of the extent of their involvement in the parish community. This article gives an overview of the varied ministries of our youth and youth leaders.

The following is taken from discussion at a youth planning meeting, where leaders felt a need to emphasize the passion we have for our ministry, a passion of creativity and flexibility that is the foundation of all youth ministry

Youth involvement in parish ministry is growing under the direction of Tim Gasson, whose own experience is extensive. In keeping with inclusive Vatican II principles, it is not enough that youth have their own distinct ministry, but that this ministry also touches and embraces the community to which it belongs. In this vein, the activities of youth must be fused with all other parish and diocesan ministries, so that "youth" ministry is an indicator of youth involvement in the celebrations and seasons of the Church community.



At St Michael's, this principle is carried through more extensively with every passing day. Youth currently provide music for at least three masses per month (first and third Sundays and youth mass), and often more. Members of the youth group, such as James Reynolds, Tim Snedden and Sophie Ravlich are regular altar servers at Sunday Masses. Special mention must also be given to long-standing altar server Claire, who serves at most 8:00am Sunday masses. The youth provide readers for Sunday masses and special occasions, whenever approached by Vicki Cullen of an organising committee, and read at the Christmas Vigil and family masses. Youth such as Alicia Murray and Sarah Costello also read regularly through the liturgical year. Several of the youth leaders are regular Holy Communion ministers at Sunday mass. The youth also put time aside to organise special liturgies, including (but not exclusively) youth masses, a stations of the cross, Taize prayer, meditations and prayer sessions for feasts such as Corpus Christi.

Alicia Murray has been our valuable youth representative on the Vision team, and Peter Ravlich sits as representative on the Liturgy Committee.

Music is perhaps the most dynamic of our youth ministries, and has come into prominence over the past year or two. From the cantoring of Jessica Spencer to Tim's music group, the effect of this ministry has been a noticeable change in the versatility of our celebrations. The ability to express ourselves in song while accompanied by talented musicians is invaluable in shaping the parish community, and the group play for many liturgical and sacramental functions, including masses, Taize prayer and weddings.

Our musical group includes Monique Murray, Anne-Marie Ravlich, Sarah Costelloe, Alexandra Spencer, Claire Wackrow and many others of note, including the Dolan family of Mary, Bridget and Patrick.

The ministerial involvement of youth is not merely parish based, but extends into the wider diocese in a symbolic and tangible recognition of our church as a universal community. Tim works with the local and wider parish clusters to facilitate key movements, including ecumenical dialogue and liturgical invitations in accord with Vatican II principles and the Pope's recent encyclical. Youth from Saint Michael's have read at two Diocesan youth masses this year, and one of our leaders sits on both the Diocesan Liturgy Commission and the Diocesan Youth Liturgy Committee. Two of our youth leaders this year attended a ministry training day run by Youth Ministry Support, and several played music and served at the Eastern Region Diocesan youth mass.

These commitments give a broad (but by no means complete) outline of youth ministry in St Michael's, where the recognition of ours as a living church is daily demonstrated. Youth ministry has several distinctive features, as recognised by Rome. As the young of a modern church, youth should be encouraged whenever possible into active participation and engagement with a vital and thriving community. We at St Michael's come close to this ideal, where we recognise the mutability of the world, and especially of our ministry. These are the days when wars can begin at the push of a button, when share prices command the fate of starving nations, where we must choose to live not just despite this reality, but because of it and inside it.

Youth ministry might be likened to the *Aggiornamento* of Pope John XXIII: a breath of fresh air in the church. By involving youth in all ministries at St Michael's, we are maintaining a living church, and recognising the special character of youth, who can only be the future of the church by inclusion in the community of the present. Like the fresh breeze of Vatican II, youth ministry is a vital turbulence that challenges and awakens, changing focus and direction, but never weakening.

Parishoner Profile



Next year, Margaret Garrett will celebrate 50 years as a member of the St Michael's community. For this profile she talked to John Shaw about her life, her involvement in the parish, the changes she has seen and her confidence about the future of the Church.

Margaret Garrett (nee Lyttleton) was born in Dunedin. Her mother came from a Catholic Irish background; her father (not a Catholic) was from English stock. The family moved to Auckland when Margaret was only two years old.

After attending the Grey Lynn convent school, Margaret was sent to board at Sacre Coeur convent (Erskine), Island Bay, Wellington, before returning for her final year in Remuera at Sacre Coeur convent (Baradene). Margaret completed a BA at Auckland University while working for a law firm, and then spent some time as a secretary with the Kolynos toothpaste company before travelling to England on a working holiday.

On her return to Auckland, Margaret married Jim Garrett and they set up house in Remuera Road directly opposite Beatrice Road. Later, they built a house (Jim is an architect) in Omaha Road. They raised four daughters and now have seven grandchildren.

Margaret has been involved in a number of groups at St Michael's. She was a foundation member of the Catholic Women's League, Remuera branch, was league president in the 25th jubilee year in 1988, treasurer for several years and is currently the mission coordinator. She was one of the original eucharistic ministers and was also involved in an early form of Catholic family movement started by the late Father Tom Ryder. Margaret was a St Michael's pioneer as a lay reader, being asked by Father Des McCarthy to be the first female lay minister of the Word for the Palm Sunday gospel: a daunting task, since in those days it was a solo performance.

At the moment, Margaret is secretary of the Liturgy committee; she is pleased with the high standard of the St Michael's liturgy, but claims no personal credit for it. She took part in the Alpha programme in 2000 - but not the evening sessions held at St Michael's, she chose the daytime option at St Marks. Margaret enjoyed the contact with the Anglican community, thinks Alpha is valuable and hopes that St Michael's will offer the programme again soon. Margaret has also led the ABIL (Adult Biblical Interdependent Learning) course at St Michael's, another valuable programme worth repeating, in her view.

On the whole, Margaret approves of the changes brought

in by Vatican II; she likes the English language mass, with the celebrant facing the congregation, and the greater lay involvement. She has some queries about the modern church music, feeling that some of the English words to the old hymns can be a bit trite, and she misses Gregorian chant and Latin hymns.

Margaret favours the use of cantors at mass, especially those with professional training as singers, because of the confidence this gives to the congregation to join in the sung responses; but she is not sure we need the hymn after communion, preferring that time to be one of quiet, for personal prayer. However, you won't find Margaret supporting the notion that the congregation should sit back while the choir performs at some length. "We had that kind of 'performance liturgy' in the old days."

On possible developments at St Michael's, Margaret likes the idea of the iazza ("anything that gives more 'meeting and greeting' space will be most welcome"), thinks the times of Sunday masses are satisfactory as they are, is not a fan of the baldacchino ("it was not part of the original design") and sees no reason to widen the range of parish services offered at St Michael's ("I think we do very well.").

When asked to play "Pope for a Day", Margaret came up with three proposals:

1. "Offer priests the *choice* of a celibate life or being married – once they are mature enough to make such a decision, perhaps aged 30."
2. "Find a way for divorced and re-married Catholics to return to full communion with the Church."
3. "Set up some form of commitment to their faith for the mid-teens – perhaps to replace confirmation."

And what about the future of the Church?

"I am sure the Holy Spirit knows what He is about, and will pull the right strings at the right time. I just hope we will all recognise and follow His promptings, both now and in the future."

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Why can't Women be Priests?

Alicia Murray, a parishioner for all her 23 years, is a lawyer and a member of the new Parish Council. She has been closely involved in the Youth Ministry at St Michael's.



I have never understood the reasoning behind the refusal to ordain women, but it was not until I started to do a little bit of research into this article that I realised how strongly I felt about this topic. However, I want to say at the outset that this is merely my opinion and the purpose of this article is to encourage debate.

To begin with a preliminary point. Many of those who argue that women should not be priests rely on the proposition that the Church (and the Pope) have definitively stated that women cannot be priests. This argument has no merit in itself. There are some things certainly which must be accepted in faith, but there is also a need to question those teachings that are not fundamental to Catholic faith.

An analogy is useful here. In law, there is debate over whether all laws must be accepted and therefore followed without question simply because they have been enacted properly, or whether there are some instances in which you are entitled to disobey the law. An often-used example in trying to persuade students to the latter view is the question "If parliament made a valid law ordering all blue-eyed babies to be killed, would you have to obey?"

Laws cannot always be absolute. There may be times when your conscience calls you to disobey. This is the same with the institution of the Church. Open and honest debate is important, otherwise the Church becomes stagnant and irrelevant, as is happening more and more in our society. I believe that the Catholic Church has something to offer people, but also that it needs to change, to keep up with the times, to stay relevant to the people who are living now.

The arguments against having women priests are flimsy at best. There are two main categories in which these argument fall. The first rests on the fact that Jesus was a man and that in the new testament, and in the early Christian Church, no women were ordained to priestly ministry. Secondly, the arguments rest on the idea that this has always been so and therefore must be accepted.

The first set of arguments are predicated on out-dated notions of male and female roles. Yes Jesus was a man, but only because as a women he would not have been

listened to or respected and therefore could not have achieved anything, due to the nature of those times. The same is true of the early Christian Church. Women were treated as second class citizens and believed to be inferior to men. Only recently has this begun to change. Today, women are seen to be equal to men both in society and in the eyes of God (in theory at least) and should be treated as such. Society has changed and therefore the Church must as well. The only way the Church has survived for so long is that it has changed to keep up with the times. You only have to look back 40 years to see the impact of Vatican II.

Is there any function of a priest that relies solely on his masculinity? No. There is nothing in the duties of a priest that would prevent women from fulfilling those duties as well, if not better, than a man. I believe that women would offer a lot as priests and would complement their male colleagues by offering different perspectives on the issues of their faithful.

And, on a practical note, some of the issues surrounding the lack of priests would be resolved. It seems trite to complain about the lack of priests when the Church is excluding half of the world's population without a second glance.

As an aside, I have much more of an issue with allowing priests to marry. I can see that merit of the arguments against married priests. The major objection being that their first priority would no longer be the Church but their own family. Then there would be the issue of divorce and separation, which does not sit well with catholic teaching.

However, there are also potential advantages to having married priests, in that they would be able to relate better to the majority of the congregation and understand family issues better. This issue needs to be considered carefully, whereas none of the objections to ordaining women has any substance.

The aim of the article is to open debate and encourage people to express their opinions, in the hope that the Church does not become completely irrelevant in today's world.

Ordaining women to priestly ministry is one step towards this necessary change

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Cluny Convent Remuera



On the heading of every weekly news sheet of the Parish of St Michael, there is advised that there is a Monday mass at Cluny Convent at 7.15 am at 74 Victoria Avenue. Only a few people attend each week as many parishioners are unaware of this small chapel in busy Victoria Avenue, although the work of the Sisters running the Kindy is well known.

The top picture shows the relatively new chapel interior built on the front of the convent and alongside the Cluny Kindergarten. It has two beautiful French carved statues (centre pictures) and a painting of the their Order's founder. The bottom picture shows one of the Sisters with a splendid full size copy of a Ruben's painting in the entry area.

Cluny Convent is a haven in a busy suburb.



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