

St Patrick's Parish History



Compiled by Patricia O'Donnell

*If you have information you think should be added please
email me @ tricio2285@gmail.com*

The Parish history of the Eastern suburbs.

Chapter 1 The Foundations are Laid

The area known as the Eastern suburbs was first owned by Mr James Coutts Crawford. In 1869 Mr James and Mrs Alice Bourke bought land from Mr Crawford and built the first house on the ridge above Childers Tce and were the first Catholics to live in the area. The driveway which ran up the hill and turned right to their back door is now known as Bourke and Upper Bourke streets. They had 10 children, four boys and six girls. Mr Bourke established a wool scouring business on the flat land below the house. The Patent Slip Company commenced in Evans Bay that year too and so made it easier for Mr Bourke to get his completed product to the harbour for shipping overseas. The family went by horse and gig to Mass at St Mary of the Angels Church on Sundays. Mrs Bourke died in 1913 and Mr Bourke in 1915. They are buried in Mount Street Cemetery in the city.

Mr Crawford had formally named the area Kilbirnie after his home in Ayrshire in Scotland. Sections in Kilbirnie were sold from 1877 and people lived in the area because it was easy to get into the city by the road round the bays. Archbishop Redwood bought a large section of land beside the sea at Evans Bay, large enough for a presbytery and a church in 1881. This is the present Church and former presbytery site on Childers Tce and Kilbirnie Crescent corner.

The Catholics living in the Eastern suburbs at the turn of the century were cared for by the Marist Fathers who ran the Newtown Parish and a Sunday Mass was said in O'Donnell's Hall in Kilbirnie Crescent (opposite the Aquatic Centre now) when possible. Extracts from the New Zealand Tablet note that a Mission was held in Kilbirnie in February 1908 led by the Redemptorist Fathers in O'Donnell's Hall. Attendance was high and a strong wish was expressed by the local people for a church of their own. Mass was now said in the hall weekly and a Sunday School for the children was also run but parishioners felt strongly that a place of their own was needed. At a meeting on 10th June 1908 Catholics decided to build a temporary church and enough guarantors were found to ensure the

building would be erected. It was also decided to hold regular socials for the Catholic community at O'Donnell's hall on the last Wednesday of the month. In July plans were drawn up for a brick church to cost 3,000 pounds. Parishioners saw the illustration at the social in August. The proposed brick church was designed by architect Mr Yourelle and would have a nave measuring 77 feet by 31 feet and would have 2 aisles.

Proceeds from the first 2 socials had raised 100 pounds. On 26 August 1909 a pleasant social gathering was held at O'Donnell's hall in aid of the church building fund with 100 people present. Mrs Higginson sang and the ladies of the parish provided "a very pleasant supper." Later it was determined that a wooden church would be cheaper and the plans were altered to a church/school building with the idea of building the proper church later. On 11th November 1909 the erection of the church/chapel began and the first Mass was held on Christmas Day by Archdeacon Devoy SM with much rejoicing.

In December the Parishioners of Kilbirnie ran an Art Union to raise funds for the furnishings of the building. This was drawn at St Anne's hall Newtown on the last week of February 1910

A report in the New Zealand Tablet of 27/1/10 described the opening of the first Catholic Church in the Eastern Suburbs. St Patrick's Church was formally blessed and opened on Sunday 23 February 1910 by Archbishop Redwood. Also in attendance were Very Rev. Fr O'Shea, VG, Very Rev, Dean Regnault S.M. [the Provincial of the Society of Mary {Marist} Fathers], Ven. Archdeacon Devoy and other priests.

Archbishop Redwood said he was gratified to see such a large crowd in attendance and thanked Archdeacon Devoy for his work in spearheading the building of the church as part of Newtown Parish. He also acknowledged the 'valuable services' of the committee and the efforts of the ladies who had helped to raise funds. Mention was also made of the generous donations towards the building sent from other parts of Wellington and other places in New Zealand. The building was described as "a neat serviceable building" and was designed with a north wing that

was a school in the weekdays. It was staffed by the Sisters of Mercy who walked over the hill from Newtown Convent daily to teach. Archbishop Redwood said "No work is so important or so necessary than the carrying on of good Catholic education. Let them be taught here to become a joy to their parents, an honour to the Church, a blessing to society, a guarantee of order and virtue to the Dominion of New Zealand." The Archbishop concluded by expressing the hope that that day would mark the beginning of a period of blessing for the district. A collection was taken up and 241 pounds was given.

The church was just off Kilbirnie Crescent and its foundation stone had been laid at the end of October 1908. It was a simple wooden building with a red asbestos tile roof. The cost was 650 pounds for the building, the seats were 53 pounds and the altar 25 pounds. The church itself was 60 feet long, 27 feet wide and 25 feet high. It seated 200 people. Later more seats were added to bring capacity to 300. The altar was of Celtic Design and was built by Mr H Fielder. There was a northern wing which was to be used as a school for the children run by the Sisters of Mercy. The walls of the church had a lower four foot dado of varnished rimu with the upper walls of match wood painted a sage green. The ceiling was painted white and there were plenty of plain windows for ventilation. At the east end was the altar set on a platform, on either side of which were large easy-sliding doors so the altar could be shut off when the building was being used for secular reasons such as a school during the day and for social occasions in the evenings. Above the west door was the stairs leading to the choir loft which would, in time, house an organ as well as a choir. At the back of the altar were 2 doors. The south one led to the vestry where the priest robed for Mass and where all vestments, precious vessels, lectionaries and other priestly items were stored. The door on the north side led down into a large room which was used as a dining room and a resting room for the Sisters during the week. A small kitchen and toilet were attached. A flight of stairs led up to the vestry.

Fr Dalton Campbell SM was appointed to look after this extension of the Newtown parish. He lived in the Newtown presbytery and walked over the hill daily to minister to the parishioners.

On 8th June 1910 a social in aid of the church fund was held in O'Donnell's Hall. From March 1910 A Mass was celebrated each Sunday at Seatoun. There was also a school in Seatoun and by 28 April 1910 there were 50 children at St Patrick's school and 30 children at Seatoun. On 8th June 1910 another social in aid of the church fund was held in O'Donnell's Hall.

Before the church was built children had walked over the hill to St Anne's School run by the Sisters of Mercy. Now in the northern wing of the Church two Sisters opened a school for the local children on the 31st January 1910 and 41 children enrolled on the first day. By March the roll was 62. The Church wing had folding doors to separate the school from the church and every Monday morning the big boys from St Anne's came over to put out the desks and chairs and stack up the forms used for seating at Mass. On Friday afternoons they reversed the procedure, stacking the desks at the back and putting out the forms before folding back the big doors.

The Sisters, Sister Mary Rose Foran, Superior and Sister Mary Paschal Hayes, travelled from Newtown daily. In 1912 the rooms at the back of the church were remodelled to form a convent with sleeping rooms. This was known as Uncle Tom's Cabin as it was done at the suggestion of Mr Tom Bourke. The first four Sisters to live there were Sister Mary Chanel Burton, Superior, Sister Mary Paschal Hayes, Sister Mary Imelda Aisher and Sister Mary Evangelist Herring. When the numbers of students increased in 1916, Sr Clotilde Sullivan came daily from Hill St to teach. Sister Mary Germaine also came to do the cooking.

In 1915 Crawford Rd was regraded and widened at Duncan Tce so that the tramline could be extended up Constable St down Crawford Rd to Seatoun Rd [now known as Rongotai Rd] where the shops were. New tram sheds and workshops were built in Onepu Rd More people were then able to settle in the area because houses were cheaper.

The Sisters of Mercy bought the Bourke House at Childers Tce in late 1916 from Mr MF Bourke at a generous price and established St Catherine's Convent. The land was acquired as a convent and high School and Music Academy [report in Evening Post 29 January 1917.] The Sisters moved in in January 1917 and on 29th January the convent was officially opened and blessed by Archbishop O'Shea assisted by Archdeacon Devoy, Parish Priest. The Archbishop praised the Sisters of Mercy "for doing marvellous work for Catholic education in New Zealand.

In February 1917, the St Catherine's Catholic Convent School for children was opened as a specialist school for children, both boys and girls, and was fee-paying. The large room downstairs on the north-west corner of the Convent was the classroom and had its own door to the outside. The teacher was Sister Angela Butler. There were six pupils. The school grew quickly to 15 in 1918, outgrowing the Community room and it was decided to build a school of 4 classrooms. Plans went on hold when New Zealand was gripped by the Influenza epidemic

1918 was the year of the influenza pandemic. In May, the first wave of a new strain of influenza swept through Europe, known as the Spanish flu. The second wave reached New Zealand at the end of September and early October. Mainly school children and the elderly caught this weak strain of the flu. Military camps and boarding schools were the most affected. There were few deaths and the patients generally recovered after a week's illness.

Then came the third wave of the flu in November. This wave was much more serious and people who caught it became very ill with headaches, a high fever, sweats, chest pains and coughing. Many of them experienced long nose bleeds and then recovered. Others developed delirium or pneumonia which led to death. It appears that those who had caught it earlier had immunity to this wave. On 8 November, there was a premature announcement of the Armistice and in many towns people gathered to celebrate. Then, on 12 November, the real Armistice was celebrated with dancing in the streets country-wide amid large, spontaneous crowds of revellers. New Zealand was experiencing an unusually cold and unsettled

spring. 12 November was cold, windy and showery in Wellington, therefore coughing and sneezing in crowds was rife. This was a fertile ground for spreading the disease.

On 12 November, by order of the Government, all schools, offices, exhibitions and movie theatres were closed as a precaution against spreading the disease. At St Catherine's, the Sisters became volunteer nurses, going into the homes of local people who caught the flu to tend the patients and care for the families.

Doctors and nurses went from patient to patient travelling all over the city. The Town Hall became the centre to dispense cough medicine and fill prescriptions. Temporary hospitals were set up in Wellington such as the one at St Patrick's College, Cambridge Terrace set up in the boarding school premises once the Marist priests had sent the students home for their safety. Here volunteer nurses cared for the seriously ill patients. In November, the death rate in Kilbirnie and Lyall Bay was 15.6%. With a population of just 2,237 people, this was the highest death rate in the Greater Wellington area.

In Kilbirnie, Sister Chanel Burton, the Superior of St Catherine's Convent, worked at St Patrick's Hospital, walking both ways each day. While nursing there, she too caught the flu and died on 30 November at St Catherine's Convent. She had had a particularly busy day nursing and, on her way back to Kilbirnie, called in at the Newtown Convent where the Superior, noting how poorly Sister looked, tried to persuade her to stay overnight. However, Sister said she had to go back to Kilbirnie to get some more medical supplies and return to a sick patient where she proposed keeping a night vigil. She walked on to Kilbirnie Convent and went to her room to rest, and when Sister did not come down to the community room for tea, the Sisters went to her room where they found she had died.

Her death was described in the *NZ Tablet* newspaper as "*she fell victim to overstrain brought on by her strenuous labours to alleviate the sufferings of influenza victims.*" Sister Chanel was buried at Karori Cemetery after a Requiem Mass at St Patrick's Church, Kilbirnie on 3 December She was a

Sister of Mercy for nearly 30 years and had been in Kilbirnie for seven years. She was skilled in wood carving and is remembered for the beautifully decorated altars she carved for the chapels in Newtown and Kilbirnie. The latter altar was later donated to the new Kilbirnie St Patrick's Church in 1990 and a plaque was placed commemorating her work. In 1919 it was decided to build St Catherine's School as her memorial.

The Eastern suburbs continued to grow. On 8th August 1918 the Annual Meeting of St Patrick's Branch of the New Zealand Catholics Federation was held. Chaired by Rev Fr Dalton Campbell SM of Newtown, it was declared that Kilbirnie had a Catholic population of 250 people and so was large enough to be a parish of its own. Later that month Mr J P Bourke died aged 39. He bequeathed 500 pounds to the parish.

A Bazaar to help finance the proposed St Patrick's primary school was held in June 1919 as the school had outgrown its premises.

In December 1919 Fr Dalton Campbell was farewelled by the parishioners of Kilbirnie and Seatoun. He had cared for the parish fulltime for 3 years whilst living in Newtown

2 THE PARISH IS ESTABLISHED

In 1919 the Marist Fathers decided to leave Newtown parish to establish a parish and Mission house in Island Bay beginning in 1920. As Fr Dalton Campbell was seriously ill and unable to carry on his duties, Archbishop O'Shea appointed Mons Thomas Connelly as Parish Priest and Fr Michael Griffin as Assistant priest to the Eastern Suburbs now known as St Patrick's Parish based in Kilbirnie. Fr Griffin was born in New Zealand but had lived in Ireland from the age of 8. When he was ordained a priest he chose to return to New Zealand and was appointed to Kilbirnie.

The Parish covered Hataitai, Kilbirnie, Lyall Bay, Melrose, Houghton Bay, Miramar and Seatoun. In November 1919 the priests pitched a tent on the church property in Seatoun and in early 1920 bought a house at 13 Naughton Tce for use as the presbytery. This house was next door to St Catherine's Primary School and St Catherine's Convent of the Sisters of Mercy. It was blessed and opened by Archbishop O'Shea in March 1920. St Catherine's primary school, a fee-paying school of music and drama, was opened in July 1920. This school was built as a memorial to Sister Chanel Burton, the first principal of the school who died in the Influenza epidemic in 1918.

At this time Catholics were isolated in the New Zealand community. Some businesses refused to employ Catholics and Catholics were not welcome in many non-Catholic homes. So Catholics tended to socialise in their Parish communities. Clubs were formed, many around sports. School committees were also social gatherings with supper after the business was done. There were no active roles for the laity in the Mass. Men were ushers, seating people and took up the collections. Women cared for the altar linen and arranged the flowers. Small boys were altar servers. The altar was isolated from the congregation by a fence like structure called altar rails. Here the people knelt to receive the consecrated host on their tongues as the priest walked up and down on the other side to give the hosts.

The first group formed in the Parish was the Choir in time for Easter 1920. It was led by Mrs Collins who also played the piano and later the organ in the church. Later the choir was trained by Mr Dickinson. There were choral competitions that the choir entered and they also held concerts to which the parishioners were invited. A Tennis club was formed in 1926 and played on St Patricks School grounds. Basketball (netball) for women was played in the winter.

Church groups were also established. St Vincent de Paul Society began in 1922 and a Ladies' Auxiliary followed. These groups provided families with support where needed and also organised or helped out at social occasions for the Parish. Sunday Mass was 9am at St Patrick's Church with Benediction at 4pm. It was usual for families to attend both.

The primary school next to the church was opened on Sunday 21st June 1925. This land was donated by Mr MF Bourke and his sister Mrs Quirke. Total cost was 6000 pounds of which the parents had raised 1000 pounds. It was built of brick and had 3 floors. The ground floor had amenities and 3 large rooms where students hung their coats and sat to eat lunch when it was wet. The second floor had 3 classrooms and a staffroom for the Sisters. The top floor had 3 classrooms. This building was added to in 1972 when 3 more classrooms and a parish hall were built.

In 1924 Catholics living in Miramar decided to fundraise to buy land for a church. In 1926 land was bought in Athens St. A shed on the property was converted into their Mass centre and on 24th October 1926 the first Sunday Mass was celebrated. In 1927 the current church site was bought and a hall constructed and opened in May 1928. Mass was then said there.

The presbytery in Kilbirnie was built in 1929. Its site was directly across from the beach on Kilbirnie Crescent. It was a 2 storey brick building with 1 bedroom, kitchen, dining, lounge rooms and a large study on the ground floor. Upstairs were 4 bedrooms and a suite of rooms for the Parish Priest.

This presbytery was built on the site chosen for the 'proper' church to be built. The elaborate plans for the real church had been drawn up in 1908 and the church/school that opened in 1909 was considered temporary. Why the church was not built remains a mystery. Plans were remade in the 1930s for the real church to be built and opened in 1938. These plans also died.

In 1929 a 3 storey building of unenforced concrete was erected in Hataitai which cost 5,000 pounds. The top floor was the church called Our Lady of Mt Carmel. Below was the school staffed by the Sisters of Mercy. There were about 80 Catholics in the area. The Parish Committee introduced a birthday collection held annually on the opening date. This was used for maintenance. In 1943 a tornado hit the property and this fund paid for most of the repairs.

St Patricks Church had a small bell tower but no bell. In 1929 Fr Connolly bought the Wellington City Fire Board Bell for 35 pounds. The fire service had just converted to sirens. Fr Connolly dedicated the bell for church use and named it Margaret after his mother.

3 The Parish Grows in 1930s and 40s

The Parish continued to grow in numbers. In 1936 Fr Michael Griffin became Parish Priest after Mons Connolly was transferred. In August 1930 the Holy Name Society for the men of the parish was set up in the parish.

The house on the south side of St Patrick's Church was bought and converted into a hall in 1932. It was separated from the church by the driveway going down into the school playground. The hall was a long narrow building with a small stage at the western end at the street frontage. At the eastern end were the bathrooms, kitchen and storage rooms. This became the social centre of the parish and was also used by the school.

In December 1931 a Boy Scout troop was started under the auspices of Mons Connolly. It was based in Hataitai and had 10 scouts and 12 cubs. In October the troop transferred to the Church Hall at St Patrick's. The NZ Tablet on 19/7/1933 p33 published a piece about the Presentation of warrants to Scout Master Mr M. O'Connor, Assistant Scout Master Mr V.P. Fitzgibbon, Cub Master Miss C. Fitzgibbon and Assistant Cub Master Miss M Lee. This was a popular group for the boys and young men.

The parish choir flourished and a school choir was trained and accompanied by Mrs Collins. In May 1932 the pupils sang on 2YA on Uncle Jeff's Programme.

On 6th June 1933 it was announced at the AGM of the St Patricks Kilbirnie Basketball Club that they were entering 3 teams in the local competition; one team each in the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades.

The extended St Catherine's hall opened in July 1933 and was written up in an article in the NZ Tablet of 19/7/1933.

In March 1936 the Parish of Miramar and Seatoun was formed. Fr Uhlenberg was Parish priest; Fr D Bourke was curate. A hall had been built in Hobart Street in 1928 and Sunday Mass was said there. When the parish began the hall was extended and a Chapel and sacristy added so

the Blessed Sacrament could be there permanently. From 1930 two Sisters of Mercy held classes there during the week.

War years

There were special times of prayers for peace and, in ordinary services, there were special prayers. At Sunday Masses a special prayer was recited at the end of Mass. It was directed to St Michael and was repeated three times. Mass was in Latin and the Priest would read the Readings and Gospel in English before the sermon. At the end of Mass he would read out the notices including a list of the dead. Sundays at 4pm was Devotions for Peace at St Patrick's because, in winter it would be dark at 5pm and more difficult to get home. Because of the Blackout there were few events at night. Processions were held by the Catholic community during which the people would walk in a long line around a designated course saying the rosary aloud and singing hymns. One popular site for this was Star of the Sea Convent and school in Seatoun. These were held on Sunday afternoons.

Funeral Masses were said for deceased servicemen. The Catholic papers, The Tablet and Zealandia, published list of the dead with their service photos. In the event of a serviceman's death the Parish Priest would be informed by the Government and sometimes he would break the news to the family before the telegram arrived. The adults would talk about the war after Mass on Sundays. People passed news by word of mouth and read papers like the Free Lance closely to see if places could be recognised. People knew that there were German mines at the mouth of the Harbour and, at times, Japanese reconnaissance planes flew over at night. Life was full of tension with rationing of food and clothing and a full blackout at night. At the end of the War there were special Masses of thanksgiving for Peace. There was a religious thanksgiving ceremony in the Town Hall in which Archbishop O'Shea took an active role.

In December 1943 Fr Griffin the Parish Priest, died suddenly. He had been in the parish since 1919. Mon A J McRae was appointed Parish Priest.

He was a tall man, 7 feet 1 and ½ inches, 217 centimetres. He was also Vicar General of the Archdiocese.

The Parish had lay groups in active contribution to Parish life such as The Choir, the Legion of Mary, St Vincent de Paul. The parish was still the centre of social life also. A yearly parish picnic was held in January. Parishioners travelled by the ferry Cobar from Queen's Wharf to Day's Bay to the beach there and Williams Park. Active groups in the Parish were The Holy Name Society for men, the Children of Mary for young single women, the Sacred Heart Society for the women, the Hibernians, the Altar Society, the Catholic Home and School Association. Sports clubs were Basketball [now netball, Table tennis and Tennis. Rugby was played at the Marist Club.

On Sundays a 6am Mass was now held and communion was given first to nurses attending so they could leave early if duty demanded. Newtown Hospital's Nursing Home was in Duncan Tce. One of our oldest parishioners, Mrs Rebecca Poitier of Kilbirnie Cres died in 1947. She had been baptised by Bishop Pompallier who was a family friend and she remembered him in her childhood. In 1948 the schools opened late because of a poliomyelitis outbreak. There was much rejoicing in September 1948 when the Parish Choir won the Archbishop O'Shea Cup for Annual Catholic Choirs Contest. The choir then recorded several Latin motets for the National Broadcasting Service to be played over the radio.

After the war many European immigrants settled in the parish and there was a strong parish commitment to help them. Fr Kolich, a Croatian priest fluent in several European languages, joined the parish to look after them. The large house Ngaroma was an estate of 6 and a half acres in Queen's Drive. It was a tudor style brick building with 20 rooms built by the Hope Gibbons Family as their family home. In 1947 it was bought by the Archdiocese with monetary support from the Government and was used to house immigrants. In 1944 The Prime minister Peter Fraser offered to take a group of 736 Polish Refugee Children and 105 adults to New Zealand on the Troopship *General George Randall*. They were housed in a camp at Pahiatua. When it became obvious after the war ended that

Poland would be a communist state, the refugees were offered New Zealand citizenship. The Camp was slowly closed down as children were sent to boarding schools or moved to towns for work. Ngaroma was one of several hostels opened for school age children and teenagers starting work. Army Barracks Huts were added for more accommodation. The parish collected clothing and articles to help the girls. Two Ursuline Sisters had come on the ship. They moved to Ngaroma and three more Sisters came from France to care for the girls. Accommodation was for 120 and, as the girls moved on, other refugees were housed there as a start to their new lives in Wellington. In 1958 the Sisters were recalled to Poland and the hostel was then run for refugees by the St Vincent de Paul society. In 1967/68 the place was used as a hostel for working girls under the Sisters of Good Shepherd. In 1969 it became Vatican land as the embassy for the Papal Nuncio.

Chapter 4 The Parish Changes in the 1950's and 60's

The Catholic Church, at this time, was very traditional. All Liturgies were said by the priests with no lay input. The Mass was said in Latin with the priest's back to the congregation. All the prayers and the altar-boys' responses were in Latin. Only boys could be servers. The readings were read in English by the priest before the sermon. At the end of Mass the priest read the notices. No newsletters. At Communion people lined up and, when your turn came, you knelt at the altar rails which surrounded the sanctuary. The priest walked up and down on the other side of the rails, placing the host on your tongue. The altar-boy held a silver plate under the chin lest the host be dropped. Only the priest received the wine. No one took an active role in the Mass. The congregation sang hymns and listened. Adults read the prayers in English in their Missals. Women wore hats. Mass ended with prayers at the foot of the altar in English, 3 Hail Mary's for the conversion of Russia and a prayer to St Michael for Protection. Little children would rarely come to Sunday Mass. There was a choice of 4 Masses on Sunday morning so one parent would attend an early Mass then the other parent a later one. Sunday masses had to be finished by midday.

The first Sunday of the month was Sacred Heart Sodality for the ladies. There was a social in the evening too. The second Sunday was Holy Name Society for men and the third Sunday was Children of Mary for young unmarried women. Everyone wore their best clothes to Mass.

Benediction was held at 3pm and most families attended. Permission had to be asked of the priest to attend a non-catholic wedding or funeral. Mons McRae would say it was good manners to attend these events to support our non-catholic relatives and friends.

Then Pope John XXIII was elected in 1958. He called the Second Vatican Council in Rome to modernise the Church. All Bishops were required to attend. At the end of the Council major changes were made. Mass was said in our own languages and new missals in English only were published. People were trained to read the Mass readings, the

Communion host could be received on the hand while standing and you put your host in your own mouth. Later Communion wine was also offered for consumption. Altar rails were taken down and offertory processions were introduced. Modern hymns were written and sung, using guitars and other instruments. Sunday Masses could be on Saturday night and Sunday afternoon and evening. Women didn't wear hats unless they wanted to. Nuns' habits changed to modern dress. These changes were introduced over ten years with clear teaching as to why the changes were being done through the priests' sermons and adult discussion groups.

Another change was the building of the airport at Rongotai and the reclaiming of land for housing. There was also housing built up the hills. Thus Kilbirnie increased in size.

In 1950 St Catherine's College was opened with 54 Third formers. The old presbytery next door was closed and demolished. The Parish built tennis courts on the site and in 1957 built a Pavilion with the Tennis club rooms at the southern end, the Scouts Den at the northern end and a 4 roomed flat in the middle to be rented out. Mons McRae bought the 4 houses on Childers Tce between the hall and the shop on Childers/Rongotai Rd corner. The houses were later demolished to extend the School's playground.

In 1952 St Anthony's Church in Seatoun was built and Seatoun became a parish in 1954.

In 1958 the Catholics living in Houghton Bay asked that Sunday Mass be said there. The tram system was not good and few had cars. They used the local hall. The Twomey family who lived there had offered a site at 64 View Road for a possible Carmelite Convent. The Sisters decided against accepting and the Parish bought the land cheaply. A transit shed was bought, placed on the land and renovated as a church/hall. called St John Vianney. In 1977 the church was closed and the building sold to Newlands College.

In 1959 Hataitai became a Parish.

The 60's began with the finishing of the Vatican Council II and the slow introduction of all the changes that brought the Catholic Church into the 20th Century and mainstream society. Many married women were in full time employment and the Parish was no longer the social centre for the parishioners. Parish picnics were still held in summer at Paraparaumu and the Charity Ball continued where young women made their entry into society as debutants once they left college.

Holy Cross church was opened in 1961 and Planned Giving was introduced in 1961 as a new way of giving money to the Church so that a budget could be worked out for future planning and needs.

On 30th June 1961 a heavily laden, five ton truck hurtled through the fence on Crawford Road, flew through the air and landed in the Parish Hall. The truck's brakes failed and the driver tried to turn it into the bank. It bounced back, went across the road at speed and landed in the hall, scattering its load of sawn timber and demolishing the hall's western wall and stage. The front wheels were ripped off and the cab crushed by its load. The incident happened just 5 minutes before school was due to close and was witnessed by a group of Form 1 pupils returning from cooking class. No-one was hurt.

Mons McRae would attend the Rotary Lunch "Hour of hunger" meal annually. Everyone was served a small bowl of rice and he would be photographed for the newspaper because he was so big and the bowl was so small.

In July 1961 a parishioner Frank Whittaker was ordained priest and celebrated his First Mass at St Patrick's followed by a meal in the hall catered for by the women of the parish.

On 6 Nov 1964 the fire bell was removed from the bell tower on the church. Mons McRae helped by holding up the phone wires with a rake to allow the crane to remove the bell which was lent to the Wellington Fire Brigade for their centennial celebrations in 1965. The bell was cast in 1871 and has the inscription "Founded in Wellington New Zealand by the Fire Brigades AD 1871." It weighed 12 cwt and was made of copper and

tin alloy. The Parish had bought the bell in 1929. After the centennial the bell was returned to the church but not the bell tower. In 1987 it was gifted to the Fire Service museum.

In December 1964 Mons McRae died suddenly. His funeral was at St Mary of the Angels Church and he had 8 pallbearers because of the length of his coffin. He was remembered as a leader in the ecumenical movement which brought Catholics into close touch with other Christian churches. He was succeeded as Parish Priest by Fr Jack Dunn.

The first Parish Council was elected to have overview of all Parish activities. St Vincent de Paul Society continued as did the Legion of Mary, the choir, the Scouts and the Tennis and Badminton clubs. Some choir members established the Musical Players, a singing, dancing troupe of entertainers who performed round the greater Wellington area. Women belonged to Catholic Women's League and Homemakers.

A Men's Society was established in the Parish to give opportunities for men to socialise. The society met every second month with a speaker and a meal. 6.30 to 9.30pm. The first speaker was Winston McCarthy the famous rugby commentator. There was a strong Youth Group and Junior Legion of Mary. The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was in operation to prepare children not attending Catholic schools for the Sacraments.

A new Hall was built in Rongotai Rd. A special book rack was put in the main porch displaying books for children to read when making a visit.

5 The Parish modernizes in the 70's and 80's

Parishioners increased their different roles in the liturgies as decisions made in the Vatican Council ii continued to be activated. Communion became available in both forms and lay people trained as Ministers of the Eucharist to distribute Communion at Masses. Masses were concelebrated by groups of priests. These Ministers also took Communion to the sick at home. Pacific immigration became common and our Masses began to be multi-cultural.

Fr Jack Dunn died suddenly in December 1973. Mons Tottman took over as Parish priest in 1975 till 1979.

St Catherine's College built a new administration and classroom block in 1975. The first ordination of a priest in the parish was held on Friday 17 June 1977. Michael O'Donnell, son of Jack and Molly O'Donnell Parishioners since 1943, was ordained a Marist Priest by Cardinal Delargey. His First Mass was on Saturday morning followed by a meal in the Church Hall. Then many went to Athletic Park for the rugby test All Blacks versus Lions. The All Blacks won which added to the celebrations.

On 10th August 1979 700 boys walked from St Patrick's College in Cambridge Tce carrying their chairs to their new college on Evan's Bay Parade. Mons Tottman was transferred so Fr Owen Sinclair became the Parish administrator until Fr Gerard Dorgan took over as Parish priest. In 1979 the desire for a new church to replace the 'temporary' one built in 1910 was resurrected. Possible costs and quotes were sourced and a plan drawn up by the Lockwood Company for a wooden church. Financially it seemed an impossible dream.

The 80s began with Catholic schools integrating into the government system. St Patrick's school was deemed an earthquake risk. The school was closed and demolished in January 1982. The building proved difficult to demolish. Plans were drawn up for a new building. The school transferred by daily buses to the old Fever hospital in Alexandra Rd for 2 years while the new school was built. It took a year to draw up plans and get building permission. Construction began in April 1983 and was

completed in January 1884. The new building of 6 classrooms and admin area was all on one level. The new St Patrick's Primary school was blessed and opened on 24th June 1984.

Celebrations began with a concelebrated Mass by Cardinal Williams and Parish Priest Fr Gerry Dorgan. The school children welcomed the congregation in several languages and then presented the readings, first one in Samoan and second one in Maori. After Mass approximately 400 people moved to the terraced steps and playground in front of the school. Mr Ian MacDonald, the chairman of the School council welcomed them all and outlined the history of the school on this site. He stated that there is a link with the old building in that the commemorative plaque was made from timber from the old school. The building was blessed and everyone was invited to walk through the school and have afternoon tea.

In 1985 St Catherine's convent was demolished and a classroom block built for the college.

The Parish sponsored a Cambodian family in 1985. Pope John Paul ii visited New Zealand in November 1986 and stayed at the Vatican Embassy in Queen's Drive. The Parish choir took part in the huge Mass held at Athletic park in Newtown and many parishioners also attended.

6 The Church is Finally Built

Prayer groups were also established in parishioners' homes where we met to pray together. Renew meetings began. Our Parish formed 12 groups in which adults of the Parish gathered to discuss the Vatican II documents and as to how these ideas could be incorporated into parish life. We met for several 6 week sessions over several years and had written material to follow. A number of initiatives came out of these discussions such as the cup of tea after Mass on Sundays. The second Renew session resurrected the desire for a new church.

1988 saw a change of Parish Priest with Fr Gerry Dorgan transferred to Greymouth and Fr Des Moosman taking up the reins. RCIA was introduced as a way of teaching adults interested in joining the Catholic Church and was run by the Parishioners. The new church dream became a reality with an active committee formed which met monthly. With money already raised and a generous bequest, the parish needed \$200,000. Parishioners were kept informed through the Parish newsletters. Fundraising increased with Community dances being held at various locations eg St Catherine's College hall, Our Parish hall and Rongotai College hall. Two plays were written and performed in the Parish hall with parishioners taking the acting roles. Another fundraiser was the Saturday night functions and Housie evenings in the hall where Parishioners prepared and served supper. Others initiated a Senior Parishioners monthly lunch and entertainment in the Church hall. In February 1988 Recycling Aluminium Cans was begun in Woolworth's (now Countdown) carpark on Saturdays. Volunteers were rostered and in 5 years \$24,000 was raised.

In December 1989 the plans for a new church were approved and on 14th January 1990 the last Mass was said in the old church. Sunday Masses were then said in St Patrick's College Chapel and weekday Masses were said in the presbytery.

The 1990s began with the building of a proper church for the parish at last. The old church was sold for \$12,000 and in April 1990 was

transferred in large pieces by a fleet of Mac trucks to its new site for a Maori Community in Porirua. The old pews were sold also. The new church was built by Lockwood and is lined in pinewood. It seats 400 and has a side chapel, a large foyer, a meeting room with facilities for hospitality and meetings, a sacristy and a vestry. The stained glass windows, gifted to the Parish by the Sisters of Mercy, had previously been in St Catherine's Convent. The large window in the chapel was gifted by Mr and Mrs Famularo in memory of their 8 year old son Paul who was killed in an accident on Onepu Rd. The carved altar, the font and lectern also came from the St Catherine's Convent. The altar and the wooden panels had been carved by Sr Mary Chanel Burton in 1916-17. She later died in the 1918 flu epidemic.

On 28th October 1990 the new church was opened and blessed by Cardinal Williams who had lived in the parish as a boy. 500 attended the Mass and the following lunch. The Parish Centre under the church was opened in Aug 1992. In Jan 1992 an adults' education group was started and in January 1993 a Scripture group started.

November 1994 the 75th Jubilee was held with a special Mass and a tree planting by Fr Twiss and Fr Whitaker, old boys of the parish.

The Capuchin Fathers took over the Parish in January 1998 with Fr Paul Clarke OFM Cap. as Parish Priest and the Irish Capuchins, Fr Mathew Clerkin, Brother Martin and Brother John. In 2015 the Parish came full circle with the formation of Holy Trinity Parish incorporating the whole of the Eastern Suburbs, just like it was in 1919. In 2009 Fr Gregory Lakra came from India to our parish. Later he was joined by Fr Sanele Finau, Fr Ephrem Tigga and Fr Paulus Nag.

In February 2018 the presbytery was demolished and was replaced by a car park. The building had been declared an earthquake risk in 2012 and the priests moved to the presbytery in Miramar. The garden area has been retained and will be developed as a reflective area.