

HISTORY OF TAKAPUNA PARISH

NOTES : CATHOLIC BEGINNINGS -

1.
Takapuna, not as a Parish as we know it, but as a Catholic Centre links us with the earliest days of Catholic life in Auckland.
2.
New Zealand's Illustrious First Bishop, Bishop Pompallier, acquired under Sir George Grey, the Governor, the 23 acre grant of land on which the School and Orphanage now stand.
3.
Under his direction there was erected in 1846, the First School on the North Shore. Built of stone, it was opened in 1849 as St. Mary's College and catered for young men of both races. The first Rector was Fr. Forest S.M.
4.
It is on record, that it was visited by Governor Sir George Grey and his wife, accompanied by Bishop Pompallier.
5.
During the Maori Wars in the late 50's, the College in spite of noble sacrifices made by Bishop, Clergy and Faithful, encountered many difficulties due to lack of finance.
6.
Bishop Pompallier often crossed the Harbour by rowing boat, landing at the jetty between Barry's Point and the Orphanage property, to visit St. Mary's, first as a School, and later as New Zealand's FIRST Seminary.
7.
The FIRST New Zealander to become a Priest, Monsignor Mahoney - for many years Parish Priest of Onehunga, studied at St. Mary's for a short while. Mr Theo Maire, one of the parishioners was baptised by Monsignor Mahoney.
8.
The famous Father Walter MacDonald, and his Priest brother James, came to New Zealand as Deacons, completed their studies at St. Mary's, Takapuna, and were ordained in old St. Patrick's, Auckland.
9.
The College became an Orphanage in 1893 under the Sisters of Mercy and was renamed St. Joseph's.

CATHOLIC PIONEERS : THOMAS and MARY POYNTON -

10.
It was in answer to the prayers and labours of Thomas and Mary Poynton, the great Catholic pioneers, that Bishop Pompallier came to New Zealand, and when he moved from Russell to Auckland, they did also, setting up on this land - Carmel College School. Their homestead was on the piece of land now occupied by the St. John Ambulance Station. It was only demolished about five years ago. The land on which Carmel College is built [not the Convent], but the School] was given to the Sisters of Mercy by Mrs Shea, their daughter. Mrs Shea [Shea Terrace] was the very daughter who was taken 1200 miles to Sydney to be baptised.

Poyntons buried from St. Joseph's, their graves in O'Neill's Point Cemetery, opposite St. Luke's Church, Bayswater. Mrs Shea also buried alongside them. Graves visited by Apostolic Delegate and Bishops of New Zealand in Centenary Year 1938.

SISTERS OF MERCY -

11.

See Note 9. The Seminary became a Children's Home 1893. Sisters rowed across from St. Mary's Bay, Auckland.

1923 - the original St. Mary's is now incorporated in the present St. Joseph's Convent. This 118 year old building must have been one of the first stone buildings in Auckland. Its 30 inch walls enabled it to withstand the 1923 fire. This historic building, now rough cast and painted has served in turn as a Boys College, Seminary, Orphanage, and today as a Convent.

ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH -

12.

The present St. Joseph's Church - approximately 70 years old - was built as a Church-School and sited near the present Boy's Home. Never really belonged to Takapuna Parish as such, but to the Diocese. Survived the fire and shortly after [i.e. 1923] was moved to the position on Taharoto Road. It is on record that it was manoeuvred into position but during the night, the whole building collapsed like a pack of cards. As children, some of our present parishioners attended St. Joseph's for both School and Church.

13.

The Bell in the roof has 1857 on it. Thought to have been brought to New Zealand by the second group of Sisters of Mercy to come to New Zealand in that year. One of seven bells brought to New Zealand on a return trip to New Zealand by Bishop Pompallier.

14.

As the number of Catholics increased, Devonport became the main centre, and it was from there that the Priests visited Takapuna and Northcote. Takapuna became a separate Parish from Devonport in 1919. Monsignor Kelly came in 1935.

15.

St. Vincent's built in 1949. St. Luke's Belmont 1960. Parish still growing. St. Joseph's about to be rebuilt to seat over 700 [seven Masses in Parish each Sunday].

16.

Rosmini College 1962. Carmel College 1957. Presbytery built in 1919.