

MP. WELLINGTON PARISH 1961
St. Bernadette

1961 Presbytery built
1962 June 10 Church opened
1966 Basement hall opened.

Parish priests

1961	H. Jillings	1994 - 1995	C. Hamblin
1962-67	D. Angland	1996 - 2000	Andrew Nguyen (Administrator)
1967-70	W. Wood	2001	Tom Laffey
1970-77	E. Burke	2002 - 2003	Savelio Tewaga
1977-1981	E. Mullen	2004 - 2007	Felise Lemi CSSR (Administrator)
1982-1987	J. Dooley	2008 - 2010	Alex Viruthakulanga CSSR. (Administrator)
1987-1989	B Kelly	2011 - 2012	Ikenasio Vitaliano
1990 - 1993	L. Sakey	2013	Wieslaw Pawlowski SChr (PP)

50yrs Booklet 2012

Article from *Zealandia* June 14, 1962

NEW CHURCH BLESSED AT MT. WELLINGTON

Auckland – the new parish of St. Bernadette, Mt. Wellington, which was cut off from Panmure parish in February of 1961, and its new brick church blessed and opened last Sunday by His Grace Archbishop Liston. Between 400 and 500 people attended the ceremony.

The church is built to seat 300 people and has a basement hall which will seat about 150. A special feature, in line with modern liturgical thinking, is the placing of the sacristy at the back of the church so that Mass is always preceded by a procession to the altar.

Other features are a fine statue of St. Bernadette from France; a rimu altar made by Mr. D. Moir; a leadlight window of the Lourdes scene designed by Auckland artist James Turkington and six other leadlights of the Mass and Our Lady; extensive use of coloured glass, including a large red cross-shaped window in the centre of the sanctuary wall; and blue rosaries, modeled on St. Bernadette's own Rosary preserved in Notre Dame museum, as motifs on the glass of the entrance doors.

The wrought iron work of altar rails, choir railings and balustrade was done by a Dutch parishioner, Mr. L. Klaassen.

Statues of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Lourdes and the main altar crucifix, all donated by parishioners, are due to come from Oberammergau.

Before the new church was built, Mass was celebrated in the home of Mr. and Mrs. T. Wackrow until Palm Sunday this year. The first resident priest, the Rev. Father H. Jillings, was appointed in June with a renovated house for a presbytery. The new parish priest is the Rev. Father D. Angland.

The church is built on a four-acre site, leaving ample room for further parish buildings. It was designed and built by Mr. V. Armanesco, of the Hillsborough Construction Co., for a cost of \$15,000.

A HISTORY OF THE PARISH OF ST. BERNADETTE, MT. WELLINGTON

(from Trevor Wackrow)

- 1 The history of the Catholic Church in the Panmure district began about 1840. Initially a mission station headed by Fr. Garin, was established to care for the spiritual needs of the soldiers of the Imperial Army and the few settlers in the district. Fr. Fynes, the first Parish Priest of Panmure/Howick, was appointed
- 5 by Bishop Pompallier in 1852. He was followed by Fr. Walter MacDonald, who became a familiar figure to every resident as he rode about Ellerslie and Panmure and Howick on his horse Shamrock. His death in December 1899 was mourned by people of all denominations, thousands of whom attended his funeral. In 1904 another milestone was passed in the Catholic life of Panmure, when the
- 10 Sisters of Our Lady of the Mission arrived to establish a convent and school. In view of the continued growth of Panmure/Howick, His Lordship Bishop Liston established a separate parish of Panmure in 1949. The Parish Priest was Fr. Singleton Gardiner, and his assistants later were Frs David Blake and Peter Gray.
- 15 In February 1961, the Parish of St. Bernadette, Mt. Wellington, was cut off from the Panmure parish. The first Holy Mass was celebrated in the parish on Sunday, 12th. March 1961, at the home of Nancye and Trevor Wackrow, 49 Commissariat Rd.. Three Masses were celebrated at this address on Sundays and Holy Days, for over a year. Planned Giving meetings, and other parish meetings were also held
- 20 there. Weekday Masses were said for the first time on Wednesday 5th. July, 1961, in the presbytery - a house that had been bought in 1960. The first meeting for the new parish was held at Panmure parish hall on Sunday 12th February, 1961. Fr. Gardiner introduced the new Parish Priest, Fr. Harry Jillings.
- 25 It was decided that a church-hall be erected on the new 3 acre property in Bailey Rd., for Mass, and functions to raise funds, with the aim of erecting a convent and school. At the second parish meeting, held in the wreck of a presbytery at 27 Bailey Rd., on 26th. February 1961, Fr. Jillings announced that His Grace Archbishop Liston
- 30 had made a present of the property to the new parish, and with typical generosity said that the extensive renovations needed for the presbytery would be paid for by himself. (Fr. Jillings).

At this stage, the Archbishop with-held permission for the building of a church/hall. A brick church must be built, financed by a Planned Giving Campaign, organised by the National Fund Raisers. This campaign was conducted in September - October 1961. In August 1961 the Hillsborough Construction Co. began work on the parish church of St. Bernadette. Fr. Des Angland was appointed Parish Priest in February 1962. Masses were transferred to the partially completed church about April/May of that year, and the church was blessed and opened by Archbishop Liston on 10th. June 1962. This construction company originated in a group of unionists who met to discuss the Papal Social Encyclicals. The foreman, Mr. Vic. Armanesco, designed a basic church design of steel portal frame and brick veneer. He had Hume Engineering calculate the engineering aspects of the framework. The timber framing was fastened to the steel frames by Ramset gun, a fairly new innovation in N.Z. building at that time. This design was first used at Avondale, and also at Glen Innes, Glen Eden, Panmure and Otara. It meant considerable savings financially, yet allowed for variations, especially in the interior lay-out. Fr. Angland chose Roman Tapestry bricks for the exterior; a sand-blasted copy of St. Bernadette's rosary beads for the glass of the main doors; and the stained glass windows were designed by Auckland artist, Mr. Turkington, and the glass supplied by Phillips & Impey. The statue of St. Bernadette was obtained from France by Fr. Jillings and the Lourdes window in the baptistry was designed to tie in with this statue. The Stations of the Cross, discarded by St. Benedict's, Newton, were renovated in blue and white.

These things were donated by parishioners:

The figure on the cross (Fr. Jillings) and the statues of Jesus and Mary (a Panorama Rd. family) were from Oberamagau; the monstrance (from France); relic of St. Bernadette (Fr. Angland); wrought iron Communion rails etc., (donated and made by Leo Klaassen); the Baptismal font.

Working with Vic Armanesco on the building were Russell Piaggi, Dave Moir, Graham Martin. The contract price was :

Construction £20,000
Pews & Altar £2,000

(Later borrowed to block in the hall walls £600)

The hall was dug out and drained by extensive working bees, and eventually opened in 1966. Extensive drainage of the site was carried out by the men of the Irish

community, and the large boundary stone retaining wall was built by the Yugoslav community, with the rocks donated by Mr. Tony Laus.

The convent and school never eventuated because of the lack of nuns.

For the following eleven years, a few parishioners ran Housie, to supplement parish income.

The hall floor site was extremely wet. Field tiles were laid in mud in which you could lose your gumboots. This was overlaid by concrete laid by working bees. Father Angland then decided to excavate the kitchen area. This was done on three nights for ten weeks - working bees working in atrocious conditions, wheeling wet clay across the hall floor, up a plank into Johnny Walsh's truck. One load of sloppy wet clay was accidentally dropped up the drive! On the final night the completed job was left (with water still oozing through the wall) for the contractors to move in next morning and reinforce. Next morning half the untouched clay under the church had collapsed, leaving most of the church foundation blocks hanging in mid-air. The contractor had to shore up and reinforce in a great hurry. The whole scene was further complicated by a funeral upstairs in the church!.

Over the next few years, parish life continued without any extraordinary interruptions, other than a comparatively rapid change of Parish Priests. Fr. Wood took over from Fr. Angland in 1967. He was succeeded in 1970 by Fr. Burke, who was here for seven years, and was followed by Fr. Mullen until 1981, then Fr. Dooley until 1987. Fr. Brian Kelly was here for two years, then Fr. Munday for one year, and then Fr. Sakey until the time of writing. Along the way there were several temporary PP's, like Fr. John Dunn, and Fr. Pat Brady...

In 1989 the Parish Management Committee wrote to the Lands Dept. asking that the Right of Way caveat on our property - which allowed classrooms to be brought through to the school - should be lifted, as its time had expired. When this was referred to the Education Dept., they asked to buy an access right-of-way through the centre of our property. Because of the cost and worry of maintaining the proposed parish school property without any prospect of a school, the parish asked the Education Dept. to consider buying the whole property at the rear, and a right-of-way down the

and so, in July of 1989, the diocese was notified of the suggested sale. This would involve the re-siting of the presbytery. After a few negotiations, a selling price of \$215,000 was agreed to, around November 1990, for the sale of approximately 3/4 of the land. The Ministry of Education would pay for the fencing of their new property, and other costs involved in the transfer of ownership.

To re-locate the existing house was considered uneconomic, so it was to be sold for removal, and the proceeds (\$11,250) were to be used to furnish the new house. James Davern & Co. moved it off to become a farm house in the Tuakau area on 8th. May.

It seems it had been a farm house originally, further down Commissariat Rd., before being moved up to the Bailey Rd. site, where it was bought for the parish.

After its removal, a caravan was hired and moved onto the site for a couple of months, until the new house was finished.

Tenders for the new house closed with the architect, Mr. Tony Orgias, on 14th. March 1991, after over 30 builders had expressed interest. On 3rd. April, the tender of Keith Brown, builder, of St. Heliers, was accepted - \$121,120 for the house and \$33,612 for the groundworks - and work started on 8th. April.

As Mike Collins from the parish, had a great deal of experience in laying cobblestones, it had been decided that the parking areas would be laid in cobblestones, by working bee. Under the direction of Mike, with the help of two of his associates, Peter Ellis and Hugh Mulligan, and assisted by John Doran, Richard Lavas, Allen Kemp and Latu Kuea from the parish, a good and speedy job was done despite wintry wet weather. The tar-sealing of the drive was part of the contract. The house was blessed by Bishop Denis Browne on Sunday afternoon, 7th. July in the presence of a good body of parishioners.

Another change that took place in 1991, was that the sanctuary was altered (in February) to conform more to recent liturgical thinking. The wooden altar was cut down to about half its previous size, by an organ builder, Alan Minifie, and the carpentry was done by Brian Tolich of the Ellerslie parish (with the help of Jack Skeen), Tom Mulligan painted, and Bill Dell did the electrical work. The predella was lowered by a step, and brought forward about three metres; the tabernacle was also brought forward and given its own alcove. Provision was made for the L.P.G. heater to be located permanently for the winter months.

A life-long friend ^{26 JUN 1977} remembers Fr Eddie

One of the tributes paid to the late Father Eddie Burke, parish priest of Mt Wellington, came from his friend and neighbour Father John White, formerly of Panmure and now retired in Ireland.

"He was a prayerful priest," wrote Father White, who used to call on him practically every week and always received a friendly welcome.

Father Burke was born in Kilkenny, a beautiful city with its ancient castles, churches and monasteries we both knew and loved so well. I can remember him as a friend and companion since we were 11 years old at school with the Christian Brothers in Kilkenny.

Eddie finished his secondary studies at St Kieran's College and seminary, where we were both to meet again and continue on to the priesthood. We were ordained on June 11, 1939. We also had as com-

panions Father Arthur Lenihan of Matamata and Father Jerry O'Sullivan of Mount Maunganui.

By Father Canice Gormly

With World War II in its infancy, we sailed together from Ireland on December 8, 1939, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. We were joined on board by Father Philip Purcell, now parish priest of Te Awamutu.

Also to travel with us were Sisters Mary Agatha

and Mary Ireneus, novices on their way to St Mary's Convent, Auckland. All this is only a memory now; but it was the foundation of a long and happy friendship.

Father Burke was first

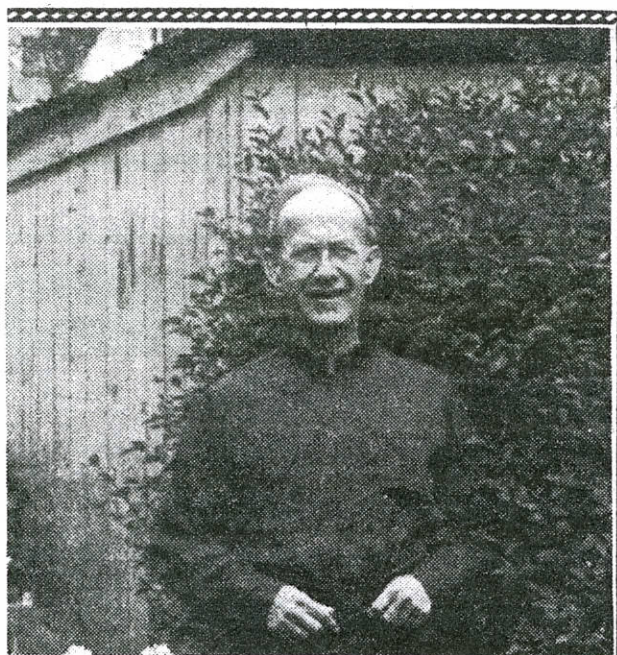
sent on loan to the Wellington archdiocese for four years, then returned to Auckland where he was appointed successively to St Heliers, Ellerslie, and Otahuhu. Ohura was his first parish; Otorohanga followed, then Ruawai and latterly Mt Wellington.

Father Eddie was gener-

ally a quiet, amiable and likeable person, with a dry sense of humour. In his younger days he was a 100 yards sprinter, and excelled in the Irish sports of hurling, handball and football.

He was also no mean Rugby player! He loved a good hustling game. "Great stuff!" he used to beam, after a particularly rugged game. He played golf with the same vigour and energy.

In later years his health declined and he underwent major surgery. He suffered quietly without complaint. He doggedly continued his parish duties and never failed his people. To them he was always friendly,



"A PRAYERFUL PRIEST": Father Eddie Burke relaxing at home during a visit to Ireland some years ago.

approachable, reliable. On his funeral day they made that obvious.

His sudden death on May 23 was a great shock to all. His Requiem Mass, offered by Bishop Mackey and con-

celebrated by some 80 priests, with an overflowing congregation of parishioners and friends, was a glowing tribute to this faithful and prayerful priest.

May God rest his soul.

Parish gives scholarship

July 30, 1972

The parish of St Bernadette's, Mt Wellington, Auckland has established a three year scholarship, worth \$225 for a Polynesian student at McAuley High School, Otahuhu.

This generous gesture is in response to a general appeal made at last year's prize-giving, when the Principal, Sister Moira Feeney, reminded parents that as well as their gaining much from the Maori, there should at the same time be assistance for him.

The scholarship will be awarded on conditions similar to those of the Pompallier Diocesan Scholarship recently established.

The recipient will be chosen from among new entrants, Maori or Polynesian from schools and districts which the school ordinarily serves.

The chaplains of appropriate societies, parish priests, or head teachers also make recommendations.