
The Feast of Divine Mercy - 1st Sunday after Easter

A Special Promise of Mercy

Our Lord's promise to grant complete forgiveness of sin and punishment on the Feast of Mercy is recorded three times in the *Dairy of St Faustina*, each time in a slightly different way:

- I want to grant a complete pardon to the souls that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My Mercy. (Diary 1109)
- Whoever approaches the Fountain of Life on this day will be granted complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. (Diary 300)
- The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion will obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. (Diary 699).

Extraordinary Graces

Our Lord is also emphasising, through this promise, the infinite value of Confession and Communion as miracles of mercy. He wants us to realise that since the Eucharist is His own Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, it *is* the "Fountain of Life" (Diary 300). The Eucharist is Jesus, Himself, the Living God, longing to pour Himself as Mercy into our hearts.

Why would Our Lord feel the need to emphasise this? Because so many people do not really understand it. They either see no need to receive Holy Communion, or they receive it simply out of habit. As St Paul explains in his letter to the Corinthians, they eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, "without recognising the body of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

In His revelations to St Faustina, Our Lord makes it very clear what He is offering us in Holy Communion and how much it hurts Him when we treat His presence with indifference:

My great delight is to unite Myself with souls ... When I come to a human heart in Holy Communion, My hands are full of all kinds of Communion, My hands are full of all kinds of graces which I want to give to the soul. But souls do not even pay any attention to Me; they leave Me to Myself and busy themselves with other things. Oh, how sad I am that souls do not recognise Love! They treat Me as a dead object (Diary 1385; also see 1288 and 1447).

So, Our Lord's promise of complete forgiveness is both a reminder and a call. It is a reminder that He is *truly present* and *truly alive* in the Eucharist, filled with love for us and waiting for us to turn to Him with trust. And it is a call for us *all* to be washed clean in His Love through Confession and Holy Communion – no matter how terrible our sins – and begin our lives again. He is offering us a new start.

St. Patrick's Parish *in the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit*

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Mass Times

Sundays 7.30am 9.00am 10.30am 6.00pm
Weekdays 12.05 Tuesday - Friday
9.00am Saturday
(Any changes are advertised in the weekly bulletin.)

Reconciliation

Friday 11.30am - 12 Midday
Saturday 9.30am

Special Times of Prayer

Mon & Wed 9am Morning Prayer (Blessed Sacrament Chapel)
Tues 11am Rosary (Blessed Sacrament Chapel)
Wednesday 5-6pm Exposition & Rosary (Cathedral)
Friday 11am-Noon Exposition & Rosary (Cathedral)

Youth Group & Tertiary Chaplaincy Prayer (see weekly bulletin)
A Prayer Chain is operating for your needs Ph 354 4401

10 Aspects of What it Means to Be Catholic

In many of my contributions to Saint Patrick's News I strive to reflect on what it means to be a Catholic today and how to make sense of the doctrines and teachings of the Church in light of contemporary experience. As a part of this I use the Catechism of the Catholic Church to have some certainty that what I am writing is in accord with the defined and authoritative teaching of the Church. At the same time I know that there are many Catholics of many stripes who disagree with what the Church teaches and yet regard themselves as Catholics. There are many who do not attend any liturgy from one year to the next and yet assert themselves as being Catholic. I do not wish to pass judgment on anyone in this article but to explore the characteristics of an authentic expression of Catholicity in the Roman Rite.

1. Eucharist Centred

This entails a belief in the Eucharist as being simply what the Church says it is—the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ truly and substantially present under the appearances of bread and wine. To believe this is also to believe in the power of the Risen Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit to continue and re-present his self-offering on the Cross to the Father here and now. If this prayer is answered then prayer is real. If this prayer is answered Christ is truly present to us now and at work in us and the sacraments. If not, then prayer, not just our prayer but any prayer whatsoever, is a delusion and our faith is a sorry fraud in which we play dress-up to alleviate our existential inadequacies in the face of futility and death. Fortunately the lives of the saints, amongst other things, point to the former being true.

If I do not attend Mass inevitably I become less-Catholic. The function of the sacraments is like that of the senses to the body. If a body is not fed it is still a body but it becomes malnourished and weaker; so it is with our faith. I cannot expect to have a spiritual life that is vibrant and living if I do not cultivate it.

“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” (Jn 12:24)

More eloquently than any treatise, these words of Jesus reveal the secret of life. A person cannot experience the joy that Jesus gives without having loved suffering. Nor can one experience resurrection without going through death.

Jesus gave everything: forgiveness to sinners and heaven to the good thief; he gave his mother; he gave his own body and blood and his very life, to the point of crying out: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mt 27:46).

Back in 1944 Chiara wrote: “Do you realise that he has given us everything? Who could give us more than a God who loves us so much that he seems to forget that he is God?”

And he gave us the possibility of becoming children of God. He generated a new people, a new creation.

On the day of Pentecost, the grain of wheat that had fallen to the ground and had died was already blooming into a fruitful plant. Three thousand people, of every ethnicity and nation, became “one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32). Then they became five thousand, and then ...

“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” (Jn 12:24)

Jesus in his abandonment gave all of himself. In this spirituality that is centred on Him, the risen Jesus should shine out fully and our joy should bear witness to Him.

Chiara Lubich

Mariapolis 2006-03-24

You are invited to attend the Mariapolis at Feilding High School. Wednesday 19-Sunday 23 April 2006.

Please, ring the Focolare Centre Ph (04)384 4559 or (04) 479 7713 for more information and during the Mariapolis: 027 281 7713 or 021 234 4117.

Anne Odogwu

POVERTY BANQUET

****LENT 2006****

"I was hungry and you fed me" (Mt 25:35)

St Patrick's Parish, Palmerston North warmly
invites you to come and share a Third World
meal
this Lent

"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you?" (Mt 25:37)

We have an option to fast in Lent – millions
worldwide have no choice but to fast every day
of their lives

*"As often as you did it for one of these...you did it for me."
(Mt 25:40)*

Come and meet the challenge!

Tuesday 4th April at 6.30pm

St Patrick's Parish Hall
Amesbury Street
Palmerston North

Cost: Koha to Caritas
BYO chopsticks optional

For catering purposes please register with St Pat's office – 358.6740

Or
Ellen 357.4246/027.310.6733

2. Acceptance of Legitimate Authority

There are many groups which assert similar beliefs to Catholics. There are groups which have split off from the Church in the past such as the Old Catholics, Liberal Catholics, American Catholics and Society of Pius X. Some of these are liberal and others are conservative but they all have in common a rejection of the Pope to determine what valid and authentic Catholic teaching is. The Pope by definition is Catholic. My opinions on his formal teaching will say what my position is and not whether he is conservative or liberal. This is because his statements of formal teaching are necessarily not his own opinion or belief but statements of the Church for the Church. The Catholic conviction is that the Petrine Office is a gift by Christ to the Church and is a safeguard of Catholicity. I might disagree with the Pope on various issues and still be Catholic but I cannot disagree with the idea and authority of the Papacy and be Catholic. This is one of the major areas of dispute that we have with the Anglican Communion.

3. Apostolicity

This characteristic is similar to the former. In it we can see that a Catholic does not look for worldly approbation for the faith but seeks to be in authentic continuity with the teachings of the Apostles. Thus, the Scriptures, which are the written expression of the Apostles teaching inspired by the Holy Spirit and the Tradition i.e. the way in which the community formed around Jesus lived, are for Catholics the touchstones of Catholic life. The Magisterium, that is the formal teaching of Popes and Councils, is the continuation of the teaching of the Church with apostolic authority. Every generation of Catholics strive to embody the truth revealed in Jesus Christ to a new age. It is not a Catholic attitude to want to change doctrines simply because the context has changed or that it is inconvenient to hold a certain belief. It is Catholic to want to enter more deeply into the mystery of what is revealed and to access the truth in the present time while staying faithful to the primitive faith enunciated by the apostles and witnessed to by the martyrs.

4. Veneration of Our Lady

Since Mary is the archetypal disciple if we wish to be good disciples we must imitate her. However it does not end there. Jesus not only offered his life for us on the Cross but according to ancient tradition he gave his mother to us to

be our mother. The Beloved Disciple was also asked to take care of Jesus' mother. A Catholic will always respect Our Lady even if s/he does not have an explicitly Marian spirituality or prayer life. Our Lady will always get the upper hand in stories or jokes. We have an intimacy and a claim on the intercession of Our Lady in such a way that we feel that our relationship with her is special but not exclusive. She is a spiritual Mother who cares for us and brings us closer to her Son.

5. Universality

Wherever we go in the world we know that we are in communion with other Catholics. If I go to Singapore or South Africa I will not think to myself, "Which Church will I go to?" I will necessarily go to a Catholic Church of the Roman rite. The language may be different but the liturgical colours, prayers and readings are the same as are all of the gestures. I can genuflect towards the tabernacle and know that what I am doing is understood by all who are there and that I am reverencing the same Christ in the same Eucharist. This is the universality and unity of the faith in action. To choose to go to another church because it is convenient, has a better preacher or better facilities for the children is not an authentic Catholic attribute. The body of the Church will be poorer for my not being there.

6. Sacramentality

Catholics believe that God is mediated in many different ways. He is really, truly and substantially present in the Eucharist but also present in the Word, the priest and the people. The beauty of the world and many other things including art, relics of the saints, holy places mediate the glory of God. These are not sacraments but they can be sacramental. The Church itself is like a sacrament in showing forth the presence of the great sacrament of God, Jesus Christ, to the world. Since I am a member of the Church I too am called to mediate Christ through the call of baptism which has made me a dwelling of the Holy Spirit.

7. Trinitarian

We always begin the Mass with the sign of the Cross. As we enter the Church we sign ourselves with the cross having dipped our finger in the holy water stoop. All of the formal, set prayers prayed by the priest have a Trinitarian element or reference to them. Ever since the Council of Nicea in

and thank Joyce for all the years she has given to her Family Group.

On behalf of all the Passionist Family Group Leaders and the members of the various PFGs we wish you all a Happy and a Holy Easter and reaching a new understanding of the Passion which is the centre of Passionist life and spirituality.

As Lent will be almost over when you see this I shall pass on a few suggestions from Fr Brian Traynor CP on the spirituality of the Lent period. Father suggests that it is more meaningful to choose the best 'action' for you to perform or not to perform, then you would continue this practice after Lent is completed.

The starting point in a meaningful Lenten programme is to agree that the end purpose is to grow into closer union with Jesus. To do this divide our programme into three areas for daily examination:

*These are simply: **MYSELF, OTHERS and GOD.***

We must accept in the first place that there is a need for prayer, study, fasting and humility. It is hoped that by the time you reach Easter you would have established a pattern that you might like to continue that involves setting reasonable personal goals and constantly assessing them in the light of your Christian commitment.

In this way you can use the Lenten time to 'convert' yourself and feel renewed in mind and heart in a wholesome way that includes your relationships, your personal needs and your faith in Jesus.

Easter time, then will be for you, like the Catechumens, a time of rejoicing in your commitment and celebrating your renewal of faith.

Brian Traynor CP

Passionist Family Group Movement Anne Odogwu

2006 has been quite an eventful year in the life of the Passionist Family Groups in our Parish. The year started with Anne-Marie and John Murray and family moving to Perth and thus completing their service as Parish Co-ordinators. We all appreciate the enthusiasm that Anne-Marie put into this role and an extra Passionist Family Group – The Runaway Chickens was started in her time. Alison and Rom Rudzky were the first Co-ordinators of this Group and all appreciate the time they gave to this commitment.

The new Parish Co-ordinators are Pat and Rod Carson and they have been getting to know the Leaders of the various Groups and are planning to meet with each PFG. They will begin by coming to the Pogats' outing to Shannon.

The new Runaway Chickens Group Co-ordinators are Leslie Williams and Simon Ford and Lorna and Craig Johnson. The Chameleons also have new Leaders Graeme and Trish Bates. . We welcome them and look forward to hearing of the progress of their Groups.

Unfortunately, the Pogats will be farewelling their Leaders at their Shannon outing and in actual fact Allan Wheatley has already departed to Kaikohe. Denise, Kimberley and Theo will be joining him there and though we shall miss their friendly leadership we wish them a successful and happy time in The Far North, a lovely area in New Zealand. As well as enjoying our outing to Shannon we will be hoping and praying that we find some new Leaders. At Shannon we shall be visiting their Historic Railway Station. This is free and they have set up some seats from a typical second class train as the older ones will remember them. There are also photos, etc and it is free to visit. We will then drive about 3 kms to see the International Canoe Slalom Course near the Mangahao Power House and picnic at the Hall nearby which is in lovely grounds with nice trees.

The Salu Vino/Phoenix PFG will be farewelling Joyce Melody, who has been a dedicated Leader of the Phoenix PFG and then a joint Leader with Bernadette Feldberg of the combined Family Groups. Once again we are very appreciative of Joyce's keen interest in the Passionist Family Movement

325AD the church has been wary of any attempt to debase the mystery of the Trinity. Catholics may not understand this doctrine, which speaks of the interior life of God and the dynamic of his revelation in time, but we know that to remain catholic that it is important to maintain it. To say that Jesus was a God pretending to be a man or alternatively that he was a man who became God is utterly unCatholic and unChristian.

8. The Sacraments

The Church teaches us that there are seven sacraments. All of these sacraments are necessary for the life of the Church. These rituals are not magic. Magic is when we use the things of nature to influence God. The sacraments are when God uses the things of nature to transform us. The priest acts not just for the people, that is, *in persona Ecclesiae*, but also in the person of Christ the head, that is, *in persona Christi Capitis*. Therefore, he, through the sacrament of Holy Orders is given authority to do things a lay person cannot legitimately do. The grace of God is mediated through the sacraments with the priest as an instrument for the Church. It is not the priest who baptizes but Christ which is why the sacraments are valid even if the priest is for some reason sinful or unworthy of his office. In the sacrament of penance or reconciliation, I speak to God in the presence of the priest so I am confident that my sins are forgiven and that I am in full communion with the Church.

The effect of the sacraments is enduring. Hence, the Eucharist remains holy until it is consumed. Therefore, it is kept in the tabernacle so it can be taken to the sick and exposed for public adoration. The sacraments of baptism and confirmation can only be received once. A sacramental marriage is only ended through death or if the Church declares through an annulment that it was never truly and validly brought about in the first place.

As a result, the sacraments, along with the liturgical year give shape to the lives of Catholics. Secular activities such as Halloween are mere pale imitations of the mysteries of Christ's life which inform our journey of faith through time to our heavenly home.

9. Attitude to Law

Catholics are accustomed to and think in terms of structures. They like continuity and predictability and always strive to bring order to the Church

through observance of Church laws and customs. They also rejoice to keep the law as it is a way of honouring God because the law is seen as a gift from God to help us on our journey to holiness. Catholics wish to observe holy days of obligation and to participate in the liturgy as the church would have them do rather than be disobedient for the sake of it. Protestants tend to distrust structures and regard them as human innovations that impede reception of the Gospel. For our part we regard structures as allowing for and creating the context for the growth of community and the passing on of apostolic teaching. There may be disagreements over Church law but we do accept that the law is a good thing which makes us identifiably Catholic and confirms us in that identity.

10. Ability to Reflect

Catholics are not fundamentalists. Fundamentalists insist that the rest of the world interpret faith and reality through their own narrow lens using only their language and their ideas without opening up to dialogue. We have a breadth of vision that strives to incorporate different ways of prayer, spirituality and interpretation that are consistent with authentic faith. We also have the ability to contemplate the mysteries of the faith and enter into them so that they become a part of our own lives. We do not believe that we oppose faith and reason but use both to open ourselves to the wonder of God. Catholics strive to be truly spiritual without losing sight of our lived experience and the joy of creation. Thus, we can look at the things and beauty of this world and see God just as we can realize that God is with us in our suffering and loving us even as we sin. He calls us back to fullness of communion with him and invites us to share in his mission as members of his

From the Parish Pastoral Council Kevin O'Donnell

“St Patricks News” review.

Over a period of several meetings, the Parish Council have been considering the effectiveness of this monthly publication, relative to the time and commitment of the production team together with the extra office costs of photocopying each month. There could be an

1932. Here she felt “very much at home”. Then followed 41 years as a teaching Sister of Mercy. In 1971 (then aged 60) she became Principal of St James’ School, where she remained three years, until the Mercy Sisters withdrew from the school. She then enjoyed her retirement cooking, and painting, finally living at St Joseph’s Upper Hutt. Sister Margarita died at St Joseph’s Home of Compassion on 21st January 2006.

In February of this year, Sister Mary Denise (late of Palmerston North) celebrated her 70 years as a Sister, with Sister Mary Winefride of Wellington.

We, in St Patrick’s Parish, have much to be grateful for, with the loyal support given to our Parish since 1894 when the first teaching Mercy Sisters arrived. These Sisters dedicated their lives in the service of our children, in schools and with music, as well as running the Mercy Hospital for 50 years.

May we never forget their service to God and to us.

Refer: Sister Margarita’s life story *From Free-Range to Cloister*.

International World Youth Day 2008

Sydney, Australia

WYD 2008 will be held in Sydney, Australia, from 15 – 20 July 2008. World Youth Days have been positive experiences for millions of young people over the past 20 years and could be a significant occasion for our young people in Aotearoa, New Zealand. WYD focuses on the 16 – 35 year age group and Bishop Peter and the Diocese of Palmerston North is committed to seeing a group attend as part of the larger national pilgrimage. This will also be an opportunity for members of the parish to support our young people.

Young people interested in exploring the opportunity to join a Palmerston North group attending the WYD should contact David Mullin on 358 8079 or email palmerstonnorth@worldyouthday.org.nz. See also the poster in the Cathedral foyer.

Sister Mary Margarita Lyons R.S.M. 1911 – 2006

Margarita Lyons' mother, Ellen Lyons (Donoghue) was born in Scartaglin, Castle Island, County Kerry, Ireland in 1870. Her father emigrated to New York in 1880, but returned to Ireland. He then decided to come to New Zealand, where he purchased land on the Pahiatua Track. Ellen followed and after working in Australia, came to New Zealand in 1888. On arrival in Palmerston North, she worked for a dentist's wife, a Mrs Tripe, who taught her to cook, housekeep, and to become a proficient needlewoman.

Michael Lyons, Margarita's father, was born in 1865 at Mountshannon, County Clare, Ireland. He arrived in New Zealand in 1882 and found employment as a farrier, later with a surveying group, and then he came to Palmerston North where he met and married his wife in St Patrick's (2nd) church in 1894. First of all they lived in Main Street, later Scandia Street (now Albert Street) opposite where St James' School is today. He then became caretaker of the Esplanade and Sports Ground, so they shifted to a town council house at the Esplanade.

In 1903 they moved to Taikorea (Te Kawau area) where blocks of land were offered to settlers prepared to farm. There were seven children, Margarita being the sixth child born in 1911 at Taikorea. Here she was brought up in a pioneering area in a little cottage, surrounded by bush. Her father cleared the land, planted an orchard, and became a dairy farmer, as well as a blacksmith. Margarita enjoyed the freedom of the country life and well remembered her first trip to Palmerston North in a trap drawn by Tommy the horse. The 16 mile journey took 2 hours and then Tommy was put in a stable near Melody Lane in Broadway, to rest before their return journey.

Margarita attended Taikorea School at the age of 7 and at the age of 17 years went to board at St Mary's College, Wellington.

Later Margarita entered St Mary's Convent as a postulant on 21 February

opportunity for business sponsorship to cover some "Newsletter" publication costs (our actual Mass count exceeds 700 people, taken Sundays in October of each year - a significant market exposure).

Joint editors, Teresa Gillbanks and Joan Brookes have indicated that after more than 11 years as editors, they would like to be relieved of this task. The Parish appreciates very much the regular monthly commitment of Joan and Teresa and believes that there must be others in the Parish, who are able to assume this position.

We thank Parishioners who responded to the recent questionnaire which indicated a desire to see this publication continue, but like all volunteer groups this Parish too needs more people involved to ensure existing services can continue.

If you are able to be available to assist with any of the "Parish Contact" services, as listed inside the Newsletter cover, please contact either the Parish office or myself. It could be appropriate for the Newsletter to become a quarterly publication, however the Parish Council has yet to make a final decision.

Farewell to Fr Marcus Francis

Most parishioners will be aware that regrettable for us at St Patrick's, Fr Marcus will be leaving us late June to commence studies in Rome for a Doctorate of Canon Law. There will be a farewell function for Fr Marcus on Sunday, 18th June at St James School Hall from 12 – 2 pm. I trust everyone who is able, will take time out to attend this special occasion. It will probably be some years before he returns to St Patrick's, perhaps as a Canon Lawyer?

Fr Marcus spent time with us as a Deacon prior to his ordination and on 24th February 2001 was ordained in Taradale and has been here at the Cathedral with Fr Brian since.

The opportunity to contribute to a farewell collection will be available closer to the time.

Parish Area Development Committee Report

We acknowledge the time and effort of Peter Hurley and Graeme Siddle in representing us in this group of local parishes. Their report is included in this newsletter.

St Patrick's News Survey Teresa Gillbanks and Joan Brookes

We thank those members of the parish who took the time to complete the newsletter survey questionnaires. As the present compilers of the newsletter we are encouraged by the positive response to our parish newsletter by the majority of respondents. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the continuation of a parish newsletter being produced at least four times per year (54%), and 41% indicated they wished the publication to continue monthly.

It was gratifying to note the enthusiasm for contributions from Fr Marcus, Barry Slade, the Social Justice Group, Passionist Family Group activities, as well as general parish news items. There were also several good suggestions for future newsletters which will be followed up in due course.

However, after more than eleven years each, we have asked to be relieved of our responsibilities for the newsletter. We have very much enjoyed our experience in producing the newsletter each month, but feel this is a good time to move aside allowing space for a new team to inject new energy and enthusiasm into this popular publication. Offers of assistance in preparing future editions are welcome and it is now over to the Parish Council to consider how this can be managed.

Thank you to all those who have contributed over the years, to all of you who have read the publications, and even more thanks to those of you who have encouraged us along the way. It has been a rewarding experience.

God Bless
Teresa and Joan

From the Pastor

Easter is a special time for all Christians and especially so for Catholics. We have the wonderful Easter ceremonies that are full of ancient symbolism that speak so profoundly of the mysteries of faith.

These ceremonies with their ancient roots are sacred dramas allowing us to enter the great mystery of what Christ has done and is doing for us. All of the senses and emotions are engaged as we enact the final days of Jesus' life and celebrate the miracle of the resurrection. What a wonderful opportunity to rediscover and reinvigorate our baptismal faith! Again this year we are privileged to welcome others into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

I encourage all of you who receive Saint Patrick's News to make the most of this special time of grace by bringing family, friends and acquaintances to experience the glory and fullness of the Catholic tradition and faith. Please make available to them the Easter timetable included in this issue!

Fr Marcus, the parish team and I wish you a holy and blessed Easter. We express our gratitude to all those people who contribute materially and spiritually to the Parish and we invite all parishioners to truly share Easter joy this year.

May the joy of the Risen Christ enter your hearts and bring you all the gifts that the Holy Spirit bestows. He is truly risen! Alleluia ! Alleluia!

Fr Brian Walsh

Two raffles were drawn on the day. The Hamper was won by Elaine O'Brien and the \$50 note won by Ellen Fowles.

But of course no picnic is complete without a good BBQ and we were all very aptly provided for both from the parish and each family's contribution. Thanks to all those who added to the wonderful feast.

But the most thanks needs to go to Father Marcus and his organising team for their very fine efforts. For any day such as this to be successful it needs a committed team to plan and provide for the many necessities.. Thank you on behalf of all there.

And lastly, to all the parishioners who were not present. Hopefully you will be able to participate in the next picnic, or parish event, as these times are very relaxed ways that help us all realise that each one of us really is a small part of a much bigger family.

Christmas Gift Parcels

The Christmas Season is now well behind us but in its passing we Vincetians wish to express our thanks to those many people who enabled us to pass onto those families whom we visit some Christmas gifts and the best wishes of St Patrick's and the St James community.

It was humbling to represent the Vincentians at the end of year ceremony at St James and to receive from the children a wonderful array of Christmas goodies for distribution. Thanks also too, to the many parishioners' christmas contributions.

The Social Justice Group were able to assist us with names and in the distribution of parcels. I can assure you it was a most rewarding to receive, on your behalf, the thanks of parents and children who received those parcels.

So, on behalf of the Social Justice Group and the St Vincent de Paul Society, a very warm 'thank you'.

Harry Lampen-Smith.
Conference Chairperson.

Pastoral Area Development Committee

Report for St Patrick's Parish

The inaugural meeting of the Manawatu Pastoral Area Development Committee (Name may be changed) was held 28th February and attended by representatives from various parishes (both clergy and laity - elected by Parishes) within the Manawatu. The meeting was facilitated by Judith Campbell of the Diocesan Centre; Bishop Peter Cullinane was also present. Frs Brian and Marcus, Peter Hurly and Graeme Siddle attended on behalf of the parishioners of this Parish.

The Manawatu Area is among the last in the Diocese to look at Pastoral Areas. This does of course mean that we can benefit from the experience of others. The establishment of pastoral areas in this part of the Diocese is beginning stage 2 which is expected to last 12 months.

We were reminded that the Pastoral Area Development Committee is a follow on from Vatican II and an attempt to inject life and development into a dynamic organisation (the church) so that the needs of all are catered for to the best of our ability in an ever changing world.

The meeting recognised that people are concerned about the shortage of Priests and that that may mean a reduction in the number loss of Masses. It is true that there is a shortage of Priests, but this is not the reason for the PADC. Rather Bishop Peter said that the shortage of Priests has been the catalyst for the PADC, which would really have happened at some stage in the future. The developmental role of the PADC was emphasised and the meaning of the word "Pastoral" was explored. Bishop Peter said that it was whatever 'gave life' to us as Catholic Christians in this church.

The meeting looked at various ways to subdivide the area so as to work more efficiently with smaller groups. A number of permutations were discussed including a simple geographical one of "East of the Ranges and West of the Ranges". However a draft proposal was reached incorporating City and Rural as well as having a geographical logic to it.

The concept proposed is that the Parish of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit will work with Dannevirke and Pahiatua, Our Lady of Lourdes will work with Foxton and Shannon and St Mary's will work with Feilding. These sub groups will meet once a month and then the whole PADC will come together every three to four months to share what has been covered among the smaller groups. The three City Parishes will also work together with separate occasional meetings.

It was agreed that this concept should be communicated to all parishes involved, so that parishioners and Councils are aware of the proposal and may have the opportunity to comment on it.

It was noted that each Pastoral Area will be different – each community within an area is unique. Therefore the development of any Pastoral area will reflect the universality of the Church by recognising the distinctive nature of each local church across our diocese.

The next PADC meeting (whole group) will be held in the St Patrick's Lounge on 28 March at 7 p.m. at which our parish along with the other Parishes represented will give feedback.

If parishioners wish to make further comments please get in touch with Peter Hurly or Graeme Siddle.

Study in Canon Law for Fr. Marcus - Fr Marcus

As many parishioners will know by now I will be leaving the parish this year to do further studies. I write this note to clarify for the parish what is happening.

25 June is my last Sunday in the parish and I will be driving up to Auckland to fly out to Italy in early July, for three months of language immersion and acclimatization, before commencing a Licentiate in Canon Law, JCL, at the Angelicum University in Rome.

This degree is equivalent I would say to a Masters degree and runs for three years. It will qualify me as a canon lawyer and enable me to work with marriages and to advise Bishop Peter on matters to do with Canon Law.

I therefore anticipate that at the conclusion of my studies I will return to Diocese and may even be appointed to Palmerston North. Look out for the occasional letter from Rome in the St. Pat's News.

As many of you know in the passed five years I have made an effort to visit parishioners at home on an *ad hoc* basis. I have not managed to see everybody in that time. If you would like to see me in person, before I go, please notify the Parish Office and I will try pop around for a cuppa.

Parish Picnic - Teresa Gillbanks

On Sunday 19 March many parishioners gathered in the Parish House gardens for a picnic in honour of our patron saint, St Patrick.

The weather was just perfect for bringing out the picnic rugs and very quickly everyone looked as though they were at home with each other, many of whom had only met on the day.

The Irish dancers put on a fantastic performance and reminded 'us not so young anymore folk' what it used to be like, or wished it had been like, to kick up our heels and dance for joy!

Some other hidden talents came to the fore in the joke telling contest with the very youngest of these, Charlie Johnson, having the crowd in stitches. Fortunately for himself he proved to be too great a contender to beat and happily bounced away with the much contested prize, a bar of chocolate.

Then there was the hooplah 'hoop off' with a couple of very brave adults, namely Parish Pastoral Worker Jenny Moleta and Parish Council member Kathryn Rankin facing off with the younger generation and I must say they made the younger ones work hard. In the end Caleb Jameson took away the prize. Well done, Caleb.

Other novelty relay races followed and some adults needed extra encouragement to participate - they had become rather wary of the ability of the children by this stage!