

Te Kete Atawhai

MERCY BASKET



YEAR II STUDENT Christienne Dadula holds her prize-winning design for a stained glass window which has been incorporated into a large cross in the new gymnasium at St Mary's College, Ponsonby. Watching on are Bishop Pat Dunn who blessed and opened the complex on March 15, Mr Paul Keane, chairman of the St Mary's board of proprietors, and Mrs Bernadette Stockman, the college's principal. See stories, page 2



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- ♦ A world-first for Mercy Parklands – excellence in dementia care – page 3
- ♦ Irish pilgrims make connection with NZ Mercy founding sister – page 6
- ♦ Mercy celebrates 50 years in Tonga – pages 8-9

State-of-the-art gym for Mercy's oldest college

St Mary's College in Ponsonby, established in 1850, has a new gymnasium building, opened and blessed in March by Bishop Pat Dunn. The complex contains an international basketball court, a dance studio, offices and five new classrooms which open onto a mezzanine gallery for viewing sports fixtures.

A KEY FEATURE OF THE EXTERIOR IS A LARGE, ILLUMINATED cross which is clearly visible on the cityscape and will be a significant landmark for Auckland.

The building has been named after Mr Paul Keane, chairman of the board of directors of St Mary's College for the past 12 years.

Jessica Polo is a Year 13 student and one of two Sports Prefects at St Mary's College. She helps to run the school's Sports Council which meets weekly and is responsible for encouraging students to be more involved in physical activity.

"It's exciting to have a state of the art sports facility in the heart of our school," says Jessica. "Being a real sports nut, I believe the new gym will provide many new opportunities for students and sport at our school.

"My only wish is that I could get to use it for longer," says Jessica, who is now in her last year at St Mary's.



ARTIST'S VIEW of the new gym complex at St Mary's College, showing the large cross which is now a feature of the city landscape.

She says the new gym is significantly larger than the old hall. "This means that junior PE classes will no longer have to go outside and miss out when a senior class is on.

"Having a proper dance studio will enable students to learn in a real dance environment, providing them with great experience should they decide to pursue this when they leave St Mary's. It will encourage more students to participate in dance.

"The new gym could see higher level games being played here, giving

St Mary's students the opportunity to be inspired by watching top class athletes."

The \$7 million complex has been welcomed by St Mary's College principal, Mrs Bernadette Stockman, a past pupil of the school who took up her position in Term 4 last year. The building has been designed to meet student needs well into the future, she says.

School song inspiration for stained glass window

Christienne Dadula was among Year 10 art students who took part in a competition last year to make a design to be incorporated in the large cross which dominates the new gymnasium at St Mary's College. The challenge was to incorporate the environment around the school.

"MY MAIN INSPIRATION CAME FROM our school song," says Christienne, who continues to include art as one of her options this year. "The song has the Virgin Mary as its main focus, but also highlights the colours that symbolize our school.

"What really stood out for me as I was completing this project were the lines, 'Our colour's blue, that's for Our Lady', and 'a touch of red speaks for our caring'.

"The roses in my piece were inspired by the roses I saw in the sisters' small cemetery next to our field, and the gold crown was inspired by the stained glass figures of the saints I saw at St Patrick's Cathedral."

The illuminated cross is clearly visible on the city landscape, but Christienne admits she was more conscious of how her design would be seen within the



WINNING design for stained glass window, drawn by St Mary's College student Christienne Dadula.

gymnasium. "To be honest, I thought more about what the stained glass would look like from within the school, than how it might appear as part of the Auckland landscape.

"As the building gradually took shape, I became more and more excited. When I found out that my art work had been chosen for the new building, I was overwhelmed and felt very surprised.

"I thought my art teacher was joking when she told me I had won the competition. When the building was completed and my piece had been transformed into stained glass, I sent my mum and dad a photo of it straight away.

"Seeing my work up on the cross is truly humbling, and I'm very glad that I've already left a piece of me and my passion at St Mary's."

Excellence status a world-first for Mercy facility

Mercy Parklands, the residential aged care facility in Ellerslie, has been named as a Centre of Excellence for *Spark of Life*, the specialised programme it has introduced over the past five years for residents who live with dementia.

A PLAQUE CONFIRMING THE STATUS, A WORLD-FIRST, WAS presented to Mercy Parklands at a ceremony in February by Australian Jane Verity, the founder of *Spark of Life* and currently CEO of Dementia Care Australia.

Spark of Life is a strengths-based programme that enables staff to relate to people with dementia in positive and creative ways, kindling within them a spark of interest and independence which has often become hidden and overlooked.



THE Centre of Excellence plaque, presented to Mercy Parklands for its *Spark of Life* programme.

Spark of Life caught the attention of Mercy Parklands CEO Ann Coughlan at a healthcare conference some years ago. Since then the programme has been promoted at Mercy Parklands by the manager of the facility's Allied Health team, Helen Delmonte, who has graduated from special training in Australia as a *Spark of Life* master practitioner.

Helen admits that *Spark of Life* is not a cure, but says it focuses on meeting the emotional needs of people with dementia, helping them to feel joyful, loved and involved.

"In the past, aged care has often focused on people's physical needs," Helen explains. "*Spark of Life* is a new approach, aimed at lifting people's spirits, feeding their souls and warming their hearts."

The programme offers a person-centred model of care, with a focus on the remaining strengths of each resident, helping them to thrive in a new way, says Helen. Strategies for staff involve a shift of focus, to better understand the person with dementia. "People are happier when they feel they are being well cared for," she says.

The decision to name Mercy Parklands as a Centre of Excellence was based on documented evidence, pointing to the difference the programme has made to residents and their families. Gains include a huge reduction in the number of falls, which can often lead to long-term disability for older people, as well as a significant drop in the number of challenging incidents among residents for staff to deal with.

The *Spark of Life* philosophy has also prompted a complete restructuring of one of Mercy Parklands' wings, providing a more homely atmosphere for its 13 residents, all of whom live with

pronounced aspects of dementia. The change has been achieved without needing to turn the wing into a secure area, or with significant increases in medication or other forms of restraint.

"The residents in Wing 2 feel much more strongly that this space is their home," says Helen Delmonte. "The programme which operates there gives them more scope to contribute to daily living, able sometimes to help by cooking their favourite recipe or to be involved in some aspect of life they had forgotten all about."

The Centre of Excellence plaque was received by CEO Ann Coughlan. "We're delighted to receive this plaque, because we have seen how well *Spark of Life* fits with our Mercy core values.

"Our mission is to enhance human living, through Mercy's compassion and skills. The *Spark of Life* approach has helped all our staff to do this better, in ways that our residents' families have been quick to recognise and appreciate."

Representing the board of Mercy Healthcare at the presentation was Sister of Mercy Patricia Rowe, who told the gathering of staff, residents and special guests that *Spark of Life* "goes to the heart of Mercy values, respecting the innate dignity of each person.

"On behalf of our board, I want to thank each staff member at Mercy Parklands for taking the time to learn about this approach and to change the way you work, for going the extra mile and for being here for the long haul."

Patricia Rowe said she had been moved to hear staff testify how *Spark of Life* is being implemented at Mercy Parklands. "It happens in a mutual way, with benefits for both staff and residents. This is Mercy in action," she said. "This is Mercy making a difference."



SPARK of Life founder Jane Verity (left) presents Ann Coughlan, CEO of Mercy Parklands, with the Centre of Excellence plaque. Watching are (second from left) Hilary Lee, president of Dementia Care Australia, and Helen Delmonte, who leads the *Spark of Life* project at Mercy Parklands.

Mercy Hospital's 'flying nun' wins the duck race

A 'flying nun', sponsored by Mercy Hospital Dunedin, was the outright winner in this year's Corporate Duck Race, held in Dunedin in February to raise funds for local charities.

PICTURED HERE, THIRD on the left, the 'flying nun' was also second in the 'Best Dressed' category.

Around 100 rubber ducks were bought by local businesses at \$200 each; these were then decorated and launched into the Water of Leith, joining 5000 yellow ducks in a charity race between two of the city's bridges.

Dunedin Rotary sold duck tickets at \$5 a time, inviting purchasers to "see which duck can paddle the Waters of the Leith the fastest."

Mercy Hospital's mission coordinator, Dr Janice McDrury said the event generated "lots of energy and excitement, as



THE FLYING NUN (third on the left) was first in the race and second in the Best Dressed category. Quack Sparrow was third in the race, while Allen Duck came fourth.

staff from our different areas engaged in this fund-raising exercise.

"The creativity was amazing, and it's a good example of staff teams in the hospital participating in a fund-raising event within the wider community."

More than \$20,000 was raised for Cure Kids Inc, Otago Community Hospice, Autism Otago Support Group, the Child Cancer Foundation and Rotary

Community Projects. The project was organised by the Rotary Club of Dunedin East Charitable Trust.

"We had to shorten the race a little, as a wind got up and started blowing the ducks in the wrong direction," said an organiser. "But we'll definitely be doing this again."

'Rementia' the focus for Spark of Life

Spark of Life is a pioneering approach to dementia care, says Helen Delmonte who leads the programme at Mercy Parklands in Ellerslie.

THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE PROGRAMME "OFFERS A profoundly practical approach that lifts the human spirit, awakens dormant abilities and heals relationships that have been broken through dementia."

Helen says that *Spark of Life* is about "redefining what it means to have dementia, opening up new possibilities for improvement. It is also about revitalising the culture of dementia care – enriching the quality of life for people with dementia and giving joy and renewed energy to carers."

Helen uses the word "rementia" to describe what happens when the principles of *Spark of Life* are pursued. "Residents recover some of their lost abilities, when their social and emotional environment becomes more supportive and understanding.

"Mercy Parklands has made a conscious decision to create an environment that supports rementia, and which is enriching to all people living, working and visiting our facility.

"We chose *Spark of Life* unanimously, for its optimistic approach towards dementia rehabilitation."

She notes that in 2009, Dementia Care Australia received an international award for its *Spark of Life* whole-systems approach, from the International Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing, an agency covering 30 countries for excellence in aged care services.



SPARK OF LIFE leader Helen Delmonte, with staff at Mercy Parklands who serve as torchbearers for the Spark of Life programme; they were participating at the presentation of the Centre of Excellence plaque. See story, page 3.



This year, Mercy is celebrating 20 years since the house, built in Baggot Street in 1827 by Catherine McAuley, re-opened in 1994 as Mercy International Centre.

What Baggot Street holds for Kiwi pilgrims

Sisters of Mercy from New Zealand have played their part in this story. Among the first of these was Irish-born Elizabeth McCaver, who had spent years in Auckland, many of them as the Congregation's bursar, before returning home to Ireland in 1991. Soon after, she took up the position of finance manager and facilities planner for the process of converting the house in Baggot Street from a convent to Mercy International Centre.

OTHERS TO LEAVE THEIR MARK ON THE PROCESS HAVE BEEN

Sr Mary Hanrahan of Christchurch, who was director of Mercy International Association (MIA) for four years (1997-2001), as well as the late Mary Gormly of Wellington, who served on the team which staffs the Baggot Street House. Many others, from New Zealand and countries around the world, have spent short spells as volunteers, helping the team with the smooth running of the house.

Sr Ethel Bignell of Wellington was Administrator of MIA for five years. Our present Congregation Leader, Anne Campbell is currently president of the MIA Mercy Leaders, and Denise Fox is a director on the MIA board.

A long succession of Sisters of Mercy and their partners in mission have travelled to Baggot Street to share in the programmes provided at the centre. Among those who were there in recent times were Richard Whitney, CEO of Mercy Hospital Dunedin, and Gabrielle Huria, kaihautu of He Waka Tiaki, the mission team of Mercy Ministries in New Zealand. The two Kiwis joined a larger group of pilgrims from Mercy facilities in Brisbane for a visit in April 2012.

Gabrielle describes Catherine's house in Dublin as the ukaipo of Mercy. Ukaipo means the source of sustenance, the mother or true home. "The old saying, 'there's nothing like the real thing', comes to mind," says Gabrielle.

"Praying in the chapel where Catherine began and ended her day, learning in the rooms where she taught, and walking around the Dublin of her day, was an extraordinary experience.

"It gave me a greater level of insight into her understanding of the Gospel, and the meaning of hesed, the Hebrew word that mercy springs from. On every day of our visit, in small and large ways, I came into direct contact with Catherine's model of steadfast, rock-solid faithfulness that endures. It's a call to love as God loves."

What stood out especially for Gabrielle "was Catherine's desire to create a beautiful and safe environment, in the well-to-do, leafy surroundings of Baggot Street, for the poor and vulnerable of her community.

"This concept has travelled across the oceans of time to us here in Aotearoa, and is evidenced in the efforts by Sisters of Mercy and their partners in mission to create beautiful spaces in which to care for the sick, the poor and the vulnerable.

"In our efficient and fast modern world, it's too easy for the sick, poor and old to be invisible."

What do New Zealanders carry with them when they visit Baggot Street? "It's the clarity of distance," says Gabrielle Huria. "It takes us two days to get there, and many of us descend from Irish stock. We offer an understanding of the culture of the place, with the added value of seeing with new eyes.

"As French writer Marcel Proust observed, 'the real value of discovery consists not in seeing new lands, but in seeing with new eyes'.



HOUSE of Mercy, Baggot Street, now Mercy International Centre. Says Gabrielle Huria (right), New Zealand pilgrims take with them 'the clarity of distance'.



"We also have a quirky national habit of opening up the windows and letting light in. Our many firsts include giving women the right to vote, splitting the atom, and honouring the Treaty of Waitangi as a founding national document."

Gabrielle insists that there can only ever be one ukaipo, one mother, one Baggot Street that tells this particular story. "But that does not preclude the value of the offspring, and that's where we fit in.

"That intrepid group of eight women, led by Mother Cecilia Maher, who landed in Auckland in 1850, was another first – the first Catholic sisters to arrive in New Zealand.

"Both their legacy and the other founding places of sisters throughout New Zealand are important for our continuing the Mercy story. We keep the story alive throughout New Zealand by naming the various buildings, institutions and school houses after Catherine and her works of mercy."

Pilgrims make the link with Mother Cecilia

The chapel at St Mary's Convent in Ponsonby has its own story to tell. Built at the request of Mercy pioneer Mother Cecilia Maher and blessed by Bishop Pompallier in 1866, the chapel is a great link to this country's Mercy origins.

STILL USED REGULARLY BY STUDENTS from St Mary's College next door, and often by past pupils when they come to marry, it's a mecca for students and staff from Mercy facilities who want to explore the beginnings of Mercy in this land.

In February, the chapel welcomed Irish visitors, Father Oliver Maher and his brother Ken, and their good friends Kevin and Geraldine Butler. The brothers are great-great grandnephews of Mother Cecilia Maher.

Fr Oliver, a priest from the diocese of Ossory, lives in Urlingford, a small provincial town about 18 miles north of Kilkenny. His brother Ken hails from Ballygar in County Galway. Their friends Kevin and Geraldine live near Kilkenny.

"For many years I've heard my parents talk about New Zealand and our family connections there, so I always planned to visit at some stage," Fr Oliver said. "The trip was very exciting, but in the back of my mind I couldn't help thinking of those wonderful Irish missionaries – priests and sisters – who embarked on epic voyages to arrive in New Zealand, never to return home again.

"It took us all of 22 hours flying time to get there, where it took Mother Cecilia and her companions around eight months by sea."

Fr Oliver says he heard about Mother Cecilia when he was younger, and that he and his parents were lucky enough to attend centennial celebrations some years ago at St Leo's Convent in Carlow, from which the founding community had travelled.

"As part of our visit to Auckland we spent half a day with the Mercy Sisters in Ponsonby. I was deeply touched to be presented with a copy of Mother Cecilia's biography by none other than its author, Sr Marcienne Kirk. As I read the book, I was struck once again by the faith and bravery of those wonderful women."

Fr Oliver and his brother spent time in the small cemetery where Mother Cecilia is buried, and caught up with a group of pupils from Holy Cross School in Papatoetoe who were visiting the chapel as part of their RE programme. The girls

sang a verse and chorus of The Circle of Mercy for the visitors.

"Meeting that group of young students in the chapel made me realise that the ideals which the sisters set out to achieve all those years ago are still being realised."

Fr Oliver and his group were very taken by the warmth and friendliness of everyone they met. "I was blown away by the beauty of the country and by how vast it is. We travelled from Auckland to Cape Reinga, then flew to Dunedin and travelled up the South Island, visiting glaciers and fjords, and doing a sky-dive

from 15,000 feet near Lake Taupo.

"The whole trip was way above our expectations, and I can't wait to return again. I've already started saving for the next trip!"

He says he has been encouraging his friends to visit. "If I were younger I would definitely be considering a move to New Zealand!" He finished his interview by wishing our readers a very happy St Patrick's Day. "We always say a prayer that day for those who are away from home. This year in particular, I'll be remembering those in New Zealand."



ABOVE: Fr Oliver Maher with archivist Sr Marcienne Kirk, who presented him with a copy of her book on the foundress, Mother Cecilia Maher.



LEFT: Fr Oliver Maher (left) and his brother Ken, beside the portrait of Mother Cecilia Maher in St Mary's Convent, Ponsonby.

Arrival of first Sisters of Mercy remembered

Sisters of Mercy and some of their partners in mission gathered earlier this month to remember the arrival of the first Sisters of Mercy in New Zealand in April 1850. The celebration took place in the chapel built under the direction of Mother Cecilia Maher and blessed by Bishop Pompallier in 1866.

THE SIMPLE CEREMONY INCLUDED THE lighting of eight candles, remembering each of the pioneer band of sisters from Ireland, most of them from St Leo's Convent in Carlow, who spent eight months on board the *Océanie*, a 533-ton sailing ship which had left from Antwerp in August 1849.

Seventy-five years after their arrival, Auckland's sixth bishop Henry Cleary drew on the memories of long-time residents to recall that "everyone in the village was down at the shore to welcome the nuns, the Catholics being in the minority."

The group was rowed ashore in an open boat, to land at a spot in Customs Street West where the old Government Buildings stood. "A procession was formed. Preceded by the whole Catholic population up the tree-lined track known as Albert Street, the Sisters in twos, flanked by Catholic members of the garrison as guard-of-honour, were followed by acolytes, the priests, the venerable Bishop and his coadjutor, Dr Viard.

"When they reached St Patrick's, Benediction was given, hymns were sung, and the Magnificat and Te Deum intoned by the bishops, priests and sisters. Dr Pompallier briefly expressed his gratitude to God for this happy culmination of his dearest wishes, and welcomed the sisters to their new home.

"The citizens afterwards extended their greetings in the recently erected schoolroom, where refreshments were provided for all. The convent was a neat little wooden house, the walls lined with canvas and then covered with paper."

This year's celebration was attended by around 60 sisters and lay people, representing many of their current ministries. The short ceremony was followed by breakfast in St Mary's Convent next to the chapel. Helping to organise the event were Sr Teresa Anderson and Dennis Horton, both members of He Waka Tiaki, the mission team of Mercy Ministries.

"We usually hold this event on a Saturday morning, close to the actual



IRISH visitor Ken Maher films the memorial to his great-great grandaunt Mother Cecilia Maher and her pioneer companions, while his two friends talk by her graveside behind St Mary's Convent, Ponsonby, with Sister of Mercy Anne Frances Bates.

anniversary of April 9. We keep the early-morning ceremony short, so that those attending are free to pursue their regular weekend commitments," Dennis Horton explained.

"A feature of recent gatherings has been the inclusion of students from some of our Mercy colleges, whose presence has helped them to appreciate the significance of this occasion. They never

fail to be touched by the courage of those first sisters, and by the fact that some of them were quite young when they made this epic journey.

"It's a reminder, too, of how a small band of dedicated people can make a difference that lasts for generations. We are still reaping the benefits of the seeds sown by those founding Sisters of Mercy."

This year, Sisters of Mercy have been celebrating 50 years of ministry in Tonga. Their mission there was established by a group of four sisters who went from Christchurch in 1964 to teach in the village of Lapaha. Today, three Sisters of Mercy, all of them Tongan-born, maintain a range of ministries in Lapaha and Kolonga. Here's how the 50 years of Mercy mission have been celebrated.

Sisters of Mercy mark 50 years in Tonga

Celebrations to mark Mercy's first half-century in Tonga began in January with a Mass of Thanksgiving in the parish church of Lapaha. Presiding was Bishop Soane Patita Paini Mafi, who in his homily affirmed the sisters and their ministries.



AMONG THOSE PRESENT WERE CONGREGATION LEADER ANNE Campbell from Wellington and Sr Rosemary O'Malley from Christchurch, who was among the first community of four sisters to found their mission in 1964.

Sr Eileen Dwyer, currently from Riccarton, who spent 28 years working in Tonga, was warmly welcomed by those who remember her from her time there.

In greeting those who gathered for the Mass, Anne Campbell acknowledged concern for the devastation caused by a cyclone in Tonga's northern islands. "Mercy New Zealand will be doing its best to help through our national Caritas links," she said. "May we continue to make a welcoming space in our hearts for God's mission of mercy to be further revealed in our times."

A second Mass was celebrated in Riccarton in March. Tapa cloths, fine mats, flowers and balloons decorated the hall of Villa Maria College, where sisters and friends gathered in a spirit of

SEATED BESIDE Congregation Leader Anne Campbell (left) at last month's celebration in Christchurch are Sisters of Mercy Rosemary O'Malley, who helped to found Mercy's mission in Tonga in 1964, and Eileen Dwyer, who served in Tonga for 28 years.

thanksgiving with the Tongan Catholic community of Christchurch. Photos and power point displays told the story of Mercy's presence in the 'Friendly Islands' since 1964.

From the original band of four, two Sisters of Mercy were present. Sr Lucy Duffy, who served in Tonga for six years, and Sr Rosemary O'Malley who was there for 25 years, joined in the celebrations. Rosemary spoke of leaving New Zealand by boat with a consignment of goods, of teaching and caring for young boarders within their first 10 days, and of the help they received from the people of Lapaha after they arrived.

Tongan chaplain Fr Line Folaumoeloa led the afternoon



Eucharist. He remembered being encouraged as a young priest to make a small pond with a bag of cement and to care for two ducklings. He was instructed by Sr Juliana not to eat his produce for a year, but to share his experience with families in the village, providing each of them with cement and two ducklings. As the project became sustainable, he realised he had learnt the basics of development.

Sharing from her experience of 28 years in Tonga, Sr Eileen Dwyer spoke of teaching days when she used actions and simple verse to convey English meanings. Her greatest delight came from pastoral work within prison ministry, as she saw the miracles of God's mercy when family members were reconciled.

Sr Enid told of her desire to go to Tonga, the challenge of pronouncing unfamiliar names, and the ease with which Tongan girls applied traditional weaving skills to introduced crafts such as macramé. Sr Bernadette spoke of two cyclones and the devastation they caused in her first months in Tonga in 1982.

Several who had contributed to the mission in Tonga were able to share in the liturgy and the story-telling which followed. These included Sr Bernadette Fitzgerald (20 years as secondary teacher, educator of pre-seminarians and diocesan archivist), Sr Enid Lagan (16 years as teacher and school librarian) and Sr Ellen Duffy (three years offering health support for people).

Sisters of Mercy Tina Vaeatangitau (St Anne's School, Manurewa) and Monika Mo'ale (Villa Maria College) facilitated the day, which included food and entertainment during the afternoon. The local Tongan community charmed all with dance and song.

In Tonga today, one Sister of Mercy currently works in parish ministry; another coordinates the Diocesan Office for Justice and Development and has worked as director of Caritas Tonga, helping with development and relief projects.

A Sister of Mercy also teaches at Takuilau College, a diocesan



ABOVE: Members of the Tongan Catholic community in Christchurch dance at last month's celebration there to mark 50 years of Mercy ministry in their Pacific homeland.

BELOW: Sisters of Mercy gather in Christchurch to mark 50 years of ministry in Tonga. Back row, Srs Tina Vaeatangitau, Monika Mo'ale, Eileen Dwyer, Rosemary O'Malley (foundation member), Bernadette Fitzgerald. Front row, Srs Enid Lagan, Lucy Duffy (foundation member) and Ellen Duffy.



co-educational secondary school; she is deputy principal and is well qualified for teaching English and Religious Education.

A group of students from Takuilau College travelled to Auckland in March as guests of the Tongan government for this year's Polyfest, the cultural festival held over five days for Auckland secondary school students. The group, which had provided a traditional dance following the Mercy jubilee Mass in Lapaha in January, was congratulated at Polyfest by NZ Prime Minister John Key – see story page 10.

Tongan students impress PM at Auckland Polyfest

Students from Takuilau College in Tonga, where a Sister of Mercy is among the teachers, have been in New Zealand recently for the annual Polyfest, celebrating the cultures of the South Pacific.



THE SCHOOL'S CULTURE GROUP HAD EARLIER PERFORMED A traditional dance as part of the entertainment which followed the Jubilee Mass in Lapaha, to mark the 50 years of service by Sisters of Mercy in Tonga (see previous page).

"The Takuilau group entertained us magnificently at our celebration of 50 years in Tonga," reports Sr Mary Catherwood. "The village of Lapaha is well known for the calibre of its dance and immersion in Tongan culture."

Last month's trip to Auckland was a prize awarded by the Tongan Government, after the 30 students won the Faiva dance competition held last year among Tonga's secondary schools. Takuilau is a Catholic college, which began in 1975 with 80 students and now has more than 400 on its roll.

"It's no surprise that Takuilau College was chosen to represent Tonga at the Polyfest gathering," says principal Sitani Paulo. "Many of the students taking part come from a chiefly line. Performance in cultural dances has been in their blood from birth. Our culture shapes us to be who we are as Tongans."

While in Auckland, the group performed two faivas at Polyfest to great acclaim from the local audience. Prime Minister John Key was on hand to watch their performance and congratulated and welcomed them afterwards.

Also on hand were caregivers from St Catherine's Rest Home in Ponsonby, where three of them are past pupils of Takuilau College and currently members of the rest home's mission team. The team has raised funds in recent years for mission outreach, including payment of school fees for a student at their former college.

Meanwhile, Mercy schools in New Zealand have raised over \$7000 to buy science equipment for Takuilau College. Donations have come from Villa Maria College in Christchurch and St Mary's College in Wellington. Generous support has also come from St Mary's School in Northcote.

Due to arrive early this month, the equipment was requested by Takuilau's principal after science materials were badly damaged when a cyclone lifted the roof off classrooms in March 2010.



STUDENTS from Takuilau College in Tonga danced at the Auckland Polyfest last month. On hand to congratulate them after their stellar performance was New Zealand's Prime Minister John Key.

TOP: Takuilau College students perform at Polyfest in Auckland. The Tongan stage was sponsored this year by Massey University.

A 'home-coming' for Carmel's new principal

The new principal of Carmel College describes her appointment to the Mercy school in Milford as a home-coming. "This is the third time I have been part of the Carmel community," says Chris Allen. "I was first here as a student, returned 14 years later as a teacher and now, after a gap of 12 years, as the principal."

MS ALLEN, WHO SUCCEEDED KATH DEADY AT the end of last year, came most recently from Hamilton, where for the past three years she has been principal of Sacred Heart Girls' College.

Auckland-born, she spent her early life in Rotorua with her parents, seven sisters and one brother. When her family moved to Devonport she attended Carmel from Year 9 to the end of Year 12, when she went to Iowa for a year as a Rotary Exchange Student.

She attended Auckland University, trained as a teacher at ACE and returned to Carmel as a first-year teacher in 1990. She taught there for 12 years as an English specialist and was HOD of English for six years.



CARMEL'S new principal, Chris Allen.... "a new phase of learning"

She left Carmel in 2001 for senior leadership positions at Marist, Aquinas, Baradene and Long Bay Colleges, and also worked as an account manager for an IT company.

She and her husband Grant Smith have two children: Kate, who also attended Carmel College, and Blair who went to Rosmini.

Ms Allen says that what links her three spells at Carmel is that "I have always been here as a learner – and I return as a learner now. It is good to be back in the Mercy 'fold', and I look forward to a long and productive learning relationship with this Carmel community."

Welcomed to Mercy's mission waka

A whakatau or formal ceremony was held at St Mary's Convent, Ponsonby, last month to welcome Kathleen Petrie to He Waka Tiaki, the mission team of Mercy Ministries. Among those to extend the welcome were Reuben O'Neill, chairman of Tiaki Manatu Trust, and Gabrielle Huria, te kaihautu or leader of He Waka Tiaki.

KNOWN PREVIOUSLY TO MANY AMONG OUR MINISTRIES as Kath Deady, she served as principal of Carmel College, Milford, from 2003 until her retirement at the end of last year. She also taught for some years at McAuley High School in Otahuhu, and was principal there for three years.

Kath's initial responsibilities will include the development and nurturing of mission within Mercy healthcare facilities and community development initiatives in Auckland and Hamilton.

Accompanying Kath at her whakatau was Tony Harkins who had been chairman of the proprietor's board at Carmel College between 1998 and 2013. He has recently been appointed to the board of Tiaki Manatu Trust, and was named deputy-chairman at that board's meeting in March.



Kathleen Petrie

New manager at Mercy Centre

Beate Matthies has been appointed as the new manager of Te Ngakau Waioira Mercy Spirituality Centre in Epsom, Auckland. She fills the vacancy left by Dr Jennifer Reid, who returned to Canada for family reasons after holding the position for several months.

BEATE HAS A BACKGROUND IN MARKETING AND BUSINESS and has worked in a variety of roles with Catholic communities in many countries. Originally from Germany, she has a special interest in issues of social justice and has worked in this area for more than 10 years.

Beate is chairperson of her parish council and is closely involved in her local community. She has an MBA in International Marketing; her thesis focused on the development of Catholic study and retreat centres.

"I'm delighted to work with the dedicated people involved in Mercy Centre," she says. "I look forward to greater community engagement in all that the centre offers, including retreats, spiritual companionship, meditation and many different courses."



Beate Matthies, new manager at Mercy Centre

**‘In the end we shall be asked only one thing:
“Were you merciful?”**

**Mercy is not reducible to any of its works, for
“Were you merciful?”
will be a question of the heart.’**

Sister of Mercy Margaret Farley
in *Meeting the Global Citizen in YOU*

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Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.**

Editor is **Dennis Horton**, who can be contacted at:

DHorton@somauck.org.nz

Ph (09) 360 7874

PO Box 6015, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1141.

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