



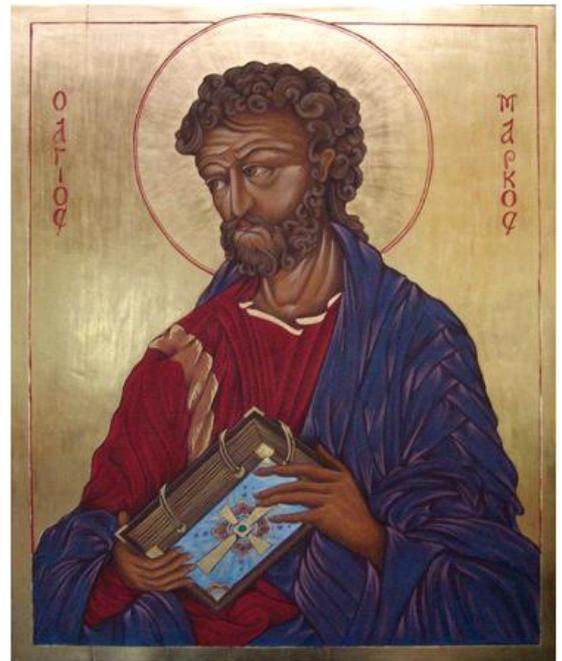
# FOOTPRINTS

**“Wise Men and Angels,  
Mary and Joseph, all  
looked forward to the  
arrival of the  
Emmanuel.”**

**MAGAZINE OF  
ST. MARK’S  
PARISH  
PAKURANGA  
AUCKLAND**



**Children from St. Mark’s Catholic School in their  
Christmas Play.**



**What does 'evangelise' mean?  
“To give witness with joy and  
simplicity to who we are and  
what we believe in.”**

**Pope Francis**

**October - December 2016**

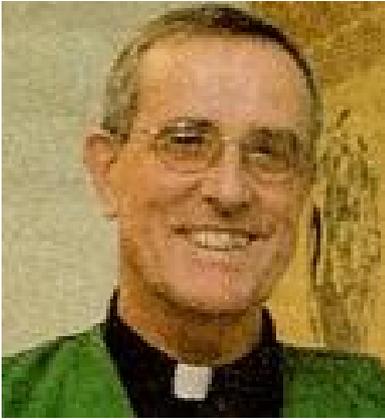
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**Online edition: <http://www.pakurangacatholic.org.nz/footprints/>**



## A Word from our Parish Priest



Amazing how fast the days go by. Already in the Season of Advent, and before we know it, it will be Christmas. In preparing for this great feast, it's always good to spend some time as family, reflecting on the blessings we have received this past year. It is good to sit around the dining table as a family, and share what you are most thankful for this year. Would the Year of Mercy be something we would lay out on the table? Think about it. In that first paragraph, Pope Francis tells us that "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's Mercy." Reflecting on that, and how we are called to live our faith daily, then surely we see that in mercy, we find proof of how God loves us. He gives his entire self, always, freely, asking nothing in return. He comes to our aid whenever we call upon Him. The door is always open for us to come to Him and experience mercy, forgiveness, love. What a wonderful gift God gives us. This is a great gift we can share with one another in this Advent season and Christmas time. I did say, He asks for nothing in return. Let's think about that. I can only give to God what He has already given to me/us. So, what do you think about that? What do we need to give to God? Everything. God has made us in His image and likeness. So, the best gift we can give to God this Christmas, is ourselves - all that God has blessed us with - the gift of life, the gift of family and friends and faith community. Give it all to God. As I have said many times before, God has very BIG hands; and God has a much BIGGER HEART. By giving ourselves to God this Christmas, we come to see that Jesus is present in every day of the year. Thank you, Jesus.

Fr Carlo and I wish you all every blessing for a "Christ-filled" Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2017.

I want to conclude with a prayer: **Give us the vision, Lord God, to see you in the simple events and situation of our lives and to see You in our brothers and sisters, especially in the poor and needy. May those who most need our help, be the clearest reminders of your presence among us. May our response to their need reveal your loving presence in our world. We ask this through Jesus, your Incarnate Love. Amen**

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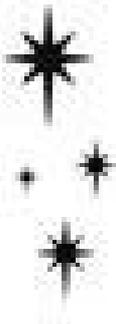
**In this issue....**we celebrate the great humility and mercy of our God who entered our world as a refugee, as an unplanned baby for Mary and Joseph and in real poverty. This was the beginning of a life full of His mercy!



# Happy Birth Day Baby Jesus



St Mark's Junior School celebrated the beginning of the Christmas Liturgical Season. This year's theme was from the perspective of a "grumpy" innkeeper and his joy at the end when Jesus was born in his stable. Many hours of rehearsing, costume sewing and creating sets resulted in an outstanding performance. The actors' average age was seven years old and they didn't miss a cue. Their performance was spot on and a joy to watch.



The Marian Centre, our Eastern region Catholic Kindergarten, celebrated very prayerfully the birth of the child Jesus. These two, three and four year olds entered into this holy time in a most wonderful way. Pictured above, the three wise men bow low to their Emmanuel.



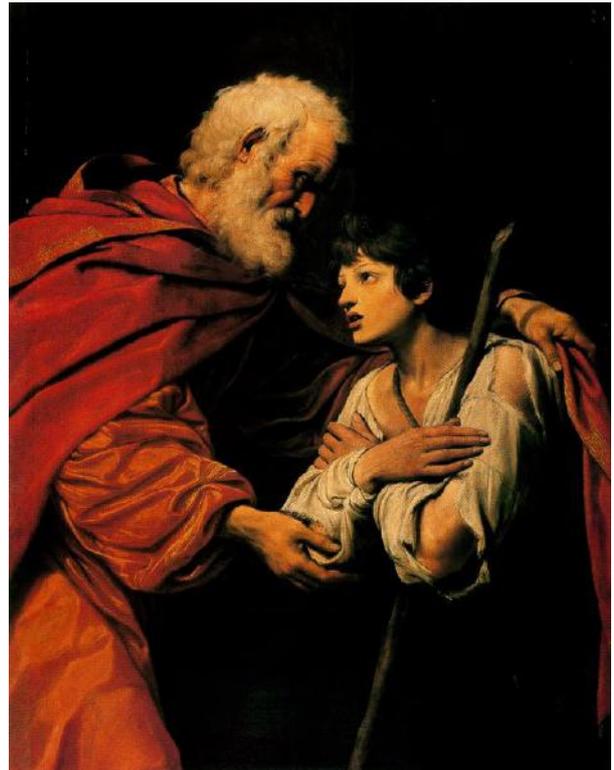
## God Finds Us!

by Rev. Emile Frische M.H.M.

The Gospel readings tell us about what we should do to attain salvation: strive to enter through the narrow door; be humble at all times; make God the first priority in life; carry your cross and renounce all your possessions. These are all on the part of man. But given our limitations and weakness, can we do all these successfully?

So, Jesus gives us the other and the most important part, namely, the part of God. Salvation is mainly the work of God, and our part is just to cooperate with His grace. To illustrate this, Jesus tells the three "Lost and Found" parables.

The shepherd noticed one sheep was missing. So he left the ninety-nine and looked for the lost sheep. When he found it, he put it on his shoulder and announces with great joy the good news. A woman had to clean up her entire house in search for one lost coin. When she found it, she invited her neighbors to celebrate with her.



A son left the house and was lost in the midst of worldly pleasure and excess. But his father did not give up on him. Every day, he searched the horizon, looking for signs of the coming of his son. And when from afar he saw him coming home, he ran to meet him and kissed him.

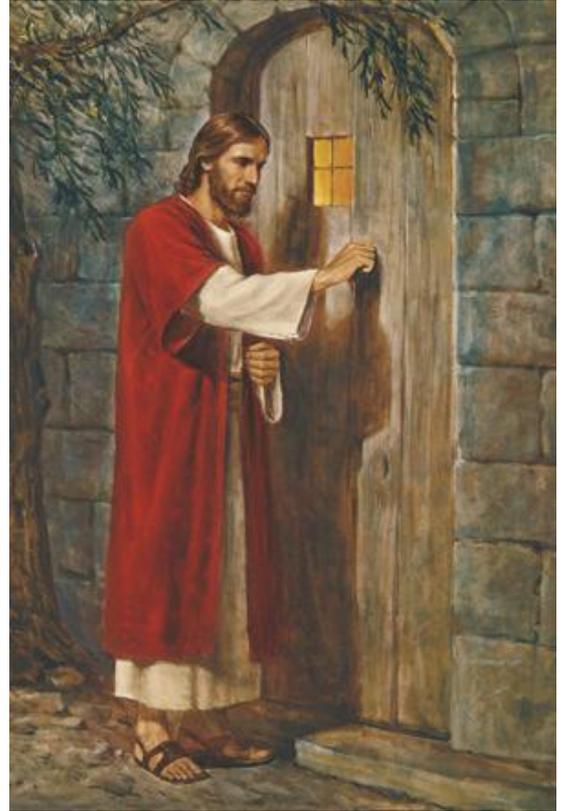
When someone offends us, we would invariably say, "Get out of my sight! I don't want to see you again. Get lost!" How different God is from us. He does not want anyone of us to be lost. So He looks for us patiently and unceasingly until He finds us. This is the main theme of the three "Lost and Found" parables. Unfortunately, we keep running away from Him, we keep hiding from His sight.

When we were little children, we always asked our parents, "Can I go with you?" As we grew older, it is our parents who asked us, "Will you come with me?"



Then during our teenage years and into college, as we enjoy our freedom in the company of our friends, we begin to ignore the invitations of our parents.

And when we got our own job and place to stay, and especially when we already have a family of our own, we have declared our total independence from our parents, and many of us have practically lost contact with them. We call on them very occasionally, and usually only when we need something from them. This is what happens in our relationship with God. As we began to develop our own resources and capacities, we also started to have the sense of self-sufficiency.



And as we insist on our freedom and independence, we consciously ignore God, and relegate Him to the sidelines. We eventually assume a different attitude towards God - we call on Him only when we need Him. But most of the time, we are self-sufficient and have no need of God.

The devil can deceive us even in our spiritual life. All the while we think we are leading good and holy lives, only to find out that spiritual pride has gripped our hearts. The fact is that we do not find God; He finds us! We do not choose Him; He chooses us. We do not run to Him; He runs to meet us, and most often, He runs after us.

This is what the three "Lost and Found Parables" have abundantly illustrated. God always takes the initiative. Our part is just to say yes to Him, to cooperate with His grace, and to open our hearts to Him. That is why, in prayer, it is God who should do most of the talking, while we do most of the listening.

Let these words from Saint Augustine become our own: "O Lord, you were within me, but I was outside. You were with me, but I was not with you. You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more."



# PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

by Paul Oliver

Dear fellow parishioners of St Mark's,

The last few months have again been a very busy time for our Parish Council and we have been taking part in a number of initiatives on behalf of our vibrant parish since my last update.

Both Health and Safety and Risk Management have continued to be a key focus for us. We continue the process of integrating and implementing the key requirements as part of the wider Auckland Diocese directive. These include such key areas as implementing emergency evacuation processes for all Masses; overseeing fire safety needs; and also youth safety. Some of these initiatives will be known to parishioners as various signs go up around our buildings etc. and relative instructions are advised. There will also be relevant announcements made, where required, in the weekly newsletter. So please look out for these.



Our Year of Mercy activities have also continued to be a primary focus for us with a number of our council members and parishioners attending in a very successful Fun Day at the North Shore Events Centre in September. To further support our Mercy activities, we also have now planned a proposed 'Clean-Up Day' to support our local community in rubbish removal and specifically in providing assistance in the Tamaki Estuary Protection project.

A reminder also please that we do have our Parish website fully functioning now which has been an initiative through our Parish Council and can be viewed at [www.pakurangacatholic.org.nz](http://www.pakurangacatholic.org.nz).

We are currently looking at ways to support the "Fund-raising for our Roof" project and please also look out for communications and announcements about this.

In closing, as a Council we are currently heavily involved in arranging our Annual Youth and Altar Servers Party and our world-famous Christmas Volunteers Party , so please look out especially for announcements around these significant parish celebrations to be held in December.

With God's Blessings,

Paul Oliver

St Mark's Parish Council



## Fire Alarm at St Mark's



At the 10.00 am Mass on Father's Day, Sunday 4th September 2016, the alarm to evacuate the church went off right at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer. The Blessed Sacrament was left on the altar while the people went outside. Everyone came back after the alarm was turned off to sing the Great Amen. Fr Carlo was the Celebrant on that day. Two Fire engines came in response to the alarm. The false alarm was triggered by a sensor on the church wall (School side) being activated by ants or other small insects getting into the device. This was the first time many parishoners had experienced an alarm going off during a Mass.

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## Annual Candlelight Rosary Procession (Praying for vocations to the Priesthood)

On Sunday 2nd of October 2016, a group of people at St. Mark's Parish organised this Diocesan Procession at Sacred Heart College. Hundreds of people came with candles to pray in the sunset. Bishop Pat opens the night with a talk in the Chapel and then there is a procession of the Blessed Sacrament around the grounds concluding with Benediction and the singing of hymns and our country's National Anthem.





# Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis

*(From Vatican Radio)*

*Holy Mass and Rite of Canonisation of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta - Saint Peter's Square, 4 September 2016.*

"Who can learn the counsel of God?" (Wis 9:13). This question from the Book of Wisdom that we have just heard in the first reading suggests that our life is a mystery and that we do not possess the key to understanding it. There are always two protagonists in history: God and man. Our task is to perceive the call of God and then to do His will. But in order to do His will, we must ask ourselves, "What is God's will in my life?"

We find the answer in the same passage of the Book of Wisdom: "People were taught what pleases you" (Wis 9:18). In order to ascertain the call of God, we must ask ourselves and understand what pleases God. On many occasions the prophets proclaimed what was pleasing to God. Their message found a wonderful synthesis in the words "I want mercy, not sacrifice" (Hos 6:6; Mt 9:13). God is pleased by every act of mercy, because in the brother or sister that we assist, we recognise the face of God which no one can see (cf. Jn 1:18). Each time we bend down to the needs of our brothers and sisters, we give Jesus something to eat and drink; we clothe, we help, and we visit the Son of God (cf. Mt 25:40).



We are thus called to translate into concrete acts that which we invoke in prayer and profess in faith. There is no alternative to charity: those who put themselves at the service of others, even when they don't know it, are those who love God (cf. 1 Jn 3:16-18; Jas 2:14-18). The Christian life, however, is not merely extending a hand in times of need. If it is just this, it can be, certainly, a lovely expression of human solidarity which offers immediate benefits, but it is sterile because it lacks roots. The task which the Lord gives us, on the contrary, is the vocation to charity in which each of Christ's disciples puts his or her entire life at his service, so as to grow each day in love.



We heard in the Gospel, "Large crowds were travelling with Jesus" (Lk 14:25). Today, this "large crowd" is seen in the great number of volunteers who have come together for the Jubilee of Mercy. You are that crowd who follows the Master and who makes visible his concrete love for each person. I repeat to you the words of the Apostle Paul: "I have indeed received much joy and comfort from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you" (Philem 1:7). How many hearts have been comforted by volunteers! How many hands they have held; how many tears they have wiped away; how much love has been poured out in hidden, humble and selfless service! This praiseworthy service gives voice to the faith and expresses the mercy of the Father, who draws near to those in need.

Following Jesus is a serious task, and, at the same time, one filled with joy; it takes a certain daring and courage to recognise the divine Master in the poorest of the poor and to give oneself in their service. In order to do so, volunteers, who out of love of Jesus serve the poor and the needy, do not expect any thanks or recompense; rather they renounce all this because they have discovered true love. Just as the Lord has come to meet me and has stooped down to my level in my hour of need, so too do I go to meet him, bending low before those who have lost faith or who live as though God did not exist, before young people without values or ideals, before families in crisis, before the ill and the imprisoned, before refugees and immigrants, before the weak and defenceless in body and spirit, before abandoned children, before the elderly who are on their own. Wherever someone is reaching out, asking for a helping hand in order to get up, this is where our presence - and the presence of the Church which sustains and offers hope - must be.

Mother Teresa, in all aspects of her life, was a generous dispenser of divine mercy, making herself available for everyone through her welcome and defence of human life, those unborn and those abandoned and discarded. She was committed to defending life, ceaselessly proclaiming that "the unborn are the weakest, the smallest, the most vulnerable". She bowed down before those who were spent, left to die on the side of the road, seeing in them their God-given dignity; she made her voice heard before the powers of this world, so that they might recognise their guilt for the crime of poverty they created. For Mother Teresa, mercy was the "salt" which gave flavour to her work, it was the "light" which shone in the darkness of the many who no longer had tears to shed for their poverty and suffering.

Her mission to the urban and existential peripheries remains for us today an eloquent witness to God's closeness to the poorest of the poor. Today, I pass on this emblematic figure of womanhood and of consecrated life to the whole world of volunteers: may she be your model of holiness! May this tireless worker of mercy help us to increasingly understand that our only criterion for action is gratuitous love, free from every ideology and all obligations, offered freely to everyone without distinction of language, culture, race or religion. Mother Teresa loved to say, "Perhaps I don't speak their language, but I can smile". Let us carry her smile in our hearts and give it to those whom we meet along our journey, especially those who suffer. In this way, we will open up opportunities of joy and hope for our many brothers and sisters who are discouraged and who stand in need of understanding and tenderness.



## Fun Day Out For Special Children

On Sunday 4th of September, I was given the opportunity to volunteer at the Fit for Mission Kids fun day at the North Shore Events Centre. I wasn't too sure what to expect but was wonderfully surprised at how supported this event was by the diverse faiths we have here in New Zealand. On entering the event centre we were greeted warmly and friendly into the main centre.

There were more than a dozen stalls and activities catering for all ages and abilities. For example there were face painting stalls, karaoke, henna stations, Maori body art, dance performances, poi making, father's day card making etc. The support and generosity from our parish and the other faith groups was evident and the free food from all the different cultures made the event a great experience.

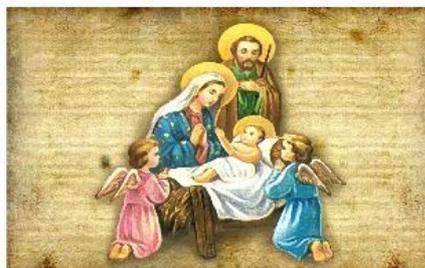
We would especially like to thank St Mark's parish for their kindness and generosity in donating the baked goods and other foods. From seeing the faces of the participants, the day was definitely a massive success.

*Ella Voykovich*

Family Life Pregnancy Centre wishes the Parish of St Mark's a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. We thank you all for the awesome support that you have given the fundraiser

**Fill A Bottle – Save A Life**

in September 2016



Our 0800 3675433 free calling number operates through the Christmas season and holidays so if you want us to support a pregnant mum then please pass it on.

**Family Life International NZ**



## Our Cardinal's Reflection on Suzanne Aubert

*Cardinal John Dew shared this wonderful reflection on Suzanne Aubert in a recent issue of WelCom, the monthly newspaper of the Archdiocese of Wellington and the Diocese of Palmerston North.*

As the world watches with delight the canonisation of Teresa of Calcutta to sainthood on 4 September, we share the celebration and prayerful moment of this great woman, world leader, and now a Saint of the Church. Here at home, in Aotearoa New Zealand, we have our own saint in the making - Suzanne Aubert - another woman whose great vision, leadership and influence lives on today.

In a few weeks' time, on 1 October, it will be ninety years since Suzanne Aubert (Sr Meri Hohepa) died. On 5 October 1926, Wellington saw the biggest funeral accorded to a woman. Historic photos show that event of 90 years ago with thousands of people lining the streets as Suzanne was taken to Karori for burial. The Supreme Court sitting was postponed that day. Members of the Department of Health received a memo saying: "I would be glad if as many officers of the Department as possible could attend her Requiem Mass to be held at St Mary of the Angels ... I need not remind officers that it is not a question of creed with us, it is a question of the recognition of the services of a very special and devoted woman who by her life and example has left an example to us all."



Ninety years ago it was publicly recognised that 'her life and example has left an example to us all'. Today we still acknowledge, and perhaps even more so, her life and example are indeed an inspiration to us in a society that needs compassion more than ever. Her legacy lives on. I was recently asked what I thought her greatest legacy was. I had no hesitation in answering I thought her greatest legacy was her Sisters and the work of compassion they live today.

*(Continued on the following page)*



As has been said many times; 'The Congregation has become an enduring sign of her commitment: to bring "those disadvantaged in society the love, care and compassion of Christ"' - The Story of Suzanne Aubert, Jessie Munro, Bridget Williams Books 1996. However, there is also the legacy of her strong and courageous faith, her trust in Divine Providence and of course her inspirational writings and practical wisdom shown in her writings.

I have also been asked over recent years why I think Suzanne Aubert should be made a saint by the Church. That answer is also easy. She is a heroine, a role model, a person who walked our streets, a person who continues to give us an example of how to live our lives too. Our society in Aotearoa New Zealand today needs such inspiration. Being publicly and universally recognised by the Church would bring the story of her unique and extraordinary life to the attention of so many more people; it would motivate and encourage others to imitate her selfless and generous love. People would begin to ask what motivated her and what drove her to care for the poor and vulnerable, those who could not care for themselves, and they would discover it was her following of Jesus and living his Gospel. She was a woman who lived and showed great and deep goodness, and she wanted others to share in that goodness, which would lead them to the glory of God.



It is almost 90 years since Suzanne Aubert died. An enormous amount of dedication has gone into preparing all the work for Rome for her to be declared a Saint, but it is a slow process. You can certainly help her Cause with your prayers; you can make her works known and find out more about her, read some of her writings and go and visit the Visitor Centre at the Home of Compassion at Island Bay - it is well worth it. Most of all imitate her example of compassion, love and care and, like her, be aware that everything is a gift from God. Therefore, with her, say, and say often, 'Thanks be to God for all he has done and is doing for us.'

Finally, please pray, we don't want to wait another 90 years until we have our first Saint. *(Article credit - WelCom, September 2016)*



## Suzanne Aubert Declared 'Venerable'

Suzanne Aubert, the founder of the Sisters of Compassion, New Zealand's home grown order of Sisters, has been declared 'venerable', a major milestone on the path to sainthood in the Catholic Church. The announcement has just been made from Rome by Pope Francis.

If Suzanne Aubert's Cause for Sainthood is successful, she will be New Zealand's first saint, said Cardinal John Dew. "She was a remarkable woman who devoted her life to helping others. She was a pioneer of New Zealand's health and welfare system and a friend to Maori throughout her life. Her tireless compassion and practical brand of Christianity made a huge impact on New Zealand society." Suzanne Aubert (1835-1926) came to New Zealand from France in 1860 and spent most of her life here, fully identifying with her adopted country.

"Suzanne Aubert was ahead of her time, promoting the rights of women and Maori in the nineteenth century," said Cardinal Dew. "Her care for infants, young children, their mothers and families, and her practical concern for the incurably sick and unemployed was legendary." "Being declared 'venerable' is a major step towards sainthood in the Catholic Church, says Dr Maurice Carmody, the promoter of her canonisation cause. "There are a number of stages in the canonisation process." Last year the official case for her proposed canonisation was submitted to the Congregation for the Cause of Saints in Rome. Her case has been examined by Church historians and theologians and now, with the Pope's approval, she has been declared 'venerable' - the second stage on the way to being declared a saint.

"The next stage involves the recognition of a miracle attributed to Suzanne, such as recovery from a terminal illness as a result of prayer. She can then be declared 'Blessed' by the Pope. A second miracle and proof that she is a model for the universal Church will enable her to be canonised as a saint," said Dr Carmody. "Being declared 'venerable' is a major step towards sainthood in the Church, says Dr. Maurice Carmody, the promoter of her canonisation cause." "Suzanne Aubert was an inspirational figure in New Zealand history. She reached out to people of all walks of life. Her huge energy and respect for all those she encountered, especially the needy, impressed a wide cross-section of New Zealanders. Her funeral was the largest ever held for a New Zealand woman."

When she died in 1926, at the age of 91, The Evening Post said of her: Aubert "may rightly be described as one of the greatest women in public effort and loving self-sacrifice New Zealand has known." Suzanne Aubert was a woman of many talents. She had an in-depth knowledge of Maori herbal remedies which she combined with her medical training to develop 'Mother Aubert' herbal medicines. These were hugely popular throughout New Zealand. She was also expert in Maori language and tikanga, and developed a Maori - English dictionary which became a reference text for decades.

Her legacy lives on in the work of the Sisters of Compassion. The Sisters today are still engaged in social work, pastoral care, prison and hospital chaplaincies, education, working with disadvantaged migrant communities, and care of the sick and the elderly.



## ST. MARK'S FIA FIA NIGHT 2016

On Saturday 19 November over 250 of the St. Mark's community once again came together to enjoy a Pacific Island Fia Fia social night of music, dancing, dining and entertainment hosted by the St. Mark's Pasifika Group.



The Fia Fia night was organised to raise funds to assist with the development of an area in the proposed columbarium where parishioners can sit in quiet contemplation and prayer. With the great support given through participating in the Fia Fia night and the raffles organised prior to the night a total of \$5,100 was raised. It is anticipated that those funds will be a significant contribution towards the cost of the area for silent reflection.

The support given to the Fia Fia night was very much appreciated by the Pasifika Group and to have such a wide range of parishioners from all age groups taking part was very meaningful. The music provided by DJ. Mark Aiono, was targeted towards all age groups. Having Father Emile and Father Carlo participating and giving their support made the occasion even more special. We were also very grateful and extremely pleased that Father Raphael and Father Ofa were also able to attend.



*Above: Lorraine and Ray Anderson.*



*Right: Marie and Steve and friends*



*Above: Rev. Emile on camera!*

*Above: Grace Rowlands, Paulina Mahon & Jill Faulding.*

The entertainment in the way of Island dancing presented by the Flying Fijians, the Samoan Divas and the St. Marks Golden Girls created huge applause and even encouraged many parishioners to try out their island dancing skills and develop their techniques. A few even earned prizes for showing their hidden talents. Cash donations made during the entertainment was way beyond expectations and proved the great generosity of our community.

The Pasifika Group was most appreciative of even further generosity of many parishioners who contributed special prizes that were awarded during the night as part of the fun and entertainment. As a result many received unexpected "Spot" prizes. The success of the Fia Fia Night and the wonderful support and encouraging comments received may justify consideration for yet another Fia Fia Night in 2017,



*Above: Mary Lenton, Rosemary and Bryan Palmer, Stephanie and Philip Lenton.*



# Divine Mercy in my Life

## by Susanna Lai

**17.7.1998:**

Father Brian Joseph Kelly asked Mrs Anna Cheng to form a prayer group. Inspired by Father Rory, she chose to recite the chaplet of Divine Mercy and other prayers in the group. I am one of their founding members.



**5.10.2009:**

Father Brian had a mission for our group to pray with others in the church. Evelyn and I started to recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy in English every Friday.

**August 2012**

The Divine Mercy picture was framed at the back of the Church.

**24.4.2014**

The first Divine Mercy Sunday Services were held with the help of Deacon Chris Sullivan. We recited the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, had Benediction and guest speakers. We also acquired a Divine Mercy Statue which we shared among the members and in their homes for praying with.

**12.4.2015**

The second year of Divine Mercy Sunday services was the same as 2014, with the addition of the blessing of Holy items.





*Above: The original Divine Mercy image.*

**2016 The Year of Mercy**

25.2.2016: The Divine Mercy Congress, Auckland.

Our church was chosen to be the host for the Congress for the East. Father Rory and other speakers came to introduce the Divine Mercy to the parishioners. The relics of Saint Faustina were also displayed.

**3.4.2016 Divine Mercy Sunday Services**

This year, we had the youth of St. Mark's beautifully singing the chaplet of Divine Mercy.

**1.7.2016. The St. Mark's Divine Mercy Group was formed.**

**28.8.2016. Special Divine Mercy Sunday Services.**

Anna-Maria and I would have liked more celebrations during the Year of Mercy. This time we not only did the prayers, we also fundraised for the Monte Cecilia Housing Trust, reaching out our hearts and our hands to people in need.



*“...The relics of Saint Faustina were also displayed....”*

**22.11.2016.**

The Divine Mercy group recites the Chaplet of Divine Mercy every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; thanks to all the leaders and members who help. This is my story of how I met the mercy of Jesus.



## Youth For Christ Report

On the first of October, the Youth For Christ (YFC) group of St. Mark's Parish gathered together on a fine Saturday evening for our final Chapter Prayer Assembly, or CPA, for the year, filled with fun, fellowship and worship. We also farewelled our Chapter Head, Etienne, after many years of wonderful service to our group. Thank you Etienne for all you have done for us!

We had a good turnout, with close to 40 youths attending, as well as a few new faces, which we are always excited to see. The night began with a few ice-breaker activities, so that everyone would get to know and be familiar with each other. Our first activity was pairing up with someone you did not know, and getting to know each other by asking a few questions. This activity was then followed by a team activity in which we had to get into groups of six or seven, line-up one behind another, hold hands left-to-right under our legs, walk back and lie down, and walk forward and get up again. Don't worry, this activity was just as confusing as my explanation!

Following all the games and activities, came our first talk. We were blessed to have a guest speaker, Taya, from the Catholic Disciple College (CDC) come and speak to us about her vocation, and how we should consider joining the CDC. We were also lucky to have the opportunity to ask her any questions we had about the CDC. After we heard her do her talk, we then began to get into Common Prayer Time, which I was extremely privileged to lead. Common Prayer Time is when everyone gets into their own quiet place, whether it be standing, sitting or laying down, and pray silently while soft music is playing in the back and while someone is guiding their prayers over the microphone. The theme of this Common Prayer Time was being resilient in our faith, and I based this on Mark 13:13 "And you will be hated by all for my name's sake, but he who endures to the end shall be saved."

Like all YFC events, we ended with worship, where the band plays three to four songs, and where everybody is praying and worshipping the Lord out loud, with a speaker at the front leading us. The worship is personally my favourite event as it allows me to offer all my burdens to the Lord while singing out loud. Many youths went hard for this one, singing and shouting, praising our Lord as they knew it would be the last time we would be able to worship for a long time. What a way to end the year!

I'd like to end with a massive thank you to a lot of people who have helped us during the year. To our parent co-ordinators, Uncle Rennel and Auntie Jemima, Uncle Red and Auntie Ging, Uncle Ramille and Auntie Mic, for their unconditional support of the Youth in whatever we do. I'd also like to thank our wonderful Chapter Heads, JP and Etienne, for their love, selflessness and invaluable leadership.



To the St. Mark's community, for your never ending support in our various activites such as fundraisers, we are forever grateful for what you have done, and continue to do for us. To Father Emile and Father Carlo, for always showing up whenever you can to our activities and supporting us, and also for opening up the St. Mark's facilities for us Youth to use. You both have left an indelible mark on us all and for that, we thank you. And lastly, to the Youth Group, this has been an awesome year filled with fun and faith. Thank you for being a part of this year, and I hope to see you all again next year.

As my school Principal, Mr Dale would always say, "Have a Merry CHRIST-mas, not Christmas." Merry Christmas everyone! Have a blessed New Year, and I hope to see you all again for 2017!

*Lance Encabo*

*Lucy Chen's Birthdays .....*



*through the years.....*

*Can you name the priests?*

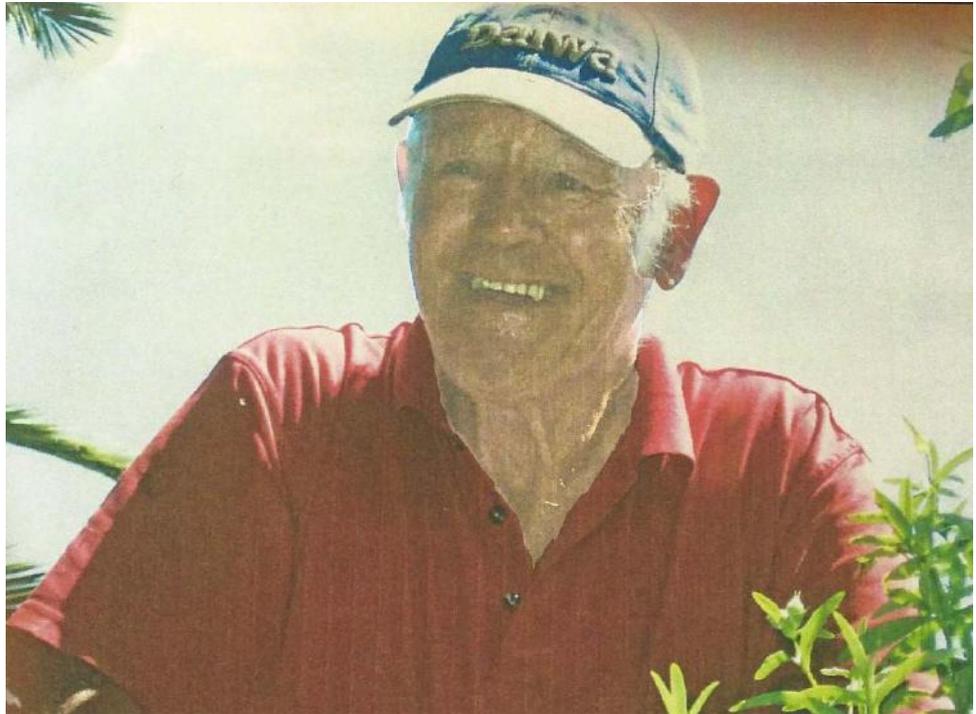


*A group of parishoners gathered at Dennys, Highland Park, to celebrate Lucy's birthday on the 4th of October.*

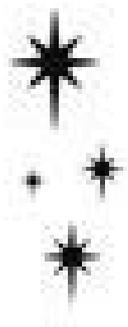


# *Sacred moments.....*

*Right: A Long-time parishoner, Grahame McFarland died on 18th November 2016. Grahame was a regular at morning Mass and he has been resident in the Pakuranga area for many years, working as a plumber. He was a very loyal Old Boy of Sacred Heart College.*



## *Bringing Christmas in Song....*



*Above: Our very own Gospel Choir singing Christmas Carols with the folk at Metlife Care, Highland Park, on the 7th December 2016. A very joyful and prayerful time for all!*



*Parishoners present at the Full Moon Festival Dinner for 2016 are seen here celebrating with our priests, Fr. Emile and Fr. Carlo.*



# *Blessed Times*

*“Mothers’ Prayers Group” Christmas Lunch.*



*An International Food Festival, on 4 December, was held to raise money for the Youth Lifeteen Summer Camp.*



*Gillian Ralph (above) and husband Martin have moved to Melbourne. Many thanks to them both for all the work they did at St. Mark’s.*



# *Some of our newly Baptised....*



*Left: Alanah, child of James Cortes and Ma Fatima Bugay was baptised at St Mark's on the 11th of September 2016.*

*Right: James Michael, son of Adam and Edel Roughton and grandson of Mike and Philomena Lobo, was baptised on Sunday 6 November 2016.*



*Left: Jasmine, daughter of Jasper and Marissa Venida was baptised at St Mark's on the 2nd of October 2016.*



*Davina Anthony - Baptism Day (2nd October 2016) surrounded by her family.*



*Above: The Baptism of Logan Mario Ensil on 12 June 2016. His parents are Adrian and Nadine Ensil. His Godparents are Erica and Bernard Rooza and Jenna Ensil and his Grandparents are George and Shirley Van Niekerk.*



## Friendship Group Christmas Luncheon.



Our very little group continues to meet on the last Thursday of the month. We have been entertained by some great talent during the year. Singers, ukulele playing, square dancing, interesting talks from Celia Caughy, lunch at the RSA, a talk from Age Concern and our anointing Mass.

Our group enjoyed a lovely lunch at the Howick RSA on 1 December 2016. It was a lovely way to finish the year. We were entertained by great Christmas music played on the saxophone. The winner of the hamper was Jo Gillies. We were also given two paintings from Rae McKeown and the winners of those were George and Lyn.

We look forward to returning on the 23rd of February 2017. All welcome. If anyone would like to know anything about this group please phone Megan on 021 901 379.





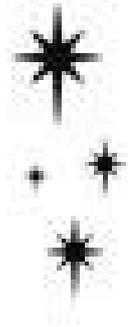
## Christmas Boxes

Once again I thank you very much for your continued support in filling the shoe boxes for the children around the world who have nothing. The power of this simple gift is just the beginning for many of these children coming to know Jesus.

Please continue to pray for all the children who will receive your boxes.



*Megan McColl and Maureen Bell pack the Christmas boxes into the car, ready for delivery.*



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## Anointing Mass

We celebrated our anointing Mass on the 27th of October. Thank you to Father Emile and Father Carlo for celebrating this Mass for us. It was a very special time and it was lovely to see so many parishioners join us for Mass. We all enjoyed lunch in the centre afterwards.

It has been decided to have two anointing Masses next year so we will be having one on the 30th of March. Everyone is welcome to join us for that.





# MINI EVANGELISTS

# From



## The Man Behind the Story of Father Christmas/Santa Claus

St. Nicholas was a Bishop who lived in the fourth century in a place called Myra in Asia Minor (now called Turkey). He was a very rich man because his parents died when he was young and left him a lot of money. He was also a very kind man and had a reputation for helping the poor and giving secret gifts to people who needed it. There are several legends about St. Nicholas, although we don't know if any of them are true!

The most famous story about St. Nicholas tells how the custom of hanging up stockings to get presents in first started! It goes like this:

There was a poor man who had three daughters. He was so poor, he did not have enough money for a dowry, so his daughters couldn't get married. (A dowry is a sum of money paid to the bridegroom by the brides parents on the wedding day. This still happens in some countries, even today.) One night, Nicholas secretly dropped a bag of gold down the chimney and into the house (This meant that the oldest daughter was then able to be married.). The bag fell into a stocking that had been hung by the fire to dry! This was repeated later with the second daughter. Finally, determined to discover the person who had given him the money, the father secretly hid by the fire every evening until he caught Nicholas dropping in a bag of gold. Nicholas begged the man to not tell anyone what he had done, because he did not want to bring attention to himself. But soon the news got out and when anyone received a secret gift, it was thought that maybe it was from Nicholas.

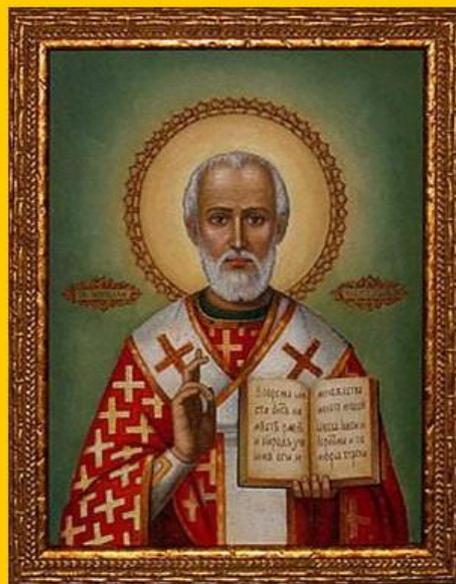


Image from the St. Nicholas Center  
[www.stnicholascenter.org](http://www.stnicholascenter.org)

# EASY TO MAKE





## How St. Nicholas Became Santa Claus

In the 16th Century in northern Europe, after the reformation, the stories and traditions about St. Nicholas became unpopular.

But someone had to deliver presents to children at Christmas, so in the **UK**, particularly in England, he became 'Father Christmas' or 'Old Man Christmas', an old character from stories plays during the middle ages in the UK and parts of northern Europe. In **France**, he was then known as 'Père Noël' in **Germany**, the 'Christ Kind'. In the early **USA** his name was 'Kris Kringle'. Later, Dutch settlers in the USA took the old stories of St. Nicholas with them and Kris Kringle became 'Sinterklaas' or as we now say 'Santa Claus'!

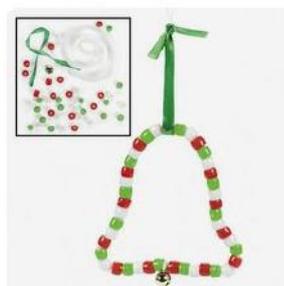
Many countries, especially ones in Europe, celebrate St. Nicholas' Day on 6th December. In Holland and some other European Countries, children leave clogs or shoes out on the 5th December (St. Nicholas Eve) to be filled with **presents**. They also believe that if they leave some hay and carrots in their shoes for Sinterklaas's horse, they will be left some sweets.

St. Nicholas became popular again in the Victorian era when writers, poets and artists rediscovered the old stories.

In 1823 the famous poem 'A Visit from St. Nicholas' or 'Twas the Night before Christmas', was published. Dr Clement Clarke Moore later claimed that he had written it for his children. (Some scholars now believe that it was actually written by Henry Livingston, Jr., who was a distant relative of Dr Moore's wife.) The poem describes St. Nicholas with eight reindeer and gives them their names. They became really well known in the song 'Rudolph the Red nosed Reindeer', written in 1949. Do you know all eight names? Click on Rudolph's nose to find out!



# CHRISTMAS CRAFT IDEAS





# Why Celebrate St Nicholas' Day - 6 December?



## How to Celebrate

- ☆ To learn about the true Santa Claus and Father Christmas: St. Nicholas, a man of faith who lived his life in devotion to Christ
- ☆ To focus on giving more than receiving: St. Nicholas cared for the needy
- ☆ To emphasise small treats and family fun: St. Nicholas loved children
- ☆ St. Nicholas points to Jesus, the heart of Christmas
- ☆ To offer a spiritual dimension to gift giving
- ☆ To tell the story of a Christian saint, whose model life inspires compassion and charity
- ☆ To honour St. Nicholas, honours the Christ Child who selflessly gave the greatest gift.