

sermons were really great making you reflect and think about your beliefs and really life in general”.

The Redemptorist Community continued to consolidate their relationship with the district – the number of people attending Mass growing to a point where it became obvious that there was a need to expand the capacity of the Chapel. Again, the local community came to the fore and more structural changes were made to the Homestead with the provision of a Chapel that could now hold up to 100+ people, and attendance at the 3 masses had now grown to around 350.

As the location became more consolidated, there was an increasing movement of members of the Redemptorist Order to and from the area. In 1957 Father Charles Rohan was appointed Superior, and Father Pat Dobbs was appointed Director of Students. Although the number of resident Priests and Brothers at the Homestead fluctuated, there was a continued close relationship with the local Catholic community, even though, because this was not a dedicated Parish, the Priests could not undertake home visits and fulfil other roles and responsibilities associated with a designated Parish Priest. The impact of the latter situation was reduced by the increasing initiated contact of the local Catholic community.

#### **Development of a Parish**

As the number of those attending the Masses grew, there was an increasing desire by the Glendowie Catholic community that a Parish be established. Approval for this was sought from the Bishop and following his approval the Parish was established in 1965. The first Parish Priest was Father Ray Dobbs, and also resident in the community was Father James Pringle, Father Bernard Dennehy and Father Denis Whelan.

*The above information has been collected by reviewing archive material and interviewing a number of Parishioners who were members of the Catholic community during these early days, these included, but were not limited to:*

*Mrs Gwenda Heron*

*Br Frank Blewman*

*Mrs Marcie Towers*

*Fr Denis Whelan*

*Mr Tony Squirrel*

*Mrs Win Squirrel*

*Printed August 2010*



## **Redemptorist Diamond Jubilee 1950 - 2010**

### **Recollections**

#### **Redemptorists' arrival in Glendowie 60 years ago**

##### **Setting up in New Zealand**

Prior to the 1950's, New Zealand students wishing to enter the Redemptorist Order could only undertake their training in Australia. Whilst this was acceptable in respect to the overall objectives of the Order in New Zealand, there was an increasing desire for training to be provided in New Zealand. The Bishop of Auckland, Bishop Liston, was approached and he gave his approval for the Redemptorists to develop a Foundation in the Diocese of Auckland.

The challenge then was to find a site that met or would go some way to meet the following requirements: either existing classrooms or space to build classrooms, a residential location, room for expansion, and be reasonably centrally located. As to be expected, with such a criteria, it proved to be exceedingly difficult to locate such a site. However following an ad placed in the Herald by Mr George Cole, a local Catholic Real Estate Agent, the owner of the Glendowie Country Club, Mrs Burton, indicated her property was for sale. Whilst not meeting all the criteria the overall property had potential, so the Glendowie Homestead of 14 rooms and 5 acres of land was purchased – the price was Thirteen Thousand Pounds.

##### **The First Steps**

The Order now had their own location, and to acknowledge this realisation Bishop Liston celebrated Mass on June 24<sup>th</sup> 1950, in what was the original ball room of the Homestead and now the dedicated

Chapel. The members of the first community were: Father Cecil Dennehy (Superior) and Father James Cummins (responsible for the students). Two brothers were also in residence, Brother Alexander McVeigh and Brother Paul McNamara.

### **Involving the Local Glendowie Community**

The Catholic Community in Glendowie was very welcoming of the Redemptorists and the provision of a place for attending Mass, relatively small though the Chapel was. – “It was a long walk for us to go to Mass at St Heliers – very few of us had cars at that time”. “I know one family who had four little ones – father would walk to 7.30am Mass and then meet mother with the children on the way back – she would go on to 9am Mass and he would take the children home’. “I don’t know why, but we always referred to the Redemptorists as ‘the Reds’ and knew that they would give good sermons because they were Missionaries, so we were really pleased to know they were settling here”. “My husband helped get the Chapel ready for the community to be able to attend Mass here in Glendowie – he (my husband) was a builder and was very pleased to be able to assist with the all changes needed in the Homestead”.

The first ‘public’ Masses were celebrated at 7am and 9am on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1950. The celebrating Priest waiting for the sound of footsteps on the verandah to indicate the arrival of the first of what was to become the Catholic Community of Glendowie.



Memories relating to the Masses included – “At that time we still had to fast to receive communion and at the 9am Mass we used to sit there and the smell of bacon wafted throughout the Chapel”. “It was a ‘gathering’ of families squeezing in together on the verandah”. “After Mass the children used go into the horse paddock and had great fun collecting all the acorns – that became quite a tradition”.

### **The Redemptorists Work**

Work on reconstructing the Homestead to suit the needs of the Order continued and in addition classrooms were built.



During this time a close and supportive relationship developed with the local Catholic community. Rosters were created to ensure that there were always flowers on the altar, the linen was washed and the grounds were maintained – particularly care of the trees, that still stand tall today, dropping their leaves in the autumn. One of the Parishioners was given the opportunity to graze their daughter’s horse on part of the unused 5 acres - the neighbours initially wanted to know which of the Priests or Brothers rode.

In 1952 the first students began their studies at St Peter’s College in Newmarket - this then truly consolidated the establishment of the Redemptorists in Glendowie.

The Homestead was a very old building ‘that moved on its foundations’ when the wind blew – in fact sometimes in a strong wind doors would jam and the local builder would get a call to come and ‘free’ one of the priests who had got stuck in a room’.

The kitchen, the hub of the Homestead, was very basic, and trying to cook meals for an increasing number of residents was quite a challenge. However “the local Catholic community” were fantastic, often arriving with big saucepans of casserole or other cooked meals which really were a bonus, particularly in winter time when the wind literally blew through all the cracks in the house – and there were plenty of those”. “There were a number of women in the Parish who got together and used to make Christmas dinner each year. They would arrive at the House with roast turkey, vegetables, puddings – a really great meal. They did this for about 6-8 years”.



On the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1952 the Order received the hand painted Icon of Mother of Perpetual Help that is in our Church today

In 1955 the existing young students commenced their studies at Sacred Heart College, however attendance at Sacred Heart only continued until 1959, when the students once again were sent to Australia to complete their studies.

In the same year, 1955, the Community had their first Mission. This was preached by Father Vincent McManus. “This was a great Mission and really showed how well the Redemptorists could preach’. “The