

Parish and School Partnership

*Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi – With your foodbasket and my foodbasket
the people will thrive...*

This Maori Whakatauki (proverb) about the importance of working together as one illustrates the very close bond between St Mary's Catholic Parish and St Mary's Catholic School in Papakura.

The following is a brief history of the Catholic Community of Papakura – focussing especially on our Parish's partnership with our school. Our Parish is a fairly large one bordering Manurewa at Takanini and includes Papakura, Clevedon, Kawakawa Bay, Orere Point, Hunua, Paparimu, Ararimu, Raventhorpe, Ramarama, Drury, Karaka and Kingseat in its boundaries. Back in the 1860's we were originally served from Otahuhu and then from Pukekohe. Our earliest church buildings were constructed at Ramarama (which was then called Maketu) and at Ararimu. By the time St Mary's was formally established as a Parish under Fr. Joseph Duffy on December 7th 1927 the original Parish church had been in Chapel Street since 1873. On February 14th 1954 our present church was blessed and opened by Archbishop James Michael Liston of Auckland. This was followed just a few months later by the completion of St Mary's Catholic School on Clarke Road (on May 21st) - under the care of the Sisters of the Mission. From 1955 -1979 the Sisters lived in a two-story brick convent on Union (now Wood) Street. The old convent building still stands today as a local landmark.

The Sisters' spiritual legacy of Contemplation, Communion and Mission has been built on by generations of dedicated staff and parents to make St Mary's Catholic School a "model" for other communities to follow. Its Catholic special character is highly regarded across our Diocese because it ensures a warm and welcoming atmosphere where every child can develop his/her potential to feel loved, nurtured and valued as part of a family - in relationship to the person of Jesus Christ. Not only does it strive for excellence through delivering a broad, quality curriculum but it also provides vital day-to-day support for our Parish's mission of evangelization and outreach to our wider community. St Mary's Catholic School holds a very special place in our hearts. We are grateful for this opportunity to tell our Parish's story and to develop and strengthen our Parish/School partnership for generations to come.