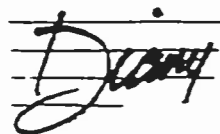


A VOICE FROM THE PAST .....

Few Popes have had a greater impact on the Church than Pope John Paul II. The following is taken from his address to artists in 1999:

' ... Writing from this Apostolic Palace, which is a mine of masterpieces perhaps unique in the world, I would rather give voice to the supreme artists who in this place lavished the wealth of their genius, often charged with great spiritual depth. From here can be heard the voice of Michelangelo, who in the Sistine Chapel has presented the drama and mystery of the world from the Creation to the Last Judgement, giving a face to God the Father, to Christ the Judge, and to man in his arduous journey from the dawn to the consummation of history. Here speaks the delicate and profound genius of Raphael, highlighting in the array of his paintings, and especially in the 'Despute', in the room of the Signatura, the mystery of the revelation of the triune God, who in the Eucharist befriends man and sheds light on the questions and expectations of human intelligence. From this place, from the majestic Basilica dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles, from the Colonnade which spreads out from it like two arms to welcome the whole human family, we still hear Bramante, Bernini, Borromini, and Moderno, to name only the more important artists, all rendering visible the perception of the mystery which makes of the Church a universally hospitable community, mother and travelling companion to all men and women in their search for God.

This extraordinary complex is a remarkably powerful expression of sacred art, arising to heights of imperishable aesthetic and religious excellence. What has characterised sacred art more and more, under the impulse of Humanism and the Renaissance, and then of successive cultural and scientific trends, is a growing interest in everything human, in the world, and in the reality of history. In itself, such a concern is not at all a danger for Christian faith, centred on the mystery of the Incarnation and therefore God's valuing of the human being .... '



**'Friends of the Cathedral' Annual Mass and Luncheon - Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup>.**



# NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF THE CATHEDRAL



No. 67 : JUNE 2006

## A WELCOME SPIN-OFF .....

The archives of the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch virtually had their beginning with Fr Kevin Clark forty-seven years ago. He was on the staff of the Cathedral when he came upon a trunk in the Presbytery garage. It was full of letters and documents relating to Bishop Grimes and the building of the Cathedral. The need for more space in Bishop Joyce's office had led to the earlier correspondence being given less attention than that which seemed more urgent if not more important.

Time passed, and in 1966 Fr Clark found himself appointed to the Chatham Islands. Knowing that a less busy schedule would allow him more time for personal interests, he took with him three packed boxes of the material he had chanced upon, and began the process of sorting it. Soon his desk, the floor and the spare bed were covered with what proved to be a growing pile of correspondence and documentation which would prove invaluable for a major work Bishop Ashby had in mind - the conservation of the exterior fabric of the Cathedral and its interior re-ordering to meet the needs of liturgical renewal.

The Cathedral Conservation Project (1970-75) is now long since past, but other works in and about the Cathedral have followed. In all of these Fr Clark has had a major role as Diocesan Archivist and as a member of the Cathedral Trust. Nothing however, could have given him greater satisfaction than the historical spin-off which followed the Cathedral's centenary.

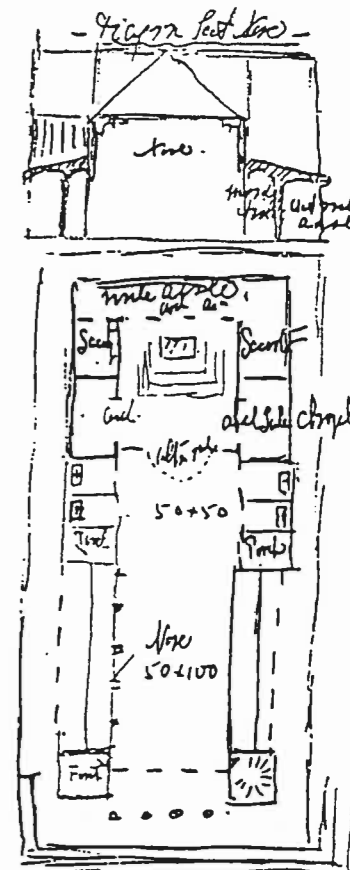
How do we account for this upsurge in interest? Michael Hanrahan's history of the Cathedral no doubt helped. So, too, did Jean Clifton's research into the earlier family history of Bishop Grimes, but it was a small group of women who of their own initiative offered to sort and catalogue the photographs in the Diocesan Archives who brought to life this resurgence of interest in matters historical. Over the months they have met once a week, sorting and annotating nearly 2,000 photographs, handling them and storing them using correct conservation techniques.

The catalogues compiled to date cover individuals, groups, buildings and events. Presently these are being circulated among older people in the hope that unknown names, dates and places, can be filled in. In turn, this had led to people searching cupboards and drawers for their own family photographs relating the Church, which they feel should be preserved. Given this expanding interest, it was suggested that a gathering could be called of those interested in matters historical. And so, a meeting was held in November last year. It attracted 26 people. In turn, this gave rise to a newsletter 'Archivally Speaking', and a second gathering which was held in June of this year. To that even more people responded. This was a hands-on-workshop run by Jane Teal, Archivist of the Anglican Diocese of Christchurch. She taught those present how to make folders for documents and artifacts, and how to store them properly.

Who knows where this spin-off of the Cathedral's centenary will end, but it augurs well for preserving the foundations of tomorrow's Diocese.



*The members of the Cathedral Trust, together with the 'Friends of the Cathedral' offer their greetings and congratulations to Bishop John Cunneen and Fr Kevin Clark on the forthcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their ordination to the priesthood.*



**Architect Petre's first sketch of the Cathedral in the margin of a letter to Bishop Grimes.**

For the Cathedral Trust

*John Harrington*  
Monsignor J.M. Harrington

'Friends of the Cathedral' Newsletter: Cathedral House, PO Box 4544, Christchurch.

## A CATHEDRAL LIKE NO OTHER .....

The late Monsignor Tom Liddy was never one to speak off the top of his head. What he said was always considered, and wise. And so it was that on the eve of my first visit to Europe he told me I should see what Europe and to offer, and in time I should go back to savour what I had found to be profitable.

In March of this year, I had the joy of visiting Europe for the sixth time – a third of those journeys made possible by the good timing of my parents, who with eight days to spare saw to it that I could collect superannuation from the age of sixty. And before even going to the travel agent, I knew that again this time Chartres Cathedral would be on my itinerary as it had been five times before.

Chartres Cathedral has been like a magnet to me. Now as the train from Paris draws near to the station I know exactly where to look to see its uneven spires towering above the houses. I know exactly the route to take through the town to find it. I know well what I have come back to see and to savour.

In an age when the written word was not available to the masses, the portals of Chartres Cathedral were a catechism for the lay faithful. As they went into Mass, there were their forebears in the faith from the Old and New Testament; there were the stories they had heard at their mother's knee, and later from the priests. The main façade, the royal portal, is devoted to the glorification of Christ. On the right are the central events of the Incarnation – the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Shepherds, and the Presentation in the Temple. On the left, there is the Lord Ascending into Heaven, and the Mission of the Apostles. In the centre, there is Christ enthroned in everlasting splendour, below him there are the apostles grouped in sets of three, and flanking the doorway the ancestors of the Messiah, the kings and queens of Judah.

The north portal, at the left side of the Cathedral, was decorated from 1230 onwards. There the sculptures depict the Holy Scriptures from the Creation to the coming of Christ; there, too, are those who foretold his coming.



Melchisadek, Abraham, Moses : North Porch (c. 1194)

The south portal, slightly older than its counterpart, tells the story of the Church. There the twelve apostles surround a majestic statue of Christ teaching. The side doorways are devoted to the martyrs and confessor saints. The upper part of the central door shows the resurrection of the dead, and above the lintel, there is Christ the Judge, seated between the Virgin Mary and St John, who are interceding for humanity.

Thus the portals of Chartres Cathedral were designed to keep before the faithful the main events and the principle figures of Christianity, from the Creation to the Last Judgement. As a collection of twelfth and thirteenth century sculptures, they are unsurpassed for their simplicity and their beauty.

But it is not only the sculptures that draw people to Chartres. So too do its magnificent stained glass windows.

Strangely, the sculptured portals of Chartres Cathedral were not part of the architect's original plan. But its shimmering stained glass windows were. The advent of the flying buttress had made

possible walls of glass that could fill an empty void with colour – purple, blue, red and green. Under the play of light every fragment would become a jewel, with ever-changing hues reflected on the pillars and flagstones below.

The stained glass of Chartres belongs to a single period of history – all of it placed between 1215 and 1240, except for three windows in the façade which go back to the twelfth century. The lower windows in the nave comprise a series of medallions with scenes from both the Old and New Testament. But other things are revealed in the medallions as well. They are a mine of information about the customs, manners and costumes of the time.

The upper windows depict the Apostles, Prophets and sundry saints. Designed to be viewed from a distance, these representations are vigorously stylised, as are the donors of the windows, who were great lords or wealthy churchmen.

But the crowning of Chartres is its rose windows. Without binoculars they are too high to discern detail, but their impact is in their design, colour and sheer size. A pamphlet available in the Cathedral notes that its builders were taught they must be 'in a state of grace' while they worked; that they could not set foot on the site in a state of sin, because that would add the sin of blasphemy to their souls. Certainly there is something spiritually confident and exalted about Chartres Cathedral.

Time was when the cathedral presented a very different picture. During World War II the glass had to be removed, packed into crates and taken to the south of France. Those who loved the Cathedral were shocked that it was in danger from German bombs. They were even more shocked when they saw their Cathedral robbed of its multi-coloured ornaments, and harsh daylight pouring through the openings where for centuries priceless stained glass had worked its magic.

As it happened, Chartres Cathedral was spared the bombs which fell on other parts of the town, and today, as in older times, its sculptures and its stained glass draw pilgrims and sightseers by the hundred every day, among them even a traveller from the far ends of the earth, come to marvel and admire for one last time a Cathedral like no other.

JMH

### *The Way of the Cross* SCULPTURES LLEW SUMMERS POEMS BERNADETTE HALL



*Celebrating the Centenary of the  
Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament  
Christchurch New Zealand 2005*

**Copies may be purchased at the  
Cathedral, or Madras Café and  
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4544, Christchurch. Delivered in  
New Zealand: \$26.95. Cheques  
payable to the Cathedral Trust.**

*This book was commissioned by the Cathedral Trust as a Centenary project. It superbly portrays the Stations, so skilfully created by Llew Summers, alongside the robust commentary by Bernadette Hall's poems.*

*These Stations have not been without controversy. That has often been the price of art since time began. Study and veneration have allayed the misgivings of many. For some the challenge remains.*

*The Stations you see today join other works created by artists of this city: the labours of Ria Bancroft, Ida Lough, Philip Trusttum and Pat Mulcahy have become integral parts of our Cathedral, just as the musical compositions of Vernon Griffiths, Dorothy Buchanan and John Ritchie have filled its vast spaces at times of celebration.*

*All these are evidence that our country has come of age: while the wider world provides us with inspiration, we have the talent here to give it expression appropriate to its time and place.*

*+ John Cunneen  
Bishop of Christchurch*